

Investigate the role of Professional identity in career path development (Case Study: Housing Foundation of Islamic revolution - East Azerbaijan Province)

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of corporate identity and its dimensions, including organizational membership, loyalty and similarity on the career path development of employees in the education organization. The research method is descriptive and is applied-survey. The population of this study included staff of education organization. Needed data for this study was collected by using a sample of 170 individuals and using random cluster sampling method. Data collected in the LISREL software environment were analyzed by applying structural equation modeling tests and also through SPSS software due to the assumptions of the study. The questionnaire reliability was confirmed by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient; the content validity was confirmed by using experts familiar with the subject. Based on data analysis, the following results were obtained: (1) corporate identity affects career path development in the education organization, (2) organizational membership affects career path development in the education organization; (3) organizational loyalty affects career path development in the education organization and (4) organizational similarity affects career path development in the education organization.

Keywords: corporate identity, membership, loyalty, similarity, career path development.

Introduction:

Manpower has a crucial role to achieve the goals and aspirations of the organization as well as its effectiveness and efficiency. If the manpower factor, which is the most important factor and resource of organization's production, be removed, what remain i.e. other factors and facilities of organization cannot be used on its own (Kazemi, 1991). On this basis, and given the importance of existence and impact of manpower in the organization, one of the basic tasks of human resource management is efforts in the field

of preservation and promotion of job in the organization. So that each person in the organization after gain experience and acquire job skills, can access to job promotion and pass progress stages (Hatam et al., 1390).

Although career path in managing individuals, is an old topic but the increase of recent efforts and leveraged use of the human management system types, again attracted attention to career path management. It is noteworthy that the development and planning of career path is considered both a huge opportunity and threat for organizational effectiveness. With proper and systematic management of career path, employees are encouraged to increase their performance. But if it is mismanagement, leads to frustration of workforce and the mismatch between skills and job.

Fundamental changes in organizations are always created by managers of public and private sectors. Most of these changes are due to the change of career path of employees. In fact, career path includes long-term communications and psychological commitments between organizations and employees. Psychological commitments in an organization are the employees' beliefs about their organization and move them from a simple relationship with colleagues to do voluntary works for the organization and honest service to the partners (Hall et al., 1996, and Callanan, 2003).

Occupational activities carried out by employees of an organization can provide the conditions to fully meet the needs of the people and then inner satisfaction (Ackah, et al., 2004) and corporate identity of individuals be increased. On the other hand, because of the importance of career path development within the organization we should pay enough attention to effective variables in this factor that professional identity can be considered as an effective factor in motivating employees to a successful management of career path.

If the impact of corporate identity on the career path development of employees in the organization be confirmed the organization's management should pay particular attention to this factor that career path development which is an important variable to achieve the goal of providing quality manpower in the future, well done. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of corporate identity and its dimensions, including organizational membership, loyalty and similarity on the career path development of employees in the education organization.

Corporate identity

Corporate identity is an attitude of employees that after the 1980s shifted to the forefront of organizational studies and has increased managers' understanding of the behavior of employees and organization (Mohammad Zadeh et al., 1992). Corporate identity refers to the extent that employees of an organization define themselves through similar features who believe are organizational characteristics, (Kahn et al., 2002). About the meaning and definition of corporate identity, there is little agreement. This structure represents certain ways through which people define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular organization (Cole et al., 2006).

Corporate identity is a reflection of social identity. According to the theory of social identity, individual identity is the perception of individual of himself that include properties associated with a particular thinking or way of individual like attitudes or competencies. Social identity helps to reconcile the two poles of identity i.e. oneness of the individual (individual identity) and being one with others (social identity) in interdisciplinary studies (Ashforth, 2001). The basic principles of social identity theory has created a basis for the conceptualization of corporate identity in the past two decades, in other words corporate identity is a special form of social identity (Gautam et al., 2004).

Corporate identity is an Inter-subjective structure and cannot exist unless the individuals agree on its existence, although it indicates the interpretation of the organization's members (Ashforth et al., 1996). According to theory of corporate identity, organizational identity is related with a set of organizational features which members of the organization perceive them as main, stable and distinct characteristics and help them to define and explain the organization and their sense of belonging to it (Gioia et al., 1996).

Corporate identity is also the overall picture of a company, megacorporation or a business in the public mind, such as customers, investors and staff and in fact is a visual character or identity that can be realized about a group of similar products or services from a common source, that usually affect a specific sales market or general economic activity of a company. In addition, in a job with identity a set of tasks are defined in different work teams and individuals in these teams fulfill a certain set of tasks and activities. Of course it may a work that starts on a task or activity or job be finished in another job. Professional identity arises because the individual has understood the sequence of tasks that is responsible in a work team and knows what is the association of project or mentioned team with the whole working system. In fact, knowledge of the relationship between business units and relationship of individuals' work with the whole system can cause to understand the role of individual in their tasks (Susan, 2003).

