

A Study on the Effects of the Employees Psychological Empowerment on Promotion of the Human Resources Productivity (A Case Study)

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Abstract

Limitations of resources as one of the most important obstacles to the rapid growth and development of organizations in the contemporary era, has turned the concept of productivity to one of the main and continual concerns of managers of the organization. In addition, the complexity and diversity of the human resource management process (management of the main organizational capital) leads to the emergence and development of various issues for managers. Managers of the organization are always looking for employees who work in accordance with the working conditions and bring maximum productivity. So far, many studies have been conducted on the ways to increase the productivity of employees, among which, the discussions of "empowerment" with their particular attitude toward human resource development, are considered as successful approaches to improving the productivity of the organization's human resources. The current study aimed at identification of the empowerment components effective on promotion of human resources productivity, and investigation of these factors effectiveness, with a descriptive-survey approach, on a statistical population of employees of Iran Auto Parts Manufacturing Company). In fact, the statistical techniques such as multiple regression coefficients as well as the structural equations, have been the basis for analyzing the relationships between the research variables. Finally, based on the dominant relationships and the effectiveness of empowerment factors on the human resources productivity, the required strategy to be applied for the statistical population of the study, has been proposed.

Keywords

Empowerment, Psychological Empowerment, Productivity, Human Resources Productivity

1. Introduction

There is a variety and diversity in different types of organizations and their practices, but they are all common in at least one case, and that is nothing but the human resource concept [1]. This point of view, along with the change in organizational conditions (the effects of new technologies and ever-increasing competition), has led to a shift in attitude to the concept of human resources, and it has been named by the titles such as key success point, competitive advantage of the organization, and the human capital. In fact, human resources have become the main capital of the organization and, consequently, the employees have become the main drivers of the work flow and the partners of the organization.

Therefore, having an organization with successful managers with specific skills, without having employees with appropriate occupational and ethical attributes, will be fruitless [2]. In this regard, the main focus of the current study is to investigate the effects of employees' empowerment on improving and promoting the productivity of human resources of the organization. What is certain is that attention to the issue of human productivity has so far been neglected for various reasons. Although some measures have been taken, such as the establishment of the National Productivity Organization, and some emphasis on the Third and Fourth Development Plans, have been undertaken to promote the productivity of human resources, there is still a long way to achieve the desired status, and vital steps need to be taken.

The official statistics of the Ministry of Industry show that most industries of the country are operating with one-third of their nominal capacity, which is equal to one-third of the capital and production capacity of the country's manufacturing units. Low productivity of human resources is an important factor in reducing the economic power of society, and inefficiency of programs and methods of work execution [3].

Empowerment, as one of the approaches of recent decades in the development of human resources, has led to positive and numerous changes in the implementation of the operational tasks of the staff. In today's changing conditions, organizations have no choice but to exploit human resources. Accordingly, the only factor creating a balance in the organization would be the employee empowerment [4].

In fact, empowerment is a tool that aligns individual goals with organizational goals and creates the belief that organizational progress will bring benefits to employees. Staff empowerment, in addition to having positive effects on the organization's performance, has positive effects on employees (Ruth Alsop et al., 2005, P108). The results of the studies clearly show its effects on work processes, including changes in staff attitudes (increased job satisfaction, stress reduction, ambiguity reduction, etc.) [5]. Achieving these attributes will be possible by empowering the most important resource and competitive tool of the organization (i.e., human resources) [18].

Based on their inherent mission and specific features of the work environment, Iran Auto Parts Manufacturing Company needs to minimize human-resource-related problems in the organization's environment (in order to benefit from its results, such as increased productivity, cost savings, etc.). In this regard, efforts have been made to, besides identifying the concepts and functions of staff empowerment and the productivity of human resources, investigate the relationship between these two concepts. Hence, the recognition and investigation of the relationship between staff empowerment and human resource productivity in Iran Auto Parts Manufacturing Company has been studied, so that by the help of the results obtained from this research, the solutions for solving existing problems and promoting the quality of human resources, would be provided.

2. The Theoretical Framework of the Study

In this chapter, by the aid of the existing theories, it has been tried to briefly define the concepts of staff empowerment and the human resources productivity, and evaluate their different aspects. In this regard, after defining these variables, and their scope, the review of the related literature and conceptual model of the study will be addressed in the final section.

