

Investigating the Relationship between Managers' Skills and Job Performance and Creativity of Employees

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and job performance and creativity of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Descriptive-correlational research method was used. The statistical population of the study included all employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences except 600 faculty members and hospital staff. According to Krejcie and Morgan sampling table, 233 samples were selected by stratified random sampling. The data collection tool consisted of three questionnaires of managers' skills, job performance, and creativity. The content and face validity of the questionnaires was approved by a panel of experts. Using inferential statistics, their reliability was approved by Pearson correlation coefficient and regression. The results showed a significant relationship between managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and job performance and creativity of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.

Keywords: managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human), job performance, creativity

INTRODUCTION

Universities of Medical Sciences, as the largest organization providing health services, possess characteristics that distinguish them from other areas of management and organizations. These features are mainly related to health care programs and activities and are widespread in the community and have a special executive complexity. Today, the management of medical universities has become more complex and requires new types of competencies and skills in the field of management. Managers must have special characteristics, abilities, competencies, and skills to be effective (Kiai, Salari, and Moradi, 2014). The performance of managers and employees as the most important component of these systems is of special importance, and if there is to be a change in education, it must start with the management and its employees (Ahadi et al., 2015).

In this respect, the effectiveness of university activities undoubtedly requires competent managers who have a comprehensive, deep, and flexible mindset. Unfortunately, the traditional style of management has overshadowed a significant part of universities, while higher education systems need competent managers who are able to face new conditions (Amin Bidokhti and Parvaresh, 2010). The skills required for managers are classified into technical, human, and perceptual skills (Mirkamali, 2014).

Today, in parallel with reforms and delegating more authority to university administrators, further development of skills, knowledge, and information and professional identity of the managers are required so that they may ask the community of employees to help and cooperate and may lead the university with a participatory leadership style, mediate tensions, and motivate the staff. It is essential to motivate employees to pursue a healthy career path. To improve the quality of the employee performance, managers have an effective role, i.e. if the manager can help the human resources to use their psychological drives and act in this way to do organizational work, there will be

no need for the pressures of organizational regulations to make employees perform their duties out of fear and conservatism (Hatami and Sarmadi, 2012). Job performance is actually the sum of the behaviors that people express in relation to the job, or in other words, it means the amount of product, outcome, or return that is achieved due to the employment of individuals in their job (Rogers and Sophia, 2014).

Therefore, in today's complex organizations, managers have the most effective role in productivity and increasing organizational performance. The function of managers also varies depending on the type of organization. In education-oriented organizations, like higher education, management has a much more important and fundamental role and position, and in other words, the performance of the organization is more influenced by the skills of its managers. The necessary condition in evaluating the performance of such organizations is the evaluation of its managers, and the evaluation of employees and managers regardless of its provisions will have negative results (Musa Khani, Hamidi, and Najafi, 2010).

However, employees are the main driving force behind creativity and innovation behavior in organizations, and for many scientists, promoting a more creative behavior on the part of employees has become a challenge. And many researchers have conducted research on employees' creative behaviors and innovations and have found that managers' skills and organizational climate are effective in increasing employees' creativity (Gu and Peng, 2010).

Because knowledge is increasingly an important component of creativity and innovation, universities play a broader role in creativity as a producer of knowledge and as its disseminator. In the current context of international competition, the production of innovation is too complex for individual or group firms and researchers working individually or collectively to handle it alone. In other words,

