

The Degree of Administrative Empowerment at Private Higher Education Institutions in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The study aims to specify the actual level of administrative empowerment of the academic Heads of Departments available in Saudi private higher education institutions. It also aims to find out the obstacles faced by the academic heads during the processing of administration empowerment in Saudi private higher education institutions based on their views. The study uses "the questionnaire" as it is the most effective and suitable way to collect the data of this study.

Keywords: Higher education. Private colleges and universities. Administration of education. Administrative empowerment.

1- Introduction

Administrative empowerment presently has become the main focus of various researchers as, a strategy to enhance the sense of responsibility in employees. It's also considered as the cornerstone of empowering educational leaders to enhance their responsibility and accountability to face challenges and developments as well as to establish behaviors that fit with the leaders' role in all educational organizations. (El Trawna, 2006, p.76).

Previous studies have confirmed that there is a problem in applying the administrative empowerment concept for leaders of academic departments because of the regulations and rules that limit their roles to manage their department based on their professional judgments. Furthermore, other managerial and financial obstacles that affect their performance could lead to their inability to achieve their departmental goals (Andraws and Adel Salem, 2008). AlHamdy's (2000) and ElRashedy's (2004).

Based on previous studies that have examined administrative empowerment from many aspects, ElTaany and Elsewey's (2013A.D) study of administrative empowerment and its relation to the functional satisfaction of 350 public school principals in Al-Dammam, Saudi Arabia found a strong correlative positive relation between the administrative empowerment level and functional satisfaction level. Similarly, Gdy and Obaida's (2013) study asserted that the functional satisfaction level of the participating public hospitals employees is generally low.

2- Problem of the Study

The findings of studies by ElGhamdy (2004), and Andraws (2006) and ElSherif (2011) have proven the existence of some obstacles for academic heads of departments. Hence, it has become clear that there is a problem with applying the concept of administrative empowerment as a result of the following challenges: (1) experiential, financial and administrative obstacles, (2) inaccurate understanding of the roles of the academic head of department regarding the administrative empowerment and disagreement of the head's duties and responsibilities, (4) roles and regulations that limit the management role of the academic head of department. Moreover, the inability to delegate authority and the lack of freedom to participate in conferences and scientific activities without prior consent of the dean are also deterrent factors.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the availability level of administrative empowerment and the obstacles in the administrative empowerment process in the academic HOD in colleges and private Saudi universities.

3- The theoretical literature

The empowerment concept is "a state of mind derived from the recognition of the value of the work administrative leader, and confidence in his knowledge capabilities, managerial skills, professional independence and his freedom to take decision-related to his work. The ability to determine the organization orientations that affects its path and the results of its performance (Ahmadi and Abu Khudair, 2009: 523). (Quick and Nelson, 2009) defined, the empowerment as: "The process of participation in the force, within the limits of the Organization". (Galab and Al Hussein, 2013:24)

On the other hand, Massoud (2006) asserts that the concept of empowerment is twofold: abstract and concrete. The concrete part is to give workers the authority to take a decision on the performance of their daily tasks in an innovative and effective way, and solving problems in a way that gets the satisfaction of the customer and citizen, this is done by providing them with the information and appropriate training to get the enough efficiency to be responsible and subject to monitoring and accountability for any decision that has been taken. As

for the abstract aspect of empowerment, it represents the confidence in the capacity of workers and respects their decisions and assesses their role, so as to have some sense of belonging to the organization in which they work, meaning that there is a unity between management and workers, both are partners in achieving the set goal. This partnership is achieved through the availability of open discussions, respect for different viewpoints, the assessment of new ideas, and avoiding the management escalation of errors, in the sense that there should be an acceptable level of error .

Daft (2001) defined empowerment strongly as a tool to link between the manager and his subordinate in the implementation of the tasks in the controlling organizations. He asserts that empowerment is the attempt to spread and participate force everywhere in the organization.

So empowerment helps in the satisfaction and achievement of basic needs, feeling of belonging to the self and confidence, this leads to a feeling of greater conviction and satisfaction in their performance so they can avoid frustration and stress (Aldowry and others 2010: 343) Mahmoud and Awad Allah (2013) study which aimed at exploring the reality of applying the organizational talents' department and its relation with empowering public schools employees .The study found the following results:(1) The level of applying organizational talents and empowering employees is medium;(2) there are also statistical meaningful differences between the different educational stages with regard to managing recruitment of primary grade teachers and the overall management of organizational talents of secondary grade teachers; and(3) there are statistical meaningful differences between the different educational stages :efficiency, independence and freedom to act.

Kareem and Fathy's (2012) study examined administrative empowerment level of educational leaders in the ministry of education in Saudi Arabia from the viewpoint of a group of course participants comprising 96 school principals and 56 educational supervisors in King Saud University and Imam Mohamed Bin Saud Islamic University in Riyadh of the academic year (2010/2011). The study findings found that the level of administrative empowerment of the educational leaders is medium, followed by the empowerment through the leading approaches in the first rank. Empowerment through knowledge, information and feedback came in the second rank and empowerment through training and development came in the last rank.

