Study of the Relationship between Empowerment and Quality of Staff Working Life of Iran Telecommunication Company

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to identify the relationship between empowerment and quality of work life in Iran Telecommunication Company. This empowers and increases staff performance, which would develop organizations. Therefore, higher income and quality of working conditions enhance the performance of the status of the company. Quality of working life includes legalism, growth opportunities, fairly payment, social affiliation, and the general atmosphere of life, social integration, safe work environment and the development of capabilities. Empowerment includes effectiveness, significance, sense of competence and the right choice.

Research methodology is correlation and functional and data collection method is documentary and survey questionnaires. The researcher made questionnaire for the quality of working life and for empowering, he used from PEQ standard questionnaire. The population includes employees of Iran Telecommunication Company with 240 people that were selected by using Cochran formula with 147 people. The output results of the SPSS software show confirmed the relationship between employee empowerment and working life quality with amount of 0.734 and the significant level of 0.001. A significant and positive correlation was found between empowering and growth opportunities and variables of legalism, independence and social integration.

Keywords: quality of working life, empowerment, Iran Telecommunication Company.
Introduction

Our world is the world of our organizations and the main drivers of this wheel are humans. They give means to the body of the company and permit the realization of the goal. Without humans, organizations are meaningless, and management is fictitious. Possibly, this raises doubts about the discourses that in the future world machines will replace people in the organization and the human role in the organization will fade. This is not likely because automation transformed the work type of human activities and according to Peter Drucker, manual labor has been replaced by knowledge work. But the decisive role of man will be established and continued as the governing force of the organization (Moorhead and Griffin, 2008: 5).

New attitudes towards humans are strategic. This means that humans are the major work factors and their creators. Therefore, human labour force plays a pivotal role in organization evolution and the development of the organization is derived from the unlimited capabilities this human factor (Moheb Ali, quoted by Sharif zad and Kheirandish, 2009). Nowadays, most employees have higher living standards, and generally have better education and are more informed and aware. As a result, this increased the ability of their self determination and self control. They want to have independency and be recognized as important persons. They want to have an opportunity to be empowered and obtain more potential capabilities (Heraci and Blanchard, 1996: 139).

A suitable environment should be provided to circulate these capabilities. The environment affects the job atmosphere and enhances an appropriate and open communication channels so that employees become involved in major decisions and procedures of the organization. Therefore, their participation and satisfaction in work increases, and their work related stress decreases. These environmental features represent of a kind of corporate culture or management style. Accordingly the staff has a sense of ownership, autonomy, responsibility and self esteem (Dolan and schuler, 2008: 354). Quality of work life is one of the main sources of development of the organization. This takes place with the combination of science, art, experience, wisdom, knowledge, and ultimately human common sense (Salmani, 2003: 73). In fact, quality of work life is realized because of participative decision making, job security, working improvement and environment, a sense of ownership and self, creating opportunities for professional development, appreciation of the work and the development and job enrichment. Self satisfying the needs of individuals and incentives for retention in the organization is of great importance. The aim of this effort is the access to efficient tools and methods in order to analyze and evaluate various aspects, relating to quality of work life and determining the suitable strategies for its promotion and finally, improving individual and organizational productivity.
Problem Statement

Organizations are living in a context that is called the environment. Organizational environment includes all factors that affect organizations. But those factors are not under supervision (Rezaian, 1998). Increased environmental changes such as increasing development of technology, intensity of competition and changing expectations of customers and stakeholders force to adapt to their environment in order to survive and to develop (Markvard, 2002). With the development of science and technology and the expansion of business areas, such as virtual organization or network, expanded business and the business environment have become challenging and competitive. New variables appear which make the survival for many organizations a difficult task. In such an environment, it is natural to reshape competitive advantages. The biggest competitive advantage is expressed in the new variable of business and learning (Senge, 2003). Many organizations have recognized solutions to enhance the capabilities of organizational learning and empowerment programs. Efforts were made to implement the reform program of the affecting variables on individuals, learning and empowerment in order to take advantage of them. This would help overcome internal and external obstacles and create necessary background for enabling staff training (Mohammadi, 2003). This empowerment increases employee performance, grows organizations and therefore higher income and quality of life result. Such high quality of life increases the performance of staff in organization.

Quality of working life is such an important issue. The spread of technology and industrialization process in western countries was considered and encouraged by social scientists. "The quality of working life" can be considered a component of welfare and to this purpose; organizations, governments and different professional efforts measure and improve the quality of working life. So check the quality of working life, communities and different groups are becoming one of the most popular evaluations in recent years.

According to Feldman, the quality of relationships between staff and all workplace, is in the form of programs and activities and is done to improve the quality of working life, emphasizing the human dimension in parallel to the technical and economic interest in organizations (Pardakhtchi et al., 2009 ).

Quality of working life often uses objective criteria or subjective criteria, and rarely can it be measured with the use of both types of indicators. Subjective indicators are achieved from the survey of perceptions, evaluations and satisfaction of urban residents, while objective indicators related to observable facts which are often obtained from secondary data. In fact, the quality of life considers all the social indices and their empowerment as the need for basic and fundamental factors. Many of these factors overlap with variables related to quality of life. Empowerment is a mechanism that increases the organization's ability to effectively use human resources (Conger, 1998). Empowerment can be the style of management. Managers and employees are invited to
greater involvement in the processes, through their involvement in decision making. But the integration in the organizational literature is the work resulting of scholars such as, Conger, Congo, Thomas, Veltos and Spreitzer (Horabadi Farahani, 2006) that have offered various theories and numerous definitions in this field. But ultimately it is mentioned that empowerment shaped as a resource for behavior or performance is related to the results of performance.

