

**Antecedents of Empowerment, Leading to Job Satisfaction:
A Case in Japanese Multi National in Malaysia**

By

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Research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
degree of Masters of Business Administration

June 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to my parents; Mr. S.V. Shanmugam and Mdm. Amaravally, whom had raised and provided me with all the necessary foundations, educations and support, until what I'm now, taking-up MBA postgraduate course in USM.

Secondly, I would like to thank Associate Professor Dr. Zainal Ariffin Ahmad, Ed.D., my dedicated research supervisor whom had spent loads of time and guidance, advising me to conduct this research in a very effective and efficient manner.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the entire MBA lecturer, whom had thought courses during my MBA period, as they had helped me in one way another which had been useful throughout conducting my research project.

Fourthly, I would like to thank my fellow MBA colleagues, whom had guided and supported me with their knowledge, in completing my thesis.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my dearest wife, Ms. Revathi, for her understanding, support, encouragement and love throughout the last two years of MBA course. Not forgetting my two beautiful kids, Barrathan and Barrathi, who had become my icon and motivation to strive continuously to the best and success.

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**Faktor Mempengaruhi Pemberian Kuasa Membuat Keputusan, Ke
Arah Kepuasan Berkerja:
Suatu Kes Dalam Konteks Multinasional Jepun Di Malaysia**

ABSTRAK

Kajian empirikal ini dilaksanakan bertujuan menentukan factor-faktor iaitu sokongan organisasi (perceived organization support), peranan yang jelas (role clarity), dan komunikasi organisasi (organizational communication), dalam pemberian kuasa membuat keputusan (empowerment), kearah kepuasan berkerja (job satisfaction). Sebelum memulakan kajian ini, kajian-kajian sebelum ini dianalisa terlebih dahulu dalam menentukan arah tujuan kajian ini. Kajian ini bertumpukan syarikat multinasional Jepun yang beroperasi di Malaysia. Seramai 210 orang berpangkat pengurus di dalam sebuah majikan Jepun di Penang, Malaysia, diberikan borang soal-selidik, dan hanya sebanyak 45.7% borang berjaya dikembalikan. Borang soal-selidik di ambil dari kajian sebelum ini, dengan soalan-soalan berdasarkan demografi responden, sokongan organisasi, peranan yang jelas, komunikasi organisasi, pemberian kuasa, dan kepuasan berkerja. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan korelasi yang lemah di antara sokongan organisasi and komunikasi organisasi, manakala peranan yang jelas memberikan korelasi sederhana, ketiga-tiganya kepada pemberian kuasa membuat keputusan. Walaubagaimanapun, pemberian kuasa membuat keputusan memberikan korelasi sempurna kepada kepuasan bekerja. Sebab-sebab untuk kelakuan korelasi seperti di atas, dibincang dengan jelas berdasarkan profile responden, kebudayaan Jepun, dan perbandingan dengan syarikat multinasional dari barat. Penemuan hasil kajian juga turut dibincangkan untuk kebaikan and kemajuan di masa akan datang terutamanya motivasi, inovasi and efisiensi pekerja-pekerja yang sedang berkhidmat di syarikat multinasional. Kekurangan dalam kajian ini turut dibincangkan dan cadangan untuk mengatasi kekurangan ini dikemukakan.

