

# Effect of Organizational Intelligence, Workplace-Life Skills, and Employee Empowerment Training on Promoting Organizational Productivity and Socialization among Employees with Job Stress

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## A-R-T-I-C-L-E-I-N-F-O

### Article Notes:

Received: Dec 21, 2019

Received in revised form:

Jan 23, 2020

Accepted: Jan 28, 2020

Available Online: Apr 21, 2020

### Keywords:

Empowerment

Intelligence

Life

Occupational stress

Organizational

Social skills

Workplace

## A-B-S-T-R-A-C-T

**Background & Aims of the Study:** Job stress has negative effects on various organizational, motivational, and social factors. The present study aimed to investigate the effect of organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and employee empowerment training on promoting organizational productivity and socialization among the employees with job stress in Persian Gulf Star Oil Co., Bandar Abbas, Iran, during 2018-19.

**Materials and Methods:** This study included 80 employees with job stress who were selected based on Morgan's table using a simple random sampling. Subsequently, the participants were assigned into a control group (n=20), experimental group 1 (organizational intelligence training, n=20), experimental group 2 (workplace-life skills training, n=20), and experimental group 3 (empowerment training, n=20) by a simple random sampling. The data were collected through Hersey and Goldsmith's Productivity Questionnaire, Taormina's Organizational Socialization Questionnaire, and Rice's Job Stress Questionnaire. Moreover, the data were analyzed in SPSS software (version 25) through multivariate analysis of covariance, analysis of covariance, multivariate analysis of variance, and univariate analysis of variance.

**Results:** The results indicated that organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and employee empowerment training increased organizational productivity and socialization in employees with job stress in experimental groups 1, 2, and 3, compared to the control group (P=0.001).

**Conclusion:** Organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and empowerment training were effective factors in enhancing organizational productivity and socialization among employees with job stress by the creation of internal motivation through preparing the environment, providing necessary context for transmitting a sense of greater self-efficacy and more ability, as well as enhancing employees' perception of their abilities.

**Please cite this article as:** Zamiri A, Heidari A, Askari P, Makvandi B. Effect of Organizational Intelligence, Workplace-Life Skills, and Employee Empowerment Training on Promoting Organizational Productivity and Socialization among Employees with Job Stress. Arch Hyg Sci 2020;9(1):58-68

## Background

In today's organizational environment, the

stress has increased in parallel with organizational complexity, technology development, and job pressures (1). Job stress is a key factor in threatening the today's organizational life. In

the organizational context, job stress reduces job satisfaction and quality; moreover, it directly and negatively affects productivity, effectiveness, work quality, and job health among the employees. Furthermore, job stress has negative effects on various organizational, motivational, and social factors (2).

The employees who experience work-related stress have lower efficiency which adversely affects the productivity. Productivity is an important factor that indicates the activity efficiency of the employees (3). Beyond a criterion, productivity is a culture and attitude to work and life, and its improvement is the main origin of economic prosperity (4). Higher productivity has significant effects on the major phenomena of the society, such as economy, politics, culture, and various social affairs, thereby reducing inflation and increasing public welfare, employment rate, as well as political and economic competitiveness (5). High productivity will raise living standards and social welfare through real incomes; in addition, it enhances national competition and quality of life which boost business leading to better quality of life in the society (6).

On the other hand, it should be noted that the existence of a work life quality in any organization requires the employees' organizational socialization since it leads to a career path and development in the organization. Organizational socialization plays an important role in transmitting organizational culture to employees and enhances the organizational culture (7). Organizational socialization compensates for shortcomings and deficiencies in organizational processes and contributes to the individual survival and provides quality of life in organizations (8).

The socialization process is a valuable organizational issue that enables workers to acquire the necessary knowledge, information, and skills for playing organizational roles (9). Lack of attention to organizational socialization can have a negative impact on employees;

moreover, those, who are poorly socialized, exhibit high levels of unfulfilled expectations, and this issue is compounded by poor attitudes, negative behavior, and lower job quality which leads to job stress and ambiguity in roles (10). It is worth noting that organizational, cultural, and social dimensions are fluctuating in employees with job stress, and educational intervention, which can moderate these dimensions, can be effective in reducing job stress.

