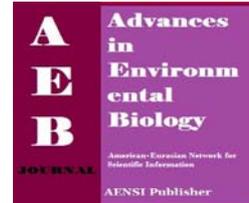




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### Correlation between the Factors Related to the Entrepreneurship and Job Performance in Experts of Department of Agricultural Extension of Golestan Province Agricultural Organization

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#### ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is to study the correlation between the factors related to the entrepreneurship and job performance of experts of Department of Agricultural Extension of Golestan Province Agricultural Organization. The research methodology is survey-descriptive. The current research population includes the experts of department of agricultural extension of Golestan province agricultural organization, and they include 126 individuals. The sample size of this research was 52 individuals using Cochran formula. Random sampling was used for choosing the samples. A questionnaire was formulated in order to collect the required data and information. The face validity was studied and the necessary reformations were conducted by the use of experts' and professors' comments. Also the Cronbach's alpha for the job performance questionnaire was ( $\alpha=0.98$ ), entrepreneurs' characteristics was ( $\alpha=0.89$ ), entrepreneurs' capacities and abilities was ( $\alpha=0.83$ ). Research findings showed that among all of the research variables, variables of environmental protection, opportunism, being a pioneer, need for achievement, being a leader, and tolerating ambiguity have positive and significant correlation with the job performance variable. In the results of multivariate linear regression only the opportunism had the ability of explaining 18.7% of the job performance changes.

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## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is not a new subject in the social sciences. In common conversations, entrepreneurship is considered in relation with the beginning of a new business. The word entrepreneur (entreprenre) has entered the language since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from the French economics. In France this word means a person who is responsible for a very important activity or project. More explicitly the use of this word is when we want to detect the risk-taking individuals, people who find better and newer ways for doing things and result in the economic development [2].

Increasing rates of changes in the scientific, economical, and social fields are considered as the main features of the current era. Today organizations are faced with broad changes which put into risk their survivals. By reviewing the features and programs of successful organizations during the last two decades we reach this point that the motor of movement of such organizations is entrepreneurship. In 21th century we see that the economy of the developed countries and developing countries are revived by the life force of entrepreneurship. It is important to mention that entrepreneurship is the same force that at the first time was the motor of movement of economy of these countries, and nowadays revives it with a new face among the world economic record [4]. Nowadays the societies and organizations could move forward in the development direction and they could provide appropriate context for mobilizing their human resources with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills in order to use the valuable potential, and direct the other resources of society and organization toward creating value and growth and development, and management [1]. Schumpeter believes that the entrepreneurship is not a physical activity, and every social environment could use its own method of entrepreneurship. Thus, an organization could provide an environment in which all of the members could participate in the entrepreneurial affairs.

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Entrepreneurs are the engineers of change, and they convert the idea to reality. Thus the entrepreneurship happens in all of the spheres of life [21]. Psychology researchers refer several characteristics to the entrepreneurs. In table 1, the most important and agreed characteristics are offered by these researchers:

**Table 1:** Studied characteristics about the entrepreneurs from perspective of different researchers [10]

| Name of Researcher                | Characteristic                     |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| McClelland (1963)                 | Need for achievement               |
| Atkinson (1957) and Rotter (1964) | Internal Locus of Control          |
| Liles (1974) and Brockhaus (1980) | Moderated risk taker               |
| Bowman, Sexton and Skier (1982)   | Tolerating ambiguity               |
| Jacobs, Witz and Wildler (1982)   | Desire for independence            |
| Sexton (1982)                     | Energetic, ambitious and committed |

Increasing tendency toward making entrepreneurial organizations, and making efforts toward institutionalizing a culture of entrepreneurship in the organizations resulted in the designing of different methods for creating entrepreneurship in organizations. One of these methods is emphasis on the group and individual entrepreneurship which ultimately results in completion and implementation of creative thinking inside the organization. Entrepreneurs are considered as the engine of economic development and they find different ways for utilization of existing resources and they are considered as the key for identifying opportunities and utilizing the opportunities [7]. Thompson [16] stated 10 characteristics of entrepreneurs in 21<sup>st</sup> century as followed:

“Detecting and proper use of profitable opportunities, planning, expert in affairs, creating ideas, creative and innovative, independent thinking, effortful and diligent, optimistic and positive, risk taker, being a leader [16].”

