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## Explaining human resource empowerment pattern and organizational excellence among employees of emergency of Guilan's University Hospitals

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### Abstract

The present paper aims at investigating the relationship between human resource empowerment and results of organizational excellence model (EFQM) among employees of emergency unit in Guilan's university hospitals. This is an applied research performed through descriptive – survey method. Required data was obtained using standard questionnaire. Research population is composed of all employees of emergency units of Rasht university hospitals (N = 400) of which 195 individuals were selected as the sample according to Cochran's formula using ordinal random sampling. Besides, share of each order was calculated through systematic sampling method. Obtained data was analyzed using SEM method in AMOS22 software. Also, Pearson's test was performed through SPSS21 software. Findings indicated a positive, significant relationship between human resource empowerment and results of EFQM among employees of Guilan's university hospitals. Accordingly, it is suggested to pay special attention to employees' empowerment features to enhance organizational performance level and to look at empowerment as a main strategy for improving organizational transformations.

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## 1. Introduction

Today, many organizations seek excellence but only some reach it. A main reason of this failure is the lack of deep understanding of the concept of excellence and its criteria, especially neglecting the role of excellent human resource (Duhlgard et al, 2007). Respecting employee empowerment to improve organizational performance and bring to a globally accepted level is a great necessity. As Denis Kinela mentions: "in today's organizational movements toward total quality management (TQM) and continuous improvement empowerment has gained a significant place... It seems that empowerment is considered as an accepted macro strategy for continuous improvement and as a acronym for the variety of manners of applying individual competencies in creative and novel methods of all organizational performance aspects" (Kinela, 2008). Empowerment is considered as a vital factor in almost all scientific references of TQM. Thomas and Volthouse identify employees' empowerment as a main component of TQM. Moreover, Cardi (1996) showed in the US that employee's empowerment plans are closely related to quality management and may be the vital element affecting organizational success or failure (Abtahi and Abbasi, 2007). At present, employees empowerment is more and more being considered in European Excellence Model (EFQM) and employees are among important measures of excellence in this model so that the model holds: "excellent organizations enhance equality and justice and involve and empower individuals" (Hill and Block, 2004).

A plenty of research is performed on the direct relationship between enablers and results. For example, Skiildsen and Kanji (1998) investigated relations between individuals, processes and performance key results and concluded that weak individual and process management may weaken individual outcomes and performance key results. In another research, Skiildsen and Duhlgard (2000) found that individuals and processes directly influence individual outcomes in the model. Although many researchers reject these reductionist studies and believe the effect of enablers on results should be investigated as a whole because of mode holism, but undoubtedly reinforcing empowerment factors improves results (Losar, 2005). With this respect, it can be said that having empowered employees is the key to a modern successful organization. Emergency unit of many hospitals and university hospitals is in this category. In fact, the issue of treatment is not, alone, a part of hospitals' and health care centers' goals. But, the most important point is to try to enhance treatment quality. Indeed, hospitals are considered as one of the main and important organizations or institutes of providing health care services which in turn play a significant role in maintaining and enhancing patients' physical and mental health. Specifically, emergency units are among those sectors providing patients with special services in critical and emergency states and considerably contribute to saving patients' lives and their treatment and health. Thus, it is necessary for hospitals and university hospitals to have empowered employees in these units and this may, even, be accompanied by competitive advantage for the organization. Presence of committed, responsible and competent employees in this unit puts more emphasize on the issue of empowerment. Considering what mentioned above, the present paper seeks the answer to this question: "is there any positive, significant relationship between employees' empowerment and organizational excellence among staff of emergency unit in Guilan's university hospitals?"

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 1.1. Organizational excellence

Semantically, excellence means superiority and eminence and organizational excellence indicates an organization's commitment to sustainable development in order to satisfy customers and enhance profitability in a supporting and totally national environment (Palravan, & Khobyari, 2012; Javadin, & Moshfegh, 2008). In this respect, the two following tasks are of significant necessity:

"To move processes and procedures toward excellency and making effort to generate analytical and scientific culture of quality in the organization".

