Assessment of the relationship between participatory management and Individual performance in Ahvaz Municipality

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Abstract
The goal of the present study is investigating about the relationship between participatory management and individual performance of municipality employees of Ahvaz center. The population of this research consists of 216 managers and staff employees. The sample size was chosen by Cochran’s formula. 138 managers and staff employees were chosen by the method proportional of stratified random sampling and simple random sampling. Pierson’s correlation statistical test and regression test show that there is a positive and significant relationship between participatory management and its components (leadership, decision making, communication, structure, supervision) and individual performance. The results also show that there is not any significant relationship between individual performance and participatory management based on gender.

Key word: participatory management, individual performance Ahvaz Municipality

Introduction
Existential philosophy of organizations is society needs and each organization is created to fulfill a special goal. To satisfy these needs, employees of organizations should do their task better than the past. Therefore, productivity and effectiveness in organizations are considered important; and fulfillment of both depends on individuals’ participation and consideration of organizational factors.

Different factors effect on employees' performances.
Internal structure of organizations can encourage or discourage organizations’ performances. Studies show that centralized decision makings and formalities in processes and work relations hinder new thoughts formation, while power distribution and flexibilities increase performances in organizations and facilitate creation of new ideas in organizations. In this paper, among factors affecting performances, factors of supervision, communication and decision making, leadership and the chosen structures regarding employees’ performances will be reviewed. The reason is that performance of each organization is a base for performance of that society and performances of employees of each organization is the base of that organization that is assessed by executive activities of employees.

Participatory management refers to creation of a space and a system by organizations’ managers in which all employees, clients and contractors are involved in procedures of decision making and problem solving and this involvement is accompanied by sympathy and empathy between managers and employees and joint intervention of managers and employees in organizations affairs, transparency of goals and development of the culture of decision making or common accountability.

Statement of the Problem and research questions

Acknowledgement
We express our gratitude to the Ahvaz Municipality and Affiliated Organizations for the valuable guidance, support, and cooperation in several ways.
We also wish to thank the faculty members, our family and friends, for their support throughout our work.

1 Sheyk mohammadi, Toliyat zadeh, 2001
2 Klunk, 2004, narrated by Oraee yazdani, and et al, 2009
Nowadays, amid powerful forces dominating organizations and institutes, participation is one of resuscitative, dynamic, fresh and productive factors that through creating organizational reticular relationships and using collective practice and thought, cause organizations to move desirably from the present situation to a more desirable situation. In this situation, the employees’ roles change from being in the margin and shadow to active factors in the heart of organizations and their muted voices reach to the ears of the organizations’ managers. Participatory management is a subjective and cultural phenomenon that conflicts with previously and traditionally shaped mental frameworks and causes the marginalized and observers to come into group works and feel commitments toward the organization.

Most advanced countries use participatory management for their survival and the continuation of their development. In these countries participatory management is assumed as communication management. Most experts believe that for success of organizations, managers should participate employees in decision-making. Participatory management system is a very effective tool based on motivation and change in management. Using participatory management, advanced countries could take large strides toward the path of growth and development. Participatory management contains 4 dimensions: decision making, communications, leadership, structure and supervision. This kind of management is based on the hypostasis that if social and individual conditions are provided, productivity, creativity, innovation and life quality will be increased. Participatory management is one of the columns of democracy and its role in human efflorescence, politics, culture and economy is significant. Generally, employees’ performance is the result of interaction of drives, skillful abilities, intellectual capabilities and available resources. Most experts believe that performance has two dimensions: behavior and results.

This means that performance relates to both the way a task is done and the obtained results. This term usually associates with terms such as effectiveness and productivity. Performance is a multi-dimensional concept that entangles concepts such as quality, satisfaction, time and so on. Continually, societies qualify the Performance of organizations and institutes that satisfy the needs. In another hand, organizations’ survival and continuation of their activity depend on their goal achievement that both of which are owed to productivity and effectiveness of human resource of the organizations. Therefore, it is essential to provide facilities to improve employees’ performance. One of these empowerment tools is the establishment of a participatory management system. Comparing traditional organizations with participatory management style organizations implies that there is less turnover and higher individual performance in the former organizations.

Hypotheses
- There is a relationship between decision-making and individual performance.
- There is a relationship between communications and individual performance.
- There is a relationship between leadership and individual performance.
- There is a relationship between structure and individual performance.
- There is a relationship between supervision and individual performance.

