Studying the Relationship between the Process of Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Agility among personnel of Agriculture-Jahad Organization in Share-Kord

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Abstract

The purpose of present research was to examine the relationship between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing among personnel of Agriculture – Jahad Organization in Share-kord.

The study has been of Descriptive-correlation method. In order to collect data a self-made questionnaire for Agility and knowledge sharing questionnaire that both questionnaire had superficial and construct validity. Their reliability were calculated through Chronbach’s Alfa that organizational agility questionnaire and process of knowledge sharing obtained 0/95 and 0/93 respectively. Research population included all of the staff, assistants, managers and senior experts at Jehad - Keshavarzi in Shahre-Kord in 2012, that 150 of them were selected as research sample through Morgan table. Results showed that with 95% confidence, there is a positive relationship between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing. Also findings showed that there is a positive relationship between adaptable organization design and process of knowledge sharing, and leadership and Identity and process of knowledge sharing, that their amount respectively equal to 50% and 56%.

Keywords: Adaptable organization design, Organizational agility, Process of knowledge sharing, Robust strategy, Shared leadership and Identity.
Introduction

Competition in uncertain, unpredictable, aggressive environment is characteristics of today's dynamic environment. To develop the skills, competencies, knowledge, abilities and actions to meet business changes, organizations have to achieve and maintain competitive advantages faster than their competitors (Porter, 1985).

Organization design is a cornerstone of a firm’s competitive advantage and performance. Research is clear that even the most cunning strategy will not reach its potential if an organization’s structures, processes, and systems do not support it.

The “new normal” requires organizations to have an amazing amount of agility just to survive, let alone thrive. Agility is a dynamic organization design capability that can sense the need for change from both internal and external sources, carry out those changes routinely, and sustain above-average performance. The final characteristic – sustained above-average performance – is the sine qua non of agility. Many firms are able to push their performance to above average in the short run; the real issue is dynamically aligning structures, processes, and systems to sustain it.

The change is of the most important characteristics of the organizations and institutes in terms of competitiveness. Agility is the organization’s ability to the change that can use its opportunities. An agile organization is a firm that changes itself and also adapts itself with environmental changes as a successful strategy. The concept of agility was presented in the report of “the strategy of productive businesses in the 21\textsuperscript{th}: perspective of the industrial experts” by research institute of Yakota in University of Lehigh. Later, Peter Dracker introduced the concept of agile organization for the first time.

In the nowadays world, knowledge is considered as an integral component of the organizations. On the other hand, because the intellectual capital and intangible assets are the most important factors for organizations, so knowledge has critical role in the nowadays organizations. Therefore, the organizations must provide a climate for sharing, transferring, and exchanging knowledge among members and also educate them. The organizational managers also must pave grounds for recognizing the effective factors on the knowledge management implementation (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

Because the manpower is considered as the main organizational resource and has the most important role in achieving competitive advantage for organizations, so human resources should have necessary skills and expertise. It is obvious that the knowledge and information are the most important instrument and resource of power in the organizations. On the other hand, it is should be remembered that the individuals own information is not sufficient. Therefore, transmitting, sharing, and changing the knowledge is considered as an important presumption for organizations.
The concentration on creation and recognition of the implicit knowledge and sharing explicit knowledge through cultural inter-organizational reengineering, use of the advanced technology, and necessity of emphasis on the creative and effective leadership are the main effective factors on the organizations’ success in the nowadays competitive markets.

The variable environment is a motivation for creating organizational agility capabilities. Because the agility capabilities of the organizations are necessary for improving organizations’ ability, it is necessary to share the knowledge among organizational members. It seems that process of knowledge sharing is the primary key to rapid, active, and creative responding in the ever-changing business environments. With regard to the previous descriptions, the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord needs a considerable level of knowledge sharing so that can have flexible reaction in dealing with unpredicted changes and has compatibility with environment. This means that every organization must acquire an appropriate level of organizational agility. The present study has been aimed to examine the relationship between organizational agility and knowledge sharing process. On the other hand, the purpose of process of knowledge sharing in the organization is to acquire organizational agility and also organizational agility characteristics can reinforce the organizational agility climate in the organization. For this purpose, the following section reviews the concept and definitions of organizational agility and then examines the relationship between them in the agriculture Jahad organization in the city of Shahrekord.