Antecedents of Empowerment, Leading to Job Satisfaction: A Case in Japanese Multi National in Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This empirical research was initiated to determine the presence of antecedent of empowerment namely perceived organization support, role clarity, and organizational communications, to empowerment, which eventually lead to job satisfaction. Literature review carried out to reveal previous findings in this research topic, and gap in the literature identified before establishing theoretical framework. The study focused on a Japanese Multinational Company (MNC) operating in Malaysian context. Samples were census with 210 questionnaires distributed to the top and middle management employees in a Japanese Group of MNCs in Prai province, Penang, and 45.7% responded. Data collection were based on adopted questionnaire with variables domains of demographic profile, perceived organization support, role clarity, organizational communication, empowerment, and job satisfaction. The empirical results revealed weak relationship between perceived organization support and organizational communication to empowerment, while moderate relationship obtained between role clarity to empowerment. Empowerment gave stronger relationship to job satisfaction. The reasoning for the strength of relationships was discussed focusing on Japanese culture, respondents' profile, and comparison to other origin country based MNC. The importance of research findings were also discussed especially in establishing antecedents of empowerment and empowering employees for the reasons to enhance employee motivation level for innovations, reliability, and increased job satisfaction level. The limitations were noted and several actions proposed for future research.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In a growing competitive business environment with advanced technologies and demanding customer requirements; it is no longer a matter of only mass manufacturing of products and selling to remain competitive in the business. It is more towards the business value which can be provided by an organization to its customers, and not forgetting the corporate social responsibilities. Organizations should focus on creating value to customers which eventually enhances business profit making as well as long term survival. However, to achieve such a tough competitive requirements with value creation to customers; it is not possible to lead and implement only by the organizations' owners and/or top management. Instead, the employees whom are directly and indirectly involved in daily operation could bring the organization towards to this directions i.e. value creation and innovation in business environment. Yet, the question to ponder here is if the employees are ready to move and take responsibilities to support organization to remain competitiveness? What are the actions needed to enhance the cognitive motivation level of employees to take the responsibilities and perform effectively and efficiently to support an organization to remain in competitive environment?

Beach (1996) noted that employees who are satisfied with their job will feel the sense of belonging to an organization. He further stressed that this sense of belonging motivates employees to perform better and effectively in carrying out organizations' task being assigned. In turn, such commitment to work optimizes manufacturing

process with cost effective, and innovations. Eventually, this will lead to value creation and satisfying customers and long-term survival of an organization. As many researchers had highlighted before (Lawler, 1973; Locke, 1969; Carless, 2004; Balzer & Spector, 1997; and Rogers, Clow & Kash, 1994), job satisfaction is about a persons' cognitive feeling towards an organization, and how it could benefit an individual in both materialistic and physical rewards. In fact, such highly satisfied employees will seek to stay with organization for continuous mutual benefit of oneself and the organization. Many factors could lead to enhancing employees' job satisfaction level such as value recognition, rewards, self-development programs, and ability to perform work efficiently. Another critical factor that is very important when emphasizing success factors for effective job satisfaction is the term called as "empowerment".

1.2 Background

"Empowerment" is a term used by many researchers (Geroy, Wright, Anderson, 1998; Tschohl, 1997; and Lashly and McGoldrick, 1994), to state the extent of power and authority given to employees in decision-making process within an organizations' business scope (Geroy, Wright & Anderson, 1998). Typically, job satisfaction increases when an individual is treated with full recognition of their capabilities and allowing themselves to act on their own with maximum autonomy in deciding their daily job function and decision-making ability. However, the freedom to make decision should be within the scope of their organization functions and fundamentals. Eventually, when employees are satisfied, they tend to contribute to their fullest for organization enhancement and success, which also benefits their own basic purpose of going to work

i.e. bread-winner, and career advancement (Beach, 1999). However, in implementing empowerment, the importance of presence of antecedents for empowerment in organizations' climate shouldn't be ignored; otherwise empowerment will remain merely on paper and not in practice, which could lead to organization failure (Rodrigues, 1994).

Some of the fundamental hurdles by traditional management in ensuring effective implementation of empowerment are as followings. The most prominent factor is the fear of losing control or the power when sub-ordinates were given power to act, which may bring threat to top management posts which was long held and hard gained (Brian, 1997). Despite that, the lack of confidence of management on their employees' capability in handling decision-making environment also contributes to poor empowerment. Some managers may have genuine intention to empower their employees, yet appropriate methods and actions don't really follow such as participative decision-making, consultation, follow-ups, training support, and not forgetting the motivational support (Cook, 1994). Apart from that, though employees' being empowered, frequent interference and alteration in employees' decisions and actions will lead to de-motivation among employees, merely due to the feeling that employees' values and capabilities are not well recognized and not trusted.

