



## Comparing Organizational Socialization Techniques and Organizational Identification in Governmental and Private Knowledge-Based Organizations

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**Abstract:** *The present study aimed to examine and compare organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification in governmental and private knowledge-based organizations. With regard to its objective, the present study was an applied research, and regarding its method, it was a comparative one. The statistical population included all employees working in governmental and private knowledge-based organizations of Kurdistan Province. A total number of 280 completed questionnaires were returned to the researcher. In order to collect the required data, the standard questionnaires of Organizational Socialization Techniques with 26 items in 6 components and Organizational Identification with 6 items in 3 components were employed. The validity of the questionnaires was checked through content validity, and their reliability was checked using Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.831 and 0.817 for socialization techniques and organizational identification, respectively. Data analysis was carried out at descriptive and analytical levels using appropriate software. The results indicated that there was no significant between governmental and private knowledge-based organizations in terms of organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification. With regard to the relationship between socialization and organizational identification, a significant relationship between the variables was seen, such that proven method in governmental knowledge-based organizations and authentication method in private knowledge-based organizations had the highest impact on the employees' identification. In the end, some recommendations are presented for the managers of the organizations to employ newcomers.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge-Based Organizations, Organizational Identification, Socialization Techniques

### Introduction

With his famous statement "Knowledge is power" in his first book "I Praise of Knowledge", Francis Bacon referred to knowledge as the criterion for identifying individuals (Rahmanseresht and Simar, 2009). Knowledge-based companies play a key role in developing knowledge-based economy (Allahyary and Abbasi, 2010). Knowledge-based companies are governmental and private companies that

are established in order to enhance knowledge and wealth, develop knowledge-based economy, meet scientific and economic goals including developing, implementing invention and innovation and commercializing research results, and develop technology with high value added (Parliament, 2010).

Organizations require expert, resourceful, efficient, and committed personnel to control themselves. They often try to promote flexibility

and sense of belonging among their employees through individual-organization balance which refers to compatibility between individuals and organizations (Edwards and Peccei, 2010). Organizational socialization is essential for individual-organization balance, because the first aim of socialization is continuing main values and giving the employees a framework for responding to their workplace and coordinating with other employees (Jones, 1986). Getting used to or accepting and following organizational culture is called the employees' socialization with organization (Robbins, 2005). Socialization is a process through which newcomers learn appropriate behaviors in order to be effective member in the organization (Michailova and Wilson, 2008). From another perspective, the individuals' socialization in organizations is a process whereby they identify and learn organizational values, expectations related to job behaviors, and social knowledge necessary to accept role in the organization (Bigliardi et al, 2005). This process includes methods that organizations utilize to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety about doubt, the reality of the newcomers' entrance to the new organization, and obtain necessary attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge (Allen, 2006). Despite of enormous debates on the importance of organizational socialization, Baker (2002) compared different fields of industrial and organizational psychology and showed that organizational socialization had somewhat neglected by then, and was only paid attention over a short period in the mid-1990s. Therefore, more studies need to be carried out in order to obtain organizational socialization and figure out its advantages for the employees and employers (Baker, 1995; Bigliardi et al, 2005). In some views, justification education of employers through socialization process is considered equal only in order to adapt the new employees to the job and workplace; however, this point should be taken into account that individuals and with passage of time, occupations change, employees are promoted to new positions or transferred to another department or organization. As

a result, in every change, employees are faced with the issue of adaption to the new occupation, workplace, and responsibilities. In a study, Benzinger (2016) examined organizational socialization techniques among new employers. Perrot et al (2014) studied six techniques of organizational socialization with learning organizations. In an experimental investigation, Ge et al (2010) studied organizational socialization, organizational identification, and organizational citizenship behavior in high-technology manufacturing companies in China, and concluded a positive relationship between organizational socialization and organizational identification. In a study, Lee (2013) proved that socialization had an effect on organizational identification among employees.