**Literature review**

With regard to the definition of knowledge management, knowledge sharing is one of the key areas in knowledge management. In other words, it can be said that since the knowledge is a key element for organizational performance, it is necessary to exploit, preserve, and maintain knowledge management. Based on the results of the study that has been done by Alavi and Linder in can be concluded that while organizations create and learn the knowledge, but they will forget it. This means that they do not pursue the learned knowledge. Therefore, efforts that done to store, organize, and recover the organizational knowledge refer to organizational memory and so it is considered as the main aspect of organizational knowledge (Alavi and Linder, 2001: 107-136).

Knowledge sharing includes wide interactions between employees to distribute and absorb the knowledge and experience (Sheng, 1998).

Thus knowledge sharing is not stimulated by imposing structures and tools but by rich social interaction and its immersion in practice. Also, knowledge sharing is more than transferring knowledge, but creating it – less exploitation of existing knowledge than generation of new knowledge (Hooff & Huysman, 2009:2).

Researchers found that existing intend employees to share knowledge can cause the process of creating new knowledge or combining it, automatically start and expand (Holdt, 2007).
Brocher emphasize on the sending process of knowledge transition that an individual provides the knowledge and then send it for potential receiver and the receiver then receives it (Brochner, 2004: 37).

There are four critical roles in process of knowledge sharing that include professional role, coordinator knowledge, goal-based knowledge, and technical knowledge. Therefore, it is suggested that this process be achieved through different channels that have ability of transiting and sharing knowledge (Holdet, 2007: 15).

It is expected from knowledge sharing methods in the organizational departments that promote the organization’s ability for active and creative responding to the variable environment. Knowledge sharing methods help to decrease costs, respond the customers’ needs, deliver the products and services, and improve business processes and market share (Law and Angi, 2008). On the other hand, an agile organization can decrease production costs and also increase market share, satisfy its customers’ needs, prepare its customers for marketing new products, evaluating and predicting the activities that have not added-value, and increase organization’s profit. Because of these benefits, agile organization theory as a paradigm of the successful organizations in 21\textsuperscript{th} century has many advocates. This also has been introduced as a successfulness strategy in the competitive markets with rapid changes of the customers’ needs.

Agility is the dynamics capability of organization designing which can diagnose needs to change from internal and external sources, do them and control performance stable (Worley & Lawler, 2010)

Yousef et al. (1999) get 32 agility factors together and also summarized them in four main areas. These include key competencies management, virtual organization, organizational modernization, and knowledge-based organization.

Reviewing the components of organizational agility reveals that the following factors are the main components of organizational agility. These factors have been presented by Werly and Lawler (2010). The present study emphasizes these components. These have been defined and described in the following section

\textbf{Robust strategy}

The first feature of agility design is Robust strategy characterized as an ability to introduce results under ambient conditions. Sustainable strategy has three elements: an alternative economic logic, strong emphasis on future and flexible intention (Worley & Lawler, 2010).

Organizations with sustainable capability seek to implement sustainable strategies to gain economic and cultural advantages through responsiveness to the environment (Stead & Stead, 1995).
Each organization has to specifically choose objectives and directions of sustainability regarding to Organizational tendencies and objectives (Van Marrewijk & Were, 2003).

✓ **Adaptable organization design**

Agile organizations have designs to be able to respond quickly to internal and external pressure and to adapt with change in strategy (Worley & Lawler, 2010).

Sharifi and Zhang (2001) mentioned that organizational structure requires creation of adaption regarding to the following actions:

- Cooperation with other organizations
- Increased flexibility with the decentralization and the creation of flexible structures
- Focus on reorganization and innovation.

