The Relationship between the Organization Agility and Mental Health of Staff on Strategic Preparation for Crisis Management: The case study in Islamic Azad Universities of Mazandaran

Haydeh Ashori¹, Elham Fazeli Veisari², Siyavosh Angoraj Taghavi³

Abstract
Today, service and manufacturing organizations live in changing environmental conditions and the business, cultural, social, economic and political conditions of the environment affects the performance of organizations. Obviously, unexpected circumstances such as wars, earthquakes, floods, etc. also influence the behavior of organizations. Therefore, the managers should know that environmental threats from all sides threaten the life and survival of organizations and organizations just can overcome the crisis by strategic planning and strategic preparation. Previous studies have shown that several factors affect the strategic readiness or preparation, but it is not considered that to what extent the staffs’ organizational agility and mental health can affect it. The present study is subjected to check the enumerated factors in the strategic readiness for crisis management and investigates the role of staffs’ organizational agility and mental health. In this regard, three factors such as "strategic readiness", "organizational agility" and "mental health employees" as variables were tested in the form of three hypotheses. In this study, the relationship between independent variables as the strategic preparation and organizational agility with moderating variable of staffs’ mental health have been studied and analyzed. This study examined the hypothesis that increasing the organizational agility and mental health of employees (staffs) will increase the strategic readiness in crisis. The results of this study have confirmed the accuracy of this hypothesis.

Keywords: Strategic Preparation, Organizational Agility, Mental Health, Crisis Management.

1. Introduction
Strategic readiness is essential and vital for any organization with any activity and the private educational centers, especially universities, are not only excluded from this provision, but also by the type of their operation, having such readiness is essential and vital for them. One of the main concerns of management thinkers in different times and places is using and applying the ways which can identify the existing crisis in organizations to improve the performance of organization. It will not be possible unless by identifying important factors affecting the strategic readiness to deal with the crisis. Since no research about the effect of agility and mental health strategic readiness for crisis management in domestic universities of country has been done, this study attempts to respond to it.

Concept of Strategic Management
The professor Fred R.David defines the strategic management as follow:

“Strategic management is the art and science of designing, implementing, and evaluating multi-functional decisions that enable the organization to achieve its long-term goals”.

¹Member of academic assembly, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon Branch, Tonekabon, Iran
²Member of academic assembly, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon Branch, Tonekabon, Iran.
³Education and training of primary school
Hoskisson et al. believe that:

“Strategic Management is a set of commitments, decisions and activities of an organization to achieve the strategic competitive position and to earn above the average income.

Wheelen and Honger, 1987, represent their definition of strategic management as follow:

“Strategic Management is a set of management decisions and activities that determines an organization's long-term performance and includes the development, implementation, evaluation and control of strategy. Thus, the strategic management emphasizes on monitoring and evaluating the opportunities and environmental threats in light of strengths and weaknesses of organization”.

Concept of Crisis and Crisis Management

What is a disaster? As defined by the World Health Organization, disaster refers to the sudden ecological phenomenon, which consequently needs foreign assistance. Now, if this change causes confusion and rapid changes in the condition of human societies, it is called “crisis”.

Various definitions of this term have been presented that shows the extent of this term and also its complexity. Almost, there are definitions for “crisis” as many as the number of dictionaries in the world. The following definitions which have been proposed by some authors in the last decade, shows this evolution process obviously.

“The crisis is a disruption that affects the entire system physically and threatens its basic assumptions, sense of mental existence and vital axis” (Pachant & Mitrof, 1992)

Thus, according to the definition of the concept of crisis, it is evident that crisis management includes a series of continuous and dynamic operations and actions and generally it is based on the classic function of management which includes planning, organization, systems, leadership and control. In fact, usually several different organizations involve in crisis management tasks that must perform with full coordination of the necessary arrangements to improve the situation after the crisis.

The word “agility” in dictionaries means the fast move, agile, active, and ability to move fast and easy and being able to think quickly with a smart method (Hornby, 2000).

The root of the word, “organizational agility”, is agile manufacturing that has been introduced to respond to the changes in business environment and to benefit from those changes (as opportunities). In such an environment, every organization should have the ability of simultaneous production of different products with short life expectancy, redesign of products, changes in production methods and the ability of effective response to the changes. If a production firm has such capabilities, so it can be called as "agile organization".

