

Effects of empowerment on police officers in the singapore police force thesis ex...

[Sociology](#), [Empowerment](#)



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Chapter 1 Introduction and Background to the Study

Many organizations that try to change their ways of conducting their operations often fail to meet their targets for different reasons. Mental perception of the people involved in operationalizing the transformation efforts is the biggest contributor of the success or failure of these endeavors (Dew, 1997). The police force is one of the most important institutions in Singapore. Like all societies in the world, law and order is an integral part of any progressive society. Singapore is not an exception. Singapore seeks to spur its economic heights and make life better for its citizens.

Kondalkar (2009) reiterates that for a business organization to survive, the

employee should be empowered by developing knowledge and skills as well as by tapping into the expertise and experiences of employees in order to achieve organizational excellence and growth (Acquaah and Tukamushaba, 2009). Police organizations need to change their approach to meet the ever changing population needs and demands by increasing organizational effectiveness. Empowerment is an important process within the criminal justice departments, especially the police force. The Singapore Police department inclusive, empowerment provides the law enforcing officers to have confidence in their actions in any situation that they face as well as make changes to achieve their goals (Ferguson and Whisenand, 2009). Empowerment in any sector is believed to increase efficiency and effectiveness, especially if the procedures are followed to ensure that the recipients understand the intentions of the empowerment agents. Empowerment also comes with satisfaction and self-belief, which motivates the law enforcers and provides them with a sense of top qualification in the law enforcement department, not only in Singapore, but also in the United States. Several organizations, both for profit and not-for-profit, have realized positive changes in the operations and output with increased empowerment.

1. 1 Adaptation

One approach to be adopted is by (Ziyakashany 2009) who feels that empowerment is among the most efficient methods for elevating the level of standard of workforce and consequently enhanced organizational functionality as well as productivity. Several research findings indicate that there lacks a standard process on the development of police empowerment. Bayley (1994) and Greene (2000) both feel that existing literature has given

very limited insight into the empowerment model. Empowerment workforce can certainly contribute to an improved productivity, engagement, commitment as well as development because of the fact that empowerment is able to accommodate an essential necessity that could be conventional to any existing organization work-setting (Stuettgen, 2011). However, there are many variations on how empowerment can be understood, especially within the police service.

Whisenand, & Ferguson (2009) define empowerment as the process of increasing the capacity of individuals, groups, or members of a group to make independent decisions and transform these decisions into desired actions and results. They further base empowerment on the idea that giving employees skills, authority, resources, motivation, opportunity as well as holding them accountable and responsible for the outcomes of their actions will contribute to competence and satisfaction (Whisenand, & Ferguson, 2009). However, trust, love and dignity would come in handy in achieving the objectives of this project. This project will utilize both working definitions. The police force is not an exceptional organization since it operates within the society. In order to ensure that police officers get job satisfaction, it is important that the responsibilities are delegated to every police officer in his or her capacity, so that they can make independent decisions. This project also believes that the supervision costs would be reduced if every police officer is empowered enough to contribute to national development since empowerment comes with responsibility and accountability in the police force.

Thus, it is truly imperative for empowering organizations to embrace ample

and comprehensive alternatives, which can be essential in the enhancement of effective accomplishments of the set goals. By carrying it out would certainly make it possible for the employee to make own assessment as well as actions, dealing with challenges or obstacles as well as being answerable for the job they are performing. With this sort of autonomy, coupled with the capacity of decision making would establish an empowered workplace (Stuettgen, 2011) hence, this would increase dedication to their objectives, and would foster stronger employee-management interactions, including the promoting of significantly better performance. On top of that, empowerment encourages communication at all levels thus bridging in the conservative schism between the management and front-line officers. Nevertheless, Wuestewald (2006) believes that despite some police organizations still using hierarchical organizational processes that employ command and control systems, empowerment is actually well worth the investment. Empowering the officers with decision-making abilities without the fear to use them, intangible qualities could definitely increase the officer's output in both productivity and quality.

