



Investigating the Relationship between Employee Empowerment and the Development of an Entrepreneurial Culture at Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas

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ABSTRACT

This study has been conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas. This is a descriptive and correlational research. The sample size was 113 participants (85 females and 28 males) who were selected via simple random sampling method. The research tool was Spritzer Psychological Empowerment Scale and Entrepreneurial Culture Questionnaire. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient. The research findings showed that there is a relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, there is a significant relationship between sense of competence (self-efficacy) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, there is a significant relationship between the sense of having the right of choice (independence) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, there is a significant relationship between sense of meaning and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and there is a significant relationship between sense of trust in other employees and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

Keywords: Empowerment, Development of Entrepreneurial Culture, Employees, Fatemieh Technical and Vocational University

JEL Classifications: E37, E32, C53, C5

1. INTRODUCTION

A review of the previously conducted studies regarding the development of countries shows that no country may achieve development without passing through a stage of intellectual and cultural development, and preparing public opinion. In other words, achieving development not only involves political and human changes in society, but it also requires accepting the changes that must occur in persons. These changes should pave the way for people's accepting a culture commensurate with entrepreneurship. Therefore, promoting and spreading the culture of entrepreneurship as one of the effective strategies in the contemporary environment and as an efficient model to achieve the objectives of social and economic development and it is nowadays regarded as the engine for development as well as

the cause of competitive advantage toward the growth and survival of societies. McGuire believes that an entrepreneurial culture is influenced by the culture of the community. In fact, the values and beliefs of societies drive people to work, consistent production, creative thinking and learning and knowledge acquisition (Aqajani and Aqajani, 2006). On the other hand, in contrast with what is generally thought, the main source of competitive advantage does not lie in technology; rather, it lies in the dedication, quality, commitment and ability of the workforce. One of the most important resources of any organization is the results of its employees' creativity, and empowerment is a stimulus for this growing work environment. By raising highly motivated and competent employees, empowerment will allow managers to act quickly and properly in response to the dynamics of the competitive environment and pave the way for the

competitive advantage of their organizations. In the current state of the global economy, the only countries which are affected by various aspects of globalization are those which can offer new products and services in accordance with the customers' requirements. But empowerment is not something that managers should do for employees but is managers' attitudes and perceptions about their role in their jobs and in the organization. Besides, managers can pave the way for their employees' empowerment. Any strategy or measure that can enhance the employees' need for self-efficacy will lead to empowerment. The process of fostering a sense of self-efficacy through the identification and elimination of organizational conditions that lead to powerlessness and helplessness in employees is called empowerment.

Although much attention has been given to entrepreneurship in our country and entrepreneurs have been partially supported by the government and officials, a few creative entrepreneurs may not lead to economic and social development. Therefore, entrepreneurs must be associated with the nature and behavior of people as part of the actual structure of the social system and it should be immersed in everyone's mind as a crucial necessity (Farahani et al., 2011, p. 42). It is thus necessary to strive to develop an entrepreneurial culture and take measures to drive the employees towards entrepreneurship. One of the factors that can play a significant role in the development of an entrepreneurial culture is employee empowerment.

The extensive studies having been conducted on empowerment have focused on its role in performance (Kirkman et al., 2004) and the role of empowerment and its dimensions on entrepreneurship (Veisi and Karimizadeh, 2010; Chen, 2011); however, these studies have not dealt with the impact of empowerment on the development of entrepreneurship.

In this study, based on the cognitive approach to empowerment that includes the dimensions of feeling a sense of effectiveness, sense of competence, sense of meaning, sense of having the right of choice and sense of trust in others, we have investigated the relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas in order to reply the research question, which is: "Can employee empowerment have a role in the development of an entrepreneurial culture?"

With regard to the cognitive approach to empowerment, it is likely that employees who realize that they are effective and take measures to achieve their goals are those who believe in their own ability to perform their duties successfully, appreciate the work that they do and have the right of choice freedom of action, and can do innovative and consequently entrepreneurial activities and develop it. This creates an atmosphere that can result in entrepreneurial culture which is conceptualized as vision growth, goal setting, planning, creativity, flexibility, innovation, freedom of action and individual and group independence.

2. LITERATURE

Many studies have been conducted on employee empowerment and organizational and managerial variables. In addition,

entrepreneurship and its development and training has attracted much attention throughout the world. However, due to the various definitions and approaches to these two variables, there are many background studies performed concerning them, but few studies have been carried out in relation to the role of employee empowerment and entrepreneurship and development of cultural entrepreneurship and the few conducted studies have focused on specific ethnic or gender minority groups. Now, considering this issue, we present those studies which can reply the research question based on the research objectives.

