

## The Relationship between Organizational Learning and Flexibility towards Change in Employees of Maskan Bank of North Khorasan, Iran

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### Abstract

The organization ability in learning is the main strategic capability for competition in modern markets. The aim of this research is considering organizational learning relation to change in Maskan bank staff of North Khorasan province. In this research, the relation between organizational learning and flexibility rather to changing is analyzed. Statistic population includes all employees of Bank Maskan in North Khorasan province in 2014. In this research, 97 persons among 130 persons are selected by random sampling method. This consideration is made by descriptive method, from type of correlation, and for gathering data, it is used organizational learning standard questionnaire and flexibility standard questionnaire (Gardiner) rather to changing, and person correlation coefficient and regression Test are used in order to analyze data. Data analyzing are alone in levels of descriptive and deductive. The results showed that there is relationship between organizational learning and flexibility rather to changing and all organizational learning components (individual skills, mind models, common prospective, team learning and system thought) have direct relation with flexibility rather to changing.

**Keywords:** organizational learning; flexibility; change; Bank Maskan.

### Introduction

In recent years, the concept of organizational learning has changed substantially among scholars and people using it. The aim of these changes, however, has been to improve organizations. Scholars initially interested to the subject, e.g. Argyris and Schon, 1978:99, found that their idea is mainly confined to matters concerning the management issues, but in the early 1990s of 20th century we have witnessed their birth of interest to the subject. Recent evolutions can easily be seen concerning at creating a magazine that is dedicated to learning organization, i.e. *The Learning Organization*, (Krosanlin and wait, 1999:38), Rapid changes and the dynamism of competitive markets have made achieving

to flexibility for the organizations an essential necessity. Flexibility is not a spontaneous and involuntary phenomenon, but the organization must identify the factors influencing the flexibility and try to create them.

### Problem description

Among the most important factors of survival and the survival of organizations is the quality and excellent human resources. The main difference between organizations is their knowledge and ignorance. The role of efficient, competent and knowledgeable human resources in the realization of organizational goals is undeniable (Nekuei Moghadam and Milanifard, 2009),

An organization to outreach to other organizations must develop organizational resources and increase the amount of available information and knowledge. Staffs and their knowledge are valuable resources for the organizations and hence production of knowledge over the past several years has been interested by researchers (Homstein, 2006: 135),

Organizational learning is a dynamic process that enables the organization to adapt quickly to the changes. This process involves the production of new knowledge, skills and behaviors. Organizational learning is the main way to create knowledge-based jobs and to improve the organization's efficiency. Therefore, a successful organization must be dynamic in learning (Zhang, 2009:78),

On the other hand, businesses need to be flexible enough to manage unpredictable threats as well as the available opportunities in the uncertain future and unstable environment. Therefore, flexibility for accommodation with business dynamic environment in order to maintain the competitive advantage is one of the main challenges that managers today are faced with (Golden and Powell, 2000:375), In the past two decades, it has increasingly emphasized on the flexibility as an organizational capability, which will properly enable the company to achieve competitive advantage and hold it as well as leads to better performance in today's dynamic and competitive business environment (Zhang, 2005:165),

Given the role and effect of organizational learning on organizational components, in this study, we sought to answer this question that

whether there is significant relationship between organizational learning and flexibility to the changes in staffs of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province?

