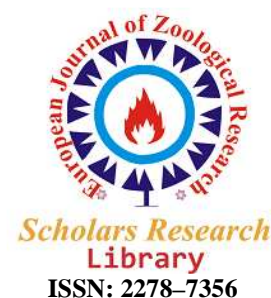




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Investigating relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational learning among the staff of education organization Karaj province

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ABSTRACT

Aimed at investigating the relationship between psychological empowerment (meaningfulness, self-efficacy, impact, self-determination, and trust) and organizational learning, 326 personnel from Karaj Province Department of Education Organization Karaj Province were chosen through cluster. Generally, the results indicated that among the factors of psychological empowerment, self-efficacy, self-determination, impact and meaningfulness had the most power to predict the organizational learning respectively. It is noteworthy that there was no significant relationship between trust and organizational learning.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment, Organizational learning, Karaj Province

INTRODUCTION

Today's fierce competition requires firms to transform themselves to be ready to change and adapt [1]. To survive and thrive in such a world, an organization must always be ready to adapt. Thus, many organizations strive to have a learning culture to create and transfer knowledge for survival [2]. Nowadays, the most important assets of an organization are smart and knowledgeable staffs who lead their organization to a sustainable competitive advantage by creating modern organizational processes. Innovative attempts in an organization are resulted from investment on learning process and upgrading human resources management and knowledge management [3]. As the depth and speed in change of today's business environment is accelerating due to globalization, technological innovation, and the knowledge-based economy, jobs have become more complex, challenging, and empowering [1]. Thus, we suppose it is psychological empowerment that can significantly influence organizational learning and prepare the clerks to handle such situations.

Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment is fundamentally a motivational process of an individual's experience of feeling enabled [4]. To empower is to give power, so that individuals have personal influences or choice over their own behavior in a work environment. Bowen and Schneider (1985) argued that an empowered workforce is better able to provide high quality customer service. Therefore, to obtain a competitive advantage and to differentiate a company from others, employees empowered by supportive managers are a key to success in a competitive world [5]. Empowering employees affect employee satisfaction, loyalty, performance, and service delivery [6]. Empowerment is closely

related to people's perceptions about themselves in relation to their work environments [7]. The environment surrounding individuals is important for increasing psychological empowerment because empowerment is not a consistent or enduring personality trait, but rather a set of cognitions shaped by work environments [8]. A great deal of effort was made to increase individuals' psychological empowerment by focusing both on empowering management practices [9]. And on the psychological nature of empowerment [8,10]. The same time, psychological empowerment has been emphasized as an important factor for employees' health [11], satisfaction and loyalty [12]. Empowering conditions, such as opportunities for decision autonomy, challenge, and responsibility make employees appreciate what they have. In turn, such appreciation results in feelings of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, and impact [13]. Consequently, they are likely to reciprocate by being more committed to an organization [13]. Thus, it is likely that the more employees are empowered, the more highly they are committed to their organization as well as to organizational learning process. Psychological empowerment of clerks is one of the psychological characteristics which can help provide such conditions. Empowerment mechanism is a management tool which operates on a number of management processes [14]. Recently, a multidimensional concept of empowerment has been considered by experts in which empowerment is defined as experienced psychological manners and cognition. This multidimensional definition of empowerment focuses on personal experience [8]. According to this view, "psychological empowerment" includes a person's important psychological feelings to his/her work place which can be summarized in five factors; meaning, competency, impact, self-determination and trust [12].

Organizational Learning

Modern companies operate in a constantly varying and highly unstable business environment. There is a constant need for them to change and learn at individual, group, organizational and inter-organizational levels [15]. Organizational learning is considered to be one of the most promising concepts in modern managerial literature. According to De Genus, "the ability to learn faster than your competitors might be the only sustainable competitive advantage you have" [16]. Indeed, extensive empirical research provided support for the notion that companies that manage their organizational learning processes better are also better-off in terms of financial and non-financial results [17, 18, 19].

[20] Emphasizes the importance of organizational learning for organizational performance defining it as a process through which managers try to increase organizational members' capabilities in order to better understand and manage the organization and its environment to accept decisions that increase organizational performance on a continuous basis [20].

Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Learning

Psychological empowerment has a mediating effect between the organizational environment (input) and subsequent behaviors (output) [21]. It is likely that the more employees perceive an organization as providing continuous learning opportunities, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership, the more likely they will be psychologically attached to their organization [1]. A research conducted by Khanalizadeh et al. among employees of Tarbiat Modares University in Iran indicates a strong correlation between organizational learning and empowerment [21].

To the realization of the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Learning, the researcher intends to predict organizational learning of personnel from Karaj Province Department of Education Organization Karaj Province on the basis of psychological empowerment factors through regression analysis.

It should be noted that few researches have been conducted to investigate the relationships among the variables of this research. Therefore, conducting a research of this nature in Karaj Province Department of Education Organization Karaj Province can be regarded as an important step toward unveiling the relationship among psychological empowerment factors and organizational learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to the purpose, this study is in the category of applied research and according to the data collection procedure is in the category of descriptive research and correlation.

Population and sample

The population of this study includes all the clerks of karaj Province Department of Education Organization Experts karaj Province. The sample of this study consists of 150 clerks who have been chosen through random cluster sampling.

Data collection instruments

For collecting data, a self-report questionnaire of organizational learning, composed of 65 items by [22] and also [23] 18-item questionnaire of psychological empowerment with factors including "meaningfulness", "competency", "impact", "self-determining" and "trust" were used . In order to determine the validity of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was used. The Cronbach's alpha for organizational learning, and psychological empowerment factors were 0.71 and 0.73 respectively. It should be noted that the reliability of the questionnaires which are used in this research have been approved by the respective experts.

