

Relationship between Teamwork and Organizational Agility from the Perspective of Employees of Social Security Organization Branches in Tehran, Iran

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ABSTRACT: The aim of study was to examine the relationship between teamwork and organizational agility from the perspective of employees Social Security Organization (SSO) branches in Tehran, Iran. This descriptive study was done using the correlation method. The population includes 1,800 employees of SSO in Tehran. To select the appropriate samples multi-stage cluster sampling method was used and 320 people (180 Female and 140 Male) were selected according to Krejcie and Morgan Table. Data was collected using the teamwork questionnaire and the organizational agility questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha for questionnaires was reported as 0.93 and 0.79, respectively. For data analysis, Pearson's correlation and linear regression methods were used. Results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between teamwork and organizational agility and that some teamwork components (mutual support and solidarity) affect organizational agility and can predict the variance of organizational agility.

Key words: Team, Teamwork, Agility, Organization, Social Security

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INTRODUCTION

Today's world is the world of continuous changes and the era of instability which has a profound impact on organizations (Ebrahimian and Ebrahimian, 2011). Organization experience major changes in this century, in particular, changes in communication channels, break of geographical and organizational boundaries and technological innovation, increased demand and rising customer expectations and break up of large markets to small limited markets which lead to serious challenges. These changes are so vast that the survival of organizations is subject to a major review in their priorities and strategic visions (Osterhaute et al., 2007). Ignoring changes increasingly threatens the survival and success of these units. In such a situation, many of these units revise their strategic priorities and business views and emphasize adapting to changes in business environment and rapid response to market and customer needs through new methods of cooperation (Bessant et al., 2001). Due to changes in the present age, a new popular way for the survival of production and service organizations is the concept of organizational agility. Therefore; agility was introduced as a solution to organizational survival (Crocitto and Youssef, 2003).

A look at the history of organizational agility suggests that in the wake of widespread political and economic developments around the world from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, many efforts were made to understand the root causes and risk factors affecting new systems in global businesses. In 1991, a group of industry experts observed that increased rate of changes in the business environment is faster than the ability of traditional manufacturing organizations

in order to adapt and cope with changes. These organizations are unable to use the advantage of presented opportunities and this disability may lead to failure and bankruptcy in long term. When the US, for the first time, saw a significant decline in the share of global business especially in the field of production (faced with new competition from Asia and Europe) took the helm of the leadership of the movement. Due to the downturn of US manufacturing and the loss of competitiveness in the 1980s that was well documented, the US Congress in 1990 decided to take necessary measures in this regard. As a result, Congress ordered the Department of Defense to create an agency in order to study the US industry with the aim of making them more competitive. In fact, by observing that the rate of change in the business environment is higher than the rate of adaptation, a group of experts and academics were gathered by the Department of Defense at the University of Lehigh, Pennsylvania, to examine the US industry and know that what systems and strategies will be successful in the industry. The result of their efforts was a two-volume report entitled "Strategy of manufacturing firms in the 21st Century" published in the Fall 1991 by the Iacocca Institute at the University of Lehigh and it was called agile at the same time (Kidd, 1996).

Agility literally means fast and active motion, and ability to move quickly and easily, and ability to think fast with a smart method (Hornby, 2000). Thus, according to the emerging concept of agility, there is no general definition approved by everyone and there are numerous definitions. A few examples are as follows: agility refers to the ability to rapid and successful response to environmental changes; agility

is organizational ability in identifying the need for changes in internal and external sources, so that the changes are done uniformly and performance is kept beyond the average; agility is the ability to survive and thrive in a highly competitive environment with continuous and unpredictable changes by responding quickly and effectively to changes as well as developing products and services based on customer demand (Sharifi & Zhang, 2001). Youssuf et al. (2003) defined agility as the ability to operate successfully in a continuously accelerated, unpredictable and competitive environment and to respond quickly and effectively to market changes. Based on the definitions provided, organizational agility first occurs in the organization and then will extend outside the organization. This means that agility is achieved by certain factors of organizational characteristic. Accordingly, models such as Goldman and Nagel's model (1995), Crocitto and Youssef model, Model of A to Z Consultants, and model of Hamidi et al. were provided to access the relative agility. Different agility models suggest that organizational agility is not developed only by one factor, but it can be obtained by combining those factors as continuous improvement systems.

