THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT IN NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

Abdolreza Miri (Ph.D)

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Management & Accounting, Qazvin Islamic Azad University, Qazvin Branch, Nokhbegan Blv., P. O. Box: 34185-1416, Qazvin , Iran, Tel: +98-912-1894482,

Hassan Rangriz (Ph.D)

Assistant Professor, Department of Management, University of Economic Sciences, No. 66, Roudsar Ave, Hafez Ave, P. O. Box: 15875-1111, Tehran, Iran, Tel: +98-912-2262026,

Esmail Sabzikaran (M.A.)

Reader, Faculty of Management, Shahid Sattary Air University, Tehran, Iran, Tel:+98-912-5014240,

Abstract

This article has been resulted from a research on an exploration of the relationship between organizational structure and employees' empowerment. There are different approaches to empowering employees. In this research, psychological approach has been considered. The psychological empowerment concerns the attitude and perception of employees from their work place. This perception and attitude is employed as evaluation criterion for empowerment. According to research literature related to empowerment, psychological empowerment consists of four traits of competence, self-determination, meaningfulness and effectiveness.

On the other hand, organizational structure, as one of the most important constituents of an organization will impact on its every internal process, including human resources and particularly employees' empowerment. Regarding the importance of Robbins research in organizational structure studies, this study is based on his perspective for identification and evaluation of structure in statistical community of this study. Robbins' organizational structure has three traits of formality, sophistication and concentration.

In this study, first the relationship between the traits of organizational structure and employees' empowerment in National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) –Tehran area is investigated, then the results have been employed to identify and offer a convenient model for the establishment of psychological empowerment in research community.

Keywords: Organizational Structure, Empowerment, Psychological Empowerment, Mechanic Structure, Organic Structure

Introduction

The new age has created a different condition for organizations. With transition from the Industrial Revolution, instrumental attitude to human work force has declined. The personnel of the professional organizations have turned to the main directors of the work stream and organization' partners; therefore, not only should the managers have the advantage of leadership skills, but also the employees need to learn procedures so as to proceed towards the leadership itself.[1]

To acquire these features, an organization must empower its most important and competitive source and instrument that is its human resources. [2]

Using traditional management approaches results in blocking the sense of innovation of employees, an increase of the amount of work and creating limitations for them. On the other hand, complete freedom of the employees causes chaos and disruption in work affairs. Both circumstances may result in misuse of an organization's material and spiritual resources, thus it will not attain its intended effectivity. [3] Empowering the employees establishes necessary equilibrium between the two stated dimensions. In fact, empowerment is a tool that aligns individual and organizational goals and makes the employees believe that the organization's growth and progress will follow their interests. [4]

In the current tumultuous circumstances, the organizations can not help appropriately taking advantage of human resources. The competitive advantage of an organization depends on its empowered and deserving human resources that can appropriately respond to the environmental changes. Empowered personnel do not merely function in their work scope, but they consider themselves responsible against all the activities of the organization; hence, they make attempts to take charge of decision-making in their work and specialty domains and to accept work as a part of life so as to perceive the effect of their work activities on the life of the organization. In empowerment, the goal is the growth of capabilities and competencies of individuals such that their private and working life is endowed with creativity and satisfaction.

The statement of the problem
Attending to the factors that diminish the existing inabilities of employees in performing their job tasks is among the focused issues in improving individuals' performance. Individual differences such as self-confidence, creativity and innovation, positive-thinking etc. are of particular importance in overcoming these problems. Achieving such goals needs to employ appropriate and scientific tactics relevant to them. [6] Empowerment is one of the most important ones to develop these features in individuals. Outputs resulting from dynamism and creativity of employees can be referred to as the most important resources of an organization. Empowerment is growing as the new stimulant of this environment. Nowadays, the main source of competitive advantage is not the mere use of technology, but it is rooted in sacrifice, innovation, positive-thinking, quality, commitment and ability of work force. [7]

