

## Phenomenography of organizational stars in Amirkabir University of Technology

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### ABSTRACT

Star employees are people with the ability to create high credibility, are irreplaceable and enhance organizational value. As the key assets of the organization, stars play a central role in gaining competitive advantage. They are extraordinary human resources whose performance is visible inside and outside the organization and have high social capital. Considering the diversity and changeability of the concept of organizational star, this research seeks to understand the interpretation and meanings of this phenomenon in Amirkabir university of technology through the phenomenography strategy. In this research, the philosophy of interpretive research, the inductive research approach, the phenomenography research strategy, and the data collection method are semi-structured interviews. For this purpose, maximum diversity sampling was done from the research community that included the professors of AmirKabir University of Technology, and in this way, 20 professors from different faculties, scientific groups, scientific ranks, genders and specialties, were interviewed. Research data analysis was done by Dahlgren and Fallsberg method. The results of the research show that there are seven ways to experience the stardom of a professor in the university, which include: being a brand, being a researcher, being an industrialist, being a technologist, being scientific, being a coach and having grit. In addition, the descriptive classes are placed in four levels of personal capacity, educational, research and boundary-breaking authority, professional and technological authority and scientific index, which is a sign of their structural and hierarchical difference in addition to the difference in their meanings.

**Keywords:** Organizational stars, personal capacity, authority, boundary breaking and phenomenography.

## Introduction

The success and credibility of a company depends on the quality of its human capital, as a result, many organizations make special investments in retaining their star employees, who have high visibility in the foreign labor market (Tzabbar, 2015: 710 & Kehoe). In terms of loyalty, star employees have little loyalty to the organization and more loyalty to the profession. From a performance perspective, they are much more valuable than their low-performing colleagues. As a result, such employees request higher rates from the point of view of economic value during employment negotiations (Morris, Alvarez & Barney, 2020:38). The overall value of the company is realized by a small fraction of elite employees. For example, 80% of company sales are often attributed to 20% of employees. In the field of professional service industries, they carry out a major part of the business and form the main knowledge asset of the organization. These employees have a wider job opportunity than their counterparts (Kang et al., 2017: 59). Also, social science thinkers have understood this situation for a long time that having a suitable position and social prestige can help individuals and organizations in attracting resources and development opportunities (Kim & King, 2014: 2623).

The university is one of the most important parts of the science and technology system in any country, and the efficiency of the structure of the universities is naturally closely related to the realization of the goals of the science and technology system of each country and the cultivation of efficient and competent human resources to respond to the needs of the society and the people. It has a development path and the quality of human resources working in the university, including its faculty members, will have a significant impact on the quality of the university in all aspects, especially in the quality of education and research (Rezayan, Marzban and Rezayan: 2023). In addition, considering that the vision of Amirkabir University of Technology in the horizon of 1404 is "benefiting from modern educational and research systems and commitment to cultivating pioneers of science and technology with the highest regional and international levels among the top 100 universities in the world" and The core and the main center of this happening in the university are star professors, it is necessary to realize the path of growth and prosperity in the country by identifying and cultivating star professors. Considering the variety of definitions and perceptions of organizational stars, this research aims to focus on this phenomenon in the university with the phenomenography research method and describe the variability of the meaning of professors' experiences from it. The research questions include the following:

1. What are the differences in the professors' experience of the organizational star in the university?
2. What meaning can be attributed to the professors' different experiences of stardom in the university?
3. What are the structural relations distinguishing and linking different meanings of being a star? The conceptualization of stars in universities, knowing the definition; The dimensions and hierarchies of stardom in the path of higher education are the innovation part of this study.

### Literature Review

Star employees are referred to as a type of unique human capital that not only have exceptional knowledge, but also influence the performance of the organization. Stars are conceptualized as extraordinary performers, their performance is visible inside and outside the organization, and they also have high social capital. These features make the stars stand out from others (Call et al., 2020:551). Stars are people who are widely and consistently recognized as individuals with desirable and rare characteristics that have exceptional outcomes (Asghari et al., 2021: 232). The most fundamental consequence of star employees is performance. Producing a high level of individual performance is essential in defining stars, and their individual level performance is well visible (Taylor & Bendickson, 2021: 981). Star employees, technical resources, with company and industry knowledge, with a high

level of performance and They bring visibility in the foreign labor market. For example, the software team at Apple, with the presence of corporate stars, is several times more productive than its competitors (Tzabbar & Baburaj, 2020:3).

In the current situation of universities, the main and emphasized axes for the growth and development of university professors are the regulations for promotion of academic staff members. This regulation emphasizes the four main axes of educational activities, research and technology activities, cultural activities and executive activities. Each of these axes has various subcategories that actually evoke the expectations of policymakers from academic staff members in the form of promotion regulations. This system is known due to its special nature as one of the outstanding policy tools in the field of higher education (Rezayan, Marzban and Rezayan, 2023: 209).

## Methodology

In this research, interpretive research philosophy, inductive research approach, phenomenography research strategy and qualitative research method were selected and the data collection method was semi-structured interview. The reason for choosing this method is to describe the difference in people's understanding of the studied phenomenon. phenomenography refers to a set of concepts or different descriptive categories related to the studied phenomenon (Mojarab, Lagzian & Mortazavi, 2018). From the perspective of phenomenologists, different people will not experience a single phenomenon in the same way, but there will be a range of ways in which different people understand or experience a phenomenon (Danaeefard & Kazemi, 2011). The participants in this phenomenological strategy are people who have experienced the desired phenomenon and have a complete understanding of it. The participants in this research were the professors of Amirkabir University of Technology. The sampling strategy according to the method, which basically looks for the differences in the experience of people in a group, was chosen from the type of maximum diversity so that the variability reaches its maximum possible. In this study, theoretical saturation was achieved after 17 interviews, but due to the increase in the diversity of viewpoints, the interviews continued until 20. The interview questions consisted of issues that encouraged the participants to focus and describe their experiences of being a star.

## Findings

Based on the findings of the research with the phenomenography strategy, the meanings and interpretations of the organizational star in the university were determined and showed that being a star in the university is introduced with the titles of being a brand, being a researcher, being an industrialist, being a technologist, being scientific, being a coach and having strength. to be from the point of view of the hierarchy of this interpretation, personal capacity is at the lowest level, i.e. individual, then educational authority, research and boundary-breaking authority at the scientific and academic level, professional and technological authority at a higher level, i.e. business and industry, and finally scientific index. Being at the highest level and in the world, the teacher is introduced as a star.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, it was determined that a star professor in the university requires different capacities and qualifications. Considering that the mission of the university is in three areas: education, research and technology, a professor must have different scientific, executive and research capabilities in order to shine in the university. The dimensions of being scientific, mentoring and being a brand are related to the field of education, the dimensions of being a researcher, being a craftsman and having grit in the field of research and being a technologist are related to the field of technology.



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