

The Impact Of Demographic Variables On Employee's Change Readiness(Case Study: Municipality's Employees Of Korca's Region)

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Abstract: Organizations have to deal with change if they want to stay competitive and to handle different challenges they face. Both private and public organizations need change to be more effective and efficient. In public organizations change is usually a planned one, which means that change that organizations are undertaking is the right one for them to perform more effectively and to fulfill their objectives. Seen by this point of view, managers of public organizations will think that their employees will accept the change. Actually, public managers face a different reality. Employees show different attitudes and behaviors to change. Some of them react in a positive behavior, they are ready to be part of change and some others react in a negative behavior which means they show resistance to change.

In this study, we will focus on demographic variables of employees to understand if they have any impact on employees readiness to change. A sample of 307 employees is drawn on basis of convenient sampling. The data is collected using a well structured questionnaire (5 point scale). Some of demographic variables we used in this study are: age, gender, marital status, education, years in the current job, years with the current employer, etc.

Keywords: Demographic variables, Public organizations, Readiness to change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Public sector is usually composed of organizations owned and managed by government. These organizations offer different services for the citizens.

There are different definitions for the term "public sector" from different researchers. However, there are three main definitions that come out from the legal, financial and organizational perspective (Maroto and Rubalcaba 2005). Legal definition, stresses that public sector is made up by government organizations and organizations governed by public law. According to the financial definition, public sector includes government organizations and private organizations which are funded by public funds including non-profit organizations providing education and health care. According to organizational definition, public sector includes all the organizations of public administration, social security, law and order, health care, education, social and cultural services.

Public sector organizations are created by government, they have political purpose and they develop public services. This means that politicians define the purposes of public organizations. Organizations of public sector are not profit

oriented and they do not depend on markets, so they can't bankrupt (Farnham and Horton, 1996). Public sector organizations cover a wide range of services including municipal enterprises financed by taxes and fees and central government departments financed by funds. Pollit(1990), stated that public sector organizations tend to be complex and sometimes they have internal conflicts caused by their need for supporting coalitions. They must satisfy different interest, which sometimes are conflictual to each other. For example, a government may agree to low the taxes and in the same time the government should increase education expenditures. Public organizations offer public goods which have a big impact to citizens and they fix many fields of their private life. Also, public organizations are financed by taxes so citizens sensibility is high for the services they offer.

Public sector had to undertake reforms to deal with different challenges. Also, studies on innovations stated that citizens want new products and new ways of offering public services (Damanpour & Schneider, 2009; Osborne & Brown, 2011; Bekkers, 2011). So, public organizations have faced the need to change in order to perform in a better way.

Public sector organizations have changed the way they have worked through new systems and new

ways of working. These organizations are faced with increasing demands for greater effectiveness and efficiency as well as greater financial accountability (Soltani, Lai and Mahmoudi, 2007). Usually, public organizations undertake changes to cut costs of services and to increase efficiencies and the quality of services delivering (Kuipers et al. 2014). Also, citizens have demanded that public services to be closer to them. These demands have impacted public organizations management to find more practical tools for change in order to fulfill successfully citizens demands. All these developments imply not only changes in public organizations but also changes in their employees behavior (Joris van der Voet, 2014).

We studied employees change readiness in the municipalities of Korça region. These municipalities have undertaken the Territorial-Administrative Reform, so their employees have faced changes in their workplace.

2. EMPLOYEES READINESS TO CHANGE

Public organizations change, over time, due to many pressures they face. Their challenge is to convince their employees that the change is the right one. If employees do not understand change or they don't think that the change is necessary for their organization they will not support or accept it. Employees play a crucial role in change success. Many researchers have studied factors that impact employees positive behaviours to support change (Armenakis et al., 1999; Madsen et al., 2005; Shah, 2009; Vakola, 2013).

Managers through change communication try to stimulate employees positive reactions to change. When employees have positive attitudes to change they work hard for change success. Readiness to change creates employees high commitment, fewer layoffs, high performance and few absences at work. Many researchers have considered human resources as the most important, dominant and complex factor in supporting and implementing change effectively and successfully in the organization (Armenakis et al., 1993).

Researchers divide the factors that influence the behaviors and attitudes of employees towards change into: a) individual factors, b) psychological factors, c) work environment factors, d) cultural factors, e) social factors. Individual factors relate with personal and social aspects of individuals such as being active, way of solving a problem, beliefs, autonomy, depression, emotional connection, demography, self-efficacy, locus of control (Cunningham et al., 2002; Madsen et al., 2005).

We studied employees readiness on the bases of organizational commitment, carrier commitment and social relationships in the workplace. In this paper, we will show if demographic variables of employees have any impact on employees readiness to change and to the other variables we studied employees readiness to change. Some of demographic variables we used in this study are: age, gender, marital status, education, years in the current job, years with the current employer, etc.

3. DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND EMPLOYEES CHANGE READINESS

Studies on the change management field have indicated different findings between change readiness and demographic variables. Some studies found that there were no relation between demographic variables and employees change readiness. Some others have found relations among them. Patom and Damster (2002) and Tyler (2005) have studied gender impact on employees change readiness. They stated that females and males were different in the terms of their change readiness to change. In his study, Shah (2009), found that there were statistically significant links between demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, education, years with current employer, and variables such as readiness to change, emotional connection, sense of pride, salary and rewards, job satisfaction, job involvement, promotion, development and training, relationships with superiors and colleagues. Whereas, Madsen et al. (2005), found that there were statistically significant links between demographic variables such as: gender, age, education, years with the current employer and variables such as readiness to change, job involvement, commitment to the organization and social relations.

