



Surveying the Relationship of Participative Management on Resistance to Change in Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Unit

Iraj Soltani¹ and Mojtaba Ranjbar²

¹. Assistant Professor, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

². PhD in the Field of Governmental Administration, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran.

*Corresponding Author: mojtaba_r1986@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: One of the main challenges in strategic planning and strategic management is to participate voluntarily people during formulating and executing strategic decisions. Employee's participation increases recognition throughout the organization, enhances creativity, improves staffs' responsibilities and reduces resistance to changes. Thus, the study tries to survey the relationship of participative management () on resistance to change among employees working in Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Unit. This study is correlation – descriptive research and 182 questionnaires were distributed using simple randomly sampling method among the employees. Two questionnaires of participative management and employee's resistance were used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine reliability coefficient of questionnaire. These amounts were 0.78 and 0.88 for above questionnaires. Because these amounts are bigger than 0.7, so they will be accepted. Descriptive statistics consist of frequency table, mean and standard deviation and in inferential level; path analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were used in structural equations. The results indicate that there is a negative significant relationship between cooperation, human relations and participation opportunity (as elements of participative management) and resistance to change .

Keywords: Participative Management, Resistance to Change, Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Unit

INTRODUCTION

From theoretical and practical points of view, organization and management domains have been gotten affected a strong force that if it is properly managed and guided, it seems that it has needed capacity for creating the most profound collaboration not only in professional grounds, but also in updating full-scale humanity. Since increasing and growing productivity is one of the most basic methods of achieving to more production and followed by supplying welfare in the society, understanding the factors affecting productivity is one of the main goals of researchers in this field ¹. The strategies of productivity increase can be mentioned to meeting the basic needs of employees, employee participation in decision making, participative style of manager, group activities of employees in the workplace, fringe benefits paid to employees and appropriate system of assessment in the work setting. According to the above, among the factors affecting productivity, the human factor is of great importance. In describing appropriately working

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environment, it has been emphasized greatly on the characteristics such as team building, open communications and balance between the needs and requirements of the labor force, but the extent to which participatory management can be effective in improving their productivity has been received less attention. Collaborative management is fast and flexible solution for achieving to complementary resources and skills. This type of partnership, the gap between the company's existing resources and future requirement would fill and by providing access to external resources and creating synergies, it would increase promote learning and rapid change and organizational competitiveness². It also makes sharing of costs and risks, access to new markets, economy saving, prevention of entering rivals and gain the knowledge and skills. Nowadays, inter-agency collaborations have been one of the most important business management tools to improve the competitiveness of organization, especially in complex and turbulent environments. Its ability to manage effectively is considered as a competitive advantage. Strategic partnerships are the engine of growth and productivity in the local and international markets³.

Theoretical Framework and Research Background

• Participative management

Participative management is considered as involvement process of employees in decision – making flow. This engagement can be occurred at decision – making levels and different types of decisions. In this definition, employees' engagement implies using effectively employees' capabilities and talents in solving managerial problems. Therefore, the method is based on power sharing and the managers delegate their power to the subordinates. In this method, even subordinates are also involved in important organizational decision – making. In the process of participation, managers will be final decision makers. The concept of participative management is not the preference of group decisions on individual decisions. However, the managers will perform the decisions after putting forward in the group. Various studies have shown that not only quality will increase significantly because of widening participation range in management domain, but also productivity and efficiency will increase too and the employees participate more to develop and apply their mental capabilities⁴.

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The Effect of Participation and Outcomes of Effective Participation

It is not clear establishing a casual relation between participation and productivity in the workplace, especially in the public sector which is associated with difficulties in measuring efficiency achievements. In fact it could be said that on the one hand, creating a link between social relationships within the organization and its outputs, products and services, on the other hand, is complex. This is further complicated when it is needed to be separated the effect of participation from other factors affecting on productivity and quality. In addition to, cooperative relationships vary significantly form one organization to other organization and this topic makes the validity of comparison between organizations are faced with the problem.

Despite the problems in this regard, in general it can be said that many researches have shown that there is positive strong relationship between participative management and productivity. The following are some examples of researches performed in this field :

- The report related to Austria national center of performance and participation has expressed 20 case studies which encompass cooperation and participation of management and employees in decisions and performance achievements .

