

Assessing the feasibility of establishing suggestion system in Islamic Azad University, Ardabil branchMohammad Rouhi Eaisalou¹, Narges Yazdani², Fatimah Shokri Irdemosa³¹Academic staff Member Islamic Azad University Ardabil Branch & Research Scholar from IRAN, Department of Public Administration, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Indiamohammadroohi@yahoo.com²Student of MA in Entrepreneurship Management, Tehran University nargesyazdani@yahoo.com³BA in commercial management

Abstract: The main objective of this paper is to investigate the feasibility of establishing suggestion system in Ardabil Islamic Azad University, Iran. Suggestion system is the customary method for transferring information and opinions to a higher level in an organization. The suggestion system may be a positive and helping power in the establishment of cooperation among employees. On the other hand the use of suggestion system can be a good replace for team building in an organization. The widespread use of suggestion system indicates its importance in participation. Especially by utilization of modern techniques and methods and by ever-increasing corrections and revisal of methods, schemes and forms its importance becomes clear more than ever. Research population is all of the employees and members of scientific boards in Ardabil Islamic Azad University. With regard to the selected formula for sample volume we choose 100 subjects from among the population (N=400). For data collection we design a questionnaire, which includes 5 general and descriptive questions and 20 questions about the effective factors on the feasibility of establishing suggestion system. Moreover, we prepare another questionnaire with 16 questions about the viewpoints of selected samples in relation to their jobs. Then we distribute these two questionnaires among samples and at the end we collect 95 completed questionnaires. We support the validity of questionnaire by consulting with members of scientific board who are experts in the field. We achieve to the reliability of 0.712 by the coefficient of Cronbach alpha, which is an acceptable coefficient. We use descriptive statistics for data analysis and classification, and for preparing diagrams and frequency tables. We obtain measures of central tendency and measures of variability for every variable. Then by means of inferential analysis, we analyze research hypotheses and answer to the questions. For analyzing research questions and hypotheses we also use Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the obtained results confirm the feasibility of establishing suggestion system in Ardabil Islamic Azad University.

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Introduction

Suggestion system is a technique in which you can use employees' opinions for identifying and solving organizational problems. According to suggestion system, all employees, from higher organizational ranks to the lower ones, can present their suggestions, ideas, innovations, and opinions for removing disorders in work procedures, improving work method and increasing product quality. Suggestion system is not a mere criticism, but it presents solution too.

Unfortunately due to different reasons, suggestion and participation systems are not in their right place in some countries such as Iran. In these countries the employees are not participated in organizational decision-making, and if an organization calls for participation, the employees will not show any interest.

Perhaps ignoring employees' opinions and suggestions is one of the main reasons for the non-acceptance of this system. Establishment of suggestion system in an organization can be of suitable revenue for that organization and its employees. Employees, managers, shareholders, customers, society, government and ... are among the beneficiaries of establishing this system. Organizations which establish this system have gained remarkable advantages such as:

- Developing spontaneous cooperation culture
- Improving employees' morale and motivation
- Increasing the degree of innovation
- Reinforcing the acceptance of responsibility and organizational dependency
- Improving productivity and quality, and presenting better post-sale services
- Decreasing resistance against change

- Empowering managers and employees
- Increasing dynamicity and flexibility
- Better information flow
- Increasing revenues and cutting costs
- Saving time and increasing pace, accuracy and precision

In some companies and organizations the aim of establishing suggestion system is to increase revenue and decrease the related costs, but the main goal must be the creation of motivation, job satisfaction, and suitable bases for group cooperation in an informal environment, which may be followed by increasing in revenue and decreasing in costs. The opportunity created by innovation through suggestion system makes employees more vivid and improves their morale. The growth and development of every company and organization is possible through its creative man power.

Literature

Suggestion system is the customary method for transferring information and opinions to the higher level of an organization. This system may be an important positive and helping power for establishment of cooperation among employees. On the other hand the use of suggestion system can be a good replace for team building in an organization.

