Strategic Planning and Participatory Culture

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ABSTRACT

The aim of research was to the relationship between forming participatory culture and strategic planning in Borujerd Mayoral Organization. This study was practical due to its objectives, and was descriptive due to its methodology. The statistical society included all 141 employees (only 121 persons has educational degree upper than over-diploma) of Mayoral Organization among whom the researchers selected 100 persons randomly and using Morgan Table. In order to collect the data needed, the researchers used, in addition to library researches, a27-question questionnaire. The alpha coefficient for test reliability was 0.82.Moreover, the validity were tested and accepted by scholars and university professors and faculty members. Then the questionnaires were scattered among 20 persons experimentally to evaluate the reliability mentioned. The researchers used alpha coefficient and Spearman test to analyse the data. Finally, the result showed that there was a significant relationship between participatory culture, organizational focus, and top-managers' decision making style, but there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and strategic relationship.
KEYWORDS: Planning, Strategic Planning, Strategic Relationship, Participatory Culture, Organizational Focus, Decision Making Style.

INTRODUCTION

As organizations around the world become globalized and competitive, they become aware of the important issue that individuals are the only factors to which they can provide premium. They are aware about the strategic human resource importance as a factor by which they can improve. Therefore, we can touch the effects of such an idea in human resource management for all organizations in the world. Human resource, as a field which its importance is getting improved continually, has become very important since then. Based upon such an idea, those organizations are successful that use and adapt proper motivations toward reaching objectives, and use participatory culture in all organizational levels to have the necessary influence on people and their performance and finally cause their growth and efficiency.

The growing access to the Internet can be considered as a very vital part in the growth of participatory culture because it progressively enables individuals to act and work collaboratively; produce and broadcast news, ideas, and creative works; and link with people who have comparable objectives and benefits. The potential of participatory culture for civic engagement and creative expression has been investigated by media scholar Henry Jenkins (*qtd. in Wikipedia 2012*).

The importance of participatory culture can be considered as a very important factor in all organizations due to the external and internal environmental changes. On the other hand, to apply the participatory culture needs many factors such as the existence of proper culture —"The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, thus, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems" (*H. Schein 1984, p. 3*) — and working in groups. Moreover, employees' participations are under the influence of manager's style of leadership. On the other hand, because of the reason that culture is one of the most important strategic factors in management, there should be enough caution to choose and edit strategic approaches. Now days, in most of organizations, those are successful that use participatory management. Due to this fact, working in a participatory manner results in high qualified products and services. Consequently, according to the issue that before working in such a manner there should be proper cultural situation, it is necessary to study the participatory and cooperative factors in organizations and identify and then create proper culture in those organizations.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Planning: Planning has got its meaning from the moment that human being wanted to think about his/her future, and gradually when societies and organizations became more complex and vast, planning also became important for management and leadership. Although planning is the most important responsibility for a manager, but it is not separated from other responsibilities such as organizing, controlling, etc. In planning, we should consider all organizing factors; because plans without organizing are useless and only written. When an organization is established to run the activities, it is necessary to consider the human motivational factors, because when individuals are not motivated, planning and organizing are useless. The concept of planning is to identify what the organization wants to do by using the four questions which are "where are we today in terms of our business or strategy planning? Where are we going? Where do we want to go? How are we going to get there?..." (*Dalziel, Murray, and Stephen C. Schoonover 1988*). Planning has 3 dimensions including (1) identifying goals, (2) identifying sources, and (3) policies, procedures, and methods.

Strategic Planning: Strategic planning, in its best form, needs vast information collection, investigating all options, and putting the emphasis on possible future results. Strategic planning facilitates participation and relation, unites interests and values, and promotes regular decision making and successful activities. Strategic planning systems are different from each other in terms of decision making criteria universality, the formal logic of decision making, and the degree of controlling for reach decision. The powers of such systems are hidden in their efforts to integrate different strategic factors in an organization for different levels and tasks. But the weakness of such systems are in their universality, instructions, and over-controlling which lead to a kind of deviation from their main philosophy of existence, strategy, and organizational structure.Mostly, strategic planning deals with at least one of three key questions:

1. "What do we do?"
2. "For whom do we do it?"
3. "How do we excel?" (*Armstrong 1986, pp. 183–185*)

It should be noted that a "strategic planning system" having characteristics such as "universality, logical decision making, and over-controlling", is practical in organization due to its "clear philosophy of existence, clear objectives, exact indexes, and necessary information about real performance with logical fee" (*Bryson 2004, pp. 35-61*).