Empowering employees brings positive effects on attitude and behavior of employees. Attitude changes of employees lead to the increase of job satisfaction, the decrease of stress, job ambiguities and so forth. Empowerment also develops the power of decision-making, independence at work and freedom in decision-making. But as its behavioral effects, it can be referred to the increase of employees' self-confidence, increase of adaptability, expedition in responding to customers and so on. [8]

Investigating into the studies conducted and the process of successful organizations in implementing empowerment represent that "organizational structure"

is one of the most important factors in establishing empowerment, so that since 1970s, the organizations tended to apply empowerment process towards the replacement of traditional, controlled and inactive structures with the dynamic, active, participatory and self-managing organizational environments. [9]

In fact, traditional structures, with such features as concentration, labor division, inflexibility against environmental changes and close supervision [10] and its mechanical form, deny any kind of motion and dynamism from individuals. In contrast, new organizational structures, with dynamic and organic formations which are like a network of relationships and have such features as customer-orientedness, division of decision-making power, high power of flexibility, engender the decrease of environmental uncertainty and self-control in individuals and thus develops a sound ground for carrying out empowerment process.[11]

Therefore, any structure can not be considered predisposed and convenient to implement the process of empowering employees in an organization. An appropriate structure for empowerment requires its factors and indicators and in fact it is an appropriate ground for its execution. [12] Given that empowerment is regarded as an internal variable for an organization and it is obviously related with the dimensions of organizational structure; hence, it is essential that the relationship of this variable be measured in view of the dimensions of structure and their mutual effects on each other in order to achieve the goal of this research.

The relationship between organizational structure in NIOPDC –Tehran area, with the employees' psychological empowerment is an issue which is focused on in this research. Due to the wide range of the domain of concepts and dimensions of organizational structure, particularly in definitions area, and regarding the principle of limited scope of the subject of research, and based on Robbins perspective   only, the dimensions of organizational structure is considered as an independent variable in relation with the psychological empowerment. Also, this study seeks to answer to the question that whether the process of psychological empowerment has more proportion and fitness on which of the two structures (organic or mechanic) on the basis of structural classification.

To this end, the subject of research is raised within this question: "Is there any correlation between the factors of organizational structure (complexity, formality, and concentration) and psychological empowerment (competence, self-determination, meaningfulness, and effectiveness). At the end of the research, and based on the confirmed relationships between the research variables, a model can be offered that illustrates the relationship between the dimensions of organizational structure with the dimensions of psychological empowerment and is the basis for providing tactics in the research community.
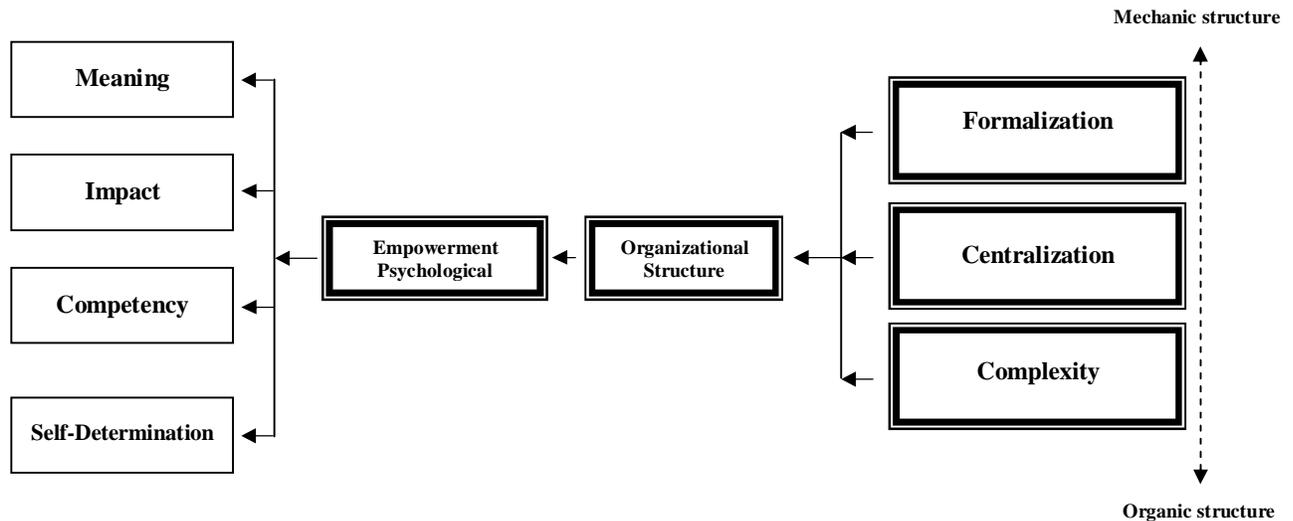
Figure 1: Research Conceptual Model

