

## Survey Relationship between Organizational Structure and Employees Empowerment in SEMET-CO Company

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between empowerment and organizational structure and the required factors in order to propose an appropriate approach for empowerment of employees. As an approach to identify and evaluate organizational structure, three traits of formality, sophistication and concentration (Robbins theory) is applied as the basis of structure study, and psychological empowerment is employed as evaluation criterion for empowerment. According to earlier researches related to empowerment (particularly Spritzer research work), the psychological empowerment consists of four traits of competence, self-determination, meaningfulness and effectiveness. This study is a survey research and in terms of goal is applicable. The statistical population of this research is all top management and employees of SEMET-CO Company in Iran including 35 individuals. The total statistical population is selected as a sample. To analyze the statistical data, descriptive statistics techniques (including: adjusting descriptive tables, mean, standard deviation) and inferential (analysis of Spearman's coefficient correlation, analysis of variance, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test) have been used. Regarding the results of research can be noticed that there is a correlation and a positive and significant relationship between the variables of organizational structure and psychological empowerment. Thus, all the hypotheses are confirmed.*

**Keywords:** Organizational structure, empowerment, psychological empowerment.

### Introduction

The new age has created a different status for organizations. With Passing through the Industrial Revolution, instrumental attitude to human work force has dropped. The employees of the professional organizations has become to the top directors of the work stream and organization' partners; therefore, not only should the managers have the advantage of leadership skills, but also the staff need to learn methods so as to proceed towards the leadership itself<sup>1</sup>. To achieve these features, an organization must empower its most important and competitive source and instrument that is its human resources<sup>2</sup>. Using traditional management approaches results in blocking the sense of innovation of employees, an increase of the amount of work and creating restrictions for them. On the other hand, complete freedom of the employees causes chaos and impaired in work affairs. Both conditions may result in abuse of an organization's material and spiritual resources, thus it will not achieve its intended affectivity<sup>3</sup>.

Empowering the employees establishes necessary equilibrium between the two stated dimensions. In fact, empowerment is a means that aligns individual and organizational goals and makes the employees believe that the organization's growth and progress will follow their interests<sup>4</sup>. The competitive advantage of an organization depends on its empowered and competent

human resources that can appropriately respond to the environmental changes.

Empowered staff do not merely function in their work scope, but they consider themselves responsible against all the activities of the organization; hence, they make attempts to take charge of decision-making in their work and specialty domains and to accept work as a part of life so as to perceive the effect of their work activities on the life of the organization.

In empowerment, the goal is the growth of abilities and competencies of individuals such that their private and working life is endowed with creativity and satisfaction. Attending to the factors that reduction causes the existing inabilities of employees in performing their job tasks is among the focused issues in improving individuals' performance. Individual differences like self-confidence, creativity and innovation, positive-thinking etc. are of particular importance in overcoming these problems. Reach such goals needs to employ appropriate and scientific tactics relevant to them<sup>5</sup>. Empowerment is one of the most important ones to develop these features in individuals. Outputs resulting from dynamism and creativity of staff can be referred to as the most important resources of an organization.

Nowadays, the main source of competitive advantage is not the mere use of technology, but it is rooted in innovation, positive-

thinking, quality, commitment and capability of work force<sup>6</sup>. Empowering employees brings positive effects on attitude and behavior of employees. Attitude changes of employees lead to the increase of job satisfaction, the reduction of stress, job ambiguities. Empowerment also develops the power of decision-making, independence at work and freedom in decision-making. But as its behavioral effects, it can be referred to the increase of employees' self-confidence, increase of compatibility, expedition in responding to customers and so on<sup>7</sup>.

Investigating into the studies conducted and the process of successful organizations in implementing empowerment represent that "organizational structure" is one of the most important factors in establishing empowerment, so that since 1970s, the organizations tended to apply empowerment process towards the replacement of traditional, controlled and inactive structures with the dynamic, active, participatory and self-managing organizational environments<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, traditional structures, with features such as concentration, labor division, inflexibility against environmental changes and close supervision and its mechanical form, without any type of human source motion and dynamics<sup>9</sup>. Against, new organizational structures, with dynamic and organic formations which are like a network of relationships and have among the features as customer-orientedness, division of decision-making power, high flexibility, engender the decrease of environmental uncertainty and self-control in individuals for carrying out empowerment process<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, any structure cannot be considered talented and convenient to implement the process of empowering employees in an organization.

