Empowerment in hospitality industry in Stavanger:

Employers' implementation techniques

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Abstract

Following thesis using descriptive research and qualitative method checks what are empowerment techniques of chosen four managers from service organizations in hospitality industry in Stavanger (Norway). Four in depth interviews were conducted to get as much profoundly insight into this issue as possible. Perception of empowerment as important part of new Human Recourses managing ideas. The purpose of the study is to answer the question how leaders in Stavanger are implementing empowerment in their daily routines towards employees and if it creates any positive customer orientation in employees' attitude.

Findings present that managers are aware of importance of empowerment. They are aware of various techniques and they use them in daily work life. All of the interviewed managers stated that trainings and communication process is the most important techniques of implementing empowerment. The study shows that delegating authority makes employees feel more important and they trust more their employers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There is a wide range of literature describing empowerment as a phenomenon presented in human resources management. Especially organizations offering services are focused on employee empowerment to improve service quality. There have been conducted plenty of researches which led to investigation of empowerment and its influence on subordinates, and their customer orientation as well as on many other aspects. Scientists have been checking reasons and outcomes of this phenomenon and how it influences employees and if it changes their attitude to work. It is known that empowerment make employees more responsible for the place that they work and they are more focused on 'delight the customer' (Lashley, 1995).

According to the existing literature it is 'suggested that empowerment is an employment strategy which represent a move in managerial perception from control to commitment' (Lashley, 1995). In hospitality industry human recourse management reveals a bunch of arrangements and forms which engage subordinates to better performance.

Empowerment is very useful tool in managers work. If they decide to implement empowerment in their strategy of being a leader it might bring only positive results. This thesis is meant to check and investigate managers and leaders who are responsible of creating quality services. How they use empowerment and what are their strategies of influencing employees to performance and better service.

The hotel industry has (comparatively speaking) not the best reputation for its ability to manage all Human Recourses (HR) related issues. management is characterized as having heavy reliance on flexible staffing policies (Knox & Walsh, 2005), and part-time and extra help workers make up a significant proportion of hotel staff (Lou & Milne, 2014). This characteristics of hotel industry is typical also for Stavanger marked. Thus this research is

planned to conduct to check how managers deal with empowerment and this HR difficult discipline.

1.2 Background

The reason I have chosen this topic is willingness to investigate techniques and methods of empowerment towards employees and subordinates in Norway. Norwegian hospitality industry rise very fast and a lot of tourists and business people visit hotels, restaurants and cafes. It is interesting how leaders and managers deal with subordinates which are the faces of the places to keep customers happy and make them wants to come back.

Personally, empowerment is very interesting topic for me as a student and future manager. By choosing this topic I wanted to deepen my knowledge and have opportunity to talk to very experienced people from the industry.

Nowadays changes are present everywhere, in all disciplines of our life. This pace of change, turbulence of the environment and increasing customers' demands might be old-fashioned human recourses management model. This system of commands and staff control might be not proper and incompatible. Thus empowerment is considered as a human recourses' tool to achieve better performance. This shows importance of empowerment. I would like to know what about that think managers in Stavanger (Norway).

1.2 Research question

The question is how leaders in Stavanger (Norway) are implementing empowerment in their daily routines towards employees and if it creates any positive customer orientation in employees' attitude. Moreover I would like to find out what kind of strategies there are using or what is the most important for them in empowerment.

To find out answers to asked questions I will conduct in-depth interviews with managers and leaders of hospitality industry in Stavanger. By asking specific question I will find out what are their methods of implementing empowerment and if it works as they wanted.

1.3 Structure of thesis

The first part of the thesis present a theoretical overview of recent developments in hospitality management and of empowerment as a strategic tool and central topic in the development of human recourse agendas.

Second part of the thesis presents method and research design which have been used to plan and conduct this study. Chapter 'Methods' describes ideas, tools which were used.

Further there is chapter with 'Findings' which contains all the information collected during the study. All data is presents and after that is discussed.

The thesis is finished with conclusion which sums up all working process and outcomes.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.2 Definitions and meanings

The following chapter of this thesis presents the most important aspects of empowerment which are helpful to better understanding of phenomenon of empowerment. Definitions and complex review create base for research which will be conducted and analyzed further.

2.2.1 Empowerment

Empowerment is wide topic and covers many aspects so the best way to explain 'empowerment' is to start with Dictionary of Human Resource Management definition which says that 'empowerment is the process of passing on authority to make decisions to others in the organization. It requires all employees to take responsibility for the quality of their work, and act in the best interest of the customer' (2008). Some authors argues with that definition because empowerment differs from delegating authority (Foy, 1994). Foy gives example of a child who have been given money for a jeans and that's delegating authority. When we give a child money to spend them on clothes that is empowerment because then child can decide himself what to spend them on. Child feels empowered (1994).

Another point of view is presented by van Oudtshoorn and Thomas who state that empowerment is to decide on boundaries of what empowered person is able to do (1993). They distinct objective fact that empowered person received either authority or permission to do something and the subjective feelings of power in empowered employee (van Outshoorn and Thomas, 1993).

Important ingredients of empowerment is that empowered 'have sense of power with freedom to use that power in the achievement of valued goals' (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Sparrowe, 1994; Siefall and Gardner, 2000).

2.2.1.1 Empowerment and customer service relation

From a service perspective empowerment has been described as giving employees the authority about customer service decisions (Wall et al., 2004).

Two different assumption are presented in following definitions: 'employee empowerment is an act of vesting responsibility in the people nearest the problem' (Barbee and Bott, 1991) and 'empowerment covers management strategies for sharing decision making power' (Bowen and Lower, 1992).

First definition may present more responsibility as an intensification of work. It means that employees may be brought to account for those things which are not controlled by them such as customer satisfaction or product quality (Lashley, 2001). Many companies press their staff to aim statements like: 'delight customer' or 'give customers attentive service and maximize sale'. Employees needs to go beyond his/her task and pleased employees with good results and this what is expected from them. (Lashley, 2001). 'Dealing with customer complaints, which is frequently feature of empowerment in service operations, put server in difficult and potentially stressful situation' (Lashley, 2001). Employee may feel burden at work and lose his/ her keenness to work. 'For some workers, empowerment in the form of added responsibilities can be an unwelcome development from those 'who only wants to work as a waitress'' (Ashness and Lashley, 1995). For other people bigger 'responsibilities may bring new dimension to work experiences and exert welcome demands on empowered' (Lashley, 2001). As Lashley continues to refer 'adding responsibilities can develop a sense of personal ownership and attachment to a specific aspect of the work' (p.7).

Second assumption, mentioned above presented by Bowen and Lower says that 'empowerment involves sharing decision making implies that more authority is delegated to the empowered employee. Clearly it means that employees will be given some power to make certain issues themselves (1992). Lashely state that 'giving employees more authority to make a decision about their immediate task can increase organizational effectiveness, and improve employee satisfaction' (2001).

Lashley researching empowerment for years, in his book 'Empowerment HR strategies for service excellence' is saying that 'establishing an agreed definition show that there are a number of different sets of assumptions and aspirations for empowerment, which are at times mutually exclusive or at least contradictory' (2001). Thus it is difficult to present one concrete definition which covers all aspects of empowerment.

Another article by the same author investigate hospitality industry and human resources management practices which 'reveals a diversity of arrangements and forms which engage employees in a variety of ways and are described by different terms' (Lashley, 1995).