Excellence model is a measure of establishment of systems in organizations and self-evaluation which determines managers' policies to improve performance (Johnkel, 2014). Moreover, organizational excellence may be considered as an organization's growth and enhancement in all aspects so that it can balance all beneficiaries' needs and expectations while respecting their highest satisfaction level. Such circumstances are followed by an organization's

success (Rich, 2015:387). An excellence organization is one in which enhancement of all aspects is respected, namely, all units and sections equally move toward excellence and organizational procedures are properly defined and established (Morinos, 2011). Most organizations face this big question: how and through which tools an organization may inclusively identify all strengths and improvable scopes and get ready to be successfully present in the arena of competition while examining and investigating various issues? (Ivano, 2014; Faraji et al, 2012). Excellence model is a strong operational tool used for a variety of objectives (Ivano, 2014:49). Business excellence models are formed in response to this need and provide agencies with a set of managerial systems and techniques in an integrated manner consistent with effective and applied performances. The European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) model.

One of the positive aspects of this model is its self-evaluation application (Nabitz, 201). This self-evaluation makes organizations aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The model is composed of three main bases including: fundamental concepts, criteria and evaluation logic. Fundamental concepts include: achieving balanced and equal results, creating value for customers, idealistic leadership, process-based management, employee-based success, reinforcement of innovation and creativity, expanding participations, and responsibility for sustainable future. Criteria form the heart and core of the model and are the base of organizations' evaluation (Parham et al, 2013).

### *1.2. Empowerment*

In management, applying the term empowerment may be traced back to the period of establishing people-oriented systems and involving employees in organizational decision-making under different terms of team-making, participation and total quality management. With the latest changes, the term converted to employees' empowerment and, thus, it can be said that this is not a novel concept (Miran, 2004).

Employees' empowerment involves a set of systems, methods and actions applied through developing capabilities and competency if individuals in order to enhance productivity and growth of the organization and human resource based on organizational goals (Choy, Heuan, 2015).

In the definition of empowerment, Kinela says: "Empowerment is the process of tending toward continuous improvement of organizational performance realized through developing and expanding authority of competent individuals and teams in most aspects and this, per se, influences the whole organization's performance" (Poorafkari, Ghanbari, 2012). There are three common approaches to empowerment:

Thomas and Volthouse (1990), identify cognitive empowerment as the process of job internal motivation encompassing for cognitive scopes (feeling of being effective, being competent, feeling of significance and having a chance to select). They were the first to introduce the concept of cognitive empowerment into management literature. Based on their model, Spritzer defined cognitive empowerment as a motivational concept composed of four components: competency, autonomy, significance and affection (Abbasi et al, 2012; Rafiei et al, 2015). Voten and Cameron believe empowerment is to give employees more power, meaning that they are assisted to reinforce their self-confidence and overcome their feeling of disability. The researchers added confidence (trust) as the fifth component to those four of Thomas and Volthouse and Spritzer. Therefore, aspects of cognitive empowerment include: feeling of autonomy, competency, being effective, being significant and confidence (Zarei, & Khademi, 2010, Gorji, 2010).

### *1.3. Literature review*

Johnckel (2014) investigated the role of innovation in achieving organizational excellence in an insurance company in Melbourne city. His results showed that implementing novel and innovative ideas by the relative organization is well supported and innovation leads to higher levels of organizational performance, and consequently, organizational excellence. Chayl and Jew Min (2009) investigated the effect of empowerment on organizational commitment among employees of various banks in Ohio. They concluded that employees' empowerment may not support the concept of trust in management, a necessary component of organizational commitment. Azim, Abrar and Bashir (2015) studied the relationship between organizational justice and cognitive empowerment and their impact on organizational performance, respecting the intermediate role of organizational

citizenship behavior in a bank in Pakistan. Their results demonstrated that organizational citizenship behavior influences the relationship between organizational justice and cognitive empowerment.