According to the results of some studies, organizational intelligence training is an intervention with an effective approach. Kim *et al.* (11) found that organizational intelligence training had a significant impact on enhancing organizational socialization (10). Organizational intelligence training is an approach that contributes to the creativity in employees, as well as organization growth and development which causes interest in topics, growing curiosity, adaptability, and flexible responsiveness in organizations. Organizational intelligence training enhances the organization's ability to create knowledge along with strategic use in the workplace, and enables individuals to solve problems caused by several factors, such as emotional and rational intelligence (12).

Workplace-life skills training have cognitive-social effects and correct inappropriate job behavior (13, 14). Belias and Koustelios, (15) concluded that workplace-life skills training increased job motivation, organizational culture, and perception of organizational support. This approach changes behavioral and cognitive interactions and gives individuals the ability to take steps towards problems by the help of practical experiences and mental abilities which leads to achieving desired results. This ability also enables individuals to solve life problems more effectively. The skills enable people to recognize their emotions in themselves and others, know how emotions affect behavior, and respond appropriately.

On the other hand, the empowerment training, which is defined as an approach to facilitate motivational behavior, is an effective interventional approach. The empowerment of the employees through training enhances their self-management ability (16-18). Emhan et al. (19) indicates that empowerment is an effective approach reflecting power and energy from a psychological point of view and is rooted in a belief that job tasks are crucial to achieve some lofty goals. Empowerment training represents a form of intrinsic motivation in which work tasks are inherently a source of reward and lead to many internal consequences (7). The concept of empowerment comes from activities that are inherently satisfactory. Current debates indicate that jobs with high levels of diversity, importance, and independence can lead to internal satisfaction (19, 20).

With this background in mind, the present study aimed to investigate the effects of organizational intelligence training, workplace-life skills, and empowerment of the employees on organizational productivity and socialization among employees who experience work-related stress.

## Materials & Methods

This quasi-experimental study was conducted based on a pre- and post-test design with a control group. The statistical population of this study consisted of all 4,000 employees in Persian Gulf Star Oil Co., Bandar Abbas, Iran, during 2018-19. To this end, the samples were selected based on the inclusion criteria of the study, including job stress diagnosis using Rice's Job Stress Questionnaire (1992) and ability to attend the training sessions. After the recall on the job stress questionnaire, 764 employees participated and 106 ones obtained scores above the cut-off point (above 95) in the job stress questionnaire indicating that they had job stress (21). Among them, 80 employees

with job stress were selected based on the Morgan's table using a simple random sampling. Subsequently, they were assigned randomly into the control group (n=20), experimental group 1 (organizational intelligence training, n=20), experimental group 2 (workplace-life skills training, n=20), and experimental group 3 (empowerment training, n=20).

It is worth mentioning that the participants were assigned to the groups without homogenization. All participants were informed of the research objectives and procedure, and written informed consent was obtained from them. The experimental groups (n=3) participated in the training sessions as intervention, whereas the control group received no training program. After the training sessions, the post-test was performed immediately, and there was no time interval between the end of the sessions and the post-test.

### Data Collection

#### Job Stress Questionnaire

Job Stress Questionnaire developed by Phillippe L. Rice (1992) was translated and standardized by Hasani and Kakabarai and utilized to measure job stress. This 57-item scale is scored from 1 (never) to 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often), and 5 (most often) (21). The validity of the questionnaire was reported to be 0.92 by Vosoughi-Niri et al. (22) through correlation with stress questionnaire at the 0.001 level indicating high validity of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was obtained at 0.88 using the Cronbach's alpha method. In the present study, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was estimated at 0.81 using Cronbach's alpha.

#### Productivity Questionnaire

The Standard Human Resources Productivity Questionnaire was developed by Hersey and Goldsmith (23). This questionnaire consists of 26 items and was developed based on a 5-point Likert scale from very high (5), to high (4),

partially (3), low (2), and very low (1) (24). In a study conducted by Zarei-Matin *et al.* (24), the validity coefficient of the questionnaire was also obtained at 0.92 using the correlation coefficient with the job performance questionnaire at a significant level of 0.001; moreover, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained to be 0.90 using the Cronbach's alpha. In the present study, the reliability coefficient was obtained at 0.78 using Cronbach's alpha.