Ultimately, the study aims to ascertain any existing correlation between organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and psychological empowerment. The direct and indirect effects of empowerment of police officers and any other workers in business organizations are what the study will attempt to establish. The empowering of police officers positively contributes to their performance since they feel rejuvenated and motivated to work towards the team objectives without the hindrances that come as a result of hierarchy and protocols (Ellison, 2004, p. 129).

1. 2 Challenges

Unfortunately, the Singapore Police force, which is charged with maintaining law, has its own challenges. The root of the problems in the Singapore police force lies with how police officers perceive the police institution. While the Singapore police believe that they are agents of change, some of them feel that their efforts have been suppressed, and that they should be given opportunities to conduct themselves in the manner they desire (Singapore Police Force Press 2011). This research study will use this challenge facing the Singapore police department to indicate the importance of empowerment in this law enforcement agent.

1. 3 Perspectives

The Singapore police unit consists of two sets of ideologists. Some of those in leadership roles in the force hold evolutionary perspective, are organic thinkers, and will accept even the most radical transformative processes. These people think from a mechanistic point of view and imagine the police force as assembled and built machines. They perceive the force as searching for the proper mechanical factors and conditions to realize success. The other school of thought perceives the force as gardens. In order to achieve the objectives and ultimate goals of any organization, it is imperative to properly cultivate an empowering environment in the workplace. The police force in Singapore is not a mechanical system.

1. 4 The Aim and Objective of the study

1. 4. 1 Aim

- To identify the construct of performance effects of empowerment on the Singapore Police Force.

1. 4. 2 Objectives

The main objective of this study is;

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Empowerment is the new form of enhancing productivity in every organization across the globe in the present day. Institutions in Singapore have so far inculcated the culture of employee empowerment across most sectors with the exception of the police force. There is a widespread fear of what an excessively empowered police force could do to the country given the fundamental position the force holds in maintaining order. Common thinkers imagine the prospect of empowerment as giving the police force too much freedom at their disposal to place the security of the nation at risk. Opponents of the move to empower the police force argue that empowering the police could lead to cases such as strikes and industrial actions, a move that would be detrimental to the security of the country. Others imagine empowerment as the sheer lack of oppression.

2. 1 Psychological Impacts

Several attributes have psychological impacts on the police officer in terms of competence, self-determination, and articulate in their performance. There is a significant need for the supervisors in the police department to understand various perceptions of their juniors; especially about the workplace (McIntire, 2011). Organizational commitment as a result of

empowerment creates a more satisfied batch of workers. This will lead to better performances at all levels of the organization besides realizing the organizational objectives within the stipulated time.

Empowering the Singapore police force entails a little more than eliminating the aspect of oppression. Officers need to be given the right to form bodies within the law to bargain for their interests in decision makings that affect their workplace and conditions. They need to be involved and properly represented in ensuring policy makers do not contravene their interests and overlook their legal and social benefits. Empowerment requires that police officers are confined within boundaries that are appropriate. Un-empowered officers will be confined within boundaries that are too strict. It is imperative that the police force is restrained on their powers as a united body or workforce due to the fact that they are the bearers of the country's weaponry. Nonetheless, the restrictions need to be practical and put into account that the police officers are people with emotional and social needs (Whisenand, & Ferguson, 2009).

2. 2 Decision Making

Psychological empowerment will mean officers are given a chance to make crucial decisions. This will create a feeling of responsibility; acts of negligence and laxity at work will become more unlikely. This means that there is job satisfaction which will boost the performance of these officers. Further benefits of this empowerment are that job productivity is increased because officers become innovative and also their confidence levels increased (Whisenand, & Ferguson, 2009). Supervisors should entrust these officers with responsibilities in order to achieve empowerment.

