

Review of the Effective Factors on the Psychological Empowerment of Employees of Maroon and Karoon Oil and Gas Operating Companies

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Abstract

Nowadays, one of the most important challenges faced by managers in the organization is not using intellectual resources, mental power and potential capacities of the human resources sufficiently. It is seen that in most organizations, capabilities of the employees are not used optimally and managers are not able get use of their potential capacities. The present research aims to recognize the factors affecting the psychological empowerment of the employees of Maroon and Karoon oil and gas operating companies. This study is an applied one in terms of purpose and as for data collection method, this is a descriptive survey. In this research, in order to gather information regarding the theoretical principles of the research and research literature, library studies and university magazines have been used and also, a field method has been used in order to collect statistical information with the purpose of testing the research hypotheses as well as a search in the statistical population. The statistical population of this research is comprised of all of the employees of Maroon and Karoon oil and gas operating companies. The members of the population were selected using Krejcie and Morgan table and cluster random sampling method. In total, a number of 252 employees were selected as the ultimate sample. In terms of data analysis, the tools used here have been SPSS and Smart PLS software. The results obtained from the fitting indexes of the conceptual model are indicative of the proper fitting of the research model. Inferential statistic and descriptive statistic methods have been used for data analysis. Besides, the result obtained from testing the hypotheses using structural equations method is an indication of the positive and significant effect of the organizational factors, job designing, rewarding system and style of leadership on the psychological empowerment of the human resources. Accordingly, the research hypotheses are confirmed. Also, according to the findings, job designing has had the highest impact on the psychological empowerment of the human resources in comparison with the other three factors.

Key Words: Organizational Factors, Job designing, Rewarding System, Style of Leadership, Psychological Empowerment

Introduction

Having empowered human resources is the most important competitive advantage that the

organizations can have in today's ever changing world. Thus, the organizations today want to use employees who are able to make effective decisions, innovation and creativity in the area of their activities as well as doing their job; those who are able to supervise their own work carefully and take responsibility and can be held accountable when it comes to their job in the organization. Given the especial place oil industry has in the world, it is very important to conduct researches on its various processes in order to improve the organizational performance. Doing studies on it must be a priority since it is one of the most important sources of energy of the country and it is what builds a foundation for economic incomes. Therefore, it is a necessity to showcase the importance of the studies done on empowerment in this industry as much as possible when it comes to using human resources development and promotion methods in the oil industry and also efficiency of the empowerment concepts with the purpose of developing and improving human capitals. That is why this study aims to investigate the factors affecting the creation of the sense of psychological empowerment of the employees of Maroon and Karoon oil and gas operating companies. Therefore, this study seeks to extract and then prioritize these factors as a proper model to be used for the purpose of using and improving the human resources in the research population.

Definitions and concepts

Rapid environmental changes are the force driving the organizations to turn to various management mechanisms for them to adapt to the environment and empowering human resources is one of these mechanisms and has a key role in the survival of modern organizations. In this age, organization has become distant from hierarchies and heteroarchies are favored more nowadays such as horizontal, network and team structures. These structures pay a more substantial attention to social dynamicity and relations and for them; human beings are at the top of the affairs. Blanchard also considers empowerment a reality which provides opportunities for decision making and does it by widening the range of authorities. In his opinion, empowerment is what leads to the breakage of the organizations' traditional hierarchies; because executive employees are closer to the problems and

they must be given the authority required for solving them (Blanchard and Randolph, 1999). Fulford (1995) believed that empowering employees leads to job satisfaction, participation, loyalty, good performance and acceleration of the presentation of services to the customers. One thing that empowerment does is that it creates a sense of valuableness in the employees which causes them to be satisfied with their job and more committed to it in the long run (Noroliza, Hassani, 2006).

