

تاریخ دریافت: ۱۳۹۴/۱۰/۲۱

تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۳۹۵/۰۹/۲۱

پژوهش‌های مدیریت عمومی

سال یازدهم، شماره سی و نهم، بهار ۱۳۹۷

صفحه ۲۴۷-۲۲۹

Estimating the Mediation Role of Organizational Structure on the Relationship Between Work Engagement and Knowledge Worker Productivity

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Received: 11/06/2016; Accepted: 11/12/2016

Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out the relationship between work engagement and knowledge worker productivity with respect to the moderation role of organizational structure. The study is practical and descriptive and correlational based on the methods. Study population was employees of Sport and Youth Administration of Khorasan Razavi. Through Morgan and simple random sampling method, the sample size was estimated 90 persons of the study population. Three questionnaires including Utrecht work engagement (2009), Robbins organizational structure (1990) and created knowledge worker productivity for data collection were used. The validity of the questionnaires approved by Context, Construct and Convergent validity and Cronbach's alpha higher than 0/70 approved the reliability. Data were analyzed by Structural equation modeling in PLS software. The results showed a significant positive relationship between work engagement and knowledge worker productivity by itself and with the mediation role of organizational structure. Also, the mediation roles of complexity, formalization and centralization are approved. In fact, organizational structure design that increases complexity, and decreases formalization and centralization can increase work engagement that will result in the improvement of knowledge worker productivity.

Introduction

World is moving from an economy based on production to a knowledge-based economy which necessitates investments on manpower, information

technology, research and development. The role of traditional requirements for production such as natural resources, manpower and capital are not as important as intangible inputs including information and knowledge. In recent years, knowledge has become the most important asset of organizations. Drucker believed that knowledge-worker productivity to be the biggest managerial challenge of 20th century and undeniably it will be needed for survival of organizations in developed countries (Peter F Drucker, 1999). To survive in the current competitive environment, the success of organizations is depended to acquire, use and transfer of knowledge. In this regard, organizations should consider the level of employees' engagement in their work. Since, they decide to use their knowledge in the organization. Also, structure of organizations creates a basis for using the knowledge (Monavarian, 2008).

Case study

The study population included employees of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of Khorasan Razavi (Iran). By simple sampling method 90 people were selected as the sample of our study.

Materials and Methods

This study is practical, descriptive and correlational based on the aim and the method of data collection. Questionnaires were used to collecting data. Knowledge worker productivity is analyzed using the Dracker model, work engagement is measured by 9-items Utrecht work engagement scale characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption, and organizational structure is examined by Robins model consists of three items including complexity, centralization and formality. Data were analyzed by Descriptive and Inferential Statistics by Structural Equation Modeling in PLS software.

Discussion and Results

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Work engagement relates to Knowledge worker productivity.

Hypothesis 2: Complexity of organizational structure relates with Knowledge worker productivity.

Hypothesis 3: Formality of organizational structure relates with Knowledge worker productivity.

Hypothesis 4: Centralization of organizational structure relates with Knowledge worker productivity.

Hypothesis 5: Organizational Structure mediates the relationship between work engagement and Knowledge worker productivity.

Hypotheses testing presented that the direct effect of work engagement on knowledge worker productivity is significant when the organizational structure is not included in the model with a value of 0.558. Including the mediator role of organizational structure, the indirect effect is significant too. T-value of the indirect effect of work engagement on knowledge worker

productivity via organizational structure mediated role is 0.145. Therefore, it is concluded that this relationship via the mediator variety is significant. In addition, this study confirms the indirect association between work engagement and knowledge worker productivity by the mediating role of dimensions of organizational structure. In fact, decreasing formality and centralization cause raising work engagement and knowledge worker productivity. In contrast, complexity as a mediating factor positively influenced on the relationship of work engagement and knowledge worker productivity.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that organizational structure plays a mediating role in the relationship of work engagement and knowledge worker productivity in the studied organization. It means appropriate design of organizational structure will be helpful in increasing of work engagement and knowledge worker productivity. Organizational structure should not act as a barrier against employees who are engaged appropriately in their work. It should give freedom to the employees to be innovative in providing solutions in different organizational situations. In this regard, Kodden (2011) showed that increasing the flexibility of organizational structure will increase work engagement and motivates knowledge workers to make more efforts for organizational goals and as a result, knowledge worker productivity rises (Kodden, 2011). In another study by Catteeuw et al. (2007), the role of organizational structure on improvement of workers' motivation and work engagement was approved. They added that more work engagement will result in more use of knowledge for advancing of the organization (Catteeuw, Flynn, & Vonderhorst, 2007). Therefore, enough attention should be paid to improvement of structure of organizations in order to increase knowledge productivity.

Key Words: knowledge worker productivity, organizational structure, work engagement.