In the studies of last two decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century five important characteristics of entrepreneurial individuals such as: creativity [9,18], risk taking [13], internal control [17,11,22], motivation for progress (need for progress) [22,15,12,6], and independency [20] were at the center of attention. Based on the researches conducted, nurturing the mentioned characteristics in individual results in their entrepreneurial capabilities.

| Characteristic                      | Characteristic describing for organization entrepreneurs  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Power-oriented                      | For some of them it is the first and most important characteristic  |
| Tendency toward economic well-being | These people consider the economic well-being and wealth necessary for security and they are more seeking for this need.                      |
| Need for achievement                | Most of the organization entrepreneurs are trying to prove that they work better than the previous person.                                    |
| Need for independence               | This need is nearly adjusted among the organization entrepreneurs.  |
| Risk taking                         | Most of the organization entrepreneurs consider themselves as risk averted people.  |
| Fear of failure                     | Failure does not have such importance in their decision makings.  |
| Creativity                          | They consider themselves less creative but they consider themselves responsible for supporting the existing creativities in the organization. |

According to Pardakhtchi and *et al* [2], in order to survey the status of entrepreneurship in one individual we need to simultaneously focus on three components of motivation, competency (entrepreneurial capabilities), and environmental supports.

Generally, reviewing the global literature of entrepreneurship confirms that the process of studying the character traits of entrepreneurs separately is become abolished and researchers of behavioral sciences proved that the environmental factors are more important than the separate psychological characteristics of individuals in their entrepreneurship.

In a research Wright *et al* [23] studied the correlation between job performance and characteristics, and they concluded that cognitive abilities act as moderating variables between these, in a way that people with higher abilities and motivations have higher job performance but people with lower abilities and higher motivations have lower performance. In this research, characteristic is the reflector of individual's motivation for doing things and individual's talent is an indicator of individual's ability [23].

In a research studying the role of agricultural agents in Yemen, Belhaj [5] studied the job performance of these extension agents in this country. Their research results showed that the group norms, close supervision and individuals' abilities affect the individuals' job performance through the group norms [5].

In a research named determinants of job performance of managers in India, Usha and Laxmi Devi [19] concluded that formal education, organizational environment, guidance and oversight, willing to work, job satisfaction, talent and perseverance, job motivation, knowledge and attitude and social base related to job have positive correlation with job performance, but age and economic conditions showed negative correlation with job performance [19].

*Research Methodology:*

From the point of aim the current research is an applied one and from the point of data collection and compilation of hypotheses it is a descriptive-correlative survey. The research population includes experts of Department of Agricultural Extension of Golestan Province with the number of 126 individuals. The research sample size was 52 individuals by the use of Cochran formula. The sampling method was simple random sampling. The instruments used in this research for gathering data and information were questionnaires. In order to evaluate the validity of questionnaire after providing it, comments and suggestions of a few experts and technicians (face validity) were used. In order to test the instrument reliability, 25 questionnaires were randomly distributed among 25 individuals outside the statistical population, and after collecting the questionnaires the data were entered to the computer and by the use of SPSSwin11.5 software and Cronbach's alpha, the validity of job performance ( $\alpha= 0.98$ ), entrepreneurs' characteristics ( $\alpha= 0.89$ ), competencies and abilities of entrepreneurs ( $\alpha= 0.83$ ) of the questionnaire were achieved, which ultimately were appropriate coefficients for the current research. Also for determining the independent variables of entrepreneurs' characteristics, entrepreneurial competencies, communication features, and environmental supports, each of the variables were offered in some sub-groups in the form of a few questions in the scale of 0 to 10 and organizational innovation variables, and tolerating ambiguity in the scale of 5 part of Likert in the domain of 1 to 5, and by sum of the answers to each question, the score of each of the variables were determined separately in the pseudo-distance measure. In order to evaluate the job performance by reviewing resources and also based on the comments of experts of extension about the most important roles of an expert in department of agricultural extension, 32 items were gathered in a regular collection of the most important management roles and operational roles of the expert of extension unit, and respondents reported the rate of conducting roles by themselves in the scale of 5 part of Liker (verylow to very high) in the domain of 1 to 5. Then by the sum of the answers to the items, the score of job performance of each of the experts was determined in the pseudo-distance measure. In order to analyze the information resulted from the research, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation and inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analyses were used.

