

Specification of the Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Curriculum Orientation of Female Students of Educational Science of Farhangian University

Zahra Akbarzadeh^a, Ladan Salimi^b, Mitra Abrazeh^c, Fatemeh Safarizad^d, Zahra Jafari Kojoori^e

^a Ph.D. Student in Curriculum, Sari University of Science and Research.

^b Assistant professor, Department Of Education, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran.

^c MA in Educational Research.

^d MA in Educational Planning.

^e Bachelor of Educational Science.

Abstract

Present study is an attempt to investigate the relationship between psychological empowerment of students with curriculum orientation. This is an applied research and heuristic and in terms of data gathering method, it is survey type and quantitative. Since the researcher aims at exploring the extant relationships between research variables, it is as well of correlation type. Statistical population of present study consists of all students of Amol Farhangian University totaling 175 ones. Chochran formula was applied for estimating sample size, according to which the sample size was estimated 120 persons. Data gathering instruments include Spreitzer psychological empowerment questionnaire and Mahlios, Friedman-Nimz & Peyton questionnaire. To examine the validity of the questionnaire, face validity and content validity were scrutinized. In addition, Chronbach's Alpha was referred to for defining the reliability of the research which was estimated 0.89 and 0.92 for empowerment questionnaire and curriculum orientation questionnaire, respectively. These values are indicative of questionnaire's reliability. Data analysis was done both descriptively and inferentially. Accordingly, correlation coefficient test applying SPSS software was implemented. It was found out that there is a significant relationship between competence and curriculum planning orientation. On the other hand, no relationship was detected between trust and curriculum planning orientation. There is a significant relationship between the sense of effectiveness and curriculum planning orientation and the correlation coefficient was estimated 0.282 that demonstrates a positive and direct relationship. Last but not least, a significant relationship was revealed between sense of freedom and curriculum planning orientation.

Keywords: Psychological Empowerment, Curriculum Orientation, Competence, Trust

Introduction

Extensive economic, social, and technological transformations occurred in late 20th century (Morgan et al. 2007). Considering these significant changes, many thinkers contend communities must predetermine their ideal society and be equipped with necessary infrastructures to be able to take advantage of changes to their own benefit and to overcome potential challenges (Jarvis, 2008 quoted by Freire, p. 102). Most thinkers suggest establishment of learning community since if people have the opportunity of lifelong learning, they can overcome the probable challenges (Edwards, 2002, p. 1; Jarvis, 2008, p. 103). It is evident that high education systems including universities contribute greatly to the flourish of such community (UNESCO, 1997, p. 30; Iksia Ezhu, 2001, p. 1; Tichler, 2006, p. 9). Needless to say, curriculum is a critical prerequisite for high education (Lonberg & Overnshtain, 2004, p. 25). The Fundamental Reform Document of Education (FRDE) of the Islamic Republic of Iran paved the way for realizing clean life which is the critical mission of education system. It underlies applying a series of strategies and coordinates the measures of education practitioners including philosophers, planners, educators, and etc. for achieving the ultimate goal of clean life. What is sought is reaching better knowledge of fundamnetal actions. Three fundamental actions are philosophizing, curriculum planning, and instruction (Al-Hosesseini, Mehrmohammadi; 2012).

Curriculum planning is focused upon three main questions: what are the goals? What ways lead to those goals? How is assessment carried out? Regarding the three major and fundamental stages of curriculum planning i.e. setting goal, specifying the method, and designing assessment, the components of curriculum will be need assessment, content purpose, content organization, presentation method, time, situation, location, and assessment. Curriculum field is one of the branches of educational science that is theoretically one of the challenging and controversial domains in epistemology. Ideologies of curriculum are both important and contentious. A review of relevant literature shows that this subject has drawn wide attention (Mehrmohammadi & Amin Khandaghi, 2009).

Interdisciplinary orientations in scholarly studies will no more be an option but a necessity. Bridging the epistemological gaps of humans or more efficient responsiveness to emerging needs of human communities obliges scientists to interdisciplinary orientations. High education policy makers are as well inevitably forced to do so (Mehrmohammadi, 2009).

A teacher's orientation to curriculum reflects his/her knowledge, perceptions, values, and prospects to the world and reveals a kind of meta-orientation entailing theoretical and practical theories of curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

Despite the well-recognized role of empowerment in practice and theories of management, our knowledge of empowerment is limited and vague (Aboodi et al, 2014, p. 230).

Spreitzer defines empowerment as an internal motivation for achieving goals. He defines empowerment as a process through which individuals gain as much power that enables them to have a direct participation in important events of their lives. One gains enough skill, knowledge, and will of power through empowerment to be more effective in what he/she does (Spreitzer 1996 quoted by Kafashpour & Shakouri 2014).