Review of Literature

Empowerment is considered as a recent subject in the literature of human resources and particularly the development of human resources. Meanwhile, due to the variety of research and wide range of studies carried out, this field enjoys rich literature and different approaches have been raised in it. [13]

In summary, this literature is divided into two parts or approaches. First, the studies which focus on structural approach of empowerment. In these studies empowerment is regarded as a result of a process and its formation is affected by external environment. It is called «structural approach ». [14] In fact, its main subject is to examine tools and means that managers provide, by which they bring their personnel closer to empowerment in the organization. The authorities of this field include Eisenberger, R. (1986), Burke, W. (1987), Block, P. (1987), Deci, E.L. (1989), Ryan, R.M. (1989), Carson K. P. (1991), Parker, L. E. (1994), and others.

The second group of theorists has further dealt with the importance of psychological dimension of empowerment in their studies. They have considered "empowerment" as an infrastructural factor in improving and developing the activities of an organization. In their opinion, empowerment is an individual's internal factor, and thus it is directly related to his attitude, feeling or perception of work environment. They believe that development or consolidation of the feeling of empowerment in an individual's mental dimensions results in his empowerment.[15] In fact, this attitude has improved to the extent that this approach is reminded of as a new motivating factor in reviving and creating tendency to work in the employees. Some of the researchers of this field include: Conger & Kanungo (198), Thomas & Velthous (1990), Zimmerman (1990), Spreitzer and so on. [16]

Due to the significance of Spreitzer's studies, particularly his psychological empowerment, the measurement of psychological empowerment in this research is based on that model. As it was stated, psychological empowerment is amongst the recent subjects in literature of human resource development, which needs to be identified and described comprehensively in terms of its dimensions and sub-fields. In the rest, we will explain this approach and its constituent parts in detail.

Table 1: Comparison of Empowerment in Former Approaches and Psychological Approach

Empowerment in Former Approaches	Empowerment in Psychological Approach
1- Empowerment means granting authority. 2- Individual and his perception is basis for developing empowerment. 3- Emphasis on participatory management, quality cycles, self-managing teams, bilateral goal-setting. 4- The process of assigning decision-making within a clear framework and emphasis on individuals' responsibility. 5- Exercising empowerment in the organization hierarchically.	1- Empowerment means granting energy. 2- Individual and his perception is basis for developing empowerment. 3- Emphasis on internalized commitment to job, simple controls, risk-taking and innovation. 4- The process of developing intrinsic work motivation through preparing the environment, so as feel more self-efficacy. 5- Exercising empowerment in the organization from bottom to up.

The psychological approach to empowerment is regarded as a new substitute in these studies which differentiates between situational features (e.g. managerial practices) and job conceptions (including employees' perception and belief in their power, competence and self-efficiency). [17] Therefore, mere management exercise in one section does not result in empowerment. Scientists consider the psychological approach to empowerment as a process of developing intrinsic motivation through preparing the grounds, creating a passage to convey more feeling of self-efficacy and finally more energy.