✓ **Shared leadership and identity**

From Worley & Lawler's (2010) viewpoint, the third feature of organizational agility design is shared leadership and identity. As the most stable feature of agility, identity determines the organization characteristic which, if not change at all, would change very slowly.

Today, the traditional leadership style cannot be effective anymore.

Because of changing hierarchy and traditional structures, it is necessary to examine new styles of leadership such as shared leadership and teamwork (Nygren & Levine, 1995).

Today, the traditional leadership style cannot be effective anymore. This has caused paying much more attention to shared leadership in the past two decades (Jackson, 2000). The shared leadership is the processes of dynamic interaction among members which emphasizes on group, active and multidirectional performance (Bligh et al, 2006).

The philosophy of shared leadership and decentralization leadership are contingent and can improve employees’ empowerment (Konu & Vittanen, 2008). In other words, guiding employees to the shared purpose is one the important tasks of leadership (Lee-Daivies et al, 2007).

To implement shared leadership in organisation paying attention to human resources, involving all staff in measurement, establishing relationships, creating and maintaining a supportive structure and team work is important (Oosterhoff & Rowell, 2004).
Research hypotheses

Primary hypothesis

The primary hypothesis of this study indicates that there are significant relationships between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city.

Secondary hypotheses

1. There are significant relationships between robust strategy and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city.
2. There are significant relationships between adaptive organizational design and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city.
3. There are significant relationships between shared leadership and identity and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city.

Research method

The present study is a descriptive and empirical survey. Total 260 employees, assistants, managers, and senior experts of agriculture Jahad organization in the city of Shahrekord in 2012. The sample size was 150 employees which were chosen by using a Morgan table.

These members have been selected by stratified sampling method. In order to collect data a self-made questionnaire for Agility and knowledge sharing questionnaire that both questionnaire had superficial and construct validity. Their reliability were calculated through Chronbach’s Alfa that organizational agility questionnaire and process of knowledge sharing, obtained 0/95 and 0/93 respectively. The collected data has been analyzed by SPSS and Amos Graphics.

Results

The primary hypothesis of this study indicates that there are significant relationships between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city. This hypothesis examines the relationship between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing in this case. The total measures of model fitness have been indicated in table 1. Also the output of structural equation modeling has been presented in fig. 1.
Table 1: The total measures of model fitness for examining the primary hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMIN</th>
<th>CMIN/DF</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>RMR</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61.99</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1: structural equation modeling for examining the relationship between organizational agility and knowledge sharing process

Table 2: the results of correlation coefficient between organizational agility and knowledge sharing process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number of hypothesis</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Critical value</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Hypothesis status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Organizational agility</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation coefficient between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing is 0.54 (with p≤0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture organization of Shahrekord city.

The first secondary hypothesis of this study indicates that there are significant relationships between robust strategy and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord. This hypothesis examines the relationship between robust strategy and knowledge sharing process. The total measures of model fitness have been indicated in table 2. Also the output of structural equation modeling has been presented in fig. 3. Also the results of correlation coefficient have been indicated in table 4.
Table 3: The total measures of model fitness examining the first secondary hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMIN</th>
<th>CMIN/DF</th>
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<th>RMR</th>
<th>CFI</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>242.48</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2: structural equation modeling for examining the relationship between robust strategy and knowledge sharing process

Table 4: the results of correlations coefficient between robust strategy and process of knowledge sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number of hypothesis</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Critical value</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Robust strategy</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation coefficient between robust strategy and process of knowledge sharing is 0.58 (with p≤0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between robust strategy and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture organization of Shahrekord city.