Literature use interchangeably various terms to describe the same thing: employee involvement, employee empowerment, employee participation, and employee commitment. Many of these terms are described by Marchington et al. as 'used to indicate that these initiatives were largely designed and initiated by management and intended to improve communications with employees, generate greater commitment and enhance employee contributions to the organization' (p.10, cited in Lashley, 1995).

To digest terms in literature which are repeated by many authors but they mean the same things Lashley in his article named 'Towards an understanding of employee empowerment in hospitality services' establishes a framework of some crucial terms to summarized them.

To begin with, empowerment through participation is 'when an organization delegate to employees some of the decision making, which in a traditional organization would be the domain of management. Employees are participating in identifying and satisfying customer needs […], or are making decisions about work organization or scheduling (Lashley, 1995).

2.2.1.2 Empowerment and organizational structure

Empowerment through involvement, when managers are focused on gaining employees experiences, suggestions, ideas. Moreover intention of this kind of empowerment is to involve employees in providing feedbacks, making new suggestions and sharing information with leaders (Lashley, 1995).

To continue with, empowerment through commitment 'encourage employees to take more responsibility for their own performance and its improvement, skills and talents […] producing more satisfied customers and greater profits (Lashley, 1995). The most important in employee commitment is attitude which affect positive results for employees and company.

Empowerment through delayering according to Lashley is minimize structure of company, in another words it is meant to make company flatter, closer to customers cut administrative costs (1995).

Putting empowerment into another words, in leading change (Daft, 2005a) or learning leadership (Daft, 2005b) power of a leader is reflected by the digital information age. Leading change is breaking with some traditional meanings of control. On the other hand leading change based on influence by vision, values, relationship and alignments. This point of view shows that power is on new level where leaders gave up the controlling process and started to focus on developing organizational culture which is based on shared values and vision (Argenti and Forman, 2002). The aim is to create work place with common goals and shared

purposes which and to create place where freedom and individual responsibility is needed to reach organizational goals.

According to Yukl (2006), empowerment and high intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy have probably the same type of consequences on a psychological level (Yukl, 2006). 'Beneficial consequences include (1) stronger commitment to tasks, (2) greater personal initiative when performing positional responsibilities, (3) greater persistency when facing obstacles and setbacks, (4) more individual and organizational innovation and learning, and a stronger optimism about the potential success of the work, (5) higher work satisfaction, (6) stronger commitment to the organization, and (7) decreased turnover' (Block, 1987; Howard, 1998; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; as cited in Yukl, 2006).

2.2.2 The psychology of empowerment

Empowerment is often measured trough two constructs. First construct is empowerment climate which mostly focuses on work environment. The other construct is psychological construct and it focuses mostly on empowerment state of empowered.

Very important aspect to better understanding empowerment is not only creating participation and involvement willingness but also producing psychological state in employees (Lashley, 2001) and engaging them at an emotional level (Johnson, 1993). Helsin states that 'empowerment by definition needs to feel people empowered (1999). Similar stand have Kolberg et al. they state that 'empowered employees are supposed to feel greater control' (1999). Very important in psychological state of feeling empowered is 'a greater sense of personal power together with the freedom to use that power' (Potterfiels, 1999) and 'sense of personal efficacy and determination' (Alpander, 1991). According to Van Oudtshorn and Thomas empowerment contains two equal aspects and both of them are very important:

objective fact of what subordinates is authorized to do and additionally subjective feeling of ability and energy, sense of power (1993).

In service organizations it not only important that employees provide physical labor and skills, but they need to supply emotions, body language to make feel customers wanted, delighted and pleased (Hochschild, 1983).

The factor analysis in Hancer and George studies in 'Psychological empowerment of non-supervisory employees working in full-service restaurants' confirmed that psychological empowerment is a multi-dimensional construct (2003). 'It is important for managers to examine the individual factors of psychological empowerment and be ready to take specific actions to increase the employee agreement level on the factor' (Hencer and George, 2003). When employees feel that they have the competence but they do not have the influence, leaders may spend much more time talking to them, asking questions and listen to employees' ideas of increasing job satisfactions (Hencer and George, 2003). The study of Deci and Ryan has pointed out that self-determination is important in process of being motivated to take the action (1985). Studies of Ashness and Lashley (1995) confirmed good communication and strong orientation in the process of implementing empowerment process.

2.2.3 Motivational empowerment

Leaders who aspire to empower employees need to take into consideration changing employees' feelings of control and personal power as well as taking care of more positive attitude of employees to workplace and greater commitment to its goals and policies (Heslin, 1999). In another words, employees are expected to be loyal to the place they work, by fulfilling trainings requirements and gained knowledge, they are expected to display confidence and do all what is necessary to do to meet service needs of customers (Barry, 1993; Johnson and Redmond, 1998).

According to McClelland motivational construct of empowerment relies more on an understanding of empowerment through employee' individual internal needs for control and power (1975). Bandura added to this statement also employee's feeling of personal efficacy (1986). With all of those circumstances employee feel empowered when they are able to deal effectively with the situations that they encounter. 'From a motivational perspective, power is intrinsically based on a need for a self-determination, and managers should adopt techniques that strengthen employees' needs for self-determination and personal efficacy (Lashley, 2001, p.24).

2.2.4 Empowerment process

Two authors Conger and Kanungo using motivational construct define empowerment 'as a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identifications that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information' (1988 p.474 cited in Lashley, 2001, p.24). Lasheley analyses Conger and Kanungo's representation of five stages in the process of empowerment (2011).

Stage 1 'Conditions leading to a psychological state of powerlessness'. This stage lead to consider those aspects of organization and organizational operating system which make employees to feel disempowered. For instance that might include: bureaucratic procedures, tall organization structure, command and control culture, supervisors who operate in an autocratic manner (Lasheley, 2001).

Stage 2 'The use of managerial strategies and techniques'. Managerial techniques are used to assist subordinates to enhance their feelings of efficacy. The techniques that are involved in that stage are for instance: setting goals, using adequate systems which provide feedback, competence reward system and supportive managements styles (Lashley, 2001).

Stage 3 'To provide self- efficacy information to subordinates using four sources'. Personal efficacy information come from watching others, from employees own development, verbal feedback, and through a positive, emotional environment which support employees and builds their confidence (Lashley, 2001).

Stage 4 ' Results in empowering experience of subordinates'. This is stage where empowered employees strengthen their efforts and believe in personal efficacy. And that leads to stage 5 ' Leading to behavioral effects. In another words that leads to achieving organizational goals (Lashley, 2001).

2.2.5 Attitudes and empowerment

This part of thesis will focus on Kelly and Kelly work which present interesting insight into aspirations of managers when introducing more participatory and involving techniques and reactions and attitudes which those techniques can cause on employees (1990). This studies showed that whilst employees hold positive attitude about the form of changes it does not change relation between them and managers. But whilst changers are introduces under the name of empowerment it creates positive response in employees and it may increase job satisfaction but there is no guarantee that commitment to work and to policies to the workplace will increase (Kelly and Kelly, 1990).

Tree possible routes are presented in mentioned studies above. Those routes may be helpful in change of attitudes between employees an help to develop bigger commitment to the organization and shared goals (Kally and Kelly, 1990).

The first route suggest that contact between managers and workers while increase might help with changing stereotypes and might produce positive attitudes among members of the groups (Kelly and Kelly, 1990).

