

Investigating the Relationship between empowerment climate and Work Engagement of Nurses

Samira, Delbari, Saeed, Rajaeepour, Delbari, Mohammad

PhD Student, faculty of Psychology & Education Science, University of Isfahan, Iran,
delbari.samira@yahoo.com

professor, faculty of Psychology & Education Science, University of Isfahan, Iran,
DRSRAJAEPOUR@gmail.com

Student of industrial management, Gonabad University, Iran, Mohammaddelbari.74@gmail.com

corresponding Author: Samira, delbari, PhD Student, faculty of Psychology & Education Science, University of Isfahan, Iran, delbari.samira@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

corresponding Author:
Dr. Kiranmayi Raparathi*

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between empowerment climate and work engagement of nurses. This study is considered as a descriptive-correlation research. The statistical population of this study consists of the nurses in the hospitals of Qom city in 2015. A sample of 130 nurses was selected randomly. Two standardized questionnaires were used for collecting the research data. These include empowerment climate questionnaire of Scott and job engagement questionnaire of Ostrich. The reliability of questionnaires was measured through Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The coefficients were 0.90 and 0.95 for empowerment climate and job engagement questionnaires respectively. Also the validity of questionnaires were investigated through both face and content validities. In order to analyze the research data and test the hypotheses, several statistical methods (including Pearson Correlation Coefficient, Simultaneous Correlation, Simultaneous Regression, One-way Analysis of Variance, and One-sample T-test) were employed in the SPSS18. The findings revealed that empowerment climate and job engagement of nurses were more than average level. Another part of our findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between empowerment climate and job engagement of nurses. It should be remembered that there are significant relationships among some of the dimensions of empowerment climate (fairness, recognition, and participation) and job engagement of nurses. Based on our findings, empowerment climate (fairness, recognition, communications, and participation) can be considered as a reliable predictors of job engagement of nurses. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that managers and administrators of hospitals pave the ground for empowerment climate through providing nurses with clarified goals, fairness, recognition and encouragement, team work, morale, participation and communications, and healthy environment. As a result, work engagement of nurses will be improved.

Key Words: empowerment climate, Work Engagement, Vigor, Dedication, Absorption

Introduction

Increasing in the trade and scientific competitions all over the world, increasingly spread of information, elimination of medium management levels in the organizational hierarchies, growth and mental maturity of employee, employee dissatisfaction from workplaces, employee expectations, and shortage of organizational resources are the main factors that organizations confront with them in the current conditions. Such conditions move the organizations toward modern management approach. Human resources development and manpower employment plans are considered as main mechanisms for achieving sustainable development and globalization. In this regard, human resources managers play a significant roles. In such conditions, it is inevitable for managers to train self-control employees. Indeed, empowerment is considered as one of the most important solutions for developing organizations and adapting them with external conditions and environmental changes. The current workplaces need employees who can make decisions, develop solutions, initiate creativities, and have responsibility and accountability of their job. Achieving such a goal will be possible through employee empowerment that concentrate on the empowerment of organizational structures and procedures and employee participation in reaching organizational goals and objectives. It also is considered as a new technique for increasing productivity through increasing employees' commitment to their organization and vice versa (Irannejhad Parizi, 2004). In the current situation, employees need active and empowered employees. Broadly speaking, enthusiastic employees are attracted by their jobs and do their obligations with responsibility and accountability (Bakker and Leiter, 2010). According to Vance (2006), employee engagement is the result of his/her characteristics such as knowledge, abilities, attitude, personality, and emotions. Markos (2010) believed that organizational content includes leadership and regulation of physical and social environment and human resources methods that affect employees and their job performance. Indeed, employee empowerment is one of the most effective mechanisms in promoting employee productivity and optimal utilization of employees' capabilities and abilities in achieving organizational goals (Naderi et al., 2007). As a theoretical concept, employee empowerment affects organizational and managerial effectiveness and organizational initiatives. According