Psychological empowerment

The process of increasing the sense of self-effectiveness in the employees of an organization through identifying situations that can be of help in eliminating the feeling of weakness or inability of the employees' is what psychological empowerment is (Kanger and Kanangoo, 1988). Thomas, Kenneth, W. and Betty, A. Velthouse consider psychological empowerment an inner incentive which reflects the active role of employees in the organization and in their view, there is a difference between management strategies and organizational factors and employees' perception of empowerment. Empowerment is the act of delegating power to someone. This means that individuals get help to improve their self-confidence in this process and overcome their sense of inability and the frustration they feel within themselves. It also means that their inner incentive helps them get a task done. It is because of this process that some opportunities are created for the individuals for them to show themselves and to show that they can come up with great ideas and put them into practice and make smart key decisions without going to their superiors. In another definition, empowerment is providing sources and tools needed by individuals in such a way that they can see these tools and use them for their benefit (Nesan, 2002). In some cases, empowerment is the ability of the person to control them; which means their ability in controlling their actions, behaviors and the decisions they make with the purpose of improving their own performance and efficiency. It is interesting to note that for the work groups to develop, managers try to simultaneously empower the groups and create an internal control system which makes it possible for them to manage the groups independently (Ahmadi Marvi, 2009).

According to the researchers conducted by Thomas and Velthouse (1990), four dimensions have been considered for empowerment which are: sense of self-determination, meaningfulness, sense of competence and self-sufficiency and the sense of effectiveness (Howard and Foster, 1999). Dimensions of psychological empowerment will be expressed in the following section:

Sense of self-determination: self-determination is the person's ability in selecting the method of

execution and organization of their own activities (Hanser and George, 2003). When a person takes on responsibilities voluntarily and a task is not forced on them, they feel the most independent. That is when they see themselves as a self-motivated or spontaneous person. They will also be able to be innovative when they feel like it and make a decision on their own and test their new thoughts. These individuals will be the ones controlling themselves and the center of their activities instead of feeling like their activities are predetermined or they are controlled by others (Wetten and Kameron, 2002).

Sense of competence (self-sufficiency): this feeling is the person's belief in their abilities for doing their activities skillfully. These individuals feel that they can do their task masterfully (Singer and Pierson, 2000).

Effectiveness or personal acceptance of the result: empowered individuals feel that they personally control the outcome of their own work. They believe that they can change the outcome of their work if they need to through affecting the environment in which they work. Empowered individuals feel like they are actively controlling their work and this lets them become in compliance with their own wishes. Having a sense of personal acceptance of the result is quite related to the sense of self-control. For the individuals to feel empowered, not only they need to feel that what they are doing is going to have a great impact, but they also must feel that they are the ones creating that impact (Wetten and Kameron, 2002).

Meaningfulness: meaningfulness means presence of a relationship between work tasks and objectives and the ideas and standards considered by the person. They consider their job activities exponentially important in their own value system. Empowered individuals are careful of what they produce and are well-spirited during that activity and have a sense of personal importance. Meaningful challenging activities give these individuals a sense of being purposeful, excitement or being on a mission you must accomplish all by yourself (Yojboro and Bang, 2000).

Organizational factors: organizational factors are a series of elements and it is through the combination and interaction of these factors that the organization is created and it is what causes the organization to be different than others. These factors are: connections, organizational culture, organizational rules and regulations and numerous items as such. They also include the following items:

- a) Organizational rules and regulations
- b) Organizational culture (Robins, 1993)

c) Connections (Tohidloo, 2012).

Style of leadership

Style of leadership is the way the leader uses his/her influence to meet the goals of the organization. One of the important factors when it comes to success is the plan to empower the employees. A method which leads to empowerment is the non-authoritarian leadership style (Memarzadeh, 2010).

Rewarding system

The rewarding system is really a means for the organization to express its gratitude to its employees because of their competence and qualification and it is by acknowledging them and paying respect to them is what encourages them to continue their good work (Safdari, 2013).

Job designing

Job designing is determining and putting together the tasks that can be done by a person as a work with special skills and specialties and those that respond to a series of needs of the organization. Job designing is the determination of the essence, methods and relations between jobs in order to achieve the technology-related and organizational necessities as well as personal and social necessities of the employee (David, 1981). Job designing might be focused on how jobs can be created and adjusted in such a way that they considerably increase their inner incentive with an outlook to the improvement of the performance and efficacy of those who are responsible for them job. Another significant goal of job designing which must be noted and considered is to meet the social responsibilities of the organization towards individuals that work in it (Willson, 1998).

Conceptual model of the research:

The conceptual model of the research has been shown in the figure below. This model has been obtained by reviewing the theoretical literature of the research.

