

A Study of the Effect of Empathy in Health Centers on Job Well-being (Case Study: Employees of Kerman University of Medical Sciences)

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Abstract

Background and Objective: The Research Was Conducted with the Aim of Exploring the Effect of Health Centers Empathy on Job Wellbeing Among the Employees of Kerman University of Medical Sciences in (2020).

Method: The Study is Descriptive and an Applied-Type Study in Terms of Purpose, and its Population Consists of 222 Employees of Kerman University Medical Sciences, 141 of Them Were Chosen as Sample Using Cochran Formula. For Data Collection, a Researcher-Made Questionnaire Was Used, the Validity of Which Was Confirmed by Means of Five Organizational Behavior Experts' Opinions, and Then Its Reliability Was Obtained 87% Using Cronbach's Alpha. The Questionnaire Was Distributed among Employees in a Stratified Random Fashion, and SPSS 19 and PLS 3 were also Used for Data Analysis.

Results: The Results Indicated that Empathy and its Dimensions Namely Organizational Climate, Perceived Organizational Support, and Affinity of an Intimate Relationship, Have a Positive and Direct Effect on Job Wellbeing, in that as Level of Organizational Climate Tend more to a Supportive Climate, and Coworkers Show Positive Behavior toward one another, We Can Manage Stress Factors Better.

Conclusion: the researcher realized that as level of empathy increases among employees, job wellbeing can also improves, and the level of the effect increases, considering the component perceived organizational support achieving the highest level. Thus, it is necessary for the managers and authorities of the university to pay special attention in this context so that they can raise healthy employees and provide them with a tranquil and friendly environment free of any stress.

Keywords: Empathy, Health Centers, Job Wellbeing, Perceived Organizational Support.

Background and Objective

As a matter of fact, general idea of managers and organizational leaders held that increase of intimate relations or sympathetic relations among staff in the workplace can reduce efficiency and productivity of human resource. However, the trend underwent widespread change as the age changed from industrial into information age. Organizational managers and leaders today found that organizational employees are the most important organizational capital, in that organization needs ideal and desirable conditions in order for organizational eminence¹. To manage stress in the workplace, managers and leaders require that relationships be closer and the climate include peace for staff. The relationships can be achieved through organizational support from employees, eliminating bureaucratic levels, offering more intimate feedback, holding intimate meetings, establishing leader-member relationship.

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Increase in empathic relations in the workplace can also uplift contribution of knowledge among employees, employees' work commitment, joy and happiness in the organizational environment, which in turn can boost organizational performance².

Empathy is recognized as an important dimension of characteristic³, and as an important virtue for contemporary organizations, in that organizations are in search of increasing such a characteristic in their organizations⁴. Empathy is defined as an important factor in making relationships viable, being humble and meek, staying away from egoism and self-admiration⁵. In fact, the claim is that empathy in organizations can turn negative relations into positive ones, i.e. low-quality relations are converted into high-quality relations among colleagues⁶. Therefore, given the above, empathy is perceived to be a principle of effective communication, and an important feature which leads to the development of human relations. Organizational empathy is a compelling force that make goals and programs of organization come true, and the most efficient reason for promoting personal growth, human relations and relationship with others. In an organization, with the help of empathy power, we can undo the most tangled knots, and make many impossible things possible, helping us cross difficult roads and work on and realize goals and programs. As a distinctive ability in communication with others, empathy emerges at the time of birth and develops increasingly from infancy and childhood to adolescence⁷. The suitable instrument for empathy requires social skills^{8,9}.

Investigating the effect of work empathy in Health Centers, i.e. leader- subordinate and manager- employee, is often considered as communicative-instrumental relations, while relations accompanied by empathy are perceived to be effective-collective relations¹⁰. In research of Clark

and Waddell¹¹ attempted to compare the two relation models based on a distinction drawn by Riess¹² between economic and collective communication. The main distinction between communicative and collective relationship include rules that dominate the exchange of interests¹³. Therefore, Health Centers formed in conjunction with empathy at least to some extent depends on communicative relationship in which leader and follower are required to take account of one another's needs and interests. However, even in leader-follower relationship which is recognized with empathy in the workplace, effective collective, communicative -instrumental features can exist together, because organizational intimate relationships require separate, or even opposite, strategies for relationship management¹⁴.

