

A framework for appraising the component of Social capital Erosion (Case study: Labor and Social affair Department of Qom)

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ABSTRACT

Organizations which have higher levels of social capital will benefit more from better and more efficient management. Social capital can discourage individualism, in other words it forms themes and essence of organizations and facilitate organized interaction and cooperation between individuals that will lead to higher productivity of organization. In the absence of social capital, other capitals lose their effectiveness. Without social capital cultural and economic development is difficult. In this study we will examine social capital. So we provide a questionnaire consisting of 23 indicators divided into four components which are organizational trust, partnership and organizational cohesion, organizational citizenship behavior and organizational norms. These indicators and components were distributed between experts and finally were distributed among 54 employees of Labor and Social affair Department of Qom. The results show trust, cohesion and citizenship behavior is low but paying attention to norms and rules has an acceptable condition.

KEYWORDS: Erosion of social capital, Organizational trust, Partnership and organizational cohesion, Organizational citizenship behavior, Organizational norms

INTRODUCTION

World Bank in different reports and seminars defines social capital as the missing factor of development chain, growth index, economic utility, attractive investment, basic living skills, the national mood, features of communities and nations, individual motivation and institutional and group norms (Jahangi, 2005, p.17). Continuous communication, close relationship between organization and customer networks, the need for empathy and mutual trust and cooperation, innovation and continuous learning are necessary to promote and facilitate economic, cultural and civic performance (Huber, 2009, p.162). Social capital can be used because of its dimensions and components such as friendly relations, social solidarity and cohesion, social spirit, social identity, empathy, common interests, mutual respect and trust, social participation, conscious relations and cooperation, networks, social norms and citizenship behaviors such as chivalry, civil excellence, loyalty, helping to fellow, accepting individual differences and some resources such as information, ideas, business opportunities, knowledge production, power etc. (Beker& Vain, 2002, p.16). Diversity and changes in life circumstances with its increasing complexity, tastes, values, norms, demands and different behaviors has increased the need to interact and build trust in others.

Examples of social capital in any society are visible. Iran has elements of trust, integrity, and social participation due to common language, shared religion, shared rituals and traditions, public respect to a series of values and principles etc. (Mobaraki, 2004, p.92). There is a common feeling among the people on issues such as floods, earthquakes, plane crashes, oppression, championship sports event, festivals, mourning, protests, elections, etc. but social capital is not fixed and neutral. Social capital may be impaired by any stimulation and cause to lack of confidence, reduced adherence to norms, declining participation and social cohesion (Share'poor, 1996, p.40). Thus, social capital, with its interdisciplinary and with its attractiveness for sociologists, psychologists and politicians can let to economists, government and other scholars to be more proper in paying attention to human factors instead of criticizing conventional theories due to neglect of the social construction. And certainly the labor productivity is more than just mathematical calculations (Dinitorkamani, 2006, p.2). Hence, identifying factors that affect the strength or weakness of social capital is important. It is important for organizations and administrations to know what criteria and what behaviors can convert this capital to wealth and benefit from it. Which behavior is causing to decline of social capital? In what ways managers can develop it?

According to the statistical population which is Labor and Social affair Department of Qom, the research questions can be expressed as follows:

The main question:

What is the status of social capital in Labor and Social affair Department of Qom?

Sub- questions:

- How is the trust factor among employees of Labor and Social affair Department of Qom?
- How are the citizenship behaviors among employees of Labor and Social affair Department of Qom?
- How are the organizational norms among employees of Labor and Social affair Department of Qom?
- How is the participation and institutional coherence among employees of Labor and Social affair Department of Qom?

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social capital is mutual norms, social networks and social trust which create capital. Norms which produce social capital must have essentially honesty, justice, mutual communication and obligations (Putnam, 2002, p.19). Social capital can discourage individualism, in other words it forms themes and essence of organizations and facilitate organized interaction and cooperation between individuals (Fukuyama, 1995, p.23). James Colman defines social capital based on its applications. He believes that this concept is not a single entity but is multi-entity which contain two common elements included: a kind of social construct and facilitator of the reaction of certain actors within this construct (Brown, 2005, p.45).