Lee et al (2017) carried out a research in Taiwan around psychological capital of pre-school teachers and found out that the more education system stresses the reinforcement of this capital, the more the professional skill of teachers will enhance. Professional skill has a direct relationship with orientation. An improvement in professional skill leaves positive impact upon orientation (Lee et al. 2017).

Organizations in the 21st century are different from the traditional ones. In these organizations, the creativity and thought power of employees are managed along with their energy. Under such circumstances, not only controlling and dictating top-down hierarchies are no more effective but employees must also be initiative and immediately solve their problems by making self-regulatory teams and playing their pertinent roles. This demands a new look to human resources and their scope of power. The necessity of training employees who have self-regulation competency has attracted many management experts to people empowerment as a new paradigm (Ghorbanizadeh & Aghaverdi, 2012).

Psychological empowerment developed in 1980 when careers turned more complicated and independence became more prominent in designing work. Organizations therefore demanded increasingly those employees who were flexible enough to adapt with rapid changes of work place (Jwo & Shim, 2010; 425). Empowerment is now in the limelight since potentially it influences upon outcomes that are to the benefit of individuals and organizations (Hun et al, 2009; 15-20).

Empowerment is defined in management as the “process of improving the right of decision making” and “individual growth through cooperation, sharing, development, and team activity”. If this concept is more delved into, it is found to be an extension of concepts such as cooperation, assigning power, and motivation which are widely discussed in organizational management. What makes empowerment different is the fact that it is more all-inclusive and is more difficult to be implemented (Amirkabiri, 2006; 34).

Empowerment is a process through which administrators help other employees to gain required power for deciding about themselves and their own works (Chang & Liu, 2008; 33).

Psychological empowerment refers to a series of psychological states and how employees think about their works and gain experience or how much they find themselves influential in an organization. In other words, it improves their self-confidence and makes them more willing to succeed (Vacharakite, 2008; 34).

Enablers are comprised of five aspects. Leadership, policy and strategy, partnerships and resources, and processes are known as enablers and all these factors strengthen an organization to achieve excellent results. 1. Leadership: supreme leaders set the ultimate goal and mission of the organization and specify necessary ways to achieve those goals, establish the necessary values and systems for sustainable success and behave and act appropriately to put those values into practice; 2. Policy and strategy: supreme organizations operationalize their ultimate goals and missions through setting a kind of strategy focused upon the interests of beneficiaries; 3. People: supreme organizations manage, expand, and take advantage of the whole potential of their employees run at individual, group, and organizational levels. They involve employees in management stressing the importance of equity and justice. These organizations pay attention to their employees, communicate with them, and encourage or reward them to make them more motivated and committed and utilize their expertise and knowledge to the benefit of organization's interests. 4. Partnerships and resources: supreme organizations plan and manage external commercial partnerships and cooperation's, internal resources, and providers to support adequately their policy and strategy and to effectively execute their processes; 5. Processes: supreme organizations design, manage, and improve their processes to keep their customers satisfied and create values for customers and other users (Aghaverdi, 2013).

Ramrudi et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between philosophic mindedness and curriculum orientation of high school teachers in Zahedan City in Iran. It was found out that there is a positive and significant relationship between teachers' philosophic mindedness and curriculum orientation and the two

aspects of comprehensiveness and penetration were predictive of curriculum orientation. According to findings, there was significant discrepancy in philosophic mindedness of male and female teachers but such difference was not observed in curriculum orientation of teachers. Deiman (2013) studied the relationship between psychological empowerment and knowledge management activities and found that there is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and activities of knowledge creation and absorption. It was as well revealed that there is a direct and significant relationship between psychological empowerment of employees and knowledge transfer, knowledge organization, and knowledge application. Besides, Dzoodzidsirata (2014) studied the relationship between psychological empowerment of employees and organizational innovation. It was found out that there is a positive, direct relationship between psychological empowerment and higher efficiency and innovation within the organization.

Present study seeks to scrutinize indicators and variables that influence upon psychological empowerment to find out if there is any significant relationship between psychological empowerment of students and their curriculum orientation.

