THE EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY WITH MEDIATOR ROLE OF SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE HEADQUARTERS OF NATIONAL COMPANY OF THE OIL-RICH REGIONS IN SOUTH- AHVAZ

Ghanbar Amirnejad¹ and *Zahra Milad²

¹Khoozestan Azad Islamic University
²Department of Executive Management, Khoozestan Branch of Research and Technology, Azad Islamic University
*Author for Correspondence

ABSTRACT

This research mainly aimed at investigation of the effects of organizational culture on organizational agility with a mediator role at sharing knowledge. The research population is consisting of 500 expert and managers selected from headquarters of national company of the oil-rich regions in South- Ahvaz. Based on goals, the research method was applied and is considered as descriptive research according to data collection method but it is causal when taking the relationship among research variables in the account and is clearly based on structural equation modeling. Research variables are measured through questionnaires and then analyzed by SPSS 18 and LISREL 8.5 software. Results of analysis indicated that the organizational culture has a significant and positive effect on the organizational agility and knowledge sharing. The knowledge sharing by itself affects the organizational agility directly. The results of hypotheses study confirm the mediator role of the knowledge sharing variable in the relationships between the organizational culture and agility capacities.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Organizational Agility, Knowledge Sharing, Headquarters of National Company of the Oil-rich Regions in South- Ahvaz

INTRODUCTION

The modern business in 21st century has accepted the change as a main characteristic (Huang et al., 2012). Experts have expressed the reasons of business world developments as accessibility to technology, intensive competition developing technologies, markets globalization, commercial competition and rapid accessibility to technologies. Thus, we cannot run and control organizations traditionally and based on past methods. A useful and effective response to these changes obtaining competitive advantage from opportunities derived from them requires the organizational agility (Shahabi, 2006). The organizational agility is considered as an infrastructure for performance and competitive advantage (Verli & Lover, 2010). Firms mostly involve competitive capabilities improvement when facing competitive pressures. If organizations developed their organizational agility, they would be able to overcome changing and vague business environment. Zhang & Sharifi (2000) developed methodology for obtaining agility capacities within manufacturing companies and classified it into four categories: accountability, competence, flexibility and speed (Almahamid et al., 2010).

Organizational culture is seen as an agility component (Jafarnejad & Shahaei, 2007). Organizational Culture evolution may be an indispensable way of achieving agility. This change must be trained to all staff (e.g. managers, experts and workforces) as short as possible time (Jafarneja & Zarei, 2005). Most of experts and researchers, have studied the organizational culture as a resource of competitive advantage (Ghorbani et al., 2009). The organizational culture includes unique pattern of presumptions, common values and norms which form sociability actions, language, symbols and organizational operations (Vosoghi, 2011). The organizational identifies the organization itself (Zehir et al., 2011; Cheung et al., 2011) and helps members’ coordination (Aghajani, 2013). Organizations have their own organizational identity and culture which is applicable between the organization and members in an unwritten contract. Unlike non-agility organizations, the culture of agile organization is dynamic, that is to say that it is based
on trust and respect of members (Jafarnejad & Shahaei, 2010). The concept of organizational culture has been considered as an effective factor on organizational productivity and performance and in case that there is a well-established business culture between management and personnel the result will be solid organizational commitment and higher performance and productivity. In his model, Denison measures dimensions of culture within four main lines including work engagement, compatibility, and adaptability and mission each measured by three criteria (Rahimnia & Alizade, 2008). On the other hand, sensation, forecast and reaction against opportunities and threats of market are essential for being preserved and successful in a very intense competitive environment (Huang et al., 2012). In order to achieve such an advantage, organizations need approaches to be able to achieve even competitive advantage over their rivals through exchanging and producing knowledge (Soekijad and Andreessen, 2012). Therefore, it’s expected that measures on knowledge sharing will lead in firms’ accountability to grow in organizational departments as well as actively change the business environment (Azhdari et al., 2011). Knowledge sharing includes knowledge distribution and transfer from one person, group, or organization to another. This definition refers to kinds of knowledge; implicit and explicit (Lee, 2001). Explicit knowledge is one that is compiled and shares facts and information (McNabb, 2007). It may also be codified and is distinguishable when distributed among people (MohammadiFateh et al., 2008). While implicit one is of personal nature and is rooted in action, commitment and participation. Reychave and Weisberg (2009) classified knowledge sharing into two categories of explicit and implicit (Azhdari et al., 2000). Organizational culture must be an extraordinary one such that allows the knowledge to be freely dominant over the organization (Downport and Provak, 2000). Most of projects and profiles fail due to lack of attention and concentration on the culture issue. One must not take it for granted that knowledge management consists of software and hardware dealing with knowledge production, protection and documentation. Cultural challenges including knowledge withdrawal may lead to failure of all profiles.