*Results:*

Personal characteristics of entrepreneurship of experts of Department of Agricultural Extension of Agricultural Organization

Personal characteristics of experts of department of agricultural extension of agricultural organization were ranked based on the coefficient of variation. As it is observable in table 2 the characteristics of information seeking and need for achievement among the experts of department of extension had the first and second priorities, and the characteristics of flexibility and risk taking had the lowest priorities. It seems that the reason for this prioritizing is due to the organizational environment governing the conditions of extension unit in Golestan province which lead the experts into this direction, and on the other hand, the bad conditions governing the agricultural extension unit of agricultural organization causes to lead the flexibility of the experts into repression and it is expected from the politicians to firstly move in the direction of organizational change and they move toward participatory and flexibility. Maybe the reason for low risk taking among the experts of Department of Agricultural Extension of Golestan Province Agricultural Organization is that the promotion criteria is not properly conducted in this unit and on the other hand, the appropriate conditions do not exist for running the fieldworks of the experts of agricultural extension of Golestan province agricultural organization.

**Table 2:** Characteristics of entrepreneurship of experts of Department of Agricultural Extension of Golestan province Agricultural Organization

| Priority | Entrepreneurs' Characteristics | Mean | Standard Deviation | Coefficient of Variation |
|----------|--------------------------------|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1        | Information seeking            | 7.86 | 1.77               | 0.225                    |
| 2        | Need for achievement           | 7.96 | 1.85               | 0.233                    |
| 3        | Hard work                      | 7.67 | 1.8                | 0.235                    |
| 4        | Sense of participation         | 7.53 | 1.87               | 0.248                    |
| 5        | Determination                  | 7.09 | 1.85               | 0.262                    |
| 6        | Leadership                     | 7.76 | 2.21               | 0.285                    |
| 7        | Trailblazer                    | 7.8  | 2.24               | 0.287                    |
| 8        | Innovation                     | 7.03 | 2.05               | 0.292                    |
| 9        | Creativity                     | 7.09 | 2.37               | 0.335                    |
| 10       | Opportunism                    | 7.34 | 2.48               | 0.338                    |
| 11       | Risk taking                    | 5.06 | 2.29               | 0.452                    |
| 12       | Flexibility                    | 8.25 | 5.04               | 0.612                    |

**Table 2:** Amount of correlation between the research independent variables with the job performance (Pearson correlation coefficient)

| Independent variable                           | Correlation coefficient "r" | Significance level |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Competencies and abilities of entrepreneurship | - 0.015                     | 0.913              |
| Communication features                         | 0.121                       | 0.395              |
| Environmental support                          | 0.278*                      | 0.046              |
| Organizational innovation                      | 0.028                       | 0.844              |
| Opportunism                                    | 0.372**                     | 0.007              |
| Trailblazer                                    | 0.397**                     | 0.004              |
| Need for achievement                           | 0.317*                      | 0.020              |
| Tolerating ambiguity                           | 0.274                       | 0.049              |