Empathy-included relationship can affect employees' thoughts and behaviors. This suggests that inclusion of empathy in leader-follower relationship can have permanent, motivational, behavioral and health-related implications, and give rise to a wide range of effects at personal and organizational level. It has been often said that the effect of positive relations in organizations on followers' performance is originated in the growth and authority of them, as it resulted in the increase of ability and motivation among human resource. Relationship together with positive empathy provides new opportunities in order to reinforce the concept "self". In such a relationship, individuals can be most of the time aware of their powers and constraints, thereby experiencing a sense of confirmation and preparation for growth and development more¹⁵.

Mutual understanding, effect and impression, interest and expectation allow for exploration of self and a sense of effectiveness. This implies that organizations forging empathy-included relationship in the workplace can bolster

their value and effectiveness among employees, because they carry the message that they have faith in their staff and abilities¹⁶. The process can be bilateral; furthermore, according to the model of self-development, everyone carries some marks and sources available in other in empathy-included relationship. In case employees feel they have access to organizational resources, their sense of effectiveness and organizational self-esteem will grow. Thus, relationship together with Health Centers empathy in organizational relationships can give rise to the increase of self's a sense of value and effectiveness among employees, as well as bringing a sense of success to organization.

Relationship with others, particularly with coworkers, is essential for human growth and development. Different ideological standpoints help form a bond between relationship and growth. In study of Davis et al¹⁷ believe that communicative interactions leads to the growth and reinforcement of relationships recognized as “five good things” by these two researchers; desire, reinforced action, increased knowledge, increase of self-value, propensity for further relationship. Therefore, practices and styles of managers and leaders that help form empathy and intimacy-included relationship and provide communicative aspects of self can lead to the similar reinforcing effect mentioned in the five good things; vitality increase, vitality and energy, value of self, a sense of purpose and faith in the abilities to achieve personal goals¹⁷.

For the above reasons, we can state that job wellbeing has four different types; social wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, subjective wellbeing, and spiritual wellbeing. Each of these aspects definitely include certain subsets which are presented in the following (Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of job wellbeing

Title	Subtitle
Social wellbeing	Social coherence
	Social acceptance
	Social collaboration
	Social prosperity
Spiritual wellbeing	Social match
	God relationship
	Internal resources
	Interpersonal fit
Psychological wellbeing	Progress at work
	A sense of competence
	Recognition
Subjective wellbeing	Job satisfaction
	Negative and positive emotion balance

The results of various studies on positive organizational psychology indicate that there is a positive relationship between job wellbeing and other important elements and output of organization, which will be briefly dealt with in what follows:

In research of Amorim⁸ a study conducted among police officers of Australia, found that the higher the level of psychological wellbeing among employees, the higher the level of their job satisfaction and organizational commitment will be. In a study¹⁷ found that the higher the level of job satisfaction among employees, the stronger organizational productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and other positive organizational behaviors will be on support service staff in British firms. Rowatt et al¹⁸ holds that organizations are required to have human resources psychologically healthy in order to increase health level in the organizational workplace. For the above reasons, we can state that a human resource who takes more advantage of wellbeing in his workplace can exert more effect and steer organization toward better growth.

Therefore, we can state that human capital is considered as organization stimulator, and is able to help organization achieve organizational goals and perspectives. The

more level of wellbeing and welfare is felt in the workplace, i.e. individual experiences circumstances free from stress or factors contributing to loss of wellbeing, the better he can keep on his work activities; it can be hoped that organization's performance and productivity will increase. Behaviors shaped in conjunction with collaboration and empathy among employees can easily bring about factors contributing to the increase of welfare and job wellbeing so that organization's performance can be improved.