'The second route suggest that attitudes between conflicting groups will change if they are both faced with a challenge, or a goal, that is common to both of them and that neither can overcome or achieve on their own' (Lashley, 2001. P.31). This claims might seems unconvincing when there are various, not equal benefits and rewards, and when the employees have little choice in their initiative. (Lashley, 2001). So very important is to keep members of the groups and manager trusting each other only then all of them can be beneficial from the success.

The third route to attitude change claims that changes in behavior lead to changes in attitudes (Lashley, 2001). More co-operatively working between employees and managers may result positive outcomes as a positive attitudes. It is difficult to maintain attitudes which are in conflict with behavior (Lashley, 2001).

Those presented above routes shows how empowerment can change attitudes of employees to the organization and enhance bigger commitment to workplace. In this context there are some barriers which may block positive changes in employees' attitudes towards co-workers and organization. Here are some of them: lack of choice, lack of trust, unequal status and initiatives that claim to be empowering to result in employees changing their attitudes about the organization, social psychology provides a means of explaining how these processes might occur and obstacles that might prevent the desired changes taking place' (Lashley, 2001, p.33).

Summing up attitudes and empowerment, emotional empowerment is likely both to succeed and fail. Everything is in hands of good managers who know how to introduce new initiatives and maintain changes which are meeting them in the process (Lashley, 2001).

2.2.6 Empowerment and management strategies

HR issues

Although one could think that all hotels, regardless of their size, would face exactly the same HR problems and issues and would need similar human resources management practices. The strong correlation has been found when it comes to size of a hotel and presence of human resources management (HRM) practices (Price, 1994). There are few reasons presented by Chow, Haddad and Singh (2007) HRM practices are more likely to be found in large organizations: 1). 'relying on informal system will make it difficult for organizations to treat all employees fairly and consistently'. 2). 'formal and bureaucratic systems will be more efficient when large number of employees must be managed' 3). Large companies are more likely to have the resources and expertise to codify practices and procedures 4). 'owners and managers of small organizations tend to resist formal management practices when these practices are counterintuitive to their personal view of their organizations and environment' (Bartmann,2005).

Being a leader in hospitality service organization creates many difficulties. It is not easy to create profitable and effective business or run this kind of place is time consuming and needs huge knowledge and experience. Moreover managers and leaders need to struggle with increasing staff turnover, difficulties in motivating employees. Thus Enz (2010) and Daft and Lane (2011) in their articles presents image of 'great leader'. To solve problems mentioned above there are three leadership bases which helps. 1). Trait theory- choosing the right person to the right position. Human personality consist of many various traits so good leader knows those traits and know how to use them so then he or she is prepared for being a motivating communicator. 2). Strategic thinking- it is necessary for internal structural changes. 3).

Transformational leader\ship- being aware of the pitfalls, choosing the right style of leadership.

Transformational leadership

Hospitality industry characterizes with high turnovers among service staff. Working hours are not conventional and mostly young people take this kind of job. The challenge is for leaders to motivate them in proper way to perform well and meet expectations of guests according to organization' s policy.

Very popular and discussed for many years style of management is 'transformational leadership'. Firstly introduced by James MacGregor Burns who stated that transformational leadership is 'where a leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group' (Burns, 2003). Transformational leadership tries to enhance job performance, motivation and morale of subordinates using specific mechanisms such as: 1) connecting follower's sense of identity to a project; 2) being a role model for subordinates and inspire them to be raise interests in the project; 3) challenging subordinates to take greater responsibility and to feel more ownership. (Burns, 2003).

According to Bernard M. Bass (1987), who developed theory about transformational leadership, this phenomenon encompasses several different aspects, such as:

- *'Emphasizing intrinsic motivation and positive development of followers*
- *Raising awareness of moral standards*
- *Highlighting important priorities*
- *Fostering higher moral maturity in followers*

- *Creating an ethical climate (share values, high ethical standards)*

- *Encouraging followers to look beyond self-interests to the common good*

- *Promoting cooperation and harmony*

- *Using authentic, consistent means*

- *Using persuasive appeals based on reason*

- *Providing individual coaching and mentoring for followers*

- *Appealing to the ideals of followers*

- *Allowing freedom of choice for followers'*.

Transformational leaders are described and presented as those who hold positive expectations for subordinates, help them believe that they can do their best. As a result of leaders' actions , they inspire, empower and stimulate followers to work on better performance. Even if this theory was presented very long time ago still is on the top. Leaders are aiming those results. Transformational leadership create trust between employee and employer so leaders can work and think of greater, external things of organizations.

According to Tracey and Hinkin (1994), 'The shrinking labor force, tightening economics conditions and other environmental influences have created demands on mangers that must be change'. The talk is about changing transactional leadership into transformational leadership where transformational leadership is much more advance and efficient when it comes to human recourses and managing people.

It is not easy to achieve this stage of managing people and be transformational leader. Nowadays leaders see that change in system of their managing is needed. 'As transformational leaders, hospitality managers must develop a strong sense of vision to clarify and communicate organizational objectives and create a working environment that fosters motivation, commitment and continuous improvement' (Tracey and Hinkin, 1994).

What characteristics should have transformational leader, readers may ask. Tracey and Hinkin answer this questions. Answer is based on their study. 'Transformational leader was viewed as competent, showed high degree of persistence in performing the job, had the organization's best interest in mind, and behaved consistently with expressed values and beliefs' (Tracey and Hinkin, 1994). It is easy to notice that transformational leaders are resigning of hierarchical system of managing people. Now important is to stop controls and trust employees.

Implementing empowerment, techniques

Before leader or manager of a place decide to implement empowerment some basic steps must be taken. First one require all managers including general manager to agree on organizational philosophy. Second step is agreeing on outcomes coming from implementing empowerment and the last one is specific goals and target dates must be established (Brymer, 1991). After this basic tree steps there is more decision to make by managers. Now they need to decide what kind of empowerment they should use. Brymer give us two options in his article 'Employee Empowerment: A guest- driven leadership strategy'.

'Structured empowerment provides specific guidelines for the front-line employees. It gives those employees the ability to make decisions but within specified and detailed limits' (Brymer, 1991). On the other hand they can choose flexible empowerment which means that 'empowerment allows employees more latitude in making on the- spot decisions that directly affect guest service and satisfaction' (Brymer, 1991). In flexible empowerment it is important to train employees very well when it comes to making decisions good for business.

Brymer in his article present fourteen steps of employee empowerment implementation. They are created for hospitality industry front-line staff. Steps will be shortly presented and described below:

Step 1. Meeting of department should be scheduled. All employees, supervisor of department and general manager must attend. Before meeting everyone should be informed that reason of the meeting is to increase customer satisfaction through expanded employee involvement.

Step 2. Employees must be explained that hotel is taking 'new' look at how guest service is delivered. Improvement will be reached by giving all employees more power to make decisions which directly affect guests and their satisfaction. Empowerment should be explained. Employees needs to know how to treat guests with individual approach and show them understanding. Bureaucracy must be minimized.

Step 3. General managers should present his or her employees' concern. General manager and supervisor should ensure that they will support all empowerment employees.

Step 4. Program of benefits for employees such as they will get more authority, they take more ownership, autonomy, flexibility. Moreover they will get full support of manager

Step 5. Employee empowerment type should be discussed either flexible empowerment or structured. If structured empowered has been chosen, employees should have their own input and suggestions, if leaders have chosen flexible empowerment option, discretion and good business judgement should be discussed.

Step 6. Managers presents the skills necessary to accomplish customer good service.