This issue becomes prominent in an organization owned by overseas management structure, i.e. Multi National Companies (MNC). In the MNC, the main objective of their management would be to maximize wealth and provide profits to their further enhancement of economy of their countries of origin while taking care of their local employees' welfare as well. Perhaps, this policy is fundamental to almost all MNC

operating globally, and not specifically in Malaysia. Some of the examples are as follows; (i) the decision in manufacturing and business expansions are much depends on country of origins cash-flow capability, and not MNC's budget constraint; (ii) product pricings in controlled by the net profit to be gained by countries of origin considering the exchange rate; and (iii) supplier selections are given priority to the companies of same MNC origin countries to control the cash-flow. In line with this basic policy, top management or rather the expatriates tends to only empower local managers up to a certain level, and withhold many decision-making especially critical decision to themselves and will only pass-down the decision to local managers for the purpose to only execute the decisions. In addition, frequent and close follow-ups practiced to ensure the execution process are in-line with main objectives, may eventually lead to local managers' perception that top management don't trust them in effective execution of critical tasks. Perhaps, such a poor "full" empowerment of local managers by expatriates will lead to ignorance attitude among employees i.e. they only become a follower, rather than a leader, in creating value to the organization. At times, this could lead to redundancy problem as well. However, recognizing the importance of empowerment in retaining capable staffs and organizations' enhancements, is somehow rather being focused and emphasized by top management of MNC, but the extent of methods for implementation of empowerment is still vague and perhaps need to be addressed for improvements.

Thus, the importance of empowerment in enhancing job satisfaction and retaining key capable and effective employees' in middle management level is crucial for continuous growth of organization.

1.3 Problem Statement

Thus, based on background above, it can be concluded that empowered employees, whom have the autonomy to make-decision and ability to decide their own work related matters, tend to strive to the best in improving organizational as well as individual value and output. Thus, empowerment leads to enhancing employees' job satisfaction, generally.

In organizations operating in Malaysian context, empowerment of local manager empowerment, may only be dominant in Malaysian own companies, and not in the Multi National Companies (MNC). This was based on the researches' observation via informal verbal communication with local managers working in MNC, who feels that they are hardly empowered due to the reasons that MNC management are more towards maximizing profit while operating in overseas, thus leading to a culture in preventing mistakes during decision-making. The local management grievances on empowerment becomes dominant in Japanese based MNC, based on researchers' informal discussion with middle-level managers from one of the Japanese MNC operating in Prai Province, Penang. The Japanese MNC expatriates tend to control decision-making and hardly communicate the key important information with the local managers, mainly to preserve secrecy and minimize risk taking. Though, lately Japanese expatriate stresses on empowerment, yet appropriate antecedents for empowerment are hardly supported such as role clarity, organizational support, effective communication, etc. However, further opinion exchange with employees attached to the Western MNCs such as the Americans, Germans and British; it is noted that Western MNCs are more open in

executing organization functions and business information, and expect the local managers to take full responsibilities of their actions

Furthermore, the literature review and empirical studies showed that in almost all articles on empowerment and its' impact on employee job satisfaction as well as organizational benefits, the focus are in Western based organizations, and organizations operating in their own countries of origin, with minimal emphasis on MNC organization. Furthermore, it couldn't be observed in literature review, any articles on empowerment related studies in Japanese based organizations.

Therefore, the research problem being investigated in this study are to determine if Japanese MNC operating in Malaysian context, have the antecedents to empowerment, and also if empowerment enhances job satisfaction level of employees, especially the local managers whom are involved in the day-to-day business decision executions.

1.4 Research Objectives

This research paper intends to study if the MNC operating in Malaysian context has the appropriate antecedents for empowerment namely perceived organization support, role clarity, and organizational communications in empowering local managerial staffs. These antecedents are expected to positively correlate to empowerment. Secondly, this research paper also intends to study if empowerment is practiced in MNC operating within Malaysian context, which eventually enhances job satisfaction level of local managers. It is expected that empowered local managers tend

to have higher motivation and job satisfaction level, and strive to their fullest for organizational success.

However, as starting point, this research will focus on Japanese based MNC operating in Malaysian context. Perhaps, the results from this study could be generalized to Japanese MNC in Malaysia, which could be further extended to study Western countries of origin based MNCs.

1.5 Research Questions

Understanding the problem statement and research objectives, and the limitations of existing available studies, we could pose the following as research questions of this particular research.

