

Opportunities and Challenges of Public Relations Identification in the Organizational Structure of Investigated Administrations and Ministries (Case study research: Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Communications and Ministry of Oil)

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Article History: Received: 14 July 2020; Accepted: 2 January 2021; Published online: 5 February 2021

Abstract:

The present research identifies the factors affecting the public relations identification in the organizational structure of the ministries such as Jihad Agriculture, Communications and Oil. After identifying the factors, they were summarized in three groups of social trust, organizational loyalty, increasing customer knowledge. The research method used in this descriptive research was correlation and using the calculated correlation coefficients, a structural model was compiled. The statistical population of the present research included managers, experts and specialists of public relations units of the mentioned ministries in 2020 and the sample size was selected based on Cochran's formula equivalent to 186 people. Necessary information was collected through four questionnaires of Cheney's organizational identity, social trust, customer knowledge management, and organizational loyalty. The analysis of test information was also done in the two categories of descriptive and inferential, the main results of which are as follows: Based on the results, it was.

Keywords: Organizational identity, social trust, customer knowledge management, loyalty

1. Introduction

Human resources is one of the vital factors and elements in the development of many organizations, because it refers to employees who provide services or products. Efforts made to develop human resources in an organization or company, based on attention to employees' development, achieve positive results. Basically, the activities that exist to prepare employees are for enabling these people to be able to adapt to the changes that are expected to help constructively and effectively achieve the goals of the organization without ignoring their interests (Sari, Akbar, & Yassin, 2018).

In other words, human resource development focuses on improving employee performance and job. For example, an effort to develop employees should be such that the organization can maintain the "sense of partnership" of each employee. Therefore, recruiting this employee is one of the most important strengths to achieve organizational goals (Urban, 2017; quoted from Sari, Akbar, & Yassin, 2018).

There are types of human resources in organizations, including the Ministries of Jihad Agriculture, Communications, and Oil. One of these human resources that has a high organizational importance is public relations. Although communication is used in all management functions, it is of particular importance in doing the leadership duty. Most experts agree that there should be effective communication in management. Today and in developed societies, these effective communications and persuasion of public thoughts are done in an organized and continuous manner through a social institution called "Public Relations" (Nadaf, Darzian Azizi, & Masoudi, 2016). According to the definition of Public Relations Society of America (2011), public relations is a strategic communication process that builds beneficial mutually relationships between organizations and the public. In the past, attitudes toward public relations served as a justifying and persuasive part for organizational activities; while in the current conditions in some administrations and collections, public relations play the main role or the same as center of thought and idea. In the last one or two decades, lots of contents have been published in the West about public relations, and the theory and literature of this field are also expanding. In recent years, many high-ranked managers have more directly participated in public relations activities to improve the public mindset of their organizations. The results of investigations conducted by Fortune Magazine with five hundred major American companies and the Times Magazine in one thousand companies show that all of them have

used public relations in their operations and have had a senior manager with public relations responsibilities (Nasiri Gheidari, 2003; quoted from Nadaf, Darzian Azizi, & Masoudi, 2016). Public relations do not just face their employees, organization and customers. Peripheral conditions are changing rapidly, which, according to many experts in communication sciences, the next crisis in public relations is untrained employees for the new conditions. Today, public relations no longer have long-term strategies due to highly evolving conditions. In the contemporary world, public relations are called 24×7 organizations, which means working 24 hours in every 7 days of the week, which of course does not mean the need to be physically present at workplace, but to provide public relations services digitally, and the transformation of traditional public relations into digital public relations is a necessity (Kavossi & Shah Hosseini, 2012).

One of the components related to public relations in organizations is identification. Employees' sense of identity with the organization is essential for the success of many organizations and has many advantages for the organization. Organizational identification encourages employees to focus on affairs that are profitable for the organization, rather than completely personal goals. They also work with interest and increase citizenship behavior, job satisfaction and work attachment (Çeri-Booms & Azerbaijan, 2012). Identity determines the important behavior and beliefs of employees in the organization and facilitates trust between members, increases teamwork, goal setting process and the institutionalization of organizational standards (Nakra, 2016). When a person acquires an identity from the organization, he/she makes decisions that are in line with the goals of the organization and consciously directs his/her efforts towards the organizational goals and increases internal satisfaction. Therefore, it increases the employees' making decisions towards the goals of the organization even when there is no supervision of the organization. Organizational identification is based on the theory of social identity, which states that individuals categorize themselves and others into various social categories such as organizational membership, gender, race, age group or religious affiliation, and consider their membership in the specific groups based on social roles and role relationships (Fombelle et al., 2012).