Method

The present research is an applied research by purpose. Indeed, the researcher seeks to solve the problem in the study sample, i.e. Kerman University of Medical Sciences. In the present research, a structural equation modeling with partial least square approach was used for testing hypotheses. To this end, SPSS 19 and Smart PLS3 software programs were utilized. The present research was conducted among employees Health Centers in Kerman

University of Medical Sciences (2020). In the study, the sample was estimated to be 222, as the sample size was determined 141 employees according to Cochran's formula. Since we had access to the whole study population, and the researcher attempts to find similarity between study sample and study population as much as possible in order to collect essential data, a standard questionnaire was used. The questionnaire comprises of 17 items, which includes a measure of empathy and employee wellbeing; it also has five-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neither agree nor disagree, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree); as can be seen (Table 2), 9 questions were used for measuring empathy in Health Centers, so were 8 questions for measuring employees' job well being. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, it was confirmed using 5 organizational behavior experts, and its reliability was obtained 87% by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, so its validity was confirmed. The sampling method was stratified random-type sampling; in what follows, the structure of questionnaire and its references are presented for more information.

Table 2. Questionnaire structure

Research variables	The number of items	Reference
Empathy in Health Centers	9 items from items 1-9	Riess et al (2012)
Job wellbeing	8 items from items 10-17	McLeod and Clarke (2014)

Research conceptual model

In the following (Figure 1), the conceptual model of the research and research hypotheses are presented accordingly.

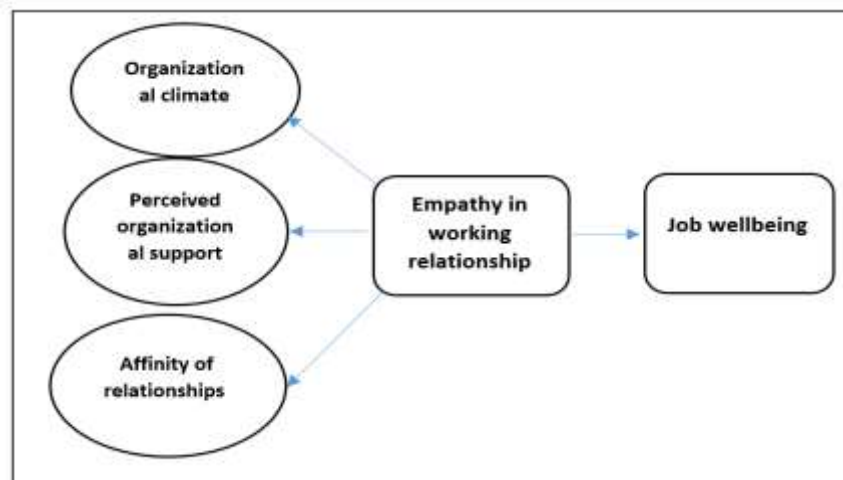


Figure 1. Research conceptual model

Main hypothesis of the research

Empathy in Health Centers has an effect on job wellbeing

Subsidiary hypotheses:

Organizational climate has an effect on job wellbeing.

Perceived organizational support has an effect on job wellbeing.

Affinity of relationship has an effect on job wellbeing.

Results

Descriptive statistics

The first part of the present study deals with the descriptive statistic of the research participants. In the present research, a number of 141 participants took part in the study, of whom 103 individuals were male and 38 were female; this suggest the high participation of male gender in the present study. As for the age of participants, the age group younger than 30 years of age (10%) equal to 14 individuals participated, and the highest frequency is attributed to the age group 30-

45 years of age, of whom a number of 75 individuals, about 53.2 percent, and the age group older than 45 years of age, 56 individuals (36.8 percent, participated. As for the education degree of participants, the highest frequency is attributed to bachelor degree, a number of 112 individuals (79.6 percent), and then postgraduate degree, a number of 29 individuals (30.4 percent).

Inferential statistic

To test research hypotheses, structural equation modeling with partial least square approach was used. However, prior to the model interpretation, it is necessary to have the model confirmed in order to see if it is fit in three aspects; measurement model, structural model, and overall model so that the results of the model can be trusted, which means its reliability and validity should be proved. To this end, for measurement model, the indices Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and convergent validity were used, which are presented in (Table 3).