The following studies may be mentioned with this point in mind. Maleki et al. (2012) studied the relationship between structural empowerment and individual readiness of nurses for change, concluding that there exists a significant positive relationship between structural empowerment and the individual readiness of nurses for change, and that access to opportunities significantly affects and accounts for readiness for change. Furthermore, Alaei (2011) investigated the role of entrepreneurial culture in the development of entrepreneurship using the views of 57 entrepreneurs and policymakers of cultural industries and revealed that strengthening the cultural industries has the greatest impact on entrepreneurship development, as compared with other (educational, administrative, financial, technical and legal) components. Veisi and Karimizadeh (2010) also studied the development of an entrepreneurial culture, showing the factors and strategies in Payam Nour University (PNU) of Mazandaran Province. They concluded that administrative factor, human - psychological factor and strategic direction respectively have the highest and lowest impact on the development of an entrepreneurial culture in PNU of Mazandaran Province. Oladele et al. (2011) studied the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria and the relationship between the underlying variables using a regression model. They showed that the index of agricultural production, inflation and unemployment are involved in entrepreneurship development. Chen (2011) examined the role of empowerment in employee performance in Malaysian automotive industry and showed that among the dimensions of employee empowerment, competence and effectiveness have the greatest impact on employees' performance and innovation.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This an applied research in terms of goal and a descriptive and correlational research in terms of nature and type of research. It seeks to find an answer to the question "can employee empowerment as a predictor (independent) variable have an impact on the development of an entrepreneurial culture (the criterion or dependent variable). The study population includes all employees of Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas in 2012. The number of the female employees was 97 and that of the male employees was 61. The population size is thus 158 employees. The sample size for this study was estimated 113 people using Krejcie-Morgan table, and they were selected among the male and female employees using simple random sampling method. The final sample included 85 females and 28 males. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire with regard to the research objectives. For this purpose, three

questionnaires of personal information including gender, age and level of education and work experience, empowerment questionnaire and entrepreneurial culture questionnaire were used. In this study, the views of experts and university professors (two professors from Islamic Azad University, Branch of Sirjan, and three professors from Girls Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas) were used for determining and confirming the (face) validity of the questionnaires. By conducting different interviews and consulting the professors at this stage, we made the required corrections in the questionnaires and ensured that they can measure what they have been purported to measure. In order to measure the reliability of the questionnaires, we first distributed them among a 30-people sample and then examined the reliability of the research tool using SPSS software. As the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was measured over 70%, it can be said that the questionnaire has good reliability. Finally, it is noteworthy that we used Pearson correlation coefficient so as to examine the relationship between empowerment and its dimensions and entrepreneurship development and made all the analyses using SPSS software.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the questionnaire in this study show that 75.2% of the respondents were females and 24.8% were males; 2.7% of the respondents were between 20 and 30-year-old, 29.2% were between 30 and 40-year-old, 57.5% were between 40 and 50 years of age and 10.6% were over 50-year-old. Concerning the level of education, it is noteworthy that 8.8% of the respondents had associate's degree, 77% had B.A and 14.2% had M.A and PhD degrees.

4.1. The Main Hypothesis

There is a relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to test the main hypothesis. For this purpose, the correlation coefficient was calculated between employee empowerment on the one hand and the development of an entrepreneurial culture on the other, with the results presented in the Table 1.

Based on the results presented in Table 1, since the significant is <0.05 , H_0 is rejected and there is a correlation between these two variables. In other words, there is a direct and significant relationship between employee empowerment and development of entrepreneurial culture and the correlation coefficient obtained is 0.5, which is significant with the frequency of 113 people at the alpha level of 0.001.

4.2. The First Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of competence (self-efficacy) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to test the first sub-hypothesis. For this purpose, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of sense of competence

(self-efficacy) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture, with the results presented in Table 2.

Based on the results presented in Table 2, since the significant is <0.05 , H_0 is rejected and there is a correlation between these two variables. In other words, there is a direct and significant relationship between sense of competence and development of entrepreneurial culture and the correlation coefficient obtained is 0.524, which is significant with the frequency of 113 people at the alpha level of 0.001.

4.3. The Second Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of having the right of choice and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to test the second sub-hypothesis. For this purpose, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of sense of having the right of choice (independence) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture, with the results presented in Table 3.

Based on the results presented in Table 3, since the significant is <0.05 , H_0 is rejected and there is a correlation between these two variables. In other words, there is a direct and significant relationship between sense of having the right of choice and development of entrepreneurial culture and the correlation coefficient obtained is 0.480, which is significant with the frequency of 113 people at the alpha level of 0.001.

4.4. The Third Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of effectiveness and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

Table 1: Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Statistical indexes	Entrepreneurship development
Empowerment	Pearson correlation	0.500
	Level of significance (significant)	0.000
	Number	113

Table 2: Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Statistical indexes	Entrepreneurship development
Sense of competence	Pearson correlation	0.524
	Level of significance (significant)	0.000
	Number	113

Table 3: Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Statistical indexes	Entrepreneurship development
Sense of having the right of choice	Pearson correlation	0.480
	Level of significance (significant)	0.000
	Number	113

We used Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to test the third sub-hypothesis. For this purpose, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of sense of effectiveness and the development of an entrepreneurial culture, with the results presented in Table 4.