An appropriate structure for empowerment requires its factors and indicators and indeed it is an appropriate ground for its implementation<sup>8</sup>. As regards empowerment is regarded as an internal variable for an organization and it is obviously related with the dimensions of organizational structure; hence, it is essential that the relationship of this variable be measured in view of the dimensions of structure and their mutual effects on each other in order to achieve the goal of this research.

The relationship between organizational structures in SEMET-CO Company, with the employees' psychological empowerment is an issue which is focused on in this research. Regarding the principle of limited scope of the subject of research, and based on Robbins perspective, the dimensions of organizational structure is considered as an independent variable in relation with the psychological empowerment. To this end, the subject of research is raised within this question: "Is there any correlation between the factors of organizational structure (complexity, formality, and concentration) and psychological empowerment (competence, self-determination, meaningfulness, and effectiveness).

**Review of Literature: Employee empowerment:** Employees are as only resources which can be exclusive in one organization than other organization and have the capability of upgrading

knowledge, skill, and motivation. Such capability not only is possible by staff training but also must be prepared a situation so that employees themselves also forerun in this context using their creativity. Roy and Sheena believe that not only managers must enjoy leadership skills but also employees must learn methods which proceed towards leadership itself<sup>1</sup>. To gain these features, organization must empower its most important competitive resource and tool namely human resource<sup>2</sup>. Employee's empowerment is considered as a recent subject in the literature of human resources and particularly the development of human resources. Meanwhile, with attention to the variety of research and wide range of studies carried out, this field enjoys rich literature and different approaches have been raised in it<sup>11</sup>. In summary, this literature is divided into two parts or approaches. First, the studies that focuses on structural approach of empowerment. In these studies empowerment is considered as a result of a process and its formation is affected by external environment. It is called structural approach<sup>12</sup>. Indeed, its main subject is to reviews tools and means that managers provide, by which they bring their personnel closer to empowerment in the organization. The authorities of this field include Eisenberger R., Burke W., Block P., Deciand Ryan, Parker L.E., and others. The second group of theorists has further dealt with the importance of psychological dimension of empowerment in their studies. They have considered "empowerment" as an infrastructural factor in improving and developing the activities of an organization. In their opinion, empowerment is an individual's internal factor, and thus it is directly related to his attitude, feeling or perception of work environment. They believe that development or strength of the feeling of empowerment in an individual's mental dimensions results in his empowerment<sup>11</sup>. Some of the researchers of this field include: Conger and Kanungo, Thomas and Velthous, Zimmerman, Spreitzer and so on. With attention to the significance of Spreitzer's studies, particularly his psychological empowerment, the measurement of psychological empowerment in this research is based on that model. In the rest, we will explain this approach and its constituent parts in detail. There are different perspectives in terms of the effective and constituent factors of psychological empowerment.

In most research studies, four common dimensions can be found for psychological empowerment. In one of the best studies carried out on empowerment, Spreitzer has identified and offered four dimensions for psychological empowerment<sup>18</sup>. These four dimensions are the same factors which Thomas and Velthous have referred to in their research. The four dimensions include: i. the feeling of self-efficacy (competence), ii. the feeling of self-organizing (having the right of choice) iii. admitting personal consequence (effectiveness) iv. the feeling of meaningfulness (being valuable)<sup>10</sup>.

**Competence:** degree that a person can perform work activities skillfully when he tries. This aspect reflects a dominate of behavior.

**Meaning:** concept is the value of the task goal or purpose, judged in about the individual's own ideals or standards. It is the proportionality between the needs of one's work role and one's beliefs, values, and behaviors.

**Self-determination:** To be self-determining means to experience a feeling of selection in initiating and regulating one's own actions. This aspect reflects a choice of behavior.

**Impact:** Sense of impact indicative the degree to which one can causally influence a desired environmental outcome. This aspect reflects a control over objectives and outcomes<sup>21</sup>.

**Trust:** Refers to positive expectations people have about the intent and behaviors of multiple organizational members based on organizational roles, relationships, experiences, and affiliation<sup>22</sup>. This aspect reflects the relationship between supervisor/manager and subordinate/employee<sup>23</sup>.

**Organizational Structure:** On the other hand, doing any move in the organization requires providing its suitable grounds. Among the most important factors, "organizational structure" plays a critical role in personnel empowerment<sup>8</sup>. Organizational structure constitutes the main concepts of any organization. In fact, the wide scope of definitions and the impact of structure on other organizational processes is an indication of its importance<sup>24,25</sup>.