This approach concentrates on the employees' perception of empowerment and delineates how they perceive empowerment. [18]

In other words, according to this attitude, power distribution does not necessarily lead to employees' empowerment. Since they may not have such conception. Such a hypothesis transforms this approach to an organic and bottom-up process, according to which empowerment occurs when psychological conditions of empowerment conception is developed in the employees. [19]

There are different views in terms of the effective and constituent factors of psychological empowerment. In most research studies, four common and similar dimensions can be found for psychological empowerment. In one of the best studies carried out on empowerment, Spreitzer (1994) has identified and offered four dimensions (factors) for psychological empowerment. These four dimensions are, in fact, the same factors to which Thomas & Velthous have referred to in their research (1990).

In order to empower others successfully, managers should develop these four characteristics in their employees. Successful empowerment means: 1- the feeling of

self-efficacy (competence) 2- the feeling of self-organizing (having the right of choice) 3- admitting personal consequence (effectiveness) 4- the feeling of meaningfulness (being valuable) [20] if managers can develop others with such features, they have successfully empowered them. Not only can empowered individuals carry out their tasks (duties), but also they think differently about themselves. [21]

• **The feeling of self-efficacy (competence)**

When individuals are empowered, they feel self-effectiveness or they feel that they have the necessary capability and skill to accomplish a task successfully. Not only do empowered people feel competence, but they feel confident that they can do the work competently. [22] They feel personal-mastery and they believe that they can learn to confront new challenges and get grown up. [23]

• **The feeling of self-determination (having the right of choice)**

Self-determination is an individual feeling of the right of choice to regulate activities. Self-determination is representative of independence in taking the initiative and continuing the processes. Examples include decision-making about the procedures of performing a task and the extent of effort in a job. [26]

"To be self-determined" means to experience the feeling of choice in execution and personal organization of activities of an individual and in a slight manner. When individuals are involved in carrying out their tasks voluntarily and intentionally rather than obligatorily, they feel the right of choice in their work or feel self-determined. [27]

In the annual report of World Bank Human Development [28] and its empowerment research in developing countries, having the feeling of the right of choice has been defined with three components: 1- having a chance for choice, 2- the individual's use of his chance of choice and 2- the ability to achieve desirable results in choice. [29]

• **Admitting consequences personally (feeling of effectiveness)**

It is the extent that an individual is capable of influencing his action's administrative or operational strategic consequences.[30] This concept is the opposite of inability and incapability, although it differs from the focus of control, it's affected by it.

The individuals whose impact dimensions are strong do not believe to be limited by external obstacles, esp. within their occupational activity. They believe that those obstacles can be controlled. They have the feeling of "active control" and make the environment work for them (unlike passive control). They try to maintain their dominance over what they see rather than react to the environment. [31] Green Berger believes that the feeling of impact is "an individual's beliefs in a certain point of time about his ability to create change in a desirable direction". [32]

• **The feeling of meaningfulness (being valuable)**

Meaningfulness is the value of occupational objectives which are judged in terms of individual standards or ideals. [33] In fact, meaningfulness involves the comparison between the requirements of role and job, on the one hand, and the individual's beliefs, values and behaviors on the other. Without taking into consideration the organizational obligations, individuals tend to pursue goals that are meaningful to them. In fact, employees prefer to work with individuals sharing similar values. [34]

When individuals attach importance to the aim or objective of the activity that they are performing; and no homogeneity is seen between their ideals and standards with what is being done, then these activities are regarded significant in their value order and they feel meaningful. [35]

