

1-Introduction

In order to survive in the global markets, financial institutions and organizations need to create and maintain the competitive advantage, and this is achieved through investing in human resources. As an important factor in gaining competitive advantage, Human capital is a guarantee to maintain and development of competitive power in global markets (Arbian and Mirzaei, 2011). From different aspects, organizations need flexibility and ability to adapt to environmental uncertainty, especially in the human resources aspect that this ability to adapt is achieved in various forms generally defined as human resource flexibility. The human resources flexibility is worthwhile for the organization through creating a sustainable competitive advantage in the long run in an uncertain environment (Farasar et al, 2016).

The productivity evaluation is one of the performance evaluation approaches of organizations and companies which has a long historical background. The performance evaluation results provide analysts valuable information about performance (Khaki, 2011).

In a study performed in this regard, the relationship between functional flexibility and the firm performance, effectiveness and productivity has been confirmed. Functional flexibility is particularly effective for those service sectors that the company aims to provide a variety of customer service. According to the results of this study, skill flexibility plays the most important role in explaining the effectiveness. This indicates the important role of skill flexibility in the companies' performance (Haqiqi Kafash, Najafi Keliani, Seyed Naghavi, 2012).

As the most basic motive for achieving satisfactory results is a significant competitive advantage over competitors, productivity is a major concern for organizations. In economic and management perspective, productivity is generally the function of three variables of technology, labor, and organization each of them will individually lead to productivity. Being up to date, modern equipment, professional human capital, and sufficient co-ordination can be a source of gradual or radical change in productivity (Grave and Bonasi, 2009).

Based on the resource-based view, human resource flexibility is seemed to be one of the variables that can play a role in the process of influencing commitment-oriented HRM measures on competitive advantage. The use of multi-functional labor allows companies to quickly address unpredictable and unbalanced demands, which may arise in units. Such flexibility will help

companies to decrease the manufacturing flow time and stock inventory and improve customer service and achieve competitive advantage (Frazer and Holby, 2010).

The managers' effectiveness also essentially depends on their competence, skill, knowledge, insight and individual abilities such as their intelligence, and because of the importance of these factors in the success of the managers, there are ongoing efforts for to find and educate those who have that type of competence, ability, intelligence and skills to turn them into effective managers and useful leaders. Flexibility is a variable that will cause the organization to act better against the changes and make the right decision. Flexibility provides the healthy, yet competitive atmosphere for employees, where the employee's effectiveness and the organizational productivity increases (Chung and Tarno, 2004).

The human resources flexibility, which enables the organization to respond appropriately to the rapid changes in the environment, has become an undeniable necessity in today's uncertain and dynamic environment. While researchers have studied human resource flexibility as a source of sustainable competitive advantage for the company, strategic human resources has not been empirically investigated and the impact of human resource flexibility on organizational performance has not been empirically investigated. The proper utilization of flexible model is an important element in performance management and can improve performance. Today, flexibility is one of the major issues in organizational thinking and has a great influence on the company performance (Voroud et al, 2014).

The research and empirical results of this study show that companies that emphasize strategic flexibility, are dependent on HR practices to gain competitive advantage. This finding is especially important for companies that emphasize the strategic flexibility of their organizations. Flexibility is almost essential for companies to maintain their competitive edge given the increasing uncertainty in the world today. According to the findings, practitioners place more emphasis on creating innovative HR practices to survive in the competition in a business environment. The impact of strategic flexibility on company performance varies in companies with male or female CEOs.

What we found from this research on female CEOs can help board in selecting executive who are consistent with their organizational strategy. Companies who looks for strategic flexibility are more confident when appointing a female CEO. According to the results, female's leadership can

increase the positive impact of strategic flexibility on company performance. (Lin, Janochen, 2017).

Many modern organizations have undergone a change, and any change requires a staff and management adaptable and compatible with change. Meanwhile, social interaction, as a key element in managing organizational change, is of great importance to most managers and leaders in a competent manner. Strengthening flexibility competency causes the following consequences:

- Increasing the ability to work and activity, despite successive changes in the environment;
- Improving efficiency;
- Developing the sense of happiness that can satisfy the person of all the existing conditions, instead of constantly looking for a reality that the circumstances never support.

Paying attention the degree of flexibility in some jobs and organizational posts can be of great importance. Managers and business owners can easily measure the degree of flexibility in people to a high degree in order to increase the effectiveness of their selection and appointment.

