

## **The relationship between organizational culture style and learning organization (Case study of Mellat Insurance Company)**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between types of organizational culture and the characteristics of a learning organization. In this thesis, the relationship between organizational culture and the characteristics of a learning organization has been investigated using McGraw's organizational culture classification and Peter Senge's five famous principles regarding learning organizations. To achieve this goal, the employees of Mellat Insurance Company were studied as the statistical population, which was 370 people. Based on the simple sampling method and Cochran's formula, the sample size was estimated to be 120 people. These results showed that the characteristics of learning culture and participatory culture have a direct relationship with the possibility of an organization being a learner, and the characteristics of bureaucratic culture and competitive culture have an inverse relationship with the possibility of an organization being a learner.

**Keywords:** Learning organization, organizational culture, bureaucratic culture, competitive culture, participatory culture, learning culture, national insurance

### **1- Introduction**

The changes and transformations of today's world are due to education and learning. Undoubtedly, the importance of learning in human development is far beyond the scope of his thoughts. Since the human environment is always subject to change and transformation, he is forced to learn to overcome these changes (1).

Today, the discussion of learning organizations has received deep attention from scientists, managers, leaders of organizations and companies. Therefore, individuals and organizations must acquire a new habit of learning and transform their organization into a learning organization. Changes and developments in the last decade and the increasing competition, complexity, dynamism and uncertainty of environmental conditions have caused organizations to

be unable to compete with agile organizations that have high flexibility, speed and innovation. Therefore, in such circumstances, the survival and survival of organizations depend on fundamental transformation and conditions that change the traditional and change-retarding organizational culture to a learning culture. Therefore, today's organizations must create a revolution in the minds of their managers and employees so that the concept of organization, work, quality, competition, profit, etc. fundamentally changes in their minds. Therefore, the desired organizations will be learning organizations. These organizations create opportunities for exercising responsibility. They learn from experiences, accept risks, and feel satisfied with the results and lessons learned. (2)

Therefore, the more successful organizations are those that learn earlier, faster, and better than their competitors. This is precisely why the concept of learning organization and organizational learning has been proposed in recent years and has grown exponentially. Instead of their traditional behaviors and movements, which in its best form also include education, organizations should become organizations that are always learning, that is, they use their efforts towards learning as a competitive advantage. (3,4)

Given the importance of organizational learning in today's world full of transformation and transformation, the researcher has chosen this topic for his research. Therefore, the main issue in the present study is whether there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and the characteristics of a learning organization? Given the importance of the above topic in the insurance industry, Mellat Insurance Company will be studied as the statistical population.

## 2- Importance and Necessity of Research

In the current state of the world economy, only those countries that can offer new goods and services that meet customer needs will be affected by globalization. One of the main factors in this is organizational learning.

Since creativity, innovation, and the ability to discover new market opportunities are among the most prominent characteristics of a learning organization, and in principle, the characteristics of this type of organization and the natural nature of a learning organization require specific and different conditions in the organization, therefore, recognizing the characteristics of a suitable platform for creating a learning organization is the first step and the most fundamental issue of the day for organizations, especially in a situation where the globalization of the economy and industry narrows the field of competition for traditional (bureaucratic) organizations in countries like our country.(5)

According to the above, such studies can help improve the situation of the organization in the current competitive situation. Therefore, the most important reasons for choosing the subject of this research are summarized as follows(6):

1. Today, organizations operate in an environment that is constantly changing and evolving. The survival and life of organizations depend on predicting and recognizing these changes and aligning with them. On the other hand, any change and transformation in organizations requires a change in organizational culture. Without recognizing the organization's culture, creating changes in other parts of that organization will certainly not lead to desired results.
2. Considering the importance of learning organizations, conducting this research is an attempt to achieve the possible relationships between different dimensions of organizational culture and the characteristics of learning organizations.
3. Implementing the organizational culture model in Mellat Insurance Company and achieving results regarding the confirmation (or rejection) of its practical application in relation to the organizational characteristics of learning organizations.

### 3- Research Objectives

Main Objective: Identify the Relationships Between Organizational Culture and Learning Organization Characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company

Sub-Objectives:

In line with the overall objective, the sub-objectives are stated as follows.