On the other hand, doing any move in the organization requires providing its suitable grounds. Among the most important factors, "organizational structure" plays a vital role in personnel empowerment.[36] Organizational structure constitutes the main concepts of any organization. In fact, the wide scope of definitions and the impact of structure on other organizational processes is an indication of its importance. Particularly, any organizational development is created under the influence of and in association with the dimensions of organization's structure or is affected by it. In view of this, attaining to empowerment will also be directly related with organizational structure. Organizational structure presents a design in which specific dimensions and features of an organization will be offered. [37] Lorain Powel, in his research, has pointed out that democratic structures possess more available conditions to implement and establish psychological empowerment due to their features of flexibility, dynamism, motion, freedom in action, attention to specialty, competence etc. which act in more compliance with the features of modern age organizations.[38] In contrast, in bureaucratic and traditional structures which profit from high formalization, particularly in the allocation of resources, centralization in decision-making, division of labor so excessively that leads to despecializing individuals, limitation and weakness in fulfilling personnel's opinions and beliefs, limitation for individuals in playing responsibility roles, etc. all create unpleasant and restricting conditions for developing psychological empowerment. [39]

Situations and conditions of the dimensions of organizational structure represent various types of organizational structure. According to the Robbins' model, dimensions of organizational structure consist of three characteristics including complexity, formalization, and centralization.

- **Complexity**

Complexity refers to the extent of division existing among the occupations in an organization. [40] But believes that complexity in the number of managerial levels in an organization. [41] In general, complexity covers the number of job titles (dispersion of jobs within an organization), hierarchies and levels of management, the degree of education, geographical dispersion of organizational units from each other. The complexity itself includes vertical, horizontal and geographical one. [42] Geographical complexity focuses on the separation between units based on

geographical situations. In vertical complexity, the norm is the number of levels in the organization and the layers of management and, finally horizontal complexity refers to separation and the number of jobs of parallel group in a level. [43]

• **Formalization**

Robbins believes that formalization refers to the degree or extent that organizational jobs have been standardized.[44] But in general, it can be said that formalization is the amount of compiling, documenting laws, regulations, instructions, procedures, jobs description, clarifying duties of personnel and so on which are considered in an organization and are recorded. [45]. In fact, formalization consists of two parts. First part refers to the extent that laws and procedures etc. are documented in an organization. The second part refers to the regulations, instructions, obeying, executing and controlling and in fact, the set red lines are observed.

• **Centralization**

The third index of organizational structure is centralization. Most theoreticians agree that centralization refers to an amount that decision-making (financial, human resources, planning, and other exceptional cases of an organization) is centralized at one point of the units of the organization, besides to which other lateral decision-making activities are affected. [47] Centralization refers to an extent that a job is benefited from an independent decision-making. The scope of centralization involves the amount of job independence in decision-making on programs, the allocation of possibilities and resources, drawing facilities and resources, granting rewards, hirings and firings, performance appraisals, promotion, adjusting and allocating budgets, access to data and control over decisions of its sub-groups. [48]

Purpose of Research

Generally speaking, this study intends to examine and recognize the relationship between organizational structure and personnel's psychological empowerment. As it was mentioned, empowerment consists of characteristics which can not be changed independent from structural traits. Therefore, the recognition of the relationship between these two fundamental concepts, in addition to exploring their relationship, can provide tactics in selecting appropriate structure for the establishment of psychological empowerment.

Hypotheses of Research

This study consists of one main hypothesis and three subordinate ones. The main hypothesis is as follows:

1. There is a significant relationship between organizational structure and personnel's psychological empowerment.

The subordinate hypotheses include the following:

1. There is a significant relationship between complexity and personnel's psychological empowerment.

2. There is a significant relationship between formalization and personnel's psychological empowerment.

3. There is a significant relationship between centralization personnel's psychological empowerment.

The variables of this study are also organizational structure (complexity, formalization and centralization) and psychological empowerment (meaningfulness, effectiveness, competence, and self-determination) in which organizational structure is the independent variable and psychological empowerment is dependent variable.