to Spiralizer (1995) and Tomas and Veldhuis (1991), empowered employees have more flexibility in doing their job, do new obligations in responding opportunities and threats, and have more motivation in dealing with problems and difficulties. According to Lindon et al. (2000), empowered employees have more job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance (Shelton, 2003: 53). Generally, employee empowerment can be done at both organizational (communicational) and individual (motivational) levels. The first level is known as empowerment climate and the second is known as psychological empowerment. The authors of this study concentrated at first level. Empowerment climate refers to perception of organizational structures, policies, and activities in supporting employee empowerment (Sibret et al., 2004). It also is defined as a workplace that leads to employee empowerment (AshutoshMuduli, 2008). Scott et al. indicate that empowerment consists of eight dimensions. These include clarify of purpose, morale, fairness, recognition, participation, communication, healthy environment, and team work. These factors are described in the following section.

Clarify of purpose: according to Witten et al. (199), clarified goals refer to the clear, measurable, consistent, and achievable goals that have time limitation.

Morale: refers to the affective reaction of employees to an event.

Fairness: refers to the comparison of employee's activities and obligations with others' activities and obligations.

Recognition: is the employees' perception of fairness of encouragement and payment system.

Participation: refers to the cooperation of employees in doing organizational activities and obligations and implementing organizational decisions.

Communication: refers to vertical and horizontal exchange of information and meanings among organizational members (Robins, 2004).

Healthy environment: refers to the employees' positive emotions to physical and psychological conditions of workplace.

Team work: refers to a group of employees that cooperate with each other in solving the organizational problems (Kirtman et al., 1999).

According to the principles of positive psychology, work engagement is counterpoint of burnout-which means a negative long-term reaction to the job and its related affairs (Holmberg et al., 2006). Work engagement not only plays an important role in understanding positive organizational behaviors, but also can be helpful in directing human resources management and professional hygiene policies in the organizations (Salanoa et al., 2007). Work engagement is defined as a sustainable positive mind to work that can be explained through vigor, dedication, and absorption to work (Noori et al., 2010). Vigor can be explained through mental flexibility of employees in workplace, interest in the work investments, and sustainability in dealing with work problems and difficulties. It can be said that the employees, who have vigor to their job, have higher levels of motivation and are empowered in dealing with work problems and difficulties. From theoretical perspective, vigor is similar to internal motivation (Salanoa et al., 2005). Dedication refers to the employee's perception of meaningfulness and pride in doing his/her activities. From theoretical perspective, dedication is similar to job attachment and commitment. In other words, dedication is degree in which an employee communicates his/her work in a good psychological manner (Coper et al., 2005). Holmberg et al. (2006) indicated that difference between work vigor and dedication is that the second is a positive psychological concept that shows employee's health and psychological healthy in workplaces. Healthy is a perceptual factor that distinguish between work engagements and work attachments. Absorption is a factor that can be explained through concentration on the work. Some authors indicate that absorption is similar to strong job involvement.

Steven and Feng (2012) investigated the relationship among revolutionary leadership, empowerment climate, and creative performance of employees. A sample of 93 teams of Chinese multinational

corporations was participated in the survey. They found that there are significant relationships among revolutionary leadership, empowerment climate, and creative performance of employees. Yuan et al. (2010) investigated the effect of leadership, psychological empowerment, and empowerment climate on the creative performance of employees. They found that there are higher levels of trust among team members, more information flow, more clarified goals, and less control in the empowered work teams. This is why the employees have more respect, determination, common values, coordinated workplace, motivation, and creative performance. Kalevala et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between structural empowerment and workplace characteristics (autonomous, control, nurse-patient relationship, and organizational support) of nurses. They found that there is a significant positive relationship between structural empowerment and workplace characteristics. Review of past studies and their findings is shown in the following diagram.

