Attitudes of Governmental Managers toward the Implementation of Management Information System (MIS)

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Abstract: The present study aimed at investigating the attitudes of the managers of Golestan province government departments toward the implementation of management information systems (MIS). The population of the study consisted of all top managers and assistant managers of Golestan province government departments who were already in office in 2010 (N=140). The participants were selected randomly based on the Morgan table for sampling (n=115). The study took on a descriptive method. All participants completed the Questionnaire for the Information Systems Establishment Factors (Fallah, 2005) which included items on the Likert scale. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire for the target population were estimated and approved as α=0.05. One-sample t-test revealed that the directors' familiarity with the advantages of MIS (P<0.001, t=5.63) and disbelief in the demerits of traditional systems were beyond our expectations (P<0.001, t=3.82). That is, the observed mean is greater than the standard mean (µ=3). Besides, the main factors hindering the establishment and application of MIS in the government departments included the resistance against the establishment and application of MIS (P<0.001, t=3.26), inappropriate organizational factors (P<0.001, t=4.20), and the directors' unfamiliarity with current information systems in the organizations.

Key Words: Management information systems, government departments.

INTRODUCTION

"Information age", "information anarchy", and "information and communication technology" are daily expressions that we frequently hear or read in the books, newspapers and internet which itself is the product of the above concepts. The age of information began with the problem that decision making in turbulent environments cause considerable confusion if it is not supported by constant achievement of relevant information. The design and establishment of information systems and technologies was a attempt to respond to this need which is one of the fundamental elements of information age. According to (Sarrafi Zadeh, 2010) the complexity of the environments outside and inside the organization increases the necessity of information and consequently necessitates the information systems.

Nowadays, performing the managing roles has become more complicated than it used to be. The high speed of changes, technologic developments, demographic and cultural changes is some of the factors that contribute to the complexity of directors' roles. Decision making is one the most critical duties that managers undertake in managing current organizations so that some of the scientists in the field of management define the concept of management as equivalent to decision making (Simon, 1998). As long as management is equated with decision making, some experts believe that a good decision will rely on information as much as 90% and the director's skills, experience and abilities as much as 10% (Winner, 1998). Besides, managing an organization efficiently in the current complex world requires the collection and processing of huge amount of information which is developing increasingly. The quantity and quality of the information managers need for decision making purposes depend on a variety of factors, but the characteristics and the mode of processing necessary information are the essential factors in this process. Not only should the information bear some characteristics like precision, accuracy, newness, speed, etc., but it should also be processed in a way to improve the quality and strength of the director's decisions. Based on the complexity, importance and impacts of this issue, practically equates the organizations with their information systems (Morgan, 1997).

With regard to its potential comprehensiveness, systemic view will lead to the integration and coordination of existing information in the organizations so that the most excellent demonstration of systemic view toward organizations will result in the management information systems (MIS). These systems are responsible for the collection and organization of data as well as the production and transmission of information to the directors. They also appear in all organizational levels like a potent supervisor enlarging the directors' awareness zone and fostering their insight to make sound decisions (Beheshtian, 2008). On the other hand, while organizations and enterprises in developed countries tend to use these systems (McLeod, 1998; Hunton, 2001), research has shown that Iranian organizations do not draw on these systems enough and adequately (Fallah, 2005; Arab Mazar Yazdi, 2007; Bakhtiari, 1989).
According to the communications with some of the managers and experts of Golestan province executive organizations, most of them reported the existence of such systems in their organizations initially. However, when the system and its various aspects were explained to them in detail, it was known that they had mistaken office automation for MIS. Indeed, office automation differs from information systems to a great extent or at least one can say that it is one of the simple, initial aspects of MIS. Therefore, it was concluded that these organizations do not utilize MIS. The present study was conducted to examine the factors associated with the establishment of MIS in Golestan province government departments as identified by their directors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study bears a descriptive method. The population of the study consisted of all top managers and assistant managers of Golestan province government departments who were already in office in 2010 (N=140). The participants were selected randomly based on the Morgan table for sampling (n=115) (Gorji, 2010). All participants completed the Questionnaire for the Information Systems Establishment Factors (Fallah, 2005) which included items on the Likert scale. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire for the target population were estimated and approved as α=0.05. Subsequently, descriptive statistics including frequency, Mean, percentage, tables and charts was used to organize, summarize and categorize the raw scores and describe sample sizes. One-sample t-test was used to verify and analyze the hypotheses. The acceptance criterion was decided to be the equivalence of means with number 3 (the option "medium" on the questionnaire) (Momeni, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 illustrates the participants' age frequency and percentage, the duration of current managing career, the total managing career history. And Table 2 show t-test results related to the subject's attitude the implementation of management information systems (MIS).

