

Research Paper

Analysis of the Relationship between Employees' Attitude to the Structural Dimensions and Employees' Empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Company

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Abstract

Company's organizational structure due to the tendency towards mechanical and inherent characteristics (High formalization and complexity, centralization, and planned behaviors in the form of regulations) of this structure is limiting the process of employees' empowerment (Competence, self-determination, significance, effectiveness) in the organization. Employees' empowerment is a very effective tool based on management changing approach so that by using it, organizations can take important long and fast steps on the path of development and growth. Since human is the base of organizational changes, this study investigates the relationship between employees' attitude to the structural dimensions of the organization and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. The statistical population of this study includes all employees who work in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. The population includes 230 employees of Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. based on statistics and information of this organization which are calculated 145 people (99 men and 46 women) by using stratified random sampling and through Cochran's Formula. Robins' (1989) Organizational Structure Questionnaire and Spritzer's Employees' Empowerment Questionnaire are used to collect data. This study in terms of purpose is a practical research. Classification of this study based on methodology is descriptive and by survey method. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and graphs) and inferential statistics (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) are used to analyze data. Then, in order to examine hypotheses of the study, structural equation and Pearson correlation coefficient are used and also to respond to the secondary hypotheses, One Sampling T-Test is used. To evaluate overall fitting of the research model, structural equation modeling is used. Measurement Model Test in LISREL software includes confirmatory analysis that evaluates discriminant validity. The results in the level of ($p < 0.05$) show that organizational structure and formalization and centralization have a significant relationship with employees' empowerment but there is an inverse relationship between complexity and employees' empowerment.

Key Words: Employees' Attitude, Organizational Structure, Formalization, Complexity, Centralization, Employees' Empowerment.

Introduction

Capable human resource is a major indicator of an organization's priority in comparison to other organizations. The first step to employees' empowerment is identification of factors affecting it. The results of researches show that organizational structure is the most important effective factor on the employees' empowerment. Therefore, experts in management consider organizational structure as one of the factors related to employees' empowerment (Scate, 1990; Kanger ad Kanengo, 1998; Spreitzer, 1997). They believe that the bureaucratic structures and autocratic styles of management cause the disability of employees. So, reducing factors of employees' disability in job functions is one of important issues of improving their performance. Personal characteristics such as self-esteem, creativity and innovation, positive thinking, quality, commitment and ability of employees are very important in order to overcome these problems. Achieving these goals requires the using of appropriate and scientific strategies. Empowerment is one of the most important strategies to create these characteristics in people and it is a new motivational factor in dynamic work environment. Today, the main source of competitive advantage is not only technology usage but they are also creativity, innovation, positive thinking, quality, commitment and ability of employees (Gresov and Drazin, 2009).

Studies conducted in successful organizations in implementing empowerment programs show that one of the most important and effective factors in establishment of different dimensions of empowerment process is "Organizational Structure". The importance of organizational structure in formation of organizational processes (especially human resource development practices in the organization) requires more attention to its relationship and effects on the process of empowerment. This subject has been the focus of empowerment organization and researchers since the early 1970s. These studies led to extensive changes in the replacement of traditional, centralized and passive structures with dynamic, active, participatory and self-management organizational structures (Mihm, 2010).

As mentioned before, empowerment variable cannot act independent of the organizational structure. In this respect, identifying the relationship between empowerment (as an internal variable of the organization) and dimensions of organizational structure will be of particular importance. This issue is considered less in previous studies. Therefore, evaluation of the relationship between psychological empowerment and dimensions of organizational structure and to investigate their interactions with each other is necessary. So, the topic of research is proposed in the form of this question: "Is there any correlation between organizational structure factors (Complexity, Formalization and Centralization) and psychological empowerment (Competence, self-determination, significance and effectiveness)?"

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Question Statement

The organizational structure reflects the way in which information and knowledge is distributed among organizations which effects on their effective usage. As a result, organizational structure effects to a large extent on the distribution and cooperation of organization resources, communication processes and organizational interactions between organization members.

