Examiningthe Influence of Organizational Design on Organizational Agility: Anassessment of Public and Private Sector Organizations in Southwest Georgia

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Abstract

The impetus of this study was to examine the influence of organizational design on organizational agility in public and private organizations in Southwest Georgia. Three main organizational designcomponentsstudied formalized organizational work; centralized organizational work, relating to hierarchy of authority and contribution; and standardized work.Three hundred (300) surveys were distributedto 30 public and private organizations in Southwest Georgia and239 questionnaires were accurately filled-out. The findings revealed that structural components relate to organizational agility in both public and private sectors, excluding hierarchy of authority.Amongst the organizational design components, formalizedwork corresponded the most with organizationalagilitywithin public organizations, whereas contributioncorresponded the most with organizational agility in private organizations. Demographic had no influence on either organizational design components or organizationalagility in either private or public sector organizations, rank of employees in either sectors did not weaken the relationship between organizational design and organizational agility.

Keywords: Organizational, Design, Agility, Formalized, Centralized, Standardized, Contribution, Hierarchy

Introduction

Organizations employ organization design as a governingdevice to influence employees work-outcomes, and to guarantee that employees accomplishnecessary organizational tasks in an effective and efficient manner, and to optimally contribute to the accomplishment of organizations goals and objectives (Katsikea et al, 2011). The way organizations are designed usually reveals the internal characteristics of organizations (Daft, 1995). These internal characteristics are essential to organizationssuccesses and failures (Zheng et al, 2010; Auh and Menguc, 2007), and organizational agility is one of these characteristics. Organizational agility usuallyenhances the success of organizations by making employees dedicate themselves to the accomplishment of organizational goals (Grawe et al., 2012). The success of organizations usuallyresides on organizationsability toenhance and sustain employees' agilityin organizations. High levels of employeeagility contribute to positive attitudes and behaviors in organizations (Chughtai and Zafar, 2006; Sinclair et al., 2005; Shore and Martin, 1989; Srivastava, 2013).

Literature Review

The review of the literature on organizational design and organizational agility revealedthat most of the literature originated from western democracies and most focused on direct relationships between organizations. Fewstudies compared the characteristics of organizational design, and the levels of organizational agilitybetween different organizational sectors. Nonehasexamined the relationships of organizational designwith work-outcomes in Southwest Georgia. This studyintended to pursue an empirical perspective on organizational design and organizational agilityin public and private sector organizations in Southwest Georgia.

This study examined the influence of three components; centralized, formalized, and standardizedorganizational work-processes, and organizationalagility among employees in selected organizations in Southwest Georgia. The impetus ofthis studywas to examine possible intercedinginfluence on the relationship between organizational designand organizational agility, depending on the sector of the organization (public or private organization). Thestudyendeavoredto perceive whether designcomponents and organizational agility differ among employeesworking in public and private organizations in Southwest Georgia.

1-1. Organizational Design

Writers have attached various definitions to organization design. Robbins and Coulter (2007) defined organization design as a formal arrangement of tasks within organizations.Jones (2013) defined it as a formal system of authority relationships, tasks that controls, and coordinates employee actions and behaviors to achieve organizational goals.

Nahm et al., (2003), say that organizational designidentifies delegation of authority, responsibility and the methods to implement and execute rules and regulations within organizations.

Most studies on organizational designhave focused on centralized, formalized, and standardized organizational work.Centralized organizationalwork and designfocus on decision-making authority bysenior-level managers within organizations (Jones, 2013). Most centralized organizational design bestow decision-making authority to senior-level managers, whereasmost decentralizedinstitutions usually delegate decision-making authority to low-level managers (Daft, 1995). A core component of centralized organizational designinvolves hierarchy of authority and contribution (Hage & Aiken, 1967;Al-Qatawneh, 2014). Hierarchy of authority mostly focuses on decision-making authority during the implementation of organizational tasks and duties (Jones, 2013). According to Hage and Aiken (1967), organizations that delegate decision-making authority to low-level employees during task execution or implementation have less reliance on hierarchy of authority.Whereas, contributionduringthe decision-making process involves employees in the decision-making process. Hence, decentralization relates tomany work-related attitudes and behaviors within organizations (Subramaniamand Mia, 2001).

Formalized organizational workinvolves "the amount of written documentation in the organization" (Daft, 1995: 16). It focuses on the length to which organizations define operational tasks through formal regulations and procedures (Michaels et al., 1988). Organizations that formalize their work usually establish rules and procedures to standardize their work-processes. Standardizing organizational workenables employees to work within standard procedures and rules established by organizations (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2001).