- 1.5.1 Does the Japanese MNC operating in Malaysian context have the antecedents of empowerment namely perceived organization support, role clarity, and organizational communications?
- 1.5.2 Does empowerment present in the Japanese MNC operating in Malaysian context, which increases the job satisfaction level of local managers?

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on availability of antecedents of empowerment in Japanese MNC in operating in Malaysian content, as well as the significant of empowerment practices and it's correlation to job satisfaction. Thus, this research will focus on a Japanese Group of Companies operating in Penang, Malaysia i.e. Toray Group of Companies Sdn. Bhd. These groups of companies have been operating in

Malaysian since the 1970s and their main productions are textiles and fabrics. Besides that, they also produce plastics namely PET-film and ABS resin. The researcher is attached to Toray Plastics Malaysia, Sdn. Bhd. which manufactures ABS resin. The main respondents of this research questionnaire surveys would be the local managers especially the middle-level managers working in these Japanese MNC Group of Companies. These respondents' feedback will be investigated whether they are empowered and whether the organizations have receive perceived organization support, role clarity, and organization communications, as the antecedents to empowerment.

1.7 Definitions of Key Terms

The following are the key terms and definitions which can be found along this dissertation.

1.7.1 Role Clarity

Role clarity defined as the degree of which an individual within an organization is clear about the information received and understanding of the information, for him to perform their jobs, otherwise without clear information, a person may perform their duties with anger, frustration and unhappiness (Rogers, Clow and Kash, 1994).

1.7.2 Perceived Organizational Support

Patrick and Laschinger (2006) described perceived organizational support as generalized belief that the organization that the employee is attached to values their contribution and cares about their well-beings (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

1.7.3 Organizational Communication

Organization communications refers to how well is the communication effectiveness between an employee and with her/his superiors. A good and constant communication and most importantly two-way communication will lead to clarity on an employee's duty and direction, leading to effective performance of tasks being assigned (Rogers, Clow & Kash, 1994).

1.7.4 Empowerment

Empowerment is the process of providing employees with the necessary guidance, training and skills, to allow them for autonomous decision-making including accountability, within an organizational scope and culture (Geroy, Wright, Anderson, 1998), or simply providing people with opportunity to make decision by expanding their autonomy in decision making (Vogt, 1997).

1.7.5 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to a person's feeling about his/her job, whereby the person's emotional state reflecting an affective response to the job situation (Balzer & Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction also refers to individuals' affective relation to their work and its' function of perceived relationship between what one wants from the job and what one perceives it is offering (Lawler, 1993 and Locke, 1969).

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study is based on social exchange theory; as explained by Zafirovski (2005) that this theory is based on social interaction in exchanging activity, tangible and intangible especially the rewards and benefits, notable giving others something more valuable than is costly to the giver (Homan, 1961). Zafirovski (2005) further stressed that besides market exchange, it is also non-economic realm, the social relations, self-interest or cost benefit calculations and expressive behaviour (Blau, 1964). The link of above explained theory to this study is the presence of social exchange between employees and owners of an organization. Employees or rather the local managers of Japanese MNCs expects the top management to value and reward them for their continuous support for business survival, while the owners expects that by valuing the employees, they will contribute and strive their fullest for enhancing business functions of the organization.

The significance of empowerment in enhancing job satisfaction level of employees, and the antecedents for empowerment implementations, shouldn't be ignored in current organizations seeking competitive advantage in a competitive environment. It is expected that the research findings could reveal to the Japanese management, the importance in creating organization atmosphere with appropriate antecedents in implementing empowerment, which in turn enhances job satisfaction level of local managers. High job satisfaction level among employees would further enhance their employees' contribution towards MNC organization's goal and objective

achievement while maintaining organizations' fundamental core values. With this research study findings, an organization could value employees' capabilities with more effectively for organizations' continuous growth and success.

