INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE RAFAH BANK IN THE OFFICE OF BRANCH AFFAIRS IN DISTRICT 1 OF TEHRAN

(Recibido el 03-07-2017. Aprobado el 04-09-2017)

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Abstract. One of the most significant changes in the area of management is the emergence and emergence of phenomena such as organizational learning and empowerment of employees. Since human resources are the most important factor of the organization, all organizations should devote the most capital, time and program to the cultivation of humans in different dimensions. Regarding this issue, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between organizational learning and empowerment of employees of Bank of Rafah Branch Office of the District 1 of Tehran. This research is applied in terms of its purpose and in terms of how to implement descriptive-correlative research. For this purpose, 200 employees of the Bank of Rafah Branch Office of the District 1 of Tehran were selected by random sampling method, as a statistical sample. In this research, two standard organizational learning questionnaires (2001) and Spectorizer Empowerment (1995) have been used. The content validity of the questionnaires was confirmed by professors and experts and reliability was 0.81 in organizational learning questionnaire (0.91) and empowerment questionnaire (0.82). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the research data. The results of the research showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational learning and employee empowerment variables.

Keywords: organizational learning, empowerment, learning organization, system thinking, common vision

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Due to the rapid and fluctuating changes in human knowledge and knowledge, everything is changing rapidly. Organizations interact as an open system with the environment and to survive, they need to respond to environmental changes. Since human resources are the most important factor of the organization, equipping and preparing these resources to face the changes, it has particular importance to all organizations, with all missions, to allocate the greatest amount of capital, time, and program to human beings in different dimensions (Jafarzadeh, 2007). In recent years, much attention has been paid to organizational learning and many scholars have been studying and analyzing them from different angles. The idea that the organization can learn is first introduced by Cyert and March in 1963. They considered learning as part of an overall organizational decision making model, and emphasized the role of rules and procedures in response to external shocks that had an impact on the organization’s performance (Gorbani Zadeh, 2008). Many scholars and thinkers on organizational learning have made several definitions that we refer to some of them.

Organizational learning is all the methods, mechanisms and processes used within the organization to realize learning. Organizational learning is the process of finding and fixing corrections that are achieved through shared insight, subjective, mental patterns and knowledge and based on experience, past knowledge, and past events. Therefore, organizational learning is a process that takes place with knowledge and performance improvement over time (Abuee Ardakani, 2000). Organizational learning theory is considered as a systemic and contingent management approach (Hashemi and Khajehpour, 2015, p. 65). Organizations, such as the human mind, are reliant on appropriate feedback to adapt to changing environmental conditions and many organizations regularly improve some of the organizational learning modes on a regular basis and development of human resources and utilization of mastery of new technologies in the organization (Hashemi, 2007). Organizational learning is shaped by the use of insights, knowledge and shared mental models based on past knowledge and experience. Organizational learning is all methods, mechanisms and processes used to realize learning within the organization. Therefore, organizational learning can be considered as an organization’s ability to detect errors as a whole and modifying them, as well as changing the organization's knowledge and values so that new problem solving skills and new capacity can be created (Stata 1989).

On the other hand, organizations today have to be run in a completely competitive environment, with amazing developments. Under such circumstances, managers do not have much opportunity to control employee and they should spend the most time and effort identifying the external and internal environment and assigning other routine tasks to the staff. Once a staff member is able to handle the tasks assigned to him competently, it has the knowledge and ability necessary to know the goals of the organization. A tool that can help administrators in this field is the empowerment process (Abdollahi et al., 2006). Empowerment is a new and effective technique for improving the productivity of the organization by utilizing the capabilities of the employees. Employees are lagging behind their knowledge, experience, and self-centered power, and in fact empowerment is the release of this power (Khanalizadeh et al., 2010). Tomas & Velthoise (1990) have described it as a motivation for performing the main tasks, some of which reflect the appropriate motivation between work and employees (Conger & Kanvngo, 1998).

Staff training, development and professional development are a core component of the empowerment plan. In new organizations known as learning organizations, managers have shown great interest in empowerment and management practices based on it. This interest is due to the fact that empowerment plays an important role in promoting learning culture. Learning organizations have three important characteristics:

1. They continuously keep alive the thirst for learning by questioning the current patterns of organization and challenging the status quo.
2. Learning organizations with a systematic thinking to create a common vision, intellectual synergy and acceptance of new ideas.
3. The most important feature of such organizations is that they work with measures such as empowerment, team building and suggestion systems to promote learning culture.

These characteristics are summarized in Fig. 1. Learning organizations are organizations that manage and manage all intellectual power, knowledge and experience of the organization to
make changes and continuous improvement for development. From Gregory's view (2003), organizational learning consists of all methods, mechanisms and processes used within the organization for the purpose of learning. The necessary skills in the culture of empowerment with the necessary skills in the hierarchical system are completely different. In empowering culture, individuals should be responsible and more autonomous. For this reason, education should be an integral part of empowerment processes. And if we declare education as one of the principles and values of the organization, then it can no longer be selective and arbitrary. It is the responsibility of education, learning and change. If education is not about learning and development, empowerment will never happen.

In the new leadership, the leader should provide an environment that allows each person to learn, grow, develop, and share work. It is also necessary to make a distinction between specific and repeated occupations, job rotation, although every organization has a lot of everyday and repeated jobs, employee empowerment organizations use different mechanisms to provide the necessary opportunities for employees to grow and learn. In this regard, training employees in the same level of business that can develop their abilities is very important to help people learn each other's job. Also, job rotation in other parts of the organization to increase staff skills and expand their scope, and participation in working groups and other special groups is difficult, to improve the company, improve quality, it is important to provide new products and services (Mosharraf Javadi et al., 2009).

