Original Research

Examining the Views of Faculty Members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences Regarding Appropriate Strategies for Empowering Professors

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Abstract:

Background: Professional development of faculty members is a key strategy to improve the quality of the higher education system. The present study was conducted to examine the views of the faculty

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members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding the appropriate strategies for empowering professors.

Method: This research is a cross-sectional analytical study. The research community is all academic staff members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences. The samples were selected by the census method and based on the entry criteria. The data collection tool in this study included two questionnaires. The personal information questionnaire included: age, gender, academic rank, educational group, work history, employment status, service style, and interest in the faculty job, and the second questionnaire was about the appropriate strategies for empowering professors based on the viewpoint of faculty members. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 21 software and descriptive statistics.

Results: 62 faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences participated in the study. The average overall score of the opinion of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding appropriate strategies for empowering professors was 3.67 ± 0.82, which was above the average level. Among the components, factors related to the educational environment had the lowest average, and participation in the education process had the highest average. The highest score is related to the issue of the existence of conditions to facilitate communication with other faculty members and the availability of resources and facilities related to education and research (at the workplace) and the lowest score is related to the issue of creating a working environment for education without research.

Conclusion: Based on the results of the present study and by examining the views of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, the average score of all empowerment components is above the average level, and among the components, factors related to the educational environment have the lowest average and participation in the education process has It was the highest average. By recognizing the items of these sub-scales and eliminating existing gaps to facilitate communication with other faculty members and "availability of resources and facilities related to education and research (at the workplace)", the field of empowering faculty members can be provided.

Keywords: Empowerment, Professors, Training, Faculty.

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Introduction

Training and improvement of human resources is a set of purposeful, premeditated, and planned actions aimed at increasing the well-being and effectiveness of the individual and the organization, continuously and systematically aimed at improving and improving the level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Improves current and future job performance of employees (1). Brown and Atkins defined education as providing opportunities for students to learn. In other words, activities that are considered to make learning easier for students are called training (2). Universities and higher education centers are among the important organizations that play a strategic role in advancing the country's goals. For this purpose, universities are expected to produce knowledge and strive to train specialized and committed human resources needed by the country. Because the university can be considered the origin of changes in any country; Provided that the university has created this capacity in itself (3). In recent years, the issue of the quality of education and teaching has been seen as one of the significant issues in the educational system, and looking at the developments in the country's higher education system in the past two decades in terms of the student population shows a small growth and insufficient attention to the quality of universities. Therefore, improving and improving the quality of education and teaching in universities requires appropriate mechanisms (4). In a university, every student receives a wide range of services from the university day and night for several years. Therefore, satisfying this type of customer continuously is a vital issue, and this issue means that investigating the factors affecting the quality of educational environment services is a vital issue. In addition, other factors confirm the need to improve the quality of services provided by educational environments. For example, as the quality of educational services provided by organizations improves, the quality of graduates will increase, and the effects of this quality improvement will spread to the entire society (5). The professional development of faculty members is a key strategy to improve the quality of the higher education system (6). Being a faculty member means being connected to multiple positions (7). Faculty members play a special role as the main factor directing intellectual and social capital, not only at the level of the educational group, faculty, and university but also at the level of the country (8). The numerous activities of faculty members, such as the demand to carry out research activities and professional management at the university level, do not leave much time for continuous growth in teaching techniques and approaches. Although faculty members feel that teaching is a priority, more time and attention is spent on other academic activities (9). In such a situation, it is inevitable to pay attention to the growth and promotion of faculty members in the form of programs to properly face changes and increase productivity (10). Empowerment strategies for faculty members are designed to improve individual knowledge and skills in the fields of education, research, and management, prepare professors for their scientific role, and increase their effectiveness at all educational levels (11). The purpose of empowering professors is to teach skills to maintain the vitality of their working life now and in the future (12). On the other hand, because the position of each institution is unique, therefore there is no fixed program and model for empowerment (13). Teacher empowerment programs are different from one university to another and are offered formally and informally (14). Formal patterns of empowerment include workshops, seminars, short-term courses, fellowships, one-on-one counseling, alternative and informal patterns of training by colleagues, formal training, electronic learning, and self-learning (12). Maharagama (2007) has mentioned the support of policymakers, officials, planners, and supervisors when using new technologies, resources, and new educational aids as factors affecting the empowerment of faculty members (15). Blase et al., considering the relationship between