the production of creativity requires a coherent national system and pragmatism, so that in addition to enterprises, other social institutions, such as universities, also play a key role in it. Responding to new expectations from universities has led them to internal developments as well as changes in the way they interact with the socio-economic environment and has resulted in the emergence of a new generation of universities as creative universities. The emergence of a creative university is in fact a response to the growing importance of knowledge in the national and regional system of innovation and a new perception of the university, i.e. an institution that is an agent of knowledge and technology transfer and a source of creative inventions and is economically frugal. In the last two decades, governments around the world, despite the differences between academic and industrial systems, have looked at this potential of universities in terms of industry to promote a creative and innovative national environment (Peykarifar and Mahnegar, 2012). Several organizational variables affect the creation and encouragement of creativity in educational organizations and helping to develop the creative abilities of employees in educational organizations, especially universities. They can be divided into three categories of structural, human, and cultural variables, among which, the human variable (including managers) has a significant impact on creating creativity and improving organizational performance (Feizi, 2011). Today, there are some negative attitudes regarding the relationship between managers and university staff, so many employees believe that their university does not support open communication channels and information sharing. University administrators are always trying to control their employees; one of their beliefs is that employees are unreliable people who only work for their own interests. Therefore, the lack of trust between managers and employees has caused employees to show little interest in participating in university issues and has reduced the growth and improvement of staff performance as well as effective changes in the administrative system and productivity (Ghorbani and Protovnia, 2014). Efficient organizations are those which not only are able to coordinate with the community's changes, but also they are able to find path of changes in the future and direct these changes for creating optimal reforms for making better future (Aspin, Akbari Lakeh, Naderi, Arbabisarjou, 2018). Universities as the major and key center to educate humans, have a special culture like the other organizations that could play a significant role in training qualified, expert people and entrepreneurs. This important issue requires the existence of suitable organizational culture in the state universities. These centers prepare the youth to make constant changes in the society as well as the world (Arbabisarjou, Farhang, Dadgar, 2016).

Therefore, the managers of the universities of medical sciences have a heavy and serious responsibility as the helmsmen of the university. They must be equipped with all kinds of management skills. Therefore, the existence of capable, creative, and skilled managers in the field of human, technical, and perceptual relations is necessary to be fully prepared to face all kinds of changes, problems, and issues in the way of medical universities (Anjum, 2014). If a manager can establish more effective and better

human relations and communication with his employees and people in other organizations, he will be more successful and will have a great impact on fostering creativity and improving job performance of employees. However, not paying attention to this issue gradually leads to loss of creativity and reduces the quality of job performance. Considering that one of the issues and concerns of universities, especially the universities of medical sciences, is that employees do not perform their duties creatively and well enough. The important issue is that everyone can be creative with his special capabilities (Li and Zheng, 2014.) Although many efforts have been made so far to develop and spread creativity and methods of fostering the spirit of modernity, innovation, and creation, the level of creativity and job performance of the staff of the universities of medical sciences in the country is low. In fact, using the skills of university administrators without considering effectiveness and creativity would not lead to a complete and effective relation. The purpose of administrators' skills is actually to change the attitude and behavior of employees. (Li and Tan, 2012).

Since the achievement of goals via the implementation of programs cannot be done without the knowledge of the implementers and effective communication with them, the necessity and importance of examining the skills of managers and the job performance and creativity of employees in universities can be considered as the following: when organizations, especially universities, do not have sufficient knowledge of the skills of managers, in practice, they would face many problems such as organizational conflict, organizational incoherence, and reduced job performance of employees (Javadzadeh et al., 2016). Therefore, identifying the skills of university managers helps to use its strengths with full awareness and vision of the governing space of the organization and predict the necessary measures for its weaknesses. Also, examining the status of job performance and creativity of employees in the country's universities can help policy makers, managers, and planners adopt appropriate strategies to reduce the gap between the current situation and the desired situation and improve the status of such standards. In this kind of educational system, education of values and ethics is performed in a complete abstract form and a mere transfer of knowledge and there is no guarantee for the internalization of values. Therefore, we cannot expect value-based aspects from graduates of these programs (Yazdani, Akbari Lakeh, et al. 2015).