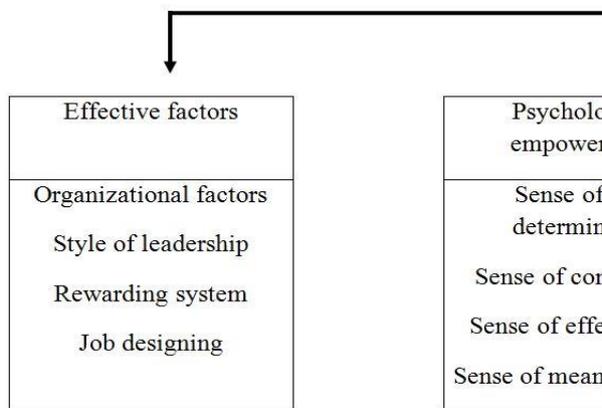


Figure 2: conceptual model of the research (with the study of Mishra (1992) as reference)

Research literature

The research literature is as follows:

First and surname of the researcher and the year of the research	Subject of the research	Results of the research
Dolard, Baker (2010)	Review of the positive relationship between a healthy psychological atmosphere and job enthusiasm in the employees of 18 schools in Australia	A healthy psychological atmosphere affects job sources including skill competence and increase of the sense of powerfulness and that is how it increases the job enthusiasm of the employees.
Albirton, Georgie (2010)	Review of the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between person-organization proportion and happiness and job performance in the employees of a university	A person – organization proportion is a good predictor of empowerment and two important factors of empowerment - self
Jawniz (2008)	Review of the job features and their relationship between psychological empowerment	Presence of certain factors in a job might have a positive impact on psychological empowerment . He suggest to those hotels that

		plan to empower their employees must investigate the job characteristics and make it their first priority to motivate employees regarding empowerment
Parastar, Sepasi and Noorbakhsh (2015)	Presentation of a model for reviewing the causal relationships of job burnout with job characteristics , structural and psychological empowerment	In female employees, the direct effect of job characteristics and structural empowerment , the direct relationship between job characteristics and psychological empowerment and the direct relationship of psychological empowerment all are significant. The results of the investigation of the fitting indexes of the model for male employees showed that the direct relationship between job characteristics and structural empowerment was significant as well as that of job characteristics and psychological empowerment and if

		frequency and intensity of the burnout
Nasrollahpour (2015)	Review of the effective factors on the organizational factors on the organizational empowerment regarding the growth of customer value in business insurances of Kerman Province	The direct and significant effect of organizational empowerment on the growth of customer value is associated with the creation of customer value (informational literacy, knowledge management and customer relations management) given the considered factors

Research method

What is necessary for meeting the goals of the research is to search for a proper methodology for the research to be conducted optimally. Thus, one of the most important aspects of each scientific research is its method without which the results of the reviews and the analyses won't be valid and understandable. Therefore, in each research a proper method is selected for based on its subject who determines its validity and value. We select the research method by taking into consideration the purposes and nature of the subject of the research and its facilities and conduction. Therefore, in order to make a decision about the method of review and conduction of a research, firstly we must specify the nature of the research subject, purposes and also the width of its range (Naderi, SeyfNaraghi, 1995). Most Educational Sciences researches especially attempt to establish relationships between the variables. A correlation research reviews the probable relationships between the variables; thus, a correlation research is a research in which the relationships between two or multiple quantitative variables are described, discovered and determined using the correlation coefficient (Hassanzadeh, 2007). The purpose of selecting such a method is for the researchers to specify the method they select to seek help from it more accurately, easily, rapidly and cheaply in getting the required answers to the research questions (Naderi and SeyfNaraghi, 1995). Also, a survey is a method of data collection

in which we have a special group. The members of that special group are asked to answer a number of specific questions. In general, in a survey there are three main purposes: description, expression and discovery (Delavar, 2005).

Since the present research aims to review the effective factors on the psychological empowerment in Maroon and Karoon oil companies during a 1-year period from 2016 to 2017. This kind of research can be considered as an applied one.

In the analytical model of the research, the following variables are considered as the independent ones: organizational factors, job designing, rewarding system, style of leadership and psychological empowerment are the dependent variable in this research.