Pakravan and Khoobyari (2012) investigated the effect of cognitive empowerment aspects on employee performance in Pars Khazar Company and found a positive, significant relationship between aspects of cognitive empowerment and employee performance. Moreover, their results suggested that feeling of competency and having a chance to select, among all cognitive empowerment elements, have the highest impact on performance. Rafiei, Shojajei and Mazidi (2015) evaluated the relationship between cognitive empowerment, organizational support and leader – member interaction in the College of Humanities of Gorgan University. Results showed that cognitive aspects of empowerment have a positive, significant impact on organizational support and leader – member interaction. Abbasi, Hassanpoor and Hassanalipoor (2012) studied the relationship between employees' empowerment and their organizational performance in Bagherol Ulum Hospital in Ahar city. Their findings demonstrated a significant relationship between the two studied variables. Doaei et al (2014) performed a research on employees' empowerment as the intermediate of intellectual capital and quality of working life. They found that intellectual capital and its aspects positively and significantly affect quality of working life through empowerment. Gorji (2010) evaluated the effect of human resource empowerment on performance of employees of Golestan Telecommunication Company. Results indicated a positive, significant relationship between the two variables. Ghorbani Zadeh and Aghaverdi (2013) investigated the role of cognitive empowerment of employees in organizational excellence among employees of Iran Customs. Results suggested that cognitive empowerment is effective on organizational excellence.

#### *1.4. Research hypotheses*

There is a positive, significant relationship between human resource empowerment and organizational excellence in university hospitals of Guilan.

There is a positive, significant relationship between job effectiveness feeling and organizational excellence.

There is a positive, significant relationship between job significance and organizational excellence.

There is a positive, significant relationship between job competency feeling and organizational excellence.

There is a positive, significant relationship between employees' feeling of selection right and organizational excellence.

There is a positive, significant relationship between individual confidence and organizational excellence.