- Guest needs to completely explain situation without interrupting

- Employee uses facial gestures, body language and eye contact to show concern

- Employee stays positive and doesn't give negative comments

- Apology needs to be given on behave of the department

- Guest's name needs to be used

- If it is appropriate and possible employee must smile

Step 7. Create a list of suggestions for improving guests services

Step 8. Managers end the meeting with reinforcing importance of employee empowerment.

Step 9. Written report should be sent after first meeting to all the employees

Step 10. Before employee empowerment program will be launched second meeting should be organized and similar steps should be discussed

Step 11. Front line employees should have been supported and motivated by managers

Step 12. Review of department progress and success needs to be prepare for third meeting which all employees must attend

Step 13. Leader must recognize and praise those all employees who have demonstrated exemplary judgment.

Step 14. Meeting must become regular.

According to Google Scholar, presented article and steps (even though do not come from the newest study) still has been cited over one hundred times by other researchers. It means they have great impact on leaders approach to empowerment.

3. METHODOLOGY

The following chapter of the thesis will cover central elements of the data collection, data description and analysis with evaluation of validity and reliability of collected data. The research question of the thesis is how leaders implement empowerment towards employees and if it has any positive outcomes. The survey was conducted in Stavanger (Norway).

3.1 Research design

Asking 'how' question in thesis there is only one way to project the research and that way is to use descriptive research. Research design is meant to create a plan for researcher's work and how he would like to investigate the problem, statement. In this thesis it is chosen descriptive research which will help me to investigate the phenomenon of the interest. In general descriptive research tend to present an overview of particular situation, specific details and settings about it (Newman, 2014).

Conduction research on a phenomenon containing real-life and real situations it is possible to choose one of two approaches: inductive and deductive (Neuman, 2014). The inductive approach is often use at the beginning evidence and then slowly builds patterns generalizations, and summary ideas. According to Robert Merton (1968), p. 103) inductive studies covers essence in the following statement:

'It is my central thesis that empirical research goes far beyond the passive role of verifying and testing theory; it does more than confirm or refute hypotheses. Research plays an active role; it performs at least four major functions, which helps shape the development of the theory. It initiates, it reformulates, it deflects and it helps clarify'.

On the other hand deductive approach is based on ideas and 'educated guesses' which lead researchers to conducting studies and check what might occur and then it moves them towards observable evidences which can test and verify ideas (Newman, 2014).

Main purpose on this study was to investigate leaders empowerment techniques and manners in Norwegian environment. So it would be the best to investigate first the topic prior to developing theory. Thus I need to choose inductive studies.

3.2 Qualitative method

Nowadays qualitative and quantitative forms of data explain empirical evidences presented in studies. Quantitative data often are explained as a data which are based on measures. It is needed to collect sizable amount of data from a chosen sample and then generalize findings to a bigger population (Punch, 2005). According to Punch qualitative research is not only non-numerical data but it is an approach or a way of thinking that involves bunch of methods and non-numerical or qualitative data (2005). Patton has very interesting insight into discussion:

> 'Qualitative research aims at understanding people, from their point of view. Its purpose is to describe how people behave and to understand why they behave the way they do; it neither determines cause or effect, not test hypotheses or theories that researcher might have about human behavior' (1990, p.40).

Even if there is many various definitions in literature Ritchie et al. sum up that all of them generally are directed at:

- providing an in-depth understanding of the social world

- learning about people's material and social circumstances, experiences, histories and perspectives

- covers a board range of approaches (Ritchie et al. 2013, p.23).

Fossey et al. (2002, p.717) state that the aim of qualitative research is to address questions concerning and helping to develop understanding of the meaning of social worlds and humans' lives. On the other hand in Maxwell article explains that qualitative researchers rely on variety of understandings as well as on corresponding types of validity when it comes to the process of describing, explaining and interpreting phenomenon of interest.

In book from 2001 Knight having a discussion about advantages and possible disadvantages of qualitative research, as stated:

> Qualitative date is easier to categorize and make sense of if you know what you are looking for, and easier still if the research was designed explicitly to look for that and that alone. It is easy to see only what is obviously relevant to those perspectives and to miss indications that things might be rather different than the perspectives imply. For example, when the research questions are about the effects of change, it is easy to tally up instances and to count the frequency of different effects and to miss the evidence of continuity (Knight, 2001).

Knight indicate that qualitative study enables researchers to get more empirical and effective outcomes. Presented study aim to investigate leaders tactics of empowerment and their managerial opinions of how it works and if it is useful. Therefor qualitative research is applied to help diving into empowerment and help to focus on managers and their perception of the empowered staff.

3.3 Sample

Sampling is the process where unit of interest is chosen. It must cover generally whole population, thus it is so important to choose proper sample. (Marshall, 1996, p.522). On the other hand, flexibility of sampling in qualitative research may be confusing for some researchers what can lead to mistakes (Coyne, 1997, p.623). The sample of following studies are four managers of the hotels and restaurants chosen in a process sampling. One man and three women were interviewed. The aim of interviews was to get in-depth knowledge from their experience about empowerment. Names and organizations remains anonymously to follow ethical issues stated by Black (2001):

- Ethical standards met and data sufficiently confidential that no individuals or institutions can be identified
- Some weakness in maintaining confidentiality
- Ethical issues not addressed or confidentiality not discussed or maintained when it should have been
- Ethical issues not addressed and/or significant loss of confidentiality
- Ethical standards violated and/or subjects endangered owing to no confidentiality.

Interviewed managers were insured that all the data and names will remain secret to public.

All of the participants in interviews will be stated as 'informant' and following number. Numbers are added according to interviews order. Informants operate in Stavanger in hospitality industry. They experience in hospitality industry as a mangers was from 5-17 years. All of them at the moment of interviews have many subordinates (from 5- 20).

3.4 Conducting interview

Conducting proper interview is demanding process which needs to be controlled by one who is responsible for interviewing. The role of interviewer requires awareness of many considerations (Neuman, 2012). Things which must be controlled by interviewer are for instance: conversation and conversation's flow of interactions, building rapport and cooperation between both parties of interview, remaining neutral and objective (Neuman, 2012).

According to Kvale's (2006) article that interviewer and interviewee has hierarchical relationship with asymmetrical power distribution. There is an overview of some of the power dynamics:

- *The interviewer rules the interview*. Interviewer in this case the author of the thesis has the power of leading interview by having and asking questions, deciding the topic, initiating time and form of the interview

- *The interview is an one-way dialogue.* Interviewer ask questions and interviewee's role is to answer. During conducted interviews this rule was fulfilled.

- *The interview is an instrumental dialogue* where conversation is instrumentalized and it is no longer way to find the truth, but it is a means serving a researcher's ends

- *The interviewer's monopoly of interpretation* 'The interviewer generally upholds a monopoly of interpretation over the interviewee's statements in social science research whereas in daily conversations, as well as in philosophical dialogues, there may be a conflict over the true interpretation of what has been said. After gathering the necessary data from interviewees, this is where it begins to interpret variety of results in order to end up with empirical results from primary resource' (Kalve, 2006, p. 484

– 485). As it is indicated by Kalve it is nature of social science where it is to interpret truly in order to kinds of conversations.

Interviews were conducted at interviewed peoples work places in neutral areas like lobbies and by the table in the restaurants where managers work. Interviews took usually from 40 minutes up to 1,5 hour (big experience of manager and willingness to share his knowledge).