El Sherif (2011) examined the level of the understanding of the teaching staff members and administrative personnel in Saudi universities in terms of the following: the empowerment concept ,recognition of the empowerment levels, functional satisfaction in Saudi universities and definition of empowerment levels and in Saudi universities, explanation of the effect of cultural background and personal features on the acceptance of the empowerment concept and examination of the empowerment model t the empowerment in Saudi universities through the study of the relation between empowerment and its effect on functional satisfaction.

Jason (2010) highlighted the positive effect of organizational trust on the empowerment; the success of an empowerment initiative may depend on the feeling of the organization's members and the positive organizational atmosphere which supports creative ideas, the change and creation of organizational trust.

Abdou(2010): asserted that schools can drain employees leading them to quit their jobs. The draining level is between 15-40% compared to traditional schools. On Addition, (Emerson, (2008) found that allowing employees to express their opinions in the issues they are dealing with, make them feel ownership of the process, ensure bilateral communication and that the administration has to encourage employee empowerment through communicating and trusting them. Also, Onne, (2004) confirmed that disagreement or conflict with the educational supervisors is the main obstacle of administrative empowerment which in turn affects commitment level.

It is noted from the different approaches to the definition of empowerment, it does not mean the participation of employees in the formal decision-making, or just listening to all employees in the various meetings, but it is giving a real voice for employees through building and designing work in a way that enables the employee (heads of academic departments) to take final decisions related to the improvement of the functional processes of their work within specific guided frameworks, in other words is giving workers and providing them with the skills, tools, information and the related authority to design their work and use information and interaction with others, and to take appropriate decisions without the need for prior approval of the President or the director with the aim of giving workers the opportunity to master their work or administrating it in a manner which provides better work service, and therefore the heads of academic departments get university leadership authority and remains responsible for the consequences of his actions and decisions.

One of the most comprehensive definitions is (Bowen Lawler, 1995, p73) definition as indicated by (Melhem, 2006: 60) who clarified that empowerment is the freedom of the employee, which is a state of mind, perceptive context which cannot be developed by imposing it on human overnight, and this situation needs the individual to adopt it the mentally, in order to have self-confidence and trusting the possessed knowledge capacity to assist in taking decisions, and choosing the results which he wants to access, this is consistent with the definition of (Rafiq and Ahmed 1998, p 379) in which we stated that the employee who possesses this state of

mind, has a group of merits that could be termed the mental characteristics of empowerment, which include the following:

- The feeling of control and authority in doing his duties.
- A sense of awareness to the overall Framework.
- Accountability and responsibility for the work results.
- Participation in the responsibility of the administrative unit performance in which he operates and the work of the whole Organization as well. (Al Maani and others, 2011: 184)

From the above, it is clear that most of the definitions had been based on the basic idea that the empowerment is granting the powers and authorities that leads to participation in decision-making from the top of the organizational hierarchy to the base of the actual practice. However, these definitions differ in the nature of its granting and how it is implemented and its consequences. The researcher sees that there is agreement in the empowerment concept with what is referred to by Al Ahmadi and Abu Khodair (2009) where empowerment is a state of mind and a kind of psychological awareness of the administrative dimensions of participation and responsibility and independence and the importance of the work, its meaning, the influence of what the staff realize about the tasks and about others, despite of the different administrative levels, that is to measure the levels of empowerment realization of its members.

From the previous definitions of empowerment, it is clear that the concept focused on the following aspects:

- Empowerment is the process of giving individuals a broader authority to exercise control and accountability and use of their abilities by encouraging them to take decisions.
- Empowerment is a self-ability through improving feelings among staff, motivation, efficiency and reliability.
- Empowerment is to encourage individuals to take personal responsibility to improve their work performance through the delegation of authority to take decisions. (Massoud, 2012: 15)

This means that the concept of empowerment in administrative thought had risen to abandon the traditional model of leadership; which focuses on routing and giving instructions directly to a leadership that believes in participation and consultation to increase the use of humans, and this in turn requires a radical change to the work roles, so empowerment is investing the enormous store of the potential of the existing personnel from various experiences, which appears in the form of new innovations, creations that helps in the rehabilitation of the second level of workers to replace the first level in the future.

4- Methodology

The study used the descriptive approach to describe and evaluate the administrative empowerment and its availability level among the academic HODs in Saudi colleges and universities. The sample consisted of (54) respondents, (7) academic HODs departments in the Saudi colleges and universities in Riyadh, and (47) heads of academic departments in KSA. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for the study consisted of two parts, the first part pertains to availability level of the administrative empowerment in the heads of academic departments, and includes 34 phrases distributed on four dimensions, the second part, pertains to the obstacles faced by the academic HODs in Saudi colleges and universities from their viewpoints and includes 12 phrases. The study, sought to investigate the level of administrative empowerment of the academic heads in the departments of Saudi private higher education institutions from their viewpoints in relation to the following aspects: delegation of authority, group work, character development, and improvement of creative behavior. It also aimed to find out the obstacles faced by academic HODs in the administrative empowerment process in Saudi private higher education institutions.