Brian Maskell, 2001, defined agility as the ability to prosper in a constantly changing and unpredictable environment. In this regard, organizations should not fear and avoid the changes in their working environment, but they should imagine the changes as an opportunity to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Operational Framework for Measuring Strategic Management Readiness in Strategic Management

In this study, to assess the strategic readiness assessment for crisis management, the Reilly measurement tool has been used which had been applied for measuring the strategic readiness for better management of crisis in U.S. banks in 1987. Also, this tool in a study that was done by Mohammad Mostafa et al. in 2004 under the same title in Egyptian hospitals was validated in outside of the west world and its application was proved in other societies. They studied the organizations from six dimensions to assess the strategic readiness of their organizations that presented questions on tool are in the case of this dimension.
Table 1: The Operational Framework for Measuring Strategic Readiness
(Mohammed Mostafa et al., 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Strategic readiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability of fast responding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis of timely detection of capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management crisis of accessing to resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal procedure information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External procedure information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis for planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Literature of Staffs Mental Health

Organizations use many resources that human resource is one of the most important. This force can only act effectively when the staffs (employees) feel their success mentally. In other words, if employees have the feeling mentally that they are useful people for development of the organization and they walk in the way of growth and development, they will use their whole power to meet the organization's objectives. Defective human relations cause undesirable results such as reduced efficiency, frequent switching jobs, absence from work, sickness, accidents and errors increase, hostility and malice (Glass & Singer, 1974).

A Review of Studies in the Field of Crisis

Roberts noted in his study in 1989, the organization changes during a crisis and therefore, it is very important that companies keep in mind the crisis before it occurs as well as studying crisis after it occurs. In his study with his colleagues of very authentic organizations, he stresses the need to study very credible companies because the events are more expensive and also more destructive than preventative measures and actions before the crisis of the companies.

Nelson and Ornstein, 2002, in his article entitled: Preparing for unexpected events, expressed organizational learning and flexibility as effective factors in organization's strategic readiness in the crisis management.

Arab in his research project in 2006 with the title: the study of the evaluation of quantitative and qualitative preparedness level of hospitals of Tehran University of Medical Sciences to deal with the earthquake risk, pointed out these items:

The results indicate that the level of general knowledge of hospital administrators, 47/52, their overall performance, 56/69, and the overall readiness level of managed hospitals about the earthquake risk, 49/54, in the studied area is very low.

A Review of Studies in the Field of Organizational Agility

Nimble, 2002, in a research entitled: The capacity of human resources and organizational agility, which was conducted in New Zealand, the organizational agility framework was analyzed in 12 private and 3 public sectors and was compared with human resources strategy and organizational ability.

In the study by Mohamed Zain et al in 2004 with the title, the relationship between information technology and organizational agility in Malaysia, was conducted, these results have been obtained:

There is a positive relationship between information technology and organizational agility. There is a positive relationship between positive attitude in the use of information technology and top managers’ support and the information quality with agility of manufacturing institutes. Using information technology is the key for success of agile organizations.
A Review of Studies in the Field of Mental Health

In a study by Kamyar Ismaili Nasrabadi in 2014 entitled; the study of the relationship of mental health on staffs’ job satisfaction due to the moderating role of organizational commitment (a case study of Iran Melli Bank), the following results were obtained:

The results of the independent t-test correlation and structural equations showed that there is a significant positive relationship between staffs’ mental health and job satisfaction and its dimensions. Also, organizational commitment moderates the relationship of role of mental health on job satisfaction and its dimensions.

In a study by M Zinodine in 2014 under the title; the effect of mental health on organizational commitment of Yazd managers of public organizations, the following results were obtained:

The statistical population of this study is consisted of managers of public organizations in Yazd province, the sample was 120 official managers of these organizations which were selected using random sampling. The questionnaire was calculated at 92.5 percent. Spearman and Kendall correlation coefficients were used to determine the reliability that equal to 0.948 and 0.861, respectively.

