

## **A Study on the Role of Political Behaviors in the Relationship between the Open Mind and Organizational Innovation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this research is to study the effect of political behaviors on the relation between open mind and organizational innovation. Open mind is the independent variable and organizational innovation is dependent variable; furthermore, political behaviors have been considered as the moderator variable. This is a descriptive-correlational research and from the viewpoint of objective, it is practical and has been accomplished through a field study and library research method. The statistical population of the study consisted of the employees of the Vocational Organization of Doroud City (85 people); and the sampling (consisting of 70 participants) was done based on Morgan and Talkman's Table. Sampling was simple randomization and the data relevant to the variables were collected through a standard questionnaire (Alpha Cronbach = 0.860). The validated questionnaire, including 10 questions relevant to organizational innovation (based on Abren C. Clark's Model), enjoyed a reliability of 0.79. The scale employed for answering the questions was a five-level Likert scale and data analysis was done through LISREL and SPSS software. Statistical operations included Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression coefficient and Chi Square. The results show that the political behaviors affect open mind and organizational innovation; open mind correlates positively with organizational innovation; political behaviors are effective on open mind; and political behaviors are effective on organizational innovations.

**KEYWORDS:** Political Behaviors, Open Mind, Organizational Innovation, Abren C. Clark's Model, Vocational Organization.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The organizations at our age have undertaken roles and missions beyond the traditional roles and in the political and social environments new duties have been assigned to them. The modern organizations have changed from mere clerical, industrial or economic institutions to social and political ones, which beside undertaking technical tasks should be more sensitive to and aware of their social – political environment (Alvani, 2005, p. 11).

Establishing organizational innovation could be a very challenging task for small businesses, especially when their owners are not involved in working process in an active manner. In the recent era, in which societies are called informational or over-industrial, the speeds of changes and evolutions are in a marvellous manner. Working with hands is no longer useful and common, instead, it is machinery working, but there should be a kind of creativity and innovation. In such situation that the distinguishing faculty is thinking, those societies can progress and develop that use human resource in the best way.

Innovation has been defined in many ways. One of its accepted definitions refers to the use of ideas or behaviours that are considered new for organization. These ideas or behaviours could be a kind of system, policy, program, tool, procedure, product, or service. Organizational innovation, in this research, is considered as organization's capacity to change some activities in form of evolutions in products or services.

Innovation has been defined in various ways. One of the approved comprehensive definitions for it is: "innovation is employing an idea or behavior which is novel for the organization applying it. This idea or behavior may be a system, policy, program, tool, procedure, product or service" (Damanpour, 1991). In the present study, organizational innovation refers to the capacity for contribution in a range of coordinated changes in order to provide products and service to the market in a better way than the competitors may do (Weerawardena, 2003).

At the present age, which is called post-industrial or informational society, the speed of change and developments is so much amazing. At this period, working with hands has lost its importance; instead, qualitative human resource that is capable of creativity and innovation through the use of

thought has gained significance. In such an atmosphere, where thinking is the cause of distinction and superiority, those kinds of societies can develop which could better exploit human resources as the origin of thoughts and ideas and as the most vital element of production (Qane' Basiri, 1994, pp. 178-189).

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

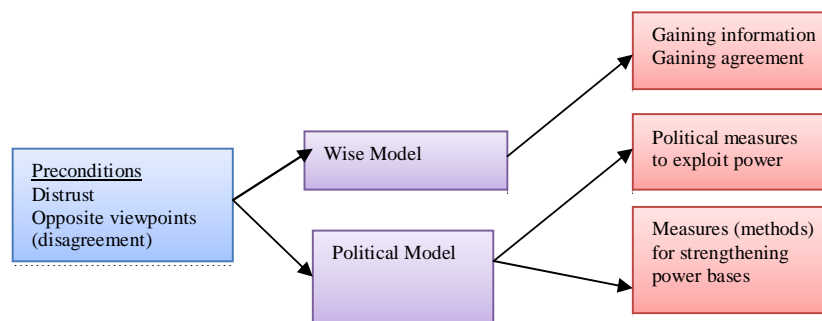
The research (Chiper de so Chairman) in 1997 showed that defensive precautions are more prevalent among the people who compete with each other while the outcome of the competition is not known; this point implies that there are ongoing issues and political disputes behind the scene in many companies (Seyyed Javadin, 2004, p. 390). In a study, about 53% of the interviewees stated that the organizational policies strengthen maintenance of the organization and the possibility of the achievement of its goals. On the other hand, 44 % stated that organizational policies deviate people from the goals. In this very same research, 60 % of the subjects answered that organizational policies are useful for the job promotion; 31 % answered that policies lead to the loss of power, position and creditability (Shermerhon, 1999, p. 218).

