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IMPACT OF A HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT ON CARPET WEAVING INDUSTRY GROWTH

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The art of carpet weaving is an area of culture which development traces back to a century-old tradition in the countries of the East. This industry has survived to present day and plays a significant role for the economies of Central Asia and Iran, making up a large share of their export supplies. The scientists from different countries study the history of carpet weaving goods in the context of their cultural and artistic peculiarities: ornaments, signs, symbols, etc. However, this industry is primarily considered as a source of creating objects of decorative and applied art. Only a few researchers address the current economic problems of the industry, in particular, the issues of labour organization and working conditions.

Technology and organization of handmade carpet making and working conditions of craftsmen in Afghanistan have not changed much for many centuries: one carpet is created within 2–4 months by backbreaking work of a group of 3–5 Afghan craftswomen. The industry faces significant competition from cheap artificial carpets from Pakistan. Experts note a drop in the export potential of carpet weaving in Afghanistan, and some even talk about the problem of fading of the ancient craft traditions in the country. These circumstances determined the relevance of the topic.

The article describes the findings of the fieldwork-based research devoted to investigating the impact of a healthy working environment on the carpet weaving industry growth. The aim of this study is to identify the factors affecting a healthy working environment and establish the correlation between them on the example of carpet weaving industry.

The findings are the results of the survey conducted in all carpet weaving companies in the Akchakh district of Jawzjan province in northern Afghanistan. This rural region has an ancient tradition of carpet weaving.

Keywords: Afghanistan, carpet weaving industry, the concept of decent work, working conditions, factors of a healthy working environment, satisfaction with working conditions.

ВЛИЯНИЕ ЗДОРОВОЙ РАБОЧЕЙ СРЕДЫ НА РАЗВИТИЕ КОВРОТКАЦКОЙ ПРОМЫШЛЕННОСТИ

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Ковроткачество как особый вид культуры и искусства имеет тысячелетние традиции в странах Востока. Сохранившись до наших дней, отрасль занимает важное место в экономике стран Центральной Азии и Ирана, составляя значительную долю их экспортных поставок. Историю ковроткачества с позиций культурных и художественных особенностей изделий — орнаменты, знаки, символы и т. п. — изучают ученые разных стран. Однако эта отрасль рассматривается преимущественно как источник создания предметов декоративно-прикладного искусства. Лишь немногие исследователи затрагивают современные экономические проблемы отрасли и, в частности, вопросы организации и условий труда занятых в ней работников.

Технологические и организационные особенности изготовления ковров ручной работы и условия труда мастеров в Афганистане за многие века практически не изменились. Один ковер создается в течение 2–4 месяцев непосильным трудом группой афганских женщин в составе 3–5 мастериц. Существенную конкуренцию отрасли составляют дешевые искусственные ковры из Пакистана. Специалисты отмечают

снижение экспортного потенциала ковроткачества в Афганистане, а некоторые вообще говорят о проблеме увядания древнего ремесла в стране. Эти обстоятельства определили актуальность данной тематики.

В статье представлены результаты полевого исследования, посвященного изучению влияния здоровой рабочей среды на развитие отрасли. Его целью является изучение комплекса факторов, формирующих здоровую рабочую среду, и установление зависимости между ними на примере ковроткацкой промышленности.

Полученные выводы базируются на результатах анкетирования, проведенного во всех ковроткацких компаниях Акчахского района провинции Джаузджан на севере Афганистана. Этот сельский регион имеет многовековые традиции ковроткачества.

Ключевые слова: Афганистан, ковроткачество, концепция достойного труда, условия труда, факторы здоровой рабочей среды, удовлетворенность условиями труда.

Introduction. The carpet weaving industry in Afghanistan goes back to an ancient history. It is said that two thousand years back in the times of the Great Alexander of Macedonia, the Greek emperor. After the military raid to the Great Ariana region, he sent a local handicraft of Balkh to his mother in Greece as a precious souvenir [1]. Since then the carpet industry in Afghanistan continued to expand along with other handicrafts. Today this industry is one of Afghanistan's export items, and thousands of workers and investors make a living from it. In recent years, due to the civil wars in Afghanistan which have lasted for more than four decades, this industry has not achieved a continuous upward growth. On the other hand, it has been around three decades since this theory of healthy working environment (HWE) was proposed. Sustainable development goals (SDG) and namely its target 8.8 states: «Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environment for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular, women migrants, and those in vulnerable employment» [2]. In addition, International Labour Organization (ILO) launched decent work concept in 1999 and defined that decent work applies not only to workers in the formal economy but also to unregulated employees, the self-employed and home workers. It also refers to adequate opportunities for work, remuneration (in cash and consideration in kind), and embraces safety at work and healthy working conditions. Social security and income security are also essential components which are defined according to a social opportunities and level of development [3]. World Health Organization (WHO) defines hostile working environment (HWE) as the working environment which can have a significant impact on our health and wellbeing taking into account that we spend one third of our lives at work. A healthy workplace involves collaboration between workers and managers aimed at continually improving health, safety and wellbeing of all workers and, thus, sustaining business productivity [4]. A healthy work environment improves productivity and reduces costs

connected with absenteeism, turnover, workers» compensation, and medical claims [5]. In this regard, the present study makes an attempt to investigate the impact of a healthy working environment on carpet weaving industry growth.