However, on the downside, most supervisors do not have enough self-assurance that their officers can certainly carry out the task equivalently and effectively (McIntire, 2011). They are reluctant to compromise the decision making capacity of their employees and perhaps not to run the risk of the potential for erroneous decision making that could put the organization in a bad spotlight (McIntire, 2011). Cacioppe (1998) and Klagge (1998) acknowledge that the cognitive facet of empowerment made up of progressiveness, capabilities as well as competencies of the officers within the organization. However, it is also related to their behavioural attributes by the officers' professionalism and work environment that can be essential. Hence, Cacioppe (1998) and Klagge (1998) feel that efficient empowering involves an open communication between the supervisors and the officers. But by doing so, it includes clarifying the responsibilities or functions the officers are expected to carry out, and when the scope of the undertakings has been identified, the supervisor together with the officers will deliberate over which of those specific functions they collectively decide the officer is capable of doing autonomously (Radolph, 2003). McIntire also agrees that when both officers and supervisors identify the responsibilities that require their attention then they will first consider employees' willingness to carry the duty before they delegate it (McIntire, 2011).

2. 3 Delegation

With duty empowerment through delegation, it is speculated that proficiency will be developed through experience build up in coordination, communication and other cognitive skills applicable for the duty (Jones et al, 1996). The officer will be motivated to enhance performance because he/she

wants to boost his/her skills through the empowerment privilege given. In this manner the supervisors can be able to exchange his opinions about the job performance with the subordinates and communicate the essential adjustments they need to make to attain full efficiency (Wolf, 1994)

Further, it is expected that the empowerment would make the officer to feel resourceful, inspired and innovative and this can be one of the factors that can increase productivity (Spreitzer et al, 1999). This efficiency will be attributed to the effectiveness in discharging duties and readiness to act in critical moments (Oldham and Quin, 1996). Ideologies developed by Cain (2000) and Gardner (2011) empowerment creates an environment that can facilitate efficiency and improve productivity. There is need to establish how the empowerment can lead to high performance and productivity in the police force. The Singapore police force is the main area of interest that performance is intended to be enhanced.

Empowerment of the police force in Singapore would also entail the need to track own performance records. In cases where the police force is not empowered, external authorities are in charge of tracking performance records of the force. Feedback on the force's efficiency in handling criminal cases, maintaining peace and curbing crime comes from other authorities. Empowered police force has the mechanisms to gauge the degree of meeting its targets and work on them. An empowered police force makes officers own their work (Edwin, et al, 2013). Those who lack the capability to set their own records, strive to meet them and amend challenges that create the expectation gap do not own their work. Furthermore, a police force with empowered service men and women are proud of their work and the

organization they work for. It would be detrimental for Singapore to continue having officers that are apathetic about the police force. Unless a full implementation of police empowerment is done, Singapore police officers may never own the work they do. An attitude of working for the government and the employer body is risky for the present and the future of the nation. Empowerment is a new management system that every institution must have.

2. 4 Problem Statement

Singapore has an old history of police unit, almost as old as the country itself. The force has been in existence since 1819. The country's initial 11 member force had the concept of community policing right from its onset. There was the need to maintain law and order among various communities and ethnicities due to a wide range of roles in the state. Under Sir Stamford Raffles, the self-regulated community police in conjunction with social structures took shape. Influx of Chinese in Singapore and the creations of secret societies began testing the efficiency of the system. Although the societies were formed as legal entities, they began involving themselves in all sorts of illegal businesses including the operation of gambling dens, monetary extortion from the masses and smuggling of illegal goods into the country (Edwin, et al, 2013). These challenges in addition to other social problems instigated the need for a bigger police force. Thus the Singapore police force was formed on these foundations. The problems have become more complex and numerous given technological advancements and growing population.

Given the magnitude of the challenges and complexities of the nature of the

work of police in Singapore today, it is significant that the officers get enabling environments for greater participation. There is a need for flexibility to meet the needs of the people they serve. The system needs to put in place advanced strategies that enable officers to respond to cases that need their attention promptly. In the face of internet technology and cybercrime, the police force needs flexible means of reaching law offenders other than the traditional physical search and frisking. There is also need to identify a variety of ideas to improve the working systems for the officers.

The real fear in dispensing comprehensive empowerment to the police force is the fear of the consequences of change. Stakeholders in the service industry wield the fear that there may be irreversible negative externalities of the revolutionary change in the police force. Both the stakeholders and service men and women may purport to resist components of change such as technological changes within the force (Whisenand, & Ferguson, 2009). A closer discernment of the primary fear in the opponents is the social change the empowerment may cause. Lewin's idea of weakening resisting forces is the best to apply to these resistive forces. The implementers of the police reforms identify the social consequences of the proposed change in the first phase such as tootling, educating, unfreezing and developing positive perception (Whisenand, & Ferguson, 2009). They then develop solutions for the problems at this stage to avoid later resistance.