1.9 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis has five chapters and will be organized in sequential order as follows: Firstly, Chapter 1 (Introduction) will cover the introduction, background of this research, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope of research, definitions of key terms, and significance of research. Chapter 2 (Literature Review) shall cover the theories behind this research proposal, previous studies related to this research topic, the variables identifications for the empirical study, development of theoretical framework and hypotheses. Chapter 3 (Methodology) shall cover research design, variables, population and sample identification, questionnaire development, data collection, measurement and statistical analysis tools to be used in this research. In the following Chapter 4 (Results), using statistical methods, the results findings shall be revealed especially the finalization of anticipated relationship between variables. In the Chapter 5 (Discussion and Conclusion), the results will be discussed and concluded, and shall highlight the limitation of research, future research proposal and significance of study for the concerned sectors.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in detail in Chapter 1 (Introduction), we could see that there still exist grievances and dissatisfactions among employees especially the middle-level managers when comes to empowerment i.e. autonomy in making work-related decision. This literature review will identify the key success factors, focusing on the antecedent for empowerment, which in turn enhances job satisfaction among employees. However, understanding the fundamental theories lying behind the key definitions of the terms used and its' shortfalls shall be reviewed first to ease the better understanding of the theories behind this literature review.

2.2 Empowerment

Mullins (2005) suggested that to have a true empowerment, there need for a new theory i.e. *“Theory E – which states that managers are more effective as facilitators than as leaders, and they must devolve power, not just responsibility, to individuals as well as groups”*. He further defined empowerment as allowing employees with greater freedom, autonomy and self-control over work, and responsibility for decision-makings. Accordingly to this Theory E, the need for empowerment can be subdivided into two i.e. (i) enables knowledge to be utilized especially when employees are directly involve in the job would have most knowledge about the work and via empowerment, top management can acquire these knowledge; otherwise if employees are not

empowerment, the key and vital information will remain within them (ii) if employees are involved via empowerment in any change management processes, then rather than resistance to change, employees will cooperate and support to make the changes work (Mullins, 2005).

Empowerment is the process of providing employees with the necessary guidance, training and skills, to allow them for autonomous decision-making including accountability, within an organizational scope and culture (Geroy, Wright & Anderson, 1998). These authors also quoted empowerment as providing people with opportunity to make decision by expanding their autonomy in decision making (Vogt, 1997). Tschohl (1997) viewed empowerment as authority for employees to bend and break rules, to do the necessities within the organization boundary, whereas Honold (1997) described empowerment as control of one's work, autonomy of the job, teamwork variations and pay systems with performance. In terms of individuality, empowerment is described as having interactive empowerment (building, developing and increasing power working with others) and self-empowerment (ability to influence own behaviour) (Vogy and Murrel, 1990). Naturally, accordingly to Lashly and McGoldrick (1994), empowerment is very specific to individual, which engages about emotion, discretion, autonomy, power and control, responsibility, commitment and not forgetting organization fundamentals.

The above-mentioned definitions of empowerment are only a few among many other interrelated definitions of empowerment, with different authors considering different contexts and perspectives. For an example, in terms of psychological

approach, empowerment is viewed as perception or attitude of individuals towards their work and their role in organization (Conger & Kanungo, 1999).

To understand better the term empowerment in a more persons' term, let's look at the key components of empowerment on employees. According to Hechanova, Alampay and Franco (2006), empowerment refers as sharing four important organizational factors to the employees namely (i) information about organization's performance, (ii) employee rewards based on organization's performance, (iii) knowledge on contributing to organization's success, and (iv) the power to make decision that influences organization's direction and performance (Bowen & Lawler, 1995). The subsequent actions in achieving above-mentioned factors are to granting employee the freedom to recommend (suggestion empowerment), employees given greater direction on how to perform work (job involvement), and high-job involvement where employees are equipped with ownership in decision-making (Bowen & Lawler, 1995).

Though exact definitions vary, but the ultimate key word for these definitions is the autonomy in decision-making, with full accountability and responsibility on the decisions made; off-course considering organizations' fundamental policies and goals.

The fundamental measurements for empowerment were developed by Thomas and Velthouse (1990), which consists of employees cognitions towards work directions i.e. meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Carless (2004) stressed that these measurements are more towards motivational approach rather than psychological approach (Spreitzer, 1995). The contents of this motivational approach are if an employee feels the sense of meaning when work is carried out, if the employee has the

capability and knowledge to perform a particular task, if an employee has the autonomy to perform the given task, and finally the belief if the employee could make differences at work.