Figure 1: Characteristics of Learning Organizations (Mosharraf Javadi et al., 2009)

In terms of organizational learning and empowerment, various studies have been carried out by various scholars; in a study by Martin (2004), the importance of learning and the need to create processes that support organizational learning and the creation of organizational knowledge has been emphasized (Yaghubi et al., 2010). Rinhart & Shert (1999) found in their studies that improving teachers' information led to professional growth, increased opportunities for decision making and ultimately empower them (Karroubi and Metani, 2009). In another study, Betnager (2007) showed that there is a positive relationship between the strategic roles of human resources and organizational commitment. It also became clear how psychological empowerment facilitates learning capacity and, as a result, leads to higher organizational commitment. In internal investigations, Shafi (2006) study on the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational learning at the National Oil Refinery Company, this showed a significant relationship between employee empowerment factors and organizational learning. Also, Asadi and colleagues (2008) in the research entitled the relationship between learning and organizational performance in the experts of the physical education organization of Islamic Republic of Iran achieved these results. There is a positive and
significant relationship between individual-level learning and team learning with organizational performance of the experts.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, descriptive-correlation method has been used. The statistical population of the research was all employees of the Bank of Rafah Branch Office of the District 1 of Tehran (400 people) after determining the sample size, 200 of them were examined using the Krejcie & Morgan table. For data collection, library studies and questionnaires have been used. To measure the organizational learning variable, Spreitzer questionnaire and to measure the empowerment variable, a standard stereotyped questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was developed using Tomas & Velthoise empowerment model. In this questionnaire, dimensions (sense of competence (self-efficacy), feeling of independence (having the right to choose), feeling of effectiveness, the sense of being important and the sense of trust are examined. Content validity of the questionnaires was approved by professors and management experts. The reliability of organizational learning and empowerment questionnaires using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was 0.91 and 0.82, respectively. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression coefficient were used to analyze the data using SPSS software.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Research hypothesis: There is a relationship between organizational learning and employee empowerment at the Bank of Rafah Branch Office of the District 1 of Tehran.

Table 1: Pearson correlation coefficient test between organizational learning and employee empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>Coefficient of determination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational learning</td>
<td>Empowering employees</td>
<td>0.803</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Pearson correlation coefficient (0.880), there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational learning and employee empowerment variables and significant level (0.001), there is a positive and significant relationship between these two variables with 99% confidence and the hypothesis confirmed.

Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient analysis between organizational learning components and empowerment of employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring, transferring and applying knowledge</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and team learning</td>
<td>Empowering employees</td>
<td>0.431</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision</td>
<td>0.575</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational learning culture</td>
<td>0.589</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System thinking</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory leadership</td>
<td>0.216</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of competencies of employees</td>
<td>0.204</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Pearson correlation coefficient (0.592) for two variables of transfer and application of information and knowledge and empowerment of employees (0.431) for two variables, teamwork and employee empowerment, (0.575) for the two variables of the outlook and employee empowerment, (0.589) for the two variables, the learning culture and empowerment of the employees and the level of significance achieved on them is equal to (0.000), with 99% confidence it can be said that there is a positive and significant relationship between them, and the hypotheses are approved also, according to Pearson correlation coefficient (0.233), for two systems of system thinking and employee empowerment and a significant level (0.001), there is a significant relationship with them with 99% confidence, and the hypothesis is confirmed. Pearson correlation coefficient for two variables of participatory leadership and employee empowerment was equal to (0.216), which was significant (0.022) with 99% confidence, it can be said that there is a meaningful and positive relationship between them, and this hypothesis is also confirmed.

According to Pearson correlation coefficient (0.204), there is a positive and significant relationship between competency development and
employee empowerment and a significant level (0.004), with a confidence level of 99%. The hypothesis confirmed.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The human resource is considered to be the most important, most expensive and most valuable asset of an organization, and a powerful human resource can create a capable organization. Regarding this, in the present study, the relationship between organizational learning and empowerment of employees in Bank of Rafah Branch Office of the District 1 of Tehran was studied.

The findings of this study showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and employee empowerment. The result of the correlation coefficient test between organizational learning and empowerment variables was 0.803, which indicates a strong and positive correlation between the two variables considering that the level of significance is equal to (0.000) and is smaller than the level of error (0.01), we conclude that there is a meaningful relationship between these two variables.

This result is consistent with the results of research by Martin (2004), Rhinathar and Shart (1999), Shafi (2006) and Assadi et al. (2008). Achieving capability is only an individual or group effort, but also factors such as structure, politics, values, reward system and organizational culture should all encourage and reinforce individual and group behaviors in this regard. Efforts to improve and rehabilitate these factors are possible through teach (Khanalizadeh et al., 2010). Organizational learning can be considered as one of the most important factors that empowers employees. When information and knowledge in the organization is distributed among all employees at different levels, they enhance the skills and knowledge of the employees and, consequently, empower them, and will increase organizational performance. According to the findings of the research, the following suggestions are presented in the field of research variables.

Increased attention to participatory leadership and employee participation in decision making
Statement of Prospects, Strategies, Policies and Strategies of the Bank of Rafah Branch Office of the District 1 of Tehran for Employees
Creating a mechanism for using tacit knowledge of experienced staff and using them for training
Development and promotion of organizational learning culture

Give the employee the sense of independence and autonomy, meaning that they are allowed to carry out their activities in the light of their abilities.

Systematic reward system based on performance
By sharing information and knowledge at all levels of organization, there is a sense of trust in the organization, so that employees feel more responsible and take advantage of relationships and communication efficiently.

Selecting and employing people in a suitable job in a way that is consistent with individual beliefs and values and work requirements.

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