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**STUDYING THE ROLE OF EMPOWERMENT ON EMPLOYEE
PRODUCTIVITY OF GACHSARAN OIL AND GAS EXPLOITATION CO.
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR UNIT**

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the role of empowerment on employee productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co. maintenance and repair unit. The research method is descriptive and correlation. The statistical population was 800 subjects from Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co. maintenance and repair unit and sample size was 260 subjects and it was obtained using Morgan table and stratified random sampling method. Standardized empowerment and employee productivity questionnaires were used for data collection. The results of testing hypotheses by Spss software and Pearson correlation test showed that there is significant and direct relationship between empowerment components (training, organizational commitment, creativity and motivation) and employee productivity. Regression analysis results showed that: creativity component among employee empowerment components does not predict significantly employee empowerment role on employee productivity.

Keywords: Productivity, Empowerment, Training, Creativity, Motivation, Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION

21th century must be considered the competition for survival century. Increasing international interactions has turned the world into a global village and organizations don't have any choice for survival and growth unless they are equipped with a variety of development and flourish tools. Wealth generation sources in any organization can be provided in land classification, capital (money), human resources (manpowers and management), machinery and equipment, information and communication. Charles Handy (1995) argues that traditional sources of wealth (land, raw materials, technology, and even unskilled workers) can be purchased in required time; a factor without which we cannot be active in organizations, the workforce is empowerment when he can easily use these resources to achieve the best benefits (Jazani and Rostami, 2011).

Due to the acceleration changes in various economic and social areas and increase of competitiveness among industrial and service organizations, manpower productivity has been converted to decisive factor since existence and survival of any organization is consistent with productivity attainment. Therefore, nowadays the most important source of competitive advantage in organizations is committed, motivated and conscientious employee. In this regard, the directors must provide organization conditions so that in which each individual can be more wealthy (Saleh, 2012).

Most experts believe that the higher productivity is a human- oriented subject, it depends on the human factors in organizations and in this regard human resources' productivity is the most important measure of productivity. As human resources are the essential elements in any attempt to improve the productivity. The main reason that mostly causes failure of organizations in achieving its goals is the lack of human resources productivity. Knowing prerequisites for strengthening and improving productivity is the most important issues in this context. Therefore, in this study we examine the role of employee empowerment and its effect on productivity.

Literature

Empowerment

Blanchard writes that managers look to empowerment from this view, it gives individuals the decision making power. Many of employees define empowerment as obtaining unconditional freedom to do

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anything. Also, empowerment means to free the inner strength of individuals in order to achieve amazing results. Empowerment means giving power and this means help people to improve their sense of self-esteem and to overcome their inability or failure, to create enthusiasm for activity in people and to mobilize their inner motivation for doing duties (Blanchard, 2003). In fact, empowerment is to assign official authority or legal power to employees (Arggris, 1998). Empowerment is the process of development, a process that increases the ability of employees to solve the problem of promoting social and political insights of employees and enable them to identify environmental factors and control them (Cartwright, 2002).

Dimensions of Empowerment

Spritzer (1992) has identified and introduced four cognitive dimensions (factors) of empowerment in one of the best empirical researches conducted on empowerment. These four dimensions are:

1. Effectiveness: A duty has effectiveness characteristic that individual considers it effective in achieving the goals. In other words, one must believe that doing his job duties effects on achieving the goals. People who are strong in their effectiveness do not believe to limitation in their career ability through outer barriers, but they believe that barriers can be controlled. They feel 'active control' and make the environment in line with their wills.
2. Merit: Merit is person’s ability to perform the assigned duties successfully. In other words, the individual believes that he has the expertise, competence and ability to perform the job successfully. If a person can perform his duties skillfully, he effects positively on his feeling.
3. Significance: if one considers its job valuable, the duty will have significant feature. In fact, significance means the match between the requirements of the role and job and beliefs, values and individual behaviors. Regardless of organizational constraints, people tend to strive for achieving their goals that are significant.
4. The right of election: It means the freedom of workers to determine the activities necessary for performing job duties. When people perform job duties voluntarily, they feel that they have the right of election in labor. In these circumstances, their activities are resulted from freedom and personal authority (Nazari and Omid, 2010).

Suggested Strategies to Empower Employees

The following are examples of strategies for organization employees’ empowerment.