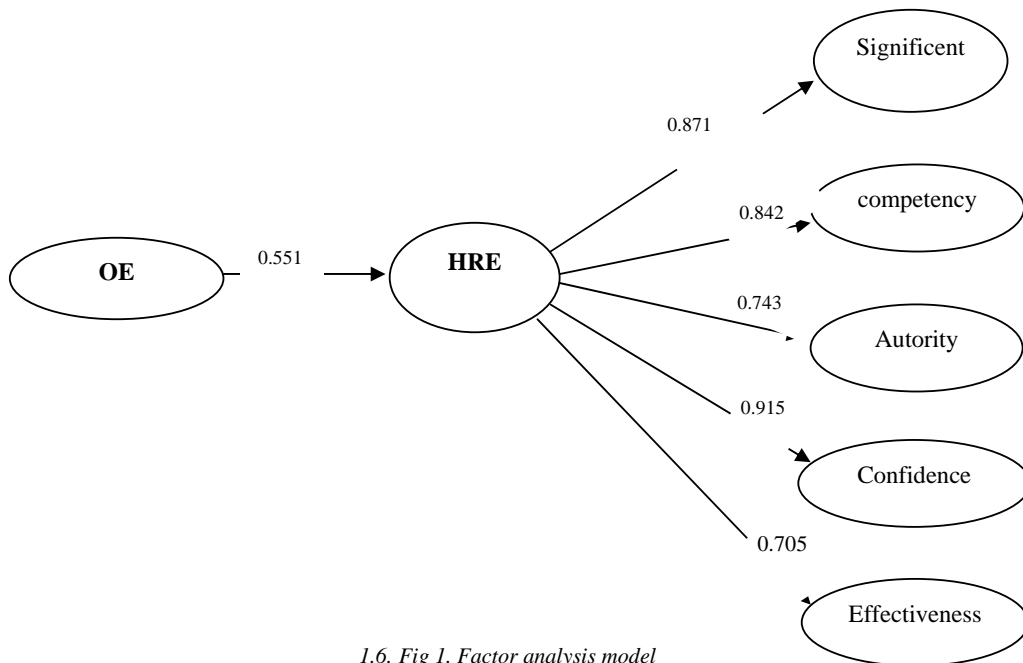
### **3. Methodology**

The present paper is an applied research performed through descriptive correlation method. Population is composed of all employees of emergency units of Rasht university hospitals (a total number of 8 centers: Razi, Heshmat, Poor Sina, Amir-Al-Momenin, Shahrivar 17th, Velayat, and Alzahra) (N = 400). The sample (n = 195) was selected through random ordinal method and random systematic method in every order based on Cochran's Model. Then, respecting the sample size of 195, the share of each center was calculated and questionnaire was distributed respecting this share. Spritzer and Mishra's standard, 15-scale questionnaire of empowerment and standard, 15-scale questionnaire of organizational excellence were used to collect required data. Moreover, standard questionnaire of performance evaluation was used to measure organizational performance excellence. Content validity of questionnaires was confirmed by university professors and the special workgroup of the eight centers. In addition, 35 individuals of the population were selected and questionnaires were distributed among them. Then, Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine questionnaire reliability that results of Cronbach's Alpha test for Effectiveness is 0.79, Significance 0.83, Competency 0.81, Authority 0.77, Confidence 0.85 and total results of Cronbach's Alpha test is 0.82.

**4. Findings**

*1.5. Investigating research structural models*

The final model of structural equations pertaining to the main hypothesis is presented in figure 1 and indicates a high effect coefficient in the relationship between variables of empowerment and organizational excellence. Moreover, factor loads pertaining to every component of tested variables are presented in Figure 1.



1.6. Fig 1. Factor analysis model

Results of factor analysis, in Figure 1, on the main hypothesis and relationships between empowerment and organizational excellence show that empowerment has a 55% effect on organizational excellence.

Table 1. Fitness indicators for factor analysis

Fitness indicators	Abbreviation	Acceptable range	Calculated value	Result
Relative square X	X <sup>2</sup> /df	1 – 3	2.73	Confirmed
Goodness of fitness indicator	GFI	Bigger than 0.9	0.97	Confirmed
Adjusted goodness of fitness	AGFI	Bigger than 0.9	0.96	Confirmed
Consistent fitness indicator	CFI	Bigger than 0.9	0.91	confirmed

General fitness indicators concerning the main hypothesis (Table 3) suggest that measurement model is fitted properly and indicators confirm this. Since the structural equation model of the main hypothesis is accepted, the hypothesis is examined using standard coefficients, critical values and significance level.

Results of Table 2 indicate that all components of human resource empowerment and organizational excellence are positively and significantly correlated and the highest effect belongs to the component of "confidence" (91%).

Table 2. coefficients, critical proportions and significance level of the model

Variable relation	Direction	Variable	Non-standard estimation	Standard error	Standard error
Significance	<--	Empowerment	0.871	0.181	0.181
Competency	<--	Empowerment	0.842	0.178	0.178
Authority	<--	Empowerment	0.743	0.169	0.169
Confidence	<--	Empowerment	0.915	0.181	10.585
Effectiveness	<--	Empowerment	0.705	0.163	10.461
Organizational excellence	<--	Empowerment	0.551	0.162	9.567

### 1.7. Hypothesis testing

Because of normal data distribution, Pearson's correlation test was used to examine the relationship between components of empowerment and excellence.