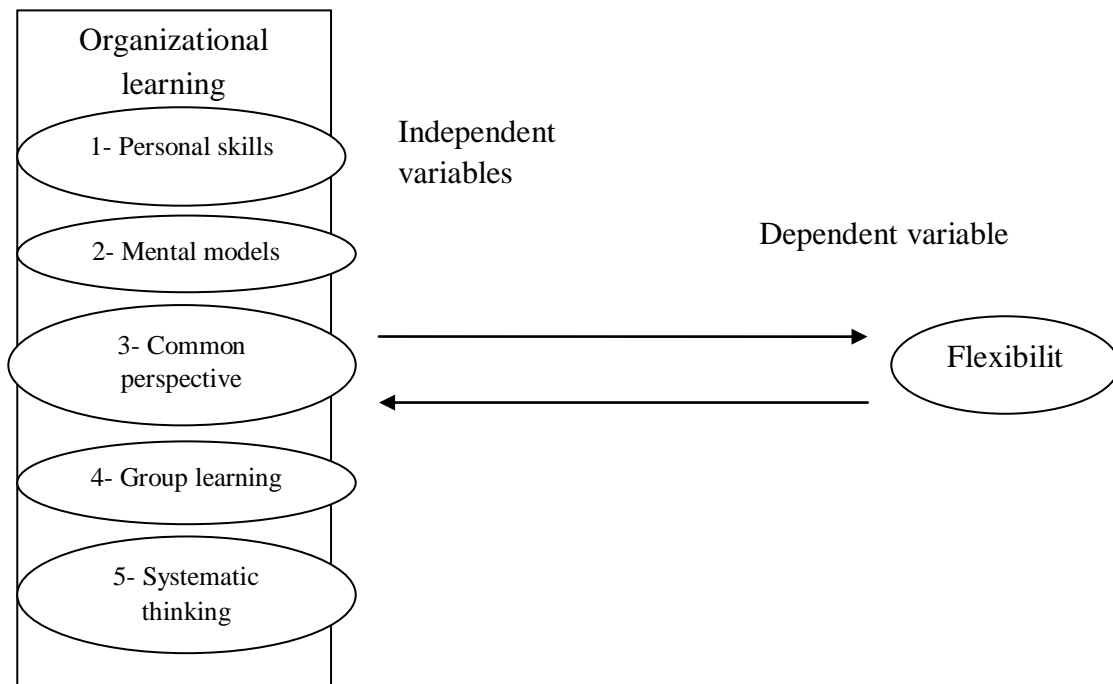
### Research hypotheses

#### The main hypothesis

There is significant relationship between organizational learning and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province.

#### Sub-hypotheses:

- 1-1) there is significant relationship between individual skills and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province.
- 1-2) there is significant relationship between mental models and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province.
- 1-3) there is significant relationship between common perspective and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province.
- 1-4) there is significant relationship between group learning and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province.
- 1-5) there is significant relationship between systematic thinking and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province.



Conceptual model: derived from the article by Niyef(2001),

### Literature review

Abdullah (2010) studied the relationship between organizational learning and empowerment of employees of education and training organization of Damghan city. They showed there is positive significant relationship organizational learning and the senses of competency, effectiveness, significance, sense of having choice right and the feeling of confidence.

Hajipoor and Moradi (2010) did a study on the organizational flexibility and the performance of manufacturing companies located in the industrial area of Arak city. Based on their results, using multi-objective machines, diversifying manufacturing processes and creating capacity for additional production would increase the operational flexibility so that having different options and separate programs to deal with the possible future outcomes and providing appropriate fields for rapid change of the competitive strategy in order to adapt with unanticipated changes in the environment increase the strategic flexibility.

Marchika and Mora (2007) studied the relationship between financial flexibility and investment decisions and concluded that there is a strong relationship between financial flexibility and investment. In other words, after a period of low leverage, companies with financial flexibility have higher potential for capital expenditures.

### Research's method

The present study in terms of purpose is application and in terms of data collection is descriptive and survey and in terms of executive method is correlational.

### The statistical population

The statistical population of research includes all employees of bank Maskan of North Khorasan province whom during the year 2014 were active and working, which included 130 participants.

### The sample size

Using Krejcie and Morgan Table, the size of the studied statistical population was determined to be equal to 97.

### Sampling method

The sampling method in this research was random stratified so that first the list of all employees in the year 2014 was provided and given the number of people in each city the sampling was done.

