

## A Study of the Rate of Social Capital in the Medical Sciences University, Shahid Bahonar University, and Azad University of Kerman

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**Abstract:** The goal of the present study was to investigate the rate of social capital in the Medical Sciences University, Shahid Bahonar University, and Azad University of Kerman. The statistic population consisted of all the faculty members of the three universities which counted 850 persons altogether. Of these, using the random sampling method, a suitable group of 265 persons were selected for the present study. The tool used for collecting the data was a standard Social Capital Questionnaire developed by Nahapit and Ghoshal (1998) considering cognitive and structural and communicative aspects. The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions whose reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the social capital questionnaire was 0/82. In order to assess the validity of the questionnaire, the formal validity method was selected. For analysing the collected data of the study, the descriptive statistics including: frequency, mean and standard deviation and deductive statistics including ANOVA and post hoc test were used. The result of the analyzed data revealed that the average social capital in the Medical Sciences University, Shahid Bahonar University, and Azad University of Kerman is 3.70 compared to a presupposed average of 3. Therefore, the average of social capital in all three universities is below average. Moreover, the results indicated that social capital is also lower than the average in cognitive, structural and communicative aspects. There was not a significant difference between social capital rates in terms of gender, age, education status, work experience, employment status and the university.

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**Key words:** Social Capital, Cognitive Capital, Structural Capital, Communicative Capital, University

### Introduction:

Social capital concept is one of the common terms in sociology. This term is usually used for expressing the internal communications among members of a group or society. This concept is based on this fundamental hypothesis that not only physical and human resources appear as the productivity factor and result in business boom and development, but also internal communication and cooperation of the members of groups and societies play important and effective roles in development process and result in increase in people's and societies' productivity. Some theorists even go further by claiming that in the case that there is no social capital or it is weak, no investment relying on physical and human resources would be optimal (Danaei, 2011). Extensive studies have been carried out in this area, and theorists such as Jacob (1961), Lori (1970), Pratt (1980), Williamson (1981), Baker (1983), Colman (1966), Patnam (1970), Bordio (1980), and Fokoyama (1990) have presented numerous definitions for social capital (Mobasheri,

2008). However, in general it can be said that social capital is considered as a resource for facilitating the relations between people. This resource includes institutes, norms, trust, awareness and many other factors which govern the relations and interactions between people and can impose different effects on people's and societies' performance (Bidokhti & Nazari, 2010). Social capital in fact refers to common goals and ideas, social cohesion, trust, honesty and mutual respect between people, respecting values, norms and moral principles, and avoiding any behavioural pretence (Nasr Esfahani, 2010). Managers and those who can supply social capital in an organization may smooth their way out to business and organizational success. On the other hand, social capital grants meaning to an individual's life and makes his or her life easier and more enjoyable (Alvani, 2004). In fact, organizational social capital is created in the result of understanding and trust-based relations between employees and managers of an organization and refers to a set of resources which are produced in the essence

of the organization's social relations and make the social life more desired in the organization (Bidokhti & Nazari, 2010). Main aspects of social capital are structural, communicative and cognitive aspects (Faghihi & Feizi, 2006). Instances of structural factors are presence of a desired work system, establishing work groups, and selecting of proper people for different affairs; instances of communicative factors are intimacy, trustworthiness, honesty and humility in organization, people's high threshold of tolerance and valuing benefaction and humanitarianism; and instances of cognitive factors are paying attention to the goals of the organization, presence of a powerful organizational culture, and transferring work experiences among people (Nasr Esfahani, 2011). Some authors have studied social capital in two organizational and national levels. In their research, Kohen and Prosak (2001) referred to social capital in organizations level. Authors such as Kohen and Prosak believe that social capital can contribute to economic development; some advantages to which these people have referred are as follows: sharing knowledge better, establishment of trust-based relations, creation of cooperation morale (inside the organization, and between organization and customers and partners), reduction of rate of displacement, reduction of employment expenses, contribution to learning and education, presentation of organizational knowledge, reduction of work force changes, increase of activities related to organizational stability and common understanding. In national level, social capital refers to networks, interactions and norms which form the quality and quantity of social interactions (Andoranizadeh, 1).

From another point of view, social capital may be studied in four individual, group, organizational and inter-organizational levels (Burt & et. all, 2000).