Method

Given that this study is concerned with the status quo*,* it employs descriptive research and since it studies the relationship between organizational structure and psychological empowerment, it utilizes correlation procedures. [49]

The study has been carried out between the years 2007 to 2008. The setting of this research is the NIOPDC- Tehran area. The participants of the research include the staff and experts of the NIOPDC who work at the expert level professions. These subjects include fife hundred and sixty experts who hold educational certificates ranging from diploma to master's degree. Given that the environment of statistical test is of double-sentenced type, the required statistical sample to apply in this study was calculated on the basis of the following formula:

$$n = \frac{NZ\frac{a^2}{2}.(1-p)}{(N-1)\varepsilon^2 + Z\frac{a^2}{2}.p(1-p)}$$

$$n = \frac{560 \times (1/96)^2 \times 0/5 \times (1-0/5)}{(0/1)^2 \times (560-1) + (1/96)^2 \times 0/5 \times (1-0/5)} = 82/11$$

To increase the accuracy and better estimation of the statistical sample, its number was raised to 90 people. Also, the results obtained from the above formula are completely consistent with the values of Kerjeci and Morgan's Table. Given that the statistical community includes only the expert level personnel, we deal with a homogeneous population; thus, the simple procedure of random sampling[1] has been utilized so that any of the elements of the statistical community have equal and identical chance of placement in the selected sample. [51]

The data required for this study was compiled through library research including studying books, internal and foreign journals and surfing the data bases in the Internet to achieve theoretical fundamentals and use other researchers' experiences.

To acquire data associated with the staff's empowerment, the NIOPDC's documents and current procedures were studied; questionnaires were also used as a

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1-It is a technique for selecting a group of subjects, in such a way that all samples have an equal chance of being selected. (kelsinjer, 1374, p.188)

major instrument of collecting information in order to obtain data related to the status of empowering employees.

To analyze the statistical data, descriptive statistics techniques (including: adjusting descriptive tables, mean, standard deviation) and inferential (analysis of correlation, analysis of variance, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test) have been used.

Data Analysis

In the descriptive analysis part, the data obtained from the statistical sample, which included 90 subjects, has been divided with regard to such indices as gender, education certificate, age and job record. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Gender	Males 69 (77%)			Females 21 (23%)			
Education Certificate	Diplomas 19 (21%)		Post diplomas 9 (10%)	B.S.s 51 (57%)		M.S.s 11 (12%)	
Age	20-30 yrs old 16 (18%)		31-40 yrs old 26 (29%)	41-50 yrs old 35 (39%)		51-60 yrs old 13 (14%)	
Service Age	1-5 yrs old 27 (30%)	6-10 yrs old 18 (20%)	11-15 yrs old 15 (17%)	16-20 yrs old 4 (4%)	21-25 yrs old 11 (12%)	30-26 yrs old 10 (11%)	Above 30 yrs old 5 (6%)

The independent variable of the research, that is, structure, is designed on the basis of Robbins' questionnaire, after investigating the NIOPDC's documents and current procedures, represents a bureaucratic and hierarchical structure in which the variables of complexity, formalization, and centralization are of high average.

With regard to the results gathered from the empowerment questionnaire and the frequency of responses given to any of the indexes, it is observed that the psychological empowerment factor has lower acceptability among the NIOPDC's staff. Whereas the self-efficacy index has higher average, after that, self-organization, meaningfulness, and finally personal acceptance of consequences are ranked respectively.

In analyzing the inferential data, first the normalization of data was examined, the results of which are shown in Table 3.

Table-3 Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test for investigating the normalization of the data of organizational structure and psychological empowerment

variables / Remarks	centralization	formalization	complexity	Psychological empowerment
Kolmogorov-Smirnov's (Z)	1/056	0/831	0/503	0/783
Level of significance (bilateral)	0/215	0/495	0/962	0/537

Given the results of two tables and the level of significance, it can be said that obtained sample data from normal distribution has the probability of 95% certainty.

