



On the investigation of staffs' empowerment and increased level of social entrepreneurship opportunities (Case study: General bureau of Cooperation, Labor, and Social Welfare, Province of Kurdistan)

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ABSTRACT

The present research aimed to examine staffs' empowerment with the increased degree of social entrepreneurship opportunities in the General bureau of Cooperation, Labor, and Social Welfare, Province of Kurdistan, in March, 2016. This research is applied in terms of nature and falls under correlational-descriptive studies. The statistical population consists of all managers and staffs of the general bureau in the city of Sanandaj where as many as 150 people were placed under study through random classified sampling method. Research tools were comprised of two Empowerment and Social Entrepreneurship Questionnaires whose content validity was confirmed by experts and the reliability of general dimensions and tools was confirmed by the Alpha of 0.51 to 0.78. Data analysis was conducted through Spearman correlational Tests and Concurrent regression. Research findings revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between all dimensions of empowerment (dimension of self-efficacy feeling; sense of being meaningful; sense of being effective; feeling of merit; freedom of action and social trust) with social entrepreneurship in the General bureau of Cooperation, Labor, and Social Welfare, Province of Kurdistan. Regression results also suggested that overall empowerment and its dimensions were appropriate predictors for the variable of social entrepreneurship. Consequently, dimensions of self-efficacy feeling, feeling of being effective, feeling

of meaningfulness and social trust in the variable of empowerment hold a significant role in anticipating social entrepreneurship of staffs.

Keywords: Empowerment; Empowerment dimensions; Social entrepreneurship; General bureau; Social welfare and Cooperation

1. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is the most important challenge for managers in the current era, because organizations are exposed to rapid and unpredictable changes. Of the most prominent factors why these changes occur, one can refer to increasing global competition and expansion and development of IT and emergence of changes in the characteristics and wants by clients (Roy and Sheena, 2005). Empowerment is another form of decentralization which necessitates ceding of powers for critical decision making to the inferior. Staffs, in empowerment, not only are in need of power rather they need to have sufficient training and education in order that they can be accountable in the area of their own decisions (Entezari et al. 2013). Staffs' empowerment could help them in the field of expansion of technical and managerial skills and in promotion of awareness level and increase their obligation towards organizational goals and thereby raise their professional opportunities (Jahanian, 2011). Identification of the state of empowerment dimensions could offer a clear picture for planning and avoid the wastage of human resources at the level for high ranking managers and decision makers (Chang et al, 2010; Stuart et al. 2010). Thus, one can easily understand that attaining organizational goals is impossible without efficient people. Management experts have introduced the very concept of empowerment for more effectiveness of staffs (Abdullahi and Nave Ebrahim, 2009).

Empowerment is a modern way for the survival of progressive organizations in a competitive environment. Accelerating developments in today's world have caused increasing complexity and impressive advancements and challenged organizations' forward progress. One of the ways to counter these challenges is to pay attention and inclination towards entrepreneurship which is called the engine of the economic development. For the same purpose, organizations must lay conditions so that all staffs reveal entrepreneurship behavior and find themselves committed against organizational goals and thus apply all their power and capacity in the direction of survival and progress of the organization. Human resources empowerment is one of the ways of creating such conditions in organizations which is assumed to have a critical role in their lives. Using potential abilities of human resources is thought of an immense privilege for each organization. Empowerment is assumed to be a modern method for the survival of progressive organizations in a competitive setting.

Today, labor and activities are newly formed and are moving towards self-administration and self-employment. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs play critical roles in development and economic expansion of various societies (Deljoe Shahir, 2002). Generally speaking, in industrial societies, entrepreneurship managers do not primarily go to large companies, rather they get engaged in somewhere where they can implement their own plans and sketches easily. For the same reason, they strive to get down to action by creating small businesses (Ahmad Purdariani and Moghimi, 2011). Research have also suggested that there is a positive correlation between economic growth and the number of entrepreneurs in a country, because a country with a large number of entrepreneurs will enjoy more stringer

trading and economic stimuli and incentives (Vares, 2003). On the other hand, entrepreneurship has recently received more attention in developed countries. These countries have already thought of this issue that there are people who possess different morale and tastes. These people are risk taking, brave, active, creative and initiative who often act to establish and navigate their own businesses in order meet their personality and psychological needs. This issue was placed under study for some time simply from the perspective of sociology and psychology among entrepreneurs who were independently used to establishing successful economic firms by relying on personal financial and human sources (Samad Aghae, 2003).