Some others study it in micro, medium and macro levels. In micro level social capital refers to the people in a group whose identity and identification forms in the result of interaction between them (Seidaei et. all, 2011). Cho (2006) divides this level into two types of "Bonding" and "Bridging" social capitals (Navabakhsh & Fadoy, 2008). In brief, recent thoughts about social capital emphasize on three types of social capital: (daroun grouhi) social capital which refers to the extent to which people relate themselves to the groups and trust and cooperate with people inside this group; (ertebatdahande) social capital which refers to the relations for peoples, who are to some extent similar regarding dignity and power, to communicate with each other; and (peyvanddahandeh) social capital which refers to the extent to which people are willing to trust

and support official authorities (Elgar & et. all, 2011). Medium level includes bonds and vertical relations which is also known as "intermediary" social capital. This level, which is formed through automatic cooperation between groups and networks such as companies, establishes a strong bond between groups and other organizations and results in information and ideas to be communicated from official institutes to public and outside these organizations (Safdari, 2008). In major level, social capital includes structural and contractual relations major institutes such as government, political ruling, and legal and judicial systems. In this level official relations and structures such as laws and regulations of political government, form the rate of political cooperation, political institutes' configuration, and components of social capital (Rahmani, Firouzjah & Heydarabadfi, 2007).

In the case that managers and governors get familiar with this concept in various levels, they may reduce many social, organizational and system expenses through reinforcing this capital and utilizing it, and, take actions towards process and structural changes in social, political and economic systems (Endvarizadeh, 2007). In this article, social capital has been studied in structural, cognitive and communicative aspects in organization, and this article also tries to study four individual, groups, organizational and inter-organizational levels as well. Social capital has various aspects and components which are in conformity with the culture of the society; components such as trust, active cooperation in civil institutes and charities, appropriate communications with each other, commitment and responsibility taking, cooperation and group work morale, and sense of collective identity (Manzour & Yadpour, 2008).

In addition, there are some factors which result in creation and extinction of social capital, including stability ideology and time pass.

Various factors cause social capital creation or extinction; among these, factors which result in lack of dependency between people, seem to play more important roles. Welfare and plenitude are important factors of this type. Presence of these various factors results in amortization and non-renewal of any obtained social capital (Endvarizadeh, 2007).

Organizational social capital is important since it results in people's (groups', teams', organizations', etc.) gathering together to fulfil the tasks successfully. Organizational social capital establishes a sense of cohesion through trust and cooperation. Elements such as trust, mutual understanding and commitment, create a communicative stability which keep the organizations alive in variable market (Endvarizadeh, 2007).

Crouse & et all, in their study on effective social capital components on American companies' performance, introduced cognitive capital (social awareness), social cooperation, social cohesion and social interactions effective on improvement of companies' performance (income improvement, quality of activities and products presentation, and work complexion (Crouse & et all, 2006).

Social capital is also considered to be an important factor in strategic decision making at organization, since main decision makers, gather the information required for strategic decision making through their social relations which are consisting components of social capital; thus, effectiveness of strategic decisions depends on the information obtained through decision makers' social capital. Therefore, organizational social capital increases the effectiveness of decisions (Johnson & et all, 2011).

Findings resulted from various research indicate that social capital is a key factor in performance of the sale units of organizations, and especially knowledge-based organizations (Young Jing & et all, 2011).

Also studies show that short-term investments on reinforcing the social private companies members' social capital influence the performance of these companies so much (Torabi & et all, 2010).

Various researches have been carried out on the ground of social capital some of which are as follows:

- In a research entitled "super company social capital" carried by Beata Lopaciuk-Gonzaryka in 2011 as an experimental research in a financial agency in Poland, main findings represented the importance of bonding (daroun grouhi) social capital especially in relation with operational tasks, and also indicated different effects of social capital on efficiency.
- In another research entitled "social capital and its role in employees' job stress and job tiredness", carried by Boyaz& Waynd in 2010, results of equations of structural model indicated that social capital, in forms of communication, supervisor's support, organizational commitments, influence and trust, has a significant relation with job stress.
- Nasr Esfahani & et all, in a research on managers and experts of service organizations of Esfahan Province in 2011, entitled "study of organizational social capital in service organizations of Esfahan Province", showed that level of organizational social capital in cognitive, structural and communicative

aspects in governmental service organizations of Esfahan Province was higher than medium.