In order to test any of the hypotheses, first the opinions of the statistical community were explored through calculating Spearman's coefficient correlation and then to be sure of the response, the test of meaningfulness of the coefficient of correlation was utilized for any of the hypotheses. Also, analysis of variance was used to compare the difference of average between several different groups in a community, and finally hypotheses were ranked in order of their average.

Table-4 :Investigating the coefficient of correlation between variables of organizational structure and psychological empowerment

		Organizational structure (Main Hypothesis)	Complexity (1st subordinate Hypothesis)	Formalization (2nd subordinate Hypothesis)	Centralization (3rd subordinate Hypothesis)
Psychological empowerment	**Correlation Coefficient (r)**	- 0.587	0.171	- 0.423	- 0.597
	Level of Significance (bilateral)	0.000	0.106	0.000	0.000
	Some	90	90	90	90

Regarding the results of the above table and the values of coefficient of correlation, it can be noticed that there is a correlation and a significant relation between the variables of organizational structure and psychological empowerment. Thus, all the hypotheses are confirmed. On the other hand, the probability 0/01 in significance level(sig) indicates that the coefficient of correlation between two variables in every hypothesis is significant. Also, in terms of the offered values of the coefficient of correlation through SPSS software, it can be inferred that all of the research hypotheses are confirmed; however, the relationship in the main hypothesis is powerful and contrary. This relationship is similar in terms of second and third subordinate hypotheses. Only in the first subordinate hypothesis, there is a direct but weak relationship between research variables.

According to the ranking based on the coefficient of determination any hypothesis, it was revealed that the third subordinate hypothesis ranks the first in terms of the intensity of correlation and thus the main research hypothesis the second then the second subordinate hypothesis does the

third. The first subordinate hypothesis also, ranked the fourth though with different relationship.

Table 5: Ranking the research hypotheses based on correlation coefficient and determination coefficient

Hypothesis	correlation coefficient (r)	Ranking based on correlation coefficient	determination coefficient(r2)	Percentage of variations based on the determination coefficient	Ranking based on determination coefficient
Main	-0.587	2	0.345	%34.5	2
1st subordinate	0.171	4	%29	% 2.9	4
2nd subordinate	- 0.423	3	0.179	% 17.9	3
3rd subordinate	-0.597	1	0.356	%356	1

In the analysis of variance too, in order to compare the difference of average between the classifications in terms of gender, education certificate, age and service age, the results derived from empowerment questionnaire are applied in analyzing the existing relation between these qualities with psychological empowerment. The results of the analysis of variance reveal whether there is any significant difference between the average of different groups in relation to each other. To achieve this end, the analysis of variance has been used to compare the average and standard deviation of various groups of statistical community.

Investigating the relationship employees' education level and psychological empowerment indicate that the average of psychological empowerment increase as the education certificate increase. Given that the averages obtained from the responses of the variables of psychological empowerment and the division made in terms of education certificate, it can be stated in the community under experiment, the higher the education certificate, the higher the feeling of psychological empowerment.

Also, exploring the relationship between staff's service age and their psychological empowerment on the basis of the obtained averages represents that the higher the service age of employees, the higher the degree of their feeling of psychological empowerment. In order to

examine employees' gender and psychological empowerment, there is no obvious difference between the average responses of men and women in terms of obtained averages. However, on the whole, it can be said that women have higher degree of the feeling of psychological empowerment. As a matter of fact, the feeling of psychological empowerment among women is higher than men with a slight difference.

Regarding the relationship between personnel's age and their psychological empowerment and given the averages offered by different age groups, comparing them with sample average does not indicate any obvious difference. In fact, there can be found no difference among the data, since there is no explicit and objective process among them, and thus it can not be interpreted. In practice, this result shows a variety among the interests and feelings of employees towards psychological empowerment on the basis of their age division.

Conclusion

To sum up, one main hypothesis and three subordinate ones, using descriptive and inferential statistics procedures were analyzed in this research.