Sinchola *et al* (1997) expressed that open mind resulted in innovation (i.e. providing new products and service); that is to say, the new knowledge which is created permits the organizations to create ideas. The scientists such as Cohen and Lobintal (1990), Headland (1994), Cogotuzander (1992), Leonard Barton and Snisper (1998), March (1991) and Nonakawtakiochi (1995) came up with the same results. This finding is also in line with the previous empirical studies accomplished by Baker and Sinchola (1999) and Harly and Halt (1998). It is also in concordance with the suggestions by Wang and Ahmad (2004). There is a relation between open mind and organizational innovations and the effectiveness of management. In an economy which is based on knowledge, the degree of open mind and organizational innovations depends on the degree of the effectiveness of innovations through the management of knowledge concerning the internal and external elements; and of course this is a tough task (Wang and Ahmad, 2004; Goldman *et al*, 1995).

Therefore, organizational innovation is effective on the improvement of the business. The significance of organizational innovation for competition has been proved through a number of studies. Such researches have studied the effects of organizational innovation on the implementation of business, paying attention to production, creativity, quality, originality and flexibility. The theories of organizational innovation and change (Hanan and Freeman, 1984) revealed that how organizations could expand successful innovations.

The organizational policy includes activities which are relevant to gaining, strengthening or using power and the other resources. When the organization encounters the phenomenon of distrust and disagreement, it can attain the desired goals and results by means of organizational policy (Aqaie Matin, 1999, p. 103). Policy refers to the application of power in order to control the process of decision making for achieving the result (Deft, 1380, p. 793).

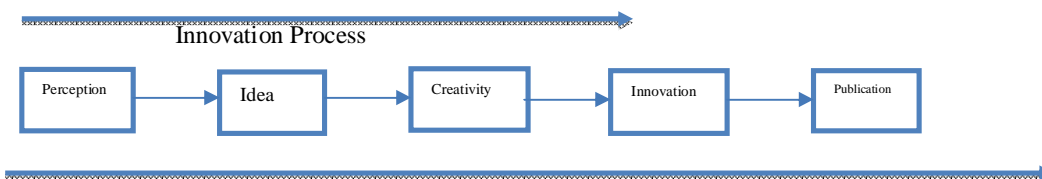
The political behaviors in the organization include conscious actions, which because of the status of the individuals or groups, are practiced in order to gain or maintain one's own profits when there are contradictory solutions (Aqaie Matin, 1999, p. 102). The political behavior can be defined in this way: they refer to those actions which are not necessary as a part of the official role of the organization; rather they play a role in distribution of the advantages and deficiencies within the organization (Haqiqi *et al*, 2004, p. 428). Mays and Allen: the political behavior means exerting control over others through illegal ways in order to achieve results which are not permitted and legal (Moqimi, 2006, p. 410).



**Fig. 1: The process of organizational policies, adapted from Richard L. Theory and Design of Organization, (2001. P. 810)**

Open mind is an attempt to redirect the values of the organization, norms and behaviors through a change in the cognitive structures (Naystrvm and Astarbak, 1984), cognitive models (Ngady, 1994), prevalent logics (Betis and Prahalad, 1995) and central presumptions which direct the behavior (Shaw and Perkins, 1991). The research shows that when individuals are not suppressed by time pressure, they tend to be open-minded (Spda and Sgara, 2008). Furthermore, when people want to make important decisions, they tend to be open-minded (Sitikin, 1992). Some researches reveal that we preserve our beliefs through choosing the information that support those beliefs (Kgan and Lahy, 2001).

Qvntz (1997) considers innovation as the application of innovate ideas resulted from creativity. He believes that innovation can be a new product, a new service or a new way to do a task; while, creativity is the ability or power to create a new thought or idea (Aqaie Fishani, 1998, p. 37). Albrecht (1987) believes that innovation is the application of creativity to change a new idea into a practical result (profit). He believes that innovation is the stages necessary for reaching conclusions for a novel idea and fact. From this viewpoint, a creative person may not necessarily be innovative; that is to say that although he may have novel ideas, he may not be capable of presenting or supplying them. Therefore, an innovative person is often creative but not all creative people are necessarily innovative (Shahrarai et al, 1996, p. 40; Saeediakia, 2005: 118).