The second secondary hypothesis of this study indicates that there are significant relationships between adaptive organizational design and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord. This hypothesis examines the relationship between adaptive organizational design and knowledge sharing process. The total measures of model fitness have been indicated in table 5. Also the output of structural equation modeling has been presented in fig. 3. The results of correlation coefficient have been indicated in table 6.
Table 5: The total measures of model fitness examining the second secondary hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CMIN</th>
<th>CMIN/DF</th>
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<th>RMR</th>
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<th>RMSEA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>257.68</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3: structural equation modeling for examining the relationship between adaptive organizational design and knowledge sharing process

Table 6: the results of correlations coefficient between adaptive organizational and process of knowledge sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of hypothesis</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Critical value</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adaptive organizational design</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results of table 6 shows, the correlation coefficient between adaptive organizational design and process of knowledge sharing is 0.50 (with p≤0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant positive correlation between adaptive organizational strategy and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture organization of Shahrekord city.

The third secondary hypothesis of this study indicates that there are significant relationships between shared leadership and identity and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord. This hypothesis examines the relationship between shared leadership and identity and knowledge sharing process. The total measures of model fitness have been indicated in table 7. Also the output of structural equation modeling has been presented in fig. 4. The results of correlation coefficient have been indicated in table 8.
Table 7: The total measures of model fitness examining the third secondary hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMIN</th>
<th>CMIN/DF</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>RMR</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>268.68</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4: Structural equation modeling for examining the relationship between shared leadership and identity and knowledge sharing process

Table 8: The results of correlation coefficient between shared leadership and identity and process of knowledge sharing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number of hypothesis</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Critical value</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Shared leadership and identity</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results of table 8, the correlation coefficient between shared leadership and identity and process of knowledge sharing is 0.56 (with p≤0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that there are significant positive coefficients between shared leadership and identity and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture organization of Shahrekord city.

Conclusion

Analyzing the results of the primary hypothesis indicate that the standardized correlation coefficient of this hypothesis is 0.54 (with p≤0.05). This result shows that there are significant relationships between organizational agility and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city with 0.95 confidences. It should be remembered that the organizations that want to become agile must promote their educated manpower with powerful motivations through critical skills, experience, and knowledge. This is considered as a critical and integrative part of the organizational strategies.
In such organizations, the information and sciences are provided for manpower and it is can be said that thought and knowledge dominate on these organizations as power.

Correlation coefficient between robust strategy and the process of knowledge sharing is 0.58. This finding reveals that there are significant relationships between robust strategy and organizational agility (with $p \leq 0.05$). This result shows that there are significant relationships between robust strategy and the process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city with 0.95 confidences.

On the other hand, correlation coefficient between adaptive organizational strategy and the process of knowledge sharing is 0.50. This reveals that there are significant relationships between adaptive organizational strategy and organizational agility (with $p \leq 0.05$). This result shows that there are significant relationships between adaptive organizational strategy and process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city with 0.95 confidences. Adaptability is a key characteristic of agile organizations. It should be remembered that the adaptive organizational design has several components. This means that not only structural flexibility, but also resources flexibility, shared power, information transparency, development, and flexible rewards are the most important characteristics that show and confirm the relationship between adaptive organizational design and knowledge sharing process.

From structural perspective, an agile organization is similar to the boundary-less firm. This means that such organizations have high level of flexibility in their vertical boundaries (organizational levels), horizontal boundaries (units and departments), external boundaries (local organizations and others), and even geographic organizations (countries). Agile organization is a boundary-less organization that is changing and has continuous process. This results in more information flows in terms of procedures, opportunities, and subjects in decision making. In other words, when individuals perceive an organization is revolting, they will have much communications and knowledge sharing culture. It is possible in such conditions that everyone share his/her information with each other.

The results of correlation coefficient between shared leadership and identity and the process of knowledge sharing is 0.56. This reveals that there are significant relationships between shared leadership and identity and organizational agility (with $p \leq 0.05$). This result shows that there are significant relationships between shared leadership and identity and the process of knowledge sharing in the agriculture Jahad organization of Shahrekord city with 0.95 confidences. An organization can promote leadership and management skills among its employees through involving them in decision making activities. This is necessary that organizational members must play leadership and management roles in different level. These efforts can be considered as job enrichment. For this purpose, it is necessary that employees share their skills and knowledge in different organizational levels with each other.
References