However, considering the structure of the country's universities and the current situation of its different levels of management and also accuracy in the structural features of creative and innovative organization, we would face a dual and conflicting reality. In explaining this dichotomy, it can be briefly said that as we move from the top management level of the university to the lower management levels, the characteristics and conditions of creativity decrease. In other words, the macro-structure of the management of the educational system of the country's universities, by observing the strong organizational focus and traditional bureaucratic structures, provides fewer grounds for the emergence of creativity and innovation (Hashemi, 2013). Community people should get more participate and encourage facilitating their own educations, increasing their

motivation, encouraging community based education and life-long learning(Ahmady & Akbari Lakeh,2015). Since the improvement and development of any society depends on the activities of its universities, where a major part of the educational activities is the responsibility of the employees, the job performance and creativity of employees also have a direct effect on increasing the productivity of this system. However, one of the challenges that the universities of medical sciences are facing is the issue of managerial skills and the employees' job performance and creativity(Zarorati, 2013). There are many hypotheses about these factors in medical sciences universities. This research seeks to clarify some of these hypotheses. A review of past research shows that the evaluation and relationship between managerial skills and employees' job performance and creativity has received less attention.

The current study set to determine the relationship between managers' skills (technical, human, and perceptual) and the job performance and creativity of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.

Research hypotheses

- There is a relationship between the managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the dimensions of job performance of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.
- There is a relationship between the dimensions of managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the dimensions of creativity of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.
- There is a relationship between the dimensions of creativity and the dimensions of job performance of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences.

Methodology: This research is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of method. It is descriptive because it examines the status of existing parameters, and the researcher's goal is to describe the real and accurate facts, and it is correlational because the researcher assesses the estimation between variables. The statistical population consists of all employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences (600 people: 260 males and 340 females) working in the academic year of 2016-2017. Using the Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table, 233 people (101 males and 132 females) were selected as the sample size using stratified random sampling.

Research tools: To collect information, the following questionnaires were used: A) Managerial Skills Questionnaire adapted from Afshari et al. (2010) by the researcher, which has 36 items and three technical (questions 1 to 12), perceptual (questions 13 to 24), and human components (questions 25 to 36). The response of each item is determined on a five-point scale from very low (1) to very high (5). Given that the maximum score for each question is 5 and the number of questions is 36, the maximum possible score for each questionnaire is 180 and the minimum is 36. A score of 180 indicates the highest score, 108 the average, and 36 the lowest score for managerial skills. Content and face validity methods were used to determine the validity of the instrument. In this regard, the questionnaire was approved by the professors of the educational management department and they assured that it has the necessary validity and the

questionnaire measures the intended construct of the researcher. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability. The coefficient obtained was 0.89 for the managers' skills questionnaire, and for the questionnaire components, it was 0.72 for the technical, 0.95 for the perceptual, and 0.92 for the human component.

B) Job Performance Questionnaire was prepared by the researcher based on the job performance appraisal form of the employees of University of Medical Sciences and Paterson's job performance questionnaire, which has 19 items and three components of knowledge (questions 1 to 6), ability (questions 13 to 7), and work conscience (questions 14 to 19). The response of each item is determined on a five-point scale from very low (1) to very high (5), given that the maximum score for each item is 5 and the number of items is 19. A score of 90 indicates the highest score, 57 average, and 19 indicates the lowest score for job performance. Content and face validity methods were used to determine the validity of the instrument. The questionnaire was approved by the professors of the educational management department, and it was ensured that the questionnaire measures the researcher's intended construct and has the necessary validity. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability. The value of the coefficient obtained for the job performance questionnaire was 0.95 and for the components of the questionnaire was 0.89 for knowledge, 0.93 for ability, and 0.80 for work conscience.

