Investigation of Relationship between Employees' Empowerment and Being a Learning Organization in Guilan Province Universities, Iran

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Abstract: The present research tries to investigate relationship between employees' empowerment and learning organization in Guilan Province Universities. Today, organizations must be managed in a completely competitive environment. In such conditions, managers do not have enough opportunity to control employees. Employees will be able to fulfill their duties well only when they have enough skill, knowledge and ability. The tool that helps managers in this case is empowerment process. Learning organization becomes important in these conditions. Learning organization concept was introduced about 20 years ago and its goal was to empower managers and employees in order to achieve competitive advantage and organizational flexibility. The present research is an applied study from its goal viewpoint and its method is descriptive-correlational. Statistical population of the research included 2690 employees of Gilan Province universities which have more than 15 employees. According to Krejcie Morgan Table, 338 people were selected by means of stratified random sampling. Data and information was gathered by means of standard questionnaires of empowerment and being a learning organization. The questionnaires validity was verified by experts and professors and their reliability was tested by Cronbach’s alpha to be 87% and 96% respectively. Descriptive analysis including frequency distribution, frequency percentage, mean, standard deviation and … and inference statistics including Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression and t test were used. Results showed that there is positive and significant relationship between employees' empowerment and being a learning organization. Variables sense of trust, sense of being effective and sense of independence had the greatest influence on the dependent variable (being a learning organization) from empowerment dimensions (sense of competence, sense of independence, sense of being effective, sense of being significant and sense of trust).

Keywords: empowerment, learning organization, sense of independence, sense of being effective, sense of competence, sense of being significant, sense of trust, universities of Gilan province

INTRODUCTION

Efficient human resource is an important characteristic of being superior to other organizations. Presence of committed and empowered employees in an organization results in reduction of absence, delay and transfer and also leads to increase in organizational performance, employees' spiritual happiness, achievement of goals and individual goals (Abili et al, 2009). Review of management literature reveals that empowerment has received a lot of attention and this can be attributed to several reasons. Empowerment is an important element in managerial and organizational effectiveness and when power and control is shared, effectiveness is therefore increased (Keler and Dansereaul, 1995). Employees are the most valuable capital of an organization. Development and changes in an organization depends on human resource empowerment. Universities need empowered and knowledgeable employees due to their in-bred philosophy of science development (Gholijafari et al, 2008). In the present complex world, organizations with high level of information about their environment can survive. Learning organization is conceptualized and come to existence in such cases. Learning organizations are organizations that can identify their environmental needs and provide their necessary tools for adaptation and therefore live on. all organizations experience learning but a learning organization must have capacity for learning and adaptation with changes and those processes of learning must be developed, managed and coordinated in that organization with the aim of innovation and improvement (MasoudiNadoushan et al, 2005).
Statement of the problem

Organizations have to respond to today's changes. Otherwise, they will die. Business world is turning from domination of capital into advantage of knowledge. An organization seeking success must develop human resources and increase the knowledge and information in access. Knowledge and information are strategic resources for organizations and must be managed and developed. Learning organization and knowledge production has received a lot of attention within the past years. Many organizations have increased organizational learning capability and implementation of empowerment plans and have tried to overcome internal and external obstacles and facilitate employees' empowerment. In the present era, successful organizations are those whose employees try to become empowered and managers' duties are to facilitate this process for teaching trend (Horistin, 2006). Empowerment means to enable employees to improve their self-confidence, remove their disappointments and motivate them for doing activities (Whetten and Cameron, 1998). In empowerment, more independence and freedom of action and responsibility is given to employees. In other words, vertical enrichment and other similar methods used for increasing employees' freedom of action are called empowerment (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001).

Learning organization is a new concept which has received a lot of attention in the past years. These are organizations that change along with environmental changes and try to learn, contrary to traditional organizations. Such a kind of learning involves changing the way of thinking. They learn how to learn together, how to approach ideas and mental impressions. Therefore, a learning organization learns to change and develop.

A "learning organization" is a group of words which can act like a sword with two edges. In other words, it can play a pain-killing role and a creative and empowerer role. Learning organization phenomenon was introduced 20 years ago and aimed to resist against complex and commercial world (Mahmoudi, 2006).