Table 3. Validity and reliability of measurement model

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Convergent validity
Organizational climate	0.942	0.960	0.890
Perceived organizational support	0.742	0.886	0.795
Affinity of relationship	0.908	0.940	0.841
Job wellbeing	0.751	0.852	0.538

Having confirmed measurement model fitting, we need to touch on the reliability of structural model; for this purpose, R2 and Q2 indexes were used and shown in (Table 4):

Table 4. Structural Model Fitting

Variable	$>0.15^2Q$	$0.19 >^2R$
Job wellbeing	0.538	0.602

Finally, we touch on overall model fitting; GOF index is used for partial least square

based models, which should be greater than 0.3. The index is calculated for the present model as follows, showing the overall model fitting:

$$GOF = \sqrt{Communalities \times R^2} = 0.621$$

Having confirmed model fitting at three levels, structural equation model was developed with the help of Smart PLS software program, which is shown in what follows, and then the research hypotheses are addressed.

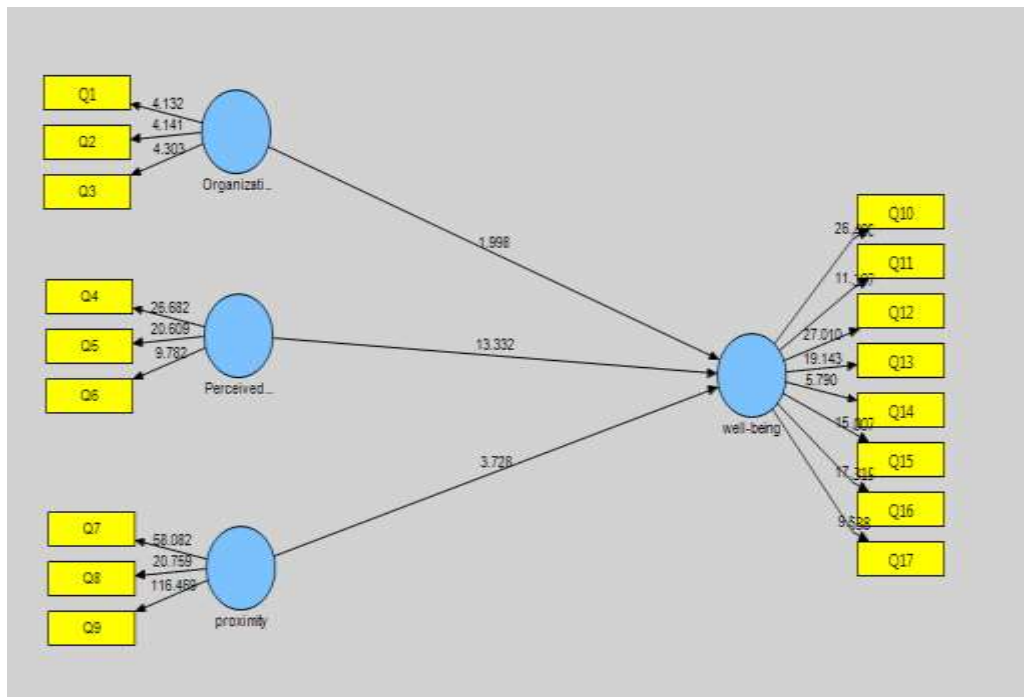


Figure 2. Partial least square in significance coefficient mode

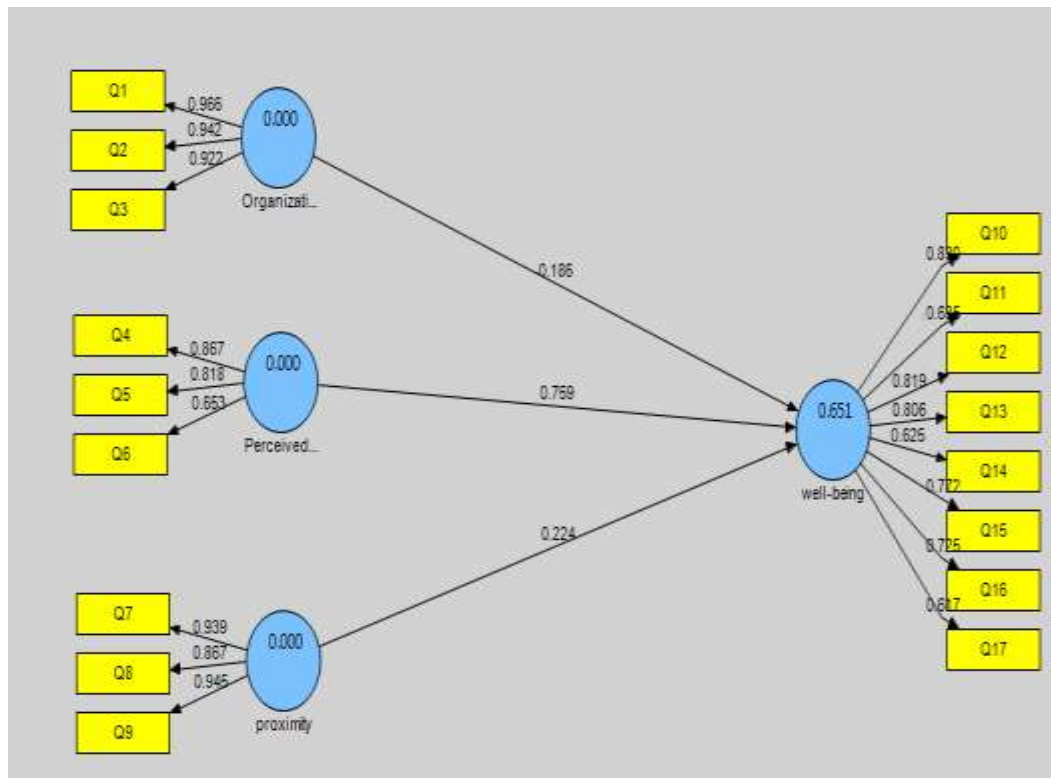


Figure 3. Partial least square in standard coefficient mode

The analysis of (Figure 2) and (Figure 3) is in the way that when T-value is greater than 1.96 in significance coefficient mode, it means that the foregoing hypothesis is confirmed, or else at 0.95% confidence level we cannot claim that the hypothesis is confirmed. In what follows, the researcher briefly deals with the subsidiary hypotheses of the research.

Deep emotional relationships among employees, leaders and followers can make employees dependent to each other and organization. Communicative standpoints challenge difference between dependence and authorization (empowerment), claiming that the difference is rooted in traditional model of virility development which views growth of independence and self-reliance as repudiation of others. On the contrary, communicative standpoints come up with a model of communication which lays emphasis on mutual independence and interdependence. In such a model, Relationship Are recognized in accordance