5- Data Analysis

The analysis and discussion of the first question were conducted based on: discussion of the empowerment concept, reasons, features, types and dimensions that include the authorities, group work, character development and improving the creative behavior.

The analysis and Discussion of the results related to the second question:

The analysis and discussion of the results to the second question, “What is the availability level of the administrative empowerment among the academic HODs in Saudi colleges and universities?” were conducted in the following procedures:

Table 1, to recognize the availability level of administrative empowerment in the academic HODs in Saudi colleges and universities, the researcher calculated the frequencies, percentages, arithmetic medians, standard deviations and ranks of the responses of participants for delegation of authorities, group work, character development, and creative behavior improvement and tabulated the results in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' responses concerning phrases related to delegation of authority

Phrase	Frequencies & percentages	Agreement level					Median	SD	Rank	Agreement level
		5	4	3	2	1				
1. I have the freedom to delegate authority to others.	Q ²	19	26	5	2	0	4.19	.768	1	Agree
	%	36.5	50	9.6	3.8	0				
2. I have the required flexibility to perform my tasks	Q ²	17	27	3	4	1	4.06	.938	3	Agree
	%	32.7	51.9	5.8	7.7	1.9				
3. The university head trusts my abilities to finish my delegated tasks.	Q ²	22	22	6	2	0	4.19	.930	2	Agree
	%	42.3	42.3	11.5	3.8	0				
4. There are functional descriptions of the tasks	Q ²	15	17	11	7	2	3.69	1.14	4	Agree
	%	28.8	32.7	21.2	13.5	3.8				
5. The university head informs me about my delegated tasks orally	Q ²	3	11	19	9	10	2.77	1.16	8	Neutral
	%	5.8	21.2	36.5	17.3	19.2				
6. I depend on myself totally to do my job without asking help from my boss	Q ²	6	27	8	7	4	3.46	1.11	5	Agree
	%	11.5	51.9	15.4	13.5	7.7				
7. The university where I work gives me unlimited authority to make decisions	Q ²	6	24	11	6	5	3.38	1.14	7	Neutral
	%	11.5	46.2	21.2	11.5	9.6				
8. There is no interference between my delegated authority and the top management's authority	Q ²	9	21	9	9	4	3.64	.644	6	Agree
	%	17.3	40.4	17.3	17.3	7.7				
General arithmetic median							3.64	.644		Agree

Legend: 5 = Highly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Highly Disagree

Table (1) illustrates there is a clear division the participants' agreement level concerning the dimension of delegating authority: Their agreement averages were between 2.77 to 4.19 in the third and fourth categories of the quinary agreement scale (i.e., neutral and agree). Phrases 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 had medians ranging from 3.42 to 4.19, and their averages were in the fourth category of the quinary agreement scale (i.e., 3.41 to 4.20), which indicated agreement. Two phrases (5 and 7) were neutral with the medians 3.38 and 2.77, respectively.

Phrase number 1, "I have the freedom to delegate authority to others," is the most prominent and ranked first with a clear variance 4.19 of 5 and SD = 0.768. The researcher believes that giving the employees the authorities to act in their tasks could allow them to make the right decisions and participate effectively in managing the organization.

Phrase number 3, "the university leadership trust my abilities to finish the tasks delegated to me" was ranked second in the delegating authority dimension with a variance score of 4.19 SD = 0.930. The researcher believes that giving the trust to the employees helps them to create, innovate and complete their tasks with a high level of accuracy and speed.

Phrase 2, "I have the appropriate flexibility to act in my tasks, was ranked third among phrases with median 4.06 of 5 SD 0.938. The researcher believes that giving appropriate flexibility to employees helps them perform their tasks perfectly.

Phrase number 7, "the university where I work gives me a high authority to use my skills in making decisions," was ranked second last among the phrases in the delegating authority dimension with a median score of 3.38 of 5 SD = 1.14). The researcher believes in the necessity of giving academic HODs a high authority to utilize their skills in making decisions.

Phrase number 5, "the leadership of the university defines the delegated tasks to me orally," was ranked last with a median score of 2.77 of 5 SD = 1.16. The researcher believes that defining the delegated tasks for each employee helps in finishing these tasks quickly and effectively.

The general median of the delegating authority dimension was 3.64 of 5 within the fourth category of the quinary scale range 3.41 to 4.20 that indicates agreement. This means the participants agreed on the dimension of delegating authority. This result is consistent with the findings of ElEbrahim, A. et al. 2008 and ElKady (2009) in that aspects in the character development dimension, such as self-development and training, were highly practiced with median scores of 3.33 and 3.49, respectively. This result is also consistent with Jdy and Obaida (2013) who found that the character development dimension, namely using administrative empowerment as a modern strategy to increase employee satisfaction, had low scores median = 2.24.