Therefore, regarding the importance of organizational agility and enriching knowledge sharing trends among staff and organization and due to the effects of the organizational culture on various aspects of an organization, we practiced in this research to investigate the effects of organizational culture (based on Denissions’ model, 2000) on the way of explicit and implicit knowledge sharing (based on Reychave and Weisberg’s model, 2009) and organizational agility (based on Sharifi and Zhang’s model, 2000) in headquarters of national company of the oil-rich regions in South- Ahvaz. Thereby through a culture validating knowledge, there would be taken a giant step toward improvement and development of knowledge sharing as well as organizational performance. The openness and trust orientation is central to good infrastructure and cultural infrastructure is essential for knowledge sharing (Sharifzade and Boodlayi, 1387).

Research Theory Framework
This section reviews literature on the organizational culture, knowledge sharing, and organizational agility.

Organizational Culture
Croccito and Yousef (2003) believe that the organizational culture is considered as an element achieving organizational agility (Jafarnejad & Shahaei, 2010). Cultural modification is an unmatched solution achieving agility; such a modification should be trained to all staff in a short term as possible (Jafarnejad & Zarei, 2005). Most of experts have studied the organizational culture as a source of competitive advantage. The organizational culture includes unique pattern of presumptions, common values and norms which form sociability actions, language, symbols and organizational operations (Vosooghi, 2011). The organizational identifies the organization itself (Zehir et al., 2011; Cheung et al., 2011) and helps members’ coordination (Aghajani, 2013). Organizations have their own organizational identity and culture which is applicable between the organization and members in an unwritten contract. Unlike non-agility organizations, the culture of agile organization is dynamic, that is to say that it is based on trust and respect of members (Jafarnejad & Shahaei, 2010). The concept of organizational culture has been considered as an effective factor on organizational productivity and performance and in case that there is a well-established business culture between management and personnel the result will be solid.
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Knowledge Sharing
National, regional and global increasing competition has changed competitive advantage to a most critical factor of organizations’ survive and growth. This competition is more serious within certain organizations. Knowledge management and its approaches are considered as a necessity to be successful within such an environment (Javadin et al., 2011). In fact, the knowledge management is a very important concept of modern business and is considered as the most prioritized investment. Malhotra (2001) defines the knowledge management as a process through which the organizations obtain skills regarding learning, knowledge deciphering, and knowledge distribution and transfer. Steve (2001) discusses the knowledge management as a process through which the organizations can transfer data to information and information to knowledge as well as they can use obtained knowledge effectively in their decision making process.

Knowledge management seeks to apply the organizational knowledge effectively generating new knowledge and obtaining and preserving competitive advantage (Bakhshizade, 2011). Although terms related to knowledge management have been used since 1980, knowledge management have been in existence since several decades ago. Peter Drucker devised the term “knowledge workers” initially early 1960. Peter (1990) discusses “learning organization”; an organization which can learn from past experiences stored in organizational memory systems. Monaca and Takeuchi (1990) indicated that how the knowledge is generated, applied and shared in the organization and how such kind of knowledge helps imitativeness (Dalkir, 2005).

The knowledge management can be defined as a systematic method and a set of approaches which provides the knowledge to be generated, flow and expand over the organization (Bakhshizade, 2011). All intact organizations create and use the knowledge. Organizations following the interactions with their surrounding atmosphere absorb certain information and transfer to knowledge. Then, mix this knowledge to experiences, values and internal regulations to make a basis for their measurements. The most successful organizations are those made the knowledge management as in inseparable in their staff’s work (Danport & Prodak, 2000).

Organizational Agility
New business in the 21st century recognized change as one of the main features (Huang et al., 2012). Most experts consider reasons of changes in the business world as growing access to technology, intense competition in IT development, globalization of markets, business competition and rapid development of technology, therefore, in such an environment, the organized cannot be guided based on traditional methods. To achieve organizational agility is require for effective response to these changes and gain competitive advantage from their opportunities (Departments, 1385).

Agility term officially the first time was used in 1991 by the Research Institute of Iacocca in Lee University, in a report entitled "The strategy of manufacturing enterprises in the twenty-first century: the perspective of industry experts" (Iacocca, 1991). Later, Peter Drucker, for the first time, introduced the Institute agile to the business world (Jafarnejad and Shahaei, 1389).

