

Investigating the role of mentoring in empowering organizations' middle managers

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Abstract

The objectives and functions of organizations can be reached well when employees, specifically managers, are among the most efficient people at organizations. Managers can play a key role at organizations because of the impression they have on the actions of subordinates and corresponding individuals. This effect will focus on how the organization's mission is performed and on employee reactions and actions as well as the type of interaction with other organizations and the community. To achieve this, the organization must empower its most important competitive resource and gear, middle managers. Mentoring which is discussed in this paper, is one of the salient capabilities and prerequisites in empowering middle managers at an organization.

Key words: mentoring, empowerment, strategic management, organizational culture.

1- Introduction:

Empowerment is one of the most promising concepts in commercial world that has been little considered, but recently it has become a global subject. However, despite much discussion about the benefits of empowerment, its utilization is slight and insignificant, and although empowerment allows managers to use the knowledge, skills and experience of all members of the organization. Unfortunately, the number of managers and groups who know how to create a culture of empowerment is small (Taghvaei Yazdi, 2015). Mentoring is a project in which a person with a background called a mentor is in contact with a target group called a mentee for a certain period of time (Najafinejad and Maqbooli, 2018). Mentoring is an approach to transferring the knowledge, skills and abilities of an experienced person to a new member. Scientific environments use mentoring to enhance socialization, professional development, and leadership training (DeJanasz & Sullivan, 2004). Mentoring which is discussed in this paper, is one of the basic skills and requirements in empowering middle managers at organizations.

Mentoring

the term "mentoring" is rooted back to Greek mythology. When Odysseus left Troy for war, he left his son to a friend named Mentor for having him as a supporter and guide in his absence. After that, and in a more organized way, mentoring first appeared in the United States in the 1970s, and in the 1990s, it gradually established its position in medicine. There have been many definitions of mentoring so far. The most appropriate definition of mentoring is the process by which an experienced, knowledgeable, and intriguing character named a mentor presents another (mentee) the evolutionary ideas and education and guides him /her in personality and professional development. The mentor is often, but not necessarily, active in one and the same discipline as Mentee. Mentoring can be divided into formal and informal. In the realm of informal mentoring, people (mentor or mentee) designate each other voluntarily. Informal or traditional mentoring is a selection process that is initiated based on the discretion and interest of the mentor and mentee. It is usually done separately, in which the process of harmonizing mentors and mentees is usually done by a third party (company, institution, organization). Since 1970s, Formal mentoring programs have been in operation , It can be stated that mentoring assists Mentee in three dimensions: supporting Mentee for professional development ,psychological support and organizational support (Pourhassan, 1397) .Mentoring is an outlined and organized relationship focused on nurturing the next generation in the field of interpersonal relationships .The primary function of such a

relationship is to develop the individual's learning capacity through the knowledge transfer, organizational culture, wisdom, and experience and bringing the inexperienced ones (in the form of a mentoring program) together. In relation to mentoring, they can be developed as part of a planned organizational effort and thus bring senior and less experienced employees together (in the form of a mentoring program). Mentees in mentoring relationships are often scrutinized for the positive impact they have on individuals. Mentees often experience many benefits in mentoring relationships, such as: self-confidence improvement, high access to advice and related information, an opportunity to receive more personal and practical encouraging feedback, increased effectiveness, awareness of culture, politics and philosophy. Organization and access to a reliable consultant to express concerns or ideas (Danishmandi et al., 2017). Mentoring is defined as a dynamic relationship in which a senior member (mentor) guides a young member (mentee) in a series of steps through formal and informal interactions towards professional development and reducing negative career effects. But for a better understanding of the concept of mentoring, these definitions are classified into seven categories of cognitive concepts:

- 1- A course in which a more experienced person guides a less experienced person;
- 2- The process in which an older person guides a younger person;
- 3- A person who provides academic advice to another person;
- 4- A person who shares his experiences with another person;
- 5- A person who actively communicates with another person;
- 6- An experienced person who guides a group of people;
- 7- The process that an elderly and experienced person guides and guides a young, less experienced person through Internet resources (Kikha, 2019).