- Rasouli & Pakniat in a research under title of "study of collective media's role in social capital configuration between Yazd citizens" shoed that there is a correlation between applying collective media and social capital. Also they showed that there is a direct correlation between the independent variable of the research, that is rate of using collective media, and social capital and its aspects (social trust, social cooperation and social norms).
- In another research, entitled "study of relation of social capital with rate of collective identity" carried out in 2011 by Jaribi & Lahrabi, on students of social science faculty of Allame Tabatabaei University, findings indicated that, in general, social capital has a direct and significant effect on collective identity.

According to what was said, the present research tries to study the rate of social capital at three universities of Medical Science, Islamic Azad, and Shahid Bahonar of Kerman. To this end, research questions have been set as follows:

**Main question:** in faculty members' opinion, what's the rate of social capital at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

**Minor questions:**

- In faculty members' opinion, what's the rate of social capital in cognitive aspect at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?
- In faculty members' opinion, what's the rate of social capital in communicative aspect at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?
- In faculty members' opinion, what's the rate of social capital in structural aspect at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

**Research Methodology**

This research is a descriptive study of survey type. The statistic population of the research is

consisted of all faculty members of University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University and Islamic Azad University of Kerman, including 850 persons in spring and summer of 2012. Based on Kokran formula, sample volume was estimated to be 265 persons with reliability level of 1.96. Participants were selected by categorical sampling method in conformity with volume, that is number of faculty members in any university was estimated and questionnaires were presented in proportion with number of professors in any university.

### Research Tools

Data collecting tool was Nahapit's & Ghoshal's (1998) standard social capital questionnaire which was consisted of 17 questions in three structural, cognitive and communicative aspects. The items of this questionnaire were set according to the aims, simplicity, lack of duality, and responders' feelings, and based on seven-degree scale of Likert type in a continuum of quite agreed, agreed, relatively agreed, no opinion, relatively disagreed, disagreed and quite disagreed; by score 1 allocated to quite disagreed and score 7 allocated to quite agreed. Since the questionnaire research tool was standardized, content validity assess was not required; however, the questionnaire was checked and approved by the thesis reader, thesis advisor, and some professors of management.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for assessing the questionnaire validation which was obtained to be 0.82. For analysing the data of the study, descriptive statistics including frequency, mean and standard deviation and deductive statistics including uni-variant t-test were used.

### Research Findings:

Resulted findings indicated that among 265 participants of the study, 118 persons, equal to 44.5 per cent, are working in Shahid Bahonar University. Regarding gender, 118 persons were female and 139 persons were male which consisted 44.5 and 52.5 per cent of the sample respectively. Also, in regard with marital status, 25.7 per cent of participants, that is 68 persons, were single and 67.7 per cent, that is 178 persons, were married. Considering age, most of participants were in age range of 31- 40 years old consisting 34.7 per cent of participants in the study that is 92 persons. Furthermore, in terms of academic educations, it could be observed that 42.6 per cent of participants in the study, that is 113 persons, have Master's degree, 28.3 per cent, that is 75 persons, have specialty doctorate degree, and 23.8 per cent, that is 63 persons, have doctorate degree (Ph.D.). Also, in regard with employment status, it could be seen that 44.7 per cent of participants, that is 117 persons, are official employees (most of the participants), and 42.7 per cent, that is 113 persons, are working contractually. And, regarding work experience, 37 per cent of participants, that is 98 persons have work experience of less than 5 years, and 3.8 per cent, that is 10 persons have the least work experience.

Average of social capital and three structural, cognitive and communicative aspects are 62.93, 21.73, 18.80 and 22.49 respectively.

**Main question:** in faculty members' opinion, what's the rate of social capital at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

**Table1:** Comparison of average of social capital score with presupposed average of 3

item	average	standard deviation	Average deviation	t	Degree of freedom	Significant level
Social capital	3.70	0.69	0.046	-6.438	226	0.001

Social capital score average is 3.70 in compare with the presupposed average of 3. The calculated t absolute value was higher than t of table. Thus, the average of social capital score in all three universities is below average.