1. Identify the relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company
2. Identify the relationship between competitive organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company
3. Identify the relationship between participatory organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company
4. Identify the relationship between learning organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company

### 4- Research Background and Theoretical Framework

The pioneers of the learning organization debate were Donald Shawn and Chris Argyris, who addressed this issue in the 1950s. Following that, another thinker named Petersenga in 1990, following the theories of Schoon and Argyris, presented new principles regarding these organizations to clarify and apply them. (13)

- Moatasab Diani (2024) in his master's thesis titled "Measuring and Comparing the Amount of Organizational Learning in the Headquarters of the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical

Education, Tehran, Faculty of Management" examined eight dimensions of organizational learning: awareness, communication, performance evaluation, knowledge enhancement, environmental adaptation, social learning, intellectual capital management, and networking. The research findings indicate the fact that although it can be said that the Ministry of Health and Medical Education Headquarters has begun its movement towards a learning organization, it is not in a good position in terms of awareness, organizational linkage, and knowledge-building, and requires extensive efforts, especially in the field of knowledge-building.

- Abdoli (2007), in his master's thesis entitled *The Relationship Between Employee Empowerment and Organizational Learning in Tehran Education*, concluded with more than 99% confidence that there is a significant relationship between empowerment and organizational learning, and thus it can be claimed that organizational learning can be improved by increasing employee empowerment.
- Rosengarten (2021) in his research report refers to the effect of the characteristics of a learning organization on increasing group learning within the organization and also with external organizations related to the main organization.
- Ellinger and Young (2000) also emphasize the relevance and positive impact of the concept of learning organization on organizational performance.
- Littlewood et al. (1995) by examining the characteristics of change management in the field of schools and its impact on organizational learning in educational units, show the positive impact of this management method on the progress and effectiveness of schools.

## 5- Research analytical model

Regarding the stated subject literature and previous studies and the opinions of supervisors and consultants, and by using the research analytical model of Hassan Danaeifard and his colleagues that was carried out at Tarbiat Modares University, the researcher has selected the following model as the research analytical model. Among the reasons for choosing the subject, the following can be mentioned:

- 1- This model has been used in Iranian government organizations before.
- 2- Mellat Insurance Company has the ability and experience in providing various insurance products to real individuals as well as business owners and legal entities. The management team of Mellat Insurance has 30 years of experience in the field of insurance and technical issues. The employees of the issuance unit have extensive experience in issuing various types of insurance policies. The combination of a set of skills and industrial connections has created a leading and revolutionary system in providing optimal services to customers, creating satisfaction in them and achieving insurance standards. With a strong, coherent and participatory organizational culture and utilizing experienced specialists, it is a pioneer in innovating new insurance products. The Smart Organization Portal is an Internet-based system that makes organizations smart by collecting organizational knowledge and providing information services. This system makes the



organization a learner. It makes the organization knowledge-based and customer-oriented and also places the organization in a space of continuous improvement.

3- Easier access to the statistical community in the shortest time.

## 6- Theoretical foundations of research

Learning organizations are organizations in which individuals continuously increase their capabilities to achieve desired results, where new patterns of thinking are developed, collective and group thinking are promoted, and individuals learn how to learn together. (Senge, 1990)

### - Key features of the learning organization

Today, it is believed that five technological components are converging to transform learning organizations into an innovation. Although each of these factors has developed independently and separately, each of them is of great importance for the success of the other. Each of these components provides a vital direction to building an organization that is capable of truly learning, that can continuously expand its capacity to realize the highest aspirations and aspirations.(8)

These five components are: (9): 1- Personal capabilities, 2- Mental models, 3- Shared ideals - collective learning based on dialogue and debate, 5- Systems thinking

Types of organizational learning from the perspective of Fayol and Lyles - Argyris and Schon

Fayol and Lyles express the types of learning in the form of two levels: low-level learning and high-level learning. Low-level learning occurs within an organizational structure or set of rules. Low-level learning leads to the development of basic relationships between behavior and results. But this often happens in the short term and affects only a portion of what the organization does. Argyris and Schon (1978) called this type of learning single-loop learning.

Another type or level of learning, according to Fayol and Lyles, is high-level learning, which aims to establish general rules and norms rather than specific activities and behaviors. The relationships that are created as a result of high-level learning have long-term effects on the organization as a whole. Argyris and Schon call this type of learning double-loop learning.

