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Assessing the Relationship between Teamwork Group-Level Factors and Human Resource Empowerment in the Branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between teamwork group-level factors and human resource empowerment in the branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran (as the primary aim) and suggest solutions for increasing human resource empowerment through the components of teamwork group-level factors (as the secondary aim). The sample includes 271 employees of the branches of Keshavarzi Bank in Tehran who were selected through simple random sampling. The data was collected through questionnaire and library method and the data collection tool was the questionnaire which its reliability and validity were confirmed. The data of variables of teamwork group-level factors and employees empowerment variables was collected through questionnaire. The results of correlation and multiple regression analysis indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between “teamwork group-level factors” and their components i.e. “structure, norm and group size” and “human resource empowerment” (the significance level is lower than 0.05), which is generalizable to the statistical population. The intensity of relationship between teamwork group-level factors and human resource empowerment is equal to 0.669, which is direct and positive with regard to the coefficient. Moreover, due to the obtained coefficient of determination, the variable of teamwork group-level factors and its components can predict the changes of human resource empowerment variable.

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1. Introduction

Today, the pundits and experts of management science have concluded that groups are the foundations of many improvements in the organization performance. One way of solving the problems of organizations is to utilize group work and cooperation between the employees in decision-making. This leads to a significant increase in efficiency of work units. Furthermore, individuals will gain more satisfaction from their job and also will increase their work efficiency through reaching the higher levels of needs and innate growth as well as satisfying the emotional needs. An important issue, which is proposed in the organizations in order to reach this objective, is moving towards smaller size, flatter structures, more flexible operation and finding new and creative ways to use groups as the foundation of many improvements in the organization performance (Schermerhorn et al., 1994). In fact, groups are the inevitable aspect of today's life and productive organizations can survive through work groups.

Managers have found that teams have more flexibility than any other work groups and are more responsive to the changing environment. In fact, teams can be considered as an effective tool for the managers to increase job satisfaction and employees' cooperation. Therefore, organizations must pay attention to team building and working as a group in order to utilize the employees' ability more effectively as well as rebuild themselves through increasing the competitive ability and work efficiency.

2. Literature

Today finding new and creative solutions for complicated problems is getting more and more difficult and individuals and different sections in the organizations cannot solve the problems all by themselves. Thus, different organizations including industrial, commercial, non-profit and government organizations need reconsideration and revolution for their survival in organizing and dividing labours and duties among the members and employees. Following this experience, many organizations have attempted to form work team. However, the results of researches indicate that some organizations have failed in forming teamwork or at least, the team has not satisfied their main needs (Rajabzadeh, & Alizadeh Sani, 2009, p. 91).

According to Tuckman (1965), forming a group and its development contain five stages: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. However, Love (1996) have converted Tuckman's model into four stages: forming, storming, norming and performing. The idea that a team is a sort of group is according to Love's statement i.e. a team moves through the developmental stages of a group. These four stages are describes as following: forming is the beginning stage of a team and gathers individuals for achieving a common goal. Storming is the stage of conflict between the members of the team over their differences (Schermerhorn et al., 1994). In the next stage, i.e. norming, members accept the team and develop norms for resolving conflicts, making decisions and completing assignments. Performing takes place when members accept responsibilities readily, so that they can follow up goals and final responsibilities (Shaw, 1981). As it was mentioned earlier, the first stage of team development is forming. In this stage, the missions and goals are described for the members. Then they perceive and accept them. On the other hand, these goals may be perceived and accepted by the members, but if the members have not perceived their roles, fields of cooperation, abilities or limitations of the team, carrying the responsibility will be difficult. Therefore, team building is based on this reality that members must have a clear role, cooperate according to their abilities and limitations and play their role in increasing profitability.