Participation is an old concept which has its origin in public affair management and religious thoughts. For example, participation on the basis of consulting has emphasized in Islam as "the council". Holy Quran has clearly required managers to decide on the basis of counsel in the affaires that need research and disquisition (Moghadasi, 2008).

The emergence of classic theories had emphasized structuralism, expertism, and rationalism in organizations. The opposition between classic philosophy and human psyche and spirit turned the attention to human relations.

- ✓ Japan is the first country that introduced and established strategically the suggestion system in 1721.
- ✓ Then it was Sweden that through the formation of royal committees had a characteristic movement.
- ✓ Italy was the 3rd country that entered to this ground.
- ✓ In 1770 it was England that executed this system in its navy for the first time.
- ✓ In 1898 by executing this system, Kodak had gained enough reputation and executive secretary of suggestion system due to his success in this system appointed as Kodak presidency.
- ✓ After 1940s, gradually the number of suggestions in American companies increased.

- ✓ During World War II, due to critical situation and the need to invention, the number of suggestion doubled in America.
- ✓ Then Edwards Deming executed the suggestion system in Japan in the form of continuous improvement.
- ✓ In 1972 Alton Mayo et al tried to find a relationship between work condition and productivity.
- ✓ At the beginning of 1980s the rate of suggestion for General Motors have been 84% per capita; while at the same year this rate have been 17.9 % for Toyota.

The establishment of suggestion system is publicized by the works of some scientists such as R. Jerys, Likert, Herzberg and Lovler and continued its existence with different titles such as goal based management, suggestion system, and quality improvement and self-managed groups.

In Iran from 1989 the development and reconstruction organization have tried to execute participation system in its units and companies. At first the required researches and studies for the regulation of executive codes of this system were conducted, and after its codifying in the spring of 1993 it was executed in four companies. These companies were Iran Radiator Making, Rolling and Production of Steel parts, Soliran, and Akam Felez. After gaining some success, this system is executed from the beginning of 1993 in a number of other companies such as Pars Minu Co and primarily in Biscuit Making workshop.

A brief introduction to suggestion system

Participation management is considered as one of the pillars of dynamic management system; this process plays an important role in the expansion of human resource of the country, and is the most suitable method for increasing productivity. Paying attention to the talents and opinions of employees is the starting point of emerging creativity in human resource; for the formation of participation system we must establish suitable relationships between employees and managers. Suggestion system is a constructive bed for the realization of this plan.

Suggestion system is one of the most common and successful system, which has employed in the recent decades. In brief, the program of this system is as following: all employees through giving different suggestions participate with managers and authorities in decision-making of organization, and its impacts on decreasing wastage and costs, and increasing productivity etc. have been very remarkable. Evaluating suggestions is the next step in this system, which totally results in two options:

- a) Accepting suggestion and its execution and granting reward to suggester;

b) Rejecting suggestion and convincing the suggester of this decision.

Generally, the basis for employees' participation in giving suggestion must be set in a way that all of them can participate in every branch related to organizational goals and present their suggestions. Every successful system of this kind must be planned in a way that without considering the degree education or organizational position all involved employees participate in decision-making.

Advantages

“Say good news to those who listen to different people and act to the best one, God guides them with His especial kindness and these people know the truth about scientists” (The Holy Quran, Zomar 18) .

“Manpower extension” as one of the dimensions of participation management can be considered the main executive output of suggestion system. Manpower extension is the basis of every organizational extension. By executing suggestion system following advantages and outputs are expectable:

- a) Increasing motivation, creating job satisfaction and the sense of belonging to the organization among employees for the realization of common goals.
- b) Increasing executive power of management in the operation of organizational affair.
- c) Increasing profitability and competitive power of organization.