Research Methodology
The present study is applied research on its goal and it is correlation research on data gathering.

Population, sample and sampling Procedure
The population of this study includes 218 managers and staff employees of Ahwaz municipality. 138 people were chosen through Cochran’s formula and the proportional stratified sampling followed by simple random sampling.

Data gathering
The researcher used two questionnaires in this study: participatory management questionnaire and individual performance questionnaire. To define the content validity of the questionnaires, the researcher consulted the supervisor professor and the advisor professor. To define its validity, the researcher used
Chronbach’s alpha coefficient. The value of Chronbach’s alpha for participatory management questionnaire was 0.79 and for individual performance questionnaire was 0.69.

**Data analysis**

To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics are used. To describe the data, descriptive statistic methods such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and chart are used. To describe the data inferentially, parametric statistic such as Independent-sample t-test, one-way analysis of variance or one-way ANOVA, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson r) and multiple regression methods are used to reject or accept the hypothesis.

**Finding**

The correlation coefficient table for each independent variable from performance
data.

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**Hypothesis 1:** there is a relationship between decision-making and individual performance.

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<td>138</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>.285*</td>
<td>reject</td>
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P<0.01

According to the above table, the value of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r= .285) between decision making and individual performance in Ahwaz municipality is meaningful at 0.05 levels. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is meaningful. As the correlation coefficient is positive then the relation is direct.

It means that with 95 percent confidence we can say that the better and more accurate is decision-making in Ahwaz, the better employees’ individual performances improve.

Managers’ decision makings during their organizational missions effect on their employees’ performances and lives. Decision making as the first duty of managers in administration of the organizations affairs, is so important that some experts defined organization as network of decision makers and define management as act of decision making. Herbert Simon (1947) believes that decision-making is at the core of management. He argues that a decision maker is an individual that when he or she reaches a crossing, is ready to choose a path at the time of choice. Heavy Misskel (2008) also believes that decision making is the main responsibility of all managers and management is a process that not only leads to decision-making, but also leads to run the decisions.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a relationship between communications and individual performance.

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<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.175*</td>
<td>reject</td>
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P<0.05

According to the above table, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.175) between communications and individual performance in Ahwaz municipality is meaningful at 0.05 levels. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is meaningful. As the correlation coefficient is positive then the relation is direct.

It means that with 95 percent confidence we can say that the better and more accurate is communication management in Ahwaz municipality, the better employees’ individual performances improve.

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8 Kavchara, 2010
9 Alvani, 2005
Communication and its roles are vital for managers and the organizations. Managers spend high percentage of their time for communications\(^{10}\). The quality of interpersonal relationships in organizations is very important \(^{11}\). According to this issue, assessment of organizational communications in higher education centers is important. Organizational communication -that refers to social and human nature- is a process by which interactions forms. Meanwhile, it is symbolic and goal oriented \(^{12}\). In recent years, defining criteria for internal communication monitoring\(^{13}\), assessment of the effect of communication atmosphere on employees’ participation in decision making (Real and et al 2009), assessment of communication strategies and communication atmosphere \(^{14}\), assessment of the effect of communication atmosphere on employees’ identity \(^{15}\), the effect of communication atmosphere on the degree of employees cooperation \(^{16}\) and assessment of organizational communication structure in higher education centers \(^{17}\) have increased in organizational communication studies that show the importance of such issues in higher education area.

Communications in a group or organization play 4 roles: controlling, creating motivation, expressing emotions, and information\(^{18}\). Paying attention to this point can guide managers’ activities in higher education. Effective communication in an organization leads to improvement of productivity, employees’ satisfaction, improvement of motivation for useful work and reduction of conflicts originated from lack of communication system\(^{19}\). For managers, communications is one of the most important leadership skills. Jack Gabe introduced two communication behaviors: defensive and supportive. His work draws a perspective from communicative behavior that can create supportive communication atmosphere \(^{20}\).

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a relationship between leadership and individual performance

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<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.307**</td>
<td>reject</td>
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P<0.01

According to the above table, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.307) between leadership and individual performance is meaningful at 0.05 levels. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is meaningful. As the correlation coefficient is positive then the relation is direct. It means that with 95 percent confidence we can say that the better and more accurate is leadership in Ahwaz municipality, the better employees’ individual performances improve.