Research Materials and Methodology

This is an applied research and heuristic. Regarding data gathering method, it is quantitative and survey type. Since the researcher is aimed at exploring the relationship between research variables, it is of correlation type, too. Statistical population includes all female students of educational science of Amol Farhangian University totaling 175 persons. Based on Cochran formula, the sample size is defined 120 persons. Data is gathered through both librarian and field method. Spreitzer psychological empowerment questionnaire and curriculum orientation questionnaire were applied for data gathering. Spreitzer psychological empowerment questionnaire consists of 12 items that measure 4 dimensions of psychological empowerment i.e. meaning, competence, effectiveness, and choice. These items are arranged based on Likert five rate scale. Spreitzer reported that the reliability of this questionnaire is 0.85. Item 4, 9, and 12 are related to effectiveness; item 3, 8, and 10 are related to choice; item 2, 5, and 7 are related to competence; and item 1, 6, and 11 are related to meaning. Mahlios, Friedman-Nimz & Peyton questionnaire was applied for measuring curriculum orientation of teachers. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was examined. Reliability was estimated based on Chronbach's Alpha as 0.89 for psychological empowerment questionnaire and 0.92 for curriculum orientation. These figures are indicative of the reliability of the questionnaire. Data is analyzed both descriptively and inferentially. Statistical population features are described bases on descriptive statistics methods including frequency, percentage, diagram, central tendency indicators (mean, median, and mode), and dispersion tendency indicators (standard error of the mean, standard deviation, variance, range, minimum, maximum). On the other hand, inferential statistics methods i.e. correlation coefficient test is applied for detecting the relationship between research variables. SPSS software was used to this end.

Results

Normality Test

Table (1) Normality Test

	freedom	effectiveness	Trust	competence	Curriculum orientation
N	120	120	120	120	120

Normal Parameters ^b	Mean	49.0393	36.8107	36.7429	37.2250	4.1839
	Std. Deviation	3.07293	2.56735	2.81413	2.90397	.30494
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.094	.189	.107	.134	.174
	Positive	.069	.104	.107	.117	.105
	Negative	-.094	-.189	-.107	-.134	-.174
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.575	3.165	1.793	2.241	2.909
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.014	.000	.003	.000	.000

According to above table, normality of data is not observed. Non-parametric tests will therefore be used for data analysis.

Research Hypothesis 1:

H0: there is no significant relationship between the competence of teachers and curriculum orientation.

H1: there is a significant relationship between the competence of teachers and curriculum orientation.

Table (2): Correlation Coefficient Test

Variable	Competence	Curriculum Orientation
Competence	1	
	.000	
	120	
Curriculum Orientation	0.260	1
	.000	.000
	120	120

According to table 2, since significance level is lower than 0.05, $H_0=0$ is not supported but $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. It is therefore stated that at 95% significance level, there is a significant relationship between competence and curriculum orientation and the correlation coefficient was found 0.260.

Research Hypothesis 2:

H0: there is no significant relationship between the sense of trust of teachers and curriculum orientation.

H1: there is a significant relationship between the sense of trust of teachers and curriculum orientation.

Table (3). Correlation Coefficient Test

Variable	Sense of Trust	Curriculum Orientation
	1	

Sense of Trust	.000	
	120	
Curriculum Orientation	0.138	1
	.021	0.000
	120	120

Since significance level is lower than 0.05, $H_0=0$ is supported but $H_1 \neq 0$ is not supported. As represented in table, there is no significant relationship between sense of trust and curriculum orientation at 95% significance level.

Research Hypothesis 3:

H_0 = there is no significant relationship between the sense of effectiveness of teachers and curriculum orientation.

H_1 : there is a significant relationship between the sense of effectiveness of teachers and curriculum orientation.

Table (4). Correlation Test

Variable	Sense of Effectiveness	Curriculum Orientation
Sense of Effectiveness	1	
	.000	
	120	
Curriculum Orientation	0.138	1
	.021	.000
	120	120

Since significance level is lower than 0.05, $H_0=0$ is not supported but $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. As evident in the table, there is a significant relationship at 95% significance level between the sense of effectiveness and curriculum orientation and the correlation coefficient is 0.138.

Research Hypothesis 4:

H_0 : there is no significant relationship between the sense of freedom of teachers and curriculum orientation.

H_1 : there is a significant relationship between the sense of freedom of teachers and curriculum orientation.

Table (5): Correlation Coefficient

Variable	Sense of Freedom	Curriculum Orientation
Sense of Freedom	1	
	.000	
	120	
Curriculum Orientation	0.228	1
	0.00	.000
	120	120

Since significance level is lower than 0.05, it is therefore concluded that $H_0=0$ is not supported but $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. It can be stated that at 95% significance level, there is a significant relationship between sense of freedom and curriculum orientation and the correlation coefficient is 0.228.