2.1. Staff Empowerment

Empowering means powering. This means helping people

to improve their sense of self-confidence and overcome their sense of powerlessness and helplessness [6]. Also, creating inner motivation and opportunities for individuals to create good ideas and apply them, is another definition of empowerment [7]. Empowerment includes four dimensions that individuals display mentally and psychologically when doing work tasks. These four dimensions are meaningfulness, personal acceptance of the result (feeling of effectiveness), self-sufficiency (sense of competence) and self-esteem [8].

Scientists consider the psychological empowerment approach to be the process of creating internal motivation through the preparation of the environment, creating the basis for the transfer of feeling of self-efficacy and ultimately, more energy. This approach focuses on perceptions and how employees perceive empowerment [9]. In other words, according to this view, the distribution of power does not necessarily lead to empowerment of employees, since employees may not have such idea. In this regard, empowerment occurs when the perception of empowerment in employees (the psychological state in individuals) is created [10].

In most research, four dimensions are presented for psychological empowerment. Spritzer's studies (1994) also provide four dimensions of psychological empowerment. These four dimensions are consistent with the dimensions of the studies by Thomas and Velthouse (1990). When managers can develop these four characteristics in others, they have empowered them successfully.

The Feeling of Self-Efficacy (Competence): When individuals become empowered, they would have a feeling of self-efficacy, and that they have the ability and skill to do a job successfully. Empowered people not only feel competent but also feel that they can do the job adequately [11].

Feeling Self-determination (Feeling to have a choice): Self-determination is a person's sense of choice and a step ahead in regulating activities. Self-determination reflects the independence and continuity of processes. Examples in this area include making decisions about how to do work or determining the amount of effort involved in doing activities.

Acceptance of Personal Consequence (feeling to have impact): the extent to which one is able to impact the strategic, organizational or operational outcomes of his or her work [12]. "Impact" is the opposite of inability and disability. In addition, the impact is different from the control center, and it is being influenced by it [13].

Feeling of meaning: meaningful is the value of job objectives, or work judged in relation to individual standards or ideals [14]. In fact, meaningfulness involves matching between the requirements of role and occupation with beliefs, values and individual behaviors. Regardless of organizational obligations, individuals tend to strive for goals that have a concept for them [10].

2.2. Productivity

Research on how to increase productivity on a regular basis and within the framework of scientific discussions has been seriously considered by scholars since about 230 years

ago [15]. Today, the increase in productivity in organizations has become one of the main concerns of the managers, as in many countries, most of their development programs have been based on increased productivity. In the last fifteen years, this has led to a 45-time increase in global productivity [16]. The term productivity or production, lexically means production, fertility and being generative [3]. Scientists have identified different levels of productivity. In this regard, the model of "Hersey and Gold Smith", due to being comprehensive and considering the identification of the factors affecting the productivity of human resources [17], has been chosen as the main basis for identifying the dimensions of human productivity in this research (Especially that is has been so far the basis of more than a dozen research studies done in this regard). Based on this theory, human resource productivity includes 7 dimensions.

These dimensions are A-ability (knowledge and skills), C- clarity (role perception or imagination), H-Help (organizational support), I-Incentive (tendency), E-evaluation (performance feedback), V- Validity (fairness), and E-environment (environmental appropriateness). From the combination of the initial letters of these 77 dimensions, an acronym called ACHIEVE is obtained, and this model is also called by the same name [13].

Therefore, the identification of this relationship is the main objective of the current study, which is titled "the study of the relationship between employee empowerment and human resource productivity in Iran Auto Parts Manufacturing Company". In fact, this research, while studying the importance of human resource productivity and psychological empowerment in the studied population, also identifies the relationship between these two.