### Methods and tools of data collection

**Library study:** to gather information on the theoretical basis and the relevant research literature, resources such as library resources, articles, books and World Wide Web were used.

**Field studies:** in order to collect and analyze the needed data the questionnaire were used.

In this study, the research tool, i.e. the appropriate questionnaire, has been used in accordance with research's objectives and limitations.

### Methods of statistical analysis

To analyze the data, the descriptive and inferential statistics and the SPSS software

was used. Since variables of this study are used by the test of normal distribution of data, i.e. Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, as well as the distance-numerical form of data, to evaluate the correlation between research's variables as well as to assess the effect of prediction of the amount of flexibility on the change capacity by employees on other organizational learning components, the linear regression was used.

### Testing research's hypotheses

#### Testing the main hypothesis of the research

The main hypothesis considers the relationship between organizational learning and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province. The following table shows that the correlation between organizational learning and the flexibility of employees to make changes is equal to 0.396. According to the estimated significance level, i.e. 0.000, it can be claimed that there is significant relationship between organizational learning and the flexibility to make changes by employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan.

		Variable	Flexibility to the variable
Main hypothesis	Organizational learning	Correlation	0.396
		Significance level	0.000
		Sample size	97

### The first sub-hypothesis testing

The first sub-hypothesis investigates the relationship between individual skills and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes. The following table shows that the correlation between individual skills and the flexibility of employees to make changes is equal to 0.325. According to the estimated significance level, i.e. 0.000, it can be claimed that there is significant relationship between individual skills and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes.

		Variable	Flexibility to the variable
Main hypothesis	Individual skills	Correlation	0.325
		Significance level	0.000
		Sample size	97

### The second sub-hypothesis testing

The second sub-hypothesis investigates the relationship between mental models and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes. The following table shows that the correlation between mental models and the flexibility of employees to make changes is equal to 0.335. According to the estimated significance level, i.e. 0.003, it can be claimed that there is significant relationship between mental models and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes.

	Variable	Flexibility to the variable	
		Correlation	
Main hypothesis	Mental models	Correlation	0.335
		Significance level	0.003
		Sample size	97

### The third sub-hypothesis testing

The third sub-hypothesis investigates the relationship between common perspective and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes. The following table shows that the correlation between common perspective and the flexibility of employees to make changes is equal to 0.306. According to the estimated significance level, i.e. 0.008, it can be claimed that there is significant relationship between common perspective and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes.

	Variable	Flexibility to the variable	
		Correlation	
Main hypothesis	Common perspective	Correlation	0.306
		Significance level	0.008
		Sample size	97

### The fourth sub-hypothesis testing

The fourth sub-hypothesis investigates the relationship between group learning and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes. The following table shows that the correlation between group learning and the flexibility of employees to make changes is equal to 0.216. According to the estimated significance level, i.e. 0.063, it can be claimed that there is no significant relationship between group learning and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes.

	Variable	Flexibility to the variable	
		Correlation	
Main hypothesis	Group learning	Correlation	0.216
		Significance level	0.063
		Sample size	97

### The fifth sub-hypothesis testing

The fifth sub-hypothesis investigates the relationship between systematic thinking and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes. The following table shows that the correlation between systematic thinking and the flexibility of employees to make changes is equal

to 0.509. According to the estimated significance level, i.e. 0.000, it can be claimed that there is significant relationship between systematic thinking and the flexibility of employees of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan to make changes.

	Variable	Flexibility to the variable	
Main hypothesis	individual skills	Correlation	0.509
		Significance level	0.000
		Sample size	97

### Study limitations

This study was conducted solely on the staff of the Bank Maskan of North Khorasan. Therefore, in generalization of its results to other employees of bank Maskan, we should be cautious.

### Results from the main hypothesis

The main hypothesis of the research considers the relationship between organizational learning and the flexibility to make changes in the personnel of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province, which was confirmed using the Pearson correlation test. As a result, there is significant relationship there is significant relationship between organizational learning and flexibility of staffs of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province to make changes.