State of the problem:

The main question in this research is: investigating the role of organizational agility and mental health in strategic readiness for crisis management at Islamic Azad Universities in Mazandaran province, so that based on that and by identifying the existing challenges, the condition for achieving success and effectiveness in crisis conditions can be provided.

Hypothesis

The main hypothesis of this study is:

A. There is a relationship between the organization agility and staffs’ mental health with strategic readiness for crisis management. Specific hypotheses of this study are:

B. There is a relationship between the organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management.

C. There is a relationship between the staffs’ mental health and strategic readiness for crisis management.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework
3. Research Method

Because in this study we investigate and describe what there is, the appropriate research method used in this study, is the correlation-descriptive method.

A descriptive study describes and defines what there is and its primary attention is the present time, though it often studies past events and works that are relevant to the current situation.

The purpose of correlation research is the understanding the complex patterns of behavior by studying the correlation between these patterns and the variables that are assumed there is a relationship between them. Ali & Raza (2015). This method is especially useful in situations which aim to explore the relationship between variables that research has been done about them. Therefore, since the present study aims to investigate the experimental relations in the field of the relationship between organization agility and staffs’ mental health with strategic readiness for crisis management, in terms of applied research, and in terms of collecting data method is descriptive and correlation type.

Research Variables

The variables in this study are as follow:

The variables associated with individual characteristics of evaluators, were including (age, education, work experience and academic degree) that were measured using the answers to the questions in the questionnaire. The dimensions of the components of organization agility are in the form of 6 indicators of organizational change, organizational leadership, values and organizational culture, services, e-government and management performance that include 30 questions.

Dimensions related to staffs’ mental health component in form of 4 indicators consisting of physical health, anxiety, social dysfunction and depression scales contain 28 questions. The dimensions related to the components of readiness to deal with the crisis include 17 questions.

Population, Sample and Sample Size Determination Method

The population of this research includes managers and staffs of the Islamic Azad University of Mazandaran province. To access the population, the list of IAU population of Mazandaran was studied and 13 instructional units were selected that the overall number of managers and staffs is 1933.

Due to the requirements of research method, the nature of the data, the type of data collection tool and population structure, the researcher must choose a sample which should be a measure of the quality and quantity of society.

Due to the issue that the population size of this research was almost unlimited, using the following formula to determine the sample size in unlimited societies, the number of samples is determined:

\[ N = \frac{Z^2 pq}{\epsilon^2} \]

But to more ensure, about 400 questionnaires were distributed and 320 questionnaires were completed and were studied and analyzed.

Data Collecting Tool

There are various tools for data collection, by which the required data can be collected and recorded. Among these, the cases such as questionnaires, interviews, observation, and analysis of documents (library studies) can be pointed out. The researcher to obtain the required data in the research should use appropriate tools and then by analyzing, processing and transforming them into information, should test the hypothesis. The major tools to collect data in this research were questionnaire and library studies.
In this study, the majority of data were obtained through the questionnaire. For this purpose, three questionnaires were designed by the following structure and were distributed among the respectful respondents. The questionnaire is consisted of 68 questions that have been raised in three main components.

4. Research Findings

In this study, the relationship between organization agility and staffs’ mental health with strategic readiness for crisis management (case study in Azad Universities of Mazandaran) has been investigated. Analysis of data collected is the most basic and important part of this research. In this study, the raw data were analyzed using statistical software (SPSS) and the results of this analysis are presented in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics.

Inferential Statistics

According to results of the collected data from questionnaires and a description of their results to evaluate and test the research hypotheses, the appropriate statistical tests were used that the analysis of each of the research hypotheses have been presented separately in the following section.

H1: There is a relationship between the organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management.

In order to test the above hypothesis, at first it is necessary to introduce the statistical data which should be examined or tested.

The agility variable includes 30 expressions in the questionnaire that the average score of respondents in 4-value range of Likert scales will be introduced as the variable score of organization agility for sample size of 320 people.

