

Psychological Empowerment Status Among the Midwives: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract- A survey on psychological empowerment as an effective approach could be referred to as one of the significant and determinant factors in organizations' achievement. The present study is intended to investigate the psychological empowerment status of midwives working in Tehran University of Medical Sciences affiliated hospitals. In this cross-sectional study that conducted in 2014, 80 midwives working in Gynecology and Obstetrics wards of Tehran University of Medical Sciences affiliated hospitals were selected by Census method. Spreitzer standard questionnaire was used to collect data. Data analysis was done by descriptive statistics. The mean psychological empowerment of midwives is reported 34.65 percent. Among the components of psychological empowerment, Competency dimension (9/53) had the highest average and the lowest average was related to effectiveness dimension (7/73). Midwives' Psychological Empowerment Working in Tehran University of Medical Sciences affiliated hospitals was at intermediate level. It is suggested to give close care and attention to psychological empowerment of staff. Hospital administrators could devolve further responsibilities to midwives. By essential planning a good clinical atmosphere could be available to midwives and this can increase the advantages of psychological empowerment in clinical fields.
Index Terms: Psychological Empowerment, Midwife, Hospital, Psychological status.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the concepts that have been proposed in the development of human resources is empowerment. Therefore, it seems that giving close care and attention to psychological empowerment of staff in therapeutic centers has a higher importance in comparison with other organizations, chiefly due to the fact that empowerment is the most significant factor in organizational productivity and ultimately the entire community of human resources [1]. The studies show that there are some remarkable advantages to empowerment process for organizations. For instance, it could provide the organizations with increase of job satisfaction, improvement of working life quality, improvement of service quality and increase of organizational efficiency [2], [3]. To be precise, psychological

empowerment is a kind of mental ability and active tendency among the ones who are able to shape and form the activities and also the ones who are capable of effecting on their occupational filed [4]. Psychological empowerment is a new approach in the field of internal motivation among the staff, moreover it can exist the opportunities in order for their talents, abilities and merits to be recognized [5]. Pundits defined the psychological empowerment as an increase of internal motivation in job. This internal motivation is expressed by means of four cognitive elements: sense of effect, merit, meaningfulness, and choice. These four criteria could reflect the tendency of a person to his/her job [6]. On the other hand; an individual with sense of merit is of the belief that her/she can do the tasks efficiently. Autonomy or the right to choose could induce the responsibility for people. Sense of being effective is a source of internal control and also it shows the ability of influencing on strategic outcomes. Finally, based on the definition declared by Spreitzer (1997), sense of meaningfulness reflects the balance between work requirements and beliefs, values and behaviors [7]. Empowerment is a new way to motivate people and now it could be referred to as one of the most important matters in management [8]. According to the studies carried out, empowerment can reduce the nervous pressure and absence from work [9], [10].

Midwifery is one of the most significant jobs. Initially because it can protect public health, promote it and also it can provide maternal and neonatal health. Mental health of the ones working in this field has a significant impact on their performance and also it has an undeniable effect on the status of mothers and infants as two sensitive and vulnerable groups. Midwives and nurses form the large part of health care workers in the world; they cover more than 80 percent of health care plans. This fact emphasizes the importance of mental health promotion among these women. Midwives play an essential part in three levels: hospitals, family health center and community [11]. Martin (2007) has done a study about the relationship between environmental empowerment, psychological empowerment, and mental pressure among nurses. The results showed that both psychological and environmental empowerment have an inverse relationship with mental pressure [12]. Studies about the psychological empowerment status of managers and its relation with available and effective factors declared that there is a positive and meaningful relation between psychological

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empowerment and self-efficacy resources [5], [13]. Some studies revealed the relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment in nursing staff. They reported that there is a meaningful relation between psychological empowerment and commitment [14], [15]. Therefore, determining the status of psychological empowerment of midwives could prepare the background for designing the useful educational programs in order for the intellectual and specialized capabilities of human resources to be promoted. This could lead to health improvement of mothers and infants. The aim of this study was to assess psychological empowerment status among midwives.

