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Analyzing the Dimensions and Components of Social Capital in Organizations (Case Study: Organizations in Varamin City)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study delves into the dimensions of social capital and its prevalence within organizations. Utilizing theories in the field of social capital, such as those proposed by Bourdieu, Putnam, Coleman, and Fukuyama, the research explicates and elucidates the issue. The research methodology employed a quantitative survey approach, targeting a statistical population consisting of employees in education, hospitals, and municipalities. A sample size of 384 individuals was selected from the total statistical population. The measurement tool in this study was a standardized questionnaire with acceptable reliability and validity. Descriptive findings indicate that the threefold dimensions of social capital (trust, collaboration, and participation) have been notably high to very high. Inferential results from the t-test demonstrate a significant difference in the mean values of the threefold dimensions of social capital, including trust, collaboration, and participation. Moreover, regression analysis results reveal that collaboration, participation, and trust, in sequence, exert the most significant influence on the level of social capital within the organization. Ultimately, the coefficient of determination indicates that approximately 58% of the variations in the dependent variable (social capital) can be attributed to the combination of the threefold dimensions of trust, collaboration, and participation. In the inferential statistics section of the research, a t-test was conducted. Based on this, to assess whether the average social capital in organizations in the city of Varamin significantly differs from 3 (the acceptable mean for sample organizations) or not, a one-sample t-test was performed. The findings indicated that the mean score for overall social capital was 4.23, social trust was 3.93, cooperation was 3.77, and the mean score for overall social participation was 4.72. Considering the significance level of the test, which was equal to sig=0.000, the test results showed that the mean scores of the examined variables in the sample organizations were significantly higher than the acceptable mean, demonstrating a statistically significant difference among them. **Keywords**: Social Capital, Participation, Trust, Collaboration, Organization

Introduction

The proper and efficient functioning of organizations is one of the most important factors affecting the development of society. This importance is due to the widespread effects that the results of the services of organizations create at different levels of society and provide the basis for improving the level of welfare and comfort of citizens. In fact, the efficiency of organizations plays an important role in the prosperity and development of the economy, society, culture, and even the environment. In these circumstances, it is clear that the development of a society depends to a large extent on the productivity of organizations and avoiding deficiencies in organizational performance. Today, one of the phenomena that is considered to advance organizational goals and increase the efficiency of the organization is the amount of social capital among the human factors of the organization. Therefore, managers should pay special attention to the process of strengthening and promoting this capital in their organizations. Members of society are connected to each other through the bonds they have and form a whole called society. Social capital seems to be the factor that produces and maintains social bonds. Some researchers have pointed out the high importance of social capital in organizations and have said that social capital is a management phenomenon that has the characteristics

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of trust (norms), shared values and behaviors, relationships, cooperation, understanding and comprehension, mutual commitment, and mutual networks. According to them, it is impossible to imagine that an organization can perform its task without some of the characteristics of social capital (Villanova and Josa, 2003). Bourdieu considers social capital to be the sum of potential and actual resources that result from the ownership of a continuous network of institutionalized relationships between individuals, or in simpler terms, membership in a group. Putnam, referring to the dimensions of social capital, says that social capital consists of trust, norms, and networks that facilitate cooperation and collaboration to achieve mutual benefits. Fukuyama considers social capital to be a certain set of informal norms or values that are shared by members of a group among whom cooperation and collaboration are permitted (Sharapour, 2016). Baker defines social capital as a resource that actors draw from specific social structures and then use to pursue their own interests (Baker, 2010). Schiff also defines social capital as: a set of elements of social structure that affect relationships between people and form inputs to production functions or constraint functions (Schiff, 2012). Burt considers social capital to be friends, colleagues, and more general contacts through which opportunities to use financial and human capital are obtained (Burt, 2012). Portz (1998), emphasizing the function of social capital in different conditions and situations, writes in its definition: the ability of actors to secure benefits and interests through membership in social networks or other social structures. This socialization process, in turn, leads to the internalization of a specific set of values and norms that others can enjoy their privileges and benefits (Sharapour, 2016). On the other hand, it has been said that the higher the social capital in the organization, the less the need for skill and supervision, and as a result, the general costs of the organization are reduced (Renani, 2017). Some findings also indicate that higher levels of social capital are correlated with better and more effective organizational outcomes (Razvani and Toghraei, 2003). Also, many experts have considered social capital from an organizational perspective to be one of the important organizational capabilities and assets that can greatly help organizations in creating and sharing knowledge and create a sustainable organizational advantage for them compared to other organizations (Nahapit and Ghoshal, 1998). However, the importance of the existence of social capital in organizations can be examined and explained from two perspectives:

