



**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

## **The Relationship between Organizational Learning and Organizational culture from the Perspective of Faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran in 2013**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aimed to investigate the relationship between organizational learning and organizational culture from the perspective of faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran in 2013. Using SPSS, the Pearson correlation test was conducted to investigate this relationship. This was a descriptive - analytical study. The population consisted of faculty members of Medical Sciences University of Tehran. Sample consisted of professors who were willing to participate in the study. However, 100 cases were willing to participate in the study and completed the questionnaires. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The validity and reliability of organizational culture questionnaire has been confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.98. The questionnaire consisted of 60 questions designed to identify the four characteristics and 12 indicators of organizational culture. The questions 1-5, 6-10, and 10-15 were related to empowerment index, team building index, and the development of individual capacities in partnerships and engaging in the work, respectively. The Pearson correlation test was used for inferential analysis of data and examination of research hypotheses regarding the normal distribution of variables. Also, Friedman test was used to prioritize the elements of organizational culture and organizational learning processes.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In the twenty-first century - as the century of knowledge - higher education is important in knowledge production and capacity building for individual and organizational learning. In this regard, universities and institutions of higher education should play much more important role in the development of countries. Therefore, the quality of universities in the twenty-first century is a major concern among the countries.

Achievement of continuous quality in academic activities require the dissemination of this culture by strengthening the cognitive - cultural dimensions and is possible by creating or strengthening the institutional structures [1]. Culture is a pattern of shared assumptions that the group learns. It solves the problems of external adaptability and internal coordination of group, it is considered valid due to the positive impact and performance, and as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel about the problems of group, it is taught to new members [2]. As human aggregations, the societies have cultures help their groups. One of these aggregations is the organization. It is defined as: many people who work together in an organized, coordinated, and approved manner to realize the organization's goals [3].

Organizational culture is a system of shared meaning that organization's members share it; so that, this feature leads to organizations separation from each other. In other words, organizational culture is a set of values helps the people in the organization to understand the acceptable and unacceptable practices. Every organization has its own culture. This culture includes the old unwritten laws, facilitates communication among members, it is the common criteria and related to the critical aspects of work that must be done, and it is a common understanding and a common semantic system that an organization members believe it and it distinguishes the organization from other organizations. This common semantic system is the significant characteristics that are valuable for the organizations and helps us to understand the organizational culture and to understand how these properties are understood by employees.

Desirable organizational culture is one of the distinguishing and power aspect of any organization. Organizational culture shows the features, attributes, strengths, and weaknesses of organization and it demonstrates the inside and outside faces of organization in terms of staff commitment to the values, principles, beliefs, attitudes, and other relevant beliefs. Through the study of the organizational culture in an organization, the integration of values and commitment of employees can be realized [4].

Organizational culture cannot be defined in specific format. In other words, there is no generally accepted definition. However, Morris defines the organizational culture as relatively fixed beliefs and shared values and perceptions are preserved by the members of organization[5]. George Gordone considers the organizational culture as a set of assumptions and values of the organization that are widely respected and lead to certain behavior patterns [6].

Considering the importance of organizational culture in any organization, it is evident that the successful implementation of new methods and new management techniques and realization of any organization's goals depends on the coordination of organizational culture -as an indicator of human resources- and developed objectives and strategies [7]. Organizational culture has different roles in healthcare and educational organizations. Culture determines the boundaries of the organization, gives a sense of identity to the organization members, and leads to a commitment beyond personal interests of individuals. Culture provides the stability in social systems. Most importantly, culture -as a control agent- creates or shapes the employees' behavior. Based on formal rules and informal norms and standards, it encourages the employees to act relatively uniform and predictable. Individuals' attitudes and behaviors should be consistent with organizational culture. Therefore, they will join the organization and by the evaluation of their activities, they will achieve to better position in their career [8]

Accelerating pace of scientific information production and the increasing development of medical sciences in recent decades have caused the need for following items to be felt more than ever: efficient manpower in the field of education, appropriate teaching and student assessment methods, and the skills necessary for planning and educational evaluation. The medical education aims to select and recruit talented faculty members and experts who are interested in today's medical education's complex problems in order to train the graduates who can identify weaknesses and strengths of universities and the factors promote the development of medical universities [9].

The main question is: how the organizations should learn and produce new knowledge? The survival and development of organizations in the today's changing world requires the ability to timely and appropriate response against consecutive environmental changes. Only those organizations that focus on organizational learning may timely predict the necessities and changes in their environment and survive inconstantly changing environment. In describing the concept of organizational learning, Huang et al (2010) stated that Organizational learning converts the organization to a cognitive entity that is able to observe its actions, explore the effects of measures, and reform the actions to improve organizational performance. Organizational learning include shared vision that shows the desired and perfect future, attraction and retention of the best and most creative workers, team learning, and systems thinking of forces and personnel in the organization . As the training and guiding agents in learning process of universities, the evaluation of faculty members' views may clarify their points of view on the relationship between organizational culture and organizational learning. It is clear that by increasing of integrity, the achievement to organizational goals will be facilitated. This may guide the managers and planners of Health and Treatment Education Center in Iran.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main objective: To determine the relationship between organizational culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran

*Objectives:*

- The relationship between collaborative culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran
- The relationship between compatibility culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran
- The relationship between adaptability culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran
- The relationship between mission culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- There is relationship between collaborative culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran

- There is relationship between organizational culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran
- There is relationship between adaptability culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran
- There is relationship between mission culture and the organizational learning process from the perspective of the faculty members in Medicine University of Tehran

## FINDINGS

Table 1: Results of Kolmogorov - Smirnov test

Variable	Mean	S.D	Z	Sig
Learning organizational culture	3.401	0.802	1.121	0.162
Collaborative culture	3.516	0.846	1.317	0.062
Mission culture	3.391	0.829	1.344	0.054
Adaptability culture	3.449	1.027	1.225	0.097
Learning organizational process	3.444	0.834	1.307	0.068

According to the test results, the significance level of the five main variables is greater than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesis of normal distribution of five main variables is confirmed. In other words, the distribution of the five main variables is normal.