2.3 Antecedents for Empowerment

2.3.1 Key Antecedents for Empowerment

There are many antecedents for effective implementation of empowerment such as psychological approach (Conger & Kanungo, 1999), strategic performance approach (Geroy, Wright & Anderson, 1998) and participative model, (Ahanotu, 1998 and Rogers, Clow & Kash, 1994) depending on researches' perspective. For examples, in participative empowerment; role clarity, role conflict, ambiguity, expectancy, stress, goal, personality and tasks were considered for empowerment implementation (Nykodym, Simonetti, Noelsen & Welling, 1994). In Beach's (1996) approach, he stresses on opportunities to act beyond boundaries, feedback appraisal, effective communications, focus on employee value, and designing systems for employees, roles not position of leaders and importance of education, are emphasized for implementation of empowerment. Mission and goal understanding, employee competent and skills, effective management style (coaching), opinion seeking, praise and self-esteem creation are tools necessary for effective implementation of empowerment (Potter, 1994). Smith (1997) suggest that empowerment needs a paradigm shift in thinking and acting, which appear threatening to people whom held traditional views about management, feeling insecure against releasing power which they value and had been hard won. Another key

factor to note here is that, according to Smith (1997), empowerment is not a quick fix, but it is about cultural change which takes time and commitment.

Thus, in next section, though there are many antecedents to empowerment, emphasis will be given to explore some of the specific key antecedents to empowerment implementations, studied in this research. These antecedents are perceived organization support (Patrick & Laschinger, 2006), role clarity (Rogers, Clow & Kash, 1994) , and organizational communications (Rogers, Clow & Kash, 1994) in ensuring empowerment, which in turn would enhance job satisfaction level among employees or the local managers in an organization.

2.3.1.1 Perceived Organizational Support

Patrick and Laschinger (2006) described perceived organization support as generalized belief that organizations that an employee is attached to, values their contribution and cares of employees' well-being (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Successful companies' history tells us that at least at most of times that organizations value their employees at most, equally to their customers and shareholders, as they realize that survival and competencies of an organization much depends on their workforce strength. In fact, employees too belief in this i.e. though their main purpose going to work is to earn a living, yet they anticipate their contributions are valued by their employer to whom they are attached; be it in monetary terms or non-monetary rewards such as recognition. Employees would prefer they are treated as ends rather than as means. This belief and valuing employees by the employer, will lead to a trust-worthy environment between management and employees, which eventually leads to

decision-making making “pass-down” to employees which is the essential part of empowerment.

Patrick and Laschinger (2006), identified several key components of perceived organizational support as means to value employees’ contribution and care for them (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). These elements are (i) fairness, which refers to information sharing of organization’s policies and procedures, (ii) supervisory support refers to performance evaluations with expectations that the supervisors represents the organization, (iii) organization rewards refers to recognition and remuneration by the organization to employees, and (iv) favorable working condition refers to indication of the extent which organization cares of well-being of employees (Burke, 2003). Patrick and Laschinger (2006) further stressed from their literature findings that perceived organization support tends to lead employees control over their own as well as organization decisions which can be related to empowerment, and have great tendencies to experience positive working mood which is actually reflecting increased job satisfaction level.

The presence of perceived organizational support elements could influence employees into strategic decision-making ability and involvement. Thus, it is vital for top management to create a climate or the management support and mentoring to allow for empowerment, which eventually enhances job satisfaction level of employees. It was further stressed that without presence of organizational support and empowerment, employees tend to work in frustration mainly due to the feeling of powerlessness in their daily working life. Patrick and Laschinger (2006) further stressed that with perceived organization support elements, employees would be able to access

organization's goals, technical knowledge, and control over the resources, which is important element for effective empowerment via feeling in control, ability to make decision with accountability and responsible. Additionally, when middle-level managers receives positive feedback on their performance, recognized and rewarded, employees feel that they are valued and their efforts recognized, which lead them to make decision in a more confident manner. These actions will eventually lead to better employee attendance and feeling affectionate to work, which is important element in enhancing job satisfaction.

Thus, we could conclude that perceived organization support as one of the antecedent of empowerment; in which an organization should have for effectiveness of empowerment system.