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facilitating leadership and creating a sense of empowerment in faculty members, identified factors affecting the empowerment of faculty members at three university levels (expression, ownership, commitment, sense of teamwork, collective efficacy), classroom (authority, reflection and thinking, planning and professional growth) and emotional-psychological characteristics (satisfaction, motivation, respect, trust and confidence, security and peace of mind) have been considered by faculty members (16). In this way, effective empowerment programs have two important and main features: first, it is a general perspective to show and examine all the aspects that affect the success of professors; Another thing is that he pays close attention to all necessary measures in the process of empowering professors and organizes them (17). The studies carried out in the field of identifying ways to empower academic staff members in education are few. The available statistics have shown that, unlike industrial and commercial organizations, effective factors and methods of human resource empowerment have rarely been investigated in the universities and medical education institutions of our country, and the research conducted by the organizations and industrial sectors of the country is also suitable for the centers. It is not education and therapy (18), what methods can improve the ability of academic staff members is one of the challenging and unknown issues; Therefore, finding the best methods and solutions becomes very necessary (19). Hence, based on the referenced cases, the current research aimed to explore the perspectives of faculty members at Jahrom University of Medical Sciences concerning effective strategies to empower professors.

Methods

This study was carried out using a descriptive-analytical method. The statistical population of this research was all the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in the academic year 2023. Sampling in this study was done by census method. The inclusion criteria for this study include: being a member of the academic staff (clinical, basic sciences, and nursing) of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences. The exclusion criteria also include non-cooperation to participate in the study and incomplete filling of the questionnaire. The data collection tool in this study included two questionnaires. The personal information questionnaire included: age, gender, academic rank, educational group, work experience, employment status, service method, and interest in faculty job. The second part included 28 questions in 9 areas, 7 questions related to motivational factors, 4 questions related to specialized communication facilities, 3 questions related to participation in the education process, 2 questions related to specialization, and 3 questions related to communication facilitation. There were 2 questions related to the educational environment, professional training, specialization, job factors, self-control and information, and modernity. The way of scoring was that the options (very low, low, medium, high, and very high) were given scores of 1-2-3-4 and 5 respectively, then the scores in each question from all the questionnaires collected and divided by the number of participants, and the grade point average in each option was obtained from 28 questions. To check the status of different areas (9 areas), the average points obtained in their indicators were announced. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire were obtained in Sadri et al.'s study with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 85% (20). Data analysis was done using SPSS software version 21 and descriptive statistics (number, frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) at a significance level of $P<0.05$.

Results

Total number of 62 faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences participated in the study and the majority of them were married (82.3%). 54.8% of them were women and the rest were men. 65.1% of their theses were from the medical field, 20.9% from the nursing field, and the rest from the paramedical field (Table 1).

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The average overall score of the opinion of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding appropriate strategies for empowering professors was 3.67 ± 0.82, which was above the average level. Figure 1 shows the average score of the opinion of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding appropriate strategies for empowering professors in terms of empowerment components. The average score of all empowerment components is above the average level, and among the components, factors related to the educational environment have the lowest average and participation in the education process has the highest average.

From the point of view of faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding the appropriate solutions for empowering professors, the highest score is related to the item "existence of conditions to facilitate communication with other faculty members" and "availability of resources and facilities related to education and research (at work)". The lowest score was related to the item "creating a working environment for education without research" (Table 2).

The results of the non-parametric test showed that the average score of the opinion of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding appropriate strategies for empowering professors is not significant according to demographic information ($p<0.05$).

