

## **Relationship between Training and Employee Psychological Empowerment (Case Study: Kermanshah Health Insurance Office)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Creative and motivated human resources are success code of any organization. Paying attention to train and cognitive empowerment can prepare the ground for organizations success in today's competitive business environment. Therefore, the aim of this research is to study the relationship between training and five dimensions of employee psychological empowerment in Kermanshah health insurance office. Regarding the goal this research is applied and with respect to gathering data is descriptive-Survey. With due attention to analysis data, this research is correlation. The population of this research is 104 people (total staff of Kermanshah health insurance office). The census method was used to gather data. Data collection tool was standard questionnaire and man-made questionnaire. To evaluate the dimensions of empowerment, Spritz questionnaire and to assess the dimension of training man-made questionnaire were used. Using the Cornbach's alpha, the validity of man-made questionnaire was calculated 87%. The analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The questions were reviewed through t-test and Pearson correlation was used to assess the relationship among variables. The research findings show there is meaningful relationship between training and psychological empowerment. It was also determined there is positive and meaningful relationship between training and four dimensions competency, independence, meaningfulness and confidence. According to the research findings, education and age have no effect on the relationship between training and employee psychological empowerment but sex has effect on this relationship.

**KEY WORDS:** Training, Empowerment, Employees, on the job training, Psychological empowerment, Health insurance office and Kermanshah province

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Increased customer expectations, globalization growth, and highly sophisticated technology are among factors causing 21<sup>th</sup> century organizations to have a different form traditional one.

In traditional organizations, merely employees' energy was governed while in 21<sup>th</sup> century organizations, it will be necessary to manage employees' creativity and intellectual power. Under these conditions, not only hierarchical command-control practices will not be appropriate, but also employees themselves must be innovative and play role in completely self-governing teams and take actions to solve problems immediately. Therefore, need to prepare employees with self-managing capabilities has caused human force improvement, as a new paradigm, to attract many management experts' attention.

Such experts believe that both managers and employees will take advantage of this improvement benefits. By culturing sense of self-sufficiency and creating autonomy environment for employees, improvement provides opportunities for them to improve their abilities and skills and to make grounds to be effective. By preparing motivated and powerful employees, on the other hand, improvement enables managers to react to the dynamism of their competitive environment more quickly and appropriately. In present age, in addition, improvement is identified as a tool by which managers are able to manage effectively modern organizations with such features as diversity of influence channels, Increased reliance on peer networks and horizontal structures, little difference between managers and employees, and decreased organizational dependence [1].

Actions organizations take in order to renew life and innovate against environmental changes as well as to empower employees is to plan, implement, and evaluate in-service training programs. Modern organizations consist of such important elements as capital, human force, technology. And management, of which human force is the most important according to many experts since organizations effectiveness depends on this fact that such force performs its duty accurately within guild and head quarter circles. As human force accounts for 70% of organizational resources and capital, to provide such human force requires doing regular training activities at all organizational

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levels. Today, education of human force is considered as one of primary strategies for attaining human capital and positive compatibility with change conditions. Human force training is regarded a social capital because organizations continuously try to provide opportunities in order to develop their human resource capabilities commensurate with technology age. For improving their performance.

In societies changing rapidly, employees training is not only desirable, but slosh is an activity for which any organization must consider some resources in order to have effective and informed human resourced [2].

### **Education**

The role education plays in economies' growth and flourish, in improvement of human relations, is qualitative enhancement of social welfare, and in civilization is an obvious and absolute fact. In parallel with development of information technology (IT), application of new communication equipment such as various world web software computers and Internet have become completely essential in educational areas so that, presently, some educational tasks are not facilitated without using IT.

Nowadays, within any organizations or offices, a division titled education division or like that is working formally, responsible for qualitatively promoting employees' informational and scientific conditions. Organizational officials and managers believe that, in modern world and with advanced technology, this divisions of any successful organizations, productivity of which depends on how this division truncations in that having job skills and expertise is a primary prerequisite to each organization's effectiveness and efficiency. Particularly, this is true with knowledge-centered and, in general, economic knowledge-centered organizations, having more importance.