\*\* Significance in 1 percent level \* Significance in 5 percent level

Based on the results, a positive and significant correlation exists between the independent variable of environmental support with correlation coefficient of ( $p= 0.046$ ,  $r= 0.278$ ) with dependent variable of job performance. Which means that the more the amount of environmental supports in relation to entrepreneurship for the experts the more their job performance will be. Research findings showed that a positive and significant correlation exists between the independent variable of opportunism as one of the personal characteristics of entrepreneurship ( $p= 0.007$ ,  $r= 0.372$ ) and variable of job performance. Also a positive and significant correlation exists between other personal characteristics of entrepreneurship with correlation coefficient ( $r= 0.397$ ) in level 0.01, variable of need for achievement with correlation coefficient ( $r= 0.317$ ) in level 0.05, leadership with correlation coefficient ( $r= 0.326$ ) in level 0.05 and tolerating ambiguity with correlation coefficient ( $r= 0.326$ ) in level 0.05 with dependent variable of job performance. Also the results show that no significant correlation exists between the competencies and abilities of entrepreneurs, communication features, and organizational innovation with job performance.

#### Regression Analysis of Job Performance;

Stepwise multi-regression analysis was used for analyzing the most important and influential variables of entrepreneurship on the job performance of experts of agricultural extension. After entering all of the independent variables that had significant correlation with dependent variable of environmental support, opportunism, trailblazer, need for achievement, and leadership and tolerating ambiguity results of table 5 were achieved. Results of table 5 showed that the variable of opportunism is the most important and the only effective variable on the job performance of the experts of department of agricultural extension of Golestan province agricultural organization that has entered the model and at the end of this stage, based on the fact that the test error reached 5%, the regression analysis has ended and the regression model is finalized. Based on this totally only one variable has entered the regression model and after standardizing the regression coefficient the final model is provided as followed.

$$Y = 74/123 + 0/432 x_1$$

That  $Y$ = job performance and  $X_1$ = opportunism

The above mentioned model shows that the most important and the only effective variable on the job performance of the experts of agricultural extension of Golestan province agricultural organization is opportunism. The results of table 3 show that  $R^2$  equals 0.187 which shows that the entered variable in model can totally explain 18.7% of the changes of job performance of experts of agricultural extension of Golestan province agricultural organization. In other words, 81.3% of the changes related to the effective factors are other factors which are not studied in this research.

**Table 3:** Stepwise multi-regression coefficients- Research dependent variable (Job performance)

| Stages      | Independent variable | B      | SEB  | Beta  | t     | Sig.  | R    | R <sup>2</sup> |
|-------------|----------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|----------------|
| Opportunism |                      | 6.018  | 1.83 | 0.432 | 3.288 | 0.002 | .432 | .187           |
| 1           | Constant             | 74.123 | .17  | -     | 5.231 | 0.000 | 0    | 0              |

#### Discussion and Conclusion:

According to the resulted data, features of information seeking and need for achievement among the experts of agricultural extension of Golestan province agricultural organization had the first and second priorities, and features of flexibility and risk taking had the lowest priorities. Among all of the research variables, the variables of environmental support, opportunism, trailblazer, need for achievement. Leadership and tolerating ambiguity had positive and significant correlation with variable of job performance. In codifying the regression equation, variable of opportunism has the ability of explaining 18.7% of the changes of the variable of job performance. By the use of the achieved equation we could estimate the amount of job performance of the experts of department of agricultural extension of the agricultural organization based on the entrepreneurial variables.

Based on the positive and significant correlation of environmental support with the variable of job performance it is suggested that an entrepreneurial atmosphere dominates the environment of department of extension based on the organizational entrepreneurial patterns.

According to the positive and significant correlation of trailblazer, need for achievement, leadership and tolerating ambiguity with job performance it is suggested to consider a special position for nurturing these features in policy makings of the department of extension.

Due to the fact that opportunism is the only variable entered the anticipation of changes of job performance it is suggested that contexts such as developing the organizational communication infrastructures and related educational programs be at the center of attention of the policy makers of programs of development of human resources of the extension organization.

It seems that due to the low risk-taking features among the experts of extension, some changes are necessary in the method of leadership of the department of agricultural extension of agricultural organization, and generally delegation and attracting the experts' partnership should be at the center of attention of management of the agricultural organization.

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