Hence, entrepreneurship is regarded as meaning conduct of activities for creating and using new economic opportunities followed by return (Ahamd Pur Dariani, 2002). Today, labor and activities are newly formed and are moving towards self-administration and self-employment. Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs play critical roles in development and economic expansion of various societies (Deljoe Shahir, 2002). Generally speaking, in industrial societies, entrepreneurship managers do not primarily go to large companies, rather they get engaged in somewhere where they can implement their own plans and sketches easily. For the same reason, they strive to get down to action by creating small businesses (Ahmad Purdariani and Moghimi, 2011).

Social entrepreneurship is one of the main and expanding dimensions in entrepreneurship activities of industrial countries across the world and enjoys a long history. Social entrepreneurs make use of the most effective service ways towards social activities (Mirak Zade and Bahrami, 2011). Social entrepreneurship is an accurately attractive structure because it informs of a high commitment. If it is an incomplete commitment, it is due to some non- entrepreneurship efforts existing in then definition; thus, social entrepreneurship will be made notorious and the foundation of original entrepreneurship will also be lost. For this, it is believed that there is a need for an appropriate definition of social entrepreneurship; a definition that would enable us to determine a scope and limit so that an activity needs to be focused attention or not or vice versa (Rograll and Sali, 2007). A tripartite process has been determined for social entrepreneurs that has been added by one more stage by Thompson: 1. Creation of insight;2. Engagement;3. Empowerment and 4. Implementing (Thompson, 2002).

2. THEORETICAL BASICS

Empowerment approaches include communicative, motivational and psychological approaches. In the communicative construct, empowerment is a process through which the manager divides his own power with his inferiors; in other words, in this approach empowerment is the same delegation of power. According to the motivational construct, any strategy granting staffs "self-sufficiency", and finally "self-decision making" and "increased right to determine working activities" will be accompanied by their empowerment. Assuming this, empowerment is the process of strengthening of peoples' merit in the organization through identification and elimination of conditions that would engender in the sense of powerlessness among them. Finally, according to the psychological construct, empowerment is a positive process.

This process refers to positive experiences of "process of increasing positive internal motivation for doing the duties assigned" that are acquired by people directly from their duties

done. These experiences will motivate an internal motivation for administering the duties assigned and thereby entail increased satisfaction. Thomas and Welt house (1991) added the dimension of psychological construct to empowerment and defined it as a set of motivational and psychological areas that in addition to self-efficacy includes three other psychological areas (self-autonomy or the right of choice, being meaningful and effective). In line with this approach, each duty must involve such characteristics as self-autonomy or the right of choice, freedom of action in determining necessary activities for doing activities, meaningfulness (the duty assigned being valued by the organization's human resources) and being effective (i.e. the duty should be in line with the fulfillment of the goals set).

Of the newest subjects that have been focused attention in scientific assemblies in the area of entrepreneurship alongside with economic and organizational entrepreneurship is social entrepreneurship. This category, in case institutionalized in the society could play a critical role in eliminating social problems (Roosta and Heydari, 2007). Social entrepreneurship, as an innovative approach is raised for dealing with social needs with emphasis on problem solving and social innovation, eliminating traditional boundaries between the private, state and non-state sectors.

Once the concept of social entrepreneurship is familiarized more, this point will be clarifies that within then depth of this concept, the creation and institutionalization of social values will be regarded as among primary and critical goals. Thus, any society, upon properly understanding this concept take basic steps in social development and improvement of social state of its one society (Roosta and Heydari, 2008). Social entrepreneurship, unlike commercial entrepreneurship common in economic firms of the private sector is pursued in an environment of civil society and through voluntary participation. NGOs and non-state outfits as areas independent from the state and market sector will fill the gap between the state and market and social entrepreneurship will be objectified collectively in these charity institutions (Salarzahi, 2008).

Entrepreneurship is assumed to be considerable efforts of entrepreneurs in a community. In fact, an entrepreneur predicts business areas and the degree of efficiency as well as returns while a social entrepreneur will evaluate the level of success in changing conditions from the view of effects he has in the community. Social entrepreneurs get down to action in form of civic or indigenous non-beneficiary forms, but many of whom are engaged in state and private sectors (Molana, 2008). Salarzahi (2008), by presenting a paradigm (Evans, 2001) has analyzed the position of social entrepreneurship among three general kinds of state or public entrepreneurship, commercial or private entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. In this paradigm, the relationship and coherence between kinds of entrepreneurship is evident.