Table1: Suggested strategies for employee empowerment (Dehghan and Hamidi, 2009)

Executive strategies and programs for employee empowerment	Program
Strategies for executing proposed program	Program
Training courses (academic and on job, etc.) - Implementing workflow system	Promoting job skills
Developing delegation of authority process-holding training courses for delegation of authority of organizations' managers- employee involvement in decision making, etc.	Delegation of Authority
Creating process of excellent employee- material or spiritual appreciation of successful employees in various occasions- sharing good experiences in organization	Introducing successful job patterns and appreciating them
Creating mechanized system for updating employee knowledge- employee access to appropriate information and data across the organization through integrated systems.	employee access to needed information
Executing performance management systems- 360 degree assessment- reports and results meetings	Feedback to individuals based on performance and results
Systematic working group formation- problem solving working group formation - kaizen teams, etc.	Creating team and self-managed teams
Respect for dignity and human values- clarifying organization programs for employee-employee comments corporation in organization decision making- providing cash and non-cash facilities, providing medical facilities and social work and etc.	Sense of belonging, value and confidence among employees
Establishing occupational health and safety management systems and environmental management in order to improve the level of safety, hygiene and health of employees	Favorable business environment
Establishing proposal system, formulating goals and strategies with employee participation, transparency of programs	Participatory management
Make the system more equitable distribution of material and spiritual chord-awarded bonuses based on performance results.	Encouragement and appreciation based on functions

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The Main Components of Employee Empowerment

Training

Training is an effort to change people's consciousness that motivate person to acquire new knowledge and develop person to change habits and behaviors and changes their intellectual direction and human destiny. Training is learning -based experience and to make relatively stable changes in person in order to enable him for work and to improve the capabilities, to change skills, knowledge, attitudes and social behavior. So training means to change knowledge, attitudes and interaction with colleagues. Training is a set of methods through which required skills are taught by employees to perform tasks (Mazaheri, 2012).

Today, training and empowering employees is considered as a tool to gain competitive advantages. Training and empowerment creates greater employee commitment to organizational objectives as well as increases job satisfaction and reduces the loss of manpower. Managers must equip their employees in order to perform any type of empowerment. This equipment includes training and information. If empowerment principles are provided in all aspects of planning and training, training can be an important organizational strategy for empowerment. The best result that is achieved by training is to improve performance, but training becomes effective when the individual participates in training courses and acquires new information and skills and transfers it to job process and leads to acquisition of commercially valuable results. Training transfer is the process of knowledge, skills and attitudes and acquired skills application in the workplace. Effective training supports empowerment targets including increased morale and employee motivation, increased flexibility, reduced employee transportation and allows employees to perform independently without need to supervise (Sabaghiyan and Araste, 2012).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is an attitude of employee loyalty to organization and is a continuous process that shows people paying attention to organization, position and welfare due to individuals' participation in organizational decisions (Moghimi *et al.*, 2009). Some experts have explained organizational commitment as an attitude and a mental state that represents a desire, need and obligation to continue work in an organization. Among them, desire means individuals' interests and desires to continue serve in an organization and need means that individual has to continue to serve in an organization because of investment in organization. Obligation means debt, responsibility and duty that people have against organization and sees he compelled to stay there. From another perspective, organizational commitment is a type of belonging sense and affiliation to the organization (Abbasi *et al.*, 2012).

Job Creativity

The current period is called age of creativity and innovation. Creative thinking, innovation and invention are unique capabilities of human beings as creatures. According to Silvan and Arti, creativity is concerned to mental process that directs a person to solve problems, discuss ideas, perceptions, subjective assumptions, theories and products that are unique. Employee creativity helps organization survival and when employees are creative they will be able to offer and operate fresh and helpful ideas about the products, performance, services, or practices of organization. Thus, production and use of new ideas offer organization to be adapted with changing market conditions and give a timely response to threats and opportunities and to grow and develop (Beigi *et al.*, 2010).

Motivation

Motivation word is derived from Latin word *Movere* meaning to move and cause. This word has shortcomings to explain our concept. What is needed is a description that explains fundamental and different aspects of the process through which human behavior is activated. Below are several definitions of motivation term:

- Moorheaf, Gregory (2000) defines Motivation in his book as a force that cause people treat in special form.
- Griffin, Riky W, defines motivation as conditions in people that make them inclined to c perform a specific action or behavior (Alvani, 2005).