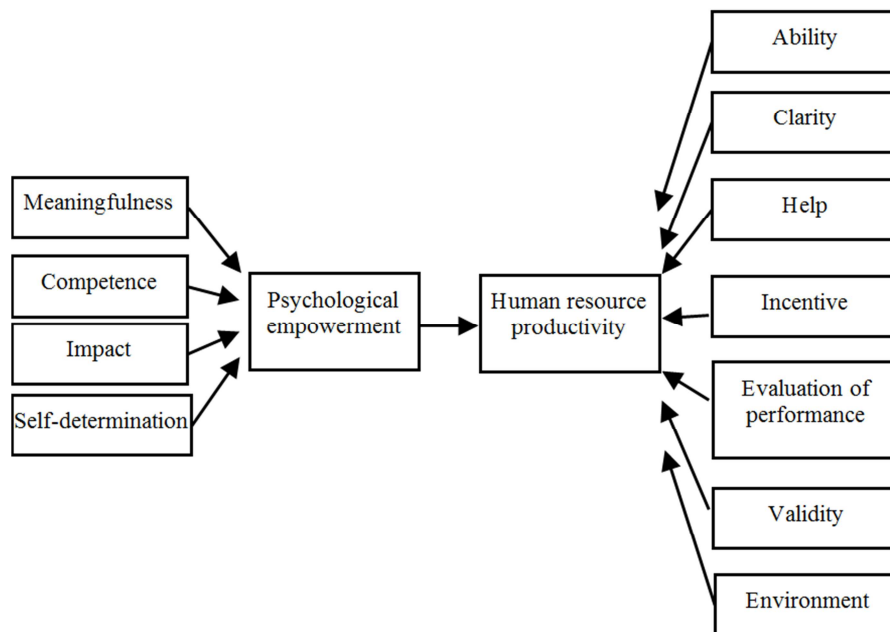


Figure 1. The relationships between psychological empowerment and Human resource productivity.

In this research, a main hypothesis and four sub-hypotheses have been developed to achieve the objectives of the research. The main hypothesis in this research is that "psychological empowerment affects the promotion of human resource productivity." Based on the main hypothesis of the research, the 4 sub-hypotheses are as follows:

1. The feeling of "meaningfulness" of the psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on the promotion of human resource productivity.
2. The feeling of "having impact" of the psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on the promotion of human resource productivity.
3. The feeling of "competence" of the psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on the promotion of human resource productivity.
4. The feeling of "self-determination" of the psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on the promotion of human resource productivity.

3. Methodology

The current study is of applied type in terms of objective, and for data collection, the descriptive-survey method has been used. As it was mentioned, because of the importance of the Hersey & Gold Smith model in productivity (ACHIEVE), it has been chosen as the criterion for measurement of the constituent components of human resource productivity. On the other hand, in order to assess the psychological empowerment of employees, in terms of comprehensiveness and importance, the Spritz model in psychological empowerment is considered as the criterion of measurement. The subject area of this research is to investigate the relationship between employee empowerment and human resource productivity in Iran Auto Parts Manufacturing Company. The statistical population of the study consists of 479 staff members and managers of this organization. Using the formula for determining sample size in binomial space in

limited societies, the sample size is 214, which is consistent with the results of Krejci and Morgan's tables.

$$n = \frac{N \cdot (Z_{\alpha})^2 \times p \cdot (1-p)}{\varepsilon^2 \cdot (N-1) + \frac{(Z_{\alpha})^2 \times p \cdot (1-p)}{2}}$$

$$n = \frac{479 \times (1/96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2 \times (479-1) + \frac{(1/96)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{2}} = 213/4321$$

Regarding the research scope of the study (all staff and managers) and the lack of any difference between the members of the statistical society, simple random sampling method was used. The main data collection instrument in this research is the questionnaire. Validity of the questionnaire was verified by applying standard tests on the human resource productivity section and cognitive empowerment of the staff. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as 0.895 by the Cronbach's alpha. The obtained data was analyzed by means of linear regression analysis (through

SPSS software) and structural equations (LISREL Software).

4. Data Analysis

For analyzing the data collected from the sample, various statistical analysis methods and tools have been used. Structural equation modeling and LISREL software were used to explain the data and evaluate the research hypotheses and identify the relationship between variables. Finally, a model of the effects of employee empowerment and human resource productivity in the form of a relationship framework, was obtained. Inferential analysis has been used to investigate and obtain the results of research hypotheses. In this section, to study the sub-hypotheses of the research and to evaluate the effect of independent variable (belief and behavioral dimensions) on the dependent variable, multiple linear regression analysis and SPSS software were used. The results of this analysis are shown in the following table.

Table 1. The results of the equations coefficient testing and regression line of the sub-hypotheses.