Especially, any organizational development is created under the influence of and in association with the dimensions of organization's structure or is affected by it. In view of this, achieving to empowerment will also be directly related with organizational structure. Organization has relatively certain boundaries to be able to distinguish organization's members from non-members<sup>26</sup>. Being specified such boundaries are carried out by means of concluding formal or informal contracts between members and organization. "Organizational structure stipulates how tasks are assigned, who does reports whom and which are formal coordination mechanisms as well as organizational interactive patterns that must be observed<sup>27</sup>. According to Stephen Robbins's theory organizational structure has been defined in three dimensions include: i. Formality, ii. Complexity, iii. Centralization.

Bernz and Stalker could take important steps to presentation a model that has several structures. They identified a mechanical structure which was much similar to ideal type of bureaucracy and called another type of it organic structure that was approximately the counterpart of this structure. So, organic organization has the network structure of control rather than has hierarchy of authority, works must be adjusted and changed continuously and permanently rather than is specialized, and information must be exchanged constantly and offered recommendations rather than the presence of supervisor who is at the top of organization.

Bernz and Stalker examined 20 British and Scottish companies in order to identify how structures and managerial activities of these organizations may be different according to environmental conditions. Their findings was that type of structure which existed in environments with sequential and dynamic changes compared to a structure which organizations choose in a stable environment was completely different. Bernz and Stalker named these two structures as organic (biological) and machine structures respectively.

Chandler (1960) has done a classic research about relationship between organization's strategy and its structure and published in the early 1960<sup>29</sup>. He examined hundreds companies of American largest companies and concluded that modifications in the strategy of these companies had been led to changes in their structure. Therefore, any time organizational structure doesn't follow strategy, results will be unfavorable. Chandler realized that his studied companies had been first launched with centralized structures. This case reflects this fact that they first had limited production lines. They extended by increasing demand for their products, increased their production lines and were forced to apply different structures to follow new strategies and conform company to these strategies. In fact, he argues that organizations initiate operation by a product with a single production line, they perform only one task. In this situation, strategy simplicity of organizations is compatible to simple and non coherent structure. Decisions can be centralized under the authority of one senior manager, because organization's strategy is focused here and a structure that can implement this strategy must have little complexity and formality.

## Research Methodology

Regarding method, this study is a survey research and in terms of goal is applicable. The statistical population of this research is all top management and employees of SEMET-CO Company in Iran including 35 individuals. The total statistical population is selected as a sample. A questionnaire has been used which is adjusted with regard to research variables and operationalising them. In this research, face validity is used to determine validity of data collection tool, to estimate questionnaire's reliability is used Cronbach alpha method show as tables 1 and 2. The values of these statistics show that first questionnaire's items have a high correlation together and second, research questionnaire has a high reliability. The variables of this study are also organizational structure (complexity, formalization and centralization) and psychological empowerment (meaningfulness, effectiveness, competence, and self-determination) in which organizational structure is an independent variable and psychological empowerment is a dependent variable. In order to analyze the statistical data, descriptive statistics techniques (including: adjusting descriptive tables, mean, standard deviation) and inferential (analysis of Spearman's coefficient correlation, analysis of variance, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test) have been used.

**Table-1**  
**Reliability test of organizational structure items of questionnaire**

	frequency	percent
Valid	35	100%
Excluded	0	0%
total	35	100%
Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items	
0.866	18	

**Table-2**  
**Reliability test of empowerment items of questionnaire**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid	35	100%
Excluded	0	0%
Total	35	100%
Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items	
0.857	18	

**Analytical model:** This research explains the influence of organizational structure on the Employee empowerment and it investigates the relationship between variables of organizational structure (Formality, complexity, centralization) and Employee empowerment show as figure-1.

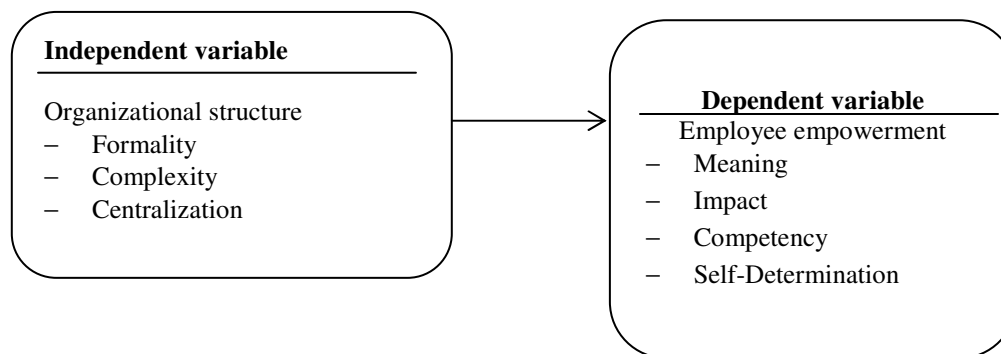
**Research hypotheses:**  $H_1$ : There is a positive and significant relationship between organic organizational structure and employee empowerment of SEMET-CO Company.  $H_{1,1}$ : There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational formality and employees' empowerment of SEMET-CO

Company.  $H_{1,2}$ : There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational centralization and employees' empowerment of SEMET-CO Company.  $H_{1,3}$ : There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational complexity and employees' empowerment of SEMET-CO Company.