### ***Organizational Socialization Questionnaire***

The standard questionnaire of organizational socialization was designed based on Taormina's model in separate 20 items using a five-point Likert scale scored from 1 to 5 (25). In a study, the validity of the questionnaire was obtained at 0.87 using the factor validity, and it was significant at a level of 0.001. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated at 0.79 by Cronbach's alpha and split-half of 0.81. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in the present study was 0.86 according to Cronbach's alpha (26).

### ***Organizational Intelligence Training***

Organizational intelligence training sessions were prepared according to Silber and Kearny's (27) organizational intelligence guidelines. The experimental group 1 was subjected to eight 90-minute training sessions conducted by the first author (Amin Zamiri, PhD student of psychology). The contents of the training sessions were as follows: Session 1: Organizational cognition and structure training. Session 2: Training employees in organizational memory; understanding organizational cognition. Session 3: Organizational learning training in the organization; tendency to learn and train organizational relations. Session 4: Training in making decisions in the organization; and the strategic insight training in the organization. Session 5: Creating the organizational change and developmental intelligence; the knowledge

application and management in the organization. Session 6: Creating a spirit of collaboration and teamwork; outlining organizational goals and strategic insights. Session 7: Knowledge application training in challenges; and organizational-social adaptation in organizations. Session 8: Summary of sessions; and provision of practical suggestions.

### ***Workplace-Life Skills Training***

Workplace-life skills training sessions were conducted in accordance with the workplace-life skills training guidelines of welfare organization during eight 90-minute sessions for the experimental group 2. The training sessions were conducted by the first author (Amin Zamiri, PhD student of psychology). The training sessions were as follows: Session 1: Providing information about reasons for holding the training sessions; presenting work-training packages; creating and naming group workshops and hospitality. Session 2: Introducing the concept of stress and its symptoms; preparing a wall newspaper and hospitality; and dealing with stress. Session 3: The health responsibility and decision-making training in hard work situations; useful interpersonal communication. Session 4: Understanding potential stressors; identifying stress management techniques; teamwork; play; and hospitality. Session 5: Providing a list of stressful job opportunities, and stress and resilience control skills; increasing the understanding of organizational relationships; promoting physical and mental health. Session 6: Identifying and separating communication style; play and hospitality; promoting knowledge of attitude towards skills on effective relationships; appropriate stress management training; proper use of problem-based stress coping; training in expressing emotion at work; Promoting joy and spirit of cooperation. Session 7: Identifying destructive, intervening factors in organizational relationships; training in regulating emotion in job stress. Session 8: Summarizing sessions and

offering important educational suggestions.

### **Empowerment Training**

Empowerment training sessions were conducted based on empowerment training guidelines (28) in eight 90-minute sessions for the experimental group 3. The training sessions were conducted by the first author (Amin Zamiri, PhD student of psychology). The training sessions were as follows: Session 1: Outlining training goals and self-knowledge training. Session 2: Strengthening self-knowledge; enhancing self-esteem in the workplace. Session 3: Creating positive thinking and optimism. Session 4: Techniques of negotiation and dialogue in the organization; communication skills; work relationship assessment. Session 5: Controlling stress in the organization; coping with stress; recognizing the interactive cycle; identifying the role of emotion in interpersonal interactions; reconstructing interactions, and increasing job flexibility. Session 6: Training in more focus on oneself and empowerment, and needs; facilitating interaction; and validating experience, needs, and developing self-efficacy. Session 7: Informing people of cognitive and emotional empowerment; emphasizing the acceptance of experiences; new ways of interacting; tracking empowerment; unknown efficacy, and highlighting it. Session 8: Summary of empowerment sessions and techniques; and providing practical suggestions.

All training sessions were performed in pre-test and post-test. In addition to pre-test and post-test, a set of questions with content of

training sessions was prepared and given to participants before and after training. The data were then collected and analyzed for differences in terms of some indices, such as the amount of information received, knowledge or ability to apply the techniques in the workplace, or rate of the attitude change.