Formalized organizational workguaranteesthat employees would complete their duties and responsibilities timely and as required, and therefore, guarantees that employees' actions and behaviors are routine and predictable (Jones, 2013), and that similar work activities areimplemented and executed uniformly at every work location (Daft, 1995). Thus, formalized and standardized organizational work are controlledfactors that seek to guarantee that employee behaviors contribute to the attainment of organizational goals. Formalized and standardized workusually coincide; though, rules andprocedures may not embody in written document in smaller organizations (Price, 1997). Well-established formalized andstandardized workprocessesusually ensure accountability and minimize violations of organizations rules and procedures(Jones, 2013).

1-2. Organizational Agility

Organizational agility is increasingly considered a vitalcomponent in work-related behaviors andattitudes (Meyer et al., 2002), and has therefore, receivedextensive attention from researchers and writers.Organizational agilityfocuses on the attitudes and behaviors of employees within organizations. It involves therelative influence of employees' identification within organizations (Mowday et al, 1982).

Organizational agility has three main traits:

1. A resilient reception and confidence of the organization's objectives and values.
2. A solid commitment to stay with the organization,
3. Enthusiasm to utilize additional effort to ensure the success of the organization, and

A solid commitment or longing to stay with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

Organizational agility enhances various aspects of organizational operations, aspects such asjob performance and productivity (Meyer et al., 2002), organizationalcitizenship behaviors, job satisfaction and motivation (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran,2005; Tella et al, 2007).It reduces turnover and absenteeism (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Studies revealed that many organizational factors can affect organizational agility, factors such as, organizationaljustice (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006), supervision, pay, demographic (Azeem, 2010), and organizationalstructure (Abdul Hameedet al., 2012; Nava et al., (2011). Although there are different types of organizational agilities, most studies focus on affective organizational agility because it is closely associated withprevious work outcomes and organizational factors (Grawe et al, 2012). This study follows previousresearch and focuses only on the affective form of organizational agility.

1-3. Organizational Design Related Studies

Studies have revealed that organizational designhas a direct relationship to work approaches and performance in organizations(Subramaniam et al, 2002). Theimpetus of this study is examining organizational design on organizationalagility; therefore, this study attempted to relate literature that links organizational design and work outcomes within the discussion. Subramaniam et al, (2002) examined the relationship between decentralized structure and organizationalagilitywithin certain organizations.

They found that centralized design had a positive relationship withorganizational agility. Similarly, Auh and Menguc (2007) examined the roles formalized andcentralized designs play on customer orientation within leading production organizations. The findings revealed that,regarding customer orientation, centralized design had a negative effect while formalized designtended to have positive effect.Nahm et al.

(2003) investigated the correlation between various organizational design components and the performance ofthe organization, and practices of time-based operational practices in industrialized organizations. Findings revealed thathierarchical layers, formalized work process design, and the level of horizontal integration have a positive impact on decision-makingand communication. The practices of time-based communication affects manual work processes and the locus ofdecision-making.

Abdul Hameed et al., (2012), examined the impact of 10 organizational influences on information technologyimplementation. Among these influences were three organizational design components: formalized and centralized work process, and organizationalsize. The findings revealed that neither formalized nor centralized work processes relate to information technologyimplementation, while organizational size was found to have a slight relationship with information technologyimplementation.Schminke et al., (2002), researched the effect of organizational design (centralized and formalized work-processes, size,and vertical (complexity) and fairness perceptions.

The findings revealed that centralized and formalized work-processes andorganizational level have an enormous effect on employees' perceptions of organizational justice. The organizational level of employeesminimizedseveral of the relationships between organizational designcomponents and organizational justice.Zeffane (1994) explored the relationship between formalized, standardized and centralized work-processes, and organizational agilitymanagement style in public and private sector organizations in Australia. Findings revealedgreateragility among employees in private organizations. Moreover, the researcher perceived management style differently among employees in public and private organizations.Based on previous literature, this study proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational design: centralized, formalized andstandardized organizational work, hierarchy of authority, and contribution, will positively relate to organizational agility in public and private sectors organizations.

Hypothesis 2: Organizational design will not differ between public and private sector organizations.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational agility will not differ between public and private sector organizations.

Hypothesis 4: Organizational sector will minimize the relationship between organizational designcomponents andorganizational agility; that is, either public or private. Specifically, these relationships will be enhanced inpublic sector organizations.