There are a large number of definitions for work group. (McDavid & Harari, 1968) have defined it as: "organized system of two or more individuals who are interrelated so that the system performs some function, has a standard set of role relationships among its members and has a set of norms that regulate the function of the group and each of its members" (p.122). Group can be defined through motivation as: "collection of individuals whose existence as a collection is rewarding to the individuals" (Bass, 1960, p.39). The combination of these definitions is a collection of individuals who have common goals or destinations, have attachment to the group and try to make changes in one another (Afjeie, 2001).

In summary, the previous studies have considered three advantages for group work as following (Rezaian, 2003):

- Group judgment is better than personal judgment.
- Groups are more successful than individuals when problem-solving requires division of labour and information exchange.
- Groups can be more creative and innovative than individuals, since groups tend to make challenging decisions (Shaw, 1981).

However, groups can be problematic too. According to the studies, individuals may work better when they do it individually than collectively due to two reasons. These reasons are as following:

- Their share in group work is hardly noticeable.
- Individuals prefer that other people carry the primary responsibility (Latane et al., 1979).

The above reasons indicate that individuals' behavior is strongly influenced by colleagues in a group. Since group attempts can divulge the positive and negative existential dimensions in individuals, today's managers need to recognize groups and group processes fully, so that they will avoid being trapped by them and will use their considerable talent.

In this regard, Keshavarzi Bank has taken measures to form teamwork in different fields, so that it can accomplish its goals in different cases such as performing operating plans, increasing the efficiency level of employees and the organization, increasing employee's cooperation in organizational decision-making, improving performance etc. However, in some cases, group work and the performance of teamwork do not accomplish the mentioned goals which a large number of factors may affect its success or failure. These factors include compatibility or incompatibility between the goals of the team and the goals of the organization, leadership style, the personal characteristics of the members, teamwork personal, group and environmental level factors, the structure of group, the norms of group, group size, etc. Since one of the main approaches of this Bank, in order to accomplish these goals, is to form teamwork on the one hand, and train creative, efficient, committed and capable employees, on the other, the main questions in this research will be:

Is there a significant relationship between teamwork group-level factors and employees empowerment in the branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran?

What solutions can be provided to increase the employees' empowerment in the branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran through teamwork group-level factors?

In today's world, employees empowerment is emphasized due to some reasons, including the need of 21st century to trained brains, the speed of continuous revolutions and innovations in all fields and the intense competition between the organizations etc. Based on this fundamental and inevitable assumption, if the organizations use knowledgeable, creative, motivated and capable employees, creativity and innovation will be encouraged (Abtahi, & Abesi, 2007). This indicates the importance and necessity of conducting this research in the field of employees empowerment. Therefore, in this research, through determining the relationship between teamwork group-level factors and human resource empowerment, we can provide some solutions to increase the creativity, innovation and capability of human resources in the branches of Keshavarzi bank (this bank plays a leading role in industry, agriculture and the whole economy of the country). If we generalize and develop these solutions, we can train human resources, who are knowledgeable and have powerful intellectual capitals, as the main factor in wealth creation and value added at different levels of this Bank, other organizations and finally at national level.

The purposes of this research are determining the relationship between teamwork group-level factors and human resource empowerment in the branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran and Suggesting solutions for increasing human resource empowerment in the branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran through the components of teamwork group-level factors.

There are a large number of researches on investigating the relationship between teamwork and human resource empowerment which some of them are summarized as following:

The results of studies conducted by Siebert et al. (2004) and Chen et al. (2007) indicate that teamwork increases effectiveness and improves employees' performance through having impact on personal empowerment (Mathieu, 2008). Moreover, the results of researches conducted by Campion et al. (1996), Hutton (2000), McGrath (1964), Millward et al. (2010) and Rajagopal & Rajagopal (2008) show that work teams, which have a cohesive structure,

improve the process of decision-making and social interactions between members, increase the ability and flexibility of employees against environmental changes.