## **Results**

The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 2 summarizes the mean $\pm$ SD scores of organizational productivity and socialization variables among employees with job stress in the experimental groups 1 (organizational intelligence training), 2 (workplace-life skills training), and 3 (empowerment training), as well as the control group in the pre- and post-test.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Levene's test, and slope of the regression were used to check the assumptions. The null hypothesis was confirmed for the normal distribution of scores in the experimental groups 1 (organizational intelligence training), 2 (workplace-life skills training), and 3 (empowerment training), as well as the control group in terms of the organizational productivity and socialization variables. In other words, the normal distribution of scores in the pre-test was confirmed in experimental groups 1, 2, and 3, as well as the control group. The F-value of interaction was insignificant for organizational productivity and socialization variables of the

**Table 1) Demographic characteristics of the participants**

| Groups                               | Age (years) |              | Educational Level |                   |                 | Gender |        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
|                                      | 25-35       | 35 and older | Associate degree  | Bachelor's degree | Master's Degree | Male   | Female |
| Organizational intelligence training | 16          | 4            | 4                 | 10                | 6               | 15     | 5      |
| Workplace-life skills training       | 16          | 4            | 3                 | 15                | 2               | 16     | 4      |
| Empowerment training                 | 17          | 3            | 3                 | 14                | 3               | 18     | 2      |
| Control                              | 13          | 7            | 3                 | 15                | 2               | 16     | 4      |



**Table 2) Mean±SD scores of organizational productivity and organizational socialization of employees with job stress (n=20)**

| Variable                            | Groups                               | Phase     | M±SD        |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Organizational productivity</b>  | Organizational intelligence training | Pre-test  | 41.55±6.87  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 80.50±5.68  |
|                                     | Workplace-life skills training       | Pre-test  | 99.10±8.81  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 95.31±8.19  |
|                                     | Empowerment training                 | Pre-test  | 41.80±6.66  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 106.10±9.60 |
|                                     | Control                              | Pre-test  | 40.30±7.04  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 38.60±5.21  |
| <b>Organizational socialization</b> | Organizational intelligence training | Pre-test  | 41.80±6.16  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 67.70±15.28 |
|                                     | Workplace-life skills training       | Pre-test  | 41.80±7.10  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 81.80±7.45  |
|                                     | Empowerment training                 | Pre-test  | 43.30±4.25  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 93.40±7.23  |
|                                     | Control                              | Pre-test  | 41.30±4.36  |
|                                     |                                      | Post-test | 39.90±3.89  |

**Table 3) Wilks' Lambda and Partial Eta-Square of studied variables**

| Variables                                   | Wilk's $\Lambda$ | df1 | df2 | F       | p     | partial $\eta^2$ |
|---|------------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|------------------|
| <b>Organizational intelligence training</b> | 0.09             | 6   | 27  | 43.27   | 0.001 | 0.90             |
| <b>Empowerment training</b>                 | 0.004            | 6   | 27  | 1018.26 | 0.001 | 0.98             |
| <b>Workplace-life skills training</b>       | 0.009            | 6   | 27  | 524.14  | 0.001 | 0.95             |

study. Therefore, the assumption of regression homogeneity was confirmed in this study.

The Levene's test results revealed no significant differences in terms of organizational productivity and socialization variables. Therefore, the variance of three experimental groups (1, 2, and 3) and the control group was not significant in terms of organizational productivity and socialization variables. Accordingly, the equality of variances was confirmed, and the null hypothesis on the equality of variances of scores in all studied variables was confirmed at the post-test. In other words, the equality of variances of the scores was confirmed in the experimental groups 1, 2, and 3, as well as the control group.