Goals

One has to do his work as if he never will die, and prepare himself as if he will die in the next morning. This attitude is obtained from a tradition from Imam

Ali (PBUH). Suggestion system is of different goals for an organization:

- a) Main goal
 - Creating a suitable base for attracting active participation of employees in different area of organization.
- b) Especial goals
 - Empowering employees to project their opinions about different area of work;
 - Improving the quality of services and optimization of work progress by using employees' opinions;
 - Creating the sense of organizational belonging and increasing the spirit of individual and collective correlation and participation among employees;
 - Creating motivation to employ the creativity and innovativeness of employees;
 - Establishing reasonable, loyal and friendly mutual relationship between management and employees;
 - Creating the sense of job satisfaction among employees;
 - Appointing proper people in suitable positions;
 - Creating dynamic working condition and safe and constructive competition;
 - Improving the sense of responsibility and work conscience among employees;
 - Upgrading the efficacy of employees and increasing their accuracy in thinking and doing;
 - Facilitating the process of resigning from a position in organization;
 - Decreasing costs and economizing;
 - Satisfying the clients;
 - Identifying and solving problems in organization.

Dimensions

The dimensions of suggestion system in all of the resources are as following:

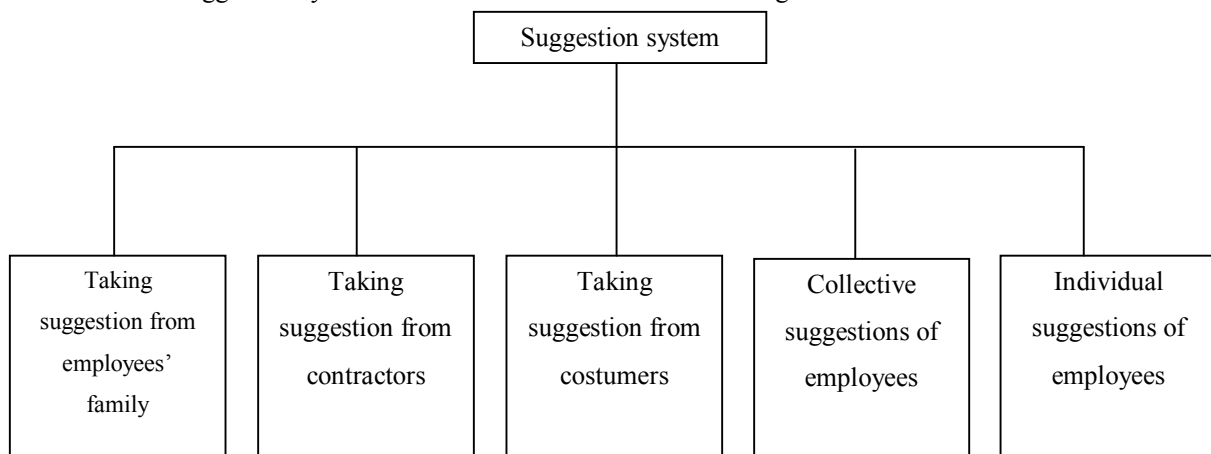


Diagram 1- The dimensions of suggestion system

Organizational structure of suggestion system

The manner of organizing, number of people in suggestion system, and the manner of their activity are different in different organizations. They depend on general diplomacies; top management opinions; the content, expansion and diversity of activities; the manner of operating organization; organizational culture; leadership style; the dimensions of participation; and some other variables. Although we cannot prescribe a similar method for managing suggestion system in all organizations, following structure can be a good standard for all organizations:

1. Suggestion system's leadership
2. Executive committee of suggestion system
3. Executive secretary of suggestion system
4. Expertise groups
5. Secretariat of suggestion system
6. Steps for executing suggestion system

Executing suggestion system begins from receiving suggestion and after passing through evaluation and surveying step, it reach to execution step, and ends with rewarding the suggester.

At the next section we explain different steps of executing this system.