Transformational leadership fosters the individuals’ performances beyond expected standards. This process occurs through the feeling of belonging and attachment between the leader and the followers. In this kind of leaders’ behaviors, emotional attachment relates to common goals of individuals and helps the followers to perform better in the larger societies \(^{21}\). These leaders play their roles as change factors through creating a common perspective and reforming the attitudes, beliefs and motivations of the followers \(^{22}\). They contribute to the formation of a new perception considering the common goal by encouraging the followers to think critically about the issues \(^{23}\).

Transformational leaders are able to influence on their followers by drawing their respect, trust and commitment and motivate them to reach an optimized performance level \(^{24}\).

\(^{10}\) Hall, 1997  
\(^{11}\) Kerbeter, 2007  
\(^{12}\) Miller, 1998  
\(^{13}\) Anan Yamoos, 2010  
\(^{14}\) Aprix, 2009  
\(^{15}\) Bartlez et al, 2009  
\(^{16}\) Super, 2008  
\(^{17}\) Shahi et al, 2008  
\(^{18}\) Robinz, 1999  
\(^{19}\) Farhangi, 2007  
\(^{20}\) Gabe, 1961  
\(^{21}\) Oliveria Marino, 2002  
\(^{22}\) Antonakis and House, 2002  
\(^{23}\) Valo and et al 2004  
\(^{24}\) Bass and Avolio, 2007
**Hypothesis 4:** There is a relationship between the structure and individual performance.

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P<0.01

According to the above table, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.327) between structure and individual performance is meaningful at 0.05 levels in Ahwaz municipality. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is meaningful. As the correlation coefficient is positive then the relation is direct. It means that with 95 percent confidence we can say that the better and more accurate is the management of structure in Ahwaz municipality, the better employees’ individual performances improve.

Woodward proved that there is a relation between technology, structure and effectiveness. He argued that effectiveness is a function of relativity between the structural requirements and technology. Organizations that improve their structures to adapt with technology are more successful than the organizations that don’t do that. According to different models introduced by Desler, Seyed Javadin, Stephan P Robins, Heresi and Bkanchar, structure is one of effective factors in organizations.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a relationship between supervision and individual performance.

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<td>0.310**</td>
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According to the above table, the value of Pearson correlation coefficient (r=0.310) between supervision and individual performance is meaningful at 0.05 levels in Ahwaz municipality. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is meaningful. As the correlation coefficient is positive then the relation is direct. It means that with 95 percent confidence we can say that the better and more accurate is supervision in Ahwaz municipality, the better employees’ individual performances improve.

Control is a process in which the predicted performance is compared with completed tasks and if there is any discrepancy or deviation in relation to what it is and what should be, it will be ameliorated. Stoner defines managerial control as a process by which we will be certain whether the completed tasks are compatible with the planned activities or not.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

Participatory management is one of the dynamic managerial systems that play an important role in development of human resources in organizations. Complexity of organizations’ environment and the procedure of organizing the organizations’ structures increasingly necessitate the need for a flexible and participatory culture that satisfies employees’ communication and job needs. Designing and running the participatory management style in Ahwaz municipality need a participatory culture; a culture that stresses on development of employees capabilities and empowers their teamwork and causes improvement, organizational trust, organizational commitment, learning opportunities, job satisfaction, productivity, participation in decision-making, care with high quality, self-satisfaction, independency, self-confidence, accountability, job control, organizational effectiveness, reduction of conflict and decrease of employees’ depersonalization. As, employees believe that formation of participatory culture in organizations is an effective factor that increases their participation in strategic decision-making, therefore, managers need a participatory culture to draw the participation of stakeholders. Findings showed that there is a relation between the leadership style and individual performance. These findings are compatible with findings of others. Only transformational leaders are able to draw essential and new paths for organizations. Such leaders are the origin of essential transformation and are dominated on the organization changes and take advantage of these changes. These leaders can introduce a better image of the future, define themselves or their subordinates effectively and challenge them for extraordinary tasks.