with a sense of authority and power as well as a sense of interpersonal dependence. Therefore, work climate together with empathy and intimacy can help empower followers, as it reinforces their interdependence. In support of such belief, the recent findings of a study on employees and managers of a bank on a large scale demonstrated that transformational leadership has a positive relationship to the reinforcement (empowerment) of employees and their dependence to manager. In addition to this, employees' empowerment and dependence are not negatively correlated with one another¹⁸.

Physical health

The findings suggest that intimate relationships have a lot of benefits for health. For example, some studies have shown that sharing stress issues with others within intimate relationship would yield many psychological benefit¹⁹. Intimate behavior helps reduce pathogenic

effects of stress better. Individuals who avail themselves of intimate relationship with others reveal less stress signs in the course of stress events of life, and recuperate from the disorder sooner, and they are less likely to experience disease. The benefits of intimate relationships have been reported a lot. Health Centers linked with supportive and close relations can be interpreted as a set of social resources that bring about people's health. These resources which are biologically provided by supportive interactions have been proved to help physiological, cardiovascular Changes, and immune system associated with experiential state and higher capacity of work. Hefei and Dutton believe that positive relationship lead to increased energy and physical health. Therefore, intimate relationship between leader and follower in the workplace can increase their physical health.

Learning

Empathy in Health Centers can develop into learning ability and creative behavior among staff. According to Fletcher, strong intimate ties can affect learning in different ways; first, knowledge can be transferred better than person to person and it is absorbed ahead of time; second, knowledge is created through interaction with people; third, people who are partners in interaction can psychologically feel a sense of security, which enables them to have better experiences, take advantage of opportunities, learning new ways of thinking and Health Centers²⁰. Edmondson states that certain aspects of leadership behavior and organization's managers such as access to and openness to improvement of psychological security as well as learning are essential. Another research has recently upheld the idea and experimentally demonstrated that leaders who are sensitive to the dynamism of relationships lay the foundations for

people to feel secure psychologically and to learn something more easily.