Ergis (1998) believes that empowerment is superficial and employees' empowerment is only verbal and still management controls organizations. Empowerment is a process in which continuous performance improvement is assisted by the development and expansion and the ability of individuals and teams. In other words, empowerment is a strategy of organizational development and prosperity. Employees can well afford the duties when they have skill, knowledge and abilities and recognize the organizational goals. A tool that can help managers in this field is empowerment process. Management style for capable employees is different with other employees and it is in the form of guidance and coaching. Empowerment in addition to change in attitude of people and their judgment about individual and organizational issues creates the belief in which freedom is a reliable source of ability. Therefore, when a group of people are capable, relations with those in power will change and they will share the common goals. Empowered people have changed their relationships with others and authorities such as companies and government. Now, organizations have entered a new era. Employees are organization partners and a part of organization. So, it is not only essential that managers have leadership qualities but all employees must employ methods in which they are self-leader. In empowered organizations, organizational structure is designed so that employees are able to achieve the desired results and do what is required and not just their duty. In some studies, organizational structure is introduced as the major barrier of empowerment and in fact by strengthening organizational structure of bureaucracy and control systems, the message of disbelief is sent to employees. In fact, we can say that these organizations are not empowered in practice. Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. according to its one hundred experiments, has a key role in providing communications in coverage areas and has also been changed in years but despite the changes in the organizational structure and in different aspects, still has problems that has negative effects on the performance of employees. Given that so far any research has not been done about the relationship between organizational structure and employees' empowerment in this organization, the relationship between these two variables has not been identified in the organization and thus a strategy to empower the employees due to the dimensions of organizational structure has not been presented. The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between employees' attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure (centralization, formalization and complexity) and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. In this study, dimensions of organizational structure including centralization, formalization and complexity are considered as the independent variables and empowerment including components of competence, self-determination, significance and effectiveness is considered as the dependent variable. According to the current structure of of

Telecommunication Organization in South Oil areas with about 230 employees, we are looking for whether there is a significant relationship between employee's attitudes to organizational structure and empowerment and whether this structure due to the complexity, centralization and formalization strengthen empowerment components and whether changing the structure is required. Employees' empowerment is one of effective techniques to increase employees' efficiency and productivity and optimum use of the capacities and individual and group abilities along the organizational goals. Also, employees' empowerment is widely known as one of the critical factors of organization success and many researchers believe that there is a direct relationship between the level of employees' empowerment and their performance and also their job satisfaction and work commitment. Employees' empowerment enables organizations to be more flexible and respond quickly to changes and can ultimately lead to improvement of individual and organizational performance and effect organizational innovation. Given that so far any research has not been done about the relationship between organizational structure and employees' empowerment in this organization, the relationship between these two variables has not been identified in the organization. The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between employees' attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure (centralization, formalization and complexity) and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Research Purposes

General Purpose

Investigating of the relationship between employees' attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Partial Purposes (Proprietary)

- 1- Investigating of the relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.
- 2- Investigating of the relationship between employees' attitude to formalization and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.
- 3- Investigating of the relationship between employees' attitude to centralization and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Research Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Secondary Hypotheses

According to structural dimensions in this study, the following hypotheses are defined:

- 1- There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.
- 2- There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to formalization and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

3- There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to centralization and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Research Conceptual Model

Analytical Model

Each organization by its own special and unique structure, creates different areas and particular requirements for empowerment. Employees according to assumption of their organization structure, form a particular empowerment and skill for the organization. Among the issues that exist in all areas of the organization and has a significant effect on the fate of the organization is employees' psychological empowerment. Thus, according to particular assumptions that govern the structure of the organization, in fact organizational structure is the underlying of employees' empowerment and effects on effectiveness and productivity of the organization. This study investigates the relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment. The researcher seeks to a proper structural framework that provides the best way to

