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EMPOWERMENT AT WORK: FOR HIGH QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE

Amal Derbale*

Abstract. The current study aimed to identify the level of empowerment and examine its importance in the work environment in order to achieve quality and effective performance according to certain personal and organizational variables. We used the descriptive method appropriate to the nature of the research, and our study included 145 workers at the National Railway Transport Company (SNTF), selected randomly. After processing the data using version 22 of the SPSS statistical program, the results of the analysis were as follows:

-Employees of the institution under study have a high level of empowerment at work.

-Empowerment significantly contributes to improving quality at work.

-There are no statistically significant differences in quality attributed to the variable of seniority.

The subject of empowerment is one of the modern issues addressed in the field of social sciences, as it attaches great importance to human resources and maintaining their sustainability in a sound condition, enabling them to adapt to the fluctuating developments of the environment and thus achieve continuity and survival. The term empowerment was not a coincidence, but rather a result of the great transformations and developments the world has witnessed- and continues to witness- in all fields, which has driven institutions to seek new ways.

Keywords: empowerment, quality, work, workers, sustainable performance

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ПОЛНОМОЧИЯ НА РАБОЧЕМ МЕСТЕ: РОЛЬ В ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИИ ВЫСОКОГО КАЧЕСТВА И УСТОЙЧИВОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ

Амаль Дербале*

Абстракт. Цель данного исследования заключается в определении уровня полномочий в рабочей среде и выявлении их значения для обеспечения качественной и результативной деятельности с учётом личных и организационных факторов. В соответствии с задачами исследования был применён описательный метод. В выборку вошли 145 сотрудников Национальной компании железнодорожного транспорта (SNTF), отобранных случайным образом. Полученные данные были обработаны с использованием статистической программы SPSS (версия 22). Анализ показал следующие результаты:

-Сотрудники исследуемой организации характеризуются высоким уровнем полномочий на рабочем месте.

-Полномочия оказывают значимое влияние на повышение качества трудовой деятельности.

-По показателю трудового стажа статистически значимых различий в уровне качества не выявлено.

Проблематика полномочий относится к числу актуальных вопросов, рассматриваемых в социальных науках. Данный феномен акцентирует внимание на человеческих ресурсах, их устойчивости и способности сохранять работоспособность в условиях постоянных изменений, обеспечивая тем самым преемственность и устойчивое развитие. Понятие «полномочия» не является случайным: оно сформировалось как следствие масштабных трансформаций и продолжающихся процессов обновления, происходящих во всех сферах жизни, что вынуждает организации искать новые подходы и стратегии.

Ключевые слова: полномочия, качество, работа, сотрудники, устойчивая деятельность

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İŞ YERİNDƏ SƏLAHIYYƏTLƏNDİRMƏ: YÜKSƏK KEYFİYYƏTLİ VƏ DAVAMLI FƏALİYYƏTİN TƏMİNİNDƏ ROLU

Amal Dərbala*

Abstrakt. Bu tədqiqat iş mühitində səlahiyyətləndirmə səviyyəsini müəyyənləşdirmək və onun şəxsi və təşkilati amillər fonunda keyfiyyətli və səmərəli fəaliyyətin əldə edilməsində əhəmiyyətini araşdırmaq məqsədi daşıyır. Tədqiqatın xarakterinə uyğun olaraq təsviri metoddan istifadə edilmişdir. Araşdırmaya Milli Dəmir Yolu Nəqliyyatı Şirkətinin (SNTF) təsadüfi seçilmiş 145 əməkdaşı cəlb olunmuşdur. Toplanmış məlumatlar SPSS statistik proqramının 22-ci versiyası ilə işlənmiş və aparılan analiz nəticəsində aşağıdakı nəticələr əldə edilmişdir. Müəssisənin əməkdaşları iş mühitində yüksək səviyyədə səlahiyyətləndirmə göstəricilərinə malikdirlər. Səlahiyyətləndirmə işin keyfiyyətinin yüksəldilməsinə mühüm töhfə verir. Əmək stajı amilinə görə keyfiyyət göstəricilərində statistik cəhətdən əhəmiyyətli fərqlər müəyyən olunmamışdır. Səlahiyyətləndirmə mövzusu sosial elmlər sahəsində müzakirə olunan müasir məsələlərdən biridir. Bu anlayış insan resurslarına böyük əhəmiyyət verir və onların sağlam vəziyyətdə davamlılığını qorumaqla yanaşı, dəyişkən mühitin inkişaflarına uyğunlaşmasını təmin edir ki, bu da ardıcılığın və mövcudluğun davamını şərtləndirir. “Səlahiyyətləndirmə” termini təsadüfi şəkildə meydana çıxmamış, əksinə, dünyanın bütün sahələrində baş verən və hələ də davam edən böyük transformasiya və inkişafların nəticəsi olaraq formalaşmışdır. Məhz bu dəyişikliklər müəssisələri yeni yollar və yanaşmalar axtarmağa vadar etmişdir.