Kresol believes that society is a group of individuals with a mutual specification which makes them different from other groups (Danayifard, 2008). In other words, there is something in each member of the group that the researcher must focus on or it can be said that the population of the research is a series of assumed or real members who help the researchers obtain the results (Sekaran, 2002). The statistical population in this research includes the employees of the Karoon and Maroon oil companies in the year 2016 and according to the latest statistics, the statistic experts of this organization, there were 670 employees in Karoon oil companies and 518 employees in Maroon Company which made a total of 1188 persons. The statistical population is a series of objects, individuals and so on with the features and characteristics of the statistical population and they are selected randomly or by chance (Goodarzi, 2009). The sample of a research is a limited number of the members of the statistical population who have and express the main features of the society (Azar and Momeni, 2001). In other words, some of the members of the population can be selected as the sample and not all of them (Danayifard, 2008). In order to select a sample which represents the population, 290 employees were selected as the ultimate sample of the research out of the total of 1188 employees of Karoon (670 persons) and Maroon (518) oil companies. The cluster random sampling method has been used in this research for this exact purpose. In order to measure the variable psychological empowerment, a psychological empowerment questionnaire made by Spiritzer (1995) with 20 questions was used with the 5-option Likert scale (completely disagree=1 to completely agree=5). These 20 questions include 4 dimensions which are meaningfulness (4 questions), competence (7 questions), autonomy (4 questions) and effectiveness (5 questions). In order to measure organizational factors with the component of rules and regulations, organizational culture and

connections, the organizational factors standard questionnaire made by YaghoobFarani, et al. was used (21 items). In order to measure the rewarding system variable, a researcher-made questionnaire was used (11 items). In order to measure the variable job designing, a standard questionnaire associated with job designing made by Ivansovich and Matson (1990) was used which has 10 items.

Table 1: factors of the research variables

Variable	Factors	Number of questions	Designer
Psychological empowerment	Meaningfulness	4	Spiritzer (1995)
	competence	7	
	Self-sufficiency	4	
	Effectiveness	5	
Organizational factors	Rules and regulations	7	Yaghoobi Farani, et al.
	Organizational culture	7	
	Connections	7	
Rewarding system	Employees' reward	11	Researcher-made questionnaire
Style of leadership	Style of leadership	16	Multiple-factor leadership questionnaire
Job designing	Job designing	10	Ivansovich and Mattson

In this research, by considering the fact that the questions of the questionnaire are standard and them clearly display the features that the researcher wants to measure. In fact, the test has content validity which has been confirmed by specialized professors, supervisor and consultant, etc. In this research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated using SPSS software which was 0.92 for the psychological empowerment questionnaire, 0.89 for the organizational factors questionnaire (with the factors: rules and regulations, organizational culture and connections), 0.92 for the rewarding system questionnaire, 0.95 for multiple-factor leadership questionnaire MLQ and 0.87 for the standard questionnaire of job designing made by Ivansovich and Mattson. To sum it up, it can be concluded that the aforementioned

questionnaires had a desirable reliability based on our evaluations.

Table 2: Cronbach’s alpha of the variables

Number of items	Variables	Cronbach’s alpha (α)	Scale
20	Psychological empowerment	0.92	5-option Likert
21	Organizational factors	0.89	5-option Likert
11	Rewarding system	0.92	5-option Likert
10	Job designing	0.87	5-option Likert
16	Style of leadership	0.95	5-option Likert

Cronbach’s alpha must at least be 0.70 for the items to have desirable and sufficient reliability (Goodarzi, 2009). As it has been displayed in the table above, the rate of Cronbach’s alpha is desirable and confirmed for the questionnaires in both Maroon and Karoon companies.

Data is analyzed in a research for it to be classified, set, processed and summarized to find answers for the questions and hypotheses of the research. The purpose of this analysis is to break down data to understandable and interpretable pieces; in such a way that various variables associated with the issue of the research could be studied (Haki, 1999). In the present research, after the necessary information was collected and converted to nominal quantities, statistical tables in the SPSS software have been used to analyze them. It is noteworthy that SPSS is statistical software which includes frequency, percentage and type of respond which have all been used to analyze the data. Then, for the purpose of a probable investigation of the relationship between research variables, the method of inferential statistics extracted from the proper statistical tests will be used separately. In this study, the methods used for data analysis are descriptive statistics method and inferential method.