empowerment and creates the preparations to take the organization to the constructive level that results in a viable, innovative, and progressive organization. In order to achieve organizational and training utilities as well as creating favorable conditions to develop the organizational structure and empowerment in this study, hypothetical model is considered between organizational structure and empowerment. In this study, Robbins' organizational structure hybrid model (structural dimensions) and Spritzer's empowerment components model are used. Robbins' organizational structure model considers structure as an important component of organization that consists of three elements: complexity, formalization and centralization. Spritzer through focusing on the psychological approach seeks to develop a regulated network of empowerment in the workplace. His model consists of four components: significance, effectiveness, competence and self-determination. Based on this model, to investigate the relationship between employees' attitude to dimensions of organizational structure and employees' empowerment, the adopted model is used.

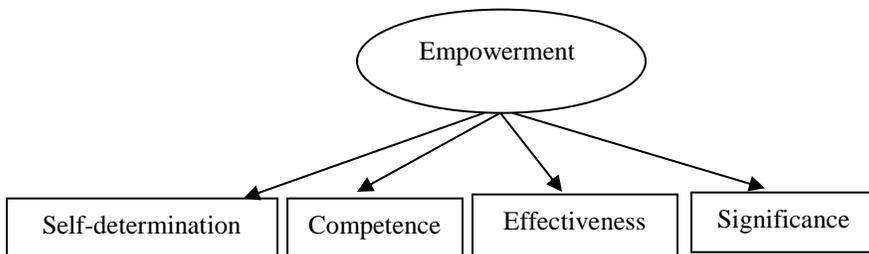


Figure 2- Spritzer's Empowerment Model

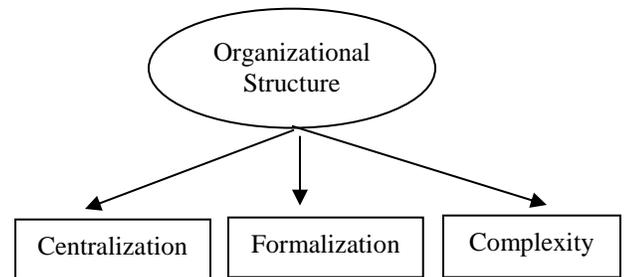


Figure 1- Robbins' Organizational Structure Model

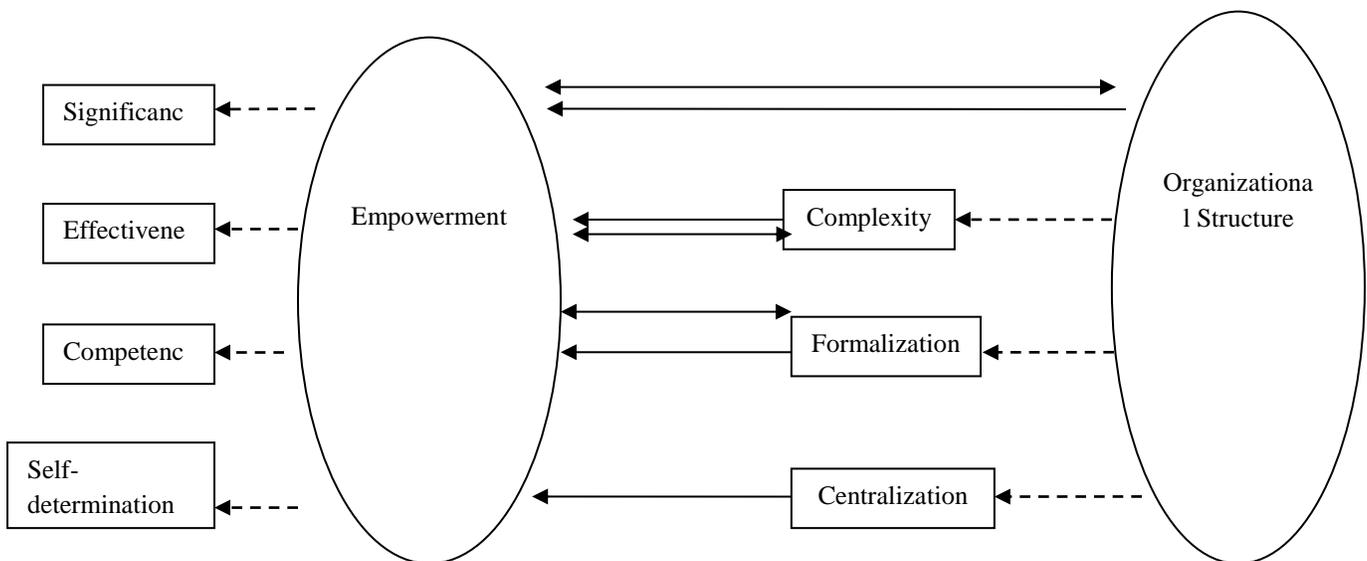


Figure 3- Adopted Conceptual Model (Robbins' Organizational Structure, 1989) and (Spritzer's Empowerment, 1995)

Research Methodology

The statistical population in this study includes employees who are working in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. The population includes 230 employees of Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co. based on statistics and information of this organization which are calculated 145 people (99 men and 46 women) by using stratified random sampling and through Cochran's Formula. Robins' (1989) Organizational Structure Questionnaire and Spritzer's Employees' Empowerment Questionnaire are used to collect data. This study in terms of purpose is a practical research. Classification of this study based on methodology is descriptive and by survey method. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and graphs) and inferential statistics (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) are used to analyze data. Then, in order to examine hypotheses of the study, structural equation and Pearson correlation coefficient are used and also to respond to the secondary hypotheses, One Sampling T-Test is used. To evaluate overall fitting of the research model, structural equation modeling is used. Measurement Model Test in LISREL software