Table 1- Comparison of characteristics of low-level and high-level learning (10)

High-level learning	Low-level learning

- It happens through the use of creative exploration and insight.
- It is indestructible.
- Develops separate structures and rules to deal with control deficiencies.
- Its background is unclear.
- It often happens at high levels.
- It affects collective insights and awareness.

- It occurs through repetition.
- It is degradable.
- It exerts control over current rules, norms, and structures.
- The background is quite clear.
- It happens at all levels of the organization.
- It has behavioral consequences .

## - Organizational culture

A new idea has emerged from the combination of the two words culture and organization, which neither of the two words contains this idea. Organization is a metaphor for order and training, while the elements of culture are neither orderly nor orderly. Culture helps to talk about something separate from technical issues in the organization and causes a kind of psyche with a kind of mystery to arise. Therefore, it can be said that culture in an organization is like personality in a person. (11)

Edgar Shine (1999) also defines organizational culture as follows:

A pattern of fundamental assumptions that group members learn to solve problems related to adaptation to the external environment and its internal development and that works so well that it is recognized as valid, then it is taught to new members as a correct way to understand, think and feel in relation to solving organizational problems. James Percy believes that individuals in an organization have common values, beliefs, appropriate standards for behavior, specific language, codes, and other patterns of thought and behavior, and in short, he defines organizational culture as a pattern of shared goals among individuals in the organization. (12)

According to Shine's view, groups, organizations, and societies are always faced with two problems: adaptation to the external environment and internal integration. In fact, these two problems represent two dimensions of organizational culture. Each of these two problems can be represented as a continuum from low to high; depending on how much adaptability and internal integration each organization has, different types of organizational culture are formed in it.

## - Types of Organizational Culture in Terms of Adaptation to the Internal and External Environment

A study of the characteristics of each of the four cultures shows that the amount of learning in each of them is different. Learning is at its minimum in a bureaucratic culture, while

organizational learning reaches its maximum in a learning culture. Considering the role of organizational culture in learning, it can be shown that bureaucratic culture inhibits organizational learning. While learning culture, as its name suggests, encourages and facilitates organizational learning. For this reason, the more we move from bureaucratic culture to learning culture, the more organizational learning increases.

## 7- Research Methodology

In this research, the model used for this research was selected by using secondary sources, including books, articles, and theses, using internet resources, conducting library studies, and consulting with professors.

A questionnaire method was used to collect data. The questions used in the aforementioned questionnaire were selected from existing standard questionnaires in relation to the variables of this research and with the final opinion and approval of the respected professors. The final questionnaire was prepared in two parts. The first part is about demographic characteristics, and the second part includes questions about each of the independent and dependent variables.

The statistical population of the present study consists of all employees of Mellat Insurance Joint Stock Company, which is about 370 people.

In this study, simple random sampling method is used. (Azar, Adel and Momeni, Mansour, 1379) Considering the size of the statistical population and the type of variable under study, which is of qualitative type, the following relationship (Cochran formula) was used to calculate and determine the required sample size:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 \frac{\alpha}{2} \cdot \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{\varepsilon^2(N-1) + Z^2 \frac{\alpha}{2} \cdot \hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}$$

Therefore, the required sample size is calculated as follows:

:

$$\frac{(370)(1.96)^2(1/2)(1-1/2)}{(0/1)^2(370-1) + (1.96)^2(1/2)(1-1/2)} \approx 120$$

Using the sampling formula explained above, the sample size of this study was determined to be 120 people.

The validity test of the questionnaire of this study was examined in terms of content validity. By precisely defining each of the research constructs, the measurement criteria for each construct,

and the composite scales of these criteria, and with the guidance and application of expert opinions of respected professors, supervisors, and consultants, and consulting with experts in the study community, the questions used in the aforementioned questionnaire were selected from existing standard questionnaires in relation to the variables of this study and with the final opinion of respected professors, and the validity of the questionnaire content was ensured.

In this study, the test-retest method (Cronbach's alpha) was used to estimate reliability. Based on the test-retest method, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the entire questionnaire was estimated to be 0.815, which is above 0.7 and acceptable.

## 8- Research findings

Test of the first sub-hypothesis: "There is a significant relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture and the characteristics of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company."