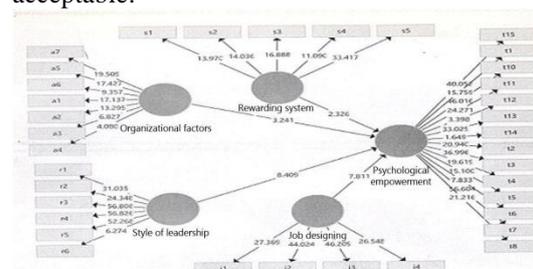
Review of the normality of the data using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test:

Table 3 – Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for research variables

Variable	Test statistic	Significance level	Test result
Psychological empowerment	4.28	0	Normal distribution of the population
Organizational factors	3.16	0	Normal distribution of the population
Style of leadership	3.01	0	Normal distribution of the population
Rewarding system	4.15	0	Normal distribution of the population
Job designing	3.53	0	Normal distribution of the population

Testing the structural model

The purpose of using the structural equation modeling is to find a theoretical model with an applied and theoretical concept and meaning; thus, the research model is evaluated in order to review how the hypotheses have been tested. In this model, the effect size index, the significance index of path coefficients, and determination coefficient index of all of the relations are acceptable in the preliminary range. The accepted rates of the effect size index must be lower than 0.05; whereas the acceptable rates for path coefficients must be either higher than 1.96 or lower than -1.96 and according to the obtained results, the rates of both indexes are acceptable.



Xx figure 4-1: t-value index in the structural model

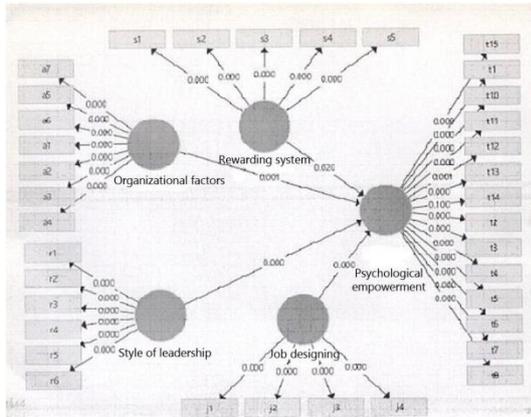
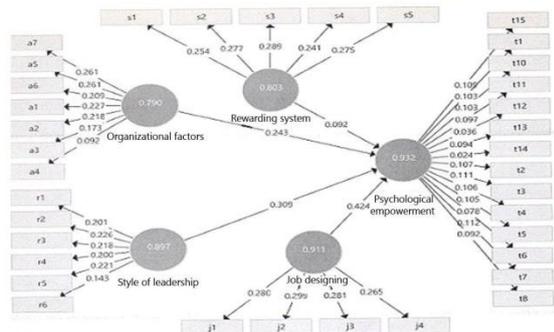


Figure: P-value index in the structural model



X figure: determination coefficient model

Testing the research hypotheses

First hypothesis – organizational factors affect the psychological empowerment of the employees positively and significantly. Given that the outputs of the structural model, the path from organizational factors to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.24 and a significance level of 0.001 and this means that the organizational factors have a positive and significant direct effect on psychological empowerment. Therefore, by taking the aforementioned points into account, we would come to the conclusion that the first hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Second hypothesis – style of leadership has a positive and significant effect on the psychological empowerment of the employees. Given that the outputs of the structural model, the relation path from style of leadership to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.30 and a significance level of 0 and this means that the style of leadership has a positive and significant direct effect on psychological empowerment. Therefore, by taking the aforementioned points into account, we would come to the conclusion that the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Third hypothesis – rewarding system has a positive and significant effect on the psychological empowerment of the employees. Given that the outputs of the structural model, the relation path

from rewarding system to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.09 and a significance level of 0.02 and this means that the rewarding system has a positive and significant direct effect on psychological empowerment. Therefore, by taking the aforementioned points into account, we would come to the conclusion that the third hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Fourth hypothesis – job designing has a positive and significant effect on the psychological empowerment of the employees. Given that the outputs of the structural model, the relation path from job designing to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.42 and a significance level of 0 and this means that the job designing has a positive and significant direct effect on psychological empowerment. Therefore, by taking the aforementioned points into account, we would come to the conclusion that the fourth hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Fifth hypothesis – the level of importance of the organizational factors, style of leadership, rewarding system and job designing and their impact on the psychological empowerment of the employees. Given that the outputs of the structural model, the relation path from organizational factors to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.24 and a significance level of 0.001. The relation path from style of leadership to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.30 and a significance level of 0. The relation path from rewarding system to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.09 and a significance level of 0.02 and the relation path from job designing to psychological empowerment has the effect coefficient of 0.42 and a significance level of 0. And this means that the level of importance and impact of organizational factors, style of leadership, rewarding system and job designing on the psychological empowerment of the employees are different. Therefore, by taking the aforementioned points into account, we would come to the conclusion that the fifth hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

