



A survey on the Relation between Organizational Health and Organizational Learning across Iran

Mohammad Jafarzadeh

Science and Research University-Department of Management and Accounting, IRAN

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Abstract

Organizational learning is a set of organizational activities such as acquiring knowledge, information distribution, information interpretation, and memory which all these affect positive organizational change in a conscious or unconscious way. According to Garvin, in many schools, learning is a process revealed during the time, is defined as acquiring knowledge, better understanding and performance improvement. This paper is aimed to investigate the relation between organizational health and organizational learning which has been conducted as a case study in Iranian state organizations using descriptive-analytical method. The statistical population of the study includes 420 staffs and managers of state organizations in Tehran. The statistical sample has been selected using simple random sampling method and the sample size has been estimated 200 people using Morgan's table of sample volume. The data gathered through modified organizational health questionnaire of Miles and analyzed using referential statistics (K-S test and regression test) in SPSS software. Findings of the study indicate a significant relation between organizational health components and organizational health. Also, it has been revealed that all organizational health components except relations and resources application have a net and significant impact on organizational learning.

Keywords: Organizational health, organizational learning, Iranian organizations.

Introduction

Many studies have been done regarding organizational learning in Iranian state organizations which is the focus of the present study. In this regards, organizational health is one of the approaches analyzed by researchers and experts. Organizational health is investigated by Miles in 1969¹. As he stated, organization health is not only the factor of surviving in an organization but is organizational development in long-time. Operations of an organization can be occasionally effective or non-effective while sustainable survival, affective power and growth is always continued. Miles classified organizational health in ten important categories. These features are not in contrast with but interact with each other.

In this regards, Soltan Hoseini et al. conducted a study on the relative role of mental health in organizational health in Isfahan's sport organizations, introduced five components for organizational health. As they asserted, personal improvement component of mental health influences five components of organizational health (adaptation, integration, sprite, innovation, relations competency); anxiety control component of mental health influences five components of organizational health (adaptation, problem solving competency, resources support, sprite, relations competency); the signs of being capable and competence of mental health influence seven components of organizational health (adaptation, integration, sprite, innovation, relations competency, focus on goals, problem solving competency); ability to communicate with others component of

mental health influences five components of organizational health (innovation, adaptation, relations competency, sprite, integration); and the ability to face with daily problems and life pressures component of mental health also influences seven components of organizational health (adaptation, problem solving competency, focus on goals, relations competency, sprite, independency, integration)².

Bacall introduced the key factor of organizational health by investigating organizational health resources. The organizational health resources include: Individuals' tendency to establish relations in work and activity (relations management), Knowledge management resources encompassing systematic thinking and learning systematic thinking as well as establishing a continuous learning system in organizations, Organizations' tendency to improve and evaluate management systems simply and clearly (change management) entailing redesigning systems, changing, improving, and creating healthy space by holding organizational health meetings in each institution and entity.

Organizational health help organizations to adjust with environment and make harmony among organization's members to achieve their goals. Many studies have been done regarding the relations between individuals and organization indicating that whether the organization is healthy or not. Organization should be in harmony totally. Similarly, all subsystems of organization should be aligned to achieve their organization's health coordinately. A healthy organization depends on tasks and plays an effective and organized role to provide products

and services. Also, an organization has an important role for coordination at organizational levels to obtain determined goals. Malik et al. (2011) based on their study on the effect of encouraging learning and job attitude in organizational culture of Pakistan's public services, concluded that the older and more experienced staffs have more contribution in their work place and organization. It can be due to their good knowledge and appropriate positioning against organizational processes and policies. The process of organizational development can be achieved when health, as a basic element, is considered as one of the properties of organization. Today, organizational health is treated as the most important property of each organization^{3,4}.

In the present age, organizations observe environments which are increasingly becoming dynamic and controversial. Change is an integral part, i.e. it is the only constant and unchangeable part of the modern world. Today, intangible and spiritual capitals, namely knowledge, are considered as a vital and critical factor. In other words, organizations will be winner against changes in order to improve their knowledge. But notably, achieving to knowledge is not possible but through learning. Learning is the key factor of gaining knowledge properties and increasing intangible capitals⁵. Knowledge feeds and promotes the learning organization. Losing individuals may not affect an organization but losing knowledge damages an organization undoubtedly. Organizational health plays a critical role to support organization learning since wise sharing facilitates group knowledge. Organizational health is one of the most obvious indices of organizational effectiveness measured by various dimensions including focus on goal, relations competency, optimum power distribution, resources application, unity and integrity, innovation, spirit, independency, adaptation, and problem solving competency^{1,6,7}.

Now, the question raised here is that whether learning in each organizational structure and framework will be taken place or/and it is need to provide an appropriate opportunity? As a

response, it should be said that all organizations learn; that is, they adjust with surrounding environment but some learn more effectively and outperform in the modern highly competitive environment. Such organizations move through the direction of achieving the features of learning organization and forming their structure in accordance with a learning organization (SobhanNejad et al., 2010)⁵.