In current age, role and importance of human force are known to everyone, which is the most invaluable, infrequent, and scantiest factor of all production ones (land, human force, technology, capital). Over sighting human force productivity, but merely paying attention to other factors not only create no efficiency and effectiveness in organizations, but also increase waste and accidents as well as human force dissatisfaction. Arena of education and learning is among those attracted by IT during several years. Despite the fact that fields and systems of education and learning have changed a little since 2000 years ago compared to other categories, now highly broad changes are occurring with help of IT. While the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century was given the name of information decade, the first decade of 21<sup>th</sup> century is named "knowledge age" with the aim of multidirectional development of mankind knowledge and awareness [3].

### **In-service training**

Currently, employees' In-service training is of a special position in different organizations because technology and science have made much more progress in few recent decades than in any other times throughout human history. These changes and transformations have occurred o such an extent that current age is called "half-information age", that is, a time during which half of mankind information is outdated every few years, being replaced by new one.

Although the subject of In-service training in Iran belongs to the post century, it enjoyed no required coherence and dynamism virtually, only being paid special attention to within few recent decades.

Like many concepts dealing with complex realms of human activities, In-service training is also a debatable concept on which there exists no consensus. More clearly speaking, different definitions and perceptions of this term are given in different countries, and even in different organizations, given the extent of employees' In-service training. In order o have clearer perception of In-service training concept, It is better to study different organizational educations, which makes this concept easier to understand.

In general, education provided by different organizations are classified into 2 general categories:

#### **a) Pre-service training**

Pre-service training is a kind of training provided o an individual before he enters and/ or is employed by an organization. Primary aim of such training is to create or increase capabilities and merits employees need in order for them to be prepared for holding specific jobs. This kind of training is not largely designed and implemented based on organizational issues and problems, rather it is aimed at raining a human force required by various organizational jobs. This education is provided in 3 forms of short term, long term, and combined course. In many cases, successfully passing these courses is a condition for an individual to be employed.

#### **b) In-service training**

Organizationally In-service training is attributed to that kind of training generally provided after an individual is employed by an organization.

### **Objectives of employee's in-service training**

Objectives of in-service training generally represent desirable points which, theoretically, refer to ideals, values, beliefs, and preferences. Therefore, objectives of in-service training typically indicate goals and objectives

achievement of which is desirable. Unfortunately, wherever the issue of desirability is outlined, there exists sharp disagreement. This is because judgment about desirability is made mostly according to values. In this way, Objectives of in-service training are extremely influenced by such judgment, hence by disagreement. For this reason, like Objectives of education, Objectives of in-service training within different countries are influenced by a variety of political, social, economic, and cultural variables. As a result, we can't speak of a set of in-service training Objectives acceptable to all social, and even organizational, systems [4].

Table 1: Different definitions of education

Expert	Provided definition
May & Jiff	In-service education is a systematic and continued improvement of civil servants knowledge, skills, and behaviors being helpful for and their organization welfare.
Pear & Gutter	In-service education is a sort of systematic effort, the main aim of which is to coordinate and align future spires, interests, and needs of individuals with organizations' needs in the form of works expected from people to do.
Terry	In-service education is the most typical, popular and essential of educating employees in acceptance of performing a practice.
Ford (1999)	To define In-service education, Ford argues that this type of education is provided after people are employed by an organization, aiming at preparing them to perform duties and job responsibilities optimally. Such education is largely provided around 3 bases: knowledge development, skills improvement, and creation / change of attitudes.
Peters (1997)	In-service education includes those types of education resulting in improved performance of employees' and, as a result, in increased efficiency.
Halleck (2002)	Electronic education (Reeducation) is a new practice providing and managing learning opportunities in order to enhance knowledge and skills via Internet and computer networks, converting the nature of schooling and studying into teaching.
Cerrito (1989)	Education is the process of improving human force quality, eventually enabling them to be more productive.
Dales (1989)	Education is an organized method by which people learn some knowledge and skills in order to reach a given goal.