Thus, given the importance of organizational agility in today's changing world, it is necessary to identify factors that can promote and improve this important organizational variable. Studies show that a variable that has a high correlation with organizational agility is teamwork in organizations (Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001). Therefore, in recent years, teamwork has been considered as one of the tools used in response to competitive challenges so that it is considered as a way to enhance organizational flexibility and achieve other advantages such as reducing administrative costs, accelerating tasks, innovation, effective decision-making, higher job conscience and better customer service (Morgan & Lassiter, 1992: 77). In recent decades, there is a significant increase in the use of teamwork in organizations. Evidence shows that in the mid-1990s, more than 55 percent of manufacturing firms in the UK have used team groups in their organizations (Parker and William, 2001). In the past two decades, teams and the use of work teams have been considered around the world (Gelfand et al., 2007). Accordingly, teamwork approach is a response to global economic competition and continuous technological innovations which led to a more complex environments and the need for effective problem solving in organizations (Moses and Stahelski, 1999). As with any management concept, different definitions have been provided for teamwork. In the organizational literature, a team is defined as two or more people who interact with each other to achieve common goals and objectives (Kozlowski et al., 1996;

Barker and Salas, 1992: 470). According to Moshabaki and Doostar (2003), a team consists of a group of two or more people who directly interact with each other and coordinate their actions in order to achieve objectives (Moshabaki and Doostar, 2004). Hence, they state that teamwork is an identifiable set of behaviors, perceptions and attitudes that the team members share in fulfilling tasks (Stout, Bowers & Salas, 1996). Some researchers have defined team as a set of interrelated activities including performance monitoring, receiving and giving feedback, two-way communication, versatility, flexibility and coordination of activities (McIntyre and Salas, 1995).

McCann and Margerison consider eight roles for teams: reporting-consulting, creative-innovative, explorer-facilitator, assessor-developer, thruster-organizer, concluder-producer, controller-inspector and upholder-maintainer. Thus, according to the effective role of team and team-building in organizations, Social Security Organization as one of the major organizations in the insurance industry which covers about 10 million people is no exception. This organization, like any other organization, for continuous and dynamic survival, needs to match its management systems in different layers from senior management to operational units with changes in the environment. For this and some other reasons such as customer satisfaction, efficiency improvement, flexibility and quickly response to rapid changes, this organization has been directed towards the use of teamwork and team building and the use of organizational agility models. Obviously, to improve organizational activities, policymakers must examine the correlation and effectiveness of teamwork and its dimensions on organizational agility in order to make constructive decisions for the future by accurately identifying business processes. This research aims to study the relationship between these two variables in the Social Security offices in Tehran to answer these basic questions:

- Is there a relationship between teamwork and organizational agility dimensions in the Social Security Organization offices in Tehran?

What is the share of each teamwork dimension in predicting organizational agility in the Social Security Organization offices in Tehran?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Population, sample and sampling method

Since this study aims to examine the relationship between teamwork and organizational agility from the perspective of employees in the Social Security Organization offices in Tehran, it is a descriptive study which was done with the correlation method. The population consists of all formal and contractual employees, managers and deputies of the

Administration of Social Security in Tehran and its 29 branches, Rey branch and Shamiran branch (1,800 people) who were employed in 2015. A total of 320 people were selected as the sample based on Krejcie and Morgan Table using the multi-stage cluster sampling. Finally, the data from 257 people was analyzed.