- A report from Australia national association has been recorded about 200 studies and states that the studies encompass some evidences showing there is a casual relation between increased employee's participation and their better performance ⁵. Analyzing reported cases from 12 countries and in their edited summaries, Farnham et al. observed that in two cases of the countries, employees' participation had positive impact on evolution of public management; in 8 cases the effect was more or less positive, 2 cases were neutral and none were negative. State managers believe that the direct participation of employees leads to better results and improve their organizational performance and productivity. In the same surveys, in scientific studies and applied studies, similar results were obtained. According to above explanation, participation can lead to promote organizational performance. This occurs when the improvement of some parameters is guaranteed such as trust, commitment and motivation. In other words, participation is guarantee of creating or maintaining trust, commitment and motivation. Two types of drivers have been reported in the literature: quintessential and procedural. Quintessential drivers are mutual commitments for achieving or avoiding certain activities of outcomes which have more intrinsic aspects. Procedural drivers are the drivers which cherish positions of employees and unions in decision-making. In summary, procedural drivers claim that participative working environments have the features that lead to improved ability to perform job duties.

• The Effect of Participative Management

The first substantial argument in participation issue is that if participative management is implemented properly, it will be effective in improving the performance, productivity and job satisfaction. Because of lack of sufficient statistical data about the correctness of this claim and those who are opposed to the views of participative management and its ethics, a brief overview of the research findings would be seem to be necessary. Participative management is not a simple mechanical technique that is easy to bring quick results. It is a complex managerial process that requires extraordinary efforts for its effective implementation. According to the article entitled organizational dynamics, Karter Rosabeth Moss considered some problems along with implementing participative management program. He has noted that the failures of participative management are because

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of too much emphasis on "participative" and very little emphasis on "management"⁶.

• Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is considered as the main obstacle to successful implementation of the change. Resistance to change can be called self-restraint as a response to change which may become the source of conflict in organization. Resistance arises from following factors:

Individual Factors: personality factors (such as strong need to control, need to success and so on) and trends based on the experiences of previous changes .

Group Factors: group solidarity, social norms and participation to decision .

Organizational Factors: unknown factors, challenge for maintaining the status quo, workload conditions

There are many reasons why people resist change in organizations. Kanter has classified various resistance factors in following table and believed that if need requirements are not run in providing change plan and accurate and adequate support is not done enough in this regard, it may total system be faced with resistance⁷.

• Different Attitudes towards Resistance

Some people assume that resistance is a natural inevitable behavioral response for the threats which is perceived from the change and conceive it has political motive and a part of coordinated fight of class efforts in organization, balancing factor in change and organizational transition or appearing problems during reconstructing organization. Resistance is seen as problematic that must be controlled in order to guarantee the success of the change. Vadel and Sohal were the first scientists who transformed negative traditional perspective to resistance to change. Considering traditional perspectives to change in the researches done in 50 recent years, they provided different image from resistance and showed that resistance has advantages including resistance is better than apathy, it avoids thinking in form of group, it considers alternative ideas, it leads the people are involved in evaluating alternative solutions dominate on the problems which their managers have been unable to assess them. Vadel and Sohal states that managers have not yet been able to harness the power of resistance in spite of its various advantages, use it to take advantage of changing and the managers claim its reason lack of models and theories in this regard to identify resistance nature for improving organizational behavior, determine its advantages and change this benefit for innovation. The only existing theory in this regard is limitation theory which not only would violate the resistance, but also would take into consideration. It provides valuable insights to managers control successfully the change. According to this methodology, it is necessary to managers participate employees in identification process of resistance in different forms, test strategies and solutions of change and then apply them. In this case, it can be expected that this method can provide a

model which considers using resistance as an active positive and beneficial perspective⁸.

Research Background

In his article, "entitled participation, a key for doing successfully change", O'Berin stated that participation and engagement of frontline staffs in organizational affairs play key role in ensuring the acceptance of the change and creating the conditions for effective collaboration of staffs in organization .⁹

Parent¹⁰ noted in an article that participation, role transparency and optimism in work setting have direct relationship with compatibility and versatility with change .