Table 3. correlation coefficients for hypothesis testing

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
<b>2. Effectiveness</b>	1				
<b>3. Significance</b>	0.389	1			
<b>4. Competency</b>	0.234	0.455	1		
<b>5. Authority</b>	0.325	0.499	0.446	1	
<b>6. Confidence</b>	0.566	0.667	0.517	0.517	1
<b>7. Excellence</b>	0.564	0.648	0.635	0.635	0.560

Based on Table 3, there is a positive, significant relationship between cognitive aspects of empowerment and organizational excellence. Hence, all hypotheses are significant in the level of  $P < 0.05$  and, thus, all are accepted.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between human resource empowerment and organizational excellence among employees of emergency unit of university hospitals in Guilan. To examine this objective, model fitness was investigated first. Accordingly, results of factor analysis and path graph (AMOS software) specified that the research model is of appropriate fitness. Then, side hypotheses were examined. Table 5 demonstrates that there is a positive, significant relationship between effectiveness and organizational excellence with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 56.4% in significance level of  $P < 0.05$ . Furthermore, results of factor analysis and available coefficients suggested that effectiveness, with a coefficient of 0.70%, may have an effect on organizational excellence. Findings are consistent with Ghirbani Zadeh (2013), Young et al (2015).

In the second hypothesis it was claimed that there is a positive, significant relationship between job significance and organizational excellence. Results of table 5 confirmed this with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 64.8% in significance level of  $P < 0.05$ . Moreover, results of factor analysis and available coefficients suggested that job significance, with a coefficient of 0.87%, may have an effect on organizational excellence. This is consistent with Ghirbani Zadeh (2013), Young et al (2015), and Abbasi et al (2012). In the third hypothesis it was claimed that there is a positive, significant relationship between competence and organizational excellence. Results of table 5 confirmed this with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 63.5% in significance level of  $P < 0.05$ . Moreover, results of factor analysis and available coefficients suggested that competency, with a coefficient of 0.84%, may have an

effect on organizational excellence. This is consistent with Young et al (2015), Bashir et al (2015) and Pakravan et al (2012).

In the fourth hypothesis it was claimed that there is a positive, significant relationship between authority and organizational excellence. Results of table 5 confirmed this with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 64% in significance level of  $P < 0.05$ . Moreover, results of factor analysis and available coefficients suggested that authority, with a coefficient of 0.74%, may have an effect on organizational excellence. This is consistent with Pakravan et al (2012), Abbasi et al (2012), Young et al (2015) and Bashir et al (2015). In the fourth hypothesis it was claimed that there is a positive, significant relationship between confidence and organizational excellence. Results of table 5 confirmed this with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 56% in significance level of  $P < 0.05$ . Moreover, results of factor analysis and available coefficients suggested that confidence, with a coefficient of 0.91%, may have an effect on organizational excellence. This is consistent with Pakravan et al (2012), Abbasi et al (2012), Young et al (2015) and Bashir et al (2015).

## 6. Suggestions

Respecting the positive and significant relationship between empowerment of human resource in emergency units of Guilan university hospitals and organizational excellence, following suggestions are presented to managers and supervisors emergency units: To reinforce effectiveness, employees should be given enough authority for problem solving during the job so that a job identity is generated for them and they can plan, implement and evaluate their efforts. Moreover, they must be aware of their results and take continuous feedback from the supervisor, coworkers and clients on their own performance.

To improve significance, it is suggested to clearly define goals, responsibilities and authorities in the organization. Attention should be paid to items such as job enrichment, enhancing employees' mentality and developing skills of organizational dependency, optimizing procedures and processes with high rate of information, and employees' job skills and knowledge. To improve authority, managers of university hospitals and emergency units are suggested to enhance self-confidence among employees through training courses and encourage them to risk-taking by providing a safe and secure working environment. Employee independence may increase his motivation and this finally in the favor of the organization ad leads to creativity growth among human resources. Managers should not make employees apply a same method since they may be familiar with a better and more significant method enabling them to have personal innovation in choosing job techniques. It is suggested to provide for participation of individuals in making decisions on job and functions in cases such as choosing working techniques and planning for job accomplishment. Besides, cases such as direct involvement of employees in job procedures along with continuous improvement of those procedures, receiving employees' opinions on criteria for their performance evaluation, possibility of using personal creativity and judgment to perform assigned tasks, increased responsibility among employees, encouraging them to be responsible through fair compensation and reward system, are also suggested.

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