Regression line equation	T1	T0	Variables	Statistical hypothesis
$Y = 0.247 + 0.139 X_1$	3/08 0/000	2/64 0/000	Significance level P-Value	1 sub-hypothesis (meaningfulness)
$Y = 0.407 + 0.227 X_2$	5/74 0/004	5/61 0/003	Significance level P-Value	2 sub-hypothesis (impact)
$Y = 0.377 + 0.424 X_3$	5/63 0/000	3/61 0/004	Significance level P-Value	3 sub-hypothesis (competence)
$Y = 0.318 + 0.264 X_4$	4/70 0/001	3/61 0/000	Significance level P-Value	4 sub-hypothesis (self-determin)

Regarding the results obtained from analysis of the collected data by SPSS Software (T test), as is shown also in Table 1, all coefficients of regression line equations on the four dimensions of the cognitive empowerment model were confirmed And meaningful. Accordingly, all regression lines associated with the sub-hypotheses of the research are significant and the effect of each of these dimensions on the promotion of human resource productivity is confirmed.

In the following, with the help of structural equation analysis, the effect of independent variable dimensions

(empowerment of employees) on dependent variable (human resource productivity) has been investigated in order to obtain the necessary response to the rejection or confirmation of the main hypothesis of the research. Theoretically, the latent variables, or the structures, are the underlying causes of measured variables. The complete model of structural equations of this study is shown in Figure 2. The effect of variables in the path diagram is indicated by directional arrows, which represents theoretical relationships between the latent and the observable variables.

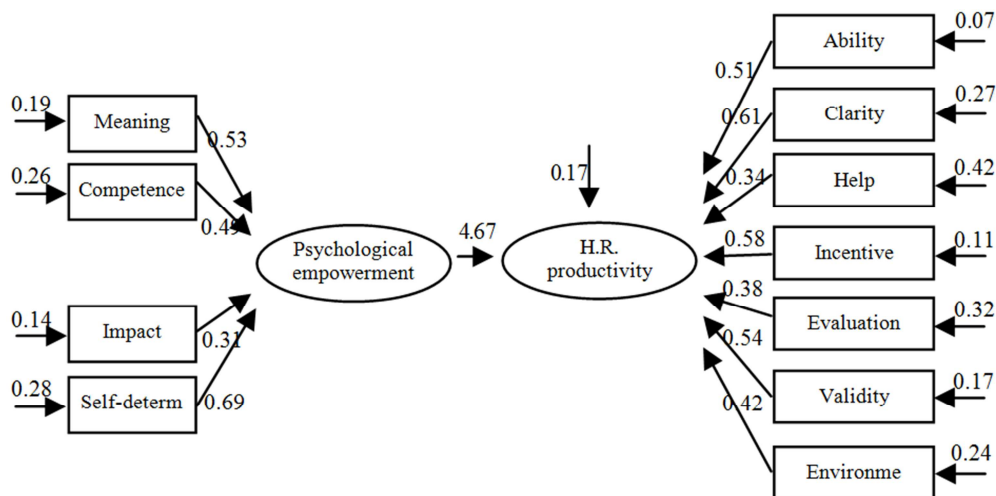


Figure 2. The structural equations model.

Chi-square=109.63, DF=213, P-value=0.0809, RMSEA=0.068

The above figure shows certain relationships between the main variables of the research (main hypothesis). In this regard, we can confirm the effect of empowerment of employees on human resource productivity and explain their

relationships according to Table 2 in the form of structural equation. The complete relationship of the structural equation model is in the form of the following equation:

Table 2. Structural equations.

Human resource productivity = γ_1 (psychological empowerment) + ε_1 Independent latent variable: psychological empowerment	Human resource productivity = $4/67$ (psychological empowerment) + $0/17$ Dependent latent variable: human resource productivity
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The most important output indicator and the analysis of LISREL software for relationships fitness is the GFI index, whose closeness to one (100%) indicates the fitness of the research relationship. In fact, this index refers to the percentage of the ability to estimate the variables in the model. The research model has the ability to estimate 95% of relationships, which is indicative of the fitness of relationships and the effect of empowering employees on human resource productivity. Since the set of linear equations

in the path diagram is fitted with the observed data, it can be concluded that the existence and reality of the causal model are significant and the model is a suitable model for responding to the main hypothesis of the research (an appropriate estimator for identifying the empowerment of employees on Productivity is human labor). The results of the tests related to the overall fitness of the structural equation model are shown in the following table.

Table 3. The results of the equations general fitness.