## Empowerment

Empowerment is a term extensively used by organizational sciences, assuming different meanings and definitions from different view points, but on which there is no consensus. Thus, term Empowerment is still being used extensively in theoretical literature of organization and management, with no clear meaning of which at hand [5].

## Empowerment and its approaches

Dunce (1993) considers Empowerment as a combination of 2 elements:

1. Establishment of organizations nurturing autonomy of selection, control, and responsibility among individuals.
2. Allowing people to exhibit their present merits and also to learn new abilities in order to improve or enhance their performance.

Shirt (1994) considers Empowerment as a process by which participants in educational their professional development, and solve their problems.

Scott and Shafer believe that Empowerment is a new concept being considered as a new fuel to grow workplace. According to Bugler and Spumes (2004), Empowerment is an individual belief by which people's skill and knowledge are improved and according to which they act [6].

Steal (2002) argues that Empowerment is to grant authority and power to organization's people and employees in order to do jobs for realizing a particular activity.

Kaplan and Norton believe that those people who grant Empowerment are considered as a foundation to establish evaluation system. In other words, granting Empowerment fills the gap between skills and abilities required by employees and present level of those skills and abilities.

Blanchard et al. (1999) argue that Empowerment is to share information with employees, to create groups, and to design an appropriate organizational structure.

Empowerment is the process of culture development, which in turn includes following items:

- Participation in information sharing with existence of insight shared by organizations and individuals, of clear goals, of decision-making frameworks, and clarity of efforts' outcomes;
- increasing merits through learning and experience;
- Acquiring resources in order to perform tasks effectively; And
- support in the form of guidance and mentoring, cultural support, and encouragement of risk taking [7].

### Mechanical and organic approaches

Based on findings from Gwine and Spritzer(1997), definition and concept if Empowerment contain 2 mechanical and organic approaches. For mechanical approach, Empowerment means to delegate authority and power to subordinates. From this point of view, Empowerment is a process in which a leader and lor a manager tries to divide his power among his subordinates.

On the bases of organic approach,granting Empowerment is not something managers must do for their employees,rather it is some perception employees have about their occupational and organizational roles. Since 1990<sub>s</sub>,organizational psychology theoreticians and experts have considered human resources Empowerment complex and multidimensional concept.distinguishing situational features (management actions) from employees' perceptions of such features.

### Psychological approach

Thomas and Penthouse (1990) outlined Empowerment issue for the first time. They identify psychological Empowerment as a multidimensional concept,defining it as a process increasing inner motivation of duty fulfillment. Supplementing Kungur\_Kanengo's motivation model (1988), they do not consider Empowerment concept as only increasing motivation, but rather as increasing inner job motivation.

Based on research done, psychological Empowerment of employee can be summarized in 5 dimensions of senses of being qualified,being autonomous (choice right), and being confident.

#### A) Sense of qualification (self-efficacy)

Qualification refers to a degree to which an individual can fulfill his occupational duties skillfully.

Witten and Cameron (1998) believe that powerful people not only feel qualified but also confident and are able to fulfill their duties effectively. For Spritzer(1997), sense of qualification is a subjective belief making a person feel he is able to perform his assigned duties successfully.

#### B) Autonomysense (sense if having choice right, independence)

Dessi and coworkers (1989) argue that powerful individuals feel self-regulating. While self efficacy refers to the sense of capability,self-regulating is attributed to the sense if having choice right. Choice right is to take responsibility for outcomes person caused them to be produced. This term has been spoken of as self decisionmaking. Spritzer(1997) defines this term as meaning a person's sense of having control over his job.

#### C)Sense of effectiveness(admission of personal outcomes)

Spritzer(1995) believes that sense of effectiveness is a degree to which an individual can influence occupational strategic, administrative, and operational outcomes. An individual can affect what is happening through his activities.

#### D)Sense of expressiveness (worthiness)

Spritzer (1997) believes that expressiveness is some conformity among working requirements, beliefs,values, and behaviors. For Applebee and Hanger (1998), expressiveness refers to the value of job related goal based on the individual's ideals and standards, therefore, it points to the attitude toward job worthiness.