Dimensions of corporate identity are as follows:

- **Membership:** the long-term stay of individual in the organization leads to an increase in transactions in the organization which in turn provide the most needs of individual within the organization, and it can be stated that he is more determined within the organization.
- **Loyalty:** Whatever the organization in terms of behavior (behavioral loyalty), emotional (emotional loyalty) and attitudinal (attitudinal loyalty) has much tendency to stay in the organization the corporate identity will increase. The trend of people to stay in the organization led that, they be identified with the organization and have the tag of that specific organization.
- **Similarity:** Whatever more homogeneity is existed among the members of an organization, the values of the members of the organization as well as the claimant values of the organization and values that are more desirable in employees' view, it is indicating strong organizational identity.

Development of career path

The career development path management is an organizational process, including the preparation, implementation and guiding the career path plans that each of the individuals has considered for themselves, or is in the career path systems. Career advancement system is a wide, organized and planned effort to create a balance between job demands of individuals and the needs of the organization to workforce (Dolan, 2001).

Development of career progress path has been built on the assumption that the most successful individuals of organizations are leading to a way with the highest compensation and position. Each person for what he does has automatically a path to career success, but it is appropriate that each individual interpret it in a way that is significant and valuable for him (Stewart, 2007).

In the dimensions of career path success, both individual needs and the needs of the organization are considered. For one, career path success is a variety of growth of himself, job security, job enrichment, achieve to a better place, increasing the richness of life and make balance between work-family And career path system for an organization is to empower the people so that they can actively manage their career path growth. Coordination and consistency between meet the needs of individuals and the needs of organization, make individual satisfied towards the organization and make satisfactory for the organization (Brown et al., 2005).

It seems that coordination of Career development path of individuals with their needs will lead to improve the knowledge and skill during the Career development path (Greenhaus et al., 2000) and as a result, by increasing a sense of like-making and organizational affiliation, professional identity of individuals will also increase. Dimensions of Career Path Development are as follows: Job search, strengthening the skills, strengthening job search and keeping the job (Amundson, 2003).

- **Job search:** This aspect focuses on many concerns of young people who are looking for a particular job that they have to get. In addition, the job search is also concerned the process of working

life of individuals especially when they are dissatisfaction about how to implement the tasks of their job. This aspect focuses on the big issues of job such as purposes.

- Strengthening the skills: When people have ideas about how to enter a particular Career Path, they should develop professional and interpersonal skills so that, they can be successful in their chosen Career Path. Strengthening these skills can be done in many forms. For many, this is the pretext for entering into formal education through universities or other formal educational centers. Other people are looking to train and develop their skills through participation in voluntary activities.
- Strengthening job search: there are different strategies and skills based on which decided in the field of the part-time, full-time or contract work. These skills are included the re-preparation, Job search, contacting, networking, interviewing, and in some cases, writing proposals. Special skills are required to follow the changes of work over time and staff must be ready to update their job search skills to meet the changing demands of the labor market.
- Keeping the job: finding a job is an important starting point. It is also about the time when people should use their personal and professional skills in a way that enable them to succeed in the workplace. Many people are successful to find good jobs, but more difficult is to keep them over a long period.

Necessities of program of career path improvement

There are several compelling reasons explain why employers need to make programs of career path improvement? Thus, only the rich and larger organizations that have the strong resources and expertise, utilize comprehensive programs, even smaller companies are also use simple but more effective programs. Important reasons for adopting programs to improve career path are as follows (Moghadas, 1386):

- equal employment opportunities: to prepare the better opportunities for minorities and women that develop from the arrival In their organizations,
- Quality of Work Life: The staff, especially younger people should express the career paths they want to be more able to control the choice of career path.
- Competition for talented employees: professional managers and employees with higher education often in choosing a company to work prefer paths that meet their aspirations and are in programs of career path improvement.
- Avoid old skills and acquire new skills: rapid changes in technology, demography, economic prosperity and downturn and changes in consumer demand can change the obsolete skills of employees that have learned in various jobs over the years.
- Maintenance of personnel: by establishing programs to improve career path in organizations, management reduces leaving work of employees which is due to disappointment in the uncertainty of career path.
- Optimal use of employees: Most employees are employed in jobs that their ability is beyond the job or there is no possibility of progress for them.

Researchers have studied a lot of motivational factors in the development of career paths. Blustein et al (1996) concluded that identity is raised as one of the most important factors influencing the development of career path. Chartrand et al. (1991) were investigated the structure measures of the career path between 1970 and 1990. According to their study, the identity of career path has been highlighted more in research fields (Wang et al., 2009).