To test this hypothesis, first, hypothesis H0 and H1:

H0: There is no significant relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

H1: There is a significant relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

In order to examine the relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture (including questions 31 to 35 designed in the questionnaire) and learning organization characteristics (including questions 1 to 30), Spearman test was conducted and the following results were obtained:

Table 2-Results of the test of the first sub-hypothesis

Result	Test statistic	Amount Solidarity	Level Error	Hypothesis
Inversely significant relationship	-2.99	0/482	05/0	Between bureaucratic organizational culture and There is a significant relationship between the characteristics of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company.



**Testing the second sub-hypothesis:** “There is a significant relationship between competitive culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.”

To test this hypothesis, first, hypotheses H0 and H1 are created.

H0: There is no significant relationship between competitive culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

H1: There is a significant relationship between competitive culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

In order to examine the relationship between competitive organizational culture (including questions 36 to 41 designed in the questionnaire) and learning organization characteristics (including questions 1 to 30), Spearman’s test was performed and the following results were obtained:

Table 4-Results of Testing the second sub-hypothesis

Result	Test statistic	Amount Solidarity	Level Error	Hypothesis
Inverse relationship p Approved	-2.8	0/399	05/0	There is a significant relationship between competitive organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company .

**Testing the third sub-hypothesis:** “There is a significant relationship between participatory culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.”

To test this hypothesis, first, hypotheses H0 and H1 are created.

H0: There is no significant relationship between participatory culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

H1: There is a significant relationship between participatory culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

In order to examine the relationship between participatory organizational culture (including questions 42 to 48 designed in the questionnaire) and learning organization characteristics (including questions 1 to 30), Spearman test was conducted and the following results were obtained.

Table 5-Results of Testing the third sub-hypothesis

Result	Test statistic	Amount Solidarity	Hypothesis
Meaningful and direct relationship	4.63	0/384	There is a significant relationship between participatory organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

**Test of the fourth sub-hypothesis:** "There is a significant relationship between learning culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company."

To test this hypothesis, first, hypotheses H0 and H1 are created.

H0: There is no significant relationship between learning culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

H1: There is a significant relationship between learning culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

In order to examine the relationship between the organizational culture of the learner (including questions 49 to 57 designed in the questionnaire) and the characteristics of the learning organization (including questions 1 to 30), the Spearman test was performed and the following results were obtained:

Table 5-Results of Test of the fourth sub-hypothesis

Result	Test statistic	Amount Solidarity	Hypothetical
Meaningful and direct relationship	6.26	0.337	There is a significant relationship between the learning organizational culture and the characteristics of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company.

**Testing the main hypothesis:** "There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and the characteristics of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company."

To test this hypothesis, first the hypotheses H0 and H1 are created.

H0: There is no significant relationship between organizational culture and the characteristics of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company.

H1: There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and the characteristics of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company.

In order to examine the relationship between the type of organizational culture (including questions 31 to 57 designed in the questionnaire) and the characteristics of the learning organization (including questions 1 to 30), Spearman's test was conducted and the following results were obtained:

Table 6-Results of Testing the main hypothesis

Result	Test statistic	Amount Solidarity	Hypothesis
Confirmation	5.37	0/401	There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and learning organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company.

## Summary and Conclusion:

Table 7-Summary of the results of the hypothesis test through the Spearman correlation test

RESULT	TEST STATISTIC	AMOUNT SOLIDARI TY	LEVEL ERROR	TESTABLE HYPOTHESES	A MARE HYPOTH ESIS
Confirmati on	5.37	0/401	0/ 5 0	There is a significant relationship between organizational culture and learning organization Mellat characteristics in . Insurance Company	Original
Inverse relationshi p Approved	-2.99	0/ 482	0/ 5 0	There is a significant relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture and learning	First sub- section

				organization characteristics in Mellat Insurance Company	
Inverse relationship Approved	-2.8	0/ 399	0/ 5 0	There is a significant relationship between competitive organizational culture and learning organization characteristics Mellat Insurance Company	Second sub-section
Direct relationship Approved	4.63	0/ 384	0/ 5 0	There is a significant relationship between participatory organizational culture and learning characteristics organization in Mellat Insurance Company	Third sub-section
Direct relationship Confirmed	6.26	0.337	0/ 5 0	There is a significant the relationship between learning organizational culture and the characteristics of the organization in learning Mellat Insurance Company	Fourth sub-section