The researcher believes that this could be due to the great efforts made by the HODs to lead their academic

department and take on administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, HODs are required to apply the new ideas at work, thus leading to the high level of character development in private higher education institutions. The researcher believes that the numerous administrative requirements compel HODs to acquire and keep abreast with field-related high skills; Therefore, the researcher also believes that this result indicates the necessity for universities to identify the training needs of their HODs regularly so that they can perform their tasks professionally and to adopt different methods to develop the character of HODs so that they could lead the academic department according to the modern measures and trends in administration.

Table 2

To recognize more about the availability level of administrative empowerment in the academic HODs in Saudi colleges and universities. This level is affected by The encouragement of the university to the group work and helps to build the team work aided by the systems and instructions of the university that help to complete the work with a high level of trust. The responses of participants related to group work are tabulated in Table 2.

Table 2. Participants' responses concerning phrases related to group work

Phrase	Frequencies & percentages	Agreement level					Median	SD	R	Agreement level
		5	4	3	2	1				
9.The university encourages the group work and helps to build the team work	Q ²	19	22	10	1	0	4.13	.793	4	Agree
	%	36.5	43.3	19.2	1.9	0				
10.The regular department meeting raises my work efficiency	Q	19	18	5	6	4	3.81	1.26	7	Agree
	%	36.5	34.6	9.6	11.5	7.7				
11.There is a great trust between me and my managers in the university	Q ²	22	22	6	2	0	4.19	.930	2	Agree
	%	42.3	42.3	11.5	3.8	0				
12.I consult my colleague in my delegated tasks	Q ²	23	24	2	3	0	4.29	.800	1	Highly agree
	%	5.8	21.2	36.5	17.3	19.2				
13.My relationship with the employee in the university is cooperative and sharing.	Q ²	21	26	3	0	2	4.23	.877	3	Highly agree
	%	40.4	50	5.8	0	3.8				
14.My relationship with my managers is cooperative	Q ²	21	26	2	2	1	4.23	.854	2	Highly agree
	%	40.4	50	3.8	1.9	9.6				
15.I work in an administrative system where the employee can participate in reaching the university goals	Q	18	20	9	4	1	3.96	1.00	6	Agree
	%	34.6	38.5	17.3	7.7	1.9				
16.The systems and instructions of the university helps me complete my work with a high level of trust	Q ²	13	21	12	4	2	3.75	1.04	8	Agree
	%	25	40.4	23.1	7.7	3.8				
General arithmetic median							4.06	.729		Agree

Legend: 5 = Highly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Highly Disagree

Table 2 illustrates that there is slight differences in the participants' agreement level concerning group work: Their agreement averages were between 3.75 to 4.29 in the third and fourth categories of the quinary agreement scale.

Phrase number 12, "I consult my colleagues regarding the delegated tasks to me," was ranked first among all phrases related to the group work dimension with a median score of 4.29 of 5 (SD = 0.800). The researcher construes this is due to the high awareness and understanding of the subjects, which made them agree on the importance of consultation between them concerning their delegated tasks.

Phrase number 14, "my relationship with my bosses can be described as cooperative one," was ranked second with a median score of 4.32 (SD = 0.854). The researcher believes that the reason behind the success of any advanced countries and organizations is group work; therefore, in order to be successful in work and life, a person must develop cooperation skills and become accustomed to teamwork all the time.

Phrase number 13, "my relationship with my colleagues in the university can be described as cooperative and sharing," was ranked third with a median score of 4.23 of 5 (SD = 0.877). The researcher believes that sharing and cooperation between employees can the level of collaboration besides increasing group efficiency in specifically the academic department and generally the university.

Phrase number 10, "the regular department meetings help increase my work efficiency," was ranked second last with a median score of 3.81 (SD = 0.877). The researcher believes that regular meetings hold great importance in increasing workflow and efficiency.

Phrase number 16, “the systems and instructions in the university help me complete my work with a high level of trust, “was ranked last with a medians score of 3.75 (SD =1.04). The researcher believes that empowering the systems and instructions in the university allow academic HODs to do their work with a high level of trust. The general median for the group work dimension was 4.06 in the fourth category (from 3.41 to 4.20) of the quinary scale that indicates agreement; this means the participants agreed with the group work dimension.

Table 3

Participation in reaching the university goals and generating new ideas to work by various skills, greatly contributes to a high level of availability of the administrative empowerment.