1-1Public trust:

Trust is one of the important components of social capital which is the main source of civil society, civic engagement, organizational commitment and democracy. Trust can be defined as perceived credibility and benevolence by the trustee (Mirzaie, 2009, p.57). In other words, trust means we believe that others do as we expect without being supervised (Lewis, 2007, p.76). Easy collaboration between individuals, creating and transferring knowledge, credibility building and partnership are values of trust. It is not clear whether trust is a decision or unintended product of continuous interaction (Gambetta, 1998, p.230) but we can decide for distrust and stating that signs of previous trust are not reliable and there are compelling reasons for distrust. But this process cannot be performed for the concept of trust.

Laport and Metli quoted from Slowic have expressed that in trusting each other; the playing field is not smooth and has a tilt to distrust. If the intensity of distrust is too much which is close to cynicism, it creates its reasons (Gambetta, 1998, p.234). Trust is based on personal experience instead of an organizational trait and cannot generalize and spread (Townkes, 2008, p.203).

1-2Norms and rules:

Norms are common rules which unify behaviors in the community. For example, "don't throw trash on the street" is a norm and if someone throws trash on the street and refrain from the norm; he will be hated by others. Resources of norm are law, social pressure, religion and the nature. Violation of the norm can cause people to break the connection and cause to isolation (Mitchell, 2004, p.370). Standardization and control of behaviors, productivity in behaviors and culture are the values of norms and rules.

1-3Cohesion and social participation:

Consensus among members of community is the result of acceptance and internalizes the normative and value system. Dur kheim believes that relations in modern societies are based on organic solidarity (Mobaraki, 2004, p.61). The values of Cohesion and social participation are consensus among members, respect, social interaction, adaptability, empathy and harmony, innovation, motivation, collaboration and cooperation, commitment, competition and accountability, synergy, teamwork and happiness.

1-4Social citizenship behavior:

Interactions between people in the communities can provide behaviors which are dominated by members of that community, it is not rewarded and certain institutions don't force them to do those behaviors directly and formally. But can influence the effectiveness and development of community (Niehoff, 1993, p.56). Behaviors such as helping to fellow, dedication, participation, civic virtue, conscience and mutual coordination are some forms of citizenship behavior. Citizenship behavior can effect on intrinsic motivation, self-control, spirituality and social responsibility.

2.Factors causing decline of social capital in organizations:

2-1Reduction in organizational trust:

Employees expect that a consistency exist between the behavior and statements of their managers. And thereby they can predict the behavior of their managers. Also, managers can reduce distrust by expressing of their expectations, feelings and experiences. Some important factors of distrust in the organization are low competence manager, inability to perform tasks and reducing effectiveness especially from the view of others and dishonesty because of lack of merit and ability to work (Zareimatin, 2010, p.248). Putnam believes that two

factors "politicization of bureaucracy and complexity of social class sources" will cause decay and decline of social capital. A society in which bureaucracy is founded on political assumptions instead of professional criteria, and bands and the election groups' benefits were considered instead of benefits of people, it will cause distrust and decline of social capital (Arab, 2009, p.67).

Social responsibility is a collection of duties and obligations that organization must do in order to preserve, protect and help to community in which it works. But there are some difficulty in accepting and performing social responsibility. A defensive strategy is the leading response of organization to social responsibility. In other words they escape from their social responsibility and it will reduce public confidence (Alvani, 2006, p.280).

2-2Ant organizational Citizenship Behavior:

Forcing employees to do positive behavior in an organization is hardly possible especially because of it is beyond the employees' official duties. But it is possible. A sign of weakness of social capital in the organization is anti-citizenship behavior. It means reducing and despising the value of work related to employees. Other examples are preventing of doing work, employee resistance, aggression, delinquency, loss of consciousness and loss of helping to partners (Katrinli, 2006). Intense competition within the organization puts people to think that they can take any form of competing. Feelings of injustice in both distributive and procedural justice, leads people to make unethical methods to compensate deficiencies. Stress that is caused by loss of performance and success in the case of over supervision and job incongruence causes employees to destruction (Josman, 2006, p.413). Another anti-citizenship behavior is low spirituality in organization. Spirituality creates consciousness, deontology and understanding of activities which creates empathy, compassion, caring and inspiring. One reason of weakness in social capital is social indifference which defines as lack of inner feeling and emotion and lack of interest and emotional involvement relative to its environment. Also indifference has been defined as an imagination, attitude and feeling in which employees think they are not able to influence decisions and determine the result (Bouradas, 2007, p.9).