Research hypothesis

Main hypothesis

There is relationship between employees' empowerment and being a learning organization in Guilan Province universities.

Subsidiary hypotheses

There is relationship between employees' empowerment and being a learning organization in public universities.
There is relationship between employees' empowerment and being a learning organization in Azad universities.
There is relationship between sense of competence and being a learning organization in public universities.
There is relationship between sense of independence and being a learning organization in public universities.
There is relationship between sense of being independent and being a learning organization in public universities.
There is relationship between sense of being significant and being a learning organization in public universities.
There is relationship between sense of trust among employees and being a learning organization in public universities.
There is relationship between sense of competence in employees and being a learning organization in Azad Universities.
There is relationship between sense of independence in employees and being a learning organization in Azad universities.
There is relationship between sense of being effective and being a learning organization in Azad universities.
There is relationship between sense of being significant and being a learning organization in Azad universities.
There is relationship between sense of trust among employees and being a learning organization in Azad universities.
There is difference between being a learning organization in public and Islamic Azad Universities.
There is significant difference between employees' empowerment in Public and Islamic Azad Universities.

Research Methodology

The present research is a descriptive study and was conducted by correlation and causal-comparative methodology. Population included all universities of Guilan province in 2012-2013 which had more than 15 employees. Krejcie-Morgan Table was used to calculate sample size to be 338 people. Two questionnaires designed by Spritzer and Mishera. Pearson correlation test and multi-variable regression and t test was used to analyze data.

Data analysis

Main hypothesis: there is significant relationship between employees' empowerment and being a learning organization in Guilan province universities.

In this test, empowerment components (sense of competence, sense of independence, sense of being effective, sense of being significant, and sense of trust) were studied. Step-by-step regression results shows that sense of trust was entered the model as the most powerful independent variable and managed to predict % of the variance of dependent variable (being a learning organization); in the second step, sense of being effective entered the model and these two variables (sense of trust and sense of being effective) managed to explain 28% of the
variance of dependent variable (being a learning organization); in the third step, sense of independence was added to the model and the three variables (sense of trust, sense of being effective and sense of independence) managed to predict % of the variance of dependent variable (being a learning organization); the variables sense of competence and sense of being significant did not have significant role in explanation of dependent variable.

Table 1. multiple correlation between independent and dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient of multiple correlation coefficient (R²)</th>
<th>Multiple correlation coefficient (R)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: test of variance analysis for model significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Mean of Squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>107.28</td>
<td>29325.91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29325.91</td>
<td>regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>273.35</td>
<td>34158.35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91572.79</td>
<td>Remaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>65.77</td>
<td>17079.17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34158.35</td>
<td>regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>259.71</td>
<td>11754.14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>86740.35</td>
<td>Remaining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>45.71</td>
<td>257.17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85636.26</td>
<td>regression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each 3 steps, the calculated F is statistically significant (P≤0.001). Therefore, we conclude with 99% of certainty that the relationship between empowerment components and being a learning organization is statistically significant and predicting variables (empowerment variables) can predict dependent variable (being a learning organization); therefore, we can analyze the regression. Step-by-step regression model was used to determine the best predictor for being a learning organization.

Table 3. Standard and non-standard coefficients of independent and dependent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficients of predicting variables</th>
<th>Non-standard coefficients</th>
<th>Standard coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Standard estimation error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant values</td>
<td>44.49</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trust</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being effective independence</td>
<td>0.479</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data summarized in table 3, the variable sense of trust among employees (p≤0.001, t=6.91, B=1.84), the variable sense of being effective (p<0.001, t=3.21 and B=1.09) and the variable sense of independence (p≤0.001, t=2.07, B=0.479) had significant role in prediction of dependent variable (being a learning organization). Sense of trust with Beta=0.368 has the greatest role in prediction of dependent variable (being a learning organization).

being a learning organization = 44.49 + 1.84(sense of trust among employees) + 1.09 (sense of being effective) + 0.479(employees' sense of independence)

The present research tries to investigate the relationship between employees’ empowerment and being a learning organization in Guilan Province universities, Iran. The role of employees' empowerment in creation of a learning organization was analyzed in this study. Although there have been many methods for creation of a learning organization but the present study showed that employees’ empowerment and its dimensions have positive and significant relationship with being a learning organization.

REFERENCES

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