2. 1. Multidimensional model of social entrepreneurship

In this model, social entrepreneurship is comprised of four dimensions of identification of social opportunities, power of intelligence, entrepreneurship based privilege and finally, the fourth dimension of including innovative behavior and risk taking and hyperactive behavior. It is noteworthy, the fourth dimension in this model can be considered ass general characteristics of any kind of entrepreneurship (economic organization and social and etc.) which is also called asocial entrepreneurship (Marat et al. quoted by Roosta and Heydari, 2008).

2. 2. Multidimensional limited model of social entrepreneurship

According to this model, social entrepreneurship is formulated as a model in which creation of social values as an outcome of social entrepreneurship is a function of innovative behavior, hyperactive behavior and risk management via considering environment limitations, social missions and survival of the organization (Roosta and Heydari, 2008). This model is comprised of six components stated in the following form. In this model, emphasis has been laid on such dimensions as environmental dynamism, innovation, seriousness, (or hyperactivity), risk management, sustainability, social mission and inquiry into opportunities (Ahangar Pur and Husseini Fard, 2008).

On the other hand, mission and overall objectives of the ministry of cooperation, labor and social welfare are policy making and planning, exercising monitoring and conducting legal measures in order to regulate work relations, resolving issues and problems of the working society, maintaining and protecting workforce, increasing the share of the Cooperation Sector in the country's economy and supporting the expansion of employment and also establishing a comprehensive system of social Welfare within the overall policies framework as well as statute rules and regulations; thus, these missions and objectives require an appropriate setting for the application of primary variables of this research. In the direction of this goal, the following two questions require to be answered:

1. Main question: To what degree is there a relationship between staffs' empowerment and their social entrepreneurship opportunities?
2. To what extent do various dimensions of empowerment (feeling of merit, feeling of self-efficacy, meaningfulness, being effective, freedom of action and social trust) relate with social entrepreneurship opportunities among staffs at general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare of the Kurdistan province?
3. To what degree is there a relationship between empowerment and the variable of social entrepreneurship in terms of demographic variables?

3. METHODOLOGY

The current research is of an applied type research and is based on two correlational-descriptive methods. The statistical population of the paper involves all personnel working in the general bureau of cooperation, labor and social welfare in the province of Kurdistan in two levels of managers and staffs in 2015 that consisted of 230 people. The sample size which was a part of the statistical population and involved all traits common with the overall population was selected based in classified random and the sample size was based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Finally, questionnaires were given out among managers and staffs and the number of 150 questionnaires was returned. Research tools included a combination of Empowerment questionnaire (Amirkabiri, 2006) as including six dimensions of self-efficacy feeling, meaningfulness feeling, effectiveness sense, feeling of merit; freedom of action and social trust and Social entrepreneurship questionnaire (Arab, 2011). Reliability of the measurement tool of the research was confirmed by several professors and scholars of the Administration Major; Thus, research tool has a good nominal reliability. To measure questionnaire's reliability, the questionnaires were first administered on a sample of 30 people and its

Cronbach's alpha was estimated at a favorable limit. Level of variables' reliability and its dimensions are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients of independent and dependent variables

Variable	Variable's title	Number of items	Dimensions	Reliability Coefficients of dimensions	Overall reliability coefficients
Dependent	Social entrepreneurship	20	None	None	0/74
Independent	Empowerment	21	Meaningfulness	0/84	
			Feeling of merit	0/65	
			Freedom of action	0/82	
			Effectiveness	0/60	
			Trust	0/92	
			Feeling of self-efficacy	0/51	

4. FINDINGS

1. Research's first question: To what degree is there a relationship between staffs' empowerment and their social entrepreneurship opportunities?

In accordance with the non-normalcy of the data distribution, in order to investigate the relationship of empowerment with social entrepreneurship the Spearman correlation test was applied where the results of the relationship between dimensions of empowerment and variable of entrepreneurship are provided ion Table 2:

Table 2. Spearman Correlation Test Results regarding relationship of empowerment with social entrepreneurship.

	Social entrepreneurship	
Empowerment	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/156
	Sig.	0/057

Table 2 results suggest that correlation coefficient between these two variables equals 0/156 not being significant at the 0/01 and 0/05 level. According to this hypothesis, the overall research assumption is rejected and one can say that there is no positive and significant relationship between empowerment and social entrepreneurship.

1. Research's second question: To what extent do various dimensions of empowerment (feeling of merit, feeling of self-efficacy, meaningfulness, being effective, freedom of action and social trust) relate with social entrepreneurship opportunities among staffs at general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare of the Kurdistan province?

