Antecedents to Leaders' Empowering Behavior: A Study of Team Leaders and Their Subordinates

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Abstract : The research in the area of self leadership advocates employee/team empowerment. It is well understood that empowered employees would contribute more and better to their organizational outcomes. This research is a part of an ongoing larger research in the area of empowering leadership behavior. The present research aims to understand some of the antecedents to empowering behavior of leaders such that the organizations can focus on the right elements and invest in the appropriate areas during their leadership development activities. The research is exploratory field study. Sampling is purposive, employing triadic design i.e. a manager and two of his/her subordinates are selected for data collection. The total no. of respondents is 240, with 80 managers and 160 of their direct reports. Initially focus group interview was done and based on the inputs from focus group, quantitative data was collected personally by the researchers using questionnaire. The sample is drawn from seven professionally run organization including those of Indian origin as well as multi-national companies. This study proposes to explore the constituents of empowering behavior both from leaders' and their subordinates' perspective and also see the relationship between some of the personal variables of leaders as an antecedent to empowering behavior. Similarly, the study aims to explore the subordinates' perspectives as an antecedent to empowering behavior. The relationship between antecedent variables and empowering behavior is tested for moderation employing organization culture. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis was done to establish the validity of the questionnaires. Further hierarchical regression analysis results revealed that organization based self-esteem and global self-esteem impact leaders' empowering behavior and this relationship is further moderated by organization culture. Team members' perspective showed higher importance for task characteristics and members' readiness from the point of view of empowerment. The relation between task characteristics and members' readiness was not moderated by culture. The finding from this research may be utilized by professionals to guide organizations desiring rapid and sustainable growth, to develop leaders who empower their teams such that they act as leaders themselves and become stimulants for the growth of organizations.

Keywords : empowering behavior, team leaders, subordinates, self-esteem, organization culture, task characteristics, team members readiness

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