II. METHODOLOGICAL REFERENCES

This cross-sectional study was carried out in 2014 on all midwives working in maternity hospitals affiliated to Tehran University of Medical Sciences. 80 midwives of these hospitals have been participated in this study. The inclusion criteria were: all midwives working in maternity hospitals affiliated to Tehran University of Medical Sciences, at least a bachelor's degree and 6 months' work experience. Dissatisfaction to participate in the study was the exclusion criteria. By the demographic questionnaire, general data such as age, level of education, job experience and the name of ward was gathered. In addition, psychological empowerment questionnaire of Spreitzer was utilized. After obtaining permission from the questionnaire designer, Eskandari and colleagues (2010) translated this questionnaire and used it in Iran for first time. The validity index of this questionnaire was reported 0.93 by him and also the Reliability coefficient of it was reported 0.73.¹⁴ Also Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was reported 0.90 by Vacharakiat (2008). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each component of questionnaire was reported 0.79, 0.80, 0.85, 0.84 and 0.88 for the entire questionnaire by Mir Kamali and colleagues (2010). empowerment questionnaire of Spreitzer has four dimensions: Competency, effectiveness, meaningfulness and autonomy. It is consisted of 12 questions (3 questions for each dimension), with A 5-point Likert scale completely disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The minimum score is 12 and the maximum is 60. The higher score is considered as the higher empowerment. After obtaining the necessary permits from the relevant authorities, the researcher went to the selected hospitals and after introducing herself, explaining the objectives of the study and obtaining informed consent, gave the questionnaire to participants. One-week time was given to the participants for filling the questionnaire because of the lack of time and heavy work pressure. Due to this event, 18 persons did not continue the study. SPSS and descriptive statistics was used in order for the data to be analyzed.

III. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

By census method, psychological empowerment of 62 midwives was analyzed. 43.5% of participants were under 30 years of age. The education level of 88.7 % of whom was bachelor's degree. 66.1% of participants was working in labor ward and 46.8% had five or under five years of job

experience (Table I). The average psychological empowerment score of participants was 34.65. in this regard the highest score was given to the competency component (9.53) and the lowest score was given to the effectiveness component (7.73) (table II).

Table I. Demographic data of participants

Criteria	Frequency (percent)
Age	
≤ 30	27 (43.5)
30-40	19 (30.6)
≥ 40	16 (25.8)
Job Experience	
≤ 5	29 (46.8)
5-10	15 (24.2)
≥ 10	18 (29)
Level of Education	
Bachelor's	55 (88.7)
Master of Science	7 (11.3)
Ward	
Labor	41 (66.1)
Maternity	21 (33.9)

Table II. Frequency of psychological empowerment components among the participants

Components	Frequency (percent)	Average	Standard Deviation
effectiveness		7.73	1.428
Low	27 (45.2)		
Middle	32 (54.8)		
High	0		
Autonomy		8.77	1.396
Low	9 (14.5)		
Middle	53 (85.5)		
High	0		
Meaningfulness		8.61	1.75
Low	14 (22.6)		
Middle	48 (77.4)		
High	0		
Competency		9.53	1.364
Low	4 (6.5)		
Middle	52 (83.9)		
High	6 (9.7)		
Overall psychological Empowerment		34.65	3.867
Low	5 (8.1)		
Middle	57 (91.9)		
High	0		

IV. CONCLUSION

In this study the level of psychological empowerment was reported desirable. This finding is similar with the results of Tourani and et al. (2008). They announced that the psychological empowerment status is desirable among the

educational hospital staffs in Kerman, Iran [20]. In this regard, the result of Nasiripour and et al. (2013) and Ebrahimi and et al. (2013) study, were similar to the findings of present study. The psychological empowerment status of Qom educational hospital staffs was declared desirable by Nasiripour. In addition, the psychological empowerment status of nurses working at Tehran hospitals was declared desirable by Ebrahimi [21], [22]. In accordance with the findings of present study, the highest and the lowest score of psychological empowerment components goes to Competency component and Effectiveness component. In this regard, Shelton (2002) reported that the highest score goes to Competency component and the lowest score goes to Effectiveness component and Autonomy component [23]. Moreover, Nasiripour and et al. and Ebrahimi and et al. reported that the Competency component received the highest score among the participants [21], [22]. Based on the findings about the Meaningfulness component, the level of this component is desirable among the midwives which mean that midwives are of the opinion that they have rewarding occupational goals. Therefore, in order for meaningfulness feeling to be increased, some practical and education on the job training programs should be provided for the staffs by health center managers. Findings about competency showed that the level of this component is favorable which means that midwives believe that they have sufficient knowledge and proficiency. The key point is that the competency and self-Efficacy have an undeniable effect on job satisfaction and doing tasks. Hence, proper and continuous use of feedback and paying attention to positive points could strengthen the competency feeling between the midwives. The result revealed that the level of effectiveness component is relatively favorable. It means the midwives believe that they are not victim of external environmental factors and they are capable of overcoming these factors. To increase the effectiveness feeling, the managers should give the regular and continuous feedbacks to their staffs about their role in order for the organizational goals to be achieved. The finding showed that the level of autonomy component is desirable. Autonomy means having the right of choice. On the other hand, having the right of choice and competency feeling could be referred to as the main components of internal motivation.

Considering that in this study the psychological empowerment was reported at middle range among midwives, freedom of action, effective management, enhances motivation and self-management ability, on the job training programs and the division of tasks based on the merit, and must be provided for midwives by the authorities. This could promote the internal interest towards job. In addition, midwives with more amount of psychological empowerment believe their abilities and capacity in doing their tasks. Also they have further sense of trust, interest and competency towards themselves and their colleagues and this

could increase psychological empowerment more and more in midwives.

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