Although several studies have been conducted in terms of work engagement and employee empowerment, but review of past studies showed that any study has not been done in terms of relationship between work engagement and employee empowerment. It also should be remembered that studying the relationship between work engagement and employee empowerment is a real interest (Khodayarian, 2009).

The main question that the present study aims to answer is that “is there any significant relationship between empowerment climate and work engagement of nurses?”

In order to answer the question, five secondary questions were developed as followed.

- 1: what is the degree of empowerment climate and work engagement in the sample?
- 2: what is the degree of work engagement and its dimensions in the sample?
- 3: is there any significant relationship between dimensions of empowerment climate (clarified goals, morale, fairness, recognition, team work, participation, communications, and healthy environment) and work engagement of nurses?

4: are the empowerment climate dimensions can be considered as reliable predictors of nurses' work engagement?

5: is there any significant difference between perception of empowerment climate and work engagement of nurses in terms of their demographic characteristics (such as gender, job experiences, and education)?

Materials and Methods

The statistical population of this study consisted of the nurses in the hospitals of Ghom city in 2015. A sample of 130 nurses was selected randomly. Finally, 115 filled questionnaires were backed completely and they were used in the statistical analysis. This study is considered as a descriptive-correlation research. Two standardized questionnaires were used for collecting the research. These include empowerment climate questionnaire of Scott and job engagement questionnaire of Ostrich.

Empowerment climate questionnaire of Scott: the questionnaire, which has been developed by Scott et al. (1996), consists of eight dimensions. These include clarify of goals, morale, fairness, recognition, team work, participation, communications, and healthy environment. The questionnaire, which consists of 35 items, has been developed in Likert five-point scale. Pardakhtchi (2012) report that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of this questionnaire is 0.89. Our findings revealed that the coefficient is 0.90. The validity of questionnaire was measured and confirmed by both face and content validities.

Job engagement questionnaire of Ostrich: the questionnaire has been developed by Shoofly (2002). It consists of three dimensions including vigor, dedication, and absorption. It includes 17 items in the Likert five-point scale. Mono et al. (2007) and Jalali (2007) report that the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of this questionnaire are 0.92 and 0.95 respectively.

Findings

The main question of this study indicates is there any significant relationship between empowerment climate and work engagement? The results of this question are indicated in table 1.

Table 1: the results of main question

Variable	empowerment climate
Work engagement	0.56 ^{**}
P<0.05 ^{**}	P<0.01 [*]

The results of this table revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between empowerment climate and work engagement.

The first question of this study indicated that what is the degree of empowerment climate and work engagement in the sample? In order to answer the question, one-sample t-test was used. The results are indicated in table 2.

Table 2: the results of first question

Variable	n	Standard deviation	Average	df	t	Sig
empowerment climate	115	0.061	3.42	114	-1.16	0.037

The results of this table revealed that the empowerment climate is more than average level. The results also found that the scores of vigor, dedication, and absorption were more than average. It can be concluded that the scores of empowerment climate and its dimensions were more than average level.

The second question of this study indicates that what is the degree of work engagement and its dimensions in the sample? In order to answer this question, one-sample t-test was used. The results of this question are indicated in table 3.

Table 3: the results of third question

Variable	n	Standard deviation	Average	df	t	Sig
empowerment climate	115	0.061	3.42	114	-1.16	0.037

The results of table 3 revealed that the average of empowerment climate is more than 3 significantly. It can be said that the average of nurses' empowerment climate is more than average level. In order to study the dimensions of this variable, one-sample t-test was used. The results of this test revealed that team work, fairness, and clarify of goals were more than average level.

The third question of this study indicates that is there any significant relationship between dimensions of empowerment climate (clarify of goals, morale, fairness, recognition, team work, participation, communications, and healthy work environment) and work engagement of nurses? The results of this question are indicated in table 4.