1. Collecting employees' suggestion
2. Evaluating the presented suggestions
3. Identifying the kind and amount of reward
4. Informing suggesters of the results of evaluation
5. Executing suggestion
6. Granting the reward to the executors of suggestion

The relationship between creativity and suggestion system

Just like a living organism, organization is susceptible to extensive environmental change. It faces with new problems, and solving them requires employing comprehensive solutions, which consider different aspects of the problems. For entering to a creative environment in which people continuously try to improve the condition, first we need a primary requirement in which without considering "quality" the "number" of suggestions is increased. Therefore, the manager must create an environment in the organization in which employees can easily express their views for the success of the organization. For the complete manifestation of the inner talent and creativity, one must be positive about freedom of thought, and this would be possible by participating through suggestion. For absorbing more thoughts it is prohibited to criticize the presentation of thoughts, and the system's slogan is as following:

Mobilization of thoughts + mobilization of ideas = suggestion system

The position of suggestion system in the management of organizations

Nowadays, management systems are considered as the technology software and the main tools of expansion process. This is based on the fact that in modern theories human resources are considered as an infrastructural element in expansion process, and every success in sustainable development process depends on human resources expansion. This emphasized the importance of considering management systems, which expand human resources.

The philosophy of this system theorizes the groups of managers and employers from two viewpoints. In addressing managers it states: you must try not to limit yourselves in a closed environment, but you must be open-minded and always welcome to new thoughts and innovations.

On the other hand in addressing employees and workers it states: by presenting new thoughts and ideas, even it seems trivial, participate in all affairs of your company. In this regard we cannot expect that our works are always accompanied with success. But the fact that you are able to identify the problem and think about a solution for it, indicates that you are a punctilious person (Koji, 1994).

Impediments of suggestion system

The establishment of employees' suggestion system, which leads to continuous improvement through making changes in organization, requires pathology and removing the impediments. These impediments can be regarded as diseases, which endanger the dynamicity of organization. The impediments include:

1. Lack of support by top managers from the system;
2. Executive managers' disability and lack of interest, and multiplicity of their occupations;
3. Heavy pace of executive processes
4. Weak expert advice of suggestions
5. Lack of training and presenting weak information
6. Execution by inexperienced people
7. The low level of scientific and technical information of employees;
8. The autonomous and individual-orientedness of managing style;
9. Non-proportionality of rewards and the results of executing the suggestion
10. Non-execution of the suggestions.
11. There are also some obstacles in work environment, which impede this system from complete success:
12. Inefficient informative system;
13. Unsuitable work relationships;
14. Bureaucratic culture;
15. Weak function of suggestion council;

16. Limited suggestive capacity of people.

Hence, for promoting suggestion system and other participative management plans we must remove the abovementioned impediments.

With modifying the five identified factors, we also expect that suggestion system gain success in official parts and meet the expectations of managers and employees (Rahnavard, 2008).

The effective factors in the success of suggestion system

For performing every work, first we must provide the suitable condition for it and then follow the goal-oriented activities based on an identified system. The suggestion system does not make an exception in this regard. Therefore, identifying the effective factors in the success, survival and continuity of suggestion system and trying to achieve them are very important matters. These factors include:

1. Serious supports of top management from suggestion system;
2. Creating motivation and real confidence for continuous improvement of employees;
3. Management stability before establishing suggestion system;
4. Holding justifying congresses for managers and employers;
5. Continuous evaluation of secretaries and executive agents of suggestion system;
6. Establishing suitable human relationships between managers and employees;
7. Suitable and exact evaluation of suggestions;
8. In time evaluation of suggestions;
9. In time evaluation of approved suggestions;
10. In time and fair payment of rewards for suggesters, experts and employees;
11. Creating the spirit of organizational convergence and dependency;
12. Regulating obvious and distinct organizational goals;
13. Preparing codes and regulations with respect to the conditions of the related organization;
14. Creating participation indices;
15. Training;
16. A system for accepting collective suggestions of employees;
17. Presenting some raw and primary ideas for employees for taking suggestion.