## Results and Discussion

In the descriptive analysis part, the data obtained from the statistical sample, which included 35 subjects, has been divided with regard to such indices as gender, education certificate, and age and job record shown in table 3.

The independent variable of the research, that is, structure, is designed on the basis of Robbins' questionnaire, after investigating the SEMET-CO company documents and current procedures, represents a bureaucratic and hierarchical structure in which the variables of complexity, formalization, and centralization are of high average. With regard to the results gathered from the empowerment questionnaire and the frequency of responses given to any of the indexes, it is observed that the psychological empowerment factor has lower acceptability among the SEMET-CO company staff. Whereas the self-efficacy index has higher average, after that, self-organization, meaningfulness, and finally personal acceptance of consequences are ranked respectively. In analyzing the inferential data, first the normalization of data was examined, the results of which are shown in table 4.



**Figure-1**  
**Research analytic model**

**Table-3**  
**Separation, sample data based on the sociological characteristics**

Gender	Males= 31(0.855)		Females = 4(0.115)	
Education Certificate	Diplomas = 2(0.05)	Post diplomas = 10 (0.29)	B.S.s = 17(0.49)	M.S.s= 6(0.17)
Age	20-30 yrs old = 5(0.144)	31-40 yrs old = 9(0.257)	31-40 yrs old = 17(0.485)	51-60 yrs old = 4(0.114)
Service Age	1-10 yrs old = 11(0.32)	10-20 yrs old = 16(0.46)	20-30 yrs old = 8(0.22)	

Given the results of two tables and the level of significance, it can be said that obtained sample data from normal distribution has the probability of 95% certainty. To test any of the hypotheses, first the opinions of the statistical community were explored through calculating Spearman's coefficient correlation and then to be sure of the response, the test of meaningfulness of the coefficient of correlation was utilized for any of the hypotheses shows as table 5. Also, analysis of variance was used to compare the difference of average between several different groups in a community.

According to the results of the above table and the values of coefficient of correlation, it can be noticed that there is a

correlation and a positive and significant relation between the variables of organizational structure and psychological empowerment. Thus, all the hypotheses are confirmed. On the other hand, the probability 0/01 in significance level (sig) indicates that the coefficient of correlation between two variables in every hypothesis is significant. Also, in terms of the offered values of the coefficient of correlation through SPSS software, it can be inferred that all of the research hypotheses are confirmed; however, the relationship in the main hypothesis is powerful and contrary. This relationship is similar in terms of second and third subordinate hypotheses. Only in the first subordinate hypothesis, there is a direct but weak relationship between research variables.

**Table-4**  
**Kolmogorov-Smirnov's test for investigating the normalization of the data of organizational structure and psychological empowerment**

<b>Variables Remarks</b>	<b>Centralization</b>	<b>Formalization</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Psychological empowerment</b>
<b>Kolmogorov-Smirnov's (Z)</b>	1.268	0.87	1.099	1.220
<b>Level of significance (bilateral)</b>	0.080	.099	0.179	.102

**Table-5**  
**Investigating the coefficient of correlation between variables of organizational structure and psychological empowerment**

		<b>Organizational structure</b>	<b>Complexity</b>	<b>Formality</b>	<b>Centralization</b>
<b>Employee empowerment</b>	Pearson correlation	0.875	0.465	0.524	0.200
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.005	0.001	0.249
	N	35	35	35	35

**Table-6**  
**ANOVA Test**

		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>d.f</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>
<b>Organizational structure</b>	Between Groups	0.748	3	0.249	0.382	0.766
	Within Groups	20.223	31	0.652		
	Total	20.971	34			
<b>Employee empowerment</b>	Between Groups	2.267	3	0.756	1.489	0.237
	Within Groups	15.733	31	0.508		
	Total	18.000	34			
<b>Complexity</b>	Between Groups	0.544	3	0.181	0.262	0.852
	Within Groups	21.456	31	0.692		
	Total	22.000	34			
<b>Centralization</b>	Between Groups	0.844	3	0.281	0.575	0.636
	Within Groups	15.156	31	0.489		
	Total	16.000	34			
<b>Formality</b>	Between Groups	0.567	3	0.189	0.273	0.844
	Within Groups	21.433	31	0.691		
	Total	22.000	34			