Learning organizations provide a more effective and useful learning by creating team-based structure leading to knowledge creation, increasing it and adjusting with variable environment better. Learning organization is the place of initiating organizational learning. In such organization, learning and knowledge are two interrelated elements; that is, learning leads to creating new knowledge and relearning new knowledge creates a new knowledge⁵.

Organizational health with organizational learning approach is facilitating the process of knowledge creation and share with providing positive work environments and effective rewards system⁵. If an organization have a strong motivation to learn, it will create structures and processes that move towards out of the organization with balanced and complementary efforts to acquire knowledge^{5,8}.

Environmental changes force organizations to adjust with their environment continuously, look for the best strategies to gain competitive advantages since the only solution of future organizations against changes is to turn into learning organization. One basic way of changing into a learning organization is to apply knowledge management within knowledge organization. Knowledge management accelerate organizational learning by facilitating the process of knowledge creation and share with providing positive work environments and effective rewards system; and in this way it help organizations to adjust with the modern hasty changes and survive consistent with changes successfully.⁹

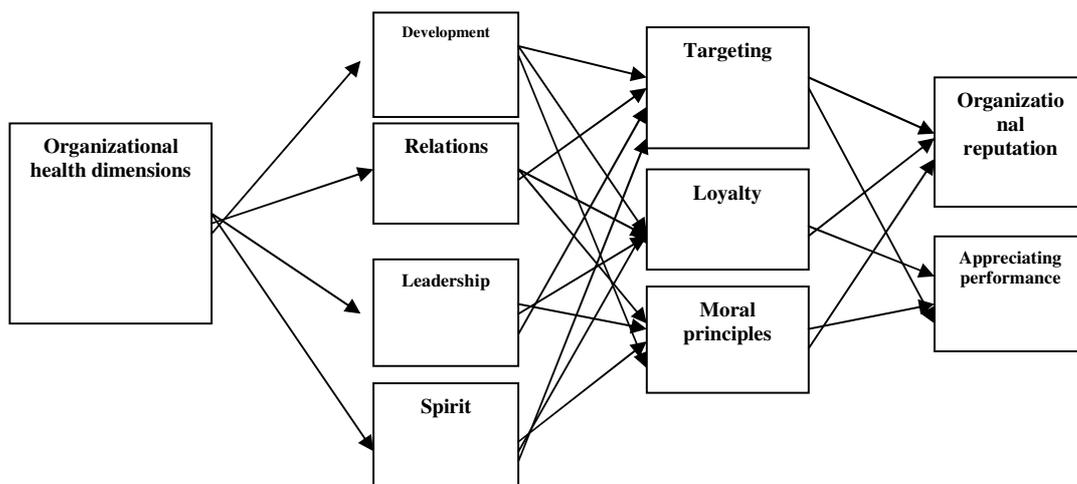


Figure-1
 Conceptual model of organizational health

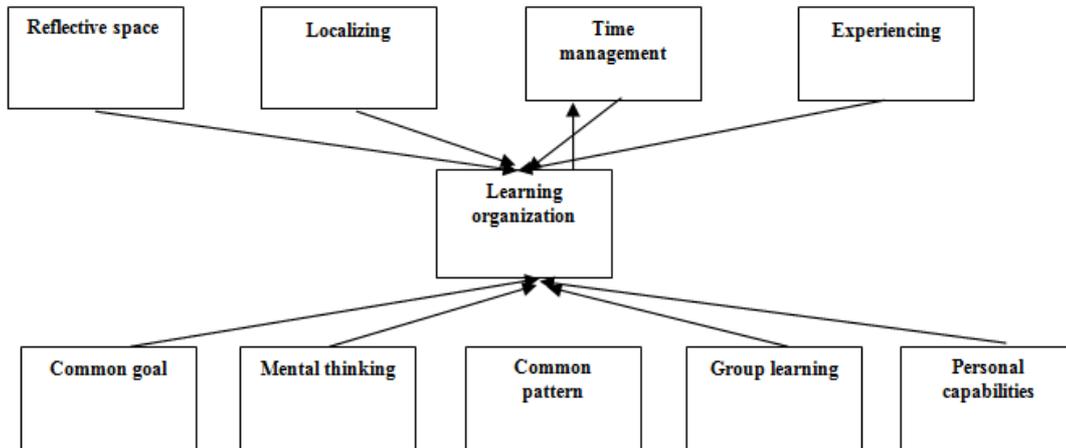


Figure-2
Conceptual model of learning organization

In a healthy organization, the goals of organization are clear for most of the members and all activities are accomplished to achieve the goals; staffs have a sense of attachment to their organization and are interested to make comments about problems since they act optimistically to solve those problems.

Methodology

The present research was an applied study using descriptive-analytical method. The statistical population of the study includes 420 staffs and managers of state organizations in Tehran. The statistical sample has been selected using simple random sampling method and the sample size has been estimated 200 people using Morgan’s table of sample volume. The data was gathered through modified organizational health questionnaire of Miles (1962)¹. The questionnaire was in the form of 5 alternatives of very high, high, average, low, and very low rated 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. The questionnaire containing 30 items measured organizational health in 10 components of focus on goal, relations competency, independency, adaptation with environment, and problem solving competency. The content validity of used questionnaire was measured. Accordingly, the primary questionnaire containing 35 items was distributed among 5 professors and experts that they agreed over 30 out of 35 items of the questionnaire. Also, the questionnaire’s reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s *alpha* coefficient (0/84). Finally, the gathered data was analyzed using referential statistics (K-S test and regression test) in SPSS software¹⁰.

