



The effects of social capital and organizational commitment on the staff's intellectual contribution in the central building of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nowadays human capital is the main asset in organizations. Thus, the employees' intellectual involvement is a key factor in the success of organizations. Hence organizations should seek for factors that affect and boost the employees' intellectual involvement. Therefore, the present research aimed at discovering the relationship between organizational commitment and social capital with intellectual involvement among employees of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences.

Method: The study population consisted of staff employees at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. A sample of 224 employees was selected using cluster sampling. Data were collected using three questionnaires including social capital, organizational commitment, and intellectual involvement. Data were analyzed using t-test, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation coefficient.

Results: It was found that the level of social capital, organizational commitment, and intellectual involvement was at an average level. There was a significant relationship between intellectual involvement and degree ($p < 0.01$) and marital status ($p < 0.05$). Other demographic variables had no significant relationship with research variables. Moreover, all research variables and their dimensions had a significant relationship with each other ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: According to the findings, it can be concluded that with improvement in each of the research variables, other variables will improve. For example, as a result of improvement in social capital or organization commitment, intellectual involvement will increase and the organization could use its competitive advantage.

Keywords: social capital, intellectual involvement, organizational commitment, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

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Introduction

Today's organizational world is actually the world of creativity and innovation. In order to survive in the competition, organizations have figured this out and are always attempting to expand their creativity. Nevertheless, some organizations' staff believe that their organizations do not advocate free communication, knowledge sharing, and expression of ideas, which lead to reduction of the staff's commitment and failure of management programs (1). In other words, lack of information and trust for expression of ideas will result in failure of the programs aiming at improvement of the organization. In organizational silence, the staff prefer not to express their opinions and concerns regarding organizational issues (2). In their primary viewpoints regarding the staff's intellectual contribution, Vakola and Bouradas (2005) considered it equal to the staff's loyalty to the

organization. Besides, they believed that no one would talk about a non-existing problem, and not expressing the opinions meant lack of problem in an organization (3). Nowadays, however, researchers have indicated that lack of staff's intellectual contribution is an obstacle to achieving organizational goals (4). According to a large number of researchers and studies conducted on the issue, social capital and its components are among the key factors in the staff's intellectual contribution (5). Lack of social capital could lead to reduction of the staff's trust in the organization and subsequently lack of intellectual contribution (6).

Social capital is a relatively novel concept in social sciences; however, it has its roots in humans' social relationships. To date, social capital is the prerequisite to achieve development, civil society, universal criteria, and a proper ground for social living (7, 8). Despite this simple definition, social sciences scholars have presented

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various definitions for social capital which are, of course, not contradictory. The common point among all these definitions is that social capital is the hidden potential in the relations among a society's members and groups which results in the performance of affairs (7, 9). Today, organizational experts state that social capital is a strong strategy and instrument for solving the staff's behavioral and organizational problems. Thus, by strengthening social capital, lack of motivation, lack of cooperation, absence from work, etc. can be eliminated and the staff's creativity and empowerment will improve improved (10, 11). Overall, social capital is so strong that some sociologists have considered it as the only solution for human's social problems (8). Moreover, Moayed Fard et al. (2009) confirmed the dynamic and mutual effects of social capital on economic growth (12).

However, review of the literature reveals that social capital is not the only contributor to the staff's intellectual contribution and some other factors play a role in this regard, as well (13). Organizational commitment can be proposed as a mediator in this respect (14, 15). Several studies, such as those by Dalisay et al. (2011) and Nikmaram et al. (2012), have shown that social capital has an impact on the staff's organizational commitment (6, 16). Considering the effect of organizational commitment on the staff's intellectual contribution, many experts have stated that organizational commitment and other occupational attitudes could predict the staff's intellectual contribution (13). Although due to the novelty of the issue, only few studies have been conducted in this regard, the findings of these few studies have supported the significant relationship between organizational commitment and staff's intellectual contribution (3, 17-19).

Vakola and Bouradas (2005) assessed the staff's intellectual contribution in four dimensions, namely senior manager's attitude towards the staff's intellectual contribution, supervisor's attitude towards intellectual contribution, individual's behavior regarding intellectual contribution, and communication opportunities. The study results demonstrated a significant relationship between the staff's intellectual contribution and organizational commitment and job satisfaction ($P=0.01$) (3). Nikolaou et al. also showed that intellectual contribution was associated with the staff's occupational attitude components (17). Furthermore, Saygan (2011) indicated a significant relationship between the staff's intellectual contribution and emotional commitment (19). In Iran, Panahi et al. (2012) investigated the relationship between the staff's intellectual contribution and organizational commitment among 260 personnel of Payam-e-Nour University of East Azerbaijan. They concluded that intellectual contribution atmosphere and individuals' intellectual contribution were associated with organizational commitment (18). Moreover, Zarei Matin et al. (2011) mentioned that occupational attitudes (including organizational commitment and job satisfaction) could result from or lead to the staff's lack of intellectual contribution. They also introduced social capital as a key factor in the staff's intellectual contribution (20).