includes confirmatory analysis that evaluates discriminant validity. In this study, standard questionnaires have been used which are used in multiple studies. Content validity of questions is confirmed by experts. Factor analysis is used for structure validity.

The reliability analysis method is use of Cronbach's Formula. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaire, the questionnaire is distributed among 30 experts in the statistical population and then they are collected. Alpha coefficient is calculated by using the following formula. The values based on the following formula are as follows:

$$r_{\alpha} = \frac{j}{j-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum S_j^2}{S^2} \right)$$

In which:

j= Number of subdivisions of questionnaire or test questions.

Sj2= Variance under j test

S2= variance of total test.

Table 1- Cronbach's Alpha of Questionnaires

Questioned Criteria	Questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Complexity	1-7	0.81
Formalization	8-14	0.87
Centralization	15-24	0.88
Significance	1-3	0.82
Competence	4-7	0.81
Self-Determination	8-10	0.87
Effectiveness	11-13	0.89

Data Analysis and Hypotheses Test

Data Analysis by Using Descriptive Statistics

Gender of Respondents

Table 2- The Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Row	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	99	68.3
2	Female	46	31.7
Total		145	100

According to Table 2, we observe that among the respondents, 99 people (68.3%) are male and 46 people (46%) are female.

Educational Level of Respondents

Table 3- The Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Educational Level

Row	Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
1	Diploma Degree	17	11.7
2	Associate Degree	26	17.9
3	Bachelor Degree	64	44.1
4	Master Degree	38	26.2
5	Ph.D.	0	0
Total		145	100

As Table 3 shows, educational level of 11.7% of respondents is Diploma degree, 17.9% is Associate degree, 44.1% is Bachelor degree and 26.2% is Master degree.

Age of Respondents

Table 4- The Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Age

Row	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	20-30	15	10.3
2	31-40	68	46.9
3	41-50	45	31.1
4	Over 51	17	11.7
Total		145	100

As Table 4 shows, among the respondents, 10.3% are between 20 to 30 years old, 46.9% are between 31 to 40 years

old, 31% are between 41 to 50 years old and 11.7% are over 51 years old.

Organizational Post of Respondents

Table 5- The Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Organizational Post

Row	Organizational Post	Frequency	Percentage
1	Manger	1	0.7
2	Boss	16	11
3	Senior Expert	13	9
4	Expert	44	30.3
5	Technician	71	49
Total		145	100

As Table 5 shows, organizational post of the most of respondents is Technician.