**Fig. 2: Innovation Process**

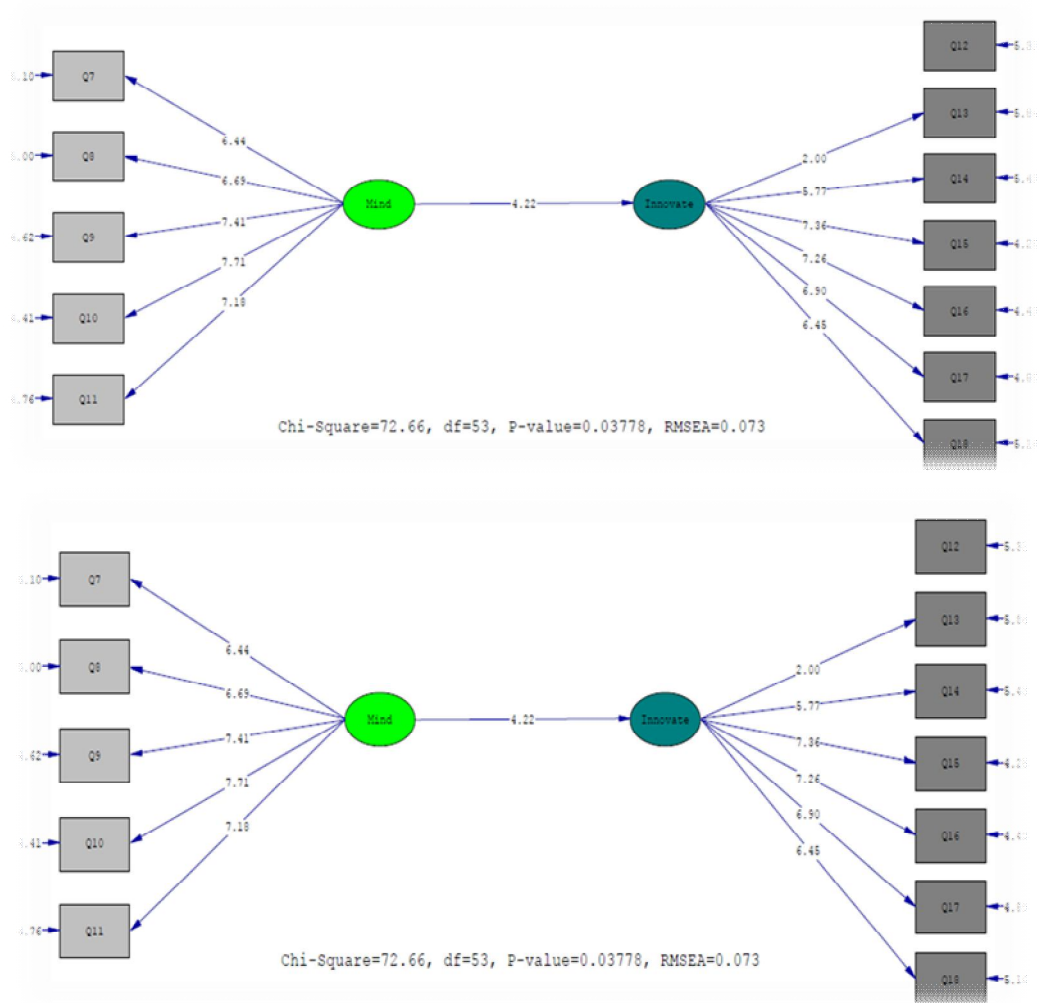
## METHODOLOGY

The present research followed a descriptive – correlational approach with an applied objective, based on field study and library research. The population of the research consisted of the employees of the Vocational Organization of Doroud City (85 participants) and sampling, through Morgan and Talkman Table, included 70 participants. The research followed a simple random sampling procedure. The data relevant to the variables was collected through a questionnaire (Alpha Cronbach = 0.860). The questionnaire used in this research is a standard one developed based on the original English questionnaire. In order to validate the questionnaire for the application in a new setting, the ambiguities were removed through consultation with the supervisor and the advisor. The scale employed for answering the questions of the questionnaire was a five-level Likert scale. Data analysis was done through LISREL and SPSS software. Statistical operations included Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression coefficient and Chi Square.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Testing hypothesis 1: open mind affects innovation.

The analysis of the procedure (the structural Model) is a technique which shows the relation between the (dependent and independent) variables of the research simultaneously. The output LISREL for testing the first hypothesis, i.e. the effect of open mind on innovation, was 0.58 and the value for the level of significance was 4.22, which was greater than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, open mind was found to have a significant positive effect on innovation.



Since the level of significance is smaller than 0.05 (error level), the relationship between the two variables is significant. Therefore, there is a correlation of 0.0539 between the variables of open mind and innovation. Thus, there is a significant relationship between open mind and innovation in the Vocational Organization; and since the resulted correlation is significant and positive, the higher the innovation the higher the open mind will be in the organization and the lower the innovation, the lower the open mind will be among the employees of the organization.