#### E) Sense of confidence (sense of security)

For Mishera and Spritzer(1998), confidence is related to relationships between superiors and subordinates. Confidence relates to interest, qualification,self openness, and trust to others. Sense if trust to others enables individuals to feel secure [8].

Table 2. Empowerment different definitions

Expert	Provided definition
<b>Dennis Kynla (1929)</b>	Empowerment is the process of achieving continued improvement of organizational performance, which is realized through expansion of influence of members of competent and qualified teams in most if their aspects whole organization performance.
<b>Graw (1971)</b>	He considers empowerment an ambiguous and distinctconcept of which different individuals make inference based on their own features.
<b>Thomas &amp;velthouse (1990)</b>	Thay identify empowerment as a multidimensionalconcept, not considering it as increasing only motivation, but defining it as a process increasing inner job motivation.
<b>Shirt (1994)</b>	He considers empowerment a process by which participants of an educational environment improves their qualifications,promote their professional development, and solves their own problems.
<b>Blanchard (1999)</b>	Empowerment is to share information with employees, to form groups, and to design an appropriate organizational structure.

<b>Gwine&amp; Spritzer (1997)</b>	Gwine& Spritzer believe there exist 2 mechanical and organic approaches within empowerment definition and concept. In mechanical approach, empowerment means to delegate power & authority to subordinates. From this view, empowerment is a process in which a leader or a manager tries to divide his own power among subordinates. Based on organic approach, empowerment is not something managers must do for their employees, but is the way employees regard and perceive their roles in organization and their job.
<b>Bowne &amp;Lowler (1992)</b>	They consider empowerment as sharing 4 elements if information, Knowledge, reward, and power with front line employees of organizations.
<b>Steal (2002)</b>	Empowerment is to grant power and authority to organizationals' people and employees to do jobs in order to realize a particular activity.
<b>Gissler (2005)</b>	Empowerment is to inject power into employees while each organization must give strength to employees' personal power sense.
<b>Vandal &amp;Seccile</b>	They defline empowerment as leader's behaviors and human resources actions enabling members of organizations to mak use their talents and abilities to increase individual and organizational growth.
<b>Kapllan&amp; Norton</b>	Those who grant empowerment are considered a foundation to establish evaluation system. In other words, empowerment fills the gap between skills and capabilities required by employees and present level of these skills and capabilities.
<b>Kunter (1998)</b>	Empowerment is to delegate power of and decentralization in decision. Making process, the result of which is placing emphasis on practices of participatory management, quality cycles, self managing groups and mutually goal setting.
<b>Scott &amp;Zhafah</b>	Empowerment is a new concept solving all organizational problems, being considered a new fuel grow workplace.

### Research conceptual model

Research framework is a conceptual model of how to theorize on relationships between several factors defined as those influencing the problem at hand. In short, conceptual framework shows mutual relations between variables. therefore, conceptual framework is a basis based on which the research precedes to the end [9]. Given operational definitions, research subject and theoretical bases provided in this research, and given the review of empowerment research literature, we deal with its importance and dimensions including senses of qualification, autonomy, effectiveness, expressiveness, and confidence first, and, next with the importance of educating employees by considering moderator variables of age, sex and education level of employees.

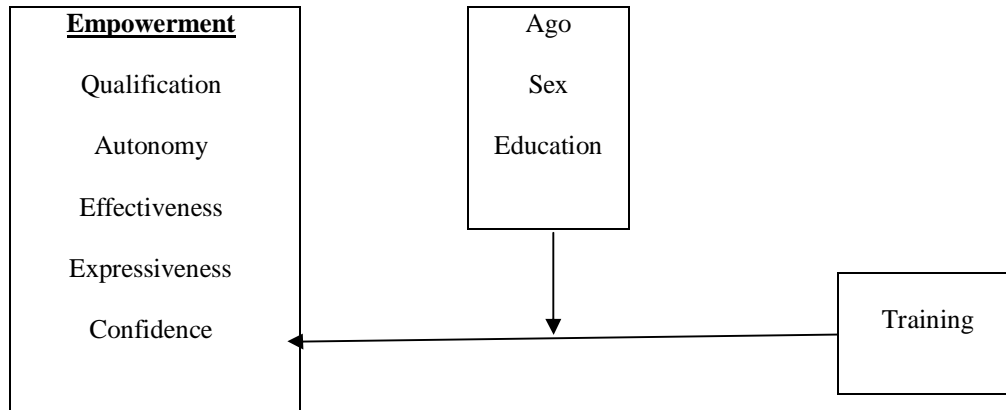


Diagram 1-1 Research conceptual model

### Research hypotheses

#### Major hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between training and employees' psychological empowerment.