Methodology and Measure

2-1. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 30 organizations from both the public and private sectors located in Southwest, Georgia. Private organizations including healthcare providers, financial institutions, andtelecommunication organizations, while public organizations included federal, state and local governments' agencies. The researcher distributed questionnaires and the researcher contacted and spoke with managers at the selected organizations. Three hundred(300) questionnaires were distributed equally topublic and private organizations and confidentiality was assured to all participants. Of the 300 questionnaires distributed,271 werereturned.Thirty-two (32) questionnaires were found not to be useful for statistical analysis, 239questionnaires were found to be statistically useful, which formed a final response rate of 80%. Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables (See table below)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables

Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender:		
Male	125	52.7
Female	114	47.3
Education:		
High School	68	28.5
Undergraduate	136	56.9
Masters or PhD	35	14.6
Age:		
19-29 years	106	44.4
30-39 years	98	41
40-50 years	28	11.7
More than 50 years	7	2.9
Job Level:		
Directors	61	25.5
Managers	73	30.5
Employees	105	44
Length of service:		
Less than 5 years	104	43.5
5-10 years	76	31.8
More than 10 years	59	24.7
Organizational Sector:		
Public organization	136	56.9
Private organization	103	43.1

Of the respondents,52.7% were males, and 47.3% were females, 28.5 % had High School Diplomas, 56.9 % had Undergraduate Degrees, and 14.6 % had a Masters' or some sort of Doctoral Degrees. 85.4 % of the respondents were 39 years old or less, 11.7 % were 40 - 50 years old, and only 2.9 % were more than 50 years old. Regarding their position within the organizations, 25.5 % of the respondents were Directors, 30.5 % were Middle Level Managers, and 44 % were employees. The length of service at their employment, 43.5% said less than 5 years, 31.8% said 5-10, 24.7% of the respondents said more than 10 years and 56.9 % of the respondents were from public organizations, and 43.1 % were from private organizations.

2-2. Measurement

The measurement in this study originated from revisions of previous measurements from literature related to components of organizational designs and organizational agility. Based on this revision, measurement of formalized work-processesinvolvesa scale developed by Podsakoff *et al.* (1993). Standardized work-process was measured using a scale developed by Hsieh and Hsieh (2001). Centralized processes in the form of hierarchy of authority and contribution was measured using a scale developed by Hage and Aiken (1967) and used by Schminke *et al.* (2000). This scale consisted of nine items (five items to measure hierarchy of authority and four items to measurecontribution). Organizational agility was measured by using the Organizational agility Questionnaire (Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Cronbach's alpha values for formalized work-processes (0.77), standardized work-processes (0.82), hierarchy of authority (0.68), contribution (0.84), and organizational agility (.88), are acceptable (Hair et al, 2003).

2-3. Results

Table 2 presents the correlation, mean, and standard deviation for research variables. As indicated in the table, the means of the study variables were higher for private organizations when compared to public organizations. The exception was for hierarchy of authority, which was higher in public organizations (M = 3.51) than private

organizations (M = 3.28).All the means of the various variables had med-point levels.Table 2. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Research Variables in Public Organizations (See table below)

Table 2. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Research Variables in Public Organizations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Formalized Work:						
Public						
Private	2.99	0.74				
	3.16	0.67				
Standardized Work:						
Public						
Private	3.17	0.65	0.46**			
	3.29	0.70	0.44**			
Hierarchy of Authority:						
Public						
Private	3.51	0.81	0.04	0.029		
	3.28	0.75	0.36**	0.23**		
Contribution:						
Public	2.44	1.03	0.11	0.33**	0.08	
Private	2.71	0.99	0.33**	0.22**	0.12	
Agility:						
Public	3.03	0.50	0.28**	0.25**	0.04	0.30**
Private	3.06	0.56	0.36**	0.21**	0.06	0.25**

2-4. Test of hypothesis 1.

A. Centralized organizational work in the form of Hierarchy of Authority and Contribution and Organizational agility.Results shows that organizational agility is not related to Hierarchy of Authority (Centralized work) in public sector organizations (r = 0.04) and private sector organizations (r = 0.06). This result therefore does not support hypothesis 1 in regards to Hierarchy of Authority.Results in Table 2 indicate that contribution shows a medium positive correlation (r = 0.30) with organizational agility in public organizations, while contribution has a small positive correlation with organizational agility in private organizations (r = 0.25), providing support for Hypothesis 1 regarding Contribution.

B. Formalized Organizational Work and Organizational AgilityThe Pearson Correlation shows a small positive correlation (r = 0.28) between formalized organizational work and organizational agility in public organizations, and medium positive correlation (r = 0.36) between formalized organizational work and organizational agility in private organizations, providing support for Hypothesis 1 regarding Formalized work.