2.3.1.2 Role Clarity

Rogers, Clow and Kash (1994) described role clarity as the degree to which individuals receive and understand information needed to perform their work tasks. They further stressed that clear job roles minimizes conflicts between peers, superiors or the management as well as with customers. Otherwise when job roles are not clear, employees will feel the frustration, anger and unhappiness during carrying out work tasks. Beach (1996) commented that employees with clear role description would have less rigid boundaries, clear primary activities and responsibilities, without creating sense of immobility, which is essential in contributing to the success of organizations. He further stressed that role clarity is one that educates employees about organization's philosophies and fundamentals and their action boundaries. Thus, employee would have

a clearer picture on what, when and how decisions are supposed to be made, for the mutual benefit of organization and individual employee itself. In fact, employees are always encouraged to stretch beyond their role for the benefit of organization, provided the actions are within stipulated organizations' fundamental policies (Beach, 1996).

It was further noted by Rogers, Clow and Kash (1994) that job description or the role clarity need to be clearly written and taught to employee emphasizing what action can and cannot be taken when arriving to decisions. With this clarity in role, employees would be more comfortable in making-decisions within their job scope without violating organizations' policies. Otherwise, if management do not discuss and clarify employees job scope and it's related power, employees tend to keep silence if they are responsible for any decision especially when there are ambiguity on who should take the decision, as well as prevent them from taking any unwanted risks.

Thus, keeping a clear borderline in roles and responsibilities of employees especially those expected to make business decisions would enhance their confidence to make decision with full accountability and responsibility. This empowerment method which creates meaning of going to work, would further increase employees' intrinsic motivation mainly due to the trust given, which enhances job satisfaction level.

Based on above, it is expected that the presence of role clarity in organizations would positively correlate in empowering employees, which should be the focus of an organizations.

2.3.1.3 Organizational Communications

Organization communications refers to the effectiveness of the communication effectiveness between an employee and with her/his superiors. A good and constant communication and most importantly two-way communication will lead to clarity on an employee's duty and direction, leading to effective performance of tasks being assigned. The clear and constant communication enhances employees' knowledge pertaining organizations' standings, thus enhances the effectiveness of employees in making appropriate and effective decisions. According to Rogers, Clow and Kash (1994), effective communications between employees and management as well as customers, will lead to increased role clarity, reduced role conflict and job tension, which enhances job satisfaction. Apart from that, such clear communication tends to make employees understand the actual situation among management and customers, which eases the decision-making in a more effective manner (Rogers, Clow and Kash, 1994).

Beach (1996) noted that feedback appraisal can be an important factor for effective empowerment. Here, feedback appraisal doesn't meant performance appraisal but more towards effective communication between superior and subordinates (Beach, 1996). With frequent feedback appraisal between superior and subordinate, an employee would be able to know where organizations' direction is, how is his/her performance status and what are the improvements necessary to be undertaken, and what strategies need to be implemented, which eventually lead to clarity when comes to decision-making by the concerned employee. The key concern here is that employers don't highlight the negative aspect of the employee, instead focus on positive part which is essential for intrinsic motivation of employees. This approach, according to

Beach (1996), is concerned with trusting employees which is a key ingredient for empowerment. Empowerment cannot exist without knowledgeable workers whom require skills and information in decision-making, and as such, the effective communication between superiors and sub-ordinates and vice-versa is vital in having effectively empowered employees (Ahanatu, 1998).

According to Geroy, Wright and Anderson (1998), when management and employees utilizes communication and consultations, it promotes participative management style, which develops employees own leadership styles, which in turn promotes empowerment. It is vital for management to create environment that shares organization information such as strategic direction and business performances, which makes employees to understand the ‘big picture’ of the organizations, thus creating self-motivation and trust environment, again the important element for effective empowerment (Margulies & Kleiner, 1995).

Thus, it is expected that for organizations to effectively implement empowerment system, they need to equipped employees with clear information pertaining the organization.

