

The role of empowerment in explaining sustainable development (Case study: Graduate students of Tehran University)

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Abstract:

Sustainable development is a complex and multidimensional process and includes environmental, economic, social and political areas, so that these dimensions interact with each other. Numerous factors map the process of sustainable development and are able to influence the flow of development, facilitate and accelerate its achievement. It is believed that community empowerment is one of the main axes of sustainable development. Therefore, the present study seeks to evaluate and analyze the effects of empowering community members on facilitating the achievement of sustainable development. This research is strategic in terms of case study, in terms of philosophy, positivist and in terms of approach, explanatory (cause-effect). . The operational model of the research is based on previous studies at home and abroad. Research data were collected through a questionnaire and tested using correlation analysis and structural equation modeling using SPSS and LISREL software. The statistical population of the study includes 17853 graduate students of the University of Tehran who were studying in this university in 1397. In order to collect data, 450 graduate students were surveyed by relative class sampling method. Based on the analysis of the path, it was

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found that empowering members of society from an economic, social, cultural, political and psychological perspective plays a role in achieving sustainable development in economic, social, political and environmental aspects.

keyword: Sustainable development, Empowerment, Higher Education, University of Tehran

Introduction

Sustainable development is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century and also an obvious necessity for the survival of societies. Sustainable development emphasizes the ability to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Undoubtedly, the participation of community members in the development process depends on their empowerment. The role of empowering community members, especially students, in achieving sustainable development goals is still unclear. Although some previous research has examined the relationship between empowerment and sustainable development, most of them have examined the relationship between these two concepts by emphasizing only some of their components and have not evaluated all components of sustainable development and empowerment simultaneously in influencing each other. Therefore, the research background has shortcomings and gaps in this regard and the present study tries to fill this gap. In general, the main question of the present study is that according to graduated students, how can empowerment play a role in the process of sustainable development of the country?

Methodology

This research is positivist from the perspective of philosophy; from the perspective of research approach, analogy; from the perspective of research strategy, it is a case study and in terms of method, it is a



correlational model based on structural equation modeling to investigate the cause and effect relationships between variables. The researcher used a questionnaire tool to collect data. The questionnaire questions were closed and had a six-choice spectrum. In total, this questionnaire included 77 questions. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha. For this purpose, a prototype including 50 questionnaires and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were calculated. Given that Cronbach's alpha values for all variables are greater than 0.69, the reliability of the questionnaire is satisfactory. The validity of the content of the questionnaire was examined by the supervisor, advisors and two members of the faculty of the University of Tehran. After receiving the opinions of the professors, the final corrections were made and prepared for distribution.

Research Findings

Table 9: Summary of research hypothesis test results

Result	Critical value	Significant observed number	Standard estimated value	Description
Confirmed	1/96	6/40	0/59	Empowerment of community members has a significant effect on achieving sustainable development

The results of Table 1 showed that the empowerment of community members has a significant effect on achieving sustainable development (effect 0.59 and a significant number of 6.40). It means, for one unit of increase in empowerment of community members, we can see 0.59 units of improvement in sustainable development, which is a moderate effect (an effect between 0.3 to 0.6).



Conclusion and Suggestions

The results showed that there is a direct and positive relationship between the dimensions of empowerment and sustainable development. Based on this finding, suggestions can be made. The issue of community empowerment covers a wide range of psychological, social, economic, cultural and political issues and is not limited to the issue of employment and equitable income. In this regard, the government has a special role and place in achieving development goals with an empowerment approach. In this regard, components such as public education in relation to economic, social, cultural and political issues to participate in projects and programs, facilitate and provide general guidance and direction to the efforts of community members to solve existing problems, emphasize the support of the people in the implementation of development projects and build self-confidence in the people, create the emergence of talents of community members by providing facilities and resources, are useful ways to participate and are new opportunities for them and also a commitment to social justice through equitable distribution of income and key facilities.

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