All of the my respondents were informed before interview about topic and structure of interview by short e-mail. After agreeing time and place interviews took place and respondents were asked 20-25 questions from my questionnaires. All of them tried answer according to their experience and from all the knowledge they have. I wrote down all the answers to the notebook which may cause some disadvantages of this form of saving data.

Interviews were taken at work place of interviewed person for instance in hotel lobby or by restaurant table. The interviews has taken approximately 40 minutes each up to 1,5 hour. There was no problems with conducting interviews. Managers were not even once interrupted by other colleagues or phone calls so it let me have a fluent, not disturbed interviews.

Some questions were more popular than the others and interviewed person either repeated themselves or skipped those questions. For other questions I have got really comprehensive answers which were very valuable.

3.5 Ethics

There are several different ethical considerations which all researchers need to be aware of according to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011), as listed below:

- '*Informed consent.* Individuals should be provided with sufficient information about the research, in a format that is comprehensive to them, and make a voluntary decision to participate in a research study

- *Self- determination*. Individuals have the right to determine their own participation in research, including the right to refuse participation without negative consequences.

- *Minimization of harm*. Researchers should not do any harm to participants or put them at risk.

- *Anonymity*. Researchers should protect the identity of research participants at all times.

- *Confidentiality*. Researchers should ensure that all data records are kept confidential at all times' (p. 63).

As it was mentioned before all respondents was informed about anonymity and the aim of following research. All of them agreed on that.

As a researcher during working process on that master thesis I followed the ways which help us act morally by Brinkmann & Kvale which are contextualization, describing events in their right context, narrative, managing to pull together a convincing narrative that situates an event temporally, so that there is rarely need to engage in further moral deliberation about what to do, and finally focusing on the particular example, that is that the qualitative researcher should know about exemplars of ethically justifiable, and also ethically questionable research, in order to evaluate own practice and learn to recognize ethical issues (2005, p.177 – 178).

3.6 Reliability and validity

To have research which is valid and reliable is a main and central concern of all measurements. However, according to Neuman 'it is not possible to get perfect validity and reliability, they are more like ideals that researcher strive to reach' (2011).

'Reliability, recognized as pertaining to the stability of data – collection measures, remains an important notion and rather than attempting to hide behind a smokescreen of synonyms,

perhaps interpretive researchers should simply to accept the fact that reliability is unlikely to be demonstrable strength of their work' (Long & Johnson, 2000, p.31). It is always questionable if under the same conditions, the same research would give exactly the same results and outcomes. Conducting qualitative studies may cause differences each time.

To have reliability, one need to have in his or her measures dependability or consistency. It means that the same results occurs each time when measurements are taken under the same or similar conditions (Neuman, 2011). During qualitative study two researchers measuring the same things might not get the same outcomes. Differences that exists and these diverse measures illuminate many of dimensions which are related to particular one case or setting. Moreover, various researcher or different measures can give reliable measurements. However, qualitative studies are not as reliable as quantitative studies which can give particular, one, fixed measure, but it is reliable because of measuring and observing in a consistent and self-conscious way. (Neuman, 2012).

Talking about reliability in following thesis, it is difficult to state that outcomes of other researchers examining other managers in hospitality industry will be exactly the same as presented here. There were conducted similar studies in restaurants and hotels checking attitude towards empowerment in many work places. Results can be compared, therefore one might say that reliability of the study in this thesis increasing indirectly.

Validity is all about truthfulness, and about how well it fits reality. In other words, 'validity concerns about questions of how well we measure social reality using our constructs about it' (Neuman, 2011). Very important requirement for qualitative measurement is that they need to have authenticity, balanced and honest view of social life of a person whose live is in the social world. In qualitative data validity lets researcher see into examined person. It gives him or her information of how this person understand, feel and see something (Neuman, 2012).

According to Neuman, validity can be seen as external and internal 'Internal validity means that there have not been made errors internal to the design of the research that can create false conclusions' (Neuman, 2011).

'In qualitative research the question is more about the represantativity of an empirical material, such as an interview, and its interpretation. One could say that research Is a cumulative process, and that the representativity or validity of a material is based on the critical scrutiny and findings of other scholars (Filstead, 1970).

During preparation to starting research, a lot of articles were studied. They were base to inspire me to create questions used in interview. Questions were checked and controlled by professor of University of Stavanger.

External validity is showing if researcher managed 'to conclude accurate result that he or she found in a specific setting with a particular small group externally to other settings and other people' (Neuman, 2011). The example of this thesis shows that sample which is taken is not random. Managers are professional people working in hospitality and who have many subordinates. Problematic is to generalize findings to other settings and other people. Other managers which could be interviewed might give different answers or they could have opposite opinions. However, 'generalization might not be the main purpose doing a qualitative research as mentioned earlier; it is rather the relevance to the research topics than the representativeness that are important when choosing people to participate in the study (Neuman, 2011).

3.7 Analyzing of the data

After conducting interviews, all of the data and information was transcribed into digital document. In qualitative research creating codes is very important process which helps to

systemize findings. Codes are used mainly to collected different issues, opinions, ideas and so on. 'They are mainly topics that are discussed by participants and afterwards identified through reading the data. Furthermore, some of these codes can be inductive and are raised by the participants themselves, while others might have been prompted by the interviewer using topics in an interview guide that were found in the literature and theory, and are called deductive codes'(Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Thus deductive codes were chosen for this thesis.

According to LeCompte (2000) good qualitative data are as unbiased as possible; however, data selections are sometimes made because such data are collected by human beings, and because people are interested in certain things and not others which in summary affect the usefulness and credibility of research results (2000, p.146). As a researcher writing this thesis I needed to stay unbiased and during interviews I did not commented interviewee opinions, I kept distance which was helpful for both parties during conducting interview.

Analysis will focus on managers' point of view when it comes to empowerment. Nowadays this part of human recourses became apparent and it is big issue of interest of managers. Analysis will focus on different opinions on certain points of local managers.

4. FINDINGS

Findings of the thesis are divided into four main topics. They were created after grouping the questions from the interview. Names of topics are as follows: 'Opinion and knowledge about empowerment', 'Techniques of implementing empowerment', 'Usefulness of empowerment', 'Features of leader who empowers'.

All interviews were prefaced with short explanation of empowerment and then questions were asked.

As it was mentioned before in chapter called 'Sample', four managers from Stavanger (Norway) were interviewed. In 'Findings' each of them get a number which will be used at the end of adequate quotation so reader know which person state particular opinion.

Some of the findings presented below might slip into each other or seems the same. This is because sometimes interviewees answered on many questions in one answer or questions were related to each other.

As it was mentioned before interviews will be kept anonymous, no names will be given. The interviews were conducted among 4 leaders from two hotels and two restaurants in Stavanger (Norway). Some might think that hotels managers and restaurant managers might have different experiences but I chose them because all of them deal with front line staff. Front line person has direct contact with customer and is the first one to meet does not matter if this is restaurant or hotel. Empowerment or lack of empowerment might works the same.

Presentation of the interviewees and their quotation numbers:

1. Manager and owner of restaurant in Stavanger, 19 years of experience, male, 10 subordinates at the moment

2. Hotel manager in small hotel (40 rooms) in Stavanger, 15 years of experience, female 10 subordinates at the moment

3. Manager and owner of small restaurant in Stavanger, 3 years of experience, female, 5 subordinates at the moment

4. Manager of the reception in big hotel (150 rooms) in Stavanger, 7 years of experience, female

4.1 Opinion and knowledge about empowerment

This part of the findings presents opinions of four interviewed managers about empowerment. After short introduction about empowerment they were asked if they are familiar with the main topic of the interview. All four managers were familiar with this phenomenon of empowerment and knew that is important part of Human Recourses and that it is beneficial when it comes to managing people. All four managers stated that empowerment is helpful in dealing with front line staff and they were aware of advantages which outcome of implementing empowerment and importance of this phenomenon.