2.3.2 Shortcomings in Empowerment

Thus, so far we have seen the fundamental definitions of empowerment and its’ antecedents. However, it should not be overlooked the difficulties and shortfalls in implementing empowerment. Many writers state that empowerment would eventually enhance organization performance, increases productivity, creates motivated employee, independent employees, and enhance job satisfaction. In this portion, brief review will

be on the anticipated bottlenecks on implementations of empowerment, which eventually reduces employees' job satisfaction levels.

Though there are many, one of the main reasons for poor empowerment could be the fear of losing the long held power in traditional management (Smith, 1997). However, as cited by Nykodym, Simonetti, Nielsen and Welling (1994), employee empowerment and participation, if executed properly, could enhance employee performance, productivity and job satisfactions (Sashkin, 1984). To simply put, development of organizations are much related to development of people (Smith, 1997). The point to ponder is whether employees are empowered by themselves or need to have antecedents in implementing empowerment.

Empowerment is about structural and cultural change, which could not be implemented overnight; instead it takes time and real commitment from both employees and management (Smith, 1997). Brian (1997) further noted that for some managers, when empowerment is emphasized, the feeling of insecurity may arise, especially loosing of power which was hard fought and won. Managers may also fear losing control when they gave up decision making power to another employee (Vogt, 1997).

Typical problems encountered by organization in empowering employees includes (i) lack of commitment from management especially during implementation, (ii) failure to equip managers with real empowerment skills, (iii) managers tend to only delegate or getting things done by subordinate, rather than empowering them, (iv) poor perceived organizational support to motivate employees, (v) lack of team environment and support, (vi) inadequate information to employees on benefits of empowerment (Cook, 1994), (vii) unclear job responsibilities or the role clarity which leads to

ambiguous during carrying out tasks, (viii) inadequate information sharing by management to employees, and other as well.

At times, even employees may fear empowerment, as when employees are exposed to risk-taking decision making, they are exposed for reprimand or losing job (Jordon, 1997). According to Honold (1997), employee empowerment is unworkable as it is incompatible with strong leadership and also it is an inefficient way to control an organization (Koch & Godden, 1997). Empowerment is doomed to fail if the organization culture is inappropriate or the top management is not ready to implement empowerment, including the employees whom are not willing the accept responsibilities and changes (Foster-Fishman, 1995).

Other organizational factors such as cultural implications, organization value, management policies, customer requirements, nature of business and government requirements, should also be considered during creating an empowered organization. These factors may be directly or indirectly effect the outcome of organization and its' competitiveness in long run.

Based on the shortcomings mentioned-above in empowerment implementation, one factors appears to be dominant i.e. management support or the management hurdle. Though "management commitment" sounds wide and broad, yet if some of fundamental key elements could be tackled, then it is possible to implement empowerment successfully. However, management commitment itself as antecedent for empowerment had been studied in detail in previous literatures (Duvall, 1999; Jong & Hartog, 2007; Long, 1996; Nykodym, Simonetti, Noelsen & Welling, 1994; Potter, 1994). Other antecedents such as perceived organization support, role clarity, and organizational

communication are least ventured, which will be the focus in this research, in determining antecedents for empowerment. In earlier Section 2.3.1, some of the key antecedents necessary for implementation of empowerment were discussed.

2.4 Job Satisfaction

One of the earlier definitions was from Karl Marx (1969) who approached job satisfaction in terms of frustration and alienation to work, which states employers' exploitation as a denial to workers' needs. Blauner (1964) further described alienation in four dimensions namely powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement, in which all these factors creates dissatisfaction among workers, mainly due to management's own priority and interest.

Other more generics definitions follow. Job satisfaction refers to the individual's attitude towards the various aspects of the job and the job content itself (Rogers, Clow & Kash, 1994). Carless (2004) defined job satisfaction as a person's feeling about his/her job, whereby the person's emotional state reflecting an affective response to the job situation (Balzer & Spector, 1997). It was emphasized by Hackman and Oldham (1980) that job satisfaction is influenced by psychological state of an individual, namely experienced meaningfulness, feeling of responsibility and knowledge of results. Similarly, descriptions by Lawler (1973) and Locke (1969) also state that job satisfaction refers to individuals affective relation to their work and its' function of perceived relationship between what one wants from the job and what one perceives it is offering. Davis and Wilson (2000) further stressed that earlier scholar, Morse (1953),