Health Centers intimacy

The leader who develops such a relationship can influence emotional attachment, motivation, and behavior of followers to organization at group level. There are several ways to affect relationship together with empathy. First of all, because leader is often seen as a representative of values and identity of a unit, certain intimate behaviors on the part of him can not only encourage people's emotional attachment to leader, but they also can affect individuals' emotional attachment to team; this will build up followers' social identity and commitment to group and organization²¹. Secondly, communicative leadership can provide close relationships and show affinity toward followers. This can influence members' interaction and lead to the reinforcement of group's communicative capital. Leader's behavior models a method that organizational/group objectives are expected to pursue. Therefore, leader's behavior which forms intimate and close relationship can be modelled by members, serving as a new group capital. Another major mechanism by which one can influence relationships at group level is prevalent emotional processes. Many studies have shown how leaders can influence followers by creating an emotional environment. Fredrickson asserts that feelings expressed by a leader can spread to others. Several empirical studies addressed the process of disposition transmission among work group, establishing that the spread of feeling from leaders to followers as well as among group members. This suggests that the expression of feelings associated with group on the part of leaders can influence the transmission of feelings, leading to a Health Centers Culture which include empathy and sympathy. In the end, leaders

can boost intimate relationship at group level by forming the concept of work, i.e. selecting task for group, structure of task, allocating reward. For instance, they can award them bonus for followers' communicative behaviors, and team's close and empathetic interaction²². Therefore, leaders who bolster empathetic behavior in the workplace is able to contribute to communicative capital of individuals and organization, bring about a sense of emotional attachment among group, bolster social identity, commitment to organization effectively, forming a sense of obligation in them in order to satisfy one another's needs, and bringing benefit in a relationship; this can be even more influential in social behaviors of members, giving rise to citizenship behavior.

Job wellbeing

Wellbeing of human resource is one of the most important issues receiving the attention of organizations. In another words, the most important capital available in organizations is human capital. We cannot definitely hope that organizations experience a favorable situation, if it is not properly considered. Therefore, contemporary organizations are in search of developing strategy and policies for human resource in order to improve the status of wellbeing and welfare in the workplace. As a Matter of fact, human capital on average Spend a great deal of their time in the workplace, i.e. the workplace on average takes up more than a quarter of employees' time. Therefore, if they are not in a proper position in terms of their job, it can be expected that they will not create favorable situation in terms of performance²³. It can be stated that organizations require employees who have a sense of belonging to organization in order to improve their performance, while employees need to feel they are energetic so as to devote themselves to their work.

With the advent of positive psychological movement in the 1990s, scientific views directed their focus toward positive human capacities, as paradigm of positive thinking developed in organizational realm with the rise of three organizational research movements; positive organizational research, positive organizational behavior, and positive psychological capital²⁴. We reach the pinnacle of theories and research relating to positive paradigms in the field of "job wellbeing". Wellbeing-based organizations provide instruments and appurtenances necessary for doing work, as well as an opportunity for human resource to achieve their personal ambitions by maintaining a balance between work and life. As a matter of fact, it can be stated that job wellbeing as a phenomenon is perceived to be a subjective phenomenon, as well as functioning as an objective phenomenon. According to this, job wellbeing can refer to psychological, subjective, social, and spiritual aspects, suggesting an inspirational and motivational force in order to delve continually into work life, deep understanding of work value, and pay attention to individual belief system, and uplift psychological level and instrumental social relationships.

The construct organizational climate has a positive and significant effect on job wellbeing as construct ($t = 1.998, \beta = 0.188, P < 0.05$); therefore, the first hypothesis of the research is confirmed. The construct perceived organizational support has positive and significant effect on the construct job wellbeing ($t=13.322, \beta=0.759, P<0.05$); therefore, the second sub hypothesis of the research is also confirmed. The construct affinity of relationships has a positive and significant effect on the construct job wellbeing ($t = 3.728, \beta = 0.224, P < 0.05$); therefore, the third sub hypothesis is also realized.