In accordance with the non-normalcy of the data distribution, in order to investigate the relationship of empowerment with social entrepreneurship the Spearman correlation test was applied where the results of the relationship between dimensions of empowerment and variable of entrepreneurship are provided ion Table 3:

Table 3. Spearman Correlation Test Results regarding relationship of perception of feeling of meaningfulness and social entrepreneurship.

Empowerment dimensions	Social entrepreneurship	
Feeling of meaningfulness	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/621
	Sig.	0/000
Feeling of merit	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/682
	Sig.	0/000
Freedom of action	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/893
	Sig.	0/000
Feeling of being effective	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/875
	Sig.	0/000
Social trust	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/730
	Sig.	0/000

Feeling of self-efficacy	No.	150
	Correlation coefficient	0/869
	Sig.	0/000

According to Table 3 results, correlation coefficient between feeling of meaningfulness and social entrepreneurship equals 0/621 being significant at the 0/01 level. According to these results, the first partial hypothesis is confirmed and one can say that there is a positive and significant relationship between feeling of meaningfulness and social entrepreneurship of staffs. Correlation coefficient between feeling of merit and social entrepreneurship of staffs equals 0/682 being significant at the 0/01.

According to these results, results of second partial hypothesis are confirmed and one can say that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between feeling of merit and social entrepreneurship of staffs. Correlation coefficient between freedom of action and social entrepreneurship of staffs equals 0/893 being significant at the 0/01. Thus, third partial assumption is confirmed and one can say that there is a positive and significant relation between freedom of action and social entrepreneurship of staffs. Correlation coefficient between the component of feeling of being effective and social entrepreneurship of staffs equals 0/875 being significant at the 0/01 level.

Thereby, partial fourth assumption is confirmed too and it can be stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between level of feeling of effectiveness and staffs' social entrepreneurship.

Correlation coefficient between social trust and staffs' social entrepreneurship equals 0/730 being significant at the 0/01 level. Thus, the partial fifth hypothesis is also confirmed and supported and one can say that there is a positive and significant relation between the said two variables. Correlation coefficient between feeling of self-efficacy and staffs' social entrepreneurship equals 0/869 being significant at the 0/01 level. As a result, the fifth partial hypothesis is confirmed and one can say that there is a positive and significant relation between self-efficacy and staffs' social entrepreneurship.

Presentation of research's final model

Having determined that there are significant relations between dimensions of feeling of meaningfulness, feeling of merit, freedom of action, feeling of effectiveness, social trust, feeling of self-efficacy with social entrepreneurship, thus through multiple regression analysis the effects of predicting variable on criterion variables was placed under study. Therefore, in the next stage, results of regression analyses are provide and in the end, based on these results, the final model of the research is presented. In order to investigate the role of empowerment dimension in predicting social entrepreneurship, concurrent multiple regression analysis was used. Tables 1-16-4 results indicate that multiple correlation coefficients equals 0/174 and the modified explanation coefficient was 0/024. Thus, it becomes clear there is 15% shared variance between a paradigm combined of empowerment dimensions and the variable of social entrepreneurship. Results also indicated that the F value (4/898) was significant at the 0/01 level.

Thus, it can be conclude that dimensions of empowerment are significant predictors of social entrepreneurship.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis for the role of empowerment dimensions in predicting social entrepreneurship.

Model summary			Variance analysis		
Method	Multiple correlation coefficient	Explanation coefficient	Modified Explanation coefficient	F statistic	Sig.
Concurrent	0/441	0/194	0/155	4/898	0/000

In Table 4, regressive coefficients of each of the predicting variables are provided. Regressive coefficient suggests what degree of changes and variations occur in the variable of criterion fort one standard deviation in the predicting variable. Results indicated that t values corresponding to Beta of empowerment at the 0/03 level and its dimensions are significant at the 0/01 level. Therefore, this dimension can be a significant predictor of social entrepreneurship. As a result, these dimensions can predict social entrepreneurship.

Table 5. Regressive coefficients of predictive variable.