Research Purpose

Nowadays in organizations, cognition, mutual understanding and communication in order to achieve goals have been accepted as the basic principle of management. This type of relationship, which is called public relations, is considered as one of the most important factors in the fate of any organization and group. In today's world, public relations are considered as strong elements in evaluating and strengthening programs and advancing the goals of organizations.

The nature of the subject of organizational identification is an attitude and in order to promote employees' self-esteem, self-belief and concentration on the development of human resources in individual and organizational life (He, 2013), its implementation, especially at the organizational level, hence requires planning, management and executive actions, especially in the field of human resource management. Attention to the historical maturity of this field by management, which has got meaning from the narrow circle of recruitment and management of employees' affairs to the highly meaningful and responsible title of human resource development, as well as the range of related roles, duties and skills represent its importance. Accordingly, in this research, the researcher seeks to answer this question that what are the identification opportunity and challenges of public relations in the organizational structure of administrations and ministries (case study research: Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Communications and Ministry of Oil)?

This research can be a source for awareness of the three important ministries of the country, the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Oil of the opportunity and challenges of their public relations identification in the organizational structure of the administrations, and finally help the progress of that ministry by accurate application of their public relations in the role of organization's consultant, and analyze the effect of the organization's policies, methods and actions on the people and creating a special effect on awareness, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors inside or outside the organization and establishing a series of two-way communication between the organization and the general public and ultimately promoting the organization and the community towards sustainable development.

Research History

Nadaf, Darzian Azizi, and Masoudi (2018) in a research investigated the role of public relations behaviors in public relations performance and social trust. The research results showed that there is a significant relationship between public relations management behaviors and public relations performance. Also, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between public relations performance and social trust.

Researches of Asgari et al. (2017), Aghaei, Bavarsad, and Shahni (2016), Rastegar et al. (2012), Rahimnia and Farkhani (2011) and, Adineh (2011) examined the trust and sense of organizational identification. The results of these researches indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between ethical atmosphere and trust and the sense of organizational identification.

In 2011, Elham Mohammad Hassan Shahroudi investigated the role of organizational self-esteem, organizational identification and organizational morale on organizational citizenship behavior. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational morale and organizational citizenship behavior, between organizational identification and organizational citizenship behavior and between self-esteem and organizational citizenship behavior.

Al-Ansari (2013), and Sison (2009) re-conceptualized public relations roles according to the ratio of their involvement in organizational valuation. The results indicated that there is a potential for employees who can expand their involvement to a mainly vital leadership-oriented role.

have conducted a research entitled "Social Responsibility, Organizational Identity and Motivation". The research findings clearly show that there is a significant difference in the perception of motivation and organizational identity between those involved and those not involved in social responsibility programs. But no such difference was observed in perception of job satisfaction. Also, a positive relationship was found between organizational identity and job happiness and motivation.

Research Theoretical Foundations

Organizational identification refers to a cognitive link between organizational identity and employee's identity (Glavas & Lindsey, 2014). The theory states that individuals' dependence and attachment to their organizations will cause them to define themselves based on organizational characteristics. In other words; they see their identity in the heart of their organizations Gkorezis et al. have interpreted organizational identity as individual's belonging to an organization, if individuals consider themselves the same organization in which they work In other words, one feels identity through the organization and the organization provides the identity of the person (Çeri-Booms & Azerbaijan, 2012). The characteristics of the organization are transmitted to the individual; for this reason, activities that threaten organizational identity are considered threats to employees themselves (Kalemci & Irfan, 2009)

According to Cheney (1983), identification has been composed of three components: A) membership; it includes a sense of belonging and a strong sense of attachment and emotional attraction, and also refers to a person's conscience, institution, and self, for example, a sense of pride in being a member of the organization, indicating that the individual establishes a strong relationship with his organization that he feels proud and pleased with his presence and introducing himself with that organization, B) loyalty; it means supporting and defending the organization and organizational goals, C) similarity; this means that the employee has the feeling and perception that he has common goals and interests with other members of the organization. The combination of individual and the organization goals entitled "goal-based management" is proposed and its foundation is based on partnership and alignment between individuals and the supervisor to achieve the goal, which strengthens the spirit and sense of commitment. Riketta states that all definitions related to organizational identification in scientific contents are referred to an individual feeling of attending in a part of the organization, accepting organizational values or a sense of pride in its membership (Riketta, 2005). Identity can be a combination of commitment, loyalty, pride and satisfaction