C) Creativity questionnaire was prepared by the researcher based on Abedi's Creativity Questionnaire. It has 26 items and four components of fluidity (questions 1 to 7), expansion (questions 12 to 8), initiative (questions 13 to 19), and flexibility (questions 26 to 20). The response of each item is determined on a five-point scale from very low (1) to very high (5), considering that the maximum score for each item is 5 and the number of items is 26. A score of 130 indicates the highest score, 78 the average score, and 26 the lowest score for creativity. Content and face validity methods were used to determine the validity of the instrument. In this regard, the questionnaire was approved by the professors, and it was ensured that the questionnaire measures the researcher's intended construct and have the necessary validity. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability. The coefficient obtained for the creativity questionnaire was 0.91 and for the questionnaire components was 0.82 for fluidity, 0.91 for expansion, 0.75 for initiative, and 0.94 for flexibility.

Ethical considerations: The researcher, after the approval of the proposal by the Graduate Studies Council of the Islamic Azad University of Zahedan, obtained a letter of introduction and a research license for the Zahedan University of Medical Sciences from the Vice Chancellor for Research. After observing the administrative hierarchy and referring to the Vice Chancellor for Research of the university and presenting the necessary documents, permission was obtained to receive an ethical code from the Ethics Committee in Medical Researches (Ethical Code: IR.ZAUMS..REC.1396.264 No. 108287-4-96). After receiving the code of ethics, the researcher distributed the questionnaire among all employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, except for faculty members and hospital staff. Before distributing the questionnaire to the

participants, the objectives of the research were explained. They were reminded that there is no need to write their first and last names and their information will remain confidential and they were assured that these questionnaires are only for research and there will be no harm or damage to them and their participation in the research is optional.

Research data were analyzed using SPSS-21 and both descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics, indicators such as mean, median, mode, frequency tables, graphs, standard deviation, variance were studied, and in inferential statistics, the data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient, independent t-test, and one-way analysis of variance.

RESULTS

According to Table 1, among the research variables, the creativity variable had the highest mean (3.43), and the managers' skills variable had the lowest mean (3.16), but in general, the mean values of the research variables were not significantly different.

Table 1: Central indicators and distribution of research variables

Variables	Standard deviation	Median	Mean
Managers' skills	0.67	4	3.16
Job Performance	0.61	3.85	3.32
Creativity	0.44	3.9	3.43

Testing hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the job performance dimensions of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Pearson correlation test was used to test this hypothesis.

Table 2 indicates a significant relationship between the managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the dimensions of job performance at the level of 99%. The correlation coefficient between the employees' technical skill and knowledge was $r=0.46$, $P \geq 0.01$, between employees' technical skill and ability was $r=0.65$, $P \geq 0.01$, and between employees' technical skill and work conscience was $r=0.79$, $P \geq 0.01$.

Also, the correlation coefficient between the employees' human skills and knowledge was $r=0.44$, $P \geq 0.01$, between employees' human skills and ability was $r=0.68$, $P \geq 0.01$, and between employees' human skills and work conscience was $r=0.93$, $P \geq 0.01$.

In addition, the correlation coefficient between the employees' perceptual skills and knowledge was $r=0.42$, $P \geq 0.01$, between employees' perceptual skills and ability was $r=0.52$, $P \geq 0.01$, and between employees' perceptual skills and work conscience was $r=0.71$, $P \geq 0.01$.

Hypothesis 2

There is a relationship between managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the creativity dimensions of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Pearson correlation test was used to test this hypothesis.

Table 2: Relationship between managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and job performance dimensions

Job Performance			Variables	
Work conscience	Ability	Knowledge		
0.79	0.65	0.46	Correlation coefficient	Technical
0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.93	0.68	0.44	Correlation coefficient	Human
0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.71	0.52	0.42	Correlation coefficient	Perceptual
0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	

Table 3: Relationship between managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the dimensions of employee creativity

Employees' creativity				Variables	
Flexibility	Initiative	Expansion	Fluidity		
0.73	0.88	0.59	0.32	Correlation coefficient	Technical
0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.46	0.31	0.46	0.44	Correlation coefficient	Human
0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.49	0.36	0.56	0.48	Correlation coefficient	Perceptual
0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	