Empowerment

Empowerment means the power and freedom to act for one's administration and in the organizational sense, it means a change in culture and courage in creating and leading an organizational environment. In other words, empowerment means designing the structure of the organization, in such a way that people while controlling themselves; be ready to accept more responsibilities (Nilipour Tabatabai and Yazdachi, 2013). In the theoretical foundations of organization and management, various definitions of empowerment have been presented, which can be identified in two categories: 1-Empowerment in the sense of sharing power: It is a process that leads to the improvement of political and social power and vision of employees and enables them to recognize and control the factors of the organizational

environment. 2- Empowerment in the sense of the motivational and cognitive concept: it is a process that is defined based on personal beliefs and perceptions and promotes the internal motivation of a person to perform his job duties (Mohbi and Eslami, 2019). Many studies have defined empowerment as the motivation to perform the main tasks. Empowering people expands the field of organizational learning for them. Learning as a constant change in experience and the results of repeated behaviors that lead to better performance and faster performance. From a strategic point of view, learning is a source of competitive advantage (Islami Herandi et al., 2018). Organizations' goals and missions can be accomplished in the best way when employees, especially managers, are among the most efficient people in the organization. Managers can have a wide role in the organization due to the influence they have on the behavior of subordinates and related people. This impact will focus on how the organization's mission is implemented and on the behavior of employees, as well as on the type of interaction with other organizations and society. In addition, today the employees of professional organizations have become the main operators of the work flow and partners of the organization, so not only managers must have leadership skills, but also human resources must learn ways to lead themselves. To achieve this feature, the organization must empower its most important resource and competitive tool, i.e. managers (Vakil al-Raaya and Amin Bidakhti, 2017).

Blanchard summarized the empowerment process in three stages: 1- Information sharing: which allows employees to know the situations of their organization and analyze them for detailed investigation. Information sharing starts with building trust in the organization and of course breaking the traditional dry hierarchical thinking and thus increases the sense of responsibility of the employees.

2- Autonomy and working independence throughout the boundaries of the organization: the boundaries of the organization through the destination (why you work), values (what guides your actions), perceptions (what is your idea of the future), goals (what, when, where, how and why you do it), roles (who you are) and organizational system and structure (how the work you do is supported).

3- Replacing self-managing teams instead of hierarchies: whenever a group of employees with special responsibilities for the work and production process are selected, they plan and execute from the beginning to the end of the work, they manage everything and they share the responsibility equally and fairly (Sephund et al., 2013).

Investigating the role of mentoring in empowering middle managers of the organization

Due to the importance of the role and influence of managers, their empowerment is the priority of organizations' programs. The purpose of empowerment is to apply the maximum potentials of employees in advancing organizational intentions. Although the issue of empowerment has a history of several decades, it has been more than a decade that theorists in the field of human resources have had a special focus on this issue and have studied and researched its dimensions, goals, strategies, models and mechanisms. Empowerment is the key to the effectiveness of organizations and managers (Bakhtiari and Ahmadi Moghadam, 2019). Mentoring is one of the very important strategies for better understanding of organizational activities and business unit environment. In some Iranian organizations (especially governmental ones), employees do not trust their managers or supervisors' abilities and competences and as a result, they are not able to get involved well with their occupations.

In order to overcome this problem, the concept of mentoring has been applied as an effective solution in current study (Noormohammadi et al., 1400). The middle managers of organizations perceive very well that mentoring is one of the basic skills and requirements that they must comprehend. In fact, with through this skill, managers as long as they are based on tools and modern and efficient beliefs can help the growth and development of employees and ultimately their organization and company.

2- Conclusion

Many studies have defined empowerment as the motivation to perform the major tasks. Empowering people expands the domain of organizational learning for them. Learning as a constant change in experience and the consequences of repeated actions that lead to better performance as well as faster. Mentoring is one of the most significant talents that plays a key role in empowering the middle managers at an organization. It can be stated that it is an organized relationship focused on nurturing the next generation in interpersonal relationships. The primary function of such a relationship is to develop the learning capacity of the individual (mentee) through the knowledge transfer, organizational culture, wisdom and experiences. Middle managers of organizations realize that mentoring is one of the fundamental skills and requirements that they need to be proficient at. In fact, this skill comforts managers in making possible the growth and development of employees and ultimately their organization and company as long as they are based on modern and efficient tools and beliefs.

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