Research tools and data collection method

To collect data, two questionnaires were used:

Teamwork questionnaire: This questionnaire contains 40 statements and seven components (communication, coordination, mutual support, solidarity, competent leadership, decision-making and specific goals) developed by Anari (2009) whose validity and reliability were confirmed. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained 0.93.

Agility questionnaire: This researcher-made scale has 16 statements developed according to Sharifi and Zhang (2001). After confirming its content validity, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was reported 0.79.

RESULTS

Table 1 reflects the views of the sample on the teamwork components and the fact that the obtained average (3.977) is higher than average. The skewness value (-0.655) shows that the resulting curve is left-leaning compared to the normal curve, and the kurtosis value (0.188) shows the kurtosis of resulting curve is higher than the normal curve.

The first question: Is there a relationship of teamwork and its dimensions with organizational agility in the Social Security Organization branches in Tehran?

According to Table 2, due to Pearson's correlation coefficient (0.72) and p-value (0.000), it is significant at the 0.01 level. Thus the hypothesis is confirmed at the 99% confidence level. Finally, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between teamwork components and agility behavior of Social Security Organization in Tehran.

The second question: What is the share of each teamwork dimension in predicting organizational agility in the Social Security Organization offices in Tehran?

According to the normality of the dependent variable (organizational agility), the regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of teamwork components. The results are reported in the following tables.

Table 2 indicates that the linear combination of teamwork components is 0.69, the coefficient of determination is 0.68 and the F ratio is 80.45, which is significant at the 0.0001 level.

Table 3 indicates that among teamwork dimensions, coefficients for mutual support and solidarity variables are significant and the remaining variables are insignificant. In other words, among teamwork dimensions, mutual support and solidarity can predict organizational agility and the impact of other variables is insignificant and cannot predict organizational agility.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the research variables

Component	Min	Max	Average	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Communications	2.43	5	4.11	0.531	0.282	-0.581	0.276
Coordination	2.2		4.106	0.605	0.366	-0.711	-0.077
Mutual support	1.40		3.886	0.750	0.563	-0.670	0.156
Solidarity	2.17		3.840	0.656	0.431	-0.543	-0.304
Good leadership	2		3.988	0.508	0.258	-0.382	0.187
Decision-making	2		3.975	0.650	0.423	-0.313	-0.397
Specific goals	1.50		3.909	0.715	0.511	-0.865	0.751
Total	2.48	4.95	3.977	0.233	0.482	-0.655	0.188
Organizational agility	2.50	4.88	3.955	0.470	0.222	-0.596	0.173

Table 2. Pearson's correlation coefficient between the teamwork and organizational agility variables

Variables	Pearson coefficient	Error(α)	p-value
Communications	Organizational agility	0.555	0.000
Coordination		0.589	0.000
Mutual support		0.750	0.000
Correlation		0.733	0.000
Competent leadership		0.424	0.000
Decision-making		0.385	0.000
Specific goals		0.448	0.000
Total		0.726	0.000

Table 2. Correlation coefficients for teamwork components and organizational agility summary regression model

Model	Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	Estimated standard error (Se)	F	Durbin-Watson
1	0.833	0.693	0.685	0.264	80.45	1.659

Table 3. Results of regression analysis for teamwork component and organizational agility

Table of coefficients							
Non-standardized coefficients				Standardized coefficients			
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance value
1	Fixed	1.517	0.159	-	9.541	0.0001	-
	Communications	0.062	0.047	0.070	1.312	0.191	0.436
	Coordination	-0.008	0.043	-0.010	-0.181	0.857	0.413
	Mutual support	0.295	0.032	0.470	9.135	0.000	0.466
	Solidarity	0.331	0.040	0.461	8.296	0.000	0.398
	Competent leadership	-0.017	0.043	-0.019	-0.404	0.687	0.580
	Decision-making	-0.007	0.037	-0.010	-0.187	0.852	0.477
	Specific goals	-0.027	0.035	-0.041	-0.770	0.442	0.442