Also, strategic readiness variable for crisis management includes 11 expressions in the relevant questionnaire that the average score of respondents in this sector will be considered as the strategic readiness score for crisis management. Thus, Pearson correlation test was used to test the relationship between organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management. The following table indicates the correlation test between organization agility variable and strategic readiness variable for crisis management.

| Table-5: Correlation Test between Organization Agility Variable and Strategic Readiness Variable |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Organization agility                         | Strategic readiness for crisis management     |
| Pearson Correlation                         | Sig.                                          |
| .145**                                       | .009                                         |
| N                                            | 320                                          |

According to Pearson correlation coefficient between the organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management that is 0.145; and based on the fallibility of less than 0.05, there is a positive relationship between organization agility variable and strategic readiness variable for crisis management. In other words, referring to the critical points table related to the Pearson correlation test in the possibility level of 0.05 with 318 degree of freedom, it can be mentioned that the correlation coefficient obtained is greater than the coefficient table at the probability level and degrees of freedom. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the two above mentioned variables. Hence, whatever the organization agility increases, strategic readiness for crisis management will be more understood and the opposite is also true.
H 2: There is a relationship between staffs’ mental health and strategic readiness for crisis management.

To test the above mentioned hypothesis, at first it’s necessary to introduce the statistical variables which should be studied and tested.

The mental health variable includes 26 questions in the mental health questionnaire that the average score of respondents in 4-value range of Likert scales will be introduced as the variable score of mental health for sample size of 320 people.

Also, strategic readiness variable for crisis management includes 11 expressions in the relevant questionnaire that the average score of respondents in this sector will be considered as the strategic readiness score for crisis management. Thus, Pearson correlation test was used to test the relationship between mental health and strategic readiness for crisis management. The following table indicates the correlation test between mental health variable and strategic readiness variable for crisis management.

| Table-9: Correlation test between Mental Health Variable and Strategic Readiness |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Strategic readiness for crisis management | Pearson Correlation |
| Mental health | .325** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 320 |

According to Pearson correlation coefficient between the mental health variable and strategic readiness variable for crisis management that is 0.325; and based on the fallibility of less than 0.05, there is a positive relationship between mental health variable and strategic readiness variable for crisis management. In other words, referring to the critical points table related to the Pearson correlation test in the possibility level of 0.05 with 318 degree of freedom, it can be mentioned that the correlation coefficient obtained is greater than the coefficient table at the probability level and degrees of freedom. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the two above mentioned variables. Hence, whatever the mental health level increases, the strategic readiness for crisis management will be more understood and the opposite is also true.

H 3: There is a relationship between staffs’ mental health and organization agility

To test the above mentioned hypothesis, at first it’s necessary to introduce the statistical variables which should be studied and tested.

The mental health variable includes 26 questions in the mental health questionnaire that the average score of respondents in 4-value range of Likert scales will be introduced as the variable score of mental health for sample size of 320 people.

Also, organization agility variable for crisis management includes 30 expressions in the relevant questionnaire that the average score of respondents in this sector will be considered as the organization agility score for crisis management. Thus, Pearson correlation test was used to test the relationship between mental health and organization agility for crisis management. The following table indicates the correlation test between mental health variable and organization agility variable.

| Table-13: Correlation Test between Mental Health Variable and Organization Agility |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Organization agility | Pearson Correlation |
| Mental health | .210** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 320 |
According to Pearson correlation coefficient between the mental health variable and organization agility variable that is 0.210; and based on the fallibility of less than 0.05, there is a positive relationship between mental health variable and organization agility variable. In other words, referring to the critical points table related to the Pearson correlation test in the possibility level of 0.05 with 318 degree of freedom, it can be mentioned that the correlation coefficient obtained is greater than the coefficient table at the probability level and degrees of freedom. Therefore, it is confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the two above mentioned variables. Hence, whatever the mental health level increases, the organization agility will be more understood and the opposite is also true.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

H1: There is a relationship between the organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management.

The resulted studies of this hypothesis indicated that there is a relationship between the organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management. In other words, if the organization agility increases, the strategic readiness for crisis management will increase and vice versa. This finding corresponds to the results of Nasiri (2009) researches which shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between organization agility and strategic readiness for crisis management in hospitals and also, it corresponds to the results of those researches which indicated the positive relationship between the variables such as Organizational change, organizational culture and values, performance management, preparing itself for the future and organizational learning with readiness for crisis management in organizations.

