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PROFESSIONAL EMPOWERMENT OF RESEARCH CENTERS STAFF OF CANE AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES, KHOUZESTAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was analyzing professional empowerment of research centers staff of cane agro-industrial companies, Khuzestan province, Iran. The population of this study included research centers staff of cane agro-industrial companies (N=450). Based on Kerejci and Morgan table the sample size was (n=207). Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha and it was appropriate for this study. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To reach the research objectives, appropriate statistical procedures for description were used. Data analysis was carried out through data description and data inferential analysis. The results of research showed the correlation between social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, systemic thinking and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff was significant. Therefore, we can conclude that staff with high level of social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, and systemic thinking had high level of professional empowerment. The result of regression analysis by stepwise method indicated social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, systemic thinking may well explain for 63.8% changes ($R^2 = 0.638$) in professional empowerment of research centers staff. Therefore, to development of the professional empowerment of research centers staffs, considering variables of social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, and systemic thinking are essential. This should be considered by agricultural managers and planners.

Keywords: *Professional Empowerment, Research Centers Staff, Cane Agro-Industrial Companies*

INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is the process to give staff real authority in their work to achieve continuous improvement and job satisfaction in an organization's performance for better quality products and customer service in order to remain competitive (Kinlaw, 1995). Spreitzer (1992) indicated four features most empowered staff have in common: (a) sense of self-determination to choose how to do the work, (b) sense of competence to perform the work well, (c) sense of meaning to care about what are doing and finally, (d) sense of impact to have influence on the larger environment. Empowerment, then, is a mind-set that employees have an overall feeling of psychological empowerment about their role in the organization. Multiple researchers are confirming staff empowerment; because it helps organizations to compete against the competitor organizations through the successes achieved in global markets (Tjosvold and Sun, 2005).

Empowerment of human resources as a theoretical concept has a great impact on organizational and management effectiveness and innovation (Conger *et al.*, 1988). According to Tjosvold and Sun (2005), educational practices can increase employee's motives and can also empower them in their careers and organizations. So, the organizations which are committed to employee empowerment have motivated and adhered employees (Ongori *et al.*, 2007). Staff empowerment has been related with organizational outcomes such as innovation, greater effectiveness, and better performance. Staff empowerment has become a popular management strategy in today's management reforms and a trend in both public and private organizations (Lau, 2010).

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Mottaghi *et al.*, (2015) indicated that there is significant positive relationship between staff empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior. This means that if an employee is placed in a high level of empowerment, his organizational citizenship behavior will be also high. Empowerment of people is a major contributor to the development of subordinates by allowing them to do extremely well by investing in themselves, even at the risk of making mistakes (Page and Wong, 2000). Empowering staff by their managers led to high employee effectiveness. Employees satisfaction and employees performance based on their extra efforts are considered as the most important employee effectiveness outcomes (Mehrabani and Shajari, 2013; Avolio and Bass, 2004; Briggs 2008; Duerr, 2009).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population of this study included research centers staff of cane agro-industrial companies (N=450). Based on Kerejci and Morgan table the sample size was (n=207). Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha and it was appropriate for this study. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To reach the research objectives, appropriate statistical procedures for description were used. Data analysis was carried out through data description and data inferential analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the demographic profile and the descriptive statistics for some characteristics of the research centers staff. The results of the demographic information of the research centers staff indicated that the age of 55.6% of research centers staff was between 30-40 years. The minimum age of participant was 27 years and the maximum age was 59 years. Based on educational levels, a greater proportion (38.6%) of them had BSc educational level. Based on the income, 73.5% of them had 10-20 million rial in month. The minimum income of participant was 6 million rial and the maximum income was 40 million rial in month.

Table 1: Demographic profile of research centers staff of cane agro-industrial companies

variables	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Age				
20-30	34	16.4	16.4	Mean=37.36
30-40	115	55.6	72	Sd= 5.87
40-50	56	27	99	Min=27
50-60	2	1	100	Max=59
Educational level				
Diploma and lower	25	12.1	12.1	
Technician	25	12.1	24.2	
BSc	80	38.6	62.8	
MSc	74	35.7	98.5	
PhD	3	1.5	100	
Income (Million Rials in Month)				
6-10	73	23	23	
10-20	74	23.3	46.4	
20-30	59	18.6	65	Mean=10.81
30-40	49	15.5	80.4	Sd=0.55

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Professional Empowerment of Research Centers Staff of Cane Agro-Industrial Companies

In this study, for analyzing professional empowerment of research centers staff of cane agro-industrial companies, the Likert scale was used. The ratings on the Likert scale were from one to five (1. very low, 2. low, 3. Moderate, 4. high and 5. very high). The final computed score represented the overall level of empowerment. The Table 2 revealed the answer of staff to each item of professional empowerment and Table 3 identified the level of overall professional empowerment after computing 10 items of professional empowerment.