The impact of employing suggestion on work environment

1. All opinions are considered, so the best decisions are adapted.
2. The gap between managers and employees is removed.
3. People think about different opinions and promote their level of proficiency.

4. Social and occupational awareness of people is increased.

5. The relationship between different people is reinforced.

6. The level of quality and productivity is promoted.

7. Make suggesters to pride themselves on their suggestions.

8. Satisfied people from their lives and works.

9. New preparations are created in people.

10. The role of employees in decision-making and management is increased.

11. People try more because they think about the works and contribute in their decision-making.

12. People are encouraged to present new suggestions.

13. The percentage of mistakes is decreased.

The impact of suggestion system on continuous improvement in organizations

According to the performed studies on presented suggestions in a certain organization, the only thing that is important and is required for continuous improvement of the company is the execution of the suggestions. The execution of these suggestions helps the company in achieving to long term and short term goals in all of the grounds.

We can study and evaluate these suggestions from different aspects:

a) Organizational aspect: These suggestions are very important for organization and increase productivity in the company; their benefits include:

1. Harmonizing individual and organizational goals;
 2. Promoting the satisfaction of partners;
 3. Creating the sense of responsibility;
 4. Increasing quantity, improving quality and promoting productivity in system;
 5. Promotion of solidarity and synergism;
 6. Promoting systemic thought in the company.
- b) Individual aspect:
8. Promote organizational belonging and increase conscientiousness in work and job satisfaction;
 9. Decrease conflicts, nervous pressures and complaints;
 10. Provide the basic needs of employees and create the sense of respectability, self-respect, and self-actualization;
 11. Create creativity and new idea in organization and empower employees;
 12. Convert the potential capacities to practical abilities;
 13. Promote self-confidence and increase personnel's motivation.

d) Economical aspects:

14. Giving an especial attention to undistributed energy, acquiring legal revenues and factors in decreasing wastage;
15. Considering environment and sustainable development;
16. Giving an especial attention to suitable and widespread grounds for solving companies' problems with regard to suggestions' codes, and promoting official safety and developing strategies for achieving to companies' long term goals;
17. Decreasing extra operations and reworking, and preventing parallel activities;
18. Improving current processes and increasing pace and accuracy of activities, and increasing organizational productivity;
19. Decreasing costs and used materials in performing works;
20. Economizing all organizational activities and costs;
21. Utilizing hardware and software systems and technologies.

Suggestion system and participation management:

Manpower, as the main and most important productive factor and stimulating power of a country's development, plays an important role in creating productivity, organizational proficiency and comprehensive development; because it is only manpower that by training, obtaining proficiency, and considering different desires especially socially effective desires, can create unbelievable things (Alvani, 1995).

Nowadays organizations are of especial situation: they are not limited to an especial geographical border and have greater and more powerful impacts on regional strategies than countries; we dare say that one of characteristics of this age is its emphasis on "organization" in a way that we can call the present age as the "age of organizations". Nowadays, with regard to "competitive aspect of activities, globalization, and facilitation of information exchange" every organization requires three important elements for its continuous improvement, which include "creativity, quality, and productivity. In this process utilizing systems and strategies, which promote these properties is of especial importance. One of these systems, which promote the abovementioned elements, is suggestion system. This system is based on participation management and has a brainstorming approach to organization. If we define participation management as a comprehensive system for attracting group and individual participation among top management and employees in line with organizational goals and continuous improvement in all dimensions, then we can say that:

"Participation management is the participation of proper people in proper time for performing proper task."

Suggestion system is a tool for establishing vivid, safe and continuous relationship between top and middle managers with employees; and since it is done voluntarily, creates the sense of responsibility and belonging among employees to improve the organization (Razavi Amiri, 2006).

Participation management follows two main goals:

1. Prizing human values and ask help from people who are related to the organization;
2. Obtaining organizational goals with the help of abovementioned people.