Table 4: the results of third question

Variable	Fairness	Recognition	Participation
Work engagement	0.51**	0.27**	0.33**
P<0.05 **		P<0.01 *	

The results of table 4 revealed that there are significant relationships among dimensions of empowerment climate (fairness, participation, and recognition) and work engagement. Based on the results of this question,

it can be said that improvement in the fairness, participation, and recognition will be effective in increasing work engagement of nurses and vice versa.

The fourth question of this study indicates that are the empowerment climate dimensions can be considered as reliable predictors of nurses' work engagement? The results of this question are indicated in table 5.

Table 5: the results of fourth question

Measure	R ²	R	Standard error of estimation
Amount	0.389	0.624	0.39

The results of table 5 revealed that empowerment climate has explained 38% of variations of work engagement. The results of F-test are indicated in table 6.

Table 6: the results of F-test

Test	Sum squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	4.67	10	0.585	3.73	0.002
residual	7.34	104	0.156		
Total	12.02	114	75		

The results of table 6 tell us that empowerment climate has explained work engagement of nurses considerably.

The results of simultaneous regression is indicated in table 7.

Table 7: the results of simultaneous regression

Dimensions	B	β	T	Sig
clarify goals	-0.06	-0.118	0.90	0.32
Morale	0.08	0.417	3.46	0.34
Fairness	0.32	0.417	3.46	0.001
Recognition	-0.02	0.037	-0.24	0.80
Team work	-0.09	-0.141	-1.02	0.31
Participation	0.24	0.387	2.19	0.03
Communications	-0.22	0.372	-2.40	0.02
Healthy work environment	0.11	0.147	1.01	0.31

The results of table 7 tell us that three dimensions of employee empowerment (fairness: 0.417; participation: 0.387; communications: 0.372) have explained a large part of variations of work engagement considerably.

The fifth question of this study indicates that is there any significant difference between perception of empowerment climate and work engagement of nurses in terms of their demographic characteristics (such as gender, job experiences, and education)? The results of one-way t-test showed that there is not any significant difference between empowerment climate and work engagement of nurses based on their gender, education, and job experiences).

Conclusion

The results of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between empowerment and work engagement of nurses. Our findings are consistent with findings of Naami (2011). Naami (2011) found that there is a significant indirect relationship between organizational culture and work engagement (through psychological empowerment). Organizational atmosphere, that team work is its base, provides employees with sufficient information in doing jobs. It also paves the ground for respectful environment for employees

and improves their participation in the job-related decisions. In such conditions, work engagement of employees will be improved. Such benefits include increase in the employee productivity, wages, self-esteem, and health. Based on the first question of this study, it can be said that empowerment climate of nurses is more than average level. In this regard, team work, fairness, and clarify of goals are three main dimensions of empowerment climate that their scores were more than average level. Based on the results of this question, it is suggested that the managers should provide an organizational atmosphere in which employees can be empowered. The results of second question revealed that the scores of work engagement of employees and its dimensions were more than average levels. In this regard, Gibbons (2006) indicates that there are significant relationships among employee participation, communications quality, and work engagement. Indeed, higher levels of employee participation increase employees' engagement and enthusiasm in doing their obligations (Cahan, 2010). The results of second question tell us that there is a significant relationship between some dimensions of empowerment climate (fairness, recognition, and participation) and work engagement. Based on the results of this question, it can be said that improvement in the fairness, recognition, and participation of employees in the organization, their work engagement will be improved and vice versa. The most correlation was observed between fairness and work engagement ($R: 0.50$). Also any significant correlation was not observed among other dimensions of empowerment climate (communications, healthy environment, team work, morale, and clarify of goals) and work engagement. Robinson insists on the importance of fairness, recognition, positive communications, and healthy environment in the employee work engagement. On the other hand, participation in decision-making, creation of development opportunities, and employees' progress are the effective factors on the involvement and work engagement of employees (Robinson et al., 2004), (Zargaran Moghaddam, 2011). The results of fourth question revealed that empowerment climate is effective on the work engagement of nurses. Our findings revealed that some dimensions of empowerment climate (including fairness, participation, and communications) are not effective on the work engagement of nurses. A large part of motivators of work engagement have nonfinancial nature. It can be said that the organizations with committed leadership can

achieve higher levels of work engagement. It is suggested that the managers increase nonfinancial motivators in their organizations. It also is expected from managers, at all organizational levels, to promote sincerity and honesty in their workplace. They also should respect their employees and participate they in the decision-making. It can be improved through face-to-face communications.