According to Table 3, there was a significant difference between employees with job stress in the organizational intelligence training group and control group in terms of organizational productivity and socialization variables. The

effect or difference was 0.90. In other words, 90% of the individual differences in post-test scores of organizational productivity and socialization of employees with job stress belonged to the impact of organizational intelligence training. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between employees with job stress in the workplace-life skills training group and control group in terms of organizational productivity and socialization variables. The effect or difference rate was obtained at 0.95. In other words, 95% of the individual differences in post-test scores of organizational productivity and socialization of employees with job stress belonged to the impact of life skill training in the workplace. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between employees with job stress in the empowerment training group and control group in terms of organizational productivity and socialization variables. The effect or difference was obtained at 0.98. In other words, 98% of

**Table 4) The mean scores of post-test in terms of organizational productivity and organizational socialization in employees with job stress using one-way analysis of covariance**

| Groups                             | Source of Changes                    | SS       | df | MS       | F       | p     | Effect size | Statistical power |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|----|----------|---------|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| <b>Organizational intelligence</b> | Pre-test                             | 122.35   | 1  | 122.35   | 2.33    | 0.13  | 0.06        | 0.31              |
|                                    | Group (Organizational productivity)  | 3665.39  | 1  | 3665.39  | 127.79  | 0.001 | 0.80        | 1                 |
|                                    | Error                                | 103.57   | 32 | 47.57    |         |       |             |                   |
|                                    | Pre-test                             | 48.54    | 1  | 48.54    | 1.78    | 0.27  | 0.01        | 0.22              |
|                                    | Group (Organizational socialization) | 2414.28  | 1  | 2414.28  | 21.08   | 0.001 | 0.39        | 1                 |
|                                    | Error                                | 202.20   | 32 | 143.24   |         |       |             |                   |
| <b>Workplace-life skills</b>       | Pre-test                             | 0.14     | 1  | 0.14     | 0.003   | 0.95  | 0.001       | 0.05              |
|                                    | Group (Organizational productivity)  | 24366.25 | 1  | 24366.25 | 522.29  | 0.001 | 0.92        | 1                 |
|                                    | Error                                | 1492.88  | 32 | 46.65    |         |       |             |                   |
|                                    | Pre-test                             | 27.87    | 1  | 27.87    | 0.75    | 0.39  | 0.02        | 0.13              |
|                                    | Group (Organizational socialization) | 28373.45 | 1  | 28373.45 | 771.56  | 0.001 | 0.95        | 1                 |
|                                    | Error                                | 1176.76  | 32 | 36.77    |         |       |             |                   |
| <b>Empowerment</b>                 | Pre-test                             | 107.75   | 1  | 107.75   | 2.47    | 0.12  | 0.07        | 0.23              |
|                                    | Group (Organizational productivity)  | 44000.15 | 1  | 44000.15 | 1009.53 | 0.001 | 0.96        | 1                 |
|                                    | Error                                | 1394.73  | 32 | 43.58    |         |       |             |                   |
|                                    | Pre-test                             | 0.03     | 1  | 0.03     | 0.001   | 0.97  | 0.001       | 0.05              |
|                                    | Group (Organizational socialization) | 5575.70  | 1  | 5575.70  | 1431.95 | 0.001 | 0.97        | 1                 |
|                                    | Error                                | 1246.01  | 32 | 38.93    |         |       |             |                   |

the individual differences in post-test scores of organizational productivity and socialization of employees with job stress were related to the impact of employee empowerment training (Table 3).

There was a significant difference between employees with job stress in the organizational intelligence training group and control group in terms of organizational productivity and organizational socialization at the post-test (Table 4). In other words, the mean score of organizational productivity and socialization was higher among the employees with job stress in the organizational intelligence training group, compared to the mean score of control group in the post-test. The effect rates were estimated at 0.80 and 0.39, respectively. In other words, 80% and 39% of the individual differences in post-test scores of organizational productivity and socialization of employees

with job stress belonged to the impact of organizational intelligence training.

There was a significant difference between employees with job stress in the workplace-life skills training group and control group in terms of organizational productivity and organizational socialization at the post-test (Table 4). In other words, life skill training in the workplace increased the mean organizational productivity and socialization scores in the employees with job stress in the workplace-life skills training group, compared to the control group in the post-test. The impact rates were estimated at 0.92 and 0.95. In other words, 92% and 95% of the individual differences in post-test scores of organizational productivity and socialization of employees with job stress were related to the impact of life skill training in the workplace.