Discussion and Conclusion:

According to the findings of the study, the mean age of Golestan province government department managers and assistant managers was 39 years which seems to be relatively young. The level of education is one of the important factors affecting the inclination toward using the resources and sciences pertaining to every scientific field. The initial descriptive data pertaining to the participants' level of education revealed that only 9% had PhD and 43% had MA/MSc and the rest of them had BA/BSc or lower degrees. Such level of education is not appropriate and is consistent with the findings of other researchers in other domestic government departments (Rahnavard, 2003; Fallah, 2005). The issue becomes more critical once we perceive the significant relationship between the level of education and positive attitude toward these systems. Therefore, it seems necessary to pay more attention to the promotion of educational and scientific levels of Golestan province government department managers and assistant directors. According to the findings of the present study regarding the directors' and assistant directors' age, experience and education, the concern is grown that managers do not have enough expertise to establish and utilize these systems consistent with the demands of the
contemporary world. Therefore, the managers should be provided with training programs and encouragements to gain enough qualifications in using these systems.

The findings of the study revealed that the managers of Golestan province government departments understand the advantages and characteristics of MIS. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Khajavi, et al., 2010) who investigated the MIS familiarity of managers whose enterprises were accepted in Tehran stock market. This also corresponds to the findings of (Fallah, 2005) in Iran's sports federations, (Rahnavard, 2004) in East Azerbaijan province Telecommunication Company, (Khajavi, 2010).

The managers of Golestan province government departments believed that there exists some resistance among the managers against the establishment and utilization of MIS in Golestan province executive organizations. The interesting fact is that despite the researcher's initial conception, the managers of Golestan province government departments identified themselves as the major barriers against the establishment of information systems rather that their personnel. This is consistent with the findings of (Arab Mazar Yazdi, 2007; Qazi zadeh fard, 2010), who reported the managers and their unfamiliarity with computer and the capabilities of software packages as the major known barriers. According to Leavit and Whisler, the establishment and utilization of IT/IS will deform the pyramid of organizational diagram so that the upper and lower levels of the pyramid would be heavier and broader and the middle levels would become thin. As a result, the number and percentage of middle managers will decrease because most of the responsibilities of middle managers will become predictable, which will bother them ever more (cited in Hosseini, et al., 2005). According to the findings of the present study, the managers believed that there was an intermediate level of resistance against the establishment and utilization of MIS on the part of their personnel in Golestan province executive organizations.

The findings revealed that the managers of government departments think of the adequacy and efficiency of traditional methods of information supply in their organizations as lower than intermediate. This is not consistent with the findings of (Etemadi, et al., 2006) who investigated the effects of IT on the quality of accounting information; however, it corresponds to the findings of (Fallah, 2005; Banaian, 2008).

According to the present findings, the managers believed that there were unfavorable organizational factors against the establishment and utilization of MIS. This is consistent with the findings of (Arab Mazar Yazdi, et al., 2007; Marble, 2003).

The study revealed that the managers of Golestan province executive organizations are not adequately familiar with the current information systems, which is consistent with the findings of (Fallah, 2005; Robertson, 2005).

REFERENCES


