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### Investigation of the role of staff age on accepting organizational change and job performance at the time of change program insertion: a case study of Tehran public libraries

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the role of age (a demographic variable) on change acceptance level on behalf of staff and their job performance at the time of change program performance in public libraries of Tehran. To measure change acceptance, three components (willingness to change, achieving related capabilities and supporting the change) and to measure job performance four components (duty performance, motivation, collaboration and discipline) were used. To this end, 210 questionnaires were distributed among public library staff of Tehran and 198 questionnaires were received filled correctly. The collected data were analyzed using multiple-regression and Beta coefficient. The results showed that younger staff welcomed change programs more and their willingness to change, achieving the related capabilities and supporting the change were in higher levels. Regarding job performance, the motivation and collaboration level among younger staff was at higher levels but higher discipline level was reported among older staff. Age was not identified as an effective factor on duty performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizational change are raised usually in conditions that the current status of organizations (equipment, procedures, personnel and institutional facilities can satisfy the environmental needs and necessities or is assessed weak. In such condition, organizational change is put forward as a serious solution [17]. For example, in libraries, increase of visitors, variety of books and the importance of facility and accuracy of service presentation have brought forth the efficiency of information technology and general basic changes have been made in servicing methods and performance of libraries. Performance of change programs has numerous advantages. Increase of servicing speed [1], service presentation through internet [4], users' convenience and time and cost saving (Pardo-del-var), reduction of organizations needs to human force and improvement of human procedures [15] are among the most important advantages of change program performance. However, organizational change has lots of advantages for organizations effective performance of organizational change programs is a difficult task and often brings staff opposition. The concern about organization future, job security and adapting with conditions are among the causes of staff opposition [7]. Among different strategies, communication level, organizational support and proper information to improve staff reaction and performance at the time of change program performance have been suggested. However, it seems that staff reaction and performance are not influenced only by these factors and demographic variables like age, gender, education and so on play important roles which may adjust the impact of other performed programs and factors. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the role of age as a demographic variable on acceptance of organizational change on behalf of staff and their job performance at the time of change program performance.

#### Concept of organizational change:

Organizational change is inserting the changes and new approaches in organization which is done aiming at improving organizational processes and procedures. These changes can be detected in how activities are done and even in organizational identity [10]. From other perspective, organizational change means applying approaches, equipment, procedures and new processes so that the organizations adapt themselves with new

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needs, new goals or expectations and adapt themselves more efficiently with their changing environment [1]. In fact, organizational change is a programmed effort throughout the organization managed by organization's higher management and increases organization's efficiency and health through programmed change plan using behavioral sciences. Vuura *et al* [14] emphasized that organizational changes have some advantages for organizations which encourage them to use this lever. Among the most important advantages are promotion of organizational capabilities for customer accountability, improvement of procedures and facilitating the affairs, increasing human force empowerment, reduction of costs, improvement of organizational performance and increasing profitability.

*Concept of job performance at the time of change program performance:*

It includes the performance gained through staff activities regarding performance of assigned duties after a specified time span which is compared with pre-determined expectations from staff [2]. From another point of view, performance is a mixture of individual's motivation and his related ability level [8]. At the time of change program performance, job performance means duty completion and full collaboration to perform the change program better. In fact, desirable job performance at the time of change program performance, in addition to doing the assigned duties, is considered an effort for a better performance of change program and even helping other colleagues for presenting a better performance. From another perspective, job performance at the time of change program performance include following components [13]:

- Knowing what is needed to know including details and the method of change program performance, awareness of job duties and expectations and change-related knowledge.
- Capability of doing duties and expectations including experience, skill and specialization in doing the jobs and fulfilment of expectations and especial capabilities in adapting with environment
- Motivation: in addition to capability, job performance means having motivation to do the assigned duties.

*The role of age in accepting the change and job performance:*

Different viewpoints have been discusses regarding the role of age on staff behavior especially at the time of change program performance. From the first viewpoint, age is among demographic variables impacting individuals' behavior. Wiess and Maurer [16] stated that usually older people have more capabilities in job performance related to changes in organizations but their worriedness gets more about post-change conditions. Kunze *et al* [7] stated that age is among influencing factors on individual's motivation. Usually, younger persons have more motivation for doing the affairs, job performance and presentation of a better performance. Snyder *et al* [12] stated that younger people show more flexibility in adapting themselves with variable conditions. Salthouse [11] stated that younger people show more effort to learn newer topics. So, they are less worried about change performance. However they need more support at the time of change due to not having enough experience in change process.

From the second perspective, the effect of age and even other demographic variables on accepting the change is subtle. Kanfer and Ackermann [6] stated that success of change programs depends on information methodology and organizational support and the role of factors like age or job experience is insignificant. Oreg [9] also stated that some studies have emphasized the role of demographic factors and some other researchers have reported it insignificant role. Johnson and Newmark [5] also emphasized that however age is effective on motivation and capability level of people, its role in predicting staff behavior in change program performance is not significant because it's been observed that staff with high performance have been a mixture of older and young ones when performing the change program and there have not been a meaningful relationship between age and job performance at that time.

*Hypotheses and measurement of variables:*

Regarding the different perspectives and viewpoints on the role of age at accepting the change, the research hypotheses consider the role of age on accepting the change and job performance at the time of performing change program. To measure the variables, Kunze *et al* model [7] was used. Its components include:

- Willingness to change: internal motivation and willingness on performing the change program so that persons welcome insertion of new changes.
- Gaining the capability and knowledge related to change: individuals' effort to gain the needed preparation on information and knowledge and the skills to adapt with new post-change conditions.
- Supporting the change program: not only staff doesn't show resistance on performance of change program but also tries to obviate the defects at the time of performance of change program.