2-3Reduce compliance with organizational norms:

Mechanisms or different interactions take place in the organization which cause employees not comply with norms, so it creates different corruption. Administrative violations force managers to establish regulatory systems (Shiuan, et al, 2003, p.8). Among important factors, we can point to organizational cynicism which is a negative conclusion that the organization has some defects. It can makes personal or performance weakness. So it cannot create organizational identity and force employees to resist changes. Today the social comparison process, the ambiguity in the goals and resist change, rules and instructions can cause employees not comply with norms and even creates unethical behavior in order to achieving purposes (Niehoff, 1993, p.18).

2-4Reducing partnership and organizational cohesion:

Great Greek scholar Plato believes that: if someone wants cavil all things my advice to him is fleeing into the desert and enjoying his knowledge and wisdom alone (Arausmous, 2007, p.53). One of the important factors in the erosion of social capital is separation of managers from community which appears in the form of "we are different". In such a case managers think they are different from others and feel there is a separation between themselves and community. Maybe its reason is the lack of network thinking and hierarchical view (Seyednaghavi, 2010, p.92). Organizational conflicts, individual reward system, traditionalism and maintain the status quo prevent creativity and innovation and can cause weakness in the skills (Zareimatin, 2010, p.203). Of the great disasters of modern society is differences and rejection of them. If an instrument and hierarchical approach exist in the organization the managers won't use any other thoughts. Participation requires a meaningful vision. Feeling of Share fate exists when the organization has sprit de corps. Today, organizations do not have the ability to move up the organizational capacity and focusing on them in order to achieving the organizational goals and mission. In figure1 we have considered the component of loss of social capital and also their relationship. First we evaluate the experts' vision about the factors considered in the model. For evaluation we used Likert Spectrum and finally 89% choose "agree" or "completely agree".