Next questions were about if the interviewed managers empower their staff. Answers were not the same. Only one manager answered that she or he empower subordinates completely. They know what to do in all situations and do not need to ask her about permission to some actions. Three of other managers said that they empower subordinates but not completely. They stated that they use empowerment but during the interviewed specific questions and answers showed that there are some situations where employee needs to consult decision or action with manager so it means that they are not empowered enough.

Summing up, awareness of empowerment is big among interviewed managers. Findings shows that managers are familiar with phenomenon but not everybody use that in daily work.

Save managers' time

'In my opinion empowerment is the base and first step to save time for managers. If manager wants to focus on his/her daily routines and tasks and thinking of company's future he or she needs to know how to empower people and techniques to do that. If my staff would not be empowered to make particular decisions in my restaurant it will be impossible for me to take day off'. (1)

Running any service place without empowered staff is impossible

'I cannot imagine running this or any other service place without empowered staff'. They are face of the place, first people who are responsible for welcoming attitude and creating good vibes in the place. They need to be empowered to feel important at work'. (3)

Feeling ownership

'Empowerment is very important for me. One of the reasons I use it is to make my subordinates feel ownership to my place. Then they feel more responsible for the place and perform better'. (1)

Empowerment-basic move in HR and managing people

'I personally think that empowerment is basic move of HR and managing people. Without empowerment and trust to my staff I could not work in my office on my another important tasks. If they would need my help all the time I will not focus on bigger problems of the hotel'. (4)

'For me empowerment is crucial form of managing human resources in service organization like hotel'. (2)

Empowered employees perform better than not empowered ones

'I have noticed big difference between empowered employees and ones who are not empowered. Usually not empowered are those who just started work at our place and they are not sure how to deal with complains of guests or they do not know what decision to make on their own. They need to ask always manager or more experienced staff. Empowered employees feels more important and responsible for work place. They are more committed to work and perform better'. (4)

4.2 Delegating authority and usefulness of empowerment

Interviewees were asked what they think about delegating authority and reaction of employees on that. Next they were asked to say what they think about usefulness about this process. Important question was also about dealing with complaining customers as well in hotels and restaurants that is good situation to check if manager empowers his or her staff and how staff behave and act in this stressful situation.

The main finding according to this part were as follow. All four managers said that they delegate authority to employees and that makes their work easier so they can focus on other managerial tasks. One manager said that even though he or she delegate authority he prefers to double check and control situation all the time. It is not about being in the middle of crisis situations but enter the situation when it is not going in good direction.

Dealing with complaining customers is everyday life for hospitality organizations so managers were asked to describe process of dealing with complains of customers. All of them were accordant that complaining customers make employees stressed and that is exam for them if the empowerment works. In all places staff is allowed to provide extra treatments or free meals if something went wrong or customer is right and he or she is unhappy. One

manager was aware that moving 'dealing with complaining guest' situation from level of employees to manager level cost company a lot of money.

Employees need to feel freedom

'Employees at work need to feel freedom. When I start to give them more authority then I see bigger commitment to their work. They try their best to pleased guests and more over they feel more important' (1)

Fast reaction on complain is important

'It is very important to react on complains straight away and be very discreet. I don't want to move complains from level of employees to higher-level managers because it cost a lot of money.' (1)

It is important to teach staff to deal with complains

'Customer needs to feel understood. Employee must shows empathy , listen to them.(…) I cannot let the unhappy customer leave my restaurant.' (1)

Empowered staff need to know how to react

'I give authority to my staff. I am often out of the place and employees are alone so they need to know how to react and deal with situations which coming surprisingly all the time.' (3)

My employees can decide about various things but first they need to talk with the complaining guest and make them feel understood. Then they need to fix what was wrong. They are allowed to get some money to fix the problem and compensate unhappiness of the guests'. (4)

Employees can run a place when manager is not there

'There is more positive outcomes of empowerment because staff can run place when I am not there. They know I trust them.' (3)

New employees need time to be empowered

'I see that at the beginning of their career at our hotel they are not sure how to react on some complains, they need advices from other colleagues and me. At the beginning they feel insecure and they prefer to be controlled and sure that they make correct decision.' (4)

Stressful situations

'Even though employees are empowered and they know how to deal with complaining guest this situations make them stressed. Their mood goes down. I always repeat them that even if they are stressed they need to act professional and do not drop good and positive attitude. It can affect guests even more.' (4)

The bigger experience employees have the better they deal with stressful situations

'It is not easy for employees. No one wants to listen to complains but the bigger experience employee has the better he or she deals with that'. (2)

4.3 Techniques of implementing empowerment

Managers were asked what kind of techniques they use to empower their staff if they use any. How it works and if it is useful. This part of findings presents managers' ways of empower their subordinates. Many of those ways are very similar and some of managers use the same ones since they state that is the best way to empower.

All of the managers agreed that basic step to start implementing empowerment is to conduct good training for employees and explain what is expected from them. Only one manager said

that no more trainings are needed after the first one. First is very thorough so he or she does not apply more trainings later.

Two of managers stated that very important is individual approach to employee. They differ so approaches must be various. All of them agreed that communication between manager and staff is crucial. Regular meetings and opportunity to be listened is mentioned by one of the managers as very important part of feeling empowered by employees.

Two of managers mentioned that decision making process is useful to empower employee. They stated that employee feels the power when that is only him or her who needs to make decisions on the spot.

Discussing new ideas of managers with employees

'Employees are invited for a meetings where managers presents new ideas. Employees are included in discussion. Their opinion is very important for me and at the same time they feel better and more valuable'. (2)

Sharing ideas

'Sharing ideas is important especially during staff meetings. It let me get new information and new points of view which I have not seen before. My people need to be listened to and appreciated when discussing new ideas.' (3)

Communication on level employee- leader is basic step of empowerment

'Communication on level employee- leader is basic. Both sides needs to talk to each other every day. Discus daily routines and future plans'. (2)

Communication is the most important

'Communication is the most important factor which makes staff focused and feel important. I work with small team so direct, verbal communication is crucial. I cannot imagine different method or not using it to communicate with my people'. (1)

'Communication between me and my employees is number one ingredient to running this place. We need to cooperate and talk all the time about ongoing issues. Communication among staff is equally important. It keeps everything in order and prevent disaster.' (3)

Personalized trainings

'All of my employees come from various backgrounds so training period and training system differ from system in bigger places where everything is uniformed. I conducted personalized trainings since my staff is not so many.' (1)

Trainings are the most important in implementing empowerment

'For me trainings are the most important at the beginning of their work at my place. Then they gain experience and they know what to do . Of course when we are launching new products. I organize trainings and courses again.' (3)

Own good decisions are very valuable

'Empowerment in policy of our hotel begins with courses and trainings. Employee needs to feel comfortable, good and secure. Then we allow him or her to make independent decisions. This point is out aim to reach. Employee who makes own decisions is very valuable.' (4)

Case studies to teach them how to deal with complaining guests

'Decision making process is the process where employees firstly take part in courses or group works where they works on case studies. Case studies are discusses with managers and

correct results are discussed. After words employees know how to deal with complains and problems of guests.' (4)

Another trainings for employees

'If my employees doesn't feel good with dealing with complaining customers it means I need to provide another training for them. There is no place for feeling bad when somebody complains to you. They need to step back and react in proper way.' (1)

Employees are kings of particular situations

'I think when subordinates has power to solve or fix problem coming from complaining customer they feels like they are in the center of decision making process and they feels like kings of this situations' (1)

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Opinion and knowledge about empowerment

Awareness of empowerment among leaders in Stavanger was high. All of them were familiar with phenomenon and all of them mentioned some characteristics of discussed empowerment.