Table 4: Relationship between the dimensions of creativity and job performance

Job performance			Variables	
Work conscience	Ability	Knowledge		
0.86	0.37	0.44	Correlation coefficient	Fluidity
0.00	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.50	0.35	0.53	Correlation coefficient	Expansion
0.00	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.42	0.35	0.39	Correlation coefficient	Initiative
0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	
0.51	0.50	0.49	Correlation coefficient	Flexibility
0.01	0.01	0.01	Significance level	

Table 3 indicates that there is a significant relationship between managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the dimensions of employee creativity at the level of 99%. As the results show, the correlation coefficient between the employees' technical skills and fluidity was $r=0.32$, $P\leq 0.01$, between employees' technical skills and expansion was $r=0.59$, $P\leq 0.01$, between employees' technical skills and initiative was $r=0.88$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between employees' technical skills and flexibility was $r=0.73$, $P\leq 0.01$.

The correlation coefficient between the employees' human skills and fluidity was $r=0.44$, $P\leq 0.01$, between the employees' human skills and expansion was $r=0.46$, $P\leq 0.01$, between the employees' human skills and initiative was $r=0.31$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between the employees' human skills and flexibility was $r=0.46$, $P\leq 0.01$.

The correlation coefficient between the employees' perceptual skills and fluidity was $r=0.48$, $P\leq 0.01$, between the employees' perceptual skills and expansion was $r=0.56$, $P\leq 0.01$, between the employees' perceptual skills and initiative was $r=0.36$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between the employees' perceptual skills and flexibility was $r=0.49$, $P\leq 0.01$.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between the dimensions of creativity and the job performance dimensions of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Pearson correlation test was used to test this hypothesis.

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between the employees' dimensions of creativity and job performance at the level of 99%. As the results show, the correlation coefficient between fluidity and knowledge was $r=0.44$, $P\leq 0.01$, between fluidity and ability was $r=0.37$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between fluidity and work conscience was $r=0.86$, $P\leq 0.01$.

Also, the correlation coefficient between expansion and knowledge was $r=0.53$, $P\leq 0.01$, between expansion and ability was $r=0.35$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between expansion and work conscience was $r=0$, $P\leq 0.01$. In addition, the correlation coefficient between initiative and knowledge was $r=0.39$, $P\leq 0.01$, between initiative and ability was $r=0.35$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between initiative and work conscience was $r=0.42$, $P\leq 0.01$. The correlation coefficient between flexibility and knowledge was $r=0.49$, $P\leq 0.01$, between flexibility and ability was $r=0.50$, $P\leq 0.01$, and between flexibility and work conscience was $r=0.51$, $P\leq 0.01$.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of the findings, it was found that 56.7% of the sample were women and 43.3% men. The highest age distribution was related to 58.4% of the respondents with 11 to 20 years of service and the lowest to 11.6% of the respondents with over 20 years of service.

The results determined that there is a relationship between the managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the job performance dimensions of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. The results are in line with the findings of Fallah (2011); he showed that only two variables of communication and human skills of managers can predict the variable of employees' empowerment. Moreover, Kurdistan Ravesh (2011)