Brian (2001) defines agility as the ability to prosperity in an environment of constant change and unpredictable (Maskell, 2001). Organizational agility underlies the performance and competitive advantage of a company (Verli and Lovler, 2010). Zhang and Sharifi (2000) developed method for achieving agility in manufacturing companies’ capabilities, and were divided into four groups (Almahamidy et al., 2010) (Figure 1-1). This agility features include:
1. Responsiveness, the ability to identify changes to respond quickly.
2. Competency, efficiency and effectiveness of the organization in achieving its goals.
3. Flexibility, the ability to run different processes and different goals.
4. The speed or quickness, the ability to reach a peak of activity in the shortest possible time (Jafarnejad and Ahmadi, 2011).
Conceptual Model

According to the literature and the study of literature, in this study, the conceptual model to examine the influence of organizational culture on organizational agility mediator knowledge sharing was accepted and evaluated.

Research Hypotheses

H1: the organizational culture affects knowledge sharing in headquarters of national company of the oil-rich regions in South-Ahvaz.

H2: the organizational culture affects organizational agility in headquarters of national company of the oil-rich regions in South-Ahvaz.

H3: the organizational culture affects organizational agility through mediator role of knowledge sharing in headquarters of national company of the oil-rich regions in South-Ahvaz.

Materials and Methods

Research Method

This research is applied regarding its objectives and descriptive regarding the data collection method. It also is causal research when taking the relationships between variables in account. The research population consists of 500 experts and managers of headquarters of national company of the oil-rich regions in South-Ahvaz out of which 217 were selected using Krejcie and Morgan’s table and stratified random sampling. In all, 217 questionnaires were distributed and the same numbers were collected.

Table 1: Variable expression, research measurement tools specifications and reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Type of variable</th>
<th>source</th>
<th>Reliability coefficient</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>Denison (2000)</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>mediator</td>
<td>Reychave and Weisberg’s model, 2009-lee’s Standard questionnaire, 2001</td>
<td>.0915</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational agility</td>
<td>dependent</td>
<td>Sharifi &amp; Zhang (2000)</td>
<td>.877</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions classified into two categories; general and technical. The general ones include information about respondents’ demographic characteristic like age, gender, experience, and degree. Technical
questions have provided in the form of three standard questionnaires of the organizational culture, knowledge sharing, and organizational agility. They are based on five point Likert scale (very low, low, moderate, high, very high). In order to determine reliability of those questionnaires, Cronbach Alpha applied using statistical software of SPSS,18. The number of items provided for measuring each latent variable and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient are determined in table 1.

As seen from the above table, Cronbach alpha coefficient indicates reliability of tools. In order to test questions validity, content validity and reliability methods were used. Experts and academics commented on questionnaire content validity and finally it was ensured that the questionnaire measures what meant by experts. The questionnaire factor validity test was performed using confirmatory factor analysis and LISEREL software. It’s observed form results listed in table 2 that both measurement models meet mentioned conditions and are suitable. Results indicate that the research questionnaire is of proper validity and reliability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings
This section outlines the results of confirmatory factor analysis models and measurement of the results of the test hypotheses using SPSS and LISREL.

Evaluation of Measurement Model
in structural equation modeling, it is necessary to ensure the accuracy of measurement models. So following section presents the results of confirmatory factor analysis models to measure the variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Measurement models comparison</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement model</th>
<th>Confirmatory factor analysis</th>
<th>□12</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>□□□df</th>
<th>valuep</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture</td>
<td>Second order</td>
<td>555.53</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.06995</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Second order</td>
<td>8.04</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.78228</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.099</td>
<td>0.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational agility</td>
<td>Second order</td>
<td>45.01</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.27013</td>
<td>0.024</td>
<td>0.096</td>
<td>0.094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Structural model of study to test the main hypothesis in the standard estimate
As shown in Table 2, the results of confirmatory factor analysis models to measure organizational culture, sharing knowledge and organizational agility show that the main criteria fitting of all latent variables is in appropriate and acceptable scope.

Figure 3: A significance numbers of coefficients of the structural model to test the main hypothesis
In other words, to a large degree conceptual models are based on observed data. As well as to identify research variables; mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients between structures, organizational culture, knowledge sharing and organizational agility were tested (Table 3). As well, we observed that all variables are in good condition. Results of correlation analysis also show that there is a positive relationship between organizational culture, knowledge sharing and organizational agility.