Motivation is a factor that motivates people internally and in fact, it is engine of human effort and dynamic. The motivation determines direction and movement and selection and the more strong human

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motivation, it will help them more in style choice. If there is demand, there will be ability. Strong motivation is a source of mobility and readiness to begin and end work correctly. Motivated and hardworking individual play always important, basic and even decisive role in promoting and increasing productivity of a country (Henry *et al.*, 2006).

- Providing professional development requirements for all personnel
- Employee training and in-service training courses: In-service training and employee training must be considered as a vital and continuous issue, because efforts can be coordinated with existing facilities and new scientific advances through training.
- All functions, guidelines and regulations must be clear for employees and there is no ambiguity.
- Providing sufficient authority to employees, so that they feel more responsible doing things.
- Care should be taken when recruiting people so that efficient and skilled individuals to be recruited. Written and oral exams are essential for selecting such individuals.
- Effort has been done for employee participation in decision-making and formulation of objectives and programs. The result will be employees' responsibility in implementing activities and more efforts in achieving organizational goals. The high quality of work life and quality concept of work life expounds the importance of respect for people in their workplace.

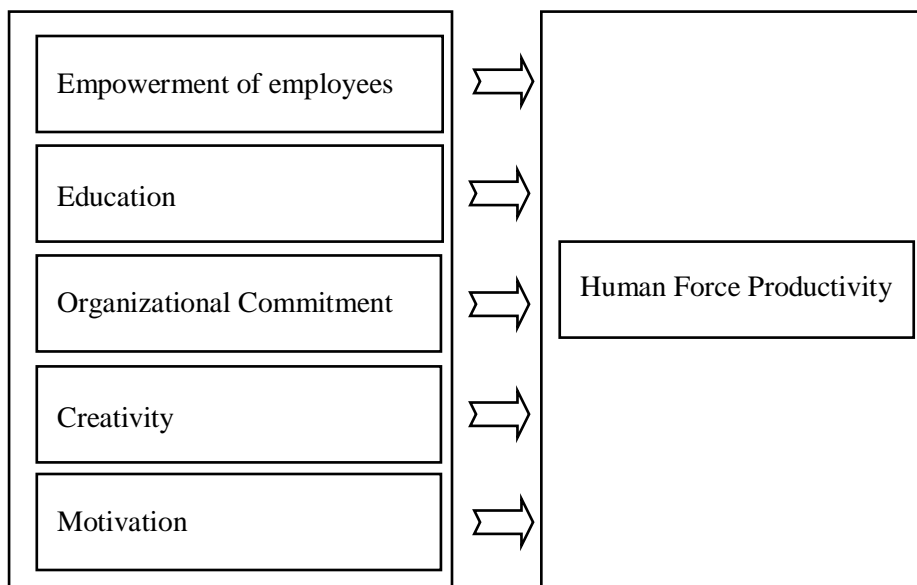


Figure 1: The research conceptual model

Hypotheses

- 1) There is significant relationship between education and manpower productivity of company Net Unit.
- 2) There is significant relationship between Organizational Commitment and manpower productivity of company Net Unit.
- 3) There is significant relationship between creativity and manpower productivity of company Net Unit.
- 4) There is significant relationship between motivation and manpower productivity of company Net Unit.
- 5) There is significant relationship between employee empowerment and manpower productivity of company Net Unit.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods

This research is applied- survey in terms of aim, is descriptive and correlation research in terms of nature and method and is sectional in terms of time horizon. In current research, statistical population includes all employee of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co. maintenance and repair administration, that is

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800 subjects, and 260 subjects have been determined as the sample size. Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression were used to investigate the research hypotheses test. Standardized questionnaires were used for this study including 102 questions.

Table 2: Feature based questions

Row	Questionnaire	Research variables	Cronbach's alpha	Items	References
1		Education	0.833	1-15	Moghimi and Ramazan, 2011
2	Empowerment	Organizational Commitment	0.772	16-22	
3		Creativity	0.758	23-34	
4		Motivation	0.830	35-56	
5	Manpower Productivity		0.870	1-46	Moghimi and Ramazan, 2011

Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1: Is there significant relationship between education component and manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.?