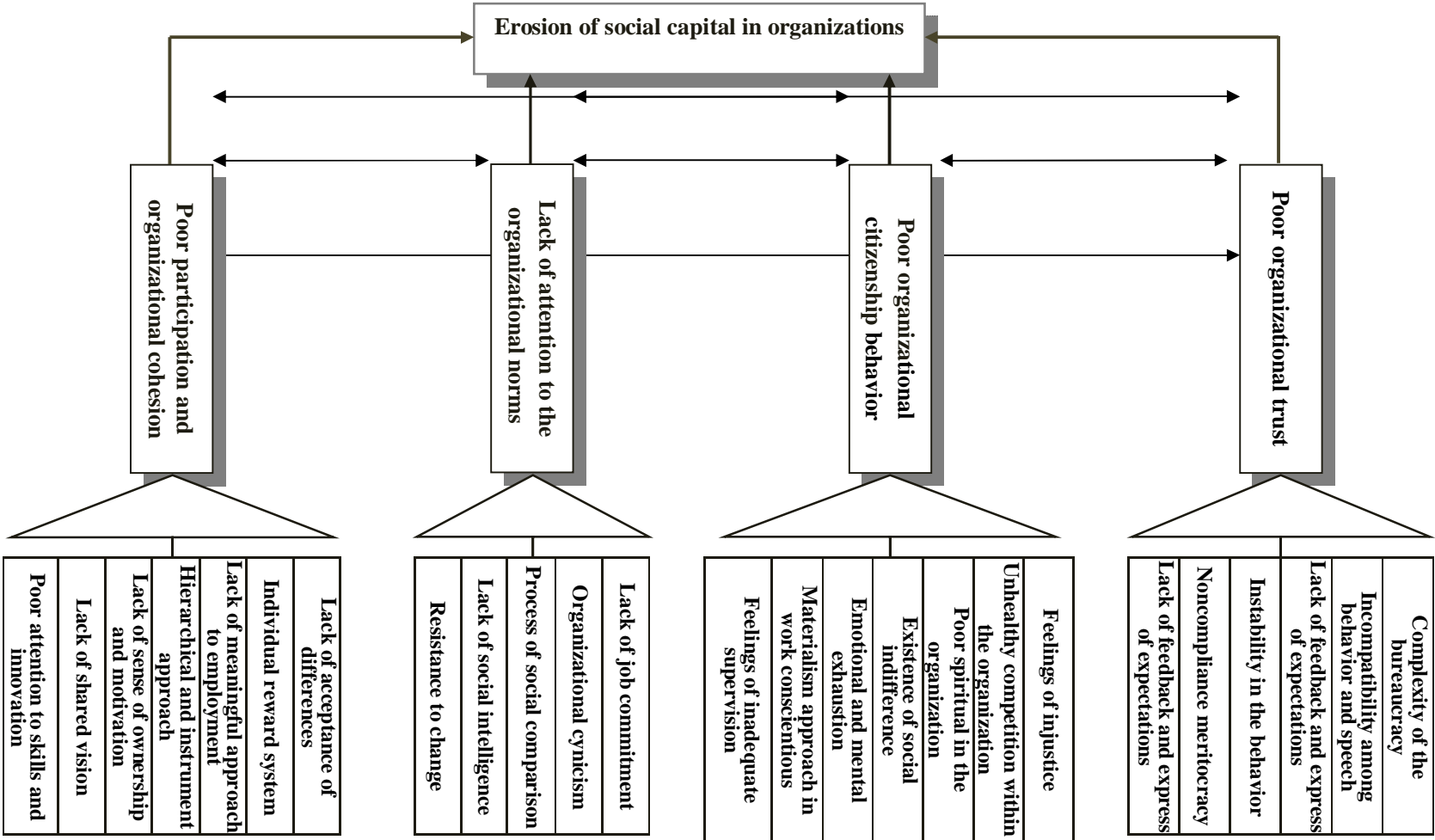


Figure1: Conceptual model: erosion of social capital in organizations

Table1: Determining importance of each parameters of model according to the experts

Sum(Experts)	Mean	Completely Disagree	Disagree	So So	Agree	Completely Agree	indicators	Components					
10	4.7	0	0	0	0	30%	Poor spiritual in the organization	Organizational citizenship behavior					
10	4	0	0	0	30%	3	10%		1	60%	6	Emotional and mental exhaustion	
10	4.5	0	0	10%	1	0	0		20%	2	70%	7	Feelings of inadequate supervision
10	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	0		20%	2	80%	8	Unhealthy competition within the organization
10	4.3	0	0	0	0	30%	3		10%	1	60%	6	Materialism approach in work conscientious
10	5	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	10%	10	Feelings of injustice
10	4.1	0	0	0	0	10%	1		20%	2	70%	7	Existence of social indifference
10	4.6	0	0	10%	1	0	0	10%	1	80%	8	Maximum cross-references	Organizational norms
10	3.8	0	0	20%	2	10%	1	20%	2	50%	5	Resistance to change	
10	3.9	0	0	10%	1	10%	1	10%	1	70%	7	Lack of social intelligence	
10	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	10%	1	90%	9	Lack of job commitment and Organizational cynicism	
10	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	10%	1	90%	9	Process of social comparison	
10	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100%	10	Individual reward system	
10	4.7	0	0	0	0	10%	1	10%	1	80%	8	Hierarchical and instrument approach	
10	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	10%	1	90%	9	Lack of sense of ownership and motivation	
10	3.7	0	0	10%	1	50%	5	0	0	40%	4	Lack of acceptance of differences	
10	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	10%	1	90%	9	Lack of meaningful approach to employment	
10	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100%	10	Incompatibility among behavior and speech	Organizational trust
10	4.7	0	0	0	0	10%	1	10%	1	80%	8	Lack of feedback and express of expectations	
10	4	0	0	0	0	10%	1	30%	3	50%	5	Lack of social responsibility	
10	4.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	10%	1	90%	9	Complexity of the bureaucracy	
10	4.6	0	0	0	0	20%	2	0	0	80%	8	Instability in the behavior	
10	4.3	0	0	0	0	30%	3	10%	1	60%	6	Noncompliance meritocracy	
		Mean of Completely Agree=78%					Mean of Agree=11%						
		Mean of Disagree=0.2%					Mean of Completely Disagree=0						
		Mean of So So=9%											

METHODOLOGY

This research is a developmental and descriptive research which different organizations can benefit from its results. Descriptive researches pay attention to current situations and relations, common process, evident effects and developmental process. Statistical population of this research is all employees of Labor and Social affair Department of Qom in Iran. The sample is 54 persons based on Morgan table. To collecting data we use questionnaire of social capital erosion which contains 23 questions. Also it contains 4 dimensions include trust (6 questions), citizenship behavior (8 questions), norms and rules (4 questions) and participation and organizational cohesion (5 questions). The reliability based on Cronbach's alpha is shown in table2.

Table 2: The reliability of dimensions

Cronbach's alpha	Number of questions	Dimension
0.84	6	trust
0.81	8	citizenship behavior
0.87	5	participation
0.77	4	norms
0.86	23	total

One Sample T-Test analysis was used for analyzing data. The test value is 3. So H0 is accepted if the mean of related dimension was more than 3. This test is considered for determining the presence or absence of dimensions. Also according to the conceptual model and the relationship which exist among components of social capital, Spearman correlation was used because of the ordinal variables.

