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An Investigation of the Difference in the Impact of Demographic Variables on Employees' Resistance to Organizational Change in Government Organizations of Khorasan Razavi

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the difference in the impact of demographic variables (age, gender and level of education) on employees' resistance to organizational change. The statistical population of this research includes the government organizations of Khorasan Razavi Province. Field method and a researcher-made questionnaire were used to collect data. The reliability of the mentioned questionnaire was calculated and confirmed by means of Cronbach's Alpha (0.739) and the validity was confirmed through factor analysis and KMO index. The findings indicate that the mean of variables in two groups of men and women was equal ($s > 0.05$), thus the variable of gender does not have a significant impact on employees' resistance to change and its dimensions (cognitive, behavioral and affective). According to the results of correlation coefficient tests and variance and Duncan analysis, the age of employees has no impact on resistance to change and its dimensions i.e. cognitive, behavioral and affective ($s > 0.05$). The results of variance analysis test on level of education impact on resistance to change indicate that the behavioral and affective dimensions of resistance to change have no relationship with the level of education. However, the level of education has a relationship with the cognitive dimension of resistance to change at a significance level of 0.041 (lower than 0.05). According to the results of Duncan test, those employees who had BA and MA degrees, showed less cognitive resistance than other level of educations.

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1. Introduction

In today's business, which is full of opportunities and threats, organizations inevitably make changes, including radical, continuous or small changes in order to adapt to the environment and improve their performance. Organizations are continually forced to change. Changes are inevitable and resistance to them is certain. Those people, who show resistance to changes, are afraid of the probable consequences of change such as disorder, complexity and bewilderment. The expenses and strain of issues have reinforced their fear and may weaken their valuable initiative (Firouzian, & Dehghan Niri, 2008). If there were no changes, managers' jobs would be easy and there would be no problem with planning. Changing is an organizational reality and its managers' responsibility to deal with them. According to experts, the current atmosphere of management is changeable. They believe that employees must easily adapt themselves to continuous revolutions and new changes. Despite the managers' attempts to make changes in organizations, the recent investigations indicate that more than 75% of these attempts at organizational changes have ended in failure or have not achieved the desired goals (Stanleigh, 2008).

Investigating the government organizations in the country indicates that there is paralysis and stagnation in them, which has reduced their efficiency. In other words, stagnation and tedium have greatly reduced the efficiency of public and government organizations in Iran. Therefore, these organizations must change their plans, identify the obstacles to changes and present solutions to overcome them. There are three main reasons for the necessity of change in government organizations: being responsive to the present and future of the society, the need for inner changes to adapt to outer-organizational events and the tendency to planning for future development. In this regard, identifying the obstacles to the organizations' changes is essential, because removing these obstacles will accelerate the plans of change.

Accepting environmental changes by the organizations will lead to their pre-eminence and will guarantee their organizational survival. In addition, it has made the occurrence of organizational changes inevitable in order to be synchronized with environmental changes. Resistance to these changes is one of the issues, which is developed by the occurrence of organizational changes. Organizational changes are not accepted by the employees of the organization and provide resistance, because the conditions are going to be different from the current ones.

When organizational changes occur, human factors in the organization show different reactions. Individuals' resistance to changes is one of the most important issues in organizations and enterprises, since individuals consider changes as a sort of threat and do not easily accept them. In fact, overcoming the resistance is one of the most difficult duties of managers. Individuals show different levels of resistance to organizational changes according to their demographic characteristics.

2. Background of the Study

There has been no research on this topic in the country so far. However, the results of a similar research, which was conducted in Islamic Azad University Izeh Branch, indicated that from the viewpoint of professors and staff of this university, paying attention to employees' emotions, consulting with them, trusting them and giving them authority are effective in reducing their resistance to change (Ourak, & Darvishpour, 2010). According to another research, which explored the participative management and employees' resistance to make changes in Physical Education Organization and Physical Education General Department of Ministry of Education, there is a significant relationship between participation in performance and resistance to change in these organizations. This relationship is inverse and negative, i.e. the more the employees participate in performing organizational affairs, the less they show resistance to change. The mean of resistance to change in Physical Education Organization was equal to 2.47 and the mean of resistance to change in Physical Education General Department of Ministry of Education was equal to 2.49 (Asafi et al., 2010). The results of another study indicated that there is a negative and inverse relationship between participative management and resistance to change in female physical education teachers of Mashhad girl schools, i.e. the more the female teachers participate, the less they show resistance to change (Farahani et al., 2011). The findings of a research showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational forgetting in terms of intentional forgetting and unconscious forgetting and resistance to change in General

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