RESULTS

Correlation coefficients, mean of the variables of the study are illustrated in the following table.

Table 1. Correlation, Mean

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
- Self-efficacy	1	-	-	-	-	-
- Meaningfulness	.421**	1	-	-	-	-
- Trust	.323**	.214**	1	-	-	-
- Impact	.524**	.221**	.314**	1	-	-
- Self-determination	.315**	.412**	.322**	.368**	1	-
- organization	.548**	.425**	.264**	.514**	.457**	1
Mean	4.44	4.12	3.45	3.74	2.84	3.12

*P < 0.05 ** P < 0.01*

As can be seen in the table above, among psychological empowerment factors, self-efficacy (0.548), impact (0.514), self-determination (0.457), meaningfulness (0.425) and trust (0.264) have the highest and lowest correlation with entrepreneurship respectively. Table of regression analysis for predicting organizational learning on the basis of psychological empowerment factors along with necessary explanations follow.

Table 2: Multiple regression summary

Predictor variable	R	R ²	Adjusted R square	Std error the estimate	F	Sig
Psychological Empowerment	0.49	0.51	0.44	2.27	23.21	0.000

As it is shown in the table above, the amount of organizational learning variance by psychological empowerment factors is 0.51 which is meaningful at the level 0.001 with respect to F=23.21. Therefore the research hypothesis on the relationship between psychological empowerment factors and organizational learning is confirmed and it is concluded that psychological empowerment factors are able to predict organizational learning. Since the observed F and the equation of predicting organizational learning are meaningful, the table for multiple regressions follows.

Table 3: Multiple regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std Error	β	T	Sig
- Constant	1.009	1.37	-	0.73	0.51
- Self-efficacy	0.46	0.12	0.29	2.77	0.00
-Self-determination	0.22	0.07	0.21	3.12	0.00
- Meaningfulness	0.13	0.05	0.17	2.66	0.00
- Impact	0.13	0.05	0.18	2.32	0.00
- Trust	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.90	0.44

As the table above indicates, the amount of obtained β for self-efficacy is 0.31 which is meaningful with respect to t=2.77 which means that with one unit of increase in self-efficacy, organizational learning is increased by 0.29 The amount of obtained β for self-determination 0.21 which is meaningful with respect to t=3.41 which means that with one unit of increase in self-determination, organizational learning is increased by 0.22 The amount of obtained β for meaningfulness is 0.17 which is meaningful with respect to t=2.66 which means that with one unit of increase in

meaningfulness, organizational learning is increased by 0.19. The amount of obtained β for impact is 0.18 which is meaningful with respect to $t=2.32$ which means that with one unit of increase in impact, organizational learning is increased by 0.21. The amount of obtained β for trust is 0.04 which is meaningful with respect to $t=0.9$ which is not statistically meaningful. Finally, it is observed that among psychological empowerment factors, self-efficacy, self-determination, impact and meaningfulness have the capability of predicting organizational learning respectively.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research indicated that there is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment factors and organizational learning, and psychological empowerment factors can predict organizational learning. It means by investment in psychological empowerment we can expect that organizational learning in the company to be increased.

Multiple regression analysis indicated that there is a meaningful relationship between psychological empowerment factors and organizational learning among the clerks of karaj Province Department of Education Organization Experts Karaj Province. It is observed that among psychological empowerment factors, self-efficacy and meaningfulness represent the highest and the lowest amount of organizational learning variance respectively. The results also showed that psychological empowerment factors simultaneously predict organizational learning. Multiple regression analysis indicated that obtained β for "trust" is not meaningful due to being overlapped with other psychological empowerment factors. The results of this research are in line with researches conducted both inside and outside Iran. In this regard, [21]. Indicates a strong correlation between organizational learning and psychological culture positively and significantly affected the level of employees' organizational commitment. Additionally, the moderation effects of organizational learning culture were found to be significant [1]. [24] Indicates that organizational learning has positive and important effects on intellectual capital. It means by investment in education and learning for each of the individuals, groups and organizations we can expect that the intellectual capital of the company including human capital, structural capital and relational capital to be increased [21].

Considering the meaningfulness role of self-efficacy in organizational learning, self-efficacy should be enhanced through assigning tasks on the basis of expertise and ability, emphasizing skills, supporting emotionally and socially and motivating and appreciating the clerks. on the basis of the findings of the research, and the meaningfulness of the relationship between self-determination and meaningfulness with organizational learning in karaj Province Department of Education organization Experts karaj Province, some strategies must be worked out in order for the clerks to feel independent in what they do and being capable of penetrating into strategic, institutional or operational consequences in their field of work. As to the role of "trust" in predicting organizational learning, although this contribution did not turn out to be meaningful by simultaneous entry of variables into the equation of regression, the results of correlation analysis of regression indicated that this factor plays a role in increasing organizational learning. Therefore, managers are recommended to strengthen this feeling among their staff so that their staffs are certain that they will be treated fairly and in the same manner, and even holding a subordinate status, the final result of their work will be justice, not damage and loss. Finally the results of multiple regression analysis indicated that "self-efficacy" not only has the capacity of predicting organizational learning but also holds a greater share than other psychological empowerment factors. Consequently, high officials and policymakers in karaj Province Department of Education organization Karaj Province are advised to match the job requirements and roles of the clerks in their office, with their personal values and beliefs. This makes it clear that under any circumstances, personal values and beliefs have priority over other factors for the karaj Province Department of Education organization Karaj Province clerks.

It is recommended that interested researchers investigate the relationship between psychological empowerment factors and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, group effectiveness, leadership styles and other related variables.

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