RESULTS

The results of One Sample T-Test analysis are shown in the following.

Table3: the result for “social capital”

	Test Value =3					
	T	df	sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					lower	upper
Social capital	-2.73	53	0.92	-0.24	-0.42	0.06

Based on this table (sig=0.92) social capital is weak in this organization Therefore, it may lead to loss of performance and provision should be made to improve it.

Table4: the result for “trust”

	Test Value =3					
	T	df	sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					lower	upper
Trust	-2.87	53	0.84	-0.33	-0.57	0.1

Based on this table (sig=0.84) the component of trust is weak in this organization Therefore, it may lead to loss of social capital. Base on this, provision should be made to improve it.

Table5: the result for “Participations”

	Test Value =3					
	T	df	sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					lower	upper
Participation	-2.54	53	0.98	-0.24	-0.43	0.04

Based on this table (sig=0.98) the component of Participation is weak in this organization Therefore, it may lead to loss of social capital. Base on this, provision should be made to improve it.

Table6: the result for “Citizenship behavior”

	Test Value =3					
	t	df	sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					lower	upper
Citizenship behavior	-1.04	53	0.87	-0.08	-0.25	0.8

Based on this table (sig=0.87) the component of Citizenship behavior is weak in this organization Therefore, it may lead to loss of social capital. Base on this, provision should be made to improve it.

Table7: the result for “Norms”

	Test Value =3					
	t	df	sig	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					lower	upper
Norms	0.41	53	0.03	0.7	0.26	0.4

Based on this table (sig=0.03) the component of Citizenship behavior has a good status in this organization. It shows the employees adhere to the rules and norms. Also it can be the result of external control.

Table8: Descriptive Statistics for the components of social capital erosion

S.E mean	Standard deviation	mean	number	components
0.0655	1.651	3.521	54	Social capital
0.0848	1.623	3.782	54	Trust
0.0761	1.897	3.564	54	Participation
0.0988	1.726	3.675	54	Citizenship behavior
0.0122	1.241	3.102	54	Norms

Conceptual model shows that there is relationship between the components of social capital. So we use the Spearman correlation test which is shown in table9. For example there is a positive correlation between trust and participation with a coefficient of 0.261. But the correlations between norm and other dimensions are low so their relationship cannot be perfect.

Table9: The result of Spearman correlation test

Norms	Citizenship behavior	Participation	Trust	Dimensions
0.029	0.158	0.261	1	Trust
0.061	0.511	1		Participation
0.044	1			Citizenship behavior
1				Norms

Conclusion

Today, social capital plays a role more important than the physical and human capital in communities. And social networks are the coherence between people and organizations. So in the absence of social capital, other investments are losing their effectiveness. And without social capital it is difficult to achieve cultural and economic development. It seems increasing social capital is necessary for modern liberal democracy. Low levels of social capital leads to non-responsible and non-flexible political systems and also a high level of corruption in it and in organizations and communities. Organizations that have higher social capital will benefit from better and more efficient management. More social capital creates more confidence in the organization or community and using new tools such as e-government will be applicable. But little social capital leads to fewer trust and confidence in work environment and mentioned tools are losing their original meaning.

When government regulations don't have high level of transparency, enforcement and inclusion, mistrust will rise in the community. Islam has a great capability to strengthen social capital. Much attention to the ethical component such as truth and honesty, faithful to the covenant, respecting the rights of others, avoiding slander etc. lead to increasing social capital in Muslim communities. Many factors led to the creation of social capital such as self-confidence, self-dignity, citizenship behavior, mutual trust, communication, creativity and innovation. Participation and cohesion, and respect to the rights of others can determine the amount of social capital in the organization. But some factors in organizations reflects the weakness of social capital such as failure of administrative teams and committee, rumors, administrative violations, the destruction of personality and regulatory bodies and numerous inspections etc. In this study the results show that in the Labor and Social affair Department of Qom the trust, cohesion and citizenship behavior is low so they cause to loss of social capital with regarding to relationship between these component and social capital. Also the results show that paying attention to norms and rules has an acceptable condition in this organization. It indicates that employees adhere to the rules it can be the result of external control because internal status of individuals in the organization show the erosion of social capital.

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