In the conditions of present-day economic situation employment and income generation are considered as one of the important issues in the national development policies. The carpet sector is extremely labor intensive and millions of people are directly and indirectly employed and earn their income from this sector in major hand-made carpet producers and exporters from Asian countries. Like most of other commodities, the trade in carpets is strongly dependent on the changes in economic and political situation at the national or international levels. For instance, Iran's production and exports declined following the US-led sanctions imposed on the country over its nuclear program. As a result, India became the world's largest exporter of hand-made carpets, particularly to the United States. On the other hand, following the Russian invasion, the Afghan refugees in Pakistan became carpet exporters, and, as a result, Pakistan earns profits worth millions of dollars annually [6, p. 475]. Noticeably, for centuries Afghanistan has got a reputation of an international leader in hand-made carpet production, but decades of war and political turmoil inflicted irreparable damage to the country's carpet industry [7]. Fortunately, the commitment of international community in 2001, and the efforts of carpet sector stakeholders, including the Afghan government, the private sector, a few donors and NGOs, prompted the industry's revitalization [6, p. 476].

Teamwork is often defined as the combined efforts of a group of people to achieve a goal. Teamwork allows employees to take extra responsibility for the task without direct supervision and choose their own working practice and time, to improve qualifications and to recruit team members [8, p. 5]. We define individual development in the workplace as the expansion of an individual's capacity to function effectively in his or her present or future job and work organization. In

other words, an instance of individual development is an intra-individual change that results in better work performance at present or in the future. The review of theoretical material on work performance helps to illustrate the potential change [9, p. 314]. According to Perkins & Zimmerman (1995) empowerment is defined as an intentional ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect, reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people who lack an equal share of valued resources gain greater access and control over those resources; or a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community, and a critical understanding of their environment [10, p. 207].

Research Background. The study conducted by Lindberg and Vingård «Indicators of healthy work environment — a systematic review» is based on reviewing many scientific articles. The authors defined such indicators as: teamwork, growth and development of the individual, recognition, employee involvement, positive, approachable and fair leader, autonomy and empowerment, appropriate staffing, skilled communication and safe physical work [11, p. 3036].

According to the study of Kristina Areskoug Josefsson and her colleagues «Staff experiences of HWE indicators at well — functioning primary care units in Sweden: a qualitative study» 13 healthy work environment indicators have been measured: positive, approachable and fair leader, high-skilled communication, collaboration, positive social climate, employee involvement, autonomy/empowerment, role clarity with clear exception and goals, recognition, growth and development of the individual at work, moderate work pace and workload, administrative and/or personal support at work, safe physical work, good relation with stakeholders. The result of their study shows that the healthy work environment has strong impact on well-functioning of the organization [12, p. 408].

The results of another study which is titled «Intensive care nurses» perceptions of their work environment, psychological distress and the factors that affect them» show that the planning of intensive care nurses should involve the preferences to work in the intensive care unit, the desire to continue, job satisfaction, adequate support and how weekly working time affects the job satisfaction of the nurses and the risk of mental illness. By increasing the satisfaction of the working environment in nurses, the risk of mental problems can be reduced [13, p. 100].

The authors of the study «Development of Healthy Work Environment Standards for Nurses in Turkey» identified 13 core standards and 92 substandards in the first round of the Dolphy method. Those 13 main

standards include patient-nurse ratio/workforce planning, improving the qualifications of nurses and career planning, working hours and home and work life balance, nurses» safety, healthy work and social rights, physical conditions and equipment, nurse-nurse and nurse-other employees communication or team cooperation, remuneration, management approach and relations with managers, motivation and job satisfaction, control of accountability in job description and autonomy/applications, leadership, ensuring quality of care, information and technology [14, p. 34].

Research method. In this study survey method is applied which is a type of research used to determine the current situation. In such a research sampling is quite extensive. Conducting a questionnaire is the easiest way to get extensive sampling. This research was conducted among all workers of carpet weaving companies at Akchakh district (410 workers) and according to the Morgan's sampling table 120 respondents were selected. Then the questionnaire was provided to 120 workers, the data were analyzed by using SPSS25, the necessary information for this research was collected using the method of library studies, including books, articles and the method of field studies through the questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this research consists of two main parts. The first part is related to the individual or so-called demographic characteristics of the tested sample (includes information such as gender, experience and age). The second part is related to the hypothesis test, which includes 42 questions that include the empowerment, individual training & development, teamwork, work-life balance, workload and supervisor-relation. In this questionnaire a 5-point Likert scale was used. To check the reliability of questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was used. Table 1 shows the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha.