#### Minor hypotheses

- 1- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' senses of qualification.
- 2- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' senses of autonomy.
- 3- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' senses of effectiveness.
- 4- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' senses of expressiveness.
- 5- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' senses of confidence.
- 6- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' psychological empowerment with respect to their age.
- 7- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' psychological empowerment with respect their sex.
- 8- There is a significant relationship between training and employees' psychological empowerment with respect their education level.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Research method is an applied one in term of its object ices and a descriptive one in term if its method, during which researcher examines activities by studying whole population in a field form.

Also, this research is a co relational one with respect to the relationship among variables and a cross-section one considering the whim of data collection [4].

This research used a questionnaire to gather information on hypotheses. After completed questionnaires had been collected, SPSS 18 software was to extract information and to develop necessary tables.

Two types of questionnaire were used to gather information. The first one was Spritzer's standard questionnaire (1995) measuring 5-fold dimensions (qualification, autonomy, effectiveness, expressiveness, and confidence) of the process of employees' empowerment using 19 items. This questionnaire was organized by modified Liker's scale containing closed-ended items, having 5 options of "absolutely agree", "agree", "noidea", "disagree", and "absolutely disagree".

The second questionnaire is a researcher-made one prepared and organized on the basis of Likert's spectrum multi-degree scale given the objectives, hypotheses, and theoretical bases of studies performed.

### Questionnaire validity and reliability

Validity of a research is a degree of accuracy of indices and measures developed to measure intended phenomenon [6]. In other words, validity is to measure the same thing taken into account by researchers.

Since Spritzer empowerment questionnaire (1995) is standardized, its validity has been confirmed by many foreign and domestic studies. Education questionnaire is a researcher-made one, validity of which has been supported by experts. After receiving their opinions and making necessary corrections, final questionnaire was prepared and organized.

Reliability means the existence of features of repeatability, stability, consistency in respective instrument. Reliability examines how decisively the instrument measures the concept of interest at any time [8]. Since Spritzer's empowerment questionnaire is standardized, its reliability has been supported by many foreign and domestic studies.

In order to ensure that education questionnaire is reliable, following doing preliminary studies, the questionnaire was distributed to and collected from 20% of population using a pilot method. After 2 weeks, all questionnaire were distributed to the population. Having been compared, responses of 20% of and whole population showed a high degree of closeness, indicating the questionnaire reliability. Using SPSS18 software, on the other hand, reliability coefficient was obtained at 87% in cronbach's alpha for employees' education questionnaire. Since this coefficient is close to 1, it show desirable validity and reliability of questionnaire.

In this research, data was analyzed by using SPSS 18 software as well as 2 statistically descriptive and inferential methods.

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to measure relationships of variable of employees' psychological empowerment and its components with employees' training and demographic characteristics.

### Conclusion and recommendations

This research investigated relationships between employee's education and psychological empowerment for Health Insurance General Office of Kermanshah province. Both empowerment and education were measured in the form of 5 components: senses of qualification, autonomy, effectiveness, occupational expressiveness, and confidence among coworker as well as senses of qualification, autonomy, effectiveness, expressiveness, and trust /confidence, respectively.

One major and 8 minor hypotheses were used to study education and psychological empowerment within Health Insurance General Office, measuring relationships of independent variable of education with 5-fold dimensions of dependent variable of psychological empowerment as well as relationships of education and psychological empowerment with 3 demographic components of age, sex, and education level. thus, initially, we address 8-fold minor hypotheses and, next, with major one.