In the analysis of variance too, in order to compare the difference of average between the classifications in terms of gender, education certificate, age and service age, the results derived from empowerment questionnaire are applied in analyzing the existing relation between these equalities with psychological empowerment. The results of the analysis of variance reveal whether there is any significant difference between the averages of different groups in relation to each other shown as table 6. To achieve this end, the analysis of variance has been used to compare the average and standard deviation of various groups of statistical community. Investigating the relationship employees' education level and psychological empowerment indicate that the average of psychological empowerment increase as the education certificate increase. Given that the averages obtained from the responses of the variables of psychological empowerment and the division made in terms of education certificate, it can be stated in the community under experiment, the higher the education certificate, the higher the feeling of psychological empowerment. Also, exploring the relationship between staff's service age and their psychological empowerment on the basis of the obtained averages represents that the higher the service age of employees, the higher the degree of their feeling of psychological empowerment. In order to examine employees' gender and psychological empowerment, there is no obvious difference between the average responses of men and women in terms of obtained averages. However, on the whole, it can be said that women have higher degree of the feeling of psychological empowerment.

As a matter of fact, the feeling of psychological empowerment among women is higher than men with a slight difference. Regarding the relationship between personnel's age and their psychological empowerment and given the averages offered by different age groups, comparing them with sample average does not indicate any obvious difference. Indeed, there can be found no difference among the data, since there is no explicit and objective process among them, and thus it cannot be interpreted. In practice, this result shows a variety among the interests and feelings of employees towards psychological empowerment on the basis of their age division.

## Conclusion

In this research was investigated the relationship between empowerment and organizational structure and the required factors in order to propose an appropriate approach for empowerment of employees. To sum up, one main hypothesis and three subordinate ones, using descriptive and inferential statistics procedures examined in this research. According to obtained results with the 99% probability, the primary hypothesis was confirmed, based on that there is a positive and significant relationship between the existing organizational structure of the company and staff's psychological empowerment. Although the study revealed that this relationship is not direct, it is the inverse. Thus, the relation

between current organizational structure, which has mechanic (bureaucratic) form and the staff's psychological empowerment of the firm, is in inverse direction. As a result, it can be inferred that the mechanic structure (bureaucratic) leads to the decrease of the staff's psychological empowerment in the SEMET-CO company. The results obtained from the first subordinate hypothesis indicate its confirmation and that there is a positive and significant relationship between its variables. Although this relation is direct, it is a weak one. Therefore, it cannot certainly be stated that the increase of complexity in the community's organizational structure can result in the increase of the staff's psychological empowerment. Thus the increase of structural complexity does not necessarily result in the increase of the employees' psychological empowerment and vice versa. The results of the second subordinate hypothesis indicate that the relation is confirmed. In fact, the 99% probability indicates a positive and significant relationship between the variables of the hypothesis. As it was noticed, the relation is the inverse. Thus, it can be expressed that there is a negative/reverse relationship between formalization and the employees' psychological empowerment. Based on this relation, an increase in organizational structure leads to the decrease of the feeling of the staff's psychological empowerment. In total, in terms of research findings and based on the statistical testing of hypotheses, it can be inferred that psychological empowerment has inverse relation with the bureaucratic organizational structure in terms of the perceptual dimensions of individuals in the community being investigated. In fact, the bureaucratic organizational structure, due to its inherent features, is a restriction of the establishment of the process of the employees' psychological empowerment in an organization. Another important point of this research is the relationship between two dimensions of psychological empowerment and organizational structure. According to the definition of the structural empowerment which is conceptually associated with the organizational structure, particularly democratic structures, it can be inferred that the execution and establishment of psychological empowerment is only possible in an organization when there is a necessary and sufficient ground in its implementation, and in fact, the structural empowerment has also been developed in the organization. On the other hand, there are some similarities and common features between structural empowerment and the characteristics of democratic organizational structure. But as it was noticed, it is not possible to enforce the process of psychological empowerment in the community being studied under the current structural circumstances, thus requiring the use of democratic structure. Indeed, democratic structure has conditions and features which are needed in the structural empowerment, their execution and development are similar concepts, as it was formerly noted. Therefore, in addition to the results obtained from testing the hypotheses, it can be derived that there is a direct relation between the use of psychological empowerment in an organization and establishment of the structural empowerment approach.

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