As mentioned above, many studies have been conducted

on the direct relationship between the staff's intellectual contribution and social capital. However, since this relationship is not direct, the mediating components should be taken into account, as well. For instance, organizational commitment and its components can affect this relationship. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine the existence and severity of these relationships in the headquarter of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran.

Methods

This applied, descriptive-analytical research was conducted in the form of a cross-sectional filed study on 244 staff of the headquarter of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. They were selected through stratified sampling in 2014. This study was performed in the library and field phases. In the first phase, the literature related to the issue and variables under the study was reviewed. Then, a questionnaire used in previous studies was translated into Persian, and after confirmation of its reliability and validity, it was distributed among the staff. The validity of the questionnaire was assessed using content validity method and experts' opinions. After applying the necessary modifications, the questionnaire was finalized. In order to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, it was distributed among 32 subjects and the data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical software. Accordingly, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of all the dimensions of the questionnaire was >0.7 , indicating the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire (21). After all, the confirmed questionnaire was distributed among the study participants and, based on the collected data, the relationships among the study variables were investigated.

The questionnaire items were filled out through a 5-option Likert scale ranging from completely agree (5) to completely disagree (1). Items 1-15 dealt with social capital and the score of this section could range from 15 to 75. In addition, organizational commitment was assessed in three dimensions of emotional commitment (items 16-23), continuous commitment (items 24-31), and normative commitment (items 32-39). Considering the fact that each dimension of the organizational commitment was evaluated using 8 items, the score of each dimension could range from 8 to 40. Finally, the staff's intellectual contribution was assessed in four dimensions of senior manager's attitude towards the staff's intellectual contribution (items 40-44), supervisor's attitude towards the staff's intellectual contribution (45-49), communication opportunities for intellectual contribution (50-53), and the staff's intellectual contribution behavior (54-57). The sum of these items showed the individuals' attitude towards intellectual contribution. Thus, the scores of management's attitude and supervisor's attitude towards intellectual contribution could range from 5 to 25 and those of existence of communication opportunities and intellectual contribution behavior were between 4 and 20.

The collected data were analyzed in the SPSS statistical software using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic

data, levels of social capital and its components, levels of organizational commitment and its dimensions, and degree of the staff's intellectual contribution. They are presented through tables, central indices, graphs, and percentages. In addition, T-test and ANOVA were used for comparative investigation of organizational variables with respect to occupational and demographic variables. Besides, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the correlations among the study variables.

Results

This study was conducted on 224 staff of the headquarter of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Among the participants, 48.2% were male and 66.5% married. The participants' age ranged from 22 to 55 years, with a mean of 35.87±7.29 years. Besides, their mean work experience was 11.09±7.32 years ranging from 6 months to 36 years. In addition, most of the participants had bachelor's degrees (44.6%) and were employed through contracts (52.2%). Moreover, most of the respondents were specialist (46.9%). Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), maximum, and minimum of the study variables are presented in Table 1.

As the Table shows, the means of all the variables, except for the management's attitude towards contribution, were slightly above the average level.

In addition, social capital, emotional commitment, and continuous commitment had the largest distance from the average level compared to other variables (nearly 2 points for emotional and continuous commitment and 4 points for social capital).

In this study, T-test was used to assess the relationship between the study variables and demographic characteristics. According to the results, none of the study variables was associated with sex. In addition, none of the variables, except for intellectual contribution, was related to marital status. The mean of the staff's intellectual contribution behavior was 13.11±2.84 among the single participants and 12.18 among the married ones, and this difference was statistically significant (P=0.032). Moreover, Pearson's correlation coefficient showed no significant relationships between the study variables and age and working experience. Also, education level was only associated with intellectual contribution behavior (P=0.009). In this regard, as the staff's education level increased, their intellectual contribution behavior scores increased, as well. According to the results, the mean scores of intellectual contribution behavior were 11.19, 12.26, 12.76, and 13.17 among the staff with below diploma, associate, bachelor's, and above master's degrees, respectively.