The results of a study by Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) showed that employees who have the same sense of identity with their organization, show positive thoughts and useful behaviors in their work environment. While the individuals may take identity with several corporate groups, the most basic organizational identities are the identity with the organization as a whole and the identity with the business unit in which people do many of their daily business activities;

Samiee et al (1393) in their study investigated the relationship between dreams and success of career path of managers in sulfate Polyacrylamide Company in Iran. The results showed that entrepreneurial creativity is the first and independence is the last wishes of career path of managers. Also there is more subjective career path success than objective career path success in managers and aspirations of public management, the independence and the work-family balance, are good predictors for the success of career path. There was a significant relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction with success of career path.

Wang et al (2009) in their study that investigated the impact of corporate identity on career path development through the comparison between Dutch and Chinese teachers in 2009 and concluded that employees tend to move towards higher levels of organization can lead to the development of employee career path and increase promotion opportunities for this group of employees. Overall, the study showed that corporate identity impacts on strengthening the career path development.

The hypotheses of this study

The First hypothesis: corporate identity impacts on the career path development in the education organization.

The second hypothesis: organizational membership impacts on the career path development in the education organization.

The third hypothesis: organizational loyalty impacts on the career path development in the education organization.

The Fourth hypothesis: organizational similarity impacts on the career path development in the education organization.

Research methodology

The research objectively is descriptive and in terms of time is survey. Data collection was done in two stages of literature and theoretical foundations and data collection was conducted to data analysis. The library method was used to collect the theoretical foundations and questionnaire was used to collect data of the first group. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of corporate identity and its dimensions, including organizational membership, loyalty and similarity on the career path development of employees in the education organization. In order to investigate and confirm these skills the developed hypotheses in the present study should be tested in the statistical population. A researcher-made questionnaire was used for data collection that 15 questions were about corporate identity (5 questions about membership, 5 questions about loyalty and 5 questions were also about similarity) and 10 questions were about the Career Path development. The content validity of questionnaire was evaluated by experts familiar with the subject and its construct validity was evaluated by using structural equation. The questionnaire Reliability has been established by using Cronbach's alpha test that its coefficient for the whole questionnaire was 98/2% which shows the proper reliability of the research questionnaire. SPSS software is used to analyze the data.

Table1: Cronbach's alpha of research variables

coefficient	Number of questions	variables
.854	15	corporate identity
.887	5	membership
.904	5	loyalty
.937	5	similarity

.813	10	career path development
.982	25	whole questionnaire

The Analysis of Data

Describe the demographic variables: based on information collected from questionnaires, percentage of respondents, according to the demographic variables listed in Table 2. As can be seen, 60% of respondents are men and 40% are women. More than 1% of respondents are under 25 years of age, more than 18% between 25 and 30 years, 20% between 31 and 35 years, 23% between 36 and 40 years, 17% between 41 and 45 years and more than 18% higher than the 46 years.

Table 2: Descriptive information about the respondents

Number education .3		Age Number .2		Number Gender .1	
7 .9	diploma .8	2 .7	to 25 years .6	103 .5	Male .4
17 .15	Associate .14	32 .13	26 -30 .12	67 .11	Female .10
	Degree				
126 .21	Bachelor .20	34 .19	31 -35 .18	.17	.16
20 .27	Master .26	40 .25	36 -40 .24	.23	.22
.33	.32	30 .31	41 -45 .30	.29	.28
.39	.38	32 .37	above 46 .36	.35	.34

According to the data, more than 18 percent of respondents have between 0 to 5 years of work experience in the education organization, 24% between 5 to 10 years, more than 15% between 10 to 15 years, 18% have a history between 15 to 20 years, and finally 21% between 20 to 25 years of work experience in the organization. The results of descriptive information about the work experience are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive information on work experience

45. 20 to 25 years	44. 15 to 20 years	43. 10 to 15 years	42. 5 to 10 years	41. 0to 5 years	work .40 experience
37 .51	32 .50	27 .49	42 .48	32 .47	Number .46

Pearson correlation coefficient is parametric and is shown for data with a normal distribution with a large number of data. Table 4 shows the correlation between the variables investigated. As can be seen Pearson correlation coefficient for variables in this research has an acceptable situation.

Table 4: Pearson correlation coefficients between the variables

correlation	variables
0/284	corporate identity and career path

	development
0/309	organizational membership and career path development
0/549	organizational loyalty and career path development
0/470	organizational similarity and career path development

Model fitting was tested by LISREL structural equation software which results is presented in Table 5. Acceptable range for the indicator RMSEA is values higher than 0/08; Acceptable values for CFI index is higher than 0/90; also the acceptable values for other indicators, including IFI, GFI and AGFI must be higher than 0/90. For example, for the present study about the comparative fit index the acceptable range must be between zero and one that in the present model the value of this index is equal to .96 and show that the selected model is acceptable.