Statistical index	Index full name	Value	Acceptable range (in path analysis)	Result
χ^2/df	Chi Square Divided to Degree of Freedom	109.63/213=0.514	$\chi^2/df < 2$	Confirmed
P-Value	Significance Level	0.0809	P-Value > 0.05	Confirmed
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	0.068	RMSEA < 0.09	Confirmed
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index	0.91	GFI > 0.9	Confirmed
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	0.95	AGFI > 0.9	Confirmed
PGFI	Parsimony Goodness of Fit Index	0.89	PGFI > 0.9	Approximately confirmed
RMR	Root Mean Square Residual	0.07	RMR < 0.09	Confirmed
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	0.92	CFI > 0.9	Confirmed
IFI	Incremental Fit Index	0.91	IFI > 0.9	Confirmed
NFI	Normed Fit Index	0.93	NFI > 0.9	Confirmed

5. Conclusion

In this research, based on a main question and four sub-questions, we tried to analyze the relationship between employee empowerment and human resource productivity in Iran Auto Parts Manufacturing Company through statistical analysis techniques. The results of the analysis indicate that this relationship is verified with a probability of 95%. Accordingly, the response to the main question of the research is positive.

A closer examination of the results of the correlation coefficient analysis of sub-hypotheses indicates that there is a difference between the dimensions of productivity in relation to empowerment of employees, as in the meantime, the "impact" dimension has the lowest correlation coefficient and the "self-determination" dimension has the highest correlation coefficient with the psychological empowerment of the staff. This issue can be examined from two perspectives, one theoretically (previous theories), and second, investigation of its causes in the researched population. Reviewing the related literature, the results indicate that there is a proximity between the concepts of psychological empowerment and the employee's conscientiousness dimension. In fact, these two concepts are formed by the beliefs of the individual about his work (which

is a factor in strengthening the relationship between them).

On the other hand, the weakness of the correlation between psychological empowerment and "humanism" dimension is due to the difference in attitudes toward these concepts. Psychological empowerment consists of an attitude and an emotion that is formed in relation to one's own characteristics, while the second dimension is formed by the attitude and feeling of individuals to others. In fact, the concepts of psychological empowerment are "individualist" and the concepts of productivity are "collectivized". The former is shaped by an interest-seeking approach, and the latter with a humanistic approach. Indeed, reviewing and observing the results of other correlation coefficients (although confirming the existence of a correlation between these two variables) does not indicate a strong relationship between these two concepts. Generally, this is also theoretically due to the difference in the way these two theories look at human resource development.

Investigation of the causes of this incident, regarding the internal conditions of the studied society (Iran Khodro Parts Supply Company), indicates that the average psychological empowerment status of the research community is from medium to low (weak) and, on the other hand, the average situation of productivity ranges from medium to high (strong). Of course, this is completely justified by organizational conditions. On the one hand, the type of uniform tasks and the

mechanical structure of the company (due to its high formalism, concentration and complexity) have led to limitation of the staffs and a reduction in the average sense of their psychological empowerment. On the other hand, the existence of an appropriate organizational culture and a friendly job interaction has led to the creation of a suitable platform for the development of productivity in the company. In sum, these effects and means have led to a reduction in the correlation coefficient between the two concepts.

At the same time, this relationship was also analyzed using the path analysis chart. The results show the fitness of the path diagram and its predictability of 94% for the relationship between productivity and psychological empowerment of employees, according to the obtained pattern. In fact, it can be concluded that the existence and truth of the path diagram (the positive response to the main question) is significant and the relationship between the variables is confirmed.

According to the results of the research questions and the existing relationships between the variables in general, it can be said that if there is a mechanism for the psychological empowerment of employees in Iran KHODRO Supplying Company, productivity will be promoted and expanded. Accordingly, based on the results of the study, the following suggestions are given for application:

In order to make better use of the results and findings of the research, it is necessary for the managers of the Iran KHODRO Parts Supplying Company to complete the implementation of these two methods in a completely, simultaneous and independent manner in order to develop human resources of the organization. In fact, with the help of this method, due to the correlation between these two projects, the platform for synergy and promotion of the level of results in their implementation, is made, so that application of each would be effective on upgrading of the other. In fact, it is necessary to avoid single-dimensional implementation (with the aim of another grounding or achieving the second method - although there is a correlation between these two methods), since based on the difference in implementation, the application of one in human resource development programs, in addition to not paying attention to other dimensions of employee development, would have no result but the one-dimensionality of the moves. Therefore, it is considered that the dimensions of productivity in the recruitment of employees, as well as training and strengthening the dimensions of productivity and psychological empowerment in the staff, or providing the conditions and facilities necessary for the implementation of these behaviors in the organization, can expand the scope of these concepts, and the development of staff.

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