Inferential Findings

Normality of Data Distribution

In order to investigate the normality of data distribution, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used. Null hypothesis is that data are normal and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used in level of 5%.

To determine the presence or absence of the relationship and the intensity of the relationship between two quantitative variables, the Pearson correlation coefficient is used. The value of this coefficient is between -1 to 1 that negative sign indicates a correlation in the opposite direction and a positive sign indicates a relationship between two variables. The more the absolute value of the correlation coefficient is close to 1, the intensity of correlation is more and the more the absolute value is close to zero, the correlation is weak. At the same time of correlation, the significance is tested. It means that two hypotheses are tested at error level of α : H_0 shows zero correlation in the population and H_1 shows nonzero correlation.

Relationship (1):

$$\begin{cases} H_0: \rho = 0 \\ H_1: \rho \neq 0 \end{cases}$$

If the component “p value” for the correlation test is less than test level, H_0 is rejected and if it is more than test level, then there is no reason to reject the hypothesis H_0 .

Main Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between employees’ attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure and employees’ empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

In order to test the above hypothesis, Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used. We consider the null hypothesis as there is No linear relationship between organizational structure and employees’ empowerment (ρ is correlation coefficient of population) which we show as follows:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: \rho = 0 \\ H_1: \rho \neq 0 \end{cases}$$

H_0 : There is NO relationship between employees’ attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure and employees’ empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between employees’ attitude to the dimensions of organizational structure and employees’ empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Table 6- The Correlation Coefficient between Employees’ Empowerment and Organizational Structure

Dependent Variable	Statistical Indicator Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level	Sample Size
Employees’ Empowerment	Organizational Structure	0.376	0.000	145

According to Table 6, the value of correlation coefficient between employees’ empowerment and organizational structure is equal to 0.376 and the significance level is 0.000 which is less than significance level of test (0.05). Therefore H_0 is rejected and we conclude that the test is significant and there is a linear

significant relationship between employees’ empowerment and organizational structure.

There is a significant relationship between employees’ attitude to complexity and employees’ empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

In order to test the above hypothesis, Pearson Correlation Coefficient is used. We consider the null hypothesis as there is No linear relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment (ρ is correlation coefficient of population) which we show as follows:

- H0: $\rho = 0$
- H1: $\rho \neq 0$

H₀: There is NO relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

Table 7- The Correlation Coefficient between Employees' Empowerment and Complexity of Organizational Structure

Dependent Variable	Statistical Indicator Independent Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level	Sample Size
Employees' Empowerment	Complexity of Organizational Structure	-0.376	0.000	145

According to Table 7, the value of correlation coefficient between employees' empowerment and complexity of organizational structure is equal to -0.376 and the significance level is 0.000 which is less than significance level of test (0.05). Therefore H₀ is rejected and we conclude that the test is significant and there is a linear significant relationship between employees' empowerment and complexity of organizational structure which is inverse relationship.