Before the 20th century, organizations had not any emphasis on employee's welfare and needs (instrumental view or the theory of production factor), but this view was in decline from 1930s on; this is mainly appeared by the works of some researchers like Likert and Maslow with the topic of behavioral science movement. The most eminent character of this movement is Herzberg who introduced job empowerment as a tool for increasing organizational efficacy. He claimed that one must concentrate automatically on his job; if he has the sense that he will be absorbed by the job, then he will tend to do it.

Luke, Schreiber and Latham (1990) concluded that participation management increases organizational productivity, and in imperious and patriarchal systems in which employees' participation in decision-making is almost zero there is no assurance for employees' satisfaction and wise decision-making.

During his studies in 2001, Spritzer states that: "participation is a factor that increase employees' confidence and empower them." Nowadays, suggestion system is undoubtedly one of the most suitable methods of productivity in different organizations; organizational learning can be acquired both by purposeful and officially planned learning, and by official and involuntary learning. Suggestion system is a suitable base for voluntary learning. From about 20 years ago (from late 1990s) some companies such as "Iran Radiator" and Iran Khodro" have seriously ventured the suggestion system. During the World War II, 35 American companies established this system and called it "National association of suggestion".

Research hypotheses

1. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and propagating voluntary cooperation culture for the improvement of employees' activities.

2. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and the improvement of employees' morale and motivation.
3. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and increasing of the degree of taking responsibility and organizational belonging.
4. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and improving employees' productivity and the quality of services.
5. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and reinforcement of taking responsibility and organizational belonging.
6. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and receiving change and improvement by employees.
7. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and empowering managers and employees.
8. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and dynamicity and flexibility of executive approaches at organizational level.
9. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and better information flow.
10. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and increasing revenues and cutting costs.
11. There is a meaningful relationship between the establishment of suggestion system and increasing accuracy, pace and precision.

Research method

According to its classification this research is of applied kind, and according to its method it is correlational. This is done through library and field methods. For surveying the feasibility of establishing suggestion system, we used a researcher-made questionnaire. In random sampling, there is no equal chance for the selection of subjects from all classes of the population. In this method we select the required subjects, which are classified randomly, from among the population under study. According to probability theory, the selected subjects' attributes must be similar to the population.

Results

The results of the performed studies in the organization under study indicate that:

1. The establishment of suggestion system is effective in propagating voluntary cooperation culture for the improvement of employees' activities.

2. The establishment of suggestion system is effective in the improvement of employees' morale and motivation.
3. The establishment of suggestion system increases the degree of taking responsibility and organizational belonging among employees.
4. The establishment of suggestion system improves employees' productivity and the quality of services.
5. The establishment of suggestion system increases the degree of receiving changes and improvements among employees.
6. The establishment of suggestion system increases the degree of managers and employees' competence.
7. The establishment of suggestion system increases dynamicity and flexibility of executive approaches at the organizational level.
8. The establishment of suggestion system makes information flow better.
9. The establishment of suggestion system increases revenues and cuts costs.
10. The establishment of suggestion system increases accuracy, pace and precision.

Suggestions

a) Suggestions for the organization under study (Ardabil Azad University):

1. Active participation of all managers and employees of the university in presenting suggestion;
2. Minimizing bureaucracy and facilitating the process by giving especial forms;
3. Inclusiveness of presented suggestions by employees in all contexts;
4. Participation of suggesters in executing their suggestions;
5. Strengthening the sense and culture of organizational belonging;
6. Identifying and encouraging creative employees and managers;
7. Improving the relationship between employees and organization and creating the sense of mutual trust;
8. Motivating employees, encouraging work morale and increasing problem solvability;
9. Employing more internal and external experts and consultants;
10. Preparing suitable and flexible regulations and updating it according to the situation;
11. Having a comprehensive plan for evaluating the whole system, planning and providing mechanism for continuous improvement of the system;

12. Posting announcements, bulletins and brochures about suggestion system;
13. Proportioning the amount and manner of paying rewards to the best suggestions;
14. Supplying the required budget for the execution of suggestion system.

b)Suggestion for the future researches

1. With regard to the number of statistical population in this research, employing a population with more aggregation seems suitable.