3. Research methodology

In this study, the model of Driskell, Hogan and Salas (1987) has been used for independent variable. In this model, it has been tried to perceive the relationship between group work factors and their impact on the effectiveness of group performance. This model is divided into three components: input, process and outcome (or output) and input factors are proposed in three levels of personal, group and environmental factors. In the present study, teamwork group-level factors have been investigated through the components of group structure, group norms and group size according to the mentioned model. In addition, the model of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) has been used for the independent variable through the components of sense of competency, sense of being meaningful, sense of having the right of selection and sense of being effective.

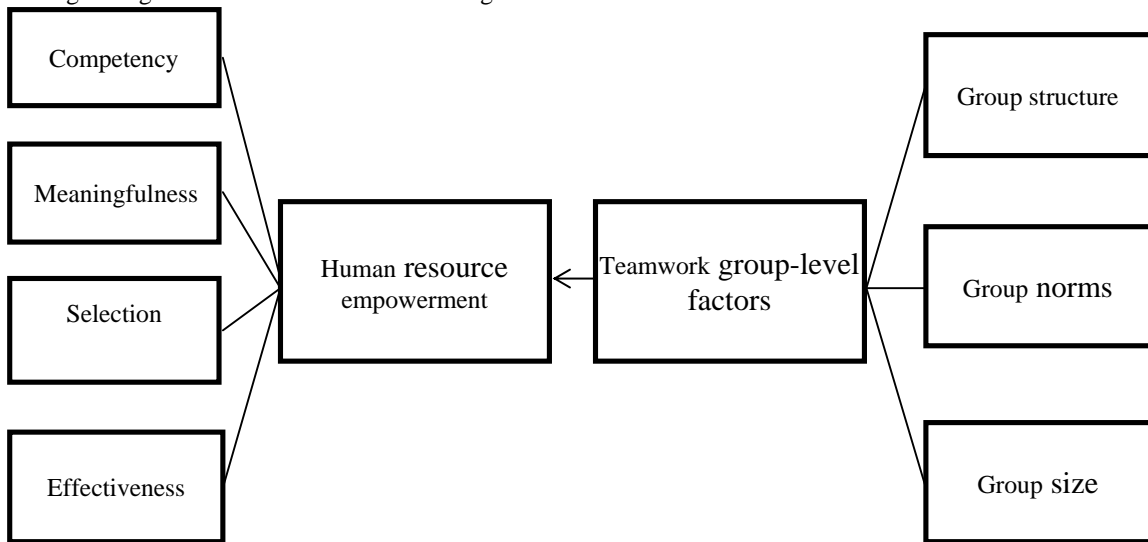


Figure 1: the model of Driskell, Hogan and Salas (1987) and the model of Thomas and Velthouse (1990)

4. Measures

Sense of competency

Sense of competency is a personal belief, which the individuals feel that they can fulfill their duties successfully (Spreitzer, 1995).

Sense of having the right of selection

Sense of having the right of selection or self-determination refers to having freedom or autonomy to determine the necessary activities for fulfilling job responsibilities (Thomas, & Velthouse, 1990). In fact, individuals, who possess this characteristic, take measures voluntarily rather than involuntarily. In such a case, the individuals' activities result from their freedom and personal power and capable employees feel responsibility and ownership of their activities (Zimmerman, 1990).

Sense of being effective

According to Spreitzer (1997), sense of being effective is the degree to which an individual can influence the strategic, administrative or operating outcomes of their job. The ability of effectiveness on results is defined as the individual's belief in a specific period of time about his ability to make appropriate changes (Wilkinson, 1998).

Sense of being meaningful

Sense of being meaningful is the opportunity when individuals feel that they are following important and valuable job objectives. They feel that their time and energy are valuable (Appelbaum, & Honegger, 1998). Meaningfulness is the proportion of business requirements and beliefs, values and behavior (Hochwalder & Brucefors, 2005).

This research is applicable in terms of objective, survey-descriptive in terms of data collection and correlative in terms of methodology.