Organization agility by including some component such as organizational change, organizational leadership, values and organizational culture, presenting services, e-government and performance management, prepare the organizations to encounter a large number of scientific and technological changes, knowledge explosion and extinction of past information. Dealing with these rapid changes can be worrying and daunting for any organization (large and small); so that the universities are not also excluded from this, because they have many financial, technical and human resources; however, in addition to education and training of required human resources for the market, they should provide specific goals at the level of higher education, such as the transmission of values and cultural heritage in society, training and educating the more mature citizens in terms of mental and physical ability and research and discovery of new knowledge to find the facts. Hence, organizations crisis is inevitable, but they can be controlled and managed somewhat by providing the readiness to deal with crisis and as it was mentioned, having some agile organizations can be considered as one of the effective steps to deal with the crisis.

H2: There is a relationship between staffs’ mental health and strategic readiness for crisis management.

The resulted studies of this hypothesis indicated that there is a relationship between the mental health and strategic readiness for crisis management. In other words, if the mental health increases, the strategic readiness for crisis management will increase and vice versa. This finding corresponds to the results of Nasiri (2009) researches which shows that there is a significant relationship between mental health and strategic readiness for crisis management in hospitals and also, it corresponds to the results of other researches which emphasized on the existence of the relationship between variables such as job satisfaction (Aldrich, 1979; Peters & Waterman, 1982), explicit identification of organizational needs in communications (Sholer & Watman, 1983) and flexibility (Nelson & Owernst, 200) with strategic readiness of organizations for crisis management.

To explain this research finding, it can be said that today rapid changes in various fields of science and technology put the organizations in some critical conditions that lack of readiness of the organization and its staffs to encounter the crisis would slow the performance of the organization and will be a threat for its survival. What an organization can take to better manage the crisis situations before happening the crisis is
the strategic readiness for crisis management that presents a strategy to provide a model of choice to overcome or to continue the next organizational activities and guesses the depth of the consequences of that model. Undoubtedly, staffs as one of the internal resources play a key role in furthering the organization's objectives and to survive it. Therefore, it is natural that their health is necessary to play the social, mental and physical roles. Mental health that includes a series of effective factors which play the important role in prevention of creating or progress of the procedure of deterioration of cognitive, emotional and behavior disorders in human, can be effective in preventing the incidence of anxiety and depression and even the physical symptoms of illnesses such as headaches, etc. in other words, whatever the level of staffs' mental health in an organization increases, it means that the level of mental stress and adverse consequences resulting from it will decrease in that organization, because Such employees can control their behavior in the face of stressful situations and they are not afraid of change and transformation in organizations and using abilities such as flexibility and updating their knowledge and skills will maintain their competence in the flow of further crises in organizations and hence, such organizations are more successful to encounter the crises.

H3: There is a relationship between staffs’ mental health and organization agility.

The resulted studies of this hypothesis indicated that there is a relationship between the staffs’ mental health and organization agility. In other words, if the mental health increases, the organization agility will increase and vice versa. This finding doesn’t correspond to the results of Nasiri (2009) researches about the lack of significant relationship between staffs’ mental health and organization agility.

To explain this research finding, it can be said that whatever the staffs’ mental health increases, and also whatever the level of mental stress, anxiety and depression and physical symptoms of illnesses decreases, they attend in organization with more vitality, establish better and more friendly relationships with their colleagues, spend more power and energy to work, respect more to the values and organizational culture, pay the services more faithfully, and also they are not afraid of change in their job tasks and call for innovation and creativity. It is obvious that in such an organization, each employee has the ability to feel, understand and predict changes in an organization's internal and external environments and tries to help himself/herself to achieve the success through acquiring the necessary skills and capabilities. Hence, by increasing and improving the staffs’ mental health level, the improvement of organization agility level to encounter the continuous changes in the world can be achieved.

References

Esmaeili Nasirabadi, Kamiyar (2014). Relationship of mental health on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, according to the moderator role (the case study in Meli bank, Iran)


Nasiri, Masomeh (2009). Strategic readiness for crisis management, Theses Master of Public Administration, Faculty of Humanities, University of Tarbiyat Modares,


Mitroff,I. (2000),Managing Crisis Before They Happen, New York: AMACON.