Factors Affecting Organizational Identification

Through numerous researches, thinkers have come to the conclusion that the organizational identification of employees is strengthened if their organizational self-esteem is strengthened

Accordingly, among the factors affecting organizational identification are policies for promoting employees' self-esteem. Fuller states that a person feels more identification with an organization that he/she believes it is accepting him/her rather than rejecting. He states that as much as a person feels that the organization consider a high position for him/her (meaning that I am a member of the organization who values me), to the same extent this person probably makes identification with the organization; because people consider value for the position they have in the organization Identity is strengthened in organizations that make the organization attractive for employees. Therefore, human resource management must implement policies in the organization that convey a signal to employees indicating that they are valuable. Employees' self-esteem promotion policies are based on this philosophy that employees are valuable assets and not factors that can be left out in the production process that should be increased and developed (Fuller et al., 2006).

Social trust also plays a significant role in the identification of an organization. Johnson examines the issue of trust at the micro and interpersonal and groups levels, and believes that trust has an essential aspect for the growth and development of relationships, and the first crisis that most relationships face is related to the person's ability to trust. To create a relationship, one must be able to create an atmosphere full of trust that reduces his and other's fears of rejection and being removed and promotes hope for acceptance, support, and approval. Trust is not a personality trait and unchangeable. Trust is an aspect of relationships that is constantly changing. Whatever people do increases or decreases the level of trust in relationships. In creating and maintaining trust in bilateral relations, the actions of both parties are very important.

Another factor affecting social identity is loyalty to the organization. Loyalty to the organization means using all the ability of employees to achieve the goals of the organization, responsibility, doing the work enthusiastically, redoubled effort, coordination with changes and cases like that. Numerous definitions have been written for loyalty. H. Becker believes "If a person, despite being aware of the better conditions of a job, higher salary and more suitable conditions, refuses to accept that job in order to maintain his current job, it is considered as his loyalty to the organization". Organizational loyalty is the subset of organizational culture. Organizational culture is also a set of values and principles that govern the organization, for example, when loyalty to the organization is one of the values accepted by employees, it will be part of the culture of that organization. In fact, organizational culture reflects the personality of the organization. Robbins defines organizational culture as: Organizational culture means a system of shared inferences that members have about an organization, and the same feature makes two organizations to be separated from each other. Culture causes the creation of commitments and adherences beyond personal interests and benefits in individuals, so what is called loyalty in the organization has a direct relationship with the accepted culture of the organization and is affected by it (Gog Lilmi et al., 2014).

Research Hypotheses

- Social trust is effective in public relations identification in the organizational structure of administrations and ministries (case study: Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Oil).
- Brand loyalty is effective in public relations identification in the organizational structure of administrations and ministries (Case study: Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Oil).
- Increasing customer knowledge is effective in public relations identification in the organizational structure of administrations and ministries (Case study: Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Oil).

Research Implementation Method

The purpose of the present research was to compile a model for predicting organizational identity; the research method used in this research was descriptive-correlation and using it, a structural model was compiled. The statistical population included all managers, experts and specialists of public relations units of the Ministry of Jihad Agriculture, Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Oil in Tehran in 2019, whose number is over 360 people. The sample size was estimated and selected using stratified

random sampling method and applying Morgan's table and according to the number of statistical population (360 people), 186 managers, experts and specialists of public relations units of the mentioned ministries. The research measurement tool was questionnaire which are: Cheney Organizational Identity Questionnaire, Social Trust Questionnaire, Customer Knowledge Management Questionnaire and Organizational Loyalty Questionnaire.

To determine the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated. In this research, the preliminary study results of Cronbach's alpha showed that the reliability of the questionnaires is appropriate.