Table 3.Participants’ responses concerning phrases related to ”skills and professional development”

Phrase	Frequencies & percentages	Agreement level					Median	SD	Rank	Agreement level
		5	4	3	2	1				
17.I participate in reaching the university goals	Q2	28	23	1	0	0	4.52	.542	1	Highly agree
	%	53.8	44.2	1.9	0	0				
18.I apply new ideas to my work	Q2	26	22	4	0	0	4.42	.637	2	Highly agree
	%	50	42.3	7.7	0	0				
19.The university management encourages me to take responsibility	Q2	21	15	11	3	2	3.96	1.10	5	Agree
	%	40.4	28.8	21.2	5.8	3.8				
10.The dean motivates me to take self-responsibility	Q2	20	18	5	6	3	3.88	1.21	6	Agree
	%	38.5	34.6	9.6	11.5	5.8				
11.My work in the university requires me to have many personal skills	Q2	22	26	3	1	0	4.33	.678	4	Highly agree
	%	42.3	50	5.8	1.9	0				
12.My work requires me to be updated with the latest in my field	Q2	27	20	5	0	0	4.42	.667	3	Highly agree
	%	51.9	38.5	9.6	0	0				
13.The university is keen on defining my training needs regularly	Q2	4	11	16	14	7	2.83	1.15	9	Neutral
	%	7.7	21.2	30.8	26.9	13.5				
14.The university adopts different ways to develop my character	Q2	2	11	18	12	9	2.71	1.10	10	Neutral
	%	3.8	21.2	34.6	23.1	17.3				
15.The university attracts local and international expertise to help me develop my performance	Q2	7	12	15	11	7	3.02	1.34	8	Neutral
	%	13.5	23.1	28.8	21.2	13.5				
16.The university helps me develop my professional and personal performance	Q2	7	15	17	11	2	3.27	1.06	7	Neutral
	%	13.5	28.8	32.7	21.2	3.8				
General arithmetic median							3.73	.666		Agree

Legend: 5 = Highly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Highly Disagree

Table 3 illustrates a diversion in the agreement level of the participants concerning the character development dimension: Their agreement averages ranged between 2.71 to 4.52 within the third, fourth, and fifth categories of the quinary scale (i.e., neutral, agree, and highly agree). The four phrases with high agreement (i.e., phrases numbers 17, 18, 22, and 21) were in the fifth category of the quinary scale (from 4.21 to 5). Phrases 19 and 20 had median scores of 3.96 and 3.88, respectively and within the fourth category of the quinary scale (from 3.41 to 4.20) that indicates agreement. Four phrases had median scores from 2.71 to 3.27 and were placed in the third category of the quinary scale with the range of 2.61 to 3.40, which indicates neutrality. This shows a diversion in the agreement level of the participants concerning the character development dimension.

Phrase number 17, “I participate in reaching the university goals” was ranked first among the phrases related to the character development dimension with a median score of 4.52 (SD =0.542). The researcher believes that the reason behind this result is due to the great efforts undertaken by the HODs for their academic department as well as the administrative duties of the department.

Phrase number 18, “I apply new ideas in my work” was ranked second with a median score of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.637. The researcher believes that applying new ideas at work is the reason behind the improvement of private higher education institutions.

Phrase number 22, “My work requires me to be updated with the latest in my field,” was ranked third with a median score of 4.42 (SD =0.667). The researcher assumes that this is due to the many administrative requirements that force HODs to use high level management skills in the work field.

Phrase number 23, “the university takes care of defining my training needs regularly” was ranked second last with a median score of 3.83 (SD =1.15). The researcher believes that this result shows the significance of universities defining the training needs of HODs regularly so that they can perform their tasks professionally.

Phrase number 24, “the university adopts different methods to develop my character” was ranked last with a median score of 2.71 of 5 (SD =1.10), which is believed to be due to the universities’ inability to adapt modern methods for the character development of their HODs.

The general median for the character development domain was 3.73 of 5 within the fourth category of the quinary scale (from 3.41 to 4.20), which indicates agreement. This means that the participants agreed on the character development dimension: This result is consistent, in varying degrees, with the findings of ElEbrahmet al. (2008) and ElKady (2009) in that aspects in the character development dimension, such as self-development and training, were highly practiced with median scores of 3.33 and 3.49, respectively. This result is also consistent with Jdy and Obaida (2013) who found that the character development dimension, namely using administrative empowerment as a modern strategy to increase employee satisfaction, had low scores (median = 2.24).

The researcher believes that this could be due to the great efforts made by the HODs to lead their academic department and take on administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, HODs are required to apply the new ideas at work, thus leading to the high level of character development in private higher education institutions. The researcher believes that the numerous administrative requirements compel HODs to acquire and keep abreast with field-related high skills; Therefore, the researcher also believes that this result indicates the necessity for universities to identify the training needs of their HODs regularly so that they can perform their tasks professionally and to adopt different methods to develop the character of HODs so that they could lead the academic department according to the modern measures and trends in the higher education administration .

Table 4

The availability level of administrative empowerment in the academic HODs in private higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia could be measured by the existence of creative ideas and applying these new ideas at work.