Sinchola *et al* (1997) state that open mind (i.e. tendency to consider new or different ideas and theories) correlates with the absence of learning through which the management actively makes inquiry about the daily affairs and current presumptions and beliefs of the organization, and it potentially ignores, changes, omits or replaces them. In this case, open mind as the organizational prerequisite and facilitator of innovation depends on the way the structures and procedures respond to the application of these new technologies (Sinchola *et al*, 1997; Sinchola, 2002).

The studies by Slatronaror, Farell, and Caskin in the field of management knowledge have revealed that open mind supports organizational innovation (Slatronaror, 1995; Farell, 2000; Caskin, 2006). It can be said that both in the present research and the researches carried out by Slatronaror, Farell, and Caskin, it has theoretically been proved that open mind correlates with organizational innovation.

## Testing Hypothesis 2: political behavior moderates the relationship between open mind and innovation

In this part, the moderating effect of the political behavior on the relationship between the open mind and innovation was studied. To this end, first through Split Data, the data was split based on political behavior into two sets of greater and smaller than the mean, i.e. when the political behavior

was little and when it was much. Then the regression coefficient was calculated between the two variables of open mind and innovation in these two conditions (i.e. little and much political behaviors). Naturally, if there is a significant difference between the two coefficients, one can consider a moderating role for the political behavior concerning these two variables; otherwise, it will not have a moderating role.

In order to test the significance of the difference between the two regression coefficients the following steps were taken:

1. Calculation of the regression coefficients in the two cases
2. Inserting  $b_1$  and  $b_2$  (the regression coefficients in two cases) in the following formulas:

$$Z_{b_1} = \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{1 - b_1}{1 + b_1}$$

$$Z_{b_2} = \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{1 - b_2}{1 + b_2}$$

$$Z = \frac{n_1 Z_{b_1} - n_2 Z_{b_2}}{n_1 + n_2}$$

3. Calculation of Chi-Square value through the following formula:

$$\chi^2 = (Z_{b_1} - Z)^2 (n_1 - 3) + (Z_{b_2} - Z)^2 (n_2 - 3)$$

4. Comparison of the value of the test with the critical value of  $\chi^2_{0.05, k-1}$  (in this formula, k is equal with 2 and refers to the number of the variables, and the critical value is 3.84).
5. Decision-making: if the value of the test is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is retained.

**Alternative hypothesis:** political behavior moderates the relationship between open mind and innovation.

- Regression coefficient (between open mind and innovation) when political behavior is little and equals with  $b_1 = 0.275$
- Regression coefficient (between open mind and innovation) when political behavior is much and equals with  $b_2 = 0.553$

$$z_{b_1} = \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{1 - .275}{1 + .275} = -.282$$

$$z_{b_2} = \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{1 - .533}{1 + .533} = -.622$$

$$n_1 = 36 \quad n_2 = 34 \quad z = 0.41 \quad \chi^2 = 48.87$$

As it is evident,  $\chi^2 = 48.87$ , which is greater than 3.84. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is retained. Thus, the political behavior has a moderating effect on the relationship between open mind and innovation.

### Testing sub-hypothesis 3: political behavior affects open mind.

Chi-Square/df	RMSEA	Level of Significance	Correlation Coefficient	
2<3	0.120>0.08	-6.06	-0.94	Open Mind

According to the results, the degree of the effect of the political behavior on open mind is -0.94, which is smaller than the significance level of -1.96. Therefore, political behavior has a significant negative effect on open mind, and the hypothesis is retained.

#### Testing sub-hypothesis 4: political behavior affects organizational behavior.

Chi-Square	RMSEA	Level of Significance	Correlation Coefficient	Organizational Behavior
2<3	0.120>0.08	- 4.55	- 0.64	

According to the results, the degree of the effect of the political behavior on innovation is -0.64, which is smaller than the significance level of -1.96. Therefore, political behavior has a significant negative effect on innovation, and the hypothesis is retained.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The findings of the research imply that there is a correlation of 0.0539 between the variables of open mind and innovation. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between open mind and innovation in the Vocational Organization. Based on the results, the correlation is significant and positive, i.e. the higher the level of innovation in the organization, the more open mind among the employees of the organization can be expected; and the less innovation, the less open mind among the employees of the organization. Since  $\chi^2 = 48.87$ , it is bigger than the critical value.

Therefore, political behavior plays a moderating role on the relationship between open mind and innovation. The degree of the effect of the **political behavior** on open mind is equal with -0.94 and it is smaller than the significance level of -1.96. Therefore, **political behavior** has a significant negative effect on open mind. The degree of the effect of the **political behavior** on innovation is equal with -0.64 and it is smaller than the significance level of -1.96. Therefore, **political behavior** has a significant negative effect on innovation.

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