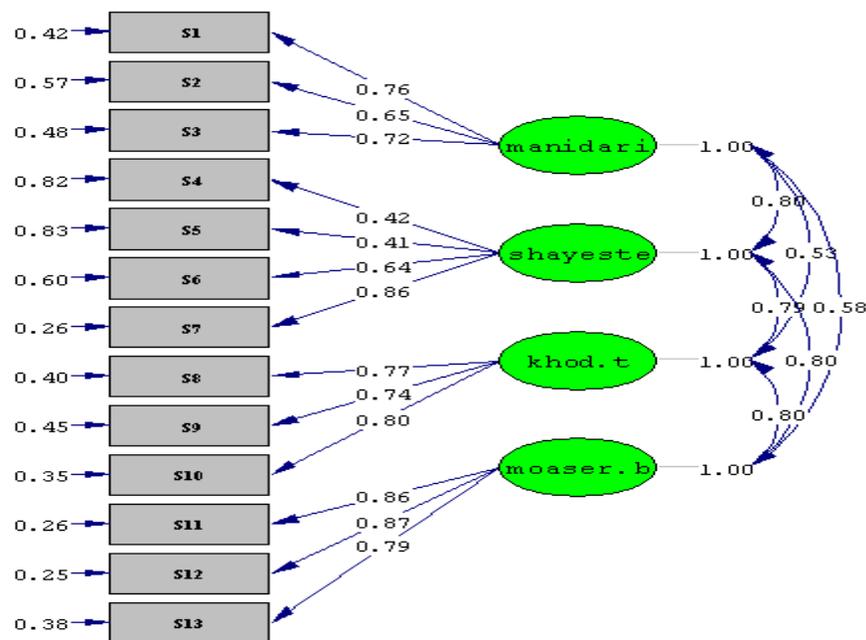
This refers to the fact that the observed variables or items of a questionnaire to what extent measure the intended structure.

A) Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Employees' Empowerment

According to critical values (t value) reported for the loading factor (coefficient λ) is more than 1.96 and as we can see in Figure 4, confirmed loading factor coefficients and latent variables are explained by observed variables (questionnaire items) and these variables can contain their latent variables. Fitting indicator of RMSEA=0.013, freedom degree of 59 and Chi-square of 167.56 with significant level of 0.000 indicates that fitting indicators are favorable. But according to t value in above Table, this measurement model is confirmed.

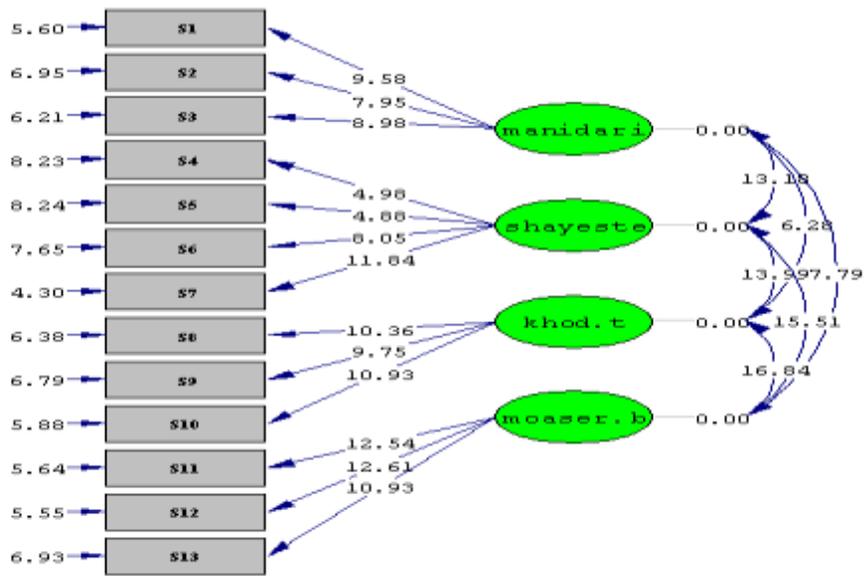
Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Measurement model in LISREL software test includes confirmatory analysis which evaluates the discriminant validity.



Chi-Square=167.56, df=59, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.013