#### Minor H1 examines relationships between education and employees' sense of qualification.

Obtained results have supported a significant relationship between education and employees' sense of qualification. Although sense of qualification accounted for the highest value (86%) of correlation coefficient in this research, in order to increase this correlation, each organization can help employees increase their learning, skills, and abilities by holding more appropriate educational courses and making job skills multipurpose.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p<0.00	0.86	5.72	12.13	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Sense of qualification

#### Minor H2 examines relationships between education and employees' sense of autonomy.

Obtained results supported positive 38% correlation and a significant relationship between education and employees' sense of autonomy. Given the present state of sense of autonomy, organizations need to give more powers to their employees in order to make the ground for their increased autonomy. In addition, it is suggested that employees participate more in organizational decision-making process, their sense of responsibility and their accountability for their duties be increased, and employees' responsibility orientation be encouraged by intra organizational reward system.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p<0.03	0.38	3.82	9	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Sense of autonomy

#### Minor H3 investigates relationships between education and employees' sense of effectiveness.

Obtained results confirm -7% correlation and the absence of positive relationships between education and sense of effectiveness. Considering status quo, in order to strengthen the relationships between education and sense of effectiveness, it is recommended that organizational horizontal communications and culture of consultation and ideas exchange be developed among employees and their sense of job effectiveness be enhanced by creating and strengthening spirit of self-confidence among them and by lowering management control as well as entrusting tasks to employees so that they have control over outcomes (self-control).

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p>0.69	-0.07	1.43	6.73	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Sense of effectiveness

#### Minor H4 studies relationships between education and employees' sense of expressiveness.

Obtained results support positive 41% correlation and a significant relationship between education and employees' sense of expressiveness to their jobs. Given that correlation level is below average, in order to augment this relationship, it is recommended that intraorganizational group work be created, commitment be increased through collective participation, employees and their performance be regarded important, and job roles of employees be clarified in order to remove ambiguity from their occupational roles.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p<0.02	0.41	1.63	6.53	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Sense of expressiveness

#### Minor H5 examines relationships between education and employees' sense of confidence.

Obtained results support positive 73% correlation and a significant relationship between education and sense of confidence. Although status quo indicates a relatively strong relationship between education and sense of confidence, in order to give strength to this relationship, honesty and intimacy need to dominate at all organizational levels so that employees replace pretention and fraud by truthfulness and honesty through having confidence. Meritocracy must be observed as much as possible in position-holding so that employees can trust each other more and develop open relationships.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p<0.00	0.73	6.32	5.82	96	Education
		10.65	31.58	96	Sense of confidence



**Minor H6 examines relationships between education and psychological empowerment of employees with respect to their ago.**

Obtained results confirm -22% correlation and the absence of a relationships between education and psychological empowerment of employees with regard to their ago.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p>0.23	-0.22	3	15.50	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Psychological empowerment

**Minor H7 investigates relationships between education and psychological empowerment of employees considering their sex.**

Obtained results support a positive correlation between education and psychological empowerment of employees given their sex.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p<0.00	0.38	3.44	8.53	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Psychological empowerment

**Minor H8 examines relationships between education and psychological empowerment of employees given their educational level.**

Obtained results show no significant relationship between education and psychological empowerment of employees given their educational level.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p>0.37	0.16	1.73	6.80	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Psychological empowerment

Based results from major hypothesis testing, there is a positive 74% correlation between education and psychological empowerment of employees, indicating a relatively strong relationship between these 2 variables within Health Insurance General Office of Kermanshah province. So it can be admitted that to make efforts in relation to educating employees continuously and objectively can be an invaluable strategy for increasing employees' abilities and making organizations powerful.

Level of significant	Correlation coefficient	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
p<0.00	0.74	10.41	65.23	96	Education
		11.25	33.43	96	Psychological empowerment

**Recommendations for other researchers**

1. Given the spread of virtual education within organizations, it is recommended that the effects of this type of education on employees' empowerment be studied specifically.
2. Although this research merely used a questionnaire to collect information, it is better to use other tools like interview, observation, examination of job performance, etc in addition to questionnaire.
3. Given that most researches have been done into granting empowerment within government organizations, it is suggested that subject of empowerment be studied within private sectors and results be compared with those of public ones.

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