Table 4. Participants’ responses concerning phrases related to “creative behavior”

Phrase	Frequencies & percentages	Agreement level					Median	SD	Rank	Agreement level
		5	4	3	2	1				
27.The university encourages me to adopt creative ideas that can facilitate the educational process in the university	Q2	12	29	7	2	2	3.90	.934	1	Agree
	%	23.1	55.8	13.5	3.8	3.8				
28.The university is keen on applying my new ideas at work	Q2	11	26	13	2	0	3.88	.784	2	Agree
	%	21.2	50	25	3.8	0				
19.They evaluate me upon my efficiency and incomparability	Q2	10	32	5	2	3	3.85	.978	4	Agree
	%	19.2	61.5	9.6	3.8	5.8				
30The university encourages me to present creative ideas and suggestions in different ways	Q2	7	27	12	4	2	3.63	.950	6	Agree
	%	13.5	51.9	23.1	7.7	3.8				
31.The university promotes the innovation and creation culture between the academic department heads using different ways	Q2	5	27	11	4	5	3.44	1.092	8	Agree
	%	9.6	51.9	21.2	7.7	9.6				
32.The university management fosters a university culture that supports creation and change	Q2	7	25	12	7	1	3.58	.957	7	Agree
	%	13.5	48.1	23.1	13.5	1.9				
33.The university allows applying new ideas at work	Q2	8	29	10	3	2	3.73	.931	5	Agree
	%	15.4	55.8	19.2	5.8	3.8				
34.The university needs to follow many procedures before making any suggested changes	Q2	13	25	10	3	1	3.88	.922	3	Agree
	%	25	48.1	19.2	5.8	1.9				
	%	13.5	28.8	32.7	21.2	3.8				
General arithmetic median							3.72	.661		Agree

Legend: 5 = Highly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Highly Disagree

Table (4) illustrates the participants’ responses concerning the phrases related to creative behavior. There is a slight deviation in the participants’ agreement level: The highest agreement was 3.90 whereas the lowest one was 3.65. Phrases 1, and 2 had the same medians range of 3.88.

There is harmony in the agreement level among the participants on the creative behavior dimension: Their agreement medians ranged between 3.44 to 3.90 in the fourth category of the quinary scale, and all the

participants responded in agreement with all the phrases related to the dimension of creative behavior development.

The phrase number (27) “the university encourages me to adopt creative ideas that can facilitate the educational process in the university” was ranked first among the phrases related to the creative behavior dimension with a median score of 3.90 of 5 (SD = 0.934). The researcher believes that this is due to the belief of private higher education institutions in the importance of adopting creative ideas that can facilitate the educational process.

Phrase number 28, “The university is keen on applying my new ideas at work” was ranked second with a median score of 3.88 (SD = 0.784). The researcher believes that the belief of the universities’ deans in the significance of applying new ideas in the work of the academic HODs in order to guarantee continuous work development.

Phrase number 34, “The university needs to follow many procedures before making any suggested changes,” was ranked third with a median score of 3.88 (SD = 0.922). The researcher believes that this is because of the bureaucratic processes that force the university or faculty management to follow many procedures prior to obtaining the approvals from the responsible entity for a proposed change in the academic department.

Phrase number 32, “The university management fosters a university culture that supports creation and change,” was ranked second last with a median score of 3.58 (SD = 0.957). The researcher believes that the university care about education that supports the creation and change among the academic heads of departments.

Phrase number 31, “The university promotes the innovation and creation culture between the academic department heads using different ways,” was ranked last (median = 3.44 SD = 1.09). The researcher believes that this could be due to the belief of private higher education institutions in the necessity of spreading the creation and innovation culture among the academic HODs in different ways.

The general median for the creative behavior development dimension was 3.73 of 5 in the fourth category of the quinary scale (from 3.41 to 4.20), which indicates agreement: This means that the participants agreed on the aspects in the development of creative behavior dimensions.

The researcher believes that the participants of the present study generally agreed on the aspects in this dimension because of their perception in the private higher education institutions’ belief in the importance of adopting creative ideas that can facilitate the educational process. Furthermore, the researcher believes this result was derived due to the university heads’ conviction on the importance of applying new ideas in the academic HODs’ work in order to guarantee the continuous development. This, in turn, may also develop the creative behavior of the academic HODs. The researcher believes that the universities’ concern on the development of an academic culture that supports creation and change is a main reason in the development of creative behavior in the academic HODs. This is believed to be resulted from the belief of the heads of private higher education institution in the necessity of promoting the culture of the creation and innovation among the academic HODs using different methods.