First, social capital increases organizational effectiveness through trust-based cohesion among employees. Strong relationships and improved communication between members, exchange of knowledge and experiences, encouragement of cooperation, and increased trust lead to improved productivity and better performance of tasks. These connections improve decision-making processes through the flow of information and individual interactions within the organization. Second, social capital is effective in creating integration and unity in the organization. These types of intertwined relationships act as a means of social solidarity that connect members of the organization to each other and to the common goals of the organization. Creating these positive connections encourages individuals to commit to the organization and to endure problems and challenges. Accordingly, Adler and Kwon (2002) believe that social capital creates values such as solidarity, integrity, cooperation, and participation for the organization. In Iran, research in the field of measuring and studying social capital is very new and limited, and the existing examples generally assess the state of social capital as undesirable. Some research findings report the worrying state of social capital based on indicators of trust and belief in the values that govern society, which in general indicates a widespread atmosphere of distrust at the societal level (including organizations). In addition, participation also has a similar undesirable state and is ranked last among the most important issues in society by people (Tajbakhsh et al., 2003). Some researchers also point to the erosion of social capital available to young people over the past few decades, both within and outside the family, which has been accompanied by the growth of individualism and the primacy of individual interests over collective ones (Sharapour, 2001). The results of some other studies have shown that over a 10-year period, Tehran had the lowest average social capital among all provinces in the country (Mehregan et al., 2012). Other findings also indicate that the social capital of Iranian youth is low to moderate. In terms of dimensions and components, it is weaker in associational relations, trust in officials, trust in strangers, sense of belonging to others, and level of social acceptance, but stronger in some dimensions such as sense of social support and ethnic and religious norms and tolerance. Therefore, the state of social capital in Iran, except in specific cases related to traditional and intra-group aspects, is not very desirable in most cases, especially in the dimension of modern relations (Shiani et al., 2009). Therefore, the need to think about ways to improve the level of social capital in society and especially in the country's organizations is fully felt, and naturally, for any planning and practical action, it seems necessary to recognize the factors related to improving social capital. Based on what has been said and also

considering that, according to field observations, organizations in Varamin city face many problems in the field of social capital, the aim of this research is to examine the issue under discussion and answer the basic question: What is the level of social capital in organizations in Varamin city and what are its dimensions?

Research method

This research is a quantitative research. Also, the present research is classified as an analytical and survey research based on its purpose, application, and method of work. Administrative staff of education, hospital, and municipality of Varamin city are considered as the statistical population of this research. Since the sample size is equal to the statistical population, there is no need to estimate the sample size and the entire statistical population is questioned. Therefore, the sampling method is a census or referendum. The data collection tool in this research is a questionnaire. For this purpose, the standard social capital questionnaire of Pantam (2007) was considered as a data collection tool and information required for this research. Since the questionnaire used in this study is standard, there was no need to determine the validity and reliability by the researcher. Data analysis of this study was done using SPSS software and through two methods of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. In the descriptive statistics section, percentage and frequency tables, standard deviation were used, and in the inferential statistics section, one-sample t-test was used to analyze the data. The dimensions of social capital examined in this study and the indicators of each are listed in the table below:

Table 1: Dimensions of social capital (trust, cooperation, participation) and the indicators of each