Participation and Participatory Culture: Participation is considered as social activity, responsibility, and commitment in group emphasizing on some points:

1. People participations and accepting roles and responsibilities;
2. People's interferences should be effective and touchable.

Creation and development of participation needs training and cultural activities in society. The aim of training to establish participation is to make people believe the importance and necessity of participation.

Participation is a collective effort in which all individuals are engaged to reach a special goal; moreover by means of all equipment; they participate in activities such as giving suggestions, decision making, planning, operating, exploiting, caring and keeping in organizations. In fact when individuals believe that their feelings are considered, the motivation of cooperation and participation is inspired within them and they will be integrated with other members. This is because of the reason that "individual, through participation, have the chance of being creative and innovative" (*Tosi 2003, p. 30*).

Regarding such issue in management, there have been done many researches in different parts of the world. Morales and his coworker in a study about 239 Spanish companies found out that managers' performances are related to several strategic factors (self-control, participatory view, environment, and anticipative activities). Moreover, they found that there is a significant and positive relationship between organizational learning and organizational innovation.

Kurt Lewin, the great German scientist, believed that "when people participate in directing activities, the degree of resistance, stamina, and tolerance against changes, innovation and creation are reduced and choose the adapting way" (*qtd. in Shahon Vand 2005, p. 46*).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of research was to the relationship between forming participatory culture and strategic planning in Borujerd Mayoral Organization. This study was practical due to its objectives, and was descriptive due to its

methodology. The statistical society included all 141 employees (only 121 persons has educational degree upper than over-diploma) of Mayoral Organization among whom the researchers selected 100 persons randomly and using Morgan Table.

In order to collect the data needed, the researchers used, in addition to library researches, a 27-question questionnaire. To be sure about the questionnaires, experts and scholars tested them both in form and content and confirmed them. The alpha coefficient for test reliability was 0.82. Moreover, the researchers used alpha coefficient and Spearman test to analyse the data. The researchers also used SPSS software to analyse the data collected.

FINDINGS

In this research we used 1 main hypothesis and3 alternative hypotheses as the followings and analysed them by means of SPSS software:

The First Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between managers' style of leadership and strategic planning.
The null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between managers' style of leadership and strategic planning.
The Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between managers' style of leadership and strategic planning.

Table 1 (Spearman Correlation Coefficient for the 1st hypothesis)

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significancy	N	Relationship
Style of leadership	-0.082	0.596	100	No
Strategic planning				

According to table 1, the correlation coefficient is -0.082 and the significance is 0.596; therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, there is no significant relationship between managers' style of leadership and strategic planning.

The Second Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between organizational centralization and strategic planning.
The null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between organizational centralization and strategic planning.
The Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between organizational centralization and strategic planning.

Table 2 (Spearman Correlation Coefficient for the 2nd hypothesis)

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significancy	N	Relationship
Organizational Centralization	0.333	0.027	100	Yes
Strategic planning				

According to table 2, the correlation coefficient is 0.333 and the significancy is 0.027; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between organizational centralization and strategic planning.

The Third Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between top manager's style of decision making and strategic planning.
The null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between top manager's style of decision making and strategic planning.
The Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between top manager's style of decision making and strategic planning.

Table 3 (Spearman Correlation Coefficient for the 3rd hypothesis)

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significancy	N	Relationship
Style of Decision Making	0.482	0.001	100	Yes
Strategic planning				

According to table 3, the correlation coefficient is 0.482 and the significance is 0.001, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between top manager's style of decision making and strategic planning.

The Main Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between participatory culture and strategic planning.
The null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between participatory culture and strategic planning.
The Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between participatory culture and strategic planning.

Table 4 (Spearman Correlation Coefficient for the main hypothesis)

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significancy	N	Relationship
Participatory Culture	0.563	0.000	100	Yes
Strategic planning				

According to table 4, the correlation coefficient and the significancy that is 0.000, therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between participatory culture and strategic planning.

CONCLUSION

In this research, it was tried to study the relationship between participatory culture and strategic planning.The statistical society included all 141 employees (only 121 persons has educational degree upper than over-diploma) of Mayoral Organization among whom the researchers selected 100 persons randomly and using Morgan Table. The researchers used, in addition to library researches, a 27-question questionnaire which was considered as a tool to collect the data needed.According to the results obtained through SPSS software and also other parts of the article, the researchers find out that there was a significant and positive relationship between participatory culture and strategic planning. However there was no relationship between managers' style of leadership and strategic planning.

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