In the same line, there was a significant difference between employees with job stress in

the empowerment training group and control group in terms of organizational productivity and organizational socialization in the post-test. In other words, empowerment training in the workplace increased the mean organizational productivity and socialization scores among the employees with job stress in the empowerment training group, compared to the control group in the post-test. The impact rates were estimated at 0.96 and 0.97. In other words, 96% and 97% of the individual differences in the post-test scores of organizational productivity and socialization of employees with job stress were related to the impact of employee empowerment training (Table 4).

## Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and empowerment training on promoting organizational productivity and socialization in employees with job stress. The results indicated that organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and empowerment training increased mean organizational productivity and socialization among the employees with job stress in the experimental groups (1, 2, and 3), compared to the control group at the post-test. This finding was consistent with the results of the studies conducted by Pelit *et al.* (6), Al-Ababneh *et al.* (29), Bhui *et al.* (30), Kim *et al.* (11), Taute (31), as well as Boye Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (32) who investigated the effects of empowerment, organizational commitment, and life skills programs on productivity and socialization among employees with job stress.

The explanation of the above results indicated that lifestyles of employees with job stress are affected by the perception of their stressful challenges and their work productivity declines due to the high perception of stress influencing the organizational socialization.

Stress is considered a determinant and employees with stress commit further human error, have lower accuracy and concentration, as well as more physical problems. In other words, stress is a determinant of many variables and can affect the employees' personal and occupational status. Stress control and management can have a great impact on increasing productivity, job satisfaction and motivation, and organizational commitment followed by eliminating a large percentage of human errors, burnout in the organization, and lack of motivation. The present study indicated that organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and empowerment training had effects on organizational productivity and socialization in employees with job stress. It should be noted that organizational intelligence training increased the information processing abilities in employees leading to their tendency and readiness for efficiency.

Organizational intelligence also created the ability to interpret, acquire, and properly store and use information. As a result, the employees had development in performing their job tasks more efficiently by gaining knowledge. Moreover, organizational intelligence training caused a greater focus on organizational activities by creating information awareness, knowledge dissemination, effective decision making, and organizational focus. Since these factors are essential for achieving necessary strategic goals, they empowered employees in terms of the productivity and strengthen their socialization in the organization, and make them more efficient in their tasks. Consequently, organizational intelligence training motivates employees to work, and feel that they are valued in terms of meritocracy, belonging, value of expertise, and growth of their capability. Therefore, they consider themselves belonged to the organization and gain high levels of motivation to perceive their job duties and show a high ability to perform the job role.

Workplace-life skills training helped



employees with job stress to coordinate their social-cognitive processes and control their failures and anxiety by increasing skills. It can be claimed that since workplace-life skills taught practical skills to control anxiety, anger, and self-awareness, the employees were less anxious and stressful when confronting challenges at work, therefore, they had more social functioning against work problems. Workplace-life skill training led to a health-oriented lifestyle in the form of increased stress control skills and also increased the organizational socialization in employees by enhancing cognitive cohesion skills. It was also found that employee empowerment training was an effective intervention to increase organizational productivity and socialization.

Empowerment training increased flexibility followed by job self-esteem, satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and performance in employees and also enhanced productivity in challenging job opportunities. Due to the energy creation and empowering employees, the empowerment training caused internalized commitment to work, simple controls, risk taking, and innovation in the staff. Additionally, it could positively affect the physical and mental states in employees and improve stress management, responsibility for health, beneficial interpersonal communication, spiritual growth, and high performance of staff, thereby increasing employees' self-esteem, adaptability, accelerated response, organizational productivity, and socialization.

## Conclusion

Organizational intelligence, workplace-life skills, and empowerment training were effective factors in enhancing organizational productivity and socialization in employees with job stress by the creation of internal motivation through preparing the environment, providing necessary context for transmitting a

sense of greater self-efficacy and more ability (energy), as well as enhancing employees' perception of their abilities. One of the limitations of study was the lack of control over important socio-organizational and economic variables that affected the research variables. Another limitation of the study was the lack of homogeneity of study population in terms of demographic characteristics in experimental and control groups.

## Footnotes

### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all the participants, as well as all employees working at Persian Gulf Star Oil Co., Bandar Abbas, Iran, for their kind support.

### Funding

The authors received no funding from an external source.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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