Chapter 3 Research Method

3. 1 Participants

There are six division headquarters that supports 36 Neighborhood Police

Centers (NPC) in the Singapore Police Force (SPF). They sum up to about 5,400 Frontline Officers. The target population was police officers across all ranks of the Singapore police force. The officers included an assortment of Inspectors, Senior Station Inspectors (SSI), Station Inspectors (SIs), Senior Staff Sergeants (SSSs), Staff Sergeants (SSs), corporals and Special Constables (SCs). The initial participants approached to participate in this research study were 297 police officers from different departments. After evaluation, the survey was conducted using a sample of 105 individuals. A mock-up of at least 3 officers from each of the 36 Neighborhood Police Centers (NPC) was selected indiscriminately to diminish subjective bias (Doughty, 2004). In a civilization where internet convenience is the most suitable methods of sending and receiving replies, Singapore Police Force has offered all its officers from the rank of Special Constables to Inspectors with a job email for easiest communiqué and rejoinder, hence the respondents send their responses by means of these work emails to the surveyor's main email. Random sampling was adopted. The model surveys were chosen from the electronic mail list that can be obtained from each police force division e-mail list that is readily obtainable to all other police officers with an entrée to the police interior intranet system. The initial survey sought the consent of the police officers from Singapore Police Force. The responses from these police officers were evaluated and the police officers who responded positively were included in the sample while those that either failed to reply or accept to participate in the study excluded.

3. 2 Random Sampling

Castillo (2009) noted that indiscriminate sampling is more often than not

used in the tentative investigations in order for the investigator to acquire a realistic ballpark figure of the results. This possibility option is commonly employed in the itinerary of the preliminary investigation to engender a general appraisal of the outcomes, without paying for any expenses in addition to saving the amount of time needed to pick out an unsystematic sample. One week after contact was made, a follow-up email was sent. A second email to the police was sent to non-respondents and other officers in an attempt to augment the targeted numbers for scrutiny. It lasted roughly one month. Incessant use of the same procedure ensured the dependability of the data. The participants were chosen from the emails by selecting after every third email considering the selection of the officers per Neighborhood Police Center.

3. 3 Recruitment

Prior to the mass investigation, an introductory electronic mail was sent to the sample group from the investigator. The initial email introduced the subject matter under investigation.

Figure 3. 3 Introductory email to sample group.

It provided a brief need for the investigation and a list of the benefits that accrued to the officers in the event the investigations would yield the desired outcomes. The structure, length and content of the first mail put into consideration the fact that officers could be bored and ignore long, boring explanations. It was concise and straight to the point, allowing easy read and avoiding fatigue. Upon delivering the message, a follow-up phone call was made to the officers to find out if any of them needed help in filling the form that soon followed. However, a phone number will also be incorporated into

the email for the officers with doubts and uncertainty or even those who may require guidance in filling out the survey. Additionally, the police officers were informed that this was a voluntary research, and that they are not obliged to respond or participate in the research. They were also sent a consent form that did not bind them fully to the research, and allowed any participant to stop participating in the research at whichever point they felt uncomfortable.

3. 4 Measurement

In the study, the investigator proposed Condition of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire-II (CWEQ-II) to measure job performance questionnaires that would measure the attitudes and opinions of the officers in an attempt to answer the objectives of the research. The researches cut across all the features of empowerment such as cooperation, permitted and the unpermitted mandate, resources and knowledge in order to determine the level of empowerment (Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, and Wilk, 2001). It considered views from all aspects of police reforms to provide definite and viable evaluation of the situation. Further, questionnaires are approved, reliable and valid tools of investigation (Western University, 2013).

An analytical measurement aspect of empowerment and the motivation police department discovered that content, convergent validity and criterion-related were well spelt out. The measured subject's closeness, to the anticipated measurement, is measured by validity. The significant factors are about perception. If an officer believes that other officers are doing the same duty and are paid about the same as he is, then it will be likely that the officer will be satisfied with his or her job.