In fact, the impact of the quality of working life on employees empowering in organization is the researcher's main concern. The main research questions are whether Telecommunications Company’s empowering staff causes a change in the quality of work life. How is this change? Is the relationship to change direct or inverse?

**Theoretical background**

Empowerment builds and strengthens confidence of people about themselves which results in increasing effort in the direction of the effectiveness of the organization's activities. Conger and Canango (2010) think that two dimensions of psychological empowerment are feelings of self efficacy and self efficacy. Thomas and Velthos (1990) pointed out to four aspects of the sense of effectiveness, feeling of having a choice, sense of competence, feelings of worthiness and sense of meaning. Whetten and Cameron (1998), based on research by Mishra (1992) and Sprentz (1995) introduced five dimensions of empowerment, including effective feeling, the feeling of personal choice, sense of competence, feelings of worthiness and a sense of security at work.

Quality of working life is the reaction of employees about work, in particular. It is necessary to satisfy the professional needs and mental health consequences. Using this definition, quality of work life focuses on personal effects and how to improve the work experience to meet individual needs. In terms of quality dimensions of working life, it includes job security, wages, occupational pride, desire and motivation at work, employee relations, and settlement of staff, career advancement and participation of employees.

Actually, the relationship of quality of work life and employee empowerment is a two way interaction and both create productivity in organization. So quality of working life is an important factor in the empowering staff. Accordingly, below model is designed to summarize the theoretical foundations of the research:
Findings and Results

Correlation coefficient between fair pay and empowerment showed no significant relationship between the amount of fair compensation and empowerment (r=-0.006). So the hypothesis is rejected and H1 and H0 of hypothesis are confirmed. This result confirms the findings of Hasan Poor (2008): Hasan Poor (2008) studied the factors affecting on the relationship between empowerment and empowerment and organizational commitment in the 19 areas of education organization of Tehran. Affecting factors on empowerment are "organizational factors, led light, reward system, job design" by empowering employees and also the relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment was investigated. Results showed that among the affecting factors on empowerment, there is style that has the most important role. The relationship between the dimensions of meaningful sense of empowerment, a sense of competence and self regulating organization with a commitment to not support the relationship between effectiveness confirmed the reliability to work with organizational commitment.

Correlation coefficient between safe work environment and employee empowerment showed no significant relationship between safe work environment and employee empowerment with values (r = -0.015). Hypothesis of H1 is rejected and the hypothesis of H0 is confirmed.

At the same time correlation coefficient between growth opportunities and empowerment showed significant relation between growth opportunities and empowerment with values (r = 0.529). The hypothesis of H1 is confirmed and hypothesis of H0 is rejected.
The correlation coefficient between legalism and empowerment represents a significant relation between the rule of law and the empowerment of value \((r = 0.440)\). The hypothesis of \(H_1\) is confirmed and the hypothesis of \(H_0\) is rejected.

Correlation coefficient between social involvement and empowerment indicates there is a significant relationship between social involvement and empowerment with values \((r = 0.374)\). The hypothesis of \(H_1\) is confirmed and the hypothesis of \(H_0\) is rejected.

Correlation coefficient between the general atmosphere of life and empowerment showed no significant relationship between overall atmosphere of life and empowerment to the amount of \((0.087 - r = )\). So the hypothesis of \(H_1\) is rejected and hypothesis of \(H_0\) is confirmed.

Coefficient of correlation between social integration and empowerment indicates that there is a significant relationship between social integration and empowerment with values \((r = 0.769)\). The hypothesis of \(H_1\) is confirmed and the hypothesis \(H_0\) is rejected.

The correlation coefficient between the development and employee empowerment showed no significant relationship between the development and employee empowerment of the amount \((r = 0.080)\). The hypothesis of \(H_1\) is rejected and the hypothesis of \(H_0\) is confirmed.

This study confirms the results of Segal and Gardner (1998). Sigal & Gardner (1998) have concluded in a study entitled "Factors associated with psychological empowerment" among the 203 employees of industrial companies of California in USA that the relationship between employees and supervisors, based on communication and a sense of meaning and self organizing, is a significant relationship.

Finally, the coefficient of correlation between the quality of working life and employee empowerment showed significant relationship between the quality of working life and employee empowerment with values \((r = 0.734)\). The hypothesis of \(H_1\) is confirmed and hypothesis of \(H_0\) is rejected. Moore & Hopkins (1998) in their study on a group of factories in America entitled "quality and empowerment programs of bilateral road towards customer satisfaction" fulfilled and emphasized the role of psychological empowerment programs to enhance the quality and improve service and customer satisfaction.

Accordingly, the result of the lack of attention to quality of work life leads each person to seek ways to satisfy their needs. This often conflicts with collective interest and creates a social vicious circle.

Nowadays, successful a manager is a manager that can work with the acceptable minimum and with maximum punishment such as: reprimand, salary deduction and facilities and. He provides incentives such as rewards, overtime, and employee selection. But experts believe that an effective manager is the one who can put in use 80 to 90 percent of the capabilities of staff.
The manager strengthens the spirit and increases mental energy in the workplace, organizational performance and good professional practices. More importantly, he tries to find better and more effective ways to do the work. Otherwise, we cannot expect find solutions, or show extraordinary effort. So it is better that cultural manager leads the side to enhance such a spirit in the workplace.
References


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