In another study conducted by Esmaili Zade et al. (2017), human resource flexibility can be worthwhile for the organization in the long run by creating a competitive advantage. Human resource flexibility involves very different natural practices, and can be generally categorized as functional, behavioral, and skill flexibility. According to the results of this research flexibility is a variable exists in an organization, causes the organization to act better and to make the right decision. Flexibility makes a healthy and at the same time, competitive atmosphere where, the employee's effectiveness and as a result, organizational productivity can be increased.

2-research methodology

The present study is an applied research is in terms of the purpose and a correlation research since it aimed to examine the relationships between variables. It is also a single-sectional research in terms of data collection because it will be done within a certain time interval to investigate the correlations between variables in an organization. The study is also conducted by filed approach.

The 90 people were used as the statistical sample in this study by simple sampling method. The research tool for data collection is a questionnaire based on the human resource flexibility questionnaire proposed by Batachard (2005), which consists of three components: functional flexibility, skill flexibility, behavioral flexibility, and 11 questions. The rating scale used in the questionnaire is based on a five-point Likert scale including (completely agree, agree, neutral,

disagree, completely disagree) and the productivity standard questionnaire of Hersey and Goldsmith (1980) including 21 questions and seven components of ability, clarity, assistance, evaluation, credit, motivation, environment. The scale used in this questionnaire is based on the general five point of Likert scale including (very high, high, somewhat, low, very low), respectively. Gender variables (male, female), age, experience, and educational degree were also added to the questionnaires. The research statistical population includes all employees of Khuzestan Gas Company in 2018.

The research sample is consisted of 90 people who were selected by simple random method. The statistical operation was also conducted on 90 questionnaires. The following tools were used to measure the variables in this study:

A) human resources flexibility questionnaire from (Batachard, 2005)

B) Labor Productivity Questionnaire (Hersey and Goldsmith, 1980)

After obtaining the necessary permits and identifying the sample members and coordinating with the officials of the education department, according to the previous planning, after the establishment of the relationship and reducing the sensitivity of the subjects about the questionnaires and the reasons for their selection in the sample, the necessary explanations provided by the researcher. The questionnaire was completed by the subject and were asked to explain if there is any ambiguity when completing questionnaires. Finally, the subjects was appreciated because of their participation.

The SPSS 24 version software was used in this study to analyze data. Also, the $\alpha = 0/05$ level of significant is determined for all the hypotheses.

3-Analyze the results

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between the human resources flexibility and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Table 1. Simple correlation coefficients between human resource flexibility and labor productivity of the employees of the National Gas Company

Criterion variable	Statistical index / Predictive variable	Correlation Coefficient)r(Significance level (p)	Sample number (n)
labor Productivity	Human resource flexibility	0.55	0.0001	90

As can be seen in Table 1, there is a significant positive correlation between human resource flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company ($r = 0.15$, $p = 0.0001$). Then, the first hypothesis is confirmed. That is, with the increased human resources. flexibility, the labor productivity has also increased in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Hypothesis 1-1: There is a relationship between the human resources functional flexibility and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Table 2 - Simple correlation coefficients between human resource functional flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company

Criterion variable	Statistical index / Predictive variable	Correlation Coefficient)r(Significance level (p)	Sample number (n)
labor Productivity	Human resource functional flexibility	0.21	0.041	90

As can be seen in Table 2, there is a significant positive correlation between human resource functional flexibility and the productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

($r = 0.21$ and $p = 0.041$)

Then, the hypothesis 1-1 is confirmed. In other words, the greater the human resources functional flexibility in the employees of the National Gas Company, the more their labor productivity.

Hypothesis 1-2: There is a relationship between the human resources skill flexibility and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Table 3- Simple correlation coefficients between human resource skill flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company

Criterion variable	Statistical index / Predictive variable	Correlation Coefficient)r(Significance level (p)	Sample number (n)
labor Productivity	Human resource skill flexibility	37.0	0001.0	90

As can be seen in Table 3, there is a significant positive correlation between human resource skill flexibility and the productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

($r = 0.37$, $p = 0.0001$)

Then, the hypothesis 1-2 is confirmed. In other words, the greater the human resources functional flexibility in the employees of the National Gas Company, the more their labor productivity.