Factors of psychological empowerment which affect curriculum orientation were prioritized through Friedman test as follow;

Table (5): Prioritization based on Friedman Test

Factors	Mean Rank	Rank
Competence	4.83	1
Sense of Trust	4.66	2
Sense of Effectiveness	4.65	3
Sense of Freedom	4.62	4

According to the achieved results, competence was ranked the first, sense of trust ranked the second, sense of effectiveness ranked the third, and sense of freedom ranked the last.

Table (6). Hypotheses Test Results

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis	Conclusion
H1	There is a significant relationship between the competence of teachers and curriculum orientation.	supported
H2	There is a significant relationship between the sense of trust and curriculum orientation.	Not supported
H3	There is a significant relationship between philanthropy of teachers and curriculum orientation.	supported
H4	There is a significant relationship between sense of freedom of teachers and curriculum orientation.	supported

Discussion

Regarding the results of correlation test of the first hypothesis, since the significance level is lower than 0.05, it is concluded that $H_0=0$ is not supported and $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. Therefore, at 95% significance level, there is a significant relationship between competence and curriculum orientation and the correlation coefficient is 0.260 that is indicative of a positive and direct relationship. According to correlation test applied for hypothesis 2, since the significance level is lower than 0.05, $H_0=0$ is not supported and $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. Thus, at 95% significance level, there is no significant relationship between trust and curriculum orientation. Correlation test results of the third hypothesis showed that since significance level is lower than 0.05, $H_0=0$ is not supported and $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. Therefore, at 95% significance level, there is a significant relationship between the sense of effectiveness and curriculum orientation and the correlation coefficient is 0.282 which is indicative of a positive and direct relationship. According to correlation test applied for hypothesis 4, since the significance level is lower than 0.05, $H_0=0$ is not supported and $H_1 \neq 0$ is supported. It is therefore stated that at 95% significance level, there is a significant relationship between sense of freedom and curriculum orientation and the correlation coefficient is 0.276 that shows a positive and direct relationship.

Conclusion:

Present study was an attempt to specify the relationship between psychological empowerment and curriculum orientation of students. As expected, there was a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and curriculum orientation of students. Spreitzer defines empowerment as internal motivation of individuals to achieve goal. Accordingly, one's need to power is satisfied when he/she is able to deal with emerged events but it is not satisfied when one feels unable encountered with social and physical demands of the environment. This finding agrees with Ramrudi et al (2016), Deiman (2013), and Dzoodzitsirata (2014).

Regarding competence, the findings of present study are not in line with those of Abaspour (2015). He ranked competence the first among psychological enablers. Present study as well confirmed that the more competence increases, the more effect it will have on curriculum orientation.

Present study results agree with those of Lee et al. (2017) in terms of competence and self-efficacy. They contend as a result of self-efficacy and competence; professional skill as well enhances.

Regarding the sense of effectiveness, it was found out that there is a significant relationship between effectiveness and curriculum orientation of teachers. This finding agrees with Loutanz et al (2007). They found that hopeful employees have higher motivation and show higher performance. They as well proved the effect of hopefulness in work place. Therefore, teachers will find suitable way for reaching their goals and are motivated enough to apply these solutions. Besides, research findings about teachers' trust showed that there is no significant relationship between trust and curriculum orientation of teachers. In other words, trust does not impact upon teachers' curriculum orientation. This finding is in line with Rezaei et al (2015).

Empowered people feel they are able to control the outcomes. They believe by influencing upon the environment in which they work or the consequences that emerge, they can transform current conditions. Empowered people do not feel constrained by external impediments but they do believe that obstacles are controllable. Our study findings are different from those of Ghorbanizade & Aghaverdi (2013) which did not find any significant relationship between the sense of effectiveness and the performance of the employees. However, in present study it had significant impact upon curriculum orientation.

As Ornstein pointed out, orientation of a teacher to curriculum reflects his/her knowledge, perceptions, values, and prospect toward the world. According to findings of present study, the more the components of sense of freedom, competence, effectiveness increase, the more reinforced the ideology of teachers will turn and they will be more successful in setting goals, choosing methods, and designing assessment and they will have more appropriate feedback to education and have more powerful theoretical knowledge.

According to above-mentioned results, preconditions necessary for conscious application of approaches must be provided and their weak points or strengths must be regarded. Subject-oriented approach is widely practiced in most high schools and universities throughout the country. This is an approach which stresses the subject and the way it is developed (Mehrmohammadi, 2009, p. 180). If this approach is insisted upon, required foundations for empowerment will not be created. Social approach to curriculum planning according to Miller perspective is consisted of three components: a) cultural transfer, b) democratic citizen, c) social changes, and social reconstructors' group. This orientation stresses social experience and considers the society as a principal source for curriculum planning. Unfortunately, research findings demonstrate that social approach is significantly underestimated currently.

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