Açar sözlər: səlahiyyətləndirmə, keyfiyyət, iş, əməkdaşlar, davamlı fəaliyyət

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1.Introduction

Perhaps the most important of these ways is the focus on its human resources, as they are the source of ideas and the main tool in transforming challenges and obstacles into opportunities and competitive capacities. This is achieved by maintaining their effectiveness, mental energies, knowledge, and skills, which represent a true wealth.

It is also considered an important element that helps raise the morale of workers, granting them confidence in their institution, which motivates them to work harder with diligence and precision, and provides a supportive and encouraging organizational environment that fosters creativity, innovation, responsibility, and risk-taking.

Many studies and researches [Diop, 2014; Bauthman, 2008] have demonstrated the importance of employee empowerment, as it is considered a new strategy and a developed managerial method that grants employees broad powers and responsibilities to face the problems they encounter while performing their tasks. It contributes to achieving competitive advantages for institutions to confront sudden environmental changes and challenges.

Within this intellectual and scientific framework, the following questions can be formulated:

- What is the level of empowerment among the workers of the National Railway Company (SNTF)?
- Does empowerment contribute to improving work quality among a sample of workers of the National Railway Company (SNTF)?
- Are there statistically significant differences in work quality attributed to the seniority variable?

2.Definition of Empowerment

The term empowerment in English language and literature consists of three components [Saoud et al., 2013: 68]:

- **Root: power** → meaning authority and strength.
- **Prefix: em** → meaning the process or movement through which authority and power can be attained.
- **Suffix: men** → indicating the actual attainment of that authority and power.

In the Oxford Dictionary (2005), it has two meanings:

1. Formal: granting power or authority to perform a certain act.
2. Giving someone greater control over their personal life or the situation they are in [Psoinos& Smithson, 2002].

Conceptually, Leboyer [2006: 172] defines it as granting decision-making authority to workers at the lower levels of the organizational hierarchy, which

means creating a participatory system in deciding how work is managed across different organizational levels.

In the organizational context, empowerment is a mode of interaction that may not be strictly formal, but allows individuals to demonstrate their abilities, skills, and talents in solving problems they face at work, taking responsibility for completing their assigned tasks, and reinforcing such positive behaviors through continuous training and development.

Accordingly, empowerment can be described as the environment that provides workers with the ability and willingness to take responsibility in developing and improving their performance.

3. Dimensions of Empowerment

Spreitzer (1995) identified four dimensions of empowerment:

3.1. Meaning (significance of work)

A sense of usefulness, value, and significance of work through compatibility between the individual's goals, values, and beliefs on one hand, and the requirements of the job on the other. If the individual views work positively, the job is valuable, leading to the creation of meaning, which becomes a motivating force.

3.2. Self-determination (autonomy)

A sense of freedom of action and will, i.e., the extent to which an individual has the freedom of choice, decision-making, and independence in setting behavioral standards according to what he sees as appropriate at work.

3.3. Self-efficacy (competence)

A sense of competence, meaning that the individual trusts his own abilities. Competence reflects the extent to which a person feels he has the necessary ability and skills to accomplish his work, in addition to confidence in his ability to complete assigned tasks with merit and effectiveness.

3.4. Impact

The degree to which an individual perceives himself capable of making a difference regarding the tasks he performs or achieving the intended influence in his environment. This reflects his belief that he can influence the system in which he works, affect strategic or operational results, and participate in decisions at all levels, in ways that earn others' respect for his opinion.

4. Advantages of Empowerment

According to Al-Maghribi [2009: 268], the advantages and benefits that can be achieved through employee empowerment include:

- Increased demand for training and education.
- Employee participation in formulating and setting goals.
- Greater contributions and ideas from individuals, leading to higher innovative capacities.

- Strengthening relations through team work.
- Supporting the authority granted to individuals while reducing control and supervision to achieve better productivity.
- Increased employee satisfaction with their jobs.
- Developing efficiency through cross-training and exchange of knowledge between superiors and subordinates.
- Reducing conflict and disputes between management and employees.

