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Original Article (Qualitative)

Structural Equation Modeling for Employee Empowerment Policymaking

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of modeling the structural equations of employee empowerment policy at Payam Noor University. This study was a descriptive survey, and quantitative data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire. The statistical population of this study includes all employees (both faculty and non-faculty members) of Payam Noor University. The sampling method was a stratified random sample of 358 people. Then, after collecting statistical data, it was analyzed using the PLS method. The validity of the tool was confirmed by professors and experts in the field of human resources and its reliability was assessed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.7. The results showed that the structural model of the research includes causal factors (leader competencies, human resource competencies, organizational competencies, and motivation of academic agents), contextual factors (university structure, university atmosphere, university technology), intervening factors (cultural conditions, economic conditions, social conditions, and political conditions), strategies (clarifying the vision, goals, and mission, empowering, optimizing, and facilitating processes, establishing a quality assurance system, establishing a meritocracy system, establishing an accountability system, creating motivation, and developing communications and interactions) and outcomes (individual outcomes, academic outcomes). The results also showed that the model has a favorable degree of fit and strong fit.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Human resources, as the most valuable organizational resource, are the center of organizational approaches and activities and play a fundamental role in achieving the goals and ideals of the organization (Babaei Meybodi & Alirezaei, 2020). In recent decades, employee empowerment has been raised as one of the fundamental axes in human resource management and organizational policy-making (Zarin Negar et al., 2025). Organizations operate in a dynamic, competitive environment affected by technological and social developments, and their survival requires having capable, participatory, and creative employees. In the meantime, employee empowerment is recognized not only as a management tool, but also as a strategic policy-making approach that can play a decisive role in improving individual and organizational performance (Hasanein & Elrayah, 2025). Recent research shows that organizations in today's complex and competitive environments will not be able to achieve their strategic goals without relying on capable and participatory human resources (Sulistio & Darmastuti, 2024).

Researchers have developed specific methods for implementing human resource management practices from the old way of working, such as low levels of employee involvement, to more participatory and supportive processes in which employees gain opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Alirezaei et al., 2022). Employee empowerment is a multidimensional concept that refers to the creation of individual and organizational capacities through increased authority, access to information, development of competencies, and strengthening of employees' intrinsic motivation (Tizfahm Fard et al., 2025). Contemporary research shows that empowerment, by enhancing the sense of meaning, self-efficacy, and impact in employees, paves the way for increased organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and innovative behaviors. From this perspective, empowerment is not simply a limited executive action, but requires the design and implementation of coherent and targeted policies at the organizational level (Asare Duffour & Asante, 2025).

Employee empowerment policymaking refers to the process of developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs that aim to provide the structural and psychological foundations necessary for employees to actively participate in organizational decision-making and activities (Younas, 2023). Recent studies emphasize that without clear policies, management support, and alignment with organizational culture, empowerment efforts cannot lead to sustainable results (Nguyen et al., 2023). Therefore, designing a comprehensive policymaking model can help to integrate empowerment efforts and increase their effectiveness. In the management and policymaking literature, policies are known as tools through which organizational values, priorities, and goals are transformed into operational plans and actions. Recent research emphasizes that effective policymaking plays a decisive role in the coordination between organizational resources, structures, and behaviors and can pave the way for improved organizational performance and sustainability (Molaei et al., 2025).

In modern approaches, policymaking is no longer viewed as a linear, top-down process, but rather as a dynamic, interactive, and multilevel process in which different stakeholders play a role. This perspective emphasizes the participation of organizational actors, the use of scientific evidence, and attention to cultural and structural contexts. Recent studies show that policies that are developed with employee participation and based on data and evidence have greater legitimacy and effectiveness and are more likely to be successfully implemented (Schaefers et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, employee empowerment models are generally based on two main dimensions: structural empowerment and psychological empowerment (Rostamzade ganji et al., 2025). Structural empowerment focuses on formal mechanisms such as delegation of authority, access to resources, training, and reward systems, while psychological empowerment addresses employees' perceptions and feelings of competence, autonomy, and influence at work (Pourhassan harzandi et al., 2025). Recent research has shown that the interaction of these two dimensions in the form of organizational policies can play an important role in improving organizational performance, innovation, and learning (Alibrahim, 2024).

Despite the expansion of empirical studies in the field of empowerment, a research gap is still felt in the field of designing and explaining employee empowerment policy models; especially models that can systematically explain the link between policymaking, leadership, organizational culture, and employee behavioral outcomes. Therefore, the researcher seeks to answer the research question: what is the employee empowerment policy model of Payam Noor University?

Research Method

This study was a descriptive survey type, and quantitative data was collected using a researcher-made questionnaire. The statistical population of this study includes all employees (both faculty and non-faculty members) of Payam Noor University. The sampling method was a stratified random sample of 358 people. Then, after collecting statistical data, it was analyzed using the PLS method. The validity of the tool was confirmed by professors and experts in the field of human resources, and its reliability was assessed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above 0.7.

Research findings

The research findings showed that the structural model of the research includes causal factors (leader competencies, human resource competencies, organizational competencies, and motivation of academic agents), contextual factors (university structure, university atmosphere, university technology), intervening factors (cultural conditions, economic conditions, social conditions, and political conditions), strategies (clarifying the vision, goals, and mission, empowering, optimizing, and facilitating processes, creating a quality assurance system, creating a meritocracy system, establishing an accountability system, creating motivation, and developing communications and interactions) and outcomes (individual outcomes, academic outcomes). The results also showed that the model has a favorable degree of fit and strong fit.

Conclusion and Discussion

The present study was conducted with the aim of modeling the structural equations of Payam Noor University's employee empowerment policymaking. The results showed that the causal conditions included leader competencies, human resource competencies, organizational competencies, and acceptance of agents. The results also showed that leaders with appropriate leadership skills, knowledge, and behavior can promote trust, motivation, and active participation of employees. Employees who have skills, positive attitudes, and a tendency toward self-actualization are better able to take advantage of the opportunities provided. These findings are consistent with the study of Khalili Esnaki (2021), which confirmed the role of capable leaders and employee competence as prerequisites for the success of empowerment programs. The contextual factors included the university structure and climate,

technology, and organizational interactions. The flexible structure, supportive climate, smart technology, and internal and industry interactions were able to provide the necessary context for enhancing employee empowerment and achieving positive academic outcomes. These findings are consistent with the research of Khalili Esnaki (2021), which emphasized that a vibrant organizational climate and integrated information technology are key factors for the success of university empowerment and innovation programs. The intervening conditions included political, social, cultural, and economic factors. Political developments, cultural inequalities and conflicts, and economic constraints can limit the impact of empowerment policies, but effective management of these conditions can maintain the effectiveness of policies. This result is consistent with the study of Park et al. (2020), who introduced environmental and economic constraints as moderating factors of employee empowerment. Organizational strategies included teaching and learning, explaining transformation strategies, establishing a quality assurance system, meritocracy, accountability, and creating motivation. The implementation of these strategies increased self-efficacy, acceptance of results, job satisfaction, and employee trust, and improved academic outcomes including agility, entrepreneurship, and globalization of the university. The findings are consistent with the research of Sokol et al. (2015), who showed the importance of comprehensive and participatory strategies in employee empowerment. The consequences were observed at both individual and academic levels. Individual outcomes included increased self-efficacy, self-efficacy, personal acceptance of results, job satisfaction, and employee trust, and academic outcomes included entrepreneurship, agility, and university globalization. These findings are consistent with the results of Nguyen et al. (2024) who showed that employee empowerment simultaneously improved individual and organizational capacity.