Hypothesis 1-3: There is a relationship between the human resources behavioral flexibility and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Table 4 - Simple correlation coefficients between human resource behavioral flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company

Criterion variable	Statistical index / Predictive variable	Correlation Coefficient)r(Significance level (p)	Sample number (n)
labor Productivity	Human resource behavioral flexibility	55.0	0001.0	90

As can be seen in Table 4, there is a significant positive correlation between human resource behavioral flexibility and the productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

($r = 0.55$, $p = 0.0001$)

Then, the hypothesis 1-3 is confirmed. In other words, the greater the human resources functional flexibility in the employees of the National Gas Company, the more their labor productivity

Hypothesis 2: There is a multiple relationship between the human resources flexibility components and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Table 1. Multiple correlation coefficients between human resource flexibility components and labor productivity of the employees of the National Gas Company with simultaneous and step-by-step logging method.

method	Predictive variables	R	R ²	F	= p	= p	t	β
simultaneous	Functional Flexibility	0/58	0/34	14/83	0/0001	0/050	1/98	0/17
	skill Flexible					0/428	0/797	0/08
	Behavioral Flexibility					0/0001	4/82	0/49
step-by-step	1 Behavioral Flexibility	0/54	0/30	37/88	0/0001	0/0001	6/15	0/55
	2 Flexibility Task	0/58	0/34	22/03	0/0001	0/0001	6/16	0/54
						0/034	2/15	0/19

As can be seen from Table 5, regression prediction of labor productivity of National Gas Company employees is significant based on the variables of HR flexibility components (task, skill and behavior).

($F = 14/83$, $P < 0/0001$).

Then, the second hypothesis is confirmed. Functional flexibility and behavioral flexibility variable with beta coefficient of 0.17 and 0.49, respectively can positively and significantly predict the labor productivity of National Gas Company employees. Also, the value of R^2 indicates that 34% of the variance of the labor productivity of the National Gas Company employees is explained by these variables. According to the results of stepwise regression analysis, HR flexibility variables in behavioral and task fields are respectively predicting the labor productivity of National Gas Company employees.

4-Discussion and conclusion

The research findings regarding the relationship between human resource flexibility and performance, in line with the results of Wal werd et al. (2000), Sin vey (2005), Batacharia et al. (2005) and Ketar & Set (2010), show that the research results confirm a relationship between human resource flexibility and corporate performance. According to the obtained results, there is a positive relationship between human resource flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company, as labor productivity has increased with increasing HR flexibility of the National Gas Company employees.

Functional flexibility is especially important for those service businesses where the company aimed to provide a variety of services. Employees with the ability to perform various tasks will help the gas company to respond more quickly than competitors to the increased demand for services in a specific field by transferring employees from one unit to another. Hence, there is a relationship between the human resources functional flexibility and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company, because the greater the human resources functional flexibility in the employees of the National Gas Company, the more their labor productivity.

Skill flexibility has the greatest role in explaining the effectiveness. This indicates the important role of skill flexibility in performance for the gas company. Providing quality services is worthwhile for the gas company. Skill flexibility point to the ability to quickly and easily acquire skills and competencies needed to carry out new tasks and jobs. There is a relationship between human resource skill flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company's, since, the labor productivity has increased with increasing human resource flexibility in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Behavioral flexibility has the greatest role in explaining the human resources flexibility in the gas company. Behavioral flexibility increases employees' tolerance for non-repetitive behavior and makes it easier to adapt to new situations. Behavioral flexibility helps employees easily adapt to new situations and exhibit less resistance to changes that are inevitable for the organization. It also increases the behavioral flexibility of employees' creativity and innovation, which leads to increased innovation and performance in the organization. Then, there is a relationship between the human resources behavioral flexibility and labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company and the increase of human resource behavioral flexibility in the of the employees of the National Gas Company is associated with their increased labor productivity.

There is a multiple relationship between human resource flexibility components and the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company. The results of stepwise regression analysis have shown that human resource behavioral and functional flexibility variables are respectively predicting the labor productivity in the employees of the National Gas Company.

Considering the benefits of human resource flexibility, gas company employees can devise long-term plans to take advantage of this competitive resource. Having flexible managers and staff require flexible human resource management and flexible human resource strategies. According to the resource-based view, organization management can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance by combining different human resources strategies and aligning them with the strategies of the entire organization. In order to have flexible employees,

the organization management can help to flexible human resources through long-term planning and appropriate human resource strategies that enhance employee skills and competencies.

Also, while investigating the findings regarding the hypotheses, the subjects were compared in terms of some of the variables and the following results were obtained: Comparing the mean human resource flexibility and labor productivity in male and female employees show that female employees have higher level of human resource flexibility and lower labor productivity compared to male employees.

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