approved a significant relationship between managers' skills and dimensions of success. Similarly, Nikkho (2010) reported that technical, human, and perceptual skills can predict the optimal performance of schools. Also, the findings of Chullen (2014) showed that human resource management has a significant effect on improving employees' performance. Salleh et al. (2012) found that there is a significant relationship between managers' skills and employees' job performance. Hoffman and Shipper (2011) concluded that managers' skills affect employees' performance. Good health is the basic human right in all its facets. Health, performance and welfare systems of the world tend to promote their goal of providing health care to the creation of a healthy society with high performance more than ever (Rezaei, Salar, Ghaljaei et al., 2017). It is inferred that managers try to maximize their efficiency through knowledge and ability to perform specific tasks that require training in the use of special techniques and tools and practical competence in behavior and activities and also by creating friendship, intimacy, empathy, and cooperation among employees, which are the most important fundamental principles of creating solidarity between members. Furthermore, managers can influence the perseverance, hard work, motivation, and ability of employees by creating a favorable environment for work through attracting the participation of human groups. The findings revealed that there is a relationship between the managers' skills (technical, perceptual, and human) and the creativity dimensions of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Comparing the results with the findings of Tabeshfar (2014) showed that there is a direct and significant relationship between creativity and its dimensions and the managers' performance. Mehri et al. (2013) showed that leadership skills affect the employees' creativity, and Abbasi (2015) found an association between managers' selection of competent individuals and employees' creativity. Thus, management jobs require the application of skills, and managers achieve the ability to work with others through human skills and achieve the highest degree of competence and expertise through technical skills and gain the ability to understand the complexities of the whole organization via perceptual skills. In this way, they can affect the employees' ability to think about things, new and unusual ways, and reaching unique solutions to problems. Collaboration is one of the most common concepts of life. It involves direct and open communication, respect for different perspectives and mutual responsibility for problem solving (Irajpour, Ghaljaei, Alavi, 2015).

The results demonstrated a correlation between the creativity dimensions and the job performance dimensions of employees of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. Also, Ussahawanitchakit (2011) found that there is a significant relationship between creativity and employees' performance, and Gu and Peng (2010) showed that creativity affects the employees' performance. The results are consistent with the findings of Li and Zheng (2014); they determined that individual and organizational factors such as managers' skills have an effect on increasing the employees' creativity. Feizi (2011) manifested that the skills

of school principals affect the creativity of teachers, and Bordbar and Mansouri (2011) reported that factors related to organizational climate, resources and skills of managers, organizational structure and systems, leadership style, and organizational culture have a significant impact on organizational creativity. Managers increase the quality of organizational communication by establishing effective communication between employees and good listening and attract the employees with love, cooperation, and consultation and reduce tensions and misunderstandings in their communication, through which they can be effective in creating creativity and innovation in the employees of an organization.

The outcomes are consistent with the findings of Hoffman and Shipper (2011); they indicated that managers' skills affect the employees' performance. Therefore, innovative ideas act as a driving force for the organization and save it from stagnation and annihilation. Creativity is important as an effective factor on productivity and effectiveness and influences the growth of the organization, increase in the quality of products and services, augmentation of employees' motivation, and increase in employee commitment and encourages pragmatism.(Zarorati (2013). Therefore, it can be said that employees can come up with more ideas through the fluidity dimension, gain ability to think in an unconventional way through initiative, and find the ability to think in different ways to solve a new problem via flexibility. In this way, they can effectively complete the tasks assigned to them by the organization. Hence, human can creatively empower himself, overcome the great nature, know the mysterious world, and solve many problems of his life. So, creativity and innovation are the factors of growth and movement. According to the findings, the following are recommended:

- Managers should know the rules and regulations of education and management and use them to solve current problems.
- In the technical dimension, managers should have the ability to monitor the performance of employees and intervene in a timely manner to solve problems.
- In the human dimension, managers should be able to communicate with internal and external groups of organization and possess the necessary skills to guide employees.
- In the perceptual dimension, managers should analyze the issues and problems that have arisen according to the conditions of the university, and to increase the effectiveness of their management, they should take benefit of the knowledge and theories of management experts.
- In the fluidity dimension, the employees at the University of Medical Sciences use words fluently to express their subject matter with colleagues and clients.
- In the expansion dimension, the employees can easily access synonymous words to express an idea and design new ways of doing their tasks at the University of Medical Sciences.
- In the initiative dimension, the employees at the university should avoid repetitive tasks or repetitive

thinking and carry out complex tasks at the university, using a variety of methods.

- In the flexibility dimension, the employees at the university should use different experiences of their colleagues to do their work and make appropriate decisions when crises and problems occur in the university.

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