### Minor questions:

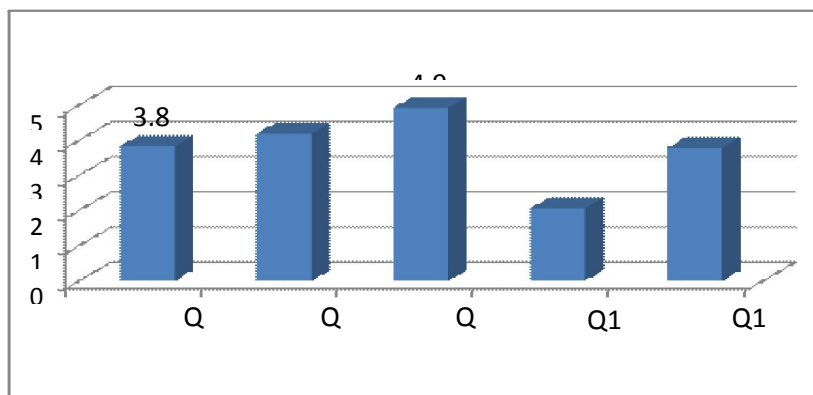
- In faculty members' opinion, what's the rate of social capital in cognitive aspect at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

**Table 2:** Comparison of average of cognitive aspect score of social University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar with presupposed average of 3

item	average	standard deviation	Average deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Significant level
cognitive aspect	3.76	0.88	0.055	13.635	249	0.001

Table 2: comparing the average score of cognitive aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman, with presupposed average of 3

According to the findings of table 2, average score of cognitive aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman is 3.76 in compare with the presupposed average of 3. The calculated t is higher than t of the table. Therefore, cognitive aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman is below average level.



As it is exhibited in chart 1, in cognitive aspect of social capital questionnaire, the highest average, that is 4.93, is related to item 4: “in the case of raising any problem in the university, one shall have sense of responsibility in lieu of it”; and lowest average, that is 2.07, is related to item 12: “in the case that I need to borrow some money, I shall refer to my

colleagues before anyone else”

- In faculty members’ opinion, what’s the rate of social capital in communicative aspect at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

**Table 3:** Comparison of average of communicative aspect score of social University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar with presupposed average of 3

Item	average	standard deviation	Average deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Significant level
communicative aspect	3.21	0.81	0.052	4.067	239	0.001

Table 3: comparing the average score of communicative aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman, with presupposed average of 3

According to the findings of table 3, average of communicative aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman is 3.21 in compare with the presupposed average of 3. The calculated t is higher than t of the table. Therefore, communicative aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman is below average level.

The findings show that in communicative aspect of social capital questionnaire, the highest average, that is 3.91, is related to item 3: “in order to improve the university status, we shall get present in our workplace without any expectation”; and lowest average, that is 2.24, is related to item 11: “I feel that any decision that authorities make about me is correct”.

- In faculty members’ opinion, what’s the rate of social capital in structural aspect at the University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman?

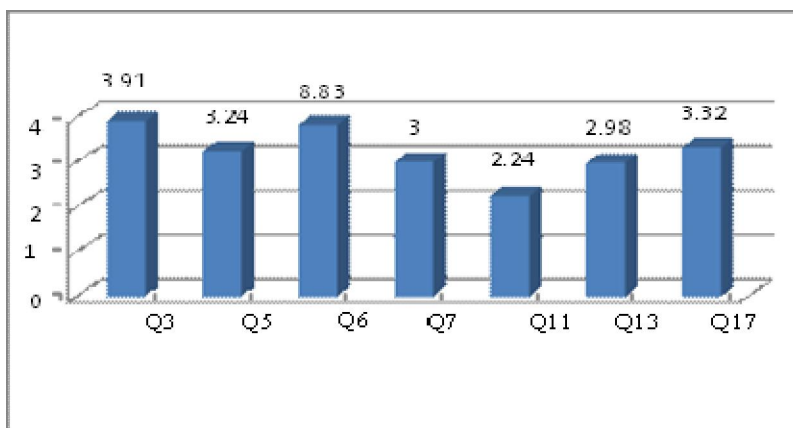
**Table 4:** Comparison of average of structural aspect score of social University of Medical Science, Islamic Azad University, and Shahid Bahonar with presupposed average of 3

Item	average	standard deviation	Average deviation	T	Degree of freedom	Significant level
structural aspect	4.34	0.96	0.061	21.997	250	0.001

Table 4: comparing the average score of structural aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman, with presupposed average of 3

According to the findings of table 4, average score of structural aspect of social capital at University of

Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman is 4.34 in compare with the presupposed average of 3. The calculated t is higher than t of the table. Therefore, structural aspect of social capital at University of Medical Science, Shahid Bahonar University, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman is below average level.



The findings show that in structural aspect of social capital questionnaire, the highest average, that is 5.29, is related to item 9: "I believe that colleagues are able to solve the problems of the university by cooperation, intimacy and compatibility"; and lowest average, that is 2.73, is related to item 15: "I think that

managers and authorities of the university would be glad to hear my suggestion and personal opinions".

