



The Relationship between Social Capital and Performance of Agricultural Extension Experts

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Abstract

Keywords:

Performance,
Social
Participation,
Social Status,
Social Trust

The purpose of research was identifying the relationship between social capital and performance of agricultural extension experts, Khuzestan province, Iran. The method of research was a descriptive-correlative. The sample size was agricultural extension experts (n=98). A five-point Likert-type scale was used as instrument to gather data in order to measure the social capital. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS₁₉). Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha and it was appropriate for this study (Cranach's alpha 0.93). The result of research revealed that the correlation between organizational performance with social participation, social status and social trust was significant. Linear regression was used to predict changes in performance by different variables. Based on the results social participation, social status and social trust, educational level and job satisfaction may well explain for 48.9% changes ($R^2 = 0.489$) in organizational performance of extension experts.

1. Introduction

The concept of social capital has received considerable attention recently among sociologists, economists, and political scientists. The recent empirical literature on social capital has demonstrated that generalized trust, norms of reciprocity, and networks of civic engagement provide positive externalities to society, for example, through improved (institutional and socioeconomic) performance (Coffe and Geys, 2005). Social capital, generally defined as the actual and potential resources embedded in relationships among actors, is increasingly seen as an important predictor of group and organizational performance (Adler and Kwon 2002, Leana and Van Buren 1999).

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) specify three facets of social capital: structural, relational, and cognitive. The structural aspect of social capital refers to the connections among actors—with whom and with what frequency they share information. Relational aspect of social capital describes the kind

of personal relationships people have developed with each other through a history of interactions. Third, the cognitive aspect of social capital refers to the fact that as individuals interact with one another as part of a collective, they are better able to develop a common set of goals, and a shared vision for the organization.

Putnam (1993) defined social capital as features of social organizations, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions. Fukuyama (1995) defined social capital as ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations. Based on many researchers, social capital depends on trust. The relationships, communities, cooperation, and mutual commitment that characterize social capital could not exist without a reasonable level of trust. Coleman (1988) defined trust as one key component of social capital.

Leana and Van Buren (1999) defined social capital "as a resource reflecting the character of social relations within an organization". Furthermore,

social capital can be considered an asset that can create positive effects to the organization itself and to the people that are part of those organizations

Hypotheses of the Study:

There is a significant relationship between organizational performance and social participation.

There is a significant relationship between organizational performance and social status.

There is a significant relationship between organizational performance and social trust.

There is a significant relationship between organizational performance and educational level

There is a significant relationship between organizational performance and job satisfaction

2. Materials and methods

The purpose of research was identifying the relationship between social capital and organizational performance of agricultural extension experts, Khouzestan province. The method of research was a descriptive-correlative. The sample size was agricultural extension experts (n=98). A five-point Likert-type scale was used as the instrument to gather data in order to measure the social capital and organizational performance. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This questionnaire was set in four subscales including: organizational performance, social participation, social status and social trust. Questionnaire reliability was estimated by calculating Cronbach's alpha and it was appropriate for this study (Cranach's alpha 0.93).

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Demographic profile

Table 1 shows the demographic profile and the descriptive statistics for some characteristics of agricultural extension experts. The results of the

demographic information and the descriptive statistics of the participant indicated that 68.89% of participants were men. The minimum age of participant was 24 years. Their maximum work experience was 21 years.

3.2 Correlation study:

Spearman correlation coefficients to test hypotheses was used, the results of this test are as follows (Table 2):

Test the first hypothesis:

The results of table 2 showed, the correlation ($r=0.526$) between organizational performance and social participation at the level of 0.01 was significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that experts with high social participation had high performance.

Test the second hypothesis:

Also the results of table 2 showed, the correlation ($r=0.483$) between organizational performance and social status. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that experts with high social status had high performance.

Test the third hypothesis:

Based on the results of table 2, the correlation ($r=0.379$) between organizational performance and social trust at the level of 0.01 was significant. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that experts with high social trust had high performance.

Test the fourth hypothesis:

Based on the results of table 2, the correlation ($r=0.376$) between organizational performance and educational level at the level of 0.01 was significant. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that experts with high educational level had high performance.

Table 1. Demographic profile of staff

Variables	F	P	CP
Age			
24-30	12	12.24	12.24
30-40	25	25.51	37.76
40-50	48	48.98	86.73
50-60	13	13.27	100.00
Educational level			
≤ BSc	77	78.57	78.57
MSc	19	19.39	97.96
PhD	2	2.04	100.00
work experience (Year)			
1-5	23	23.47	23.47
5-10	47	47.96	71.43
10<	28	28.57	100.00

F:Frequency, P:Percentage, CP:Cumulative Percentage

Table 2. Relationship between performance and independent variables.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	r	p
Social participation		0.526	0.000
Social status	Organizational	0.483	0.000
Social trust	Performance	0.379	0.000
Educational level		0.376	0.000
Job satisfaction		0.652	0.000

Table 4. Multivariate regression analysis

Independent variable	B	Beta	T	Sig
Social participation	0.465	0.434	2.980	0.000
Social status	0.544	0.832	3.509	0.000
Social trust	1.343	0.687	3.907	0.000
Educational level	0.439	0.298	2.693	0.000
Job satisfaction	0.476	0.206	2.552	0.000
Constant	1.983	---	3.839	0.000

$R^2=0.489$, $F=8.78$, $Sig= 0.000$

Test the fifth hypothesis:

Based on the results of table 2, the correlation ($r=0.652$) between organizational performance and job satisfaction at the level of 0.01 was significant. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that experts with high job satisfaction had high performance.

3.3 Regression analysis

Table 3 shows the result for regression analysis by stepwise method. Linear regression was used to predict changes in performance by different variables. Social participation, social status, social trust, educational level and job satisfaction may well explain for 48.9% changes ($R^2 = 0.489$) in performance of experts.

$$Y=1.983+0.465x_1+0.544x_2+1.343x_3+0.439x_4$$

4. Conclusion

This paper provides arguments and evidence for the importance of "social capital" in the organizational performance. Based on the results social participation, social status, social trust, educational level and job satisfaction may well explain for 48.9% changes ($R^2 = 0.489$) in performance of experts.

The results of research showed the correlation between organizational performance and social participation was significant. More research recently, did find a positive relation between participation and performance (Cheung, & Wu,

2011). Also the results showed the correlation between organizational performance and social status. This result supported by multiple researchers such as Laar and Sidanius (2001).

Based on the results the correlation between organizational performance and social trust at the level of 0.01 was significant. It means that with 99% of confidence, we can conclude that experts with high social trust had high performance. La Porta et al. (1997) and Knack and Keefer (1997) showed that a survey-based measure of trust is associated with higher ratings on subjective measures of governmental efficiency, corruption, and infrastructure quality. Knack and Keefer also found that trust is significantly associated with measures of confidence in governmental institutions. Also based on the results of research the correlation between organizational performance and educational level and job satisfaction at the level of 0.01 was significant.

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