Table 1. Reliability in the Present Research

Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha
Reliability of Knowledge Management Questionnaire	0.95
Reliability of Organizational Loyalty Questionnaire	0.73
Reliability of Organizational Trust Questionnaire	0.67

Based on the results of the above table, it is clear that the reliability by the internal consistency method and the calculation of Cronbach's alpha for knowledge management is 0.95, for organizational loyalty is 0.73 and for organizational trust is 0.67, which indicates the appropriateness of the questionnaires.

In order to investigate the validity of the present research, the face validity and content validity were considered, that in order to obtain the content validity and face validity of the measurement tool before implementation, the validity of the tool was examined through the opinion of relevant experts and researchers as well as knowledgeable people, and this process continued to some extent that the researcher achieved the desired validity.

Research Findings

The descriptive findings of data analysis were performed in two main stages: (1) descriptive analysis of data (2) inferential analysis of data including structural equations in order to analyze the statistical data of the present research; first the information obtained from the questionnaires was extracted and was arranged in the general information table, then all data were analyzed using computer and through SPSS (20.0) and smartPLS3 software in the two parts of descriptive and inferential methods.

In descriptive analysis, after describing the demographic variables, the scores obtained from the implementation of research questionnaires have been calculated and reported. In the inferential methods section, the relevant tests were used to test the research hypotheses and in other words to generalize the results obtained from the sample to the research statistical population. Also, the correlation between the scores obtained from the implementation of research tools and the significance of these correlation coefficients have been considered. Structural equations were also used to test the research conceptual model.

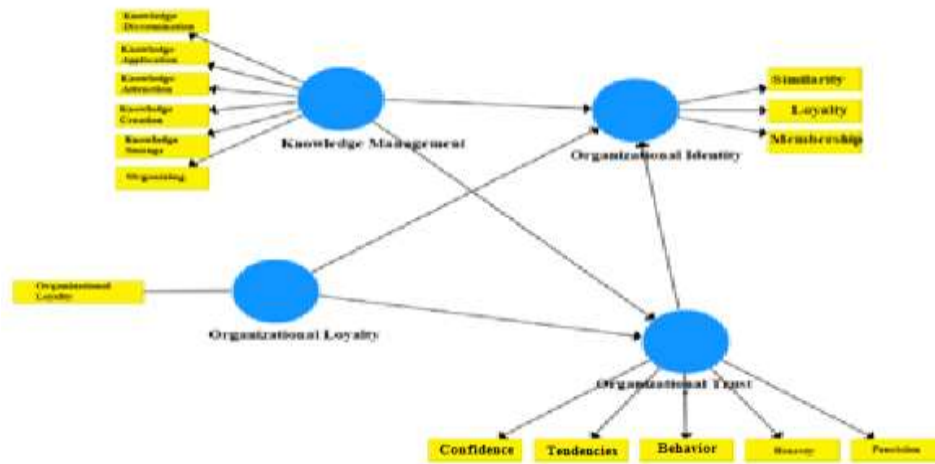


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Model (With Markers)

Table 2. Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE²⁶
Organizational Trust	0.72	0.71	0.74
Knowledge Management	0.93	0.95	0.76
Organizational Identity	0.698	0.77	0.585
Organizational Loyalty	1	1	1

To investigate the composite reliability, values higher than 0.7 are acceptable for this ratio. Based on the values of the table for the composite reliability in the table above, it is observed that these values are suitable for all structures. Also, the average variance extracted (AVE) are related to structures. Acceptable values for this criterion, which indicates the proper validity of the measurement tool are 0.5.

Discussion and Conclusion

Organizational identity means that individuals within the organization identify and classify themselves as members of a group of organization and community organization. Organizational identity is a special form of social identity that has been made up of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of individuals and members of organizational groups in a social way. Therefore, to explain organizational identity, individual and social identity are considered first. In addition, organizational identity is also defined by the concept of organizational identification, the cognitive process in which members balance their individual and social identities with the identity of the organization (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2013). Researchers who have studied in the field of organizational behavior in the last two decades have had a significant tendency to the issue of organizational identity; because organizational identity is associated with many behaviors, attitudes and working contextual variables and plays a central role in regulating the behavioral norms of members of the organization and creates self-regulation in individuals to achieve functional goals in the organization. As a result, managers are always looking to evaluate and promote organizational identity among their employees because they are interested in its positive results. When employees identify themselves with their organization, their beliefs about the organization become more positive. They will try with full awareness to realize the goals of the organization and will have a higher commitment to their organization (Qasemzadeh et al., 2014). The results of this research showed that customer loyalty, trust and knowledge have a direct effect on the organizational identity of the employees of organizations.