C. Standardized Organizational Work and Organizational Agility The results show that standardized organizational work has a small positive correlation with organizational agility in both public (r = 0.25) and private organizations (r = 0.21), providing support for Hypothesis 1 regarding to Standardized organizational work.

2-5. Test of Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2: Organization structure will not differ between public and private sectors organizations. An independent sample t-test was used to compare employee scores from public and private organizations regarding the components of organization structure included in this study.Table 3. Unrelated T Test Assessing Organization Structure in Public and Private Organizations (See table below)

Table 3. Unrelated T Test Assessing Organization Structure in Public and Private Organizations

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Formalized Work:							
Equal variance assumed							
Equal variance not assumed	0.347	0.557	-1.822	207	0.070	-0.17925	0.09838
			-1.825	205.885	0.069	-0.17925	.09823
Standardized Work:							
Equal variance assumed							
Equal variance not assumed	0.751	0.387	-1.367	207	0.173	-0.17925	0.09344
			-1.365	204.806	0.174	-0.17925	0.09354
Hierarchy of Authority:							
Equal variance assumed							
Equal variance not assumed	0.749	0.482	2.058	207	0.041	0.22309	0.10840
			2.060	206.529	0.041	0.22309	0.10828
Contribution in decision Making:							
Equal variance assumed							
Equal variance not assumed	1.207	0.273	-1.872	207	0.063	-0.26305	0.14049
			-1.874	206.164	0.064	-0.26305	0.14040

Findings in Table 3 did not reveal a significant difference [T = -1.822, p = 0.07] between employees from public organizations (M = 2.99, St.d = 0.74) and employees from private organizations (M = 3.16, St. d = 0.67) in formalized organizational work scores, providing support for Hypothesis 2 with regard to Formalized organizational work.Findings in Table 3 did not reveal a significant difference [T = -1.367, p = 0.173] between employees from public organizations (M = 3.17, St. d = 0.65) and employees from private organizations (M = 3.29, St. d = 0.70) in standardized organizational work scores, providing support for Hypothesis 2 regarding to Standardized organizational work.Findings in Table 3 showed a significant statistical difference at the P < 0.05 level for employees from public organizations (M = 3.51, St. d = 0.81) and employees from private organizations (M = 3.28, St. d = 0.75) in hierarchy of authority scores [T = 2.058, P = 0.041]. One can infer that public organizations are more centralized than private organizations because they have more layers of authority. This result did not support Hypothesis 2 with regard to hierarchy of authority.Findings in Table 3 did not show a significant difference [T = -1.872, p = 0.063] between employees from public organizations (M = 2.44, St. d = 1.03) and employees from private organizations (M = 2.71, St. d = 0.99) in contribution in decision making scores, providing support for Hypothesis 2 regarding participation.

2-6. Test of hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: Organizational agilitywill not differ between public and private sectororganizations.Table 4. Unrelated T Test Assessing Organizational Agility in Public and Private Organizations(See table below)

Table 4. Unrelated T Test Assessing Organizational Agility in Public and Private Organizations

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance	t-test for Equality of Means				
Organizational Agility	F Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variance assumed	0.013 0.908	-0.432	207	0.666	-0.02888	0.06687
Equal variance not assumed		-0.432	206.164	0.666	-0.02888	0.06678

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores for employees from public and private organizations on organizational agility. Results in Table 4 do not reveal a significant difference [T = -0.432, p = 0.666] between employees from public organizations (M = 3.03, St. d = 0.50) and employees from private organizations (M = 3.06, St. d = 0.56) in organizational agility score, providing support for Hypothesis 3.Hypothesis 4: Organizational sector (public or private) will minimize the relationship between organizationstructuralcomponents and organizational agility. Specifically, these relationships will be enhanced inpublic sector organizations.Table 5. Hierarchical Regression for Formalized Work, Standardized Work, Contribution, Organization Sector, and Predicting Organizational Agility(See table below)

Table 5. Hierarchical Regression for Formalized Work, Standardized Work, Contribution, Organization Sector, and Predicting Organizational Agility

Organizational Agility					
Organizational design components	**B**	**R2**	**Δ R2**	**Δ F**	**Sig. Δ F**
Formalized	0.213**	0. 099	0. 099	22.851	0.000
Organization Sector	-0.019				
Formalized* Organization sector	0.214**	0.100	0.001	0.021	0.884
Standardized	0.236**	0.056	0.061	12.244	0.000
Organization Sector	-0.005				
Standardized* Organization sector					
	0.236**	0.056	0.000	0.013	0.910
Contribution	0.131**	0.078	0.078	14.582	0.000
Organization Sector	-0.006				
Contribution* Organization sector					
	0.132**	0.078	0.000	0.008	0.929