Based on the results presented in Table 4, since the significant is <0.05 , H_0 is rejected and there is a correlation between these two variables. In other words, there is a direct and significant relationship between sense of effectiveness and development of entrepreneurial culture and the correlation coefficient obtained is 0.426, which is significant with the frequency of 113 people at the alpha level of 0.001.

4.5. The Fourth Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of meaning and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to test the fourth sub-hypothesis. For this purpose, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of sense of meaning and the development of an entrepreneurial culture, with the results presented in Table 5.

Based on the results presented in Table 5, since the significant is <0.05 , H_0 is rejected and there is a correlation between these two variables. In other words, there is a direct and significant relationship between sense of meaning and development of entrepreneurial culture (confirmation of H_1) and the correlation coefficient obtained is 0.478, which is significant with the frequency of 113 people at the alpha level of 0.001.

4.6. The Fifth Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of trust in other employees and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to test the fifth sub-hypothesis. For this purpose, the correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of sense of trust in other employees and the development of an entrepreneurial culture, with the results presented in Table 6.

Based on the results presented in Table 6, since the significant is <0.05 , H_0 is rejected and there is a correlation between these two variables. In other words, there is a direct and significant relationship between sense of trust in other employees and development of entrepreneurial culture and the correlation coefficient obtained is 0.351, which is significant with the frequency of 113 people at the alpha level of 0.001.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas. For this purpose, 113 employees of this university were

Table 4: Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Statistical indexes	Entrepreneurship development
Sense of effectiveness	Pearson correlation	0.426
	Level of significance (significant)	0.000
	Number	113

Table 5: Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Statistical indexes	Entrepreneurship development
Sense of meaning	Pearson correlation	0.478
	Level of significance (significant)	0.000
	Number	113

Table 6: Results of Pearson's correlation coefficient

Variable	Statistical indexes	Entrepreneurship development
Sense of trust in other employees	Pearson correlation	0.351
	Level of significance (significant)	0.000
	Number	113

selected as the sample via simple random sampling method and responded the empowerment and entrepreneurial culture development questionnaires. The data obtained by the research with respect to the hypotheses were statistically analyzed. Now, the research results are analyzed.

The main hypothesis: There is a relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used correlation coefficient in order to test this hypothesis. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between employee empowerment and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and this hypothesis was confirmed with confidence level of 99%. This means that the more empowered the employees are, the greater their culture of entrepreneurship development. This finding is in line with other studies including Oney and Ozer (2011), Chen (2011), Gallup Inc., Ofuasia et al. (2004), Veisi and Karimzadeh (2010), Hasumi and Nazem (2010), and Banian (2009), who all showed that greater empowerment of employees results in their greater entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial culture.

5.1. The First Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of competence (self-efficacy) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used correlation coefficient in order to test this hypothesis. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between sense of competence (self-efficacy) and the development

of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and this hypothesis was confirmed with confidence level of 99%.

5.2. The Second Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of having the right of choice (independence) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used correlation coefficient in order to test this hypothesis. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between sense of having the right of choice (independence) and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and this hypothesis was confirmed with confidence level of 99%.

5.3. The Third Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of effectiveness and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used correlation coefficient in order to test this hypothesis. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between sense of effectiveness and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and this hypothesis was confirmed with confidence level of 99%.

5.4. The Fourth Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of meaning and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used correlation coefficient in order to test this hypothesis. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between sense of meaning and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and this hypothesis was confirmed with confidence level of 99%.

5.5. The Fifth Sub-hypothesis

There is a relationship between sense of trust in other employees and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas.

We used correlation coefficient in order to test this hypothesis. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between sense of trust in other employees and the development of an entrepreneurial culture in Fatemeh Technical and Vocational University of Bandar Abbas, and this hypothesis was confirmed with confidence level of 99%.

For explaining the findings of the sub-hypotheses, one may claim that, as believed by experts such as Inaradevi (2012), as employees become more empowered, the organization will be driven towards entrepreneurship and competitive environment, and the employees are expected to take initiative and accept responsibility for the management of their workplace. Current employees need to be empowered enough so that they can perform their roles in the business environment so well. In addition, an

overview of the previous studies indicates that this finding is not unexpected. This is because studies such as the one carried out by Ofuasia et al. (2004), which revealed that practical training of entrepreneurship plays an important role in the management of human resources and empowerment of the youth has depended on their entrepreneurship courses, all show that wherever employees have been empowered and trained, it has resulted in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship development.

Finally, it is noteworthy that generally the results of the research showed that the cognitive approach believes that empowerment is a multi-faceted issue and cannot be based solely on a special concept; it includes sense of competence (self-efficacy), sense of having the right of choice (self-determination or independence), sense of effectiveness (personal consequence), sense of meaning or being important (being valuable) and sense of trust in others, and it is associated with entrepreneurship development.

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