Table 4: results of testing the hypothesis

Variable	Effect size	Path coefficient	Determination coefficient
Organizational factors → psychological empowerment	0.001	3.24	0.24
Style of leadership → psychological empowerment	0.0	8.4	0.30

rewarding system → psychological empowerment	0.0 2	2.32	0.09
Job designing → psychological empowerment	0.0 0	7.81	0.42

Given the information presented in the table regarding the results of testing the hypotheses, it was seen that all of the hypotheses of the research are confirmed.

Recommendations:

First hypothesis – organizational factors have an impact on the psychological empowerment of the employees. In this regard, it is suggested to the managers to try to promote the level of empowerment of the human resources by considering the missions of the organization and the way to do that is to give the employees the organizational information they need to do their job well. As the focus on the superiors experiences a fall and those in lower positions in the country become in charge of the decisions and unnecessary rules and regulations are eliminated, the organizational factors become more in line with the empowerment projects. To put it more simply, the organizational purposes must be expressed accurately, the ultimate goal of the organization must be specified and the plan must be to make the goals attainable and coordinated. In addition, managers and authorities of the organizations must make efforts to reinforce the culture of the organization and create a proper substrate for the employees to be empowered. Promotion of the spirit of the employees, increase of management’s support, encouraging the employees to be creative, innovative and participate in the affairs of the organization creates and reinforces a sense of responsibility in them in the respect of the determined values and purposes and it generally causes a rise in their commitment to the company. Strong culture is something that can become a reality if there are less mistakes and errors when messages are sent and if possible, there must be no vague communications. The most important factor supporting and backing up the employees is the organizational rules and the organization itself. It is by reforming some of the rules, making the organizational instructions subtler, paying attention to details about organizational individuals and to the needs of individuals when the rules and instructions are being designed that the organizational commitment, job satisfaction, a sense of job security and job participation can improve positively and significantly. The overall structure of the organization must facilitate the processes and reinforce the culture of dynamicity

of the organization with tendency to the empowerment of the organization.

Second hypothesis – style of leadership has an impact on the psychological empowerment of the employees.

It is recommended to the management to try and generously give the necessary information to the employees and encourage them to improve and learn by giving positive feedback. Managers must not be those authorities who just give orders, but they must try to nurture their employees in a way that they would have the ability to make decisions and take measures and consider group work and cooperation especially important and ultimately, managers must use an empowered style of leadership in order for a rise to happen in the psychological empowerment of the employees.

Third hypothesis – rewarding system has an impact on the psychological empowerment of the employees.

Since rewarding the employees plays an important role in the process of their empowerment, then it is suggested to managers consider a proper and fair rewarding system based on individuals’ performance and competence in order for their motivation to boom. That is the case when the employees are promoted based on their competence and capabilities. The rewarding system must be a performance-based system. The things that must seriously be considered when it comes to rewarding the employees is their creativity, individual and group innovation, needs, interests and personal differences. In addition, the managers must determine suitable rewards for each employee at the suitable time.

Fourth hypothesis – job designing has an impact on the psychological empowerment of the employees.

Since the organizations are interested in promoting and escalating the psychological empowerment of the employees, it is suggested to them to design jobs in such a way that the employees would have their independence, skill and variety. By taking the findings of the present study into consideration, it is suggested that being involved in the tasks that require complex skills and solving challenging problems will lead to empowerment.

Fourth hypothesis – the level of importance of the organizational factors, style of leadership, rewarding system and job designing and their impact on the psychological empowerment of the employees.

It is recommended to the managers to hold educational courses and try to educate the employees in terms of the value of the organizational and job goals especially when they

start working in the organization. In addition, the managers are expected to escalate the areas in which the employees are in charge of in order to pave the way for them to have freedom of action. If the employees participate more in the organizational decision makings and if their sense of responsibility grows through a fair rewarding system, the organizational goals will be met more easily.

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