Table 2: The Pearson Correlation coefficient between the collaborative culture and the organizational learning process variables

Variable		Collaborative culture	Organizational learning process
Collaborative culture	Pe Cor Sig	1	0.848 0.001
Organizational learning process	Pe Cor Sig	0.848 0.001	1
<b>Pe Cor</b> : Pearson Correlation		<b>Sig</b> : Sig. (2-tailed)	

Table 3: The importance level of organizational culture's main aspects from the perspective of the faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran

Organizational culture	Mean Rank	Asymp. Sig.
Adaptability culture	2.30	X <sup>2</sup> =6.02 Df=3 P=0.110
Cooperative culture	2.58	
Mission culture	2.44	
Flexibility culture	2.68	

According to the Friedman test, the importance level of each of the main aspects of the organizational culture was almost identical from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran and none of the major dimensions of organizational culture, cooperative culture, adaptability culture, flexibility culture, and mission culture were considered as the dominant organizational culture at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. The Friedman ANOVA was used to assess the importance of the collaborative culture components (the dominant collaborative culture components) from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. The results of Friedman test -that has been used to assess the importance of the collaborative culture components- has been provided in the below table.

Table 4: The importance of collaborative culture components from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran

Collaborative culture	Mean Rank	
Empowerment	1.72	X <sup>2</sup> =25.417 Df=2 P=0.001
Teambuilding	1.82	
Development of individual capabilities	2.47	

According to the Friedman test, it can be said that the importance level of each component of the collaborative culture is different from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. Given the average ranking of components, the components of development of individual capabilities, team building, and empowerment had respectively the highest importance in terms of collaborative culture from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. The Friedman ANOVA was used to assess the importance of the compatibility culture components (the dominant compatibility culture components) from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. The results of Friedman test -that has been used to assess the importance of the compatibility culture components- has been provided in the below table.

Table 5: The importance of compatibility culture components from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran

Compatibility culture components	Mean Rank	Asymp. Sig.
Core values	2.01	x <sup>2</sup> =38.006 df=2 0.001 p=
Agreement	1.66	
Coordination and continuity	2.32	

According to the Friedman test, it can be said that the importance level of each component of the compatibility culture is different from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. Given the average ranking of components, the components of coordination and continuity, core values, and agreement had respectively the highest importance in terms of compatibility culture from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between organizational learning and organizational culture from the perspective of faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran in 2013. A recent study concluded that among the types of organizational culture in the university in terms of its relationship with organizational learning, the adaptability culture ( $p=0.000$ ,  $r=0.924$ ), collaborative culture ( $p=0.000$ ,  $r=0.848$ ), mission culture ( $p=0.000$ ,  $r=0.802$ ), and compatibility culture ( $p=0.000$ ,  $r=0.749$ ) are at the first, second, third, and fourth ranking, respectively.

From the perspective of faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran, the individual capabilities, team building, and empowerment components has the highest importance in terms of collaborative culture. The coordination and continuity, core values, and agreement components has the highest importance in terms of compatibility culture from the perspective of faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran. In terms of mission culture, the vision, goals and objectives, and the strategic orientation have highest importance in Medical Sciences University of Tehran. In terms of adaptive culture, the customer orientation and change in Medical Sciences University of Tehran have been considered by the faculty members.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given that low levels of distribution and sharing of information among faculty members has led to disruptions in organizational learning cycle, it is recommended that the distribution and sharing of information among faculty members to be done based on proper planning and faculty members' needs to prevent the disruption of members' learning cycle.
- Given that all the main aspects of the organizational culture are almost identical from the perspective of faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran and none of the major dimensions of organizational culture, cooperative culture, adaptability culture, flexibility culture, and mission culture are not considered as the dominant organizational culture at Medical Sciences University of Tehran, it is recommended to plan for improving simultaneously the organizational culture dimensions.
- The results show that the importance of the collaborative culture components is different from the perspective of faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran. Given the average ranking of components, the components of development of individual capabilities, team building, and empowerment had respectively the highest importance in terms of collaborative culture from the perspective of faculty members at the University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. Therefore, a

systematic and integrated planning by Medical Education Development Center is recommended for the empowerment and development of individual capabilities, team building, and group work in Medical Sciences University of Tehran.

- According to the faculty members in Medical Sciences University of Tehran, the coordination and continuity, core values, and agreement in compatibility culture has the highest importance. It is recommended that high attention to be paid to coordination and continuity, core values, and agreement and integrity between members by university officials and education leaders.
- Considering the importance level of adaptive culture components and the average of components ranking, the customer orientation and change are respectively considered by faculty members. It is recommended that change management and customer orientation to be considered more than ever by the managers and practitioners of university and change management to be considered in the short and long term programs.
- In terms of mission culture, the vision, goals and objectives, and the strategic orientation have highest importance in Medical Sciences University of Tehran. Therefore, it is recommended that the managers and officials to provide roadmap, short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals, and ultimate vision with required expertise. Thereby, this will help the faculty members and staff to achieve to predetermined goals.

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