In what follows, the Researchers Attempts to examine the main research hypothesis,

i.e. the investigation of intimacy in Health Centers on organizational performance.

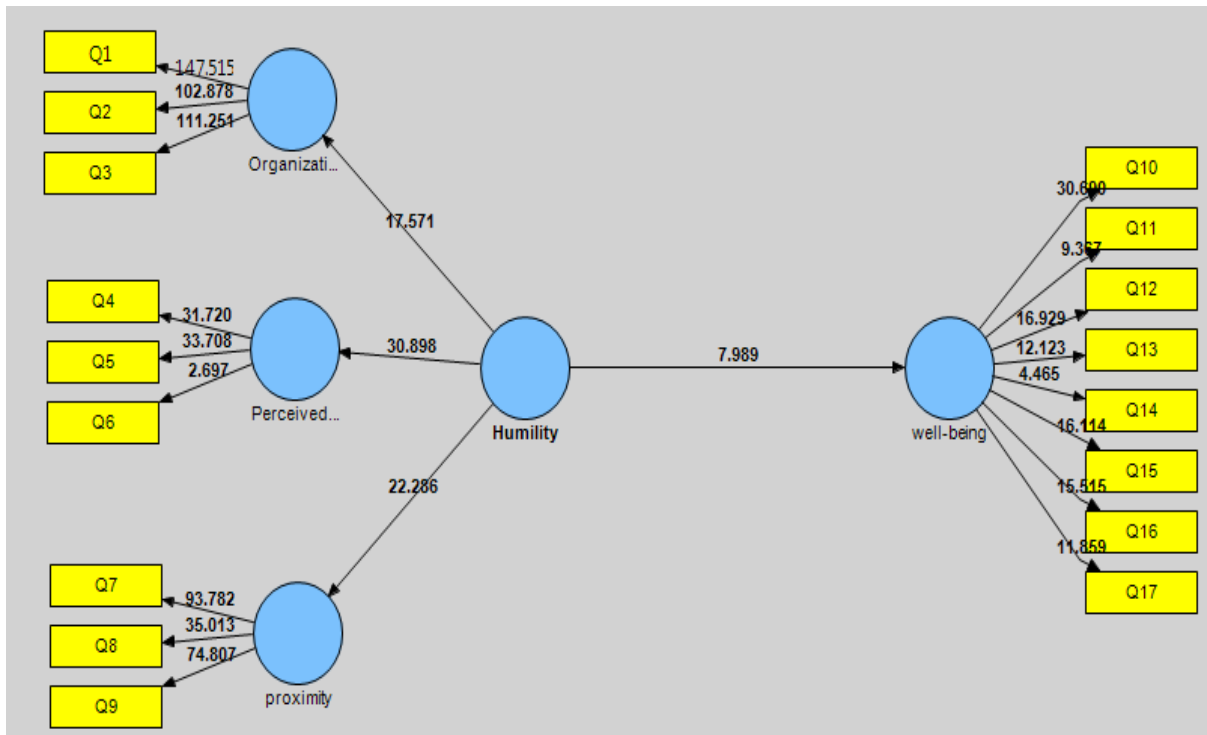


Figure 4. Partial least square in significance coefficient mode (main hypothesis)