Research findings based on the Friedman analysis of variance test

This test was used to rank the types of organizational culture. The results of this test indicate that the learning organizational culture is the most appropriate type of organizational culture for creating a learning organization, and the following types are as follows:

Table 8-Ranking of organizational culture types

Ranking based on the Friedman test	Average rank	Types of organizational culture	Row
First place	4.92	Learner culture	1
Second place	3.16	Participatory culture	2
Third place	2.71	Competitive culture	3
Fourth place	2.01	Bureaucratic culture	4



## 9- Research suggestions

Given the confirmation of the main hypothesis of the study based on the existence of a relationship between organizational culture types and the characteristics of the learning organization, it is clear that any movement from bureaucratic culture to learning organizational culture; the level of characteristics of the learning organization increases with very high confidence. Therefore, it is suggested that:

- Programs to enhance the characteristics of the learning organization and improve the organizational culture from bureaucratic to competitive to the learner should be developed and implemented with careful planning.
- Insurance companies should prepare programs through which individuals become aware of their capabilities and develop and improve them.
- To the extent possible, eliminate dry rules and regulations that hinder creativity through participatory management.
- Insurance company managers should learn the skills of demonstrating and testing mental models without inducing defensive procedures.
- Insurance companies should have programs to develop the capacity of group members.
- Through systems thinking, it can develop cooperation and participation in the organization and create changes that are effective for the entire system.

Considering the confirmation of the first sub-hypothesis, namely the existence of an inverse relationship between bureaucratic organizational culture and the characteristics of a learning organization, it is proposed:

- The goals and missions of insurance companies should be announced in an appropriate manner. In this regard, it can be mentioned that meetings should be held with different levels of employees in order to explain the goals and programs of insurance companies at the beginning and end of each year, taking into account the level of access of employees to information, especially at the undergraduate and lower education levels.
- Action should be taken to review and amend written procedures and develop the necessary instructions. Reviewing the instructions and circulars existing in Mellat Insurance Company in a way that is most consistent with the needs of employees and has maximum effectiveness and prevents the production and intensification of stress due to the announcement of inappropriate instructions and the reduction of the learning organization is proposed as an executive suggestion.
- Mellat Insurance Company should prepare programs to develop individual creativity: responsibility, freedom of action, and independence of individuals.

Considering the acceptance of the second sub-hypothesis, regarding the existence of an inverse relationship between competitive culture and the characteristics of a learning organization, it is proposed:

- By implementing methods based on scientific methods, special attention should be paid to Mellat Insurance Company and used to improve the level of a learning organization. Therefore, serious follow-up and support of the participation system and the suggestion system in Mellat Insurance Company and strengthening the existing suggestion system in order to benefit from constructive and effective suggestions are among the proposed programs.
- Programs such as strengthening specialized insurance associations by utilizing experts from other successful companies and creating participatory management areas should be planned to strengthen and expand systemic thinking.

Considering the acceptance of the third sub-hypothesis regarding the existence of a direct relationship between a collaborative culture and the characteristics of a learning organization, it is proposed:

- Programs to promote integration between individuals through participation in decision-making and creating shared insight and performing team work should be strengthened.
- Providing necessary information to the company's employees in a timely manner through the publication of an internal bulletin in order to prevent the intensification of the destructive phenomenon of rumors in the company.

Considering the acceptance of the fourth sub-hypothesis regarding the existence of a relationship between a learning organizational culture and the characteristics of a learning organization, it is proposed:

- Establishing a system for disseminating accurate and timely information in the company and improving the existing communication networks in it, with sufficient support. In this regard, collecting successful experiences of employees in an independent center in Mellat Insurance Company as a center for registering and exchanging existing successful experiences, presenting these experiences at the company level, and supporting the method of direct communication between company employees and senior managers are among the intended programs.
- Conducting comprehensive studies of the learning organization in Mellat Insurance Company and identifying individuals who are severely affected by psychological stress.
- Training the characteristics of the learning organization to all levels of company employees, so that everyone can take on some of the primary tasks of learning organization specialists for the purpose of primary prevention and preventing the increase in complications resulting from the lack of a learning organization.

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