All of managers defined and perceived empowerment in similar but not exactly the same way. Managers claimed that empowerment it is moving authority from managers to lower level employees and they see positive outcomes of that. As Bowen and Lower (1992) claimed 'empowerment covers management strategies for sharing decision making power' managers from Stavanger stated that they cannot imagine running their places without using empowerment as a managerial tool to increase self- efficacy of employees and general results of the place. As managers state empowerment safes manager's time.

Ownership as a part of empowerment was mentioned by interviewed managers from restaurants. They were trying to make their staff feel more connected with the place to feel more ownership. By giving them more responsibility and let them make their own decisions they were successful. Lashley (2001) confirm that in his theory 'adding responsibilities can develop a sense of personal ownership and attachment to a specific aspect of the work' (p.7).

On the other hand, feeling the ownership by employees is difficult to achieve especially in hospitality services organizations because high staff turnover. During the interview (and my own experience at one place), I have noticed that one manager mastered this skill and his staff really felt ownership. He had good skills methods to encourage employees to take care of customers like there are guests in employee's house.

All of the managers articulate the importance of using empowerment as a part of new human recourses trend. They see advantages and good, positive results when they launched

empowerment techniques. There is broad psychological explanation for empowerment and one of it says that is gives employees 'a greater sense of personal power together with the freedom to use that power' (Potterfiels, 1999). The interviewed managers does not see point of not using empowerment. They mentioned that it safes their time. Empowerment creates good work environment either in hotels' receptions and restaurants. Empowered employees feels more responsibility and perform better. That is the managers' opinion. It would be helpful to get real feedback from employees. Literature says that empowered employees

Summing up awareness of empowerment is high among interviewed managers, but one cannot assume that all managers in this region is aware of positive sides of it and empowerment techniques. Interviewed managers were very intelligent and knew how important is to manage the people.

5.2 Delegating authority

Managers in Stavanger state that they delegate authority to their employees. 'Dealing with customer complaints, which is frequently feature of empowerment in service operations, put server in difficult and potentially stressful situation' (Lashely, 2001). Employee may feel burden at work and lose his or her keenness to work. Delegating authority is basic step of implementing empowerment. If managers are aware of positive sides of it why one of them said that even thou she or he empower employees she or he tries to control staff's decisions to avoid huge costly mistakes. During interviews I have noticed that the bigger experience in hospitality services they have the more they trust and rely on empowerment. If they firstly let employees to make their own decisions they should not control them afterwards because that destroys whole work confidence in employees.

When it comes to dealing with complains from guests everybody agreed that it creates uncomfortable situation for employee. Only well trained and emphatic employee can handle it properly. Literature state accordingly in another words, employees are expected to be loyal to the place they work, by fulfilling trainings requirements and gained knowledge, they are expected to display confidence and do all what is necessary to do to meet service needs of customers (Barry, 1993; Johnson and Redmond, 1998).

Interviewed managers let their staff to make their own decisions but not all of them trust employees enough so they control them. I think it might be result of not big experience of manager. If manager does not trust employee enough when it comes to making decision it is a problem of manager's thinking. When he or she gave employee good training a procedure of empowerment was stable and proper, employee should not be controlled. That is opposite action of empowerment then.

5.3 Techniques of implementing empowerment

It was the most important to find out what kind of implementation techniques managers in Stavanger use when it comes to empowerment. Results are interesting. Interviewed mangers described their implementing techniques of empowerment but none of them followed exactly the same procedure as presented in literature. Each of them had their own style witch based on their believes that it will bring good results. Only one manager from the biggest place from the research has more structured empowerment implementation techniques. It was in big hotel where employees were acknowledge that they need to make their own decisions on spot while talking with guests. This procedure was introduced to all employees and created by many managers in hotel.

Literature presents step by step procedure which leads to success. Even though managers does not complain about their techniques and results. Brymers give managers fourteen steps implementation example in his article. Following article is described before in this thesis. As it was said above managers does not have structure of implementation but similarities with literature can be seen. Especially when it comes to communication as a technique. Brymers' article 'Employee Empowerment: A guest- driven leadership strategy' presents steps where communications and explaining the idea of empowerment is used. Managers mentioned that as an example. It means even if they do not have significant basic knowledge about empowerment (or they do not know about it) they still believe that this technique works.

Techniques which are used by interviewed managers are as follow, verbal communication, trainings, delegation authority by decision making process. Each of managers had his or her main idea how implementation will work but it was not structured. Managers' answers were not connected with this what we can find in literature but on the other hand some answers were repeated. Trainings and good verbal communications is important. Interviewed managers use their experience and knowledge and they state that they know what is the best for their employees.

Summing up discussion, managers know that implementing empowerment is profitable. They use it in daily work life but they have their own techniques which differs a bit form presented in literature. What is the reason to use their own techniques and not techniques presented in literature? Answer on this question might be lack of time to implement empowerment properly with basic knowledge from literature. It might be as well their believes and thought from their experience which showed them that empowerment implemented particular way, works. Techniques are not bad if they works. We can find some of them in literature. It means that they are aware of empowerment implementation but when they were asked about

empowerment they could not express themselves good enough to ensure interviewer that they

are aware of it.

6. CONCLUSION

Summing up all findings and discussion, empowerment is present in Stavanger among managers. Four managers were interviewed and they gave many interesting answers to contribute to this thesis. Findings showed that they are aware of empowerment and they know positive outcomes which might occur after implementing. Managers from restaurants and hotels in Stavanger gave similar answers. It means there is not big difference in dealing with front-line staff at hotels and restaurants staff serving customers. When it comes to implementing empowerment, they state that they have their own techniques which are not exactly the same as in literature. It is interesting because shows that managers trust their experience more. Hospitality services industry staff is difficult to manage especially in Stavanger because employees are mainly from abroad and it is difficult to make them feel ownership with the work place. There is big turnover among this employees so they not easily get involved into feeling responsible for workplace.

6.1 Limitation

There are some limitations to this research. Talking about empowerment in Stavanger, this thesis cannot generalize because of too small group of interviewed managers. Only four of them were asked to participate in research.

Some questions apparently were more interesting for interviewed managers so they gave more comprehensive answers. The other questions could have been changed or asked another way.

6.2 Further recommendations

To get deeper knowledge about empowerment further studies must be conducted. Very few studies were conducted in Norway about empowerment thus it is good to in-depth this topic

with interviewing much more managers. I recommend as well to conduct studies on

employees to check if techniques used by managers works and employees really feel

responsible and important at their work place.

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Appendix 1.