Table 3: The relationship between education component and manpower efficiency

Significance level	Number	The Pearson value
0.000	260	0.25

According to Table (3) as Pearson Test significance level is less than 0.05 (sig <0.05), then there is significant relationship between education and manpower productivity variables. This means that the more education, manpower productivity will increase, so research first hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis 2: Is there significant relationship between Organizational Commitment component and manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.?

Table 4: The relationship between Organizational Commitment component and Manpower Productivity

Significance level	Number	The Pearson value
0.000	260	0.28

According to Table (4) as Pearson Test significance level is less than 0.05 (sig <0.05), then there is significant relationship between Organizational Commitment and manpower productivity variables. This means that the more Organizational Commitment, manpower productivity will increase, so research second hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis 3: Is there significant relationship between creativity component and manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.?

Table 5: The relationship between creativity component and Manpower Productivity

Significance level	Number	The Pearson value
0.000	260	0.24

According to Table (5) as Pearson Test significance level is less than 0.05 (sig <0.05), then there is significant relationship between creativity and manpower productivity variables. This means that the more creativity, manpower productivity will increase, so research third hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis 4: Is there significant relationship between motivation component and manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.?

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Table 6: The relationship between Motivation component and Manpower Productivity

Significance level	Number	The Pearson value
0.000	260	0.34

According to Table (6) as Pearson Test significance level is less than 0.05 (sig <0.05), then there is significant relationship between motivation and manpower productivity variables. This means that the more motivation, manpower productivity will increase, so research forth hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis 5: Is there significant relationship between empowerment component and manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.?

Table 7: The relationship between Empowerment and Manpower Productivity

Significance level	Number	The Pearson value
0.000	260	0.27

According to Table (7) as Pearson Test significance level is less than 0.05 (sig <0.05), then there is significant relationship between empowerment and manpower productivity variables. This means that the more empowerment, manpower productivity will increase, so research fifth hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 8: Results of regression analysis

model	Df ₂	Df ₂₁	F change	R ² Change	Std.Error of The Estimate	Adjusted R ²	R ²	R	Sig
Motivation	258	1	35.273	0.120	0.477	0.117	0.120	0.347	0.000
Organizational Commitment	257	1	14.100	0.046	0.465	0.160	0.166	0.407	0.000
Education	256	1	9.457	0.030	0.458	0.186	0.196	0.442	0.002

Table (8) shows that 12% of employee empowerment role variation in manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co. is due to motivation and motivation explains 12% variation of employee empowerment in manpower productivity. In second order, organizational commitment explains 4.6% variation of employee empowerment role in manpower productivity. In third order, education explains 1.5% variation of employee empowerment role in manpower productivity. Motivation, organizational commitment and education explain 18.1 percent variation of employee empowerment in manpower productivity but creativity variable does not predict significantly the employee empowerment in manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.

Table 9: Coefficients of regression analysis

Model	sig	t	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Unstandardize coefficients Std. Error	B
Constant amount	0.00	10.799		0.283	2.575
Motivation	0.00	4.733	0.274	0.049	0.231
Organizational Commitment	0.00	3.361	0.195	0.037	0.126
Education	0.02	-3.075	-0.176	0.039	-0.120

Table (9) shows beta coefficients of predicting employee empowerment role in manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co. and regression equation can be written as follows:

$$Y=2.575+0.274 x_1+0.195 x_2 -0.176x_3$$

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Table 10: The variable excluded from regression analysis

model	Collinearity statistic	Partial Correlation	sig	t	Beta in
1	Creativity 0.663	0.038	0.546	0.604	0.042

Table (10) shows that creativity does not predict significantly the employee empowerment role in manpower productivity of Gachsaran Oil and Gas Exploitation Co.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The First Hypothesis

Now all developing countries have adopted this fact that more training promises more rapid development and university education makes young people to acquire basic skills and attempt to modernize society by gaining expertise in various disciplines. So if an organization's employees get good training they can contribute better in enhancing the performance of organization, and managers will need to monitor subordinates. Organizations that design and implement training courses in line with their organization's strategy, they will provide growth and excellence of manpower and organization. When the training leads to learning it will enhance employee commitment and motivation and more commitment will cause employees to work harder and show better performance. Empowering employees begins through employee education and will give people a chance to participate in the decision-making system and be accountable to their performance and work with more confidence. Training and empowerment creates the advantage that employees perform better and in this way the organization will achieve its long term goals.