Note: hierarchy of authority did not enter the equation because it was not related to organizational agility(hypothesis 1). Hypothesis 1 was tested by conducting a hierarchical regression analysis. In Step 1, organizational agility was regressed for each of the organizational designcomponents (formalized work, standardized work, and contribution) separately. In Step 2, organization sector (the moderator) was entered, and in Step 3, the organizational designcomponents and moderator interaction term were entered. Table 5 shows the results of the regression analyses.

Table 5 revealed that formalized organizational work (β = 0.213, P = 0.000), standardized organizational work (β = 0.236, P = .000, and contribution (β = 0.131, P = 0.000) were related to organizational agility but organization sector was not(P > 0.05). However, the relationships between organizational designcomponents (formalized organizational work, standardized organizational work, and contribution) and organizational agility were not minimized by organizational sector. Organizational sector did notsignificantly influence the variance in organizational agility byformalized organizational work (P > 0.05), standardized work P > 0.05 and contribution (P > 0.05). These results failed to providesupport for Hypothesis 4.

3-1. Analysis and Discussion

This study examined the influence of organizational designcomponents on organizational agility in selected private and public organizations in Southwest Georgia. Specifically, it predicted that these designedcomponents wouldpositively affect organizational agility. The findings supported these predictions regarding formalized and standardized of organizational work, and contribution. These findings are consistent with previous research (Subramaniam et al,(2002; Auh and Menguc, 2007; Nahm et al., 2003). A possible explanation of the findings in this study is thatemployees in Southwest Georgia, in both public and private organizations prefers organizations characterized by written rules anddocuments.

Moreover, it seems that employees tend to appreciate standard operating procedures that tell themhow to fulfil their duties, and to contribute in decision-making.The findings revealed that the organizational designcomponents, formalized and standardized organizational work, and contribution did notvary between employees from public and private organizations. These organizations had moderate levels of formalized and standardized work-processes, and hierarchy of authority and lower levels of contribution. Thefindingsvaries withZeffane (1994). Moreover, organizational agility did not vary between employees from organizations in the public and private sectors. Employees from both public and private organizations showed a moderate level ofagility toward their organizations. This finding also varies with Zeffane (1994).

This assumes that the culture ofboth employers and employees in both sectors (private and public) is similar. This, in turn, reflects the way organizations are designed, and mirrors the types of organizations nationwide, which are formalized, standardized, and one-way or another centralized (Marzoq and Mohammad, 2003;Al-Qatawneh, 2014).

The findings in this studyreveal that an organization's sector (public or private) does not minimize the relationshipbetween components of organizational design and organizational agility. An organization's sector (either publicor private sector) does not significantly influence the relationship between the components oforganizational design and organizational agility. Additionally, these relationships did not changesignificantly in either sector. These findings may indicate that employees in both sectors hadrelatively similar expectations regarding the components of organizational design. This may be so, because of theorganizational culture of employees in Southwest Georgia who prefer clear and predictable organizational design (Hofstede, 2001).

The findings in this study have directorial and managerial implications. The findings provide further evidence that organizational design affects employee' attitudes in private and public organizations in the Southwest Georgia. It also suggests that directors and managers in bothpublic and private sectors who intend to increase employee agility should design their organizations with high level of written rules and regulation. They should alsoestablish clear standards operatingprocedures for duties and tasks implementation and execution. Additionally, directors and managers should allow employees to involve indecisions making, and in formulating work regulations and standards. Another implication is for those organizations who intend to relocate to Southwest Georgia; should design their organization based on high levels offormalized work (written rules and regulations), standardized processes (standards operating procedures) and different levels ofcentralized processes (high or low) to increase employee' agility in their organizations.

Theoretically, the findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship betweenorganizational design and organizational agility in public and private organizations in Southwest Georgia and worldwide. These findingsshould assist in identifying the level of organization structure that enhances employees' agility in organizations.

3-2. Recommendations:

Future studies should explore the role of organizational culture in relation tocomponents of organizational design and employee attitudes and behavior in organization in other regions in Georgia and nationally. Specifically, culture may change these relationships by making them positive or negative. Additionally,future studies should also explore the influence of other components of organizational design, such as size andcomplexity, on job related attitudes and behaviors.

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