5.Method

We relied in our study on the descriptive approach, as it is appropriate for the nature of the current study, and it aims to study the current facts related to the nature of a phenomenon, a situation, a group of people, events, or conditions, in order to obtain sufficient and accurate information about them [Imad Al-Tayeb Kashroud, 2007, p.227].

6.Sample

The study sample included 145 workers at the National Railway Company (SNTF) in the Wilaya of Naâma, selected randomly.

7.Study Tool

7.1.Description of the Tool

We used a questionnaire consisting of three sections:

7.1.1.Personal data: age, educational level, seniority.

7.1.2.Empowerment Scale: 14 items distributed across 3 dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Meaning (items 01-05)
- Dimension 2: Autonomy (items 06-10)
- Dimension 3: Influence on others (items 11-15)

7.1.3.Work Quality Scale: 12 items distributed across 3 dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Participation in decision-making (items 16-20)
- Dimension 2: Supervisor's style of supervision (items 21-26)
- Dimension 3: Wages and rewards (items 27-31)

All questionnaire items were formulated in a positive direction, with responses measured on a five-point Likert scale: (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree), assigned the values (1-2-3-4-5).

7.2.Psychometric Properties of the Study Tools

7.2.1.Validity

Table (01): Internal Consistency Validity of the Empowerment Scale

Item No.	Meaning Dimension	Correlation	Item No.	Autonomy Dimension	Correlation	Item No.	Impact Dimension	Correlation
1		0.86	6		0.77	11		0.82
2		0.91	7		0.74	12		0.70

Item No.	Meaning Dimension	Correlation	Item No.	Autonomy Dimension	Correlation	Item No.	Impact Dimension	Correlation
3		0.92	8		0.78	13		0.78
4		0.83	9		0.74	14		0.71
5		0.72	10		0.76	15		0.55

Significant at 0.01 level

It is evident from the above table that the correlation coefficients are significant at the level of 0.01, which confirms the validity of the scale.

Table (02): Internal Consistency Validity of the Work Quality Scale

Item No.	Participation Dimension	Correlation	Item No.	Supervision Dimension	Correlation	Item No.	Wages Dimension	Correlation
16		0.64	21		0.87	27		0.71
17		0.80	22		0.81	28		0.69
18		0.83	23		0.88	29		0.80
19		0.81	24		0.95	30		0.71
20		0.79	25		0.84	31		0.63
			26		0.53			

Significant at 0.01 level

It is evident from the above table that the correlation coefficients are significant at the level of 0.01, which indicates good internal consistency.

7.2.2.Reliability

We calculated Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. For the empowerment variable, it was (0.86), which is good, and for the work quality variable, it was (0.83), also indicating good reliability. Accordingly, the final questionnaire became applicable.

8.Results Analysis and Discussion

8.1.Description of Sample Characteristics

Table No. (03): Distribution of the study sample according to age

Age category	Frequency	Percentage %
Less than 30	37	25.5 %
Between 31–40	60	41.4 %

Age category	Frequency	Percentage %
Between 41–50	45	31.0 %
More than 50	03	2.1 %
Total	145	100 %

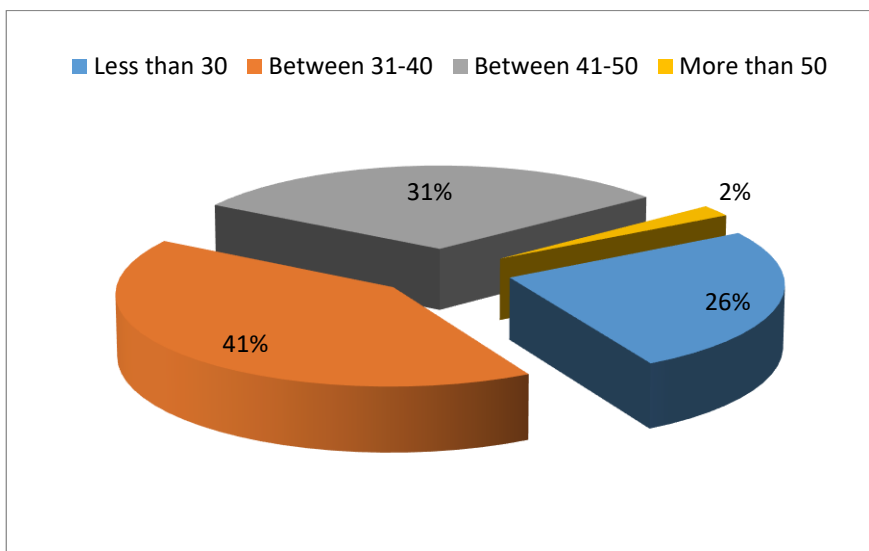


Figure No. (01): Distribution of the study sample according to age

From the table above, it is clear that the largest age group among the respondents falls within the category between 31-40 years, representing 41%. This is followed by the group aged between 41 and 50 years, which indicates that most of the sample members are in the stage of productivity and maturity.