The Results of the Study Hypothesis Test

After confirmatory factor analysis and identification of latent variables in this section we will test research hypotheses with appropriate analysis. To test the hypotheses we used LISREL software and structural equation model. The implementation of structural equation modeling to test the hypothesis, research, software output first indicates that the structural model is fitted (55/1 = df/χ2; 0.051 = RMSEA; 0.96= GFI; 0.92= AGFI; 0.97 = NFI; 0.98 ,NNFI =; 0.99 = CFI). In other words, the observed data to a large degree is based on this research conceptual model (Figure 2). Figure 3 also shows obtained coefficients from parameters of the structural model are significant. Structural equation modeling results indicate that organizational culture has a positive and significant impact on organizational agility (β = 0.44; t = 10.82) and knowledge the sharing (β = 0.52; t = 6.07) at company headquarters office in the oil-rich South Ahvaz. Knowledge Sharing has also a direct impact on organizational agility (β = 0.91; t = 8.37). The results of hypothesis test confirm the mediatory effects of knowledge sharing variable related to organizational culture and agility capabilities (β: 0.52 * 0.91 = 0.4732> β: 0.44). The null hypothesis is rejected and all research presumptions are confirmed.

Conclusion

To identify and examine the behavior of members of an organization, awareness of organizational culture is an important fundamental step. Thus, culture is core for any kind of action because it facilitates changes. Many experts and scholars studied organizational culture as a source of competitive advantage. The concept of organizational culture as a factor in productivity and performance of the organization is considered a good thing if appropriate culture between management and employees is extended to strengthen the organizational commitment, enhancement of morality, higher performance and efficiency. However, to achieve competitive advantage, organizations need solutions that enable them to get through the exchange of knowledge; even to its competitors that will achieve it. The sharing of knowledge within the organization is expected to increase the company's ability to respond actively and creatively to the changing business environment. The organizational culture should be a great cultural so that knowledge freely and easily dominates the organization. The openness and trust is central to good infrastructure and cultural infrastructure for knowledge sharing is essential.

- Organizational culture has a significant positive correlation with organizational agility. The finding represents the first hypothesis is confirmed. Accordingly, it can be concluded that creating appropriate organizational agility may be accompanied by improved capabilities. The results partly confirm previous research that has been done in this area. For example, Jacob et al., (2013), Taylor et al., (2012), Tsing (2010), Yilmaz and Organ (2008), the Ghorbani et al., (1388).
- Organizational culture has a significant positive correlation with the knowledge sharing. The finding represents the second hypothesis is confirmed. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the organizational culture is strong, shared knowledge is coupled with much success. In fact, if there is effective infrastructure and cultural context as well as clear and flexible procedures and structures to form work teams, then it can increase the desire and motivation of knowledge sharing. The results partly confirm previous research that has been done in this area. For example, Sapiio and Sandho (2011) in their study showed that different types of organizational culture affects the behavior of sharing tacit knowledge and culture of this effect could be positive or negative based on the culture. The results of Taher et al., (2010) also showed that the corporate culture facilitate the implementation of processes related to knowledge management. Other similar studies include Khakipoor et al., (2009), Bavakhany (2008), Shafii et al., (2011), Alavi and Lidner (2001), Lee (2008).

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• Knowledge sharing mediates the relationship between organizational culture and organizational agility. The results indicated that the third hypothesis is confirmed. On this basis, we can conclude that the effort to create a cultural context and make appropriate and effective knowledge management processes and efforts to share knowledge, the agility and the ability to rapidly respond to change and complex environment is changing. The results partly confirm previous research that has been done in this area. For example, research, Chang and Lee (2007), which examines the impact of organizational culture and knowledge management mechanisms focused on organizational innovation, DowlatAbadi et al., (2013) also, explores the impact of organizational culture on knowledge sharing and the development of their agility.

Suggestions
- Training and staff development through workshops to introduce the values of the society and culture of the organization and their behavior accepted by the organization, as well as familiarity and encourage their participation, teamwork, and all the business skills;
- creating learning atmosphere, supportive culture, competitive environment, are features of a favorable environment for the implementation of knowledge management.
- The role of managers and organizational leaders is also important, so that by introducing the benefits of knowledge management and knowledge sharing can also motivate people to eliminate cultural barriers in this respect.
- Through attention to the needs of managers and employees and to create opportunities for their growth and prosperity, it is possible to create a supportive and friendly culture of knowledge sharing behavior.
- design a framework for competence of directors and staff, including knowledge, skills and abilities to plan their development based on competencies;
- Effort to create a supportive culture through incentive systems for enriching creativity and innovation, learning and company human resource development;
- Development of cooperative behavior and the behavior of knowledge sharing, in order to establish constructive relationships and the exchange of information among employees.

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