References

- Ashutosh Muduli. (2008). Exploring the Determinants of Empowerment climate in Indian Industry. *Management and Labour Studies*, DOI: 10.1177/0258042X080330030333: 354.
- Bakker, A. B., & Leiter, M. P. (Eds.) (2010). *Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Cooper-Hakim, A., & Viswesvaran, C. (2005). The construct of work commitment: testing an integrative framework. *Psychological Bulletin*, 131, 241-259.
- Feng Wei, Xin Yuan, Yang Di. (2010). Effects of Transactional Leadership, Psychological Empowerment and Empowerment climate on Creative Performance of Subordinates: A Cross-level Study. DOI 10.1007/s11782-010-0002-6.
- Gibbons, J. (2006). "Employee Engagement" A Review of Current Research and Its Implications". New York: The Conference Board.
- Hallberg, U., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2006). "Same same" but different: Can work engagement be discriminated from job involvement and organizational commitment? *European Journal of Psychology*, 11, 119-127.32- Delong
- Joanne T. Clavelle, Tim Porter O'Grady. (2014). Structural Empowerment and the Nursing Practice Environment in Magnet® Organizations. Inspiring leadership. www.aone.org
- Kynla, Dennis (2014). Empowering human resources, translation by Irannejad Parizi M, Salimian A, Tehran: Modiran
- Kahan, S. (2010). "Getting Change Right: How Leaders Transform Organizations from the Inside Out". San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kirkman, Bradley L. Rosen, Benson, Tesluk, Paul E. & Gibson, Cristian B (4110). The Impact of Team Empowerment on Virtual Team Performance: The Moderating of Face-to-Face Interaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol.07, No.4, 175-134.
- Markos, S. (2010). Employee Engagement: The Key to Improving Performance. *International Journal of Business and Management*. 5, 89-96.
- Naderi N, Rajaeepour S; Jamshidian, AR. (2007). "Concepts and Strategy of employee empowerment "; *Tadbir*; No. 186.
- Naami, A Z, Taghipoor A, Nise, A k. (2011). Relationship between organizational culture with, job motivation, job engagement and innovative behaviors mediated empowerment. *Psychological Journal of Behavioral Sciences*. Volume 5, Issue 4, 325-333
- Nori A, Arizi M R, Zare R.; Babamiri M. (2010). Relationship job engagement components with dimensions of organizational commitment. *New organization psychological - industrial*.
- Robbins, Stephen, p. (2006). *Management of Organizational Behavior*. Omidvaran Farzad . Tehran: Kind publication.
- Salanova, M., Agut, S., & Peiro, J. M. (2005). Linking organizational resources and work engagement to employee performance and customer loyalty: the mediation of service climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90, 1217-1227.
- Steven .Si, Feng .Wei. (2012). Empowerment climate, and innovation performance: A multilevel analysis in the Chinese context. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology (Impact Factor: 2.09)*; 21:299-320. DOI: 10.1080/1359432X.2011.570445.

- Seibert, Scott E., Silver, Seth R., & Randolph, Alan (2010). Taking Empowerment to The Next Level: A Multi-Level Model Of Empowerment, Performance, and Satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, V. (7) 9.
- Shelton, S.T. (2002). Employee, supervisors, and empowerment in the public sector: the role of employee trust. Thesis of the degree of doctor.
- Zargaran Moghaddam, S. (2011). Impact of resources and job demands on burnout and work engagement of employees. Master's thesis, University of Isfahan.