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the relationship between teamwork and organizational agility from the perspective of the employees of Social Security Organization in Tehran. According to previous studies and existing frameworks and theories in this field, first some goals and questions were introduced and to respond to them, a good research method was developed. Results indicate that the coefficient of correlation between teamwork and organizational agility is 0.726. Therefore, we can say, with a confidence level of 0.99, that there is a significant positive correlation between teamwork dimensions and organizational agility; therefore, any change in teamwork dimensions will affect organizational agility. In other words, strengthening teamwork leads to the strengthening of organizational agility, and its ignorance reduces organizational agility in the Social Security offices. Results also indicate that at a confidence level of 0.99, all teamwork dimensions have a significant positive correlation with organizational agility. Among these dimensions, only mutual support with a coefficient correlation of 0.750 and solidarity with a correlation coefficient of 0.733 have the strongest correlation with organizational agility and only these components can predict and explain organizational agility. In other words, 69% of the organizational agility variance is explained by teamwork dimensions (mutual support and solidarity) and 52.7% of the organizational agility variance is generally explained by teamwork. The significance explanation of organizational agility by teamwork reflects this important point that in the Social Security Organization, both teamwork and organizational agility are on the agenda and implemented properly. However, other teamwork components such as

mutual support and solidarity should also be considered so that organizational agility is enhanced. Thus, this test results indicate the fact that organizational agility is a function of teamwork, and to create and deploy agility in the Social Security Organization and keep up with the resulted changes and new knowledge in the current era, organizations must consider teamwork and its dimensions, especially mutual support and solidarity which are inevitable requirements for organizations, in particular Social Security Organization. Based on the findings of this study, solidarity is another effective component of teamwork on organizational agility. A look at the theoretical foundations of this component indicates that solidarity is one of the perfect concepts both in terms of theoretical definition and operational definition. Solidarity is considered with three parts: individual, activity and pride (Casey and Martens, 2009). And in other definition, this component is considered as social consensus and group conformity and it is divided into two mechanical (artificial) and organic (natural) types. On the other hand, a look at the sub-components of solidarity shows that the majority of respondents have admitted that team members depend on each other and consider themselves a part of the project. This feature can be described that the team pays special attention to achieving organizational goals and they show certain solidarity in this way. Moreover, it can be concluded that both the organization and team members pay special attention to meeting individual needs, because based on theoretical foundations, organizational maturity depends on attention to both the individual and the organization to each other's needs, and shortcomings in one part will lead to failure in the other part. Respondents also pointed to collectivism and said that team members do not consider

individualism worthy and believe that the willingness of partners to help each other is a positive thing and they are proud of that, so that they have a sense of responsibility to keep the team.

In fact, if the organization wants to be accountable in issues such as quality, customer focus, rapid changes in today's world and the necessary speed, flexibility and competence, it must put teamwork, particularly mutual support and solidarity, on the agenda and generate its goals and visions based on teamwork and organizational agility. In general, the study results confirm theoretical foundations on teamwork and organizational agility and are consistent with research in the field of teamwork and organizational agility (Lahafi, Salvati and Jafari Moghadam (2011), Nikpour and Salajegheh (2010), Voight et al. (2000), Huegl and Parboe (2007), Kevin, 2008). Most studies in the field of teamwork reflect this important point that wherever teamwork happens and any organization that handles its tasks by teams and encourage its employees to form teams will be more successful in competition and social activities. In addition, individual team members have job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job and organizational involvement and this is what organizations seek in the form of teamwork to achieve higher goals such as greater accountability, flexibility, competence and speed in the form of organizational agility in customer focus, quality of service and keeping pace with the growing changes, and they meet their needs in the same way. Accordingly, it is very importance to consider teamwork dimensions as effective factors on organizational performance and finally organizational agility and it must be on the agenda of policymakers in the organization. By efficient establishment of teamwork and organizational agility in different areas and professional reviews, policymakers must keep them up-to-date so that the organization can continue its activities in social areas better than before.

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