Table 5: Indicators of Research Structural Equation Model

Values found for model .53 developed	Symbol .52
0/032 .55	RMSEA .54
0/96 .57	CFI .56
0/96 .59	IFI .58
0/95 .61	GFI .60
0/93 .63	AGFI .62

Test research hypotheses

By analyzing questionnaires collected from the statistical sample and analysis of them by SPSS software, Statistical results listed in the table below were obtained based on which we can approve or reject the hypotheses developed in the present study. Criteria under study included the standard coefficient, explained variance, significant coefficient and the final result of the hypothesis in terms of confirmation or rejection.

Table 6: testing the First hypothesis

result .70	significant .69 coefficient	explained .68 variance	standard .67 coefficient	Dependent .66 variable	Independent .65 variable	hypothesis .64
confirmed .77	7/14 .76	0/26 .75	0/51 .74	career .73 path development	corporate .72 identity	H1 .71

The First hypothesis: corporate identity impacts on the career path development in the education organization. This hypothesis was confirmed, it means that corporate identity has a direct and positive impact on the career path development. According to the conducted statistical analysis, the standardized coefficient between the two variables is equal to 0/51. The significant coefficient between these two variables 7/14 (more than 1/96) for the probability of 95%, shows that the relationship was significant and reflects the positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 7: testing the second hypothesis

result	significant coefficient	explained variance	standard coefficient	Dependent variable	Independent variable	hypothesis
confirmed	-2/53	0/0081	-0/09	career path development	organizational membership	H2

The second hypothesis: organizational membership impacts on the career path development in the education organization. This hypothesis was confirmed, it means that organizational membership has a direct and positive impact on the career path development. According to the conducted statistical analysis, the standardized coefficient between the two variables is equal to -0/09. The significant coefficient between these two variables -2/53 (less than -1/96) for the probability of 95%, shows that the relationship was significant and reflects the positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 8: testing the third hypothesis

result	significant coefficient	explained variance	standard coefficient	Dependent variable	Independent variable	hypothesis
confirmed	6/10	0/12	0/35	career path development	organizational loyalty	H3

The third hypothesis: organizational loyalty impacts on the career path development in the education organization. This hypothesis was confirmed, it means that organizational loyalty has a direct and positive impact on the career path development. According to the conducted statistical analysis, the standardized coefficient between the two variables is equal to 0/35. The significant coefficient between these two variables 6/10 (more than 1/96) for the probability of 95%, shows that the relationship was significant and reflects the positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 9: testing the Forth hypothesis

result	significant coefficient	explained variance	standard coefficient	Dependent variable	Independent variable	hypothesis
confirmed	11/53	0/62	0/79	career path development	organizational similarity	H4

The Fourth hypothesis: organizational similarity impacts on the career path development in the education organization. This hypothesis was confirmed, it means that organizational similarity has a direct and positive impact on the career path development. According to the conducted statistical analysis, the standardized coefficient between the two variables is equal to 0/62. The significant coefficient between these two variables 11/53 (more than 1/96) for the probability of 95%, shows that the relationship was significant and reflects the positive relationship between the two variables.

Conclusion:

Corporate identity refers to a condition that employees of an organization define themselves through similar features who believe are organizational characteristics. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of corporate identity and its dimensions, including organizational membership, loyalty and similarity on the career path development of employees in the education organization. Based on analysis of data from the questionnaires following results on the developed assumptions were obtained that all of them show that the hypotheses of the research were confirmed. (1) Corporate identity affects career path development in the education organization, (2) organizational membership affects career path development in the education organization; (3) organizational loyalty affects career path development in the education organization and (4) organizational similarity affects career path development in the education organization.

The results indicate that the studied employees believe if a job transfer a sense of meaningfulness to them can affect career path development. This means managers by considering the functionality and capabilities of employees can as far as possible assign the process of carrying out a task to each employee that employees have a clear answer for this question of others that what he do. To boost employee motivation in the development of career path managers can give growth opportunities to employees who have high focus on the implementation of their own work. On the other hand staff who ensure their membership in the organization and has job security can focus more on developing their own career path. So If a number of employees are uncertain about their membership in the organization managers should adopt measures in order to ensure their survival or determining their tasks. Also to strengthen the loyalty of employees to the organization, which is one of the variables affecting the development of career path managers should focus on effective variables on loyalty such as employee satisfaction, justice in procedures and payments, improve the attitude towards the organization, improve staff confidence to the organization.

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