Figure 4- Employees' Empowerment Model in the Standard No. Mode



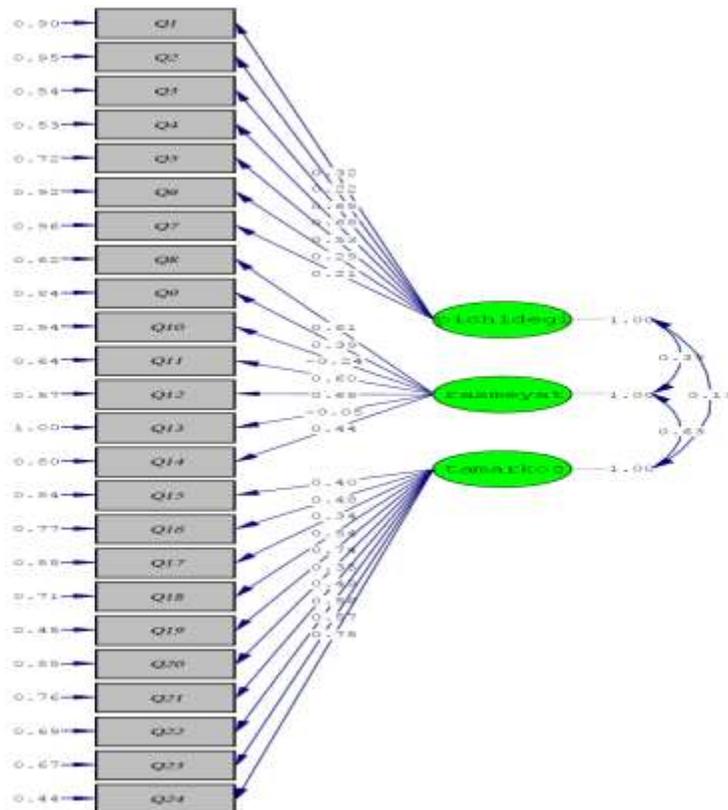
Chi-Square=167.56, df=59, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.013

Figure 5- Employees' Empowerment Model in the Significance No. Mode

B) Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Organizational Structure

According to critical values (t value) reported for the loading factor (coefficient λ) is more than 1.96 and as we can see in Figure 6, confirmed loading factor coefficients and latent variables are explained by observed variables (questionnaire

items) and these variables can contain their latent variables. Fitting indicator of RMSEA=0.031, freedom degree of 249 and Chi-square of 625.74 with significant level of 0.000 indicates that fitting indicators are favorable. But according to t value in above Table, this measurement model is confirmed.



Chi-Square=625.74, df=249, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.031