Interview questions

1. Years of Experience
2. Number of subordinates at the time
3. Position
4. Place
5. What do you think empowerment means?
6. What is your opinion about empowerment?
7. Do you empower your subordinates?
8. How do you empower subordinates?
9. Do you see any difference between employees who are empowered and not?
10. Do you think is it important to delegate more responsibilities to employees to make them feel more important?
11. Dealing with complains is a frequent feature of empowerment in service operations. Do your employees need to deal with customers complains and how does it affect their attitude to work?
12. Do your employees have power to fix problems by themselves or to please guests without contacting leader/ you?
13. What kind of decisions can your subordinates make when they deal with complaining guests?
14. Giving more authority to make decisions can increase organizational effectiveness and customer satisfaction. Do you agree with that statement? Why? Why not?
15. Do you involve employees to decision making process?
16. What advantages or disadvantages can you see in employee empowerment?
17. Do you employees feel more empowered and that you trust them?
18. What are your ways to empower employees?
19. How do you implement empowerment?

Interviews

Interview 1.)

5. 6. Empowerment in my opinion is a lot of small things and actions towards my employees so they feel empowered and good at their work place. This is my task to make them feel responsible for the place and give them power to take control when they are on their shifts. Employee empowerment it is base to save my time as a manager. If any manager wants to focus on managerial tasks, routines and about companies future he or she needs to know empowerment techniques. If my staff wouldn't be empowered I will never get day off.

7. Yes, I empower my employees. All of my employees come from various backgrounds so training period and training system differ from system in bigger places where everything is uniformed. I conducted personalized trainings since my staff is not so many. In Stavanger I often hire unexperienced staff who needs longer time to adapt and get to know all procedures. For me it is important that staff feel ownership with that place.

8. There is many various things which I do to empower my staff. I do not have specific plan. It depends on employee and his or her personality.

9. When empowered employees has power to solve or fix problems coming from complaining guests they feel like they are in the center of decision making on the spot. They are kings of the situations.

12. In my restaurant It is very important to react on complains straight away and be very discreet. I don't want to move complains from level of employees to higher-level managers because it cost a lot of money. It is crucial to feel empathy with customer, listen to them, understand that complain and then react very fast accordingly with what is needed. Why I want them to react like this is to keep customer felt understood

and to take a chance to make them happy after complain again. I cannot let them leave my restaurant unhappy. Thus it is important to let your employee deal with complains and teach them how to do this.

13. If staff does not feel comfortable with dealing with complains. It means that I need to provide another training for them. There is no place for feeling bad when somebody complains. All situations are fixable. They need to take step and react in proper way.

14. Employees at work need to feel freedom when I start to give them authority then I see bigger commitment to their work. They try their best to pleased customers. They feel more important.

15. Yes. I do that. I involve them in decision making process. Usually during daily briefings. I have my plan in head but it is important to listen to their ideas and comments. They need to have chance to share their opinions. During a briefing we can disscuse ideas and use the best during the day. Each time when I want to change something in my restaurant I ask my staff what they think about it. I think it is also part of empowerment, they feel important. And I get good advice.

18. Communication is the most important factor which makes staff focused and feel important. I work with small team so direct, verbal communication is crucial. I cannot imagine different method or not using it to communicate with my people. Moreover I send updated information about what is going on in restaurant via e mail so everyone is informed.

19. As I said before, Communication is the most important for me. Talking to my staff, getting to know them and then delegate authority.

Interview 2.)

6. I think Empowerment is giving people power to maintain themselves . It is very useful for managers and has a lot of positive outcomes form staff.

7. I see only positive sides of empowered employees . Giving them more authority it is my task to handle empowerment in proper way.

8. Delegating authority is important to employees. They need to know what to do and they must be responsible for their tasks.
   By giving them more authority staff need to be attached to a place they work. That is very important for me.

9. Employees have power to solve most of the current issues. They know when the issue gets more serious or would cost hotel a lot of money. They need to discusses first with management. But other than that they are allowed to make their own decisions. From basic things like providing products for breakfast which our hotel doesn't serv or if guest need bigger room and we have it everything is to fix.

10. Dealing with complains makes my employees flle that they have control over particular situation. I am glad when I see that they do their best to ,make guests satisfied.

11. Decision making process is very important in our hotel from point of view of employee empowerment. Employees are involved in meetings so thek are aware that they matter and their job is important. Their opinion is very valuable for managers because they work the closest to guests so they know the best what would be the best to change to satisfied guest.

12. They can fix problems themselves but when they are not sure or issue is serious they need to contact me.

14. Decision-making process is very important when it comes to empowerment. I notices that employees are really keen on new ideas. They want to interact with managers, they try to made new things because they feel important.

18. We organize staff meetings each month for each department in our hotel. Then we talk with everybody about past and future plans. It is important to get to know what they think, if they have ideas. Moreover we try to keep no big distance between employees and managers so always they can come to us with their problems.

19. Communication on level manager- employee is basic. Both sides needs to talk to each other. Disscuss daily routines and future plans. For me it is crucial to keep my staff focus and feeling good at work.

- Staff feel more lively when they are empowered. They have freedom in dealing with guests. They know that management trust them while doing managers' things. Employees has their area of responsibilities and they try to take care of it as best as they can.

- If I trained my staff well at the beginning it is not necessary to have more trainings later. Conversations can solve any inconveniences.

- I cannot imgine running service organizations like hotel without empowerment. It si for me crucial form of managing human recourses.

Interview 3.)

5. I run small place and I am really involved into it, I want my staff to feel also atmosphere of the place. I try to make them feel ownership. I always say to my staff that customers are the most important and they are always right. We need to do everything to make them come back and be satisfied after visit.
Empowerment is giving my staff power to act like a boss. Me and employees need to trust each other.

6. When I have small team and everybody feels empowered they are more attached to the place. They take care of it as of their own place and I see that they like to spend time here.

7. I empower my employees. I give almost all authority possible to my staff. I am often out of the place and employees are alone. So they need to know how to react and deal with situations which coming up. Of course there are positive and negative sides of empowerment but I think there is more positive aspects. Staff can tak responsibility for the place when I am not there. Negative side is that I care too much about this place and I always want to control them and their decisions. I want to check if company is not losing too much money.

8. My empowerment is basically talking to my employees and make them feel responsible about my place. Through all conversations and explanation they shoul understand that they are important to me and I want them to feel responsible for the place. They can decide about many things and fix customer problems them selves.

9. I treat all employees the same way so all of them are empowered. Sometimes when they are not sure what to do they comes to me to aks. I like it but of course it would be better when they make their own decision.

10. My employees need to solve prolems themselves. They deal with complains on the spot. They know that if it is necessary they can serve extra coffe or dessert. I think that makes them more confident when somebody complains. Of course there are difficult situatuions which are stressfull and not easy to fix.

11. Dealing with complains are thing all employees need to know how to deal with. They need to behave professional so I need to provide them training and explain them what I expect from them,

13. Situations might be stressfull in general but my staff know how to deal with complains and that knowledge has positive outcomes in most of the cases. They feel in charge. After well fixed complain they feel satisfied.

15. I involve staff very often in various initiatives in a daily basis. Often it depends on a person. I know my people quite well so I know what they like and what extra task can help them to feel more important. For instance, I have one lady who is passionate about food but she works as a waitress. I allowed her to come to work earlier when the cooks start and help them and learn from them. If she feels like making a dessert or sous she is allowed to participate in this process. Then I think she is happy that she can contribute to the food and then she is selling it better to customers. She feels more important.

18. Communication between me and my employees is number one ingredient to running this place. We need to cooperate and talk all the time about ongoing issues. Communication among staff is equally important. It keeps everything in order and prevent disaster.

19. For me trainings are the most important at the beginning of their work at my place. Then they gain experience and they know what to do . Of course when we are launching new products. I organize trainings and courses again.

Interview 3.)