Discussion

Academic staff members are the main pillars of academic centers. The ability of faculty members as one of the main and important factors of the country's education system is very effective in the performance of higher education (21). The present study was carried out to investigate the views of faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding the appropriate strategies for empowering professors. 62 faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences participated in the study. Based on the results of the present study, the average score of all empowerment components was above the average level, and among the components, factors related to the educational environment had the lowest average and participation in the education process had the highest average. The highest score related to the issue of the existence of conditions to facilitate communication with other faculty members and the availability of resources and facilities related to training and research (at the workplace) and the lowest score related to the issue of creating a working environment for education without research. Therefore, from the point of view of faculty members, effective activities in educational partnerships have been the most effective way to improve their capabilities.

Karimi et al. (2014) examined the appropriate solutions for empowering medical professors in the field of education from the point of view of the faculty members of the Mashhad Medical School. Based on the results of this study, the solutions of the training workshop, observation of the best performance, short-term training courses, and fellowship respectively with an average of 2.33, 2.42, 2.51, 2.59, the most suitable solutions and monitoring the professors' performance was found to be an inappropriate solution (22), which this study is in line with the current research and shows significant importance for the dimension of education in promoting empowerment. Professors have stated. Sadri et al. (2013) examined the views of faculty members on effective strategies for empowering them and related factors in the Dental Unit of Islamic Azad University 2013. According to the results, the most important factor affecting their empowerment was the provision of resources and facilities (related to education and research) at the workplace, which received the highest score (14.4). Among the proposed solutions, the existence of a performance evaluation system for faculty members by

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students and the creation of a work environment for education without research were assigned the lowest points with 84.2 and 38.2, respectively (20).

In this study, as in the present study, the learning environment without research is mentioned as the weakest point of view in promoting the empowerment of academic staff members, which is in line with the present study. Yelon et al. (2014) also stated in their study that the use of new educational methods in the field of formal and informal empowerment of academic staff members will be helpful in the empowerment programs of academic staff members (23). This report, like the current research, reveals the importance and place of training in the process of empowering academic staff members. It is worth mentioning that to improve the educational status of faculty members and to improve their empowerment, it is necessary to know their educational needs assessment because the need assessment has revealed the educational gaps and the planners in filling these educational gaps. It helps with effective decisions (24).

Mirzaei Karzan et al. (2012) investigated the educational needs assessment of academic staff members of Ilam University of Medical Sciences. Based on the results of the priority of educational needs, in 5 fields of teaching and learning, educational evaluation, research, information technology, and general field, they were, respectively: teaching methods, student evaluation method, essay writing in English, use of electronic resources and writing Scientific texts were in English (25). Khoshbaten et al. (2013) also investigated the needs of academic faculty members of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences in their study. Based on the results, the most important educational needs of faculty members are student evaluation methods, and other needs, in order and according to priority, including the teaching-learning process, how to write scientific articles, educational evaluation, research in the educational-health system, technique Educational practices, educational planning, program evaluation, academic counseling and guidance, professional ethics and the use of computers in the educational process have been reported (26). Therefore, paying special attention to these educational needs can provide the basis for improving the empowerment of professors. In addition, we cannot neglect the role of research in addition to teaching professors. Because industrial progress and economic and social development in all societies require research and research in all fields, so the first step to improve research is to gain a correct insight into the capabilities, and existing facilities, and find out the strengths and weaknesses of research programs (27).

However, the policy of the universities is more focused on the quantitative improvement of teaching and course content in graduate education units, international and virtual units, and therefore the research part has been forgotten, which is considered one of the serious harms to the core researches have entered in the production of knowledge. The educational approach has created a lot of preoccupation for professors in educational matters and does not create an opportunity for their research activities (28). Therefore, by removing existing gaps and providing conditions that can benefit from research along with teaching, an effective step can be taken in empowering academic staff members.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the present study and by examining the views of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, the average score of all empowerment components is above the average level, and among the components, factors related to the educational environment have the lowest average and participation in the education process has It was the highest average. By recognizing the items of these sub-scales and eliminating

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existing gaps to facilitate communication with other faculty members and "availability of resources and facilities related to education and research (at the workplace)", the field of empowering faculty members can be provided.