Results and Discussion

Referential statistics: Is there any significant relation between “organizational health and its components” and “organizational learning” in Iranian state organizations?

To investigate the effects of independent variables and discover fitted model, multi-variable regression method has been used¹¹.

Table-1
Entered and removed variables

Model	Entered variables	Removed variables	Regression method
First	Organizational health components	-	ENTER

In above model, all the considered variables have been entered into the model without any determined order or specific ranking and then have been analyzed.

Table-2
Entered and removed variables

Model	Multiple correlation coefficient	Determined coefficient	Balanced determination coefficient
Organizational health components	0/818	0/669	0/646

Table-2 indicates the relations between independent variables (organizational health components) and dependent variable (organizational learning). In other words, the amount of organizational learning changes based on the effects of organizational health components` effects equals with 0/67 which is 0/64 by accurate estimation of degree of freedom for each variable (this coefficient is strong and indicates the relative efficiency of the model). Therefore, 67% of organizational learning changes can be determined and predicted by organizational health components¹².

According to table-3, it is concluded that the relation is significant at the confidence level of 99%. In other words, a significant relation between organizational health components and organizational learning exists¹³.

Table-3
ANOVA analysis and determining the significance level of the model

Model	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F statistic	P-Value
Determined (Regression)	125/709	10	12/57	8/73	0/000
Residual	62/084	43	1/44		
Total	187/793	53			

Table-4
Regression weight coefficients

Model's factors	Non-standard B	Standard B	t-value	P-Value
Constant Coefficient	0/465	-	1/115	0/267
Focus on goal	0/288	0/328	3/750	0/000
Relations	0/108	0/110	1/87	0/098
Power Distribution	0/205	0/224	2/798	0/010
Resources Application	0/059	0/056	0/114	0/210
Correlation	0/214	0/228	2/890	0/010
Spirit	0/217	0/218	2/650	0/011
Innovation	0/231	0/228	2/8	0/010
Independency	0/559	0/581	9/502	0/000
Adaptation with Environment	0/221	0/214	2/213	0/014
Problem Solving Competency	0/385	0/356	3/090	0/000

According to table-4, the value of weight coefficients of each variable on each standard and non-standard dependent variable (Bs), the value of t test, the observed error level of each variable with dependent variable have been considered.

The base of standardized weight effects of focus on goal component is 0/328, relations component is 0/110, power distribution component is 0/224, resources application component is 0/056, correlation component is 0/228, spirit component is 0/218, innovation component is 0/228, independency is 0/581, adaptation with environment is 0/214, and problem solving competency is 0/356. Among them, independency component has the most significant effect in organizational learning. Therefore firstly, variable regression equation of organizational learning can be stated based on independent variables and constant coefficient value; secondly, the amount of each independent variable's effect for each change in dependent variable can be predicted. Also, the value of t statistic and significance level indicate a net and significant effect of all components (other than relations and resources

application) in organizational learning¹⁴.

Conclusion

Based on the issues presented in the present study and the findings obtained by previous works, managers should take into consideration that: Profession and efficiency of forces at technical and administrative levels are highly important factors in continuous growth, improvement and survival of an organization. In fact, good performance of forces contribute to an organization system's effectiveness. Effectiveness of Iranian's state organizations will involve the members to determine goals, philosophy, principles, criteria, and control of educational processes. Such participation and involvement entail many advantages such as continuous improvement of individual and organizational efficiency, job and mental security, staff's and customers' satisfaction, increasing motivation, recognizing talents, providing the opportunity of progress, promoting scientific and innovative spirit, promoting collaborative spirit, accelerating and specifying the process of decision making in organization that all of them totally will lead to increasing organizational health and organizational learning in Iranian state organizations.

Healthy organizations demand influential managers. Such managers should be well informed with organizational health properties and also be specialist and leader in their scope. Their leadership feature causes to create scientific spirit and responsibility and increase mental health, individual and organizational efficiency of organization's members.

The other implication of the study is that organizational change is a continuous process of testing and adaptation fitting organization's capabilities with dynamic and indefinite needs of the modern environment. Gathering information, relations and organizational learning are the main elements of this process since learning act as a catalyst. Although these concepts were related to commercial and productive organizations, they have gradually extended into services section. Organizational learning is an important factor enabling manager to treat with changes properly, promptly and effectively, make the best use of potential opportunities, and move toward organization's improvement and achievement. Further, it helps that organization provide high quality services and products in a short period. There is a necessity of more changes to survive in order to the factors mentioned earlier such as entering a competitive space and use of market mechanisms. Hence, achieving the health system and meeting the ends and expectations of society need to determine change and modification plans.

Finally, using the relation of organizational health and organizational learning is suggested for better adjustment with environment, increasing services quality, staffs' and customers' satisfaction, decreasing costs, decreasing delivery times, and so forth¹⁵.

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