

The relationship between human resource empowerment and organizational performance in municipal sport organizations

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Aim

The purpose of this study was to examine: (a) the extent to which human resource empowerment is applied to Greek Municipal sport organizations, and (b) the relationship between human resource empowerment used by Greek Municipal sport organizations and organizational performance (well executed budget, perceived service quality, participants' satisfaction and employees' satisfaction).

In particular, the questions this research wants to address are:

1. To what extent is the human resource empowerment process being used in Greek Municipal sport organizations?
2. Is there a relationship between the key factors of empowerment and performance of Greek Municipal sport organizations?

Theoretical background

The heightened levels of global competitiveness have alerted all organizations to the fact that all their resources must be utilized well. Nowadays, HRM has received great attention because of the recognition that much more could be gained from a better handling of this resource. Consequently academicians and HRM professionals have begun to devote more attention in this field and have identified several human resource (HR) activities that are critical for the survival of the organization (Rangriz, 2010). In literature as well as in practice, human resource empowerment is most often considered to be a viable means to increase the effectiveness of an organization, as well as to improve the quality of working life for employees (Manz, 1992).

Methodology, research design and data analysis

Participants of the particular research project was a random sample of 91 managerial and technical directors of 6 Greek Municipal sport organizations in Attica. For the purpose of this study a survey instrument was used (developed by Vogt & Murrell, 1990), in order to provide information on how managerial and technical directors see themselves in terms of the empowerment process and demographic characteristics using a five point Likert scale. The scales represented three different managerial styles which were: (a) the "empowering style" of management, (b) the "middle-

ground style" of management and (c) the "controlling style" of management. In the first case the director has a managerial style that reflects the director who creates and shares power. In the second case the director has a managerial style that combines the two styles of controlling and empowering in equal proportions, and in the third case, the director is concerned with control or seldom shares, creates or empowers subordinates. The reliability of the scale was found to be: $\alpha = .78$. Also, the particular research used the subjective way of measuring performance. This means that managerial and technical directors were asked to evaluate the performance of their Municipal sport organizations in relation to their current years' objectives, on a five-point Likert scale. Performance was judged against four criteria (well executed budget, perceived service quality, participants' satisfaction and employees' satisfaction). The study was a quantitative design. Descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation was performed to examine variables relationship using SPSS software (version 16).

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

From the analysis it is shown that the directors of Municipal sport organizations used 62.6% "empowering style" of management and 37.4% "middle-ground style" of management in the six key factors of human resource empowerment (Total of all Managerial functions). Also, there were significant relationships between the key factors of human resource empowerment and performance of Municipal sport organizations. More specifically, there was a significant and positive relationship between perceived service quality and the key factor of human resource empowerment: management information /communication system skills with a correlation of $r = .216$, $df = 89$, $p = .040$. Furthermore, there was a significant and positive relationship between participants' satisfaction and the key factor of human resource empowerment: decision-making and action-taking skills with a correlation of $r = .243$, $df = 89$, $p = .020$. No significant relationships were found between the key factors of human resource empowerment and the other two performance criteria which were: well executed budget and employees' satisfaction. The results of the study indicated that there were significant and positive relationships between human resource empowerment and performance of Municipal sport organizations. These findings are consistent with previous studies on human resource empowerment and organizational performance, in sport sector (Papaioannou, Kriemadis, Alexopoulos, Vrontou, & Kartakoullis, 2009), and show that the level of empowering style which directors exercised in Municipal sport organizations is related to the organizations' performance. The present findings add credence to the argument that today's organizations need to provide better quality service in order to be more efficient and more profitable. Thus, it is essential the existence of an empowered and proactive workforce which is able to meet the requirements of business competitive strategy, so that organizational goals and missions will be met with success (Huang, 2001).

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