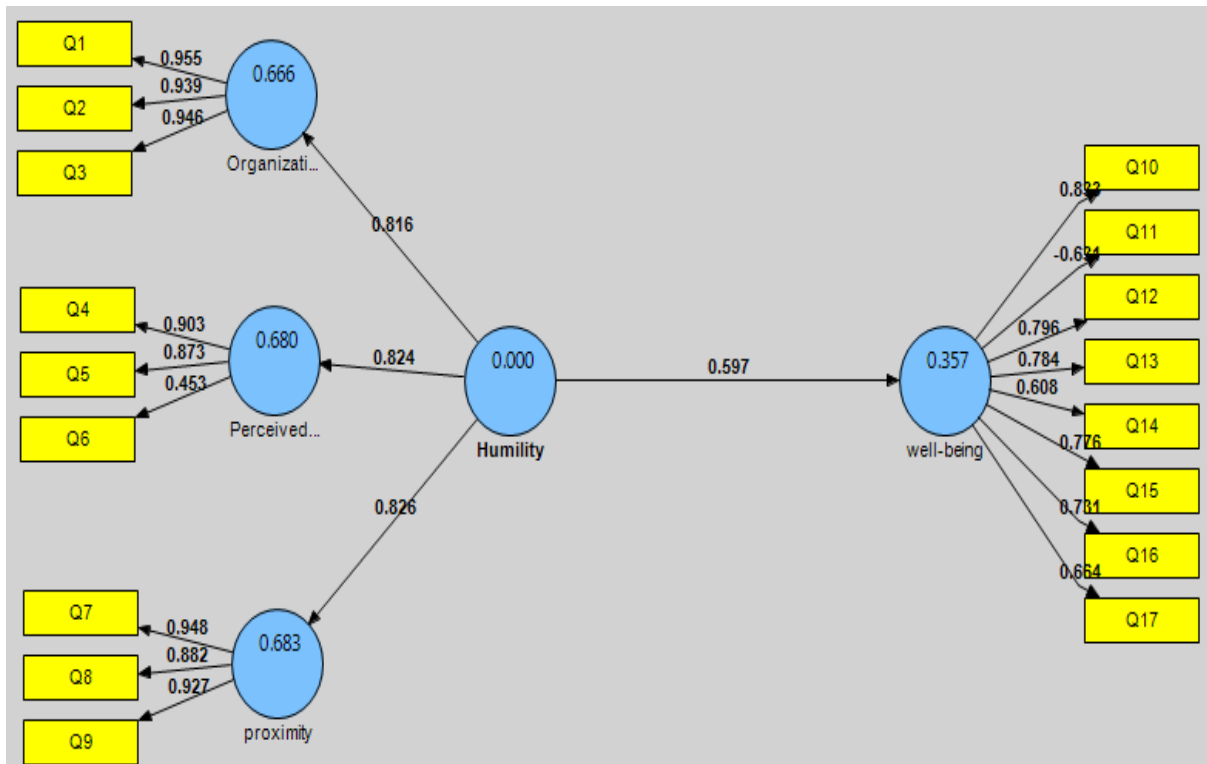


Figure 5. Partial least square in standard coefficient mode (main hypothesis)

As shown in figures 4 and 5, it can be concluded that the main hypothesis of the research, study of the effect of empathy in Health Centers and job wellbeing, is also confirmed. It is because T-value statistic is equal to 7.989 in this equation, which is greater than the absolute value 1.96. Therefore, it can be claimed that empathy in Health Centers makes a difference to job wellbeing at 0.95% level and the impact degree 0.59.

Conclusion

Today, organizations with human resource are mentally stable, and have human resource by far stronger than that of organization with mentally unstable human resource. The main objective of the present study was to explore the effect of empathy-included relationships on the improvement of job wellbeing. The research was conducted among the employees of Kerman University of Medical Sciences. The researcher utilized structural equation modeling for data analysis of collected data; the results indicated that organizational climate can improve job wellbeing, because T-value statistic of the equation was equal to 1.988, which is a little greater than the absolute value 1.96, and degree of impact in this equation was equal to 0.188, which indicates the positive and direct effect of organizational climate on job wellbeing. Therefore, as the level of organizational climate inclines at supportive climate direction, and colleagues shows positive behaviors toward each other, it can be hoped that stress factors are manageable and job wellbeing improves. On the other hand, the results indicated that perceived organizational support is a contributing factor in job wellbeing, because T-value is equal to 13.322 in this equation, the value of confirm the hypothesis, and degree of impact in this equation is equal to 0.759, showing a direct and positive effect. As the level of support from senior managers

of Medical Science is greater than collaboration-included climate, and university managers attempt to promote such behaviors in organization, it can be expected that job wellbeing improves. Affinity of relationship was also a determining factor in job wellbeing, because T-value statistic is 3.728 in this equation, which confirms the forgoing hypothesis, and degree of impact in this equation is also equal to 0.224, showing a direct and positive effect. In the end, it can be stated that as relationships are closer and intimate with one another, level of loyalty, commitment, and job wellbeing of employees can improve.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests

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No support.

Authors' contributions

The authors are the same

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