Kim¹¹ showed that there is a significant relationship between participative management and strategic planning with job satisfaction. By participating employees in planning, the employees find a more detailed understanding from the goal and it reduces conflict and vague in role during performing strategic programs .

Rahim Nia and Hasan Nia¹² in their analytic – descriptive research indicated that managers should pay attention to organizational – political environment and employees' understanding to facilitate and accelerate organizational communication, because this topic can lead to increase organizational and individual efficiency and productivity .

Habibi¹³ showed that the usage of participative management leads to increase organizational commitment and reduce resistance against change.

MATREALS AND METHODS

According to data collection method, this research is a descriptive research and path analysis was used to test relationship between variables and significance of the estimated models. From standpoint of goal, this research is an applied research and in terms of data collection, it is a survey – descriptive research and because of this, questionnaire, census and description of the variables were used .

Sample Volume

As regards, members of statistical population are limit, so following formula was used to find sample members to answer questions :

It should be noted that Morgan' table was determined the same figure as sample volume. Simple randomly sampling was used to select members .

Data Analysis Method

Path analysis software was used to analyze the data. Path analysis method is a generalization from common regression which is able to show indirect effects and total effect of each of independent variables for dependent variable in addition to direct impacts and interprets logically observed relations and correlation between

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them. Statistical descriptive and inferential issues were used to analyze the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics consist of frequency table, mean and standard deviation and in inferential level; path analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were used. SPSS version 18 and Lisrel version 8.54 under Windows were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

Descriptive Survey of Research Variables

According to above table, mean of valuableness and participation opportunity are higher than others and mean of optimism is lesser than others. Since standard deviation of all variables is low, it can be seen that data has not large dispersion and according to coefficients of skewness and elongation, the data has not tilt and its distribution is relatively symmetric.

Table1. Research variables in terms of descriptive survey

	Number	Average	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	elongation
Participation opportunity in decision	182	3.89	4.25	0.99	0.99	-0.90	-0.14
Making collaboration and cooperation	182	3.48	3.50	0.61	0.37	-0.40	0.48
Making human relations	182	3.48	3.50	0.59	0.34	0.43	0.37
Anxiety and distress	182	3.49	3.50	0.75	0.57	-0.31	-0.11
Valuableness	182	4.17	4.25	0.67	0.44	-0.57	-0.40
Past-oriented	182	3.01	3.00	1.03	1.07	0.16	-0.78
Negative-oriented	182	3.20	3.00	0.99	0.98	2.74	20.19
Optimism	182	3.00	3.00	0.83	0.70	0.38	-0.39
Avoiding confusion	182	3.67	3.67	0.73	0.53	-0.34	0.36

Consideration of Research Hypotheses

First main hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between participative management (managerial functions) and employee's resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit.

According to above mode, it can be seen that there is a direct effect -0.22 between participative management (managerial functions) with employee's resistance against change. Its T amount is -2.16 and its modulus is bigger than 1.96 and indicates that the effect of participative management (managerial functions) on resistance against change is significant or in other words, there is a negative significant effect. Its indirect effect amount is -0.16 which T amount equals with -2.59 and it shows that indirect effect also is significant or in other words there is a reverse significant effect. Total effect of this effect is -0.38, T amount equals with -3.81 and

its modulus is 1.96. It implies that totally direct and indirect effects have reverse significant effect .

Consideration of Research Sub-Hypotheses

- 1)** There is a significant relationship between participation opportunity and employees' resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit.

Amount of direct effect of participation opportunity on resistance against change is -0.18 and its significance level equals with 0.04. This amount is lesser than 0.05 and implies that direct effect amount is significance or in other words, it has negative (reverse) significant. Amount of indirect effect of participation opportunity on resistance against change is - 0.141. Its significance level equals with 0.010 which this figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that amount of indirect effect is significant or in other words, there is a negative (reverse) significant relationship. Finally, total effect of participation opportunity on resistance against change is -0.321. Its significance level equals with 0.013. This figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that amount of total effect is significant and this effect is negative (reverse).

- 2)** There is a significant relationship between cooperation and employees' resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit .

Amount of direct effect of cooperation on resistance against change is -0.25 and its significance level equals with 0.008. This amount is lesser than 0.05 and implies that direct effect amount is significant or in other words, it has negative (reverse) significant. Amount of indirect effect of cooperation on resistance against change is - 0.087. Its significance level equals with 0.005 which this figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that amount of indirect effect is significant or in other words, there is a negative (reverse) significant relationship. Finally, total effect of cooperation on resistance against change is -0.337. Its significance level equals with 0.002. This figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that amount of total effect is significant and this effect is negative (reverse).

- 3)** There is a significant relationship between human relations and employees' resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit .

Amount of direct effect of human relations on resistance against change is - 0.38 and its significance level equals with 0.005. This amount is lesser than 0.05 and implies that direct effect amount is significance or in other words, it has negative (reverse) significant. Amount of indirect effect of human relations on resistance against change is - 0.029. Its significance level equals with 0.074 which this figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that amount of indirect effect is significant or in other words, there is a negative (reverse) significant relationship. Finally, total effect of human relations on resistance against change is -0.351. Its significance level equals

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with 0.008. This figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that amount of total effect is significant and this effect is negative (reverse).

Table 2. Direct and Indirect effects of study

		from	
		Participative management	
To	Resistance against change	Effect amount	T amount
	Direct effect	-0.22	-2.16
	Indirect effect	-0.16	-2.59

CONCLUSION

The strategies to increase productivity can be mentioned the supplement of employees' main needs, participation in decision, participative leadership style of managers, group activities in work setting, fringe benefits and appropriate system of assessment in the workplace. According to the above, among the factors affecting productivity, the human factor is of great importance. In today, describing appropriate work setting have been emphasized on some features such as team-building, open communication and balance among organizational needs and workforce needs. But this topic has been received less attention that how employees' participation in the public sector can be influential on improving their productivity. However, development of participative system has been received practically less attention to improve employees' productivity providing public service, but its importance has been emphasized by many researchers. In spite of participation role in improving information flow in organization and decision process, resistance amount against change should be paid attention. Attention to resistance leads to improve productivity dimensions of human forces. It should be noted that that the ways to reduce employees' resistance to change lead to make trust among partners as one of the key success factors for strategic partnerships and reduce transaction costs, formal contracts, opportunistic behavior, Facilitation knowledge sharing between partners, improvement the performance level of participation. According to the explanations given, the results are summarized as follows:

Main Hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between participative management (managerial functions) and employees' resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit.

Based on the statistical analysis should be expressed, there is a direct effect (-0.22) between participative management (managerial functions) and resistance against change. Its T amount is -2.16 which its modulus is bigger than 1.96 that means the effect of participative management on resistance against change is significant or in other words, it has negative significant effect and also amount of its indirect effect is -0.16 and amount T is -2.59. It implies that indirect effect is significant or in other words, negative effect is significant. But totally effect amount is -0.38. T amount equals with -3.81 which its modulus is bigger than 1.96 and implies that totally, direct and indirect effect have reverse significant effects. In analyzing

this hypothesis, it should be noted that participative management is a comprehensive perspective for attracting individual and group participation among top management and employees to achieve organizational goals and try continuous improvement in all dimensions. In other words, in terms of employees' resistance against change, it should be noted that generally human being show resistance to any change, unless she or he understands the situation will be better by accepting the change. In terms of humans, the reason of resistance is lack of congruent beliefs and perspectives. But there is a general belief that if change reasons are expressed correctly using different tools such as reward, promotion and punishment, the change could be made in organization, because change is the need of every organization. In logical analysis of this hypothesis, it can be noted that there is a negative significant relationship between participative management and resistance against change in Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Unit. In other words, increasing participation amount, resistance against change will decrease. According to theoretical framework, this change is called participative change. In this method, at first people are informed about change topic. With the hope that they feel positive tendency for accepting the change in first step and in next step, thus tendency appears in group and individual behavior. In this method, informal and formal leaders and elites are identified in the groups and they are persuaded to support the change. Similarly, the rest of the people obey them and desired change takes place gradually and it is stabilized in organization. This result is compatible with O'Brien' research which states participation plays key role in ensuring the acceptance of change and creating conditions for effective cooperation of employees. In another research by Roshandel Arbtani ¹⁵ and Habibi ¹⁴, they showed that more participative management, more employees' motivation and less resistance against change .