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.909	42

Source: research data

The reliability increases as the alpha value gets closer to 1, and decreases as the value gets lower. The SPSS 25 program was used to calculate the alpha coefficient. The results show great reliability of the questionnaire. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to identify the normality of distributed data. The p-value is less than 0.05, so data distribution is not normal. Table 2 shows the result of normality tests.

Table 2

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Empowerment	.137	119	.001	.969	119	.048
Learning and Development	.274	119	.000	.830	119	.000
Teamwork	.096	119	.042	.964	119	.031
Work-life balance	.222	119	.000	.930	119	.000
Workload	.135	119	.002	.966	119	.039
Supervisor relationship	.117	119	.013	.938	119	.001
Growth of carpet weaving industries	.377	119	.000	.718	119	.000

^aLilliefors Significance Correction

Source: research data

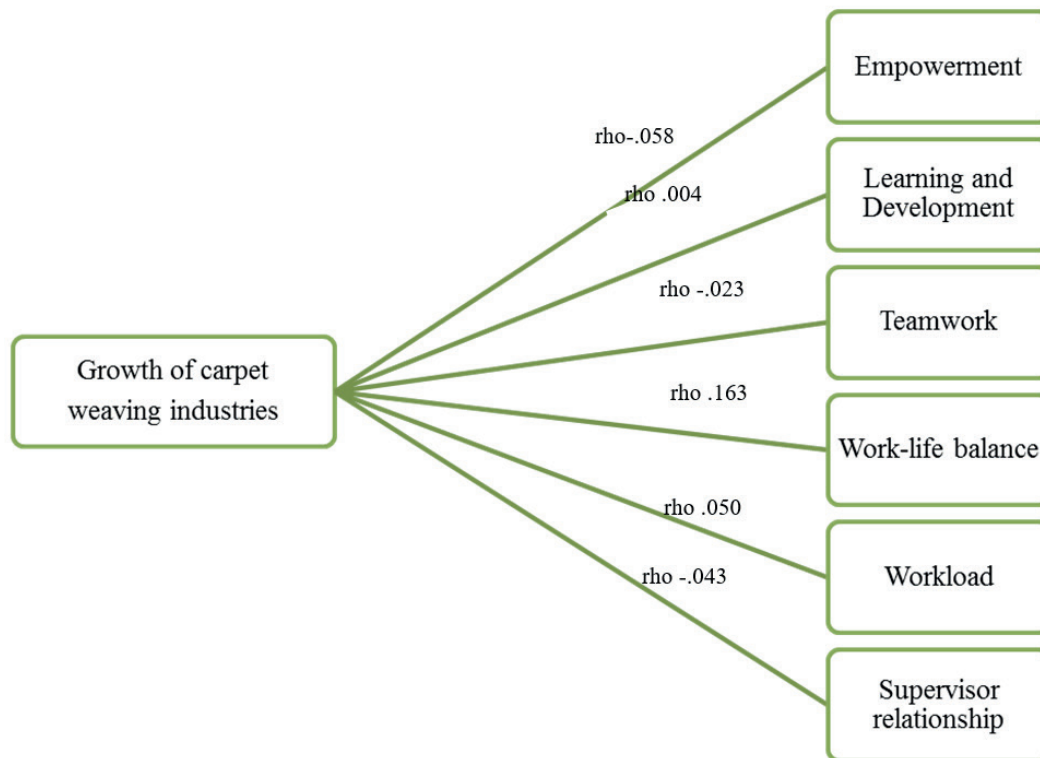
Table 3

Correlations

			Empowerment	Learning and Development	Teamwork	Work-life balance	Workload	Supervisor relationship	Growth of carpet weaving industries
Spearman's rho	Empowerment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.489**	.468**	.272*	.084	.350**	-.058
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.018	.469	.002	.616
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Learning and Development	Correlation Coefficient	.489**	1.000	.128	.097	.121	.298**	.004
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.274	.403	.299	.009	.974
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Teamwork	Correlation Coefficient	.468**	.128	1.000	.504**	.298**	.263*	-.023
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.274	.	.000	.009	.023	.845
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Work-life balance	Correlation Coefficient	.272*	.097	.504**	1.000	.267*	.393**	.163
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.403	.000	.	.020	.000	.160
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Workload	Correlation Coefficient	.084	.121	.298**	.267*	1.000	.175	.050
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.469	.299	.009	.020	.	.131	.670
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Supervisor relationship	Correlation Coefficient	.350**	.298**	.263*	.393**	.175	1.000	-.043
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.009	.023	.000	.131	.	.713
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Growth of carpet weaving industries	Correlation Coefficient	-.058	.004	-.023	.163	.050	-.043	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.616	.974	.845	.160	.670	.713	.
		N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: research data



*Correlation between dependent and independent
Source: research data*

Results. The results of this study show that that there is neither positive nor significant relation between the dependent and independent variables. However, there was positive and significant relation among such independent variables as empowerment and learning & development, relationship between

teamwork and supervisor; teamwork and work-life balance; work-life balance and supervisor-supervisee relationship. The reason for negative relation between dependent and independent variables is a lack of knowledge of respondents about healthy working environment.

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