The Second Hypothesis

Organizational commitment effects on many variables such as absence, turnover, job satisfaction and performance. A new business benefits many advantages from committed forces such as increased efficiency and effectiveness, reduced absence and turnover, and ultimately improved performance and excellence and more likely survival in the competitive environment. In this way, entrepreneurs and founders of new business, in addition to have expertise in technical and managerial tasks, try to engage team members in order to progress towards goals and to achieve the desired state and use it always as a factor that is important for maintaining, survival and development of organization. Committed individuals adhere more to the values and goals and will be more active and will precede less to leave the organization and find new job opportunities. Managers should maintain employee commitment to the organization and must increase their commitment and adherence using employee participation in decision-making and providing an acceptable level of job security, so that increased productivity.

The Third Hypothesis

Paying particular attention to the proper environment is necessary for developing individual creativity that fit with our natural culture, which is individualism. So that designing a method entitled suggestions and new ideas system, we can create mobility among employees as well as use human resources to resolve problems. However, identify work groups and encouraging them to be creative groups is difficult and time consuming, but it is not impossible, and certainly will provide more innovative ideas and solutions which will lead to increased productivity.

The Fourth Hypothesis

Paying attention to employees' motivation factors and their needs is very effective in manpower productivity and one of the basic and important factors to achieve the goal in any business is to mobilize and motivate people who do that job. There are several factors for low motivation in organizations; this work is done by paying bonus, written acknowledgments or job circulation. Knowing individuals' differences can help manager to understand better his employees and as a result, do measures that aim to meet the needs of employees and provide obligations. Considering the fact that some employees are appropriate for sales jobs, some for careers and a number of them for research positions, awareness of these differences can be helpful in decision-making of organization that is, who must be recruited for which job.

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The Fifth Hypothesis

Organizations must improve productivity in order to succeed. In fact, organizations that do not improve productivity are doomed to failure. Management must be convinced that manpower productivity plays a vital role in creating value for the organization in order to draw more attention to manpower and their empowerment. It is certain that the empowerment of human resources programs effect directly on human resources productivity. Therefore, considering the growing importance of human resource productivity, which ultimately leads to the creation of value for the organization, paying attention to employee empowerment as one of the drivers of increased productivity should be placed at the head of human resources measures and necessary decisions should be taken in this regard.

Managers and leaders must always try to involve employee in one hand help them and on the other hand expand spirit of cooperation and assistance in the organization in order to empower employees with the aim of increasing their productivity. Managers in their daily life must listen to speeches and votes of their employees so that employees feel that managers give value them. Transparency in organizational routines, management behavior and a clear statement of objectives and programs to all employees strengthen trust in the organization. Commitment and empowerment and delegation of authority beside trust are considered as a strong incentive for employees, when manager trust his employees, they will try to have accurate and better decision making and develop knowledge for their tasks.

Suggestions

- Determining objectives, responsibilities and authorities in organization
- Organizational morale and belonging: employees must be respected in organization in order to meet this factor, and help them in order to solve personal problems.
- Trust, sincerity and honesty: organization must create a positive atmosphere and friendly working relationship among employees and increase trust between managers and employees.
- recognize and appreciate: the proportion of received salary and bonuses and work done by employees.
- Partnership and Teamwork: Using views and ideas of employees in decision making and their cooperation in order to improve and advance the organizational affairs.
- Communications: including communication and easy access of employees to managers and supervisors.
- Work Environment: The factor that is more or less emphasized in organizations is workplace. Importance of workers' safety and health at work environment, paying special attention to the adornment of workplace and etc.
- Optimization of business processes and procedures: transparence of workflow and information in organizations, documentation.
- Continuous and systematic professional training courses on duties and responsibilities entrusted to person.
- Identification of factors and aspects that cause employees' apathy to attend training courses and attempt to eliminate or limit these factors through creating financial incentives, career advancement and progress and development of specialized human resources in employee training and to use experienced university professors for training courses at organization.
- Doing Psychological studies and establishing a job position entitled industrial psychologist for pathology of mental and psychological distresses and paying attention to their problems.

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