Table 2: Frequency of research centers staff based on answer to items of professional empowerment level

Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	sd	CV
In matters related to my work, I am responsible.	0	4	20	107	76	4.23	0.70	0.165
In tasks assigned, I am seeking treatment.	0	5	21	119	62	4.14	0.69	0.166
I have the ability to help other personnel.	1	3	42	112	49	3.99	0.74	0.184
In case of problems can easily cause I find it.	0	9	67	101	30	3.73	0.76	0.203
Easily accept new things.	1	10	74	95	27	3.66	0.78	0.213
I have a positive attitude towards things and events.	3	12	64	96	32	3.68	0.85	0.232
I am in the business risky.	4	13	88	78	24	3.50	0.85	0.243
I feel a personal satisfaction.	4	13	75	85	30	3.59	0.88	0.245
I feel I can improve my future and my family.	8	10	58	88	43	3.71	0.97	0.362
My colleagues treat me honestly.	8	20	71	78	30	3.49	0.98	0.281

1. very low, 2. low, 3. Moderate, 4.high and 5.very high

Table 3: Level of overall professional empowerment of research centers staff

professional empowerment level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Low	1	0.5	0.5
Moderate	76	36.7	37.2
High	130	62.8	100
Total	207	100	

Correlation Study

Spearman correlation coefficients to test hypotheses was used, the results of this test are as follows (Table 4):

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.542$) between level of social participation and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of social participation had high level of professional empowerment.

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.312$) between level of responsibility and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of responsibility had high level of professional empowerment.

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.287$) between level of risk taking and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of risk taking had high level of professional empowerment.

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.328$) between level of creativity and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of creativity had high level of professional empowerment.

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The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.548$) between level of job satisfaction and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of job satisfaction had high level of professional empowerment.

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.542$) between level of professional commitment and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of professional commitment had high level of professional empowerment.

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.649$) between level of organizational learning and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of organizational learning had high level of professional empowerment.

The results of table 4 showed the correlation ($r=0.452$) between level of systemic thinking and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that staff with high level of systemic thinking had high level of professional empowerment.

Table 4: Relationship between professional empowerment of research centers staff and independent variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	r	p
Social Participation	professional	0.542	0.000
Responsibility	empowerment of	0.312	0.000
Risk Taking	research centers staff	0.287	0.000
Creativity		0.328	0.000
Job Satisfaction		0.548	0.000
Professional Commitment		0.542	0.000
Organizational Learning		0.649	0.000
Systemic Thinking		0.452	0.000

Regression Analysis

Table 5 shows the result for regression analysis by stepwise method. Liner regression was used to predict changes in professional empowerment by different variables. Social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, systemic thinking may well explain for 63.8% changes ($R^2 = 0.638$) in professional empowerment of research centers staff.

$$Y=1.093+0.923x_1+0.498x_2+0.5914x_3+0.629x_4+0.582x_5+0.828x_6+0.709x_7+0.904x_8$$

Table 5: Multivariate regression analysis

Independent variable	B	Beta	T	Sig
Social Participation	0.923	0.972	3.489	0.000
Responsibility	0.498	0.818	3.092	0.000
Risk Taking	0.591	0.709	4.967	0.000
Creativity	0.629	0.993	4.008	0.000
Job Satisfaction	0.582	0.590	3.690	0.000
Professional Commitment	0.828	0.820	2.094	0.000
Organizational Learning	0.709	0.598	4.078	0.000
Systemic Thinking	0.904	0.503	4.902	0.000
Constant	1.093	----	5.860	0.000

$$R^2=0.638 \ F=8.392, \ Sig= 0.000$$

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Conclusion

The results of research showed the correlation between social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, systemic thinking and level of professional empowerment of research centers staff was significant. Therefore, we can conclude that staff with high level of social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, and systemic thinking had high level of professional empowerment. The result of regression analysis by stepwise method indicated social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, systemic thinking may well explain for 63.8% changes ($R^2 = 0.638$) in professional empowerment of research centers staff.

Therefore, to development of the professional empowerment of research centers staffs, considering variables of social participation, responsibility, risk taking, creativity, job satisfaction, professional commitment, organizational learning, and systemic thinking are essential. This should be considered by agricultural managers and planners.

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