The statistical population in this study includes the employees of the branches of Keshavarzi Bank in Tehran (1900 employees) which 271 of them were selected.

Data collection was conducted through the questionnaire, which was designed according to the five-point Likert scales. An expert panel confirmed its validity and its reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha, which its value was equal to 0.84 for the variable of teamwork group-level factors and 0.91 for the variable of human resource empowerment. Friedman test was used for data analysis to rank the components of teamwork group-level factors. Moreover, Pearson Correlation and Regression Analysis Tests have been used to test the hypotheses in referential statistics.

5. Research Findings

In Table 1, Pearson Correlation Matrix between teamwork group-level factors and empowerment has been demonstrated.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4
1. Empowerment	--			
2. Teamwork group-level factors	0.607	--		
3. Group structure	0.736	0.671	--	
4. Group norms	0.481	0.544	0.608	--
5. Group size	0.312	0.459	0.524	0.396

*All the coefficients in the level lower than 0.05 are significant.

In order to measure the relationship between the variables of "teamwork group-level factors" and their components and "empowerment", Pearson Correlation Coefficient has been used. results show that there are relationship between the variables of "teamwork group-level factors" and their components with "empowerment.

6. Results

According to Table 1, the correlation between the main variables of the study is extremely high. Therefore, it is concluded that H1 is confirmed and there is a significant and positive relationship between "teamwork group-level factors" and "empowerment" of employees in the branches of Keshavarzi Bank of Tehran.

Also H2, H3, and H4 are confirmed and there is a very strong, significant and positive relationship between group structure with empowerment and there are significant and positive relationship between group norms and group size with empowerment.

In order to study and determine the linearity and the type of relationship between the two primary variables of the study, Regression was conducted, which its results are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: the results of Regression

Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Corrected coefficient of determination	Estimated standard deviation	Sig	Error value
0.669	0.448	0.446	0.40210	0.000	0.05

According to the results of Regression Test, correlation coefficient is equal to 0.669, which indicates that there is a linear relationship between the two primary variables of the study. In fact, a unit of increase in teamwork group-level factors, there are 0.669 units of increase in empowerment.

Moreover, in order to rank the dimensions of teamwork group-level factors and empowerment, Freidman test was used, which its results are demonstrated in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: the results of Freidman Test on the ranking of the dimensions of teamwork group-level factors

Dimensions	Mean rank	Rank
Group structure	3.39	1
Group norms	2.52	2
Group size	2.17	3

After analyzing Freidman Test, the mean rank of statistical sample indicates that among the dimensions of teamwork group-level factors, the components of group structure, group norms and group size have the most impact on the variable of employees empowerment in order.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this study are in line with the results of studies conducted by Siebert et al. (2004), Chen et al. (2007), Campion et al. (1996), Hutton (2000), McGrath (1964), Millward et al. (2010) and Rajagopal, & Rajagopal (2008). Therefore, with regard to the findings of this research, the following items are recommended:

Since the primary hypothesis of the research about the relationship between teamwork group-level factors and employees empowerment has been confirmed, it is recommended that responsibilities should be transferred to work teams. This will lead to taking initiative measures, making dependent decisions and developing competency, meaningfulness and effectiveness.

Since the first secondary hypothesis of the research about the relationship between group structure and employees empowerment has been confirmed, building a cohesive and integrated structure in the group is recommended through developing compatibility between team's objectives and members' objectives, providing support for one another, using homogeneous combination, forming frequent relationship between the member, etc.

Since the second secondary hypothesis of the research about the relationship between group norms and employees empowerment has been confirmed, having a charismatic leader in the team is recommended in order to reinforce and establish the norms of the group through socialization process and providing employees with group norms and values.

Since the third secondary hypothesis of the research about the relationship between group size and employees empowerment has been confirmed, it is recommended that the group size should be selected based on the nature of group's responsibilities.

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