For example, empowerment correlates with job satisfaction and effectiveness of the police department (Oyer, 2011). Internal consistency that measured how a number, of items measure one element of construct coherent on various occasions, showing empowerment's reliability (O'Brien, 2010). The number of complaints made by an officer with regard to the place of work was the basis used to measure organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Likert scale was used to measure work effectiveness where the higher the score implied higher the empowerment and higher the effectiveness. There were questions raised during the survey such as the officers' opinions on their rapport between their work and the different aspect of empowerment. More, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient range was 0. 752 and 0. 772 when effectiveness was measured with their affiliation with empowerment in mind. Moreover, in their workplace the police scored high when self evaluation was carried out. In conclusion, the conditions of work effectiveness questionnaire, was noted to be valid and reliable for this study since the outcomes were averagely accurate and dependable.

3. 5 Ethics of the Survey

Under the Codes of Ethic, Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants, confidentiality and anonymity must be protected. It is important that the investigator should inform all participants of the objectives of the study because by doing so, the partakers will be made aware of the detail of the study in order to exercise rational decision to participate but at the same time, the participants are also made aware that he or she can withdraw from the study at any time. Ultimately, it is the

investigator's primary obligation to take reasonable precautions to protect confidential information obtained through or stored in any medium (APA, 2013), and to protect participants from physical and psychological harm during the investigation (BPS, 2009).

Studies have shown that participant involvement in the questionnaire would have likely show the effect of guilt (Murray, 1980), thus would damage the relationship and cause resentment between supervisors and subordinates. In short, officers may worry that their involvement in the study could lead to career liabilities and other economic harm (Nagel, 1990), such as delay in their promotion or negative report on annual staff appraisal, which could distance them from their yearly or variable bonuses. Hence for the successful execution of this study, the participants (police officers) will be guaranteed on total discretion of their involvement, by which their names, addresses, and other identification items are never recorded on the questionnaires. After receiving the reply, the survey form will be printed out and immediately their email and information will be deleted from the computer.

Chapter 4 Result

4. 1 Results of the Survey

Officers included an assortment of inspectors, Senior Station Inspectors (SSI), Station Inspectors (SIs), Senior Staff Sergeants (SSSs), Staff Sergeants (SSs), corporals and Special Constables (SCs). The survey was conducted among 89 individuals. The table below shows the results of the survey

Total survey email out: 105

No of respondent reply: 89

Figure 5. 1 Respondent reply by Rank

4. 2 Analysis

A critical look at the results table shows that no pair of the variables yields a correlation of more than 0. 5. This means the correlation obtained was not strong enough to attach any connection between any pair of the variables.

A significance test was carried out on the above correlation results to certify that the results were not obtained by chance. A mutually exclusive hypothesis test was conducted by first determining the significance level.

The analysis took significance level of alpha to be 0. 05

The test was two-tailed since there is no prior strong evidence backing the reliability of the test. With rd, significance level and knowledge that the analysis is two-tailed, a significance of the correlation could be tested.

Correlation significance = -0. 428. A correlation significance of less than /0. 5/ shows that there are high possibilities that the figures obtained from the research could be coincidental. The analysis of these empirical results cast a shadow of doubt on the reliability of the statistics obtained.

The high ranking officials have a probability of 0. 501 of declining and totally disagreeing with the reforms compared to 0. 467 for the lower ranking officials. This could be explained by Lewin's Theory. A closer discernment of the primary fear in the opponents is the social change the empowerment may cause. Lewin's idea of weakening resisting forces is the best to apply to

these resistive forces. Inspectors and Senior Station Inspectors are more adamant to police empowerment than constables and special constables.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

There is a need for flexibility to meet the needs of the people they serve. The system needs to put in place advanced strategies that enable officers to respond to cases that need their attention promptly. In the face of internet technology and cybercrime, the police force needs flexible means of reaching law offenders other than the traditional physical search and frisking. There is also need to identify a variety of ideas to improve the working systems for the officers.

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