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Table & Figure:

Table 1: Frequency of demographic characteristics of faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences participating in the study

Demographic Characteristics		F	%
Age	Under 40 years	41	66.1%
	40-49.9	11	17.7%
	50 years and older	10	16.1%
Sex	Male	28	45.2%
	Female	34	54.8%
Marital status	Single	11	17.7%
	Married	51	82.3%
Faculty	Nursing	9	20.9%
	Paramedicine	6	14.0%
	Medicine	28	65.1%

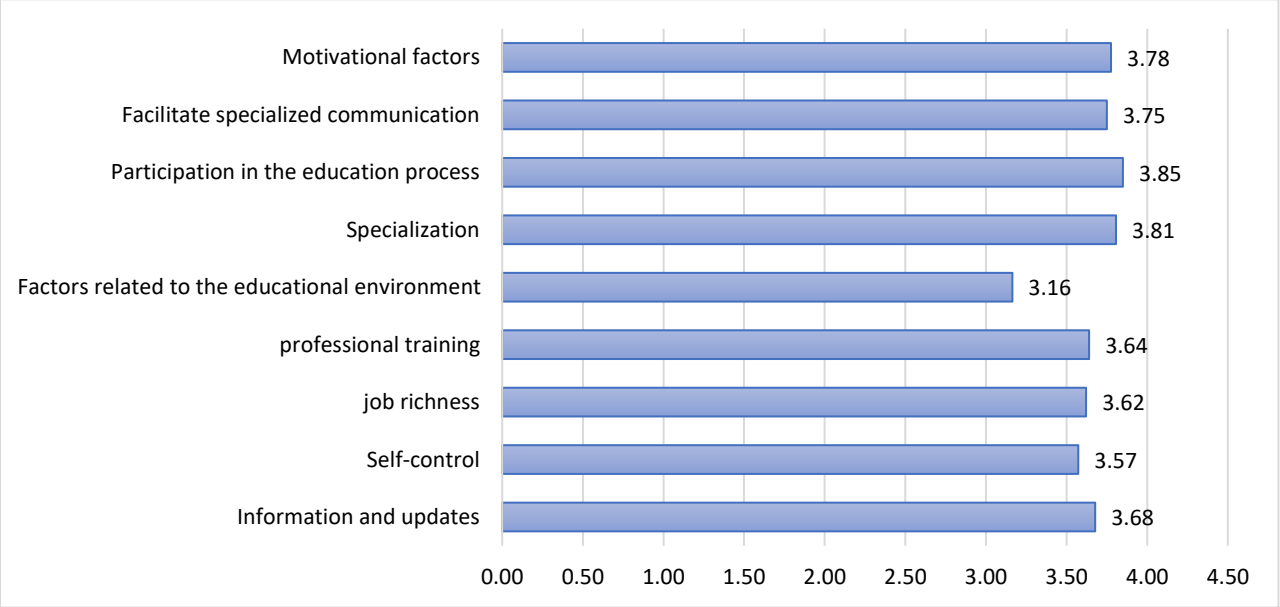


Fig 1: The average score of the views of faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding the appropriate strategies for empowering professors according to empowerment components

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Table 2: Determining the average score of the opinion of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding the appropriate strategies for empowering professors according to the questionnaire items

Questionnaire items		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	Mean±SD
Information and updates	Informing professors about the results of activities and evaluations	2	3.2	6	9.7	14	22.6	23	37.1	17	27.4	3.76±1.07
	Creating and strengthening databases and digital library on behalf of the university	4	6.5	9	14.5	12	19.4	20	32.3	17	27.4	3.60±1.22
Self-control	Delegation of authority and decision-making power	0	0.0	7	11.3	17	27.4	22	35.5	16	25.8	3.76±0.97
	Not attending the university full-time and creating conditions for studying and researching at home	5	8.1	9	14.5	22	35.5	9	14.5	17	27.4	3.39±1.26
Job richness	Dealing with activities that require different skills	3	5.0	4	6.7	23	38.3	22	36.7	8	13.3	3.47±0.98
	Using opinions in planning, setting goals, and working methods	0	0.0	8	12.9	18	29.0	18	29.0	18	29.0	3.74±1.02
Professional training	Cooperation in various committees, specific to the faculty	1	1.6	5	8.1	27	43.5	17	27.4	12	19.4	3.55±0.95
	Organization of intra-group meetings and journal club	2	3.3	5	8.2	24	39.3	14	23.0	16	26.2	3.61±1.07
	To participate in the scientific-educational and research activities of the faculty/university	3	4.8	4	6.5	14	22.6	26	41.9	15	24.2	3.74±1.05
	Creating a working environment for	8	12.9	14	22.6	20	32.3	15	24.2	5	8.1	2.92±1.15