Is there any significant difference between faculty members' social capital rates considering population's specifications and characteristics?

Table 5 shows the multi-way variance analysis of social capital scores in terms of variables of gender, age, academic educations, years of service (work experience), and employment status.

**Table 5:** analysis of multi- way variance of social capital scores in regard with sex, age, academic educations, years of service and employment status

source	Average of square	Degree of freedom	Sun square of	F	Significant level	$\beta$	Statistical power
sex	30.014	1	30.014	0.251	0.617	0.002	0.079
age	867.785	3	289.262	2.418	0.070	0.057	0.591
academic educations	290.873	2	145.437	1.216	0.300	0.02	0.261
years of service	1258.341	5	251.668	2.104	0.070	0.081	0.680
employment status	4.558	1	4.558	0.038	0.846	0.001	0.054

The findings in table 5 reveal that there is no significant difference between social capital scores regarding gender, age, academic educations, years of service, employment status and type of the university.

#### Discussion & conclusion:

Nowadays, social capital is one of key concepts. This concept, due to its nature, can have some advantages and disadvantages for organizations, and especially, for educational organizations such as universities. Developing social capital requires understanding its expenses and relative benefits to which managers interested in investment on this ground need to pay attention. Main advantages of social capital are considered to be having extensive information with low expense and short time, skill, new knowledge on behalf of society members, power gain and increase in speed of information communication. Establishing unity inside the society, and strengthening the norms, beliefs and customs are other advantages of social capital which replaces official controls. Other benefits of social capital are in grounds such as promoting team and group activities, trust, positive thinking and mistake admission, and increase of creativity and innovation in the society. As the advantages of social capital result in growth and reinforcement of social capital, it seems that some issues including lack of clarity in

comprehensive and strategic policies on the behalf of related organizations, related authorities' work policies and partial vision, lack of meritocracy, lack of belief in cooperative management and etc. encounter this process with disorder and prevent its development. Awareness of advantages and disadvantages of social capital helps university managers in promoting this kind of capital and realizing organizational goals to a good degree.

According to the findings of table No.1, average score of social capital is 3.70. The calculated t absolute value is higher than t of the table. Therefore, score of social capital at all three universities is below average level.

presence of social capital results in democracy establishment, economic growth, abilities and creativity development, peace and comfort increase in human beings' life, and cooperation, trust and transaction promotion, and lack of it causes social isolation, sense of disaffection and alienation, subjectivism and identity crisis which appear in forms of selfishness, voracity, non-responsible political systems, and corruption. Low level of social capital, especially in an organization like university, indicates that work trust, unanimity and cooperation and positive work relations are in a low level at that organization. Considering the concept of social capital, it seems that lack of it results in disorder,

breaking the norms and mixing the values and anti-values, in a manner that people in organizations suffer from confusion, conflict, struggle, being indifferent, depression and etc.

It can be said that considering the organizational culture in some organizations, lack of stability of methods and manner, lack of clarity of policies, lack of common vision, individualism instead of group work ant etc., rate of social capital is not adequate and sufficient in these organizations. Because of these, faculty members of these three universities reported the rate of social capital to be lower than the average level. Results of this study are not in conformity with the research results of Esfahani & et all (2011), since, in their research, they had reported the service social capital level to be higher than the average level. Reasons may be different areas to be studied, different organizational culture and different types of organization (service).

One of the restrictions in this research is that it uses one of the data gathering tools, which is questionnaire, in order to study the social capital in Shahid Bahonar University, University of Medical Science, and Islamic Azad University of Kerman; thus the results may not be generalized to other universities. According to the findings of this study, some important recommendations are presented as follows:

- 1- Considering the importance of social capital in cognitive aspect, it is recommended that university managers try to promote this aspect of social capital through paying attention to the organization's goals, creating a powerful organizational culture, communicating work experiences among people and etc.
- 2- Regarding the importance of social capital in communicative aspect, it is recommended that university managers try to promote this aspect of social capital through different methods including establishing informal communicative channels, amending communicative networks inside and between units, holding informal discussion meetings with employees and faculty members, using communicative channels such as email and friendly question-answer meetings, and etc.
- 3- Considering the importance of social capital in structural aspect, it is recommended that university managers try to promote this aspect of social capital through different methods such as establishing a desired work system, creating work groups, appointing proper

people to different affairs, paying attention to meritocracy and etc.

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