Second Sub-Hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between participation opportunity and employees' resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit.

Based on the statistical analysis should be expressed, there is a direct effect (-0.18) between participative opportunity and resistance against change. Its significance level is 0.014 which is lesser than 0.05. It indicates that there is a direct significant effect or in other words, it has negative (reverse) significant effect. Amount of indirect effect of participation opportunity on resistance against change is -0.014 with significance level of 0.010. This figure is lesser than 0.05 and shows that it has indirect significant effect or in other words, it has reverse (negative) significant effect. **Finally**, total effect of participation opportunity on resistance against change is 0.321 with 0.013 significance levels. This figure is lesser than 0.05 and it shows that amount of total effect is significant and this effect is negative (reverse). As we explained in pervious hypothesis about participation opportunity, it is as one of the participative management components in this research and provides

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needed opportunity for participating employees in organization to lead innovation, creativity and newer ideas for solving the problems. Beside, organizations seek constantly to reduce employees' resistance against their desired changes such as change in production method, implementing a new entry and exit system or registration.

There is a negative significant relationship between participative opportunity and resistance against change .

It implies that employees believe that whatever participation opportunity in decision – making be more, resistance against change be less. As we explained in first main hypothesis, participation can create needed ground for reducing resistance against change and the acceptance of change. This result is compatible with Habibi' research which states participative management in organization lead to increase organizational commitment and to reduce employee's resistance against change. Kim, Sonn Hee also notice that employees find more detailed understanding from organizational goals and conflict and role ambiguity levels decrease during the implementation of strategic programs using participative management.¹⁴

Forth Sub-Hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between cooperation and employee's resistance against change.

Based on the statistical analysis should be expressed, there is a direct effect (-0.25) between cooperation and resistance against change. Its significance level is 0.008 which is lesser than 0.05. It indicates that there is an indirect significant effect or in other words, it has a negative (reverse) significant effect. Finally, total effect of cooperation on resistance against change is 0.337 with 0.013 significance levels. This figure is lesser than 0.05 and it shows that amount of total effect is significant and this effect is negative (reverse). As explained in the previous hypothesis, as one of the participative management components, cooperation plays key role on performance, increased organizational satisfaction level and speed in solving problems. In other words, cooperation can use cumulative allocation and experience and rationality of employees towards organizational goals. In other words, this element refers to more activity, consultation with member of association, group work. In analysis of this hypothesis it can be stated that it has been acted in a way which resistance against change reduces by increased cooperation, the usage of cumulative specialties, experience and rationality as participative management components. According to theoretical framework, because of moral and material incentives in work, commitment, satisfaction and performance of employees will increase. Since they think they have been taken into consideration and their views are respected. Beside, motivation leads to reduce their resistance against change, because people are aware from the changes are supposed to occur in the organization. Totally, it is stated that Islamic Azad University has managed to gain the favor of employees .

Sixth Sub-Hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between human relations and employees' resistance against change working in Islamic Azad University in Gonbad Unit.

Amount of direct effect of human relations on resistance against change is -0.38. Its significance level equals with 0.005 and it is lesser than 0.05. It indicates that there is a direct significant effect or in other words, there is a reverse significant effect. Amount of indirect effect of human relations on resistance against change is -0.29. Its significance level equals with 0.074 and it is lesser than 0.05. It indicates that there is not an indirect significant effect with 0.074 significance levels. Finally, total amount of human relations on resistance against change is -0.351. Its significance level equals with 0.008 and this figure is lesser than 0.05. It indicates that amount of total effect is significant or in other words, it has negative significant effect .

According to explanations of previous hypothesis about human relations, Islamic Azad University of Gonbad Unit is able to reduce employee resistance to change.

Overall, in analysis of this research should be expressed that this university has been able to play important role in regard of the relationship between participative management and organizational – citizenship behavior with resistance to change. It has improved its performance by promoting organizational – citizenship behavior and reducing resistances against change.

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