4. METHODS

In our study, participated 307 employees of 6 (six) municipalities of Korça region. The sample of 307 employees is drawn on basis of convenient sampling. The data is collected using a well structured questionnaire (5 point scale).

We used ESPSS program to process the collected data. To investigate the potential impact of demographic variables on the study variables we used the Independent T-Test and ANOVA test. Each test was preceded by control of the variance homogeneity condition through the Levene test. The Independent T-Test was used to detect any possible influences on gender, marital status, years

in current employment and years with current employer. The ANOVA test was used to detect any possible effects of age, education and job position.

5. RESULTS

In this study, participated 307 employees of 6 (six) municipalities of Korça region. More specifically, the employees who participated in the study distributed by municipalities are presented in the table (tab.1).

Tab.1: Number of employees participated in the study

Municipality	Total number of employees	Number of employees participated in study
Korçë	310	73
Pogradec	290	57
Devoll	190	61
Maliq	164	42
Kolonjë	180	48
Pustec	30	26

The Independent T-Test was used to detect any possible influence on gender, marital status, years in the current job, and years with the current employer. The results are presented in the table below (tab.2). They show that there are statistically significant links between gender and

salary and rewards ($p = 0.038$), gender and training and skills development ($p = 0.042$), years in the current job and job involvement ($p = 0.006$), years with the current employer and salary and rewards ($p = 0.041$)

Tab.2: T-test for independent groups of variables gender, marital status, years in the current job and years with current employer.

	Gender		Marital status		Years in the current job		Years with the current employer	
	t	Sig.	t	Sig.	t	Sig.	t	Sig.
Employees readines	-0.990	.323	-0.381	.704	-1.906	.058	-1.923	.055
Emotional connection	.872	.384	-3.72	.710	-1.530	.127	-1.860	.064
Sense of pride	-1.712	.088	1.246	.214	.333	.740	1.202	.230
Feeling of obligation	-1.320	.188	-0.529	.597	-0.242	.809	.412	.681
Salary and rewards	-2.087	.038	1.539	.125	1.060	.290	2.053	.041
Carrier commitment	1.799	.073	-0.765	.445	.392	.696	-0.416	.678
Promotion	-0.299	.765	.302	.763	.069	.945	.298	.766
Job satisfaction	-1.187	.236	-0.176	.860	-0.157	.876	1.203	.230
Job involvement	-1.404	.161	-0.444	.657	-2.776	.006	-1.334	.183

Relations with supervisors and colleagues	-.348	.728	.418	.676	1.090	.277	.758	.449
Training and skills development	-2.039	.042	.240	.811	.174	.862	1.630	.104
Social relations	-1.306	.192	.868	.386	-1.733	.084	-.978	.329

The ANOVA test was used to detect any possible effects of age, education and job position. The table below (tab.3), presents the results of this test. Which show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the age and employees readiness (p = 0.012), age and job involvement (p = 0.005), age and relationships with supervisors and colleagues (p = 0.032), age and social relations at

work (p = 0.034), as well as the position and employees readiness to change (p = 0.012), position and promotion (p = 0.045), position and job satisfaction (p = 0.024), position and job involvement (p = 0.005), position and relationships with supervisors and colleagues (p = 0.032), position and social relations at work (p = 0.034).

Tab.3: ANOVA test for age, education and position variables

	Age		Education		Job position	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Employee readiness	2.971	.012	.208	.891	2.971	.012
Emotional connection	.475	.795	.440	.724	.475	.795
Sense of pride	1.807	.111	.601	.615	1.807	.111
Feeling of obligation	.519	.762	.127	.944	.519	.762
Salary and rewards	1.991	.080	1.555	.200	1.991	.080
Carrier commitment	1.204	.307	1.070	.362	1.204	.307
Promotion	2.303	.045	1.517	.210	2.303	.045
Job satisfaction	2.634	.024	1.073	.361	2.634	.024
Job involvement	3.390	.005	1.475	.221	3.390	.005
Relations with supervisors and colleagues	2.479	.032	1.045	.373	2.479	.032
Training and skills development	1.937	.088	.838	.474	1.937	.088
Social relations in work	2.455	.034	.517	.671	2.455	.034

CONCLUSIONS

- Public sector organizations have changed the way they have worked through new systems and new ways of working. These organizations are faced with increasing demands for greater effectiveness and efficiency as well as greater financial accountability.
- Public sector had to undertake reforms to deal with different challenges.
- Usually, public organizations undertake changes to cut costs of services and to increase

efficiencies and the quality of services delivering.

- Readiness to change creates employees high commitment, fewer layoffs, high performance and few absences at work.
- In our study, demographic variables such as age and job position affected the variable employee readiness. Other variables had no effect on employees readiness.
- There were statistically significant links between gender and salary and rewards,

gender and training and skills development, years in the current job and job involvement, years with the current employer and salary and rewards .

- There were statistically significant relationships between age and employees readiness, age and job involvement, age and relationships with supervisors and colleagues, age and social relations at work, as well as the position and employees readiness to change, position and promotion, position and job satisfaction, position and job involvement, position and relationships with supervisors and colleagues, position and social relations at work.

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