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27. Rezaeeiyan, 1991
30. Zahavi et al, 2009
32. Javdani, 2011
participatory management style in Ahwaz municipality need adherence to values such as justice, support and protection and a transformational leader can create such values. Findings showed that there is a relationship between organizational structure and individual performance. This finding is compatible with other findings. Designing or changing organizational structure according to the organization goal and maintaining its dynamism to be accountable to environmental changes is an essential need. Today’s, structural changes that facilitate more participation in decision-making, and support opportunities for vocations growth and interaction can be a factor for extending the leaders capacities. Such structure can create opportunities for the leaders’ interactions. Although organizational structures are evolving and there is no the best organizational structure, some researchers believe that to design and run a participatory management, passing from the deterrent and mechanical structure to empowering and dynamic structure is vital. Therefore, if managers want employees to participate in decision-making more, they should decrease formalities in organizational structures and increase organizations’ autonomy and decentralization. Although managers are aware of participatory management advantages, they are not inclined to use such styles. Although participation of stakeholders is effective for improvement of skills and capabilities of the leaders, most leaders still like to be in charge of the whole organization leadership. The reason is that most of them don’t believe in qualification of their subordinates and believe that participatory programs are bothersome and can change their administrative systems. So, the solution is that they should never think to the assumption of participatory management. Employees’ lack of belief in participatory system is also another obstacle for success of participatory management in organizations. This attitude originated from superficial confrontation with this issue. Managers on the surface call for participation of employees, but in reality don’t pay attention to them. Such group of managers, as enforcement of employees’ morale is a people-friendly issue or they want to be famous, pursues participatory management, while employees like real participation not a ritual participation. To define and alleviate the organization problems, managers should rely on their employees more than ever. The reason is that the employees face the organization’s problem routinely and objectively and know the duties and official and unofficial relations of the organization better than others. Using their views also causes more encouragement and increases their attention toward reformation of the affairs. Even if they know that their amendatory view is not applicable, their knowledge about the environment will be increased and they will work with a better understanding. One of the hidden but effective factors that effect on organizational behavior of employees is the degree of their commitment to the organization and their job. Empowered and committed human resources significantly increase the organization performance and cause the sublime goals to be expressed better and individual goals achieved, meanwhile reduce employees’ absence, delay and turn over. An individual, who is significantly committed to the organization, identifies oneself with the organization, enjoys being a member of the organization and participates and involves in the organization advancement actively and certainly welcomes participatory management. Organization should accept changes little by little. It means that they should substitute hierarchical system with participatory system. Participatory management is a way for distribution of enthusiasm and development of creativity in organizations. Its goal is promotion of knowledge in a way that its effectiveness is more than autocratic organizations.

33 Vera and Krusen, 2004
35 Kerd Naeeij et al, 2005
36 Mooler, 2001
37 Esmail, 1997
38 Raderford, 2006
39 Kambron et al, 2003
40 Moeini Shahraki et al, 2011
41 Hoy, 2002, Miskel, 2005
42 Cranson, 2001, Jakson 2000
43 lea, 2004
44 Malford et al, 2000
45 Abili and Nasiti zayee, 2009
46 Ghalavandi, Soltanzadeh, 2012
**Recommendations**

1. To change organizational structure, we suggest that the organizations should change from centralized to decentralized organizations and the subordinate managers should have practically more freedom.
2. We suggest that authorities should provide a proper ground for in-service training of employees to help them understand the concept of participation better and apply it properly.
3. We suggest that managers should ask their employees to refer to them without any doubt or fear for consultation and help. The result of such behavior is that employees attach affectionately to the managers and they will express their views and suggestions freely.
4. We suggest that managers should provide an intimate and friendly environment, increase the interaction between co-workers and create a desirable and dynamic environment in which managers and employees solve the problems by cooperation.
5. We suggest that to run and institutionalize a participatory system, managers should provide prerequisite and premises of its implementation, because it seems that the premises of establishment of participatory management are not provided in Ahwaz municipality.
6. Specifying sufficient time for participation in decision making in the organization is essential. Managers should care for establishment of more participation.
7. As employees look at participation positively, we suggest that managers should provide a proper ground for teamwork and also they should promote the culture of participation in the organization.
8. Managers should have a fixed and mechanized procedure for reviewing and accepting the received suggestions fairly.
9. Managers should hold seminars and conferences related to participatory management.
10. Managers should release newsletter to inform employees and promote the system.
11. Managers should create the atmosphere of culture of change in Ahwaz municipality.

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