Based on the results discussed earlier, it is clear that the dimensions of the availability level of administrative empowerment in the academic HODs in private higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5

The dimensions of the availability level of administrative empowerment in the academic HODs in private higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia

The dimensions of the availability level of administrative empowerment in the academic HODs in Saudi private higher education institutions	Median	SD	Agreement level
Delegation of authorities	3.64	.64489	Agree
Group work	4.06	.72950	Agree
Character development	3.73	.66628	Agree
Improvement of creative behavior	3.73	.66109	Agree
Overall availability level of administrative empowerment	3.79	.57114	Agree

Note: The table is arranged in the ascending order according to the highest median and lowest standard deviation in the case of equal medians

In Table 5, the group work dimension was ranked first among all the dimensions (median = 4.06; SD = 72950), followed by the creative behavior development dimension (median = 3.73; SD = 0.66109), then the character development dimension (median = 3.73; SD = 0.66628), and lastly, the dimension of delegating authority (median = 3.64; SD = 0.64489). The overall median of the availability level of administrative empowerment among the academic HODs in Saudi private higher education institutions was 3.79 of 5 (SD = 0.57114): This median score indicates that the participants generally agreed that there is a medium level of administrative empowerment among the academic HODs in Saudi private higher education institutions. This result concurs with ElTaany and Elseway (2013) who found that the administrative empowerment level of public

schools in Dammam was high. However, the result conflicts with the findings of Jdy and Obaida(2013) that the empowerment levels of employees in service organizations were low for all the dimensions. There is a degree of agreement with the findings of ElTrawna(2009) in that the administrative empowerment level of school principals in ElKark governorate was medium. The result also concurs to a certain extent with Kareem’s (2012) study that highlighted a medium level of administrative empowerment among the academic leaders in King Saud University and King Mohammed Bin Saud Islamic University.

The analyses of data and discussion of the results related to the third research question, “What are the obstacles faced by the academic HODs in the administrative empowerment in Saudi private higher education institutions?” were conducted by calculating frequencies and percentages, medians and standard deviations, and the ranking of the participants’ responses. Results of the analyses were tabulated in table 6.

Table6.Participants’ responses on the obstacles faced by the academic HODs in the administrative empowerment process in Saudi private higher education institutions

Phrase	Frequencies & percentages	Agreement level					Median	SD	Rank	
		5	4	3	2	1				
1.The university does not set its goals in a motivating way for the heads of academic departments; it also does not help them with methods to reach these goals	Q2	9	12	9	19	3	3.10	1.24	2	Neutral
	%	17.3	23.1	17.3	36.5	5.8				
2. There are obstacles that limit effective sharing and communication	Q2	6	3	14	23	6	2.62	1.14	11	Neutral
	%	11.5	5.8	26.9	44.2	11.5				
3. The academic HODs have low chances to participate in making all the decisions concerning university work	Q2	6	11	10	21	4	2.88	1.18	6	Neutral
	%	11.5	21.2	19.2	40.4	7.7				
4. The department heads are not trained well on creative thinking and problem solving for better results	Q2	9	17	6	17	3	3.23	1.24	1	Neutral
	%	17.3	32.7	11.5	32.7	5.8				
5. The academic HODs do not have trust by their superiors all the time; they also receive a low level of support	Q2	5	3	15	23	6	2.58	1.09	12	Disagree
	%	9.6	5.8	28.8	44.2	11.5				
6. There is no positive creative organizational culture that supports the empowerment of heads of academic departments and team work	Q2	5	9	11	21	6	2.73	1.17	9	Neutral
	%	9.6	17.3	21.2	40.4	11.5				
7. The weakness of the organizational justice in different empowerment fields	Q2	3	9	17	18	5	2.75	1.04	8	Neutral
	%	5.8	17.3	32.7	34.6	9.6				
8. The low adaptation of educational policies that supports sharing authority and making decisions	Q2	3	8	16	20	5	2.69	1.03	10	Neutral
	%	5.8	15.4	30.8	38.5	9.6				
9. The academic HODs have low opportunities to make decisions that support administrative empowerment in their work	K	7	8	10	22	5	2.81	1.22	7	Neutral
	%	13.5	15.4	42.3	9.6	9.6				
10. The top management of the university has a low level of understanding of the administrative empowerment concept	Q2	11	10	6	18	7	3.00	1.40	4	Neutral
	%	21.2	19.2	11.5	34.6	13.5				
11. Low response for the demands of the academic HODs to delegate more authority to empower them	Q2	7	10	12	17	6	2.90	1.24	5	Neutral
	%	13.5	19.2	23.1	32.7	11.5				
12. The low level of spiritual and financial motivations in raising the efficiency of administrative empowerment	Q2	5	15	15	14	3	3.10	1.08	3	Neutral
	%	9.6	28.8	28.8	26.9	5.8				
General arithmetic median						2.86	.892	Neutral		

Legend: 5 = Highly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Highly Disagree

Table6 illustrates a diversion in the agreement level of the participants regarding the obstacles faced by academic HODs in administrative empowerment in Saudi private higher education institutions: Their agreement averages were between 2.58 to 3.23 in the second and third categories of the quinary scale, which indicate disagreement and neutrality. There were 11 phrases with median scores between 2.62 to 3.23, which fall in the third category of the quinary scale (from 2.61 to 3.40), which indicates neutrality. However, phrase 5 had a median score of 2.58 of 5, which falls in the second category of the quinary scale (from 1.81 to 2.60), which indicates disagreement.