Predictive variables	Beta statistic	T value	Sig.
Constant value		8/633	0/000
Empowerment	2/825	2/981	0/003
Feeling of meaningfulness	-0/550	-2/383	0/018
Feeling of merit	-0/078	-0/512	0/609
Freedom of action	-0/295	-1/115	0/267
Feeling of effectiveness	-0/980	-3/050	0/003
Social trust	-0/810	-3/725	0/000
Feeling of self-efficacy	-0/503	-2/435	0/016

Wholly, since regressive coefficients are suggestive of a significant role of all empowerment dimensions including feeling of meaningfulness, feeling of merit, freedom of action, feeling of effectiveness, social trust, feeling of self-efficacy with social

entrepreneurship for the final model; hence, in graph 1, in addition to significance of variable empowerment at the 0/03 level, four cases of the six fold dimensions of empowerment being significant at the 0/01 were considered as predictors of social entrepreneurship. However, the very overall variable of empowerment and other dimensions, since they have had no significant regression effects on social entrepreneurship, they were eliminated from the related graph and its dimensions were regarded.

Research's third question: To what degree is there a relationship between empowerment and the variable of social entrepreneurship in terms of demographic variables?

Demographic variables at two levels of 0/01 and 0/05 have been provided.

Table 6. Relation between empowerment dimensions and variable of social entrepreneurship in terms of demographic variables.

Variable of demography	Predictive variables / Variable of criterion	Feeling of meaningfulness	Feeling of merit	Freedom of action	Feeling of effectiveness	Social trust	Self-efficacy	Overall empowerment
gender	Social entrepreneurship	0/183*	0/273**	0/152	0/469*	-0/103*	0/013	0/121
position	Social entrepreneurship	0/162*	0/264**	0/165*	0/064*	-0/090*	0/029	0/127
marriage	Social entrepreneurship	0/170*	0/273**	0/169*	0/063*	-0/102*	0/044	0/130
degree	Social entrepreneurship	0/159	0/258**	0/158	0/049	-0/104*	0/015	0/115
major	Social entrepreneurship	0/165*	0/263**	0/165*	0/058*	-0/092*	0/025	0/123
employment	Social entrepreneurship	0/153	0/254*	0/158	0/050	-0/097*	0/019	0/113
record	Social entrepreneurship	0/162*	0/265**	0/170*	0/060*	-0/101*	0/035	0/124

* $p \leq 0/05$

** $p \leq 0/01$

As seen from Table 6, relationship between empowerment and its dimensions and the variable social entrepreneurship by considering demographic variables as including gender, professional position, marriage status, educational degree, educational major, employment state, and record of service of professional staffs in the general bureaus of labor, cooperation and social welfare was considered. On this basis, via considering demographic variables, no

relation was seen between empowerment and dimension of self-efficacy with social entrepreneurship at significance level of 0/05 and 0/01.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Statistical analyses results of the investigation of relationship between subscales indicated that there is a significant relationship between feeling of meaningfulness and social entrepreneurship opportunities among staffs at the general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare. In other words, as level of feeling of meaningfulness among staffs changes, social entrepreneurship opportunities increase among staffs at the general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare, province of Kurdistan. Thus, the null hypothesis stating no significant relationship between feeling of meaningfulness and social entrepreneurship opportunities among the staffs at the general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare, province of Kurdistan is rejected and the statistical hypothesis stating existence of statistical relationship between feeling of meaningfulness and social entrepreneurship opportunities among staffs at the general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare, province of Kurdistan is supported. Although in previous research, relationship between empowerment and social entrepreneurship was not directly investigated; however, this finding affirms researches by Zare' Zade (2007), Amir Kabiri and Fathi (2010) and Farahani et al (2011).

Statistical analysis results indicate that though there is no significant relationship between overall, empowerment of staffs and social entrepreneurship, regression based model states variable overall empowerment alongside such dimensions of self-efficacy, feeling of being effective, feeling of meaningfulness, and social trust are appropriate predictors for the variable of social entrepreneurship at the general bureau of labor, cooperation and social welfare, province of Kurdistan. Having said that, model level 1 and level 2 have been tested and recent results were obtained.

Applied recommendations

1. Strengthening of significance dimensions of staffs' empowerment including social trust, feeling of meaningfulness, effectiveness, freedom of action, merit and feeling of self-efficacy with emphasis on level of relationship
2. Enhancement of social entrepreneurship opportunities among staffs and managers of organizations, particularly concentration on supportive organization and non-state or peoples based organizations
3. Consideration of demographic variables of staffs for planning for staffs' empowerment and enhancement of entrepreneurship opportunities in organizations
4. Attention to cultural and social dimensions of new concepts of sciences of management and efforts for localization of these concepts based on social and cultural structures of our country
5. Holding of workshops and formulation of programs for encouraging staffs and managers for participation in entrepreneurship opportunities for the society and organizational clients and empowering organizational forces
6. Emphasis on strengthening the dimension of feeling of merit proportionate to demographic traits of gender, position, marriage state, degrees, major and records.

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