Figure 6- Organizational Structure Model in the Standard No. Mode

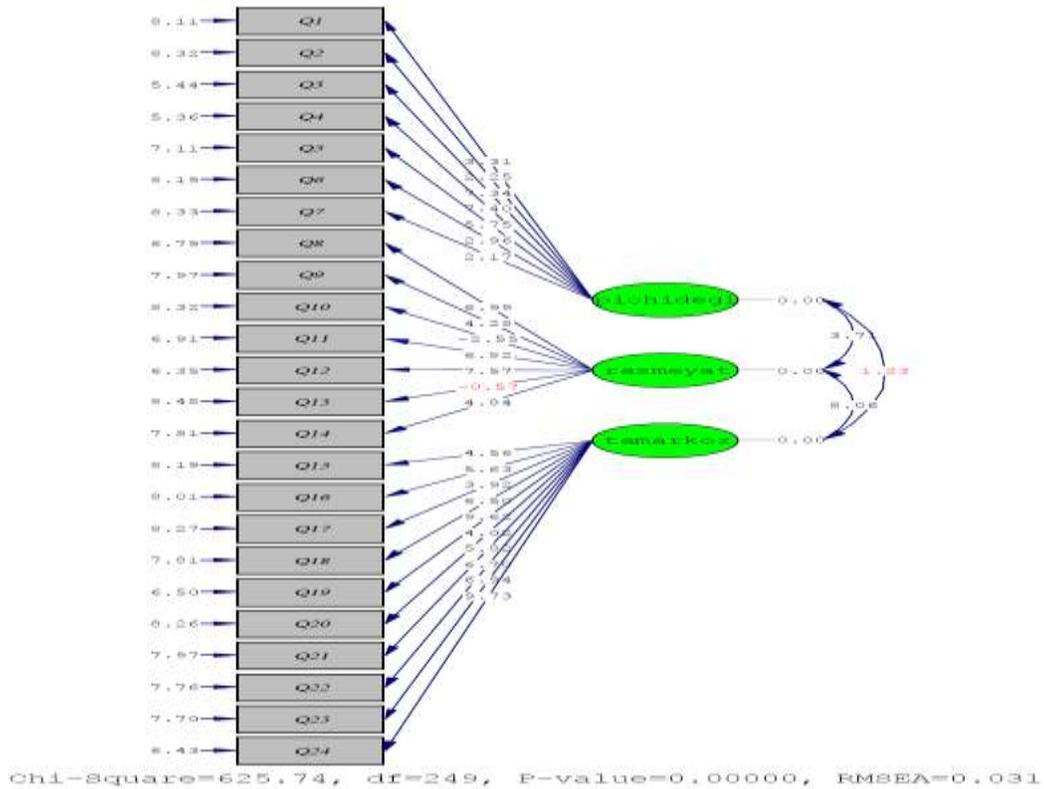


Figure 7- Organizational Structure Model in the Significant No. Mode

Conclusion

Results of Hypotheses Test

There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to organizational structure (Complexity, Formalization and Centralization) and employees' empowerment (Competence, Self-determination, Significance and Effectiveness) in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

In explaining of the main hypothesis, we can say that organizational structure is not an organizational unit condition; because different parts of an organization deal with different environmental pressures. Company's organizational structure due to the tendency towards mechanical and inherent characteristics (High formalization and complexity, centralization, and planned behaviors in the form of regulations) of this structure is limiting the process of employees' empowerment (Competence, self-determination, significance, effectiveness) in the organization. Employees' empowerment is a very effective tool based on management changing approach so that by using it, organizations can take important long and fast steps on the path of development and growth. Since human is the base of organizational changes, to achieve an acceptable level of organizational development, human resources should be improved. This is possible through strategies such as: Meritocracy system upgrades, system of career development, job enrichment systems, collaboration systems and behavioral rationality system. In fact, organic structures provide opportunities to create empowerment feeling in employees by features such as: being flexible, attention to employees' skills and knowledge, dynamics and the emphasis on the exchange of information, decentralized authority, less laws and regulations, informal communication network, attention to self-control and

more consistence with conditions. The process of successful organization in implementing employees' empowerment indicates that one of the most important factors of establishing employees' empowerment is "Organizational Structure". The importance of organizational structure in formation of organizational processes (especially human resource development practices in the organization) requires more attention to its relationship and effects on the process of empowerment. Therefore, access to the empowerment process in the organization requires the use of an appropriate structure. It must be admitted that empowerment has a great value in organizations and ultimately leads to motivated, accountable, and flexible employees, increasing organization productivity, higher quality of service and more profitability due to lower costs, more employees' loyalty to the organization and better use of employees' knowledge and skills.

There is a significant relationship between employees' attitude to complexity and employees' empowerment in Nasooz Gostaran Fidar Co.

In explaining of the 1st hypothesis, we can say that organizational structure reflects the way in which information and knowledge is distributed among organizations which effects on effective use of them. Consequently organizational structure can effect to a large extent on the distribution and cooperation of resources and processes of social relationship and interaction between members of an organization. Therefore, the layout of organizational structure facilitates or blocks the ability of an organization in terms of change, learning, innovation or improving the organization's ability. One of the dimensions of organizational structure is complexity which is multiple management levels in the organization. In general, the

complexity is different job titles (dispersion of jobs within the organization), different hierarchy and management levels and geographical dispersion of organization units from each other. On the other hand, complexity of structure has an effective relationship with employees' empowerment. The less complexity enables organization to act to creative and innovative ways and presents business planning's in such a way that maintains its position in the best way. The use of empowerment leads to understanding and commitment of the employees and the organization. Employees with an understanding of the organization and duties, often take into account their selves and consider themselves committed in excellence of the organization. Empowerment programs often are implemented to overcome employee satisfaction, reduce costs of work absenteeism and increase quality of work. Empowerment is a determinant key of service quality and satisfaction. So, it should be stated that employees' empowerment can increase employees' sense of self-efficiency and gives them the opportunity to identify customer expectations and try their best in meeting customers' needs.

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