2. It is necessary for the future researchers to go beyond the theory and execute this system.
3. It is necessary to select suitable standards for the evaluation of the plans.
4. Consider the tendency of managers to improve the quality of services and decrease the deficiencies in the process of organizational activities.

Testing hypotheses according to inferential statistics

In this section we test the hypotheses.

Table 1- Pearson’s correlation coefficient

		1 st Hyp	2 nd Hyp	3 rd Hyp	4 th Hyp	5 th Hyp	6 th Hyp	7 th Hyp	8 th Hyp	9 th Hyp	10 th Hyp
The establishment of suggestion system	Pearson’s correlation coefficient	0/920	0/501	0/9725	0/748	0/564	0/902	0/545	0/739	0/290	0/833
	Meaningful level of error	0/001	0/001	0/001	0/001	0/001	0/001	0/001	0/001	0/015	0/001
	Samples’ number	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76

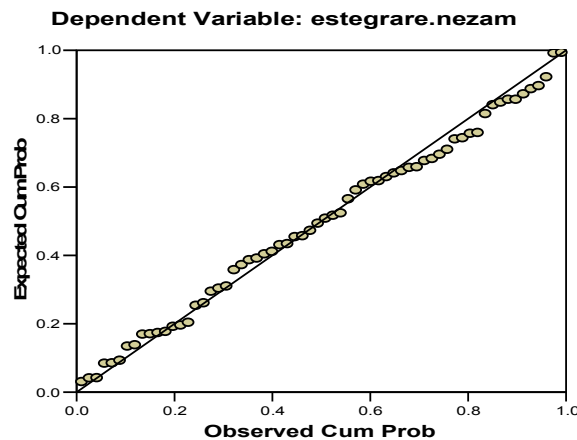
According to the table 1 and with regard to the fact that the level of error (α) for assurance level of 0.99 is smaller than 0.01 ($p\text{-value} < 0/01$), therefore we can say that all of the research hypotheses are accepted.

Table 2- correlation coefficient and the coefficient of identifying variables by regression test

Adjusted R Square	R Square	R
0/969	0/974	0/987

According to table 2 the correlation coefficient of variables concurrent with the establishment of suggestion system is 0.97.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



The results of regression coefficient for identifying variables’ ratio

Table 3-Regression coefficient results for identifying variables' ratio in the prediction of suggestion system establishment

	B	Beta	t	Meaningfulness level
voluntary cooperation culture for the improvement of employees' activities	0/667	0/522	10/95	0/001
Improvement of employees' morale and motivation	- 0/146	- 0/046	- 1/49	0/141
Increasing of the degree of taking responsibility and organizational belonging	0/073	0/101	0/721	0/474
Improving employees' productivity and the quality of services	0/160	0/105	2/79	0/007
Receiving change and improvement by employees	- 0/599	- 0/121	- 3/17	0/003
Empowering managers and employees	0/178	0/113	1/77	0/082
Increasing dynamicity and flexibility of executive approaches at the organizational level	0/445	0/087	2/66	0/010
Better information flow	0/626	0/143	3/17	0/003
Increasing revenues and cutting costs	0/750	0/153	5/31	0/001
Increasing accuracy, pace and precision	0/594	0/218	4/06	0/001

According to table 3, the variable related to increasing income and cutting costs affects the establishment of suggestion system more than other variables. Then the variables of voluntary cooperation culture; better information flow; and increasing accuracy, pace and precision are in hierarchical order, respectively.

Validity

According to Cronbach test, validity obtained from the questions answered by statistical population is 72 percent. Therefore, it is at the acceptable level.

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