Given the obtained results with the 99% probability, the primary hypothesis was confirmed, on the basis that there is a significant relationship between the existing organizational structure of the company and staff's psychological empowerment. Although the study revealed that this relationship is not direct, it is the inverse. Thus, the relation between current organizational structure, which has mechanic (bureaucratic) form, and the staff's psychological empowerment of the firm is in inverse direction. As a result, it can be inferred that the mechanic structure (bureaucratic) leads to the decrease of the staff's psychological empowerment in the NIOPDC's. As it was discussed, the mechanic structure restricts the staff's psychological empowerment. The results obtained from the first subordinate hypothesis indicate its confirmation and that there is a significant relationship between its variables. Although this relation is direct, it is a weak one. Therefore, it can not certainly be stated that the increase of complexity in the community's organizational structure can result in the increase of the staff's psychological empowerment. Thus the increase of structural complexity does not

necessarily result in the increase of the employees' psychological empowerment and vice versa.

The results of the second subordinate hypothesis show that the relation is confirmed. In fact, the 99% probability shows a significant relationship between the variables of the hypothesis. As it was noticed, the relation is the inverse. Accordingly, it can be expressed that there is a negative/inverse relationship between formalization and the employees' psychological empowerment. According to this relation, an increase in organizational structure leads to the decrease of the feeling of the staff's psychological empowerment.

On the whole, in terms of research findings and based on the statistical testing of hypotheses, it can be inferred that psychological empowerment has inverse relation with the bureaucratic organizational structure in terms of the perceptual dimensions of individuals in the community being investigated. In fact, the bureaucratic organizational structure, due to its inherent features, is a constraint of the establishment of the process of the employees' psychological empowerment in an organization. Another important point of this study is the relationship between two dimensions of psychological empowerment and organizational structure.

Concerning the definition of the structural empowerment which is conceptually associated with the organizational structure, particularly democratic structures, it can be inferred that the execution and establishment of psychological empowerment is only possible in an organization when there is a necessary and sufficient ground in its implementation, and in fact, the structural empowerment has also been developed in the organization. On the other side, there are some similarities and common features between structural empowerment and the characteristics of democratic organizational structure. But as it was noticed, it is not possible to implement the process of psychological empowerment in the community being studied under the current structural circumstances, thus requiring the use of democratic structure. In fact, democratic structure has conditions and features which are needed in the structural empowerment, their execution and development are similar concepts, as it was formerly noted. Therefore, in addition to the results obtained from testing the hypotheses, it can be inferred that there is a direct relation between the use of psychological empowerment in an organization and establishment of the structural empowerment approach.

Suggestions based on the research findings (for further study)

In this part, on the basis of the results obtained from the hypotheses and comparing them with the research literature, an attempt has been made to offer an appropriate and practical tactic to make use of them in the research community.

Given that the results of the research hypotheses revealing an inverse relationship between the variables of organizational structure (except complexity) and the staff's psychological empowerment, it is proposed that attempts be made to decrease the effects of mechanical structure so as to create more appropriate conditions to apply personnel's psychological empowerment. Some of the actions that may facilitate movement toward more organized atmosphere and establish better the staff's psychological empowerment include:

Using activities such as applying tools for facilitating organizational communications, creating flexibility in organization's practices, reducing formalization, assigning the enforcement of laws to the employees, investing individuals with authority to control activities within their work scope and decentralizing in organizational structure, their participation in decisions and organizational planning.

On the other hand, attending to the establishment of the dimensions of human empowerment in proportional to the conditions of human investments of an organization such as considering the potentials of empowerment in organizational professions, predicting empowerment in the strategies of an organization's human resources, matching it with organizational culture, taking into account the expansion of employees' educational system aligned with it, dividing the applied domains of empowerment in the organization (including managers, staff, and so on) maintaining justice in organizational relations, maintaining the material motivations level, all in all can be some of the consolidating and facilitating dimensions of execution of psychological empowerment in the research community.

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