Table No. (04): Distribution of the study sample according to educational level

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage %
Intermediate	23	15.9 %
Secondary	95	65.9 %
University	27	18.6 %
Total	145	100 %

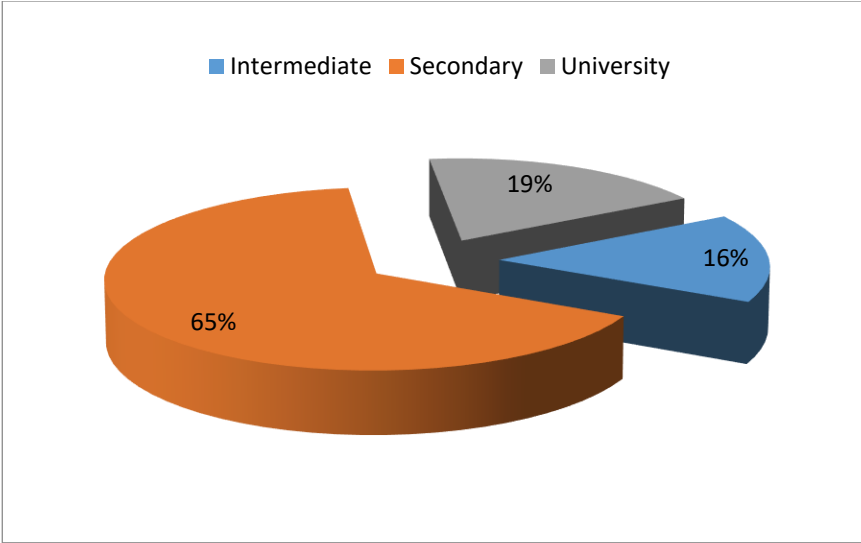


Figure (02): Distribution of the study sample according to educational level

From the table above, which represents the educational level of the workers, it is clear that the largest percentage, estimated at 65.9%, is represented by the secondary level. This is due to the demand for this category in the recruitment competition. Meanwhile, 18.6% represents the university level among the higher category, followed by 15.9% representing the intermediate level.

Table No. (05): Distribution of the study sample according to seniority

Seniority category	Frequency	Percentage %
Lessthan 5 years	24	16.6 %
From 5 to 10 years	56	38.6 %
More than 10 years	65	44.8 %
Total	145	100 %