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Factors related to the educational environment	education without research											
	Existence of a performance evaluation system of members from the related educational group	4	6.6	12	19.7	18	29.5	18	29.5	9	14.8	3.26±1.14
	The existence of a performance evaluation system for faculty members on behalf of students	4	6.5	8	12.9	21	33.9	22	35.5	7	11.3	3.32±1.05
Specialization	Assignment of responsibility according to expertise and work experience on behalf of the educational group	1	1.6	6	9.7	16	25.8	24	38.7	15	24.2	3.74±0.99
	The existence of separate specialized training groups in each department	2	3.2	4	6.5	16	25.8	18	29.0	22	35.5	3.87±1.08
Participation in the education process	Involving faculty members in educational decisions	2	3.3	6	9.8	10	16.4	24	39.3	19	31.1	3.85±1.08
	Encouragement to express opinions in the educational decision-making process	2	3.2	7	11.3	10	16.1	23	37.1	20	32.3	3.84±1.10
	Holding educational and research programs to raise awareness	2	3.2	7	11.3	10	16.1	23	37.1	20	32.3	3.84±1.10
Facilitate specialized communication	Teamwork and group participation in research	3	4.8	7	11.3	16	25.8	19	30.6	17	27.4	3.65±1.15

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	Participation in seminars, conferences, and training workshops	1	1.6	4	6.5	21	33.9	18	29.0	18	29.0	3.77±1.00
	Teamwork and intra-group participation in education	4	6.5	5	8.1	14	22.6	23	37.1	16	25.8	3.68±1.14
	The existence of conditions to facilitate communication with other faculty members	3	4.8	3	4.8	12	19.4	23	37.1	21	33.9	3.90±1.08
Motivational factors	View the successful experiences of other professors	3	4.8	8	12.9	12	19.4	24	38.7	15	24.2	3.65±1.13
	Promotion of welfare issues and the existence of an active welfare committee for academic staff members	8	13.3	5	8.3	5	8.3	14	23.3	28	46.7	3.82±1.44
	Encouraging and modeling successful professors	5	8.1	7	11.3	14	22.6	16	25.8	20	32.3	3.63±1.27
	Availability of resources and facilities related to education and research (at work)	4	6.5	7	11.3	10	16.1	11	17.7	30	48.4	3.90±1.30
	Rewarding the innovations and creativity of professors in the university	3	4.8	10	16.1	10	16.1	13	21.0	26	41.9	3.79±1.28
	Motivate through intrinsic rewards	4	6.6	6	9.8	14	23.0	13	21.3	24	39.3	3.77±1.26
	Rewards commensurate with work progress	2	3.2	10	16.1	10	16.1	13	21.0	27	43.5	3.85±1.24

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Table 3: Determining the average score of the views of the faculty members of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences regarding the appropriate strategies for empowering professors according to demographic information

Demographic information		The average score of the opinion of the academic staff	P-value
		Mean±SD	
Age	Under 40 years	3.65±0.80	0.935
	40-49.9	3.73±0.90	
	50 years and older	3.68±0.93	
Sex	Male	3.55±0.87	0.289
	Female	3.77±0.79	
Marital status	Single	3.73±0.91	0.612
	married	3.66±0.81	
Faculty	nursing	3.97±0.68	0.202
	paramedicine	4.18±0.41	
	medicine	3.66±0.78	

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