Items	Dimensions of social capital
The level of warm personal relationships in behavior and communication	Trust
The level of using good and frequent work relationships in the workplace	
The level of welcoming diverse work relationships with colleagues	
The level of using a facilitating communication structure such as work teams	
The level of using valuable information from colleagues	Collaboration
The level of awareness of one's future work prospects	
The level of shared values with colleagues	
The level of connecting with people who have many memories of the organization's history and past	
The level of the impact of recognition based on shared anecdotes and stories in relationships	
The level of shared goals with colleagues	Partnership
The level of using relationships based on honesty	
The level of cooperating with others as a requirement	
The level of accepting criticism from others	
The level of the impact of teamwork on work success	
The level of commitment to one's goals	
The level of feeling like a family with colleagues	
The level of the impact of social norms on relationships	

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Research findings

The findings of this study showed (Table 2) that most respondents had high levels of trust (66.1 percent). Also, 33.3 percent had medium levels of trust and only 0.5 percent had low levels of trust.

In the dimension of cooperation, most respondents had high levels of cooperation (62.2 percent). Also, 36.5 percent had medium levels of cooperation and only 1.3 percent had low levels of cooperation.

These findings indicate that most respondents had high levels of social participation (89 percent). Also, about 11 percent had medium levels of social participation.

In general, in the field of social capital, most respondents had high levels of social capital (81.5 percent). Also, 19.5 percent had medium levels of social capital.

Table 2: Percentage of social capital and its dimensions (trust, cooperation, participation)

Social capital	Participation	Collaboration	Trust	Variable / Amount
0	0	%1.3	%0.5	Low
%18.5	%10.7	%36.5	%33.3	Medium
%81.5	%89.3	%62.2	%66.1	High

As can be seen in Table 3, the average trust score is 3.93, the average cooperation score is 3.77, and the average participation score is 4.72, which indicates that the average scores of respondents are higher than the average of all social capital components.

Table 3: Minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of social capital and its dimensions

Standard deviation	Average	Maximum	At least	Number	Variable
0.554	3.93	5	1	384	Trust
0.703	3.77	5	1	384	Collaboration
0.519	4.72	5	3	384	Participation
0.628	4.23	5	2	384	Social Capital

Table 4 shows the amount of social capital in the organizations studied. The results of this table indicate that the municipality with 93.7% had the highest level of social capital in a high to very high level. Also, education with 90.6% and hospitals with 88.6% had high to very high levels of social capital and were in the second and third ranks, respectively.

Table 4: Amount of social capital in organizations

Social capital					Organization	
Total	Too much	A lot	Medium	Low		
107 %100	38 %35.5	59 %55.1	10 %9.3	0 %0	Frequency percentage	Education
149 %100	44 %29.5	88 %59.1	14 %9.4	3 %2	Frequency percentage	Hospital
128 %100	46 %35.9	74 %57.8	8 %6.2	0 %0	Frequency percentage	Municipality
384 % 100	128 %33.3	221 %57.6	32 %8.3	3 %0.8	Frequency percentage	Total

The main hypothesis of the research: The level of social capital in organizations in Varamin city is different.

To assess whether the average social capital in organizations in Varamin city is significantly different from 3 (the acceptable average for sample organizations), a T-test was conducted with one sample (Table 5). The test findings showed that the average total social capital score was 4.23, which, considering the significance level of the test, which is sig=0.000, can be claimed that the average social capital in the sample organizations under study is higher than the acceptable average and has a significant difference.