Discussion and investigation about the effect of social trust on the public relations identification in the organizational structure

According to the research findings, social trust has a great impact on the public relations identification. Today's organizations no longer have the time opportunities of yesterday's organizations, so they must always keep their capabilities updated by resorting to speed and skill, and in the current arena of competition, by resorting to the key factor of progress and advancement, that is "efficient human resources", move one step ahead of other competitors. At the top of the communication forces are public relations, to which the organization must pay special attention.

To this end, there must be a high degree of trust within the organization so that employees with trust in each other and in order to rely on each other, hand in hand create and organize a team that is pioneer. "Trust in the working environment is one of the important sources of competitive advantage".

Consequences of creating organizational trust has a direct and undeniable role in increasing organizational effectiveness by increasing job satisfaction, increasing organizational commitment, reducing displacement and leaving the job, facilitating acceptance, employees having belief in the information provided by the leader and increasing commitment to decisions made in the organization.

The public relations employees and specialists of the three Ministries of Jihad Agriculture, Communications and Oil who participated in this research believe that honesty is the foundation and basis of creating trust in any organization. Therefore, honesty should start from the top level of any organization and continue to the bottom levels. Although honesty means that in all circumstances one must state the truth and adhere to his promise, this fact must be kept in mind that proposing the facts and adhering to appointments is a phenomenon defined within the legitimate and legal benefits framework of any organization.

They also insist the point that the exchange of organizational views enables management to determine the goals of the organization better and, by adopting appropriate tactics, can provide the facilities to achieve the goals.

When the employees of an organization feel that they can reach a common vision through group activities and cooperation with each other, in this way trust is created among them.

Also, when all employees, whether newly hired, temporary or part-time, feel that they are important for the organization as a member of the working groups, in that case a spirit of trust is created among them. Creating trust in the organization is not achieved by management's isolation and keeping away from employees, but is formed by the management's contact and meeting with them.

Discussion and investigation about the effect of organizational commitment and loyalty on the public relations identification in the organizational structure

According to the research findings, commitment and loyalty have a great impact on the public relations identification. The existence of organizational sense of belonging, commitment and loyalty in the employees of public relations will help the managers of organization to ensure the presence of people and with regard to this confidence be able to design long-term plans for the collection. On the other hand, in-service trainings that are given to individuals and job experiences that they have gained with regard to the time of employment will not be excluded from the collection and there will be no need to retrain the specialized forces in that field and irregular consumption of educational capitals and skill acquisition time will be prevented. Therefore, according to the detailed explanations that were mentioned about the organizational sense of belonging, loyalty and commitment, it can be said that the individual relationship with public relations is a bilateral relationship and each one of the parties must act towards each other regarding their duties as much as possible, that this commitment, belonging and loyalty is mutual so that the organization achieve its goals and also employees achieve what they deserve.

Discussion and investigation about the effect of increasing customer knowledge on public relations identification in the organizational structure

One of the main pillars of an organization is the customers of that organization. Customer capital is among the intellectual capitals of the organization. In a knowledge-based economy, organizations consider "customer knowledge" as an important factor. Today, most companies that consider themselves customer-oriented, know knowledge from customers as their very valuable source. Collecting, managing

and sharing customer knowledge can be a valuable competitive tool that enterprises and professionals have paid less attention to and exploited. Customer knowledge is a type of knowledge in the field of customer relationship that can directly or indirectly affect organizational performance. Customer knowledge is a dynamic combination of experience, value, information and expert views that is required and produced during the transaction and exchange process between customers and the company (Sison, 2009).

Now it is the public relations that play an important role in the relationship between the customer and the organization. They can help this relationship and make their organization dynamic by gaining resources and acquiring information about their customers. They can get knowledge from numerous resources. In addition to internal resources (employees), external resources of knowledge acquisition include customers, suppliers, competitors, allies or partners, and the knowledge obtained from the merger or the ownership of another organization. One of the valuable external resources for the organization is customers' knowledge. What is considered by the customer and what is hidden in his mind is considered as a kind of hidden knowledge that any organization that wants to use it must install the mechanism appropriate with it, which will be followed by the process of continuous interaction between the customer and the enterprise (Farhangi & Mira, 2011).