Phrase number 4, “The department heads are not trained well on creative thinking and problem solving for better results,” was ranked first among the obstacles faced by the academic HODs in the administrative empowerment process in Saudi universities and colleges with a median score of 3.23 of 5. This includes the work and application of education for practical purposes.

Phrase number 1, “The university does not set its goals in a motivating way for the heads of academic departments; it also does not help them with methods to reach these goals,” was ranked second with a median score of 3.10 (SD = 1.24). The researcher believes that it is necessary to put forward the university’s goals in a way that motivates the HODs to reach these goals.

Phrase number 12, “The low level of spiritual and financial motivations in raising the efficiency of administrative empowerment,” was ranked third with a median score of 3.10 (SD = 1.08). The researcher believes different forms of motivation can become a great tool to satisfy employees’ needs; therefore, if the leadership plans to increase employee productivity and efficiency by recognizing their motivations and improving their needs, appropriate positive motivation and encouragement of desired behaviors, which form the base of empowerment, should be considered.

Phrase number 2, “There are obstacles that limit effective sharing and communication,” was ranked last with a median score of 2.62 (SD = 1.41). The researcher believes the reason behind this result is the obstacles that limit the effective participation and communication of the academic HODs.

Phrase number 5, “The academic HODs do not have trust by their superiors all the time; they also receive a low level of support,” was ranked last with a median score of 2.58 (SD = 1.09). The researcher believes empowerment is related strongly with trust; consequently, when trust is not given consistently to the academic HODs, this creates an obstacle to the empowerment process.

The general median of the obstacles faced by the academic HODs in the administrative empowerment process in the Saudi private higher education institutions was 2.86 of 5 (SD = 0.892) in the third category of the quinary scale (from 2.61 to 3.40), which indicates neutrality. This means that the participants were neutral about their agreement regarding the obstacles faced by the academic HODs in the administrative empowerment process in Saudi private higher education institutions. This result agrees with Onne’s (2004) study of employee–supervisor conflict in administrative empowerment, which found that conflicts with the educational supervisors can hinder administrative empowerment, and, in turn, it affects their commitment level.

6- Discussions

The researcher believes the reason behind this result is the low training level of the academic HODs on creative thinking and problem solving for better results as training is a method that helps a person apply theory into application and utilize his education gains for practical goals. In addition, HODs who are not motivated reach the goals of the university is considered an obstacle that hinders empowerment; therefore, the researcher believes that the low level of spiritual and financial motivation is the main deterring reason for empowerment as financial motivation is a means of satisfying the employees’ needs. If the leadership wants to increase employee efficiency and productivity, then it has to recognize their motivations and improve their needs to give them appropriate motivations to perform the desired behavior. The base of empowerment is positive motivation; as such, the researcher believes the reason behind this result is the existence of many obstacles that limit the effective participation and communication of the head of the academic department, the researcher believes that empowerment is related highly with trust so much so that when the academic HODs are not given continuous trust by the management, the empowerment process is impacted negatively.

7- Conclusion

The study findings showed that they were neutral regarding their agreement about the apathetic way the university’s goals were presented to the HODs. They have a low level of spiritual and financial motivation, which hinder administrative empowerment. The study showed a lack of opportunity for academic HODs to have more delegated authority or create a supporting environment in applying administrative empowerment. Since the universities are vital tools in human societies, the leaders of these universities are the central element in achieving what has been entrusted to the goals and objectives related to the targeted effectiveness and efficiency, this imposes on those leaders to provide capabilities and specific requirements so as to be able to face contemporary changes and to deal with them efficiently and competently.

In light of the findings of the study and the results, a set of recommendations to address this issue of administrative empowerment has been put as follows:

- There is a necessity for training courses and lectures for the top management in the university to establish the concept of administrative empowerment, theoretically and practically.
- The university management should put forward its goals in a motivating way and to coach the academic HODs to achieve these goals.
- Providing spiritual and financial motivation that helps raise the efficiency of the administrative

empowerment process.

- The management responds to the demands of the academic HODs through more delegation of authority in order to empower them.
- The management empowers and allows academic HODs to make decisions on all matters pertaining to university work.
- Providing the academic HODs with the opportunity to fulfill this purpose.
- The weakness of the organizational justice in different empowerment fields therefore, it is recommended to establish an organizational justice that can help in achieving the empowerment in different fields.
- Creating a positive organizational culture that supports the empowerment of the academic HODs and provides avenues for creativity and team work.
- Stimulating effective communication and participation.

Acknowledgements

This is a research project that was supported by a grant from the research center for college of education, deanship of scientific research at king Saud University.

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