Conclusions

Social capital is a multifaceted concept that has been proposed in various fields, from sociology to political science and economics. This concept has gradually become established in organizational studies and plays a very important role in the analysis and development of organizations. Social capital usually refers to a set of resources, connections, and human networks that exist in a society or organization. This concept emphasizes human interactions and indicates the power of individuals or groups to achieve common goals and solve problems. Social capital includes various dimensions that directly or indirectly affect the development and sustainability of organizations. Trust, cooperation, and participation, as the three basic dimensions of social capital, play an important role in improving internal organizational relations and achieving organizational goals. Trust, as the first dimension of social capital, turns the organization into an interactive platform and increases the efficiency and commitment of employees. The existence of trust in various organizational departments, including trust in colleagues, managers, organizational structures, and organizational rules, can ensure the growth and sustainability of the organization. On the other hand, social trust indicates the degree of confidence and willingness of individuals to cooperate and interact with each other. When members of an organization trust each other, a cultural environment is created in which individuals feel safe and comfortable. This sense of security creates healthy relationships and paves the way for the exchange of information and experiences. In addition, social trust can act as an important factor in attracting and retaining talent in the organization. People who work in a trust-building environment quickly feel a sense of belonging to their organization, and this sense of belonging leads to organizational success and growth. In general, social trust, as one of the most important dimensions of social capital, plays a fundamental role in strengthening human relationships, increasing coordination, and facilitating organizational processes, and plays a role as an essential element in achieving the goals and success of organizations. Collaboration, as the second dimension of social capital, refers to the ability of organizational members to collaborate when working together and towards achieving common goals. Collaboration of individuals creates strong teams and increases organizational capabilities. This dimension of social capital facilitates the improvement of organizational processes and performance. Collaboration, as a fundamental component of social capital, has significant effects in improving communication and promoting coordination. When individuals unite as a team and experience collaboration in processes and projects, a positive and motivating environment is created in the organization. This positive solidarity and interaction have a tremendous impact on

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organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Also, collaboration lays the foundation for the creation of strong communication networks. These cooperative communications result in the transfer of knowledge and experiences and increase productivity and create added value in the organization. Participation, as the third dimension of social capital dimensions, indicates the intensity of the collaborative characteristics in the organization. People who participate in organizational decision-making and executive processes feel more committed to their organization. Participation helps to empower organizational members. Participation, as one of the unique dimensions of social capital, plays an active role in the transformation and strengthening of organizations. This dimension reflects the degree of active participation and participation of individuals in organizational processes and decision-making and has profound effects on organizational dynamics and performance. Participation in organizations not only helps to realize the sense of connection and commitment of individuals to the organization, but also improves the acceptance of decisions and their implementation. When organizational members participate in activities and decision-making processes, it becomes possible to create a sense of will and the effectiveness of organizational programs and goals. The existence of participation as one of the dimensions of social capital provides the basis for establishing effective intra-organizational communications. People who feel that their views and opinions are important in decision-making processes and that the organization encourages the sharing of their information and ideas create a higher motivation for effective participation in organizational activities. The result of this participation makes organizations become more dynamic and creative. Overall, by promoting trust, cooperation, and participation, as important dimensions of social capital, organizations experience greater success. These three components are directly related to each other. Collaboration means working together to achieve common goals, which can provide the basis for organizational development in an atmosphere of trust. Participation also refers to the extent to which individuals participate in organizational processes and decision-making. When individuals cooperate in an atmosphere based on mutual trust and participate in decision-making at the same time, an increase in social capital in the organization is realized. As a result, organizations that pay attention to trust, collaboration, participation, and social capital can create a positive and inspiring work environment and thereby achieve improved performance, reduced errors, and facilitated organizational processes. These effective cultural connections increase organizational efficiency and play an important role in the sustainability and development of the organization. Increasing social capital in organizations, as a challenging task, requires specific strategies and methods. There are various ways that can help strengthen and promote social capital in the organization. One of the basic methods is to promote a culture of cooperation in the organization. This culture should encompass all members of the organization, from the administrative level to the operational level. Creating a mechanism Policies and policies that encourage people to share information and experiences can promote this cooperation. Encouraging group and team activities are also effective strategies for increasing social capital. Organizing group meetings, special issues, and joint project teams are areas where people can play different roles through cooperation and interaction and strengthen connections between members. Creating social opportunities and informal interactions can also help strengthen social capital. Organizing camps, business trips, or team-building activities outside the workplace brings people closer together and promotes informal connections. Developing open and two-way communication mechanisms in cyberspace can also be effective in increasing social capital. Creating online communication platforms or increasing transparency in decision-making processes can enable people to communicate more with each other. With these methods, organizations can improve internal communications, increase coordination, and create a positive and dynamic work environment that strengthens social capital. These actions also lead to creating added value for the organization and can help improve organizational performance and effectiveness.

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