According to Lawson's knowledge management model, customer knowledge includes six dimensions of knowledge organization, knowledge dissemination, knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge application and knowledge creation, that in the present research most of the public relations specialists participating in the research, that most of them had master or higher degree believed that knowledge organization and knowledge dissemination will help customers more and by using these two dimensions, customers will have more trust in public relations and according to them, knowledge storage without its application is in the last stage of customer knowledge. According to them, by integrating customer relationship management systems and knowledge management, the advantages of using them can be increased.

Now a new period or wave has begun in public relations that relies on knowledge more than ever and can be considered a new wave. In this new wave, the intensity and importance of knowledge has become more than ever. It can be said that knowledge and need are the two main driving forces of innovations (Nazarizadeh et al., 2012).

Also according to the homogeneity two-way theory, public relations have relatively an equal role to the audience and their communication is not domineering and not only interact with the customer but also seek to increase customer knowledge.

Considering that the most important and valuable capital of the organization is its human capital, and regarding that this precious capital affects the process of failure or success of the organization, trying to develop identity in employees is an important affair and managers should pay attention to it; the interpretation of these points shows that paying attention to issues such as employees' participation in the decision making of organization, human resource empowerment and delegation of authority make employees adhere to their organization and adhere to the goals of the organization. Also, organizational identity has a positive relationship with performance improvement, and organizational identity reduces the unfavorable changes of leaving the work and increases the ability of executive managers to make decision about the most important issues of the organization. According to employees like the fans of a sports team may consider organizational success as their own success. This perception of being one (belonging) to the organization that indicates organizational identity can in turn give employees a sense of organizational identity and promote employees' perception of the group and be followed by active participation in the organization; because according to Gholipour and job involvement is related to job identity and the function of identity in shaping the concept of job involvement has a high homogeneous definition; therefore, organizational identity can, by its nature, be associated with job performance and social responsibility improvement.

Suggestions Based on Research Findings

- One of the issues addressed in the theoretical foundations section was that there are structural weaknesses and problems in the field of education. When the training of public relations agents is based on a worn-out system, talking about educating people and creating culture seems a bit funny. Therefore,

it is suggested that paying attention to the dimension of education and increasing employees' knowledge be at priority.

- Since the knowledge in areas such as the field of public relations in Iran is imported, the administrative and cultural structures of Iranian society, have not been optimally and institutionally compatible with sections such as public relations and this knowledge and profession has not been well localized. So, companies can acquire knowledge from numerous resources. In addition to internal resources (employees), external resources of knowledge acquisition include customers, suppliers, competitors, allies or partners, and the knowledge obtained from the merger or the ownership of another organization.

- It is suggested that organizational authorities seek to increase the knowledge of employees and improve it in order to empower them. Managers should periodically hold training courses for employees of the organization and increase the effects of employees' training and the ratio of applying the acquired knowledge to achieve the success of the organization. Managers should also help by involving employees in organizational decision makings on the one hand and develop the spirit of cooperation and assistance in the organization on the other hand.

- One of the valuable external resources for the organization is the knowledge of customers (Sobi, 1997); what is intended by the customer and what is hidden in his mind is considered as a kind of hidden knowledge that any organization that wants to use it must prepare its appropriate mechanism, which will be followed by the process of continuous interaction between the customer and the enterprise (Farhangi & Mira, 2011). Therefore, it is suggested that special attention be paid to the knowledge obtained from customers and appropriate planning should be adopted to exploit it.

- Since the most important capital of organizations is loyal and professional employees who have full dominance over their activities in the organization and what they have to do, however this dominance and skill in today's specialized affairs cannot be achieved except by continuous activity and constant contact with the working conditions of the desired organization. As a result, employees should be kept loyal to the organization to gain more dominance over their working field day by day.

- A sense of loyalty to the organization causes employees to perform activity with more motivation and enthusiastically, and as a result, their output will be much better, and the productivity of human resources will be higher. This presence of motivation in employees will lead to loyalty to the organization, a sense of commitment, belonging and job satisfaction. Employees loyal to the organization feel responsible regarding the goals of the organization and perform activity in the direction of these goals and implement the decisions of managers.

Acknowledgment

This article was derived from PhD degree thesis in the Islamic Azad University-Ardabil branch

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