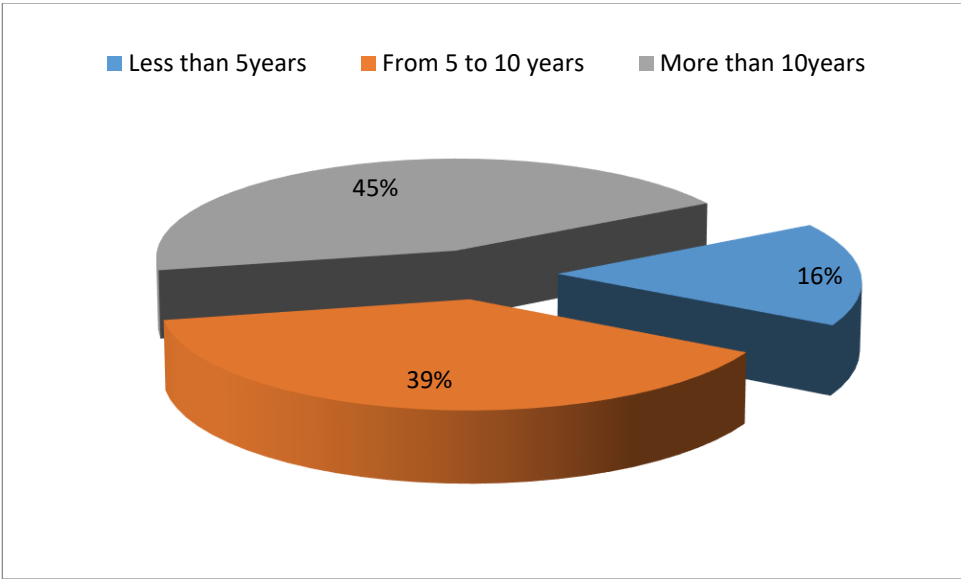


Figure No. (03): Distribution of the sample according to seniority

From this table, we notice that the largest category of workers are those with seniority exceeding 10 years, at a rate of 44.8%, followed by the category between 5-10 years at 38.6%, while 16.6% of the respondents have seniority of less than 5 years. These results indicate that most members of the research community generally belong to categories with high experience.

8.2.Presentation of the results of the first question:

The first question states as follows:

"What is the level of empowerment of the workers of the National Railway Company SNTF?"

The results were as follows:

Table No. (06): Level of empowerment of the workers of the National Railway Company SNTF

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight	Level
Level of empowerment	98.59	12.70	4.50	High

From Table No. (06), it is clear that the arithmetic mean is estimated at (98.59) with a standard deviation of (12.70) and a relative weight of (4.50), which indicates that the workers have a high level of empowerment. This reflects the institution's interest in the psychological and physical health and safety of workers by providing the necessary material, social, and organizational factors suitable for work, as well as mechanisms that allow excellence, creativity, and sustainable performance.

8.3.Presentation of the results of the second question:

The second question states as follows:

"Does empowerment contribute to improving the quality of work among a sample of workers of the National Railway Company SNTF?"

The results were as follows:

Table No. (07): Results of Pearson correlation coefficients of empowerment and its dimensions with work quality

	Work Quality
Meaning	0.87**
Autonomy	0.86**
Influence on others	0.75**
Empowerment	0.82**

The results confirmed that there is a statistically significant relationship between empowerment and work quality, where the Pearson correlation coefficient was estimated at = 0.82. The correlation coefficients of the empowerment dimensions were estimated at 0.87 for the meaning dimension (the highest), followed by autonomy in decision-making at 0.86, then influence on others at 0.75, all significant at the 0.01 level.

Considering that empowerment is a method of interaction not subject to formality, it allows individuals to demonstrate their abilities and skills, solve work-related problems, take responsibility, and accomplish assigned tasks, while reinforcing and supporting all positive behaviors through training and development.

The study results were consistent with the study of [Khalil Ismail Ibrahim Madi, 2014] and [Ayman Hassan Diop, 2014]. The researcher attributes this to the nature of the institution’s work, providing quality services, and attracting customers.

8.4.Presentation of the results of the third question:

The third question states as follows:

"Are there statistically significant differences in work quality attributed to the variable of seniority?"

The results were as follows:

Table No. (08): Results of the one-way ANOVA test for differences in quality attributed to seniority variable

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean squares	F	Sig. value
Between groups	94.939	2	47.470	0.189	0.82
Within groups	35683.57	142	251.293		
Total	35778.51	144			

From the table above, it is clear that the F value was estimated at 0.18 with a significance value of 0.82, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between quality and the seniority variable.

This can be explained by the fact that, regardless of years of seniority, the true role of workers lies in building and designing work in a way that gives them the opportunity to make final decisions to improve functional processes, or face emergency and unforeseen circumstances within defined guiding frameworks [Al-Madhoun and Tawfiq, 1999, p.78].

The study results were consistent with the study of Rizkallah Hanan (2009). The researcher attributes this to the spirit of work and enthusiasm in performing tasks to prove their existence and ambition for higher positions.

9. Conclusion of the study

What can be concluded from this study is the importance of empowerment as one of the modern methods to improve work quality by allowing workers to participate in decision-making and creativity. It also enables the institution to achieve its set objectives and broaden its future vision for sustainable, high-quality performance, ensuring its existence, continuity, and even achieving competitive advantage.

At the end of our study, we can present a set of recommendations to decision-makers that would contribute to the successful implementation of empowerment effectively:

- Setting goals in a way that motivates individuals and explaining to them how to achieve them.
- Guiding individuals and informing them how to obtain the necessary resources to achieve the goals.
- Removing bureaucratic obstacles that limit participation and effective communication.
- Showing confidence that subordinates have the ability to achieve goals and make decisions.
- Increasing opportunities for employees to participate in decisions related to all aspects of the institution.

- Training employees in creative thinking and problem-solving to achieve better results.

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