### Results from the first sub-hypothesis

The first sub-hypothesis was confirmed using the Pearson correlation test. As a result, there is significant relationship between individual skills and flexibility of staffs of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province to make changes. Thus, by improving individual skills, the flexibility of staffs to make changes will also be improved.

### Results from the second sub-hypothesis

The second sub-hypothesis was confirmed using the Pearson correlation test. As a result, there is significant relationship between mental models and flexibility of staffs of Bank Maskan

of North Khorasan province to make changes. Thus, mental models are of great importance in improving the flexibility of staffs to make changes.

### Results from the third sub-hypothesis

The third sub-hypothesis was confirmed using the Pearson correlation test. As a result, there is significant relationship between common perspective and flexibility of staffs of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province to make changes. Thus, by improving common perspective, the flexibility of staffs to make changes will also be improved.

### Results from the fourth sub-hypothesis

The fourth sub-hypothesis was confirmed using the Pearson correlation test. As a result, there is no significant relationship between group learning and flexibility of staffs of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province to make changes.

### Results from the fifth sub-hypothesis

The fifth sub-hypothesis was confirmed using the Pearson correlation test. As a result, there is significant relationship between systematic thinking and flexibility of staffs of Bank Maskan of North Khorasan province to make changes. Thus, by improving systematic thinking, the flexibility of staffs to make changes will also be improved.

### Conclusions

According to the obtained correlation coefficients for the relationship between organizational learning and its components, i.e. individual skills, mental models, common perspective, group learning and systematic thinking with the flexibility of staffs to make changes, it can be concluded there is significant positive correlation between organizational learning and the flexibility of staffs to make changes. In other words, whatever the organizational learning increases, the flexibility of staffs to make changes would also increase.

Organizational learning and flexibility of staffs to make change are both important factors that enable the organization to have a correct, quick and effective deal with changes, to use at best of the potential opportunities created by the change, to cause improvement and progress of the organization and provide the future needs and goals of the organization, as well as to supply high quality products and services in a relatively short period of time. Thus, by entering into a knowledge-based space, organizations can to getting the opportunity to survive in a dynamic environment to act more adaptable and more flexible.

## Suggestions

### Suggestions based on hypotheses

**A) Suggestions based on the main hypothesis:** based on the results from the main hypothesis, it is proposed organizations by implementing programs such as increasing quality and quantity of in-service courses, periodic meetings and educational workshops to increase the level of organizational learning and the flexibility of employees to make changes.

**B) Suggestions based on the first sub-hypothesis:** it suggests that provide staffs with opportunities for improving their knowledge, skills and abilities and also use of their skills and abilities even in challenging situations and to have a continuous emphasis on staffs' teaching.

**C) Suggestions based on the second sub-hypothesis:** it suggests that by creating, training, and functionalizing creativity, spirit of courage and criticism, the scientific and research spirit would be strengthened among employees.

**D) Suggestions based on the third sub-hypothesis:** it suggests that organization to introduce values that all employees must adapt themselves to them. Description. Any organization that wants to develop and promote should define a common vision for itself. They should allow employees in the path of getting to the objectives to do self-evaluation. This way, they can determine how close they are to the shared vision.

**E) Suggestions based on the fourth sub-hypothesis:** it suggests that employees be encouraged for doing teamwork to gather data and share them.

**F) Suggestions based on the fifth sub-hypothesis:** it suggests that managers not only try to resolve problems, but also they should try to identify problems and the way in which problems can arise as well as the way in which they can prevent of them.

### Suggestions for the future research

1. Investigating the relationship between organizational learning and organizational performance,
2. Investigating the relationship between organizational learning and empowerment,
3. Investigating the relationship between organizational learning and competitive strategy,
4. It is recommended that in future studies more samples be examined. This way, the possibility of doing more advanced and more comprehensive statistical tests would be provided and results will be clearer.

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