The relationships among the study variables were assessed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Mean and SD of the staff's scores in various dimensions of the questionnaire

Dimensions (Min-Max)	Average level	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Social capital (15-75)	45	48.90	9.61	16	72
Emotional commitment (8-40)	24	26.33	4.69	12	38
Continuous commitment (8-40)	24	26.04	4.42	14	37
Normative commitment (8-40)	24	24.93	4.20	13	38
Senior manager's attitude towards contribution (5-25)	15	13.82	3.62	5	25
Supervisor's attitude towards contribution (5-25)	15	15.43	4.23	5	25
Communication opportunities (4-20)	12	12.16	3.04	4	20
Contribution behavior (4-20)	12	12.48	2.94	4	20

Table 2. Matrix of the correlations among the study variables

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1- Social capital	1	0.487**	0.287**	0.323**	0.430**	0.387**	0.546**	0.320**
2- Emotional commitment		1	0.252**	0.525**	0.336**	0.404**	0.419**	0.334**
3- Continuous commitment			1	0.289**	0.351**	0.284**	0.337**	0.289**
4- Normative commitment				1	0.344**	0.219**	0.302**	0.251**
5- Management's attitude towards contribution					1	0.355**	0.555**	0.316**
6- Supervisor's attitude towards contribution						1	0.525**	0.302**
7- Communication opportunities							1	0.339**
8- Contribution behavior								1

**Significant at 0.01

As shown in Table 4, all the study variables were positively correlated to each other. Besides, communication opportunities were more strongly correlated to other variables.

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, based on the literature on management, the staff's contribution is a main effective factor in an organization's success (22). Successful organizations constantly attempt to increase their staff's contribution to organizational decision-makings and make use of their opinions for improving the organization's status (23).

The findings of the present study revealed an average level of social capital in the headquarter of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. Considering the importance of social capital in societies and organizations mentioned by sociology and management scholars (7, 11, 24, 25), the average level of social capital in a university is not highly desirable. Social capital is considered as a basic source for having and gaining competitive advantage in organizations; thus, organizations must constantly attempt to improve their social capital (11). Social capital has a mutual relationship with the staff's contribution. In other words, it can both lead to and result from increase of staff's contribution (26).

The present study results also indicated moderate to high levels of organizational commitment in the study population, which was not highly desirable. Organizational commitment represents the staff's attachment to the organization and their jobs. Thus, high levels of organizational commitment indicate the staff's interest in spending the rest of their occupational life in the present status (15). Mayer and Schoorman (1992) stated that organizational commitment is the representative of the staff's concerns about their organizations and causes them to consider themselves as the owners of the organizations and, consequently, have more contribution to management of the organization (27). Improvement of the staff's welfare level, appropriateness of the employees for the organization, designing challenging and motivating jobs, maintaining the staff's dignity, and respectful behavior are among the factors which can enhance the staff's organizational commitment (28).

Staff's intellectual contribution and its dimensions were the major variables of the current study, but their mean scores were lower compared to the two other variables. The dimensions of intellectual contribution were at a moderate level in this study, but senior manager's attitude was below the average level which can be a warning for the organization. An organization which does not benefit from the staff's intellectual contribution cannot in fact guarantee its long-term survival and success. The staff working in such organizations do not normally feel responsible towards problems, do not take responsibilities, do not value their capabilities, and feel strange toward the organization (29). Considering the disadvantages of lack of the staff's intellectual contribution and low intellectual

contribution among the staff of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, measures should be taken to increase the staff's intellectual contribution and use their creativity and thinking power.

Nevertheless, the correlation matrix demonstrated significant positive relationships among the study variables. Accordingly, significant positive relationships were found between the social capital and organizational commitment, organizational commitment and staff's intellectual contribution, and social capital and staff's intellectual contribution. The relationship between social capital and organizational commitment has been approved in other studies, as well (3, 6, 16, 26). The association between organizational commitment and its dimensions has also been confirmed in the previous studies, such as those conducted by Saygan (2011), Nikolaou et al. (2011), Panahi et al. (2012), and Vakola and Bouradas (2005) (3, 17-19). Besides, Dalisay et al. (2011) proved the relationship between social capital and the staff's intellectual contribution (6). Considering these significant positive associations, it can be concluded that by providing appropriate communication opportunities in organizations, better results can be obtained regarding other variables. Therefore, existence of communication opportunities can significantly affect an organization's performance and, as a result, attempts should be made to improve this factor.

Since the present study results showed no significant relationship between the study variables and demographic characteristics, it can be claimed that the study variables and their associations were not affected by confounding demographic variables. Thus, the obtained results can be generalized to similar communities.

The study findings indicated that intellectual contribution was higher among the married employees compared to the single ones. Also, as the staff's education level increased, their intellectual contribution increased, as well. This might be attributed to the higher courage resulting from their knowledge level which leads the staff with higher education levels to be able to freely express their opinions.

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