The following are secondary research hypotheses:

- 1- Age is meaningfully effective on change willingness.
- 2- Age is meaningfully effective on gaining the capability and knowledge related to change.
- 3- Age is meaningfully effective on supporting the change program.

To measure job performance at the time of change program insertion, Kunze *et al* [7] four components were used:

- Performance of job duties: staff come up with the specified duties especially at the time of change program insertion and fulfill the considered expectations.
- Discipline: observing coming and going time, ordered stack of equipment and tools, correct protection of official equipment, noticing the rules and observing administrative arrangements.
- Job motivation: internal simulator to do the duties far better and advancing the organization's goals.
- Collaboration: personal collaboration level with heads and other colleagues to perform the change program far better.

The following are the other four hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 4. Age is meaningfully effective on job duties performance at the time of change program performance.
- Hypothesis 5. Age is meaningfully effective on discipline at the time of change program performance.
- Hypothesis 6. Age is meaningfully effective on job motivation at the time of change program performance.
- Hypothesis 7. Age is meaningfully effective on cooperation level at the time of change program performance.

*Method and data collection:*

The present study is an applied research using survey-descriptive method. Both library and survey methods were used for data collection. First to explain the model and make the questionnaire, library method and study of previous research was used. After that, by verification of two of questionnaire makers' experts and insertion of correction, the validity of the questionnaire was approved. After piloting 25 questionnaire, Cronbach alpha reliability was calculated and came 0.784 for change acceptance, 0.769 for job performance at the time of change program performance. In the next stage, the questionnaire was distributed among 210 of staff of Tehran library staff and 198 questionnaires were received filled in correctly. The data were entered into software.

*Data analysis:*

Multi-regression was used to probe the relationship among research variables and the role of age in job performance and change acceptance was measured. One of the presuppositions of regression is data normality tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (table1).

**Table 1:** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Job performance at the time of change program performance				Chance acceptance			
Participation	Discipline	motivation	Duty performance	Support	Capability achievement	Willingness	
198	198	198	198	198	198	198	Acceptable number
4/124	4/132	4/157	4/304	4/110	4/214	4/152	Mean
1/162	1/158	1/142	0/773	0/844	1/008	1/073	Smironov-Kolmogrov test
0/130	0/142	0/167	0/588	0/474	0/262	0/200	Sig

The results show that data distribution is normal in all cases because significant level of all variables is less than 0.05. Then the data was tested using regression and Beta calculation. Within-variable relationship shows that change acceptance and job performance have the role of dependent variable. So, Beta coefficient for them and the related independent variables are calculated (table2).

**Table 2:** Multi-regression and Beta coefficient for research hypotheses

Dependent variable	Dependent variable	Secondary variables	Non-standardized correlation		Standardized correlation	T value	sig
			Beta value	Error			
Age reduction	Fixed Change acceptance	Willingness to change	0.222	0.041	0.408	5.415	0.000
		Capability achievement	0.485	0.070	0.386	6.899	0.000
		Supporting the change	0.426	0.068	0.302	6.928	0.000
	Job performance	Duty performance	0.328	0.097	0.061	3.384	0.003
		Motivation	0.119	0.085	0.253	1.401	0.078
		Discipline	0.284	0.082	0.221-	3.467	0.002
		Cooperation	0.245-	0.080	0.232	3.0652-	0.011
	Linearity supposition	0.249	0.071		3.5075	0.002	
					Sig=000	F=76/478	

ANOVA F value and significant level which is less than 0.05 verify the linearity supposition of within-variable relationship of research variables. In this regression analysis, the effect of age was investigated on 7 dependent variables (change acceptance components and job performance components). Age was entered into the equation inversely that the effect of age lowness was measured on dependent variables. T and significant level show that age as a demographic variable is effective on 6 variables and only duty performance was not influenced by this variable. So, all research hypotheses except for hypothesis four are verified.

#### *Results:*

The results of the study showed the effect of staff age on change acceptance level and job performance at the time of change program insertion. The lower the age, the higher staff welcoming for change programs. The results showed that younger staff welcome change program more and show more endeavor to gain new capabilities and promote their capability to adapt with new situations after change. A significant part of changes in library change programs is related to electronic services, internet and the use of IT in libraries. With increase of age, staff job security and learning new skills is welcomed less and their acceptance level of change declines. Generally, younger staffs have more preparation for change programs especially change issues of servicing methods based on information technology expansion. Also the results showed that young staffs will have more support for change programs perhaps because of the fact that younger staff have less worriedness about change results and try to help the better performance of change programs.

Also, the results of the study showed that younger staff had a better performance at the time change program insertion regarding cooperation and motivation. However, older staffs showed a better performance on discipline and in not a meaningful difference was reported on duty performance of different age groups. So, it can be stated that age had an inverse relationship with staff motivation and cooperation. Younger staff, due to more willingness to advancement, higher capability in IT area and less concern in job security and change insertion results, welcomed change programs more than older staffs and showed more motivation to experience the change. Also their collaboration with other section heads and colleagues was reported higher which is due to more motivation and higher flexibility. The results showed that older staffs had more discipline at the time of change program insertion and performed better than younger ones.

#### *Suggestions:*

Regarding the results of study and the effects of age or younger and older staff behavior, the following suggestions are presented:

- 1- It's better to consider special programs to increase older staff concern on job security and reduce their worriedness at the time change program insertion.
- 2- It's better to select the heads of sections and the main managers of change program among younger staffs because of higher motivation and flexibility.
- 3- It is suggested that the affairs related to programming and scheduling be given to older staffs because of higher discipline at the time of change program insertion.
- 4-

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