Identification happens through socialization process and has stem in "social identity" theory in which the individual becomes aware of the values, norms, and expectations of the organization and internalize them. Through identification, the employees absorb the important features of the organization as its good characteristics (Dina et al, 2014). Human resources management should take into account educating of new employees about individual integration in the organization (Lee, 2013). On the other hand, a decrease in fear and uncertainty and the new employees' trust is an educational issue in the organization. Proper education of organizational socialization can lead to an increase in the employees' emotional commitment and identification in an organization (Kato, 2010). There is still little consensus on the meaning and definition of organizational identity (Albert et al, 2000). The main assumption is that every entity has a goal which clarifies it definition and reality; therefore, organizational identity is defined as an element that reflects the main feature of an organization (Wei et al, 2007). Organizational identity includes a set of characteristics that the organization's members feel as the main features of the organization. These characteristics describe the organization

uniquely and have relative stability over time. In other words, when the past, present, and future of the organization is considered, those characteristics that are considered pivotal, stable, and the most unique form the identity of the organization (Puusa, 2006). Organizational identity refers to attempts to answer this question, "Who are we as an organization?" (Puusa and Tulvanen, 2006). Moreover, organizational identity is referred to as a concept that is a mutual understanding among the organization's members about the pivotal and relatively stable characteristics of the organization and forms an inter-subjective type of thinking among the employees (Whetten and Mackey, 2006). Researchers have recommended that organizational identity in organizations that take advantage of workforce diversity should be separately evaluated (Riketta, 2005). A large number of studies focused on the organizational effects of organizational identity (Riketta, 2005; Thakor and Joshi, 2005). The results of many studies proved that organizational identity could be affected by factors like the leader's behavior (Wieseke et al, 2009; Tangirala et al, 2007), organizational justice (Olkkonen and Lipponen, 2006; Albert et al, 2006), trust (Edwards and Cable, 2009), organizational ethics (DeConinck, 2011), and organizational socialization (Kato, 2010; Lee, 2013).

Reissner (2010) carried out a study entitled, "Change, meaning, and identity in workplace" in three manufacturing organizations through interviewing, and concluded that organizational change influenced the individuals' identities. In their study entitled, "A change in organizational identity in institutional changes", He and Baruch (2009) showed that institutional changes and legal changes in procedures act as a motive for leadership prominence, organizational culture, and strategic practices.

Governmental and private organizations are made up of a number of components; whoever, they are generally given a humane look. Knowledge-based organizations are

not an exceptional, either, and one of their characteristics is their identity. This identity is perceived through the individual's appearance, behavior, and values, and the identity of any organization affects those who are inside it. Organizational identification is composed of three components (Hongwei and Andrew, 2013) including membership, loyalty, and similarity. Membership indicates that the individuals has created a strong relationship with his/her organization, through which he/she feels proud of and satisfied with being present in that organization. Loyalty means support for and defense of the organization and its goals by the individual and other members. Similarity refers to the fact that an employee feels that he/she has common goals and interests with other members of the organization.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) presented 6 bipolar methods that organizations use to organize the newcomers' socialization (Simosi, 2010). This model is the most developed and common testable theoretical model of socialization, and theoretically explains how socialization methods affect a certain output. According to this theory, newcomers respond differently to role because the socialization methods used by organizations forms the newcomers' input information (Benzinger, 2016). Van Maanen and Schein model became a theoretical framework for other studies (Jones et al, 2006). In 1986, Jones put the 6 methods of socializations proposed by Van Maanen and Schein on a spectrum and divided into groups: institutional socialization and individual socialization (Perrot et al, 2014). Institutional methods include collective, formal, fixed, sequential, continuous, and authentication methods, and using these methods, the newcomers are provided with information that reduces their mistrust and anxiety at the beginning of their work in the organization. Individual methods include informal, variable, random, discontinuous, and disruption, which encourage the newcomers to question the current position and development of the methods of conducting their roles (Jones

et al, 2006). According to Jones, institutional methods of socialization enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment while reduces the possibility of turnover (Saks et al, 2007; Miller, 2006). In their study, Edwards and Peccei (2010) showed that organizational identity, work efficiency, and organizational commitment have a significant relationship with perceived organizational support. In a study entitled, "Do socialization methods affect turnover and absorption of individuals?" Allen (2006) selected a sample new employees of a service organization. The results of that study showed that organizational socialization methods enable new employees to be actively engaged in work. Authentication, fixed, and collective methods had a positive relationship with absorbing new employees.

Compared to traditional companies and industries, knowledge-based companies and strategic technology-bases industries have special characteristics including: They have more expert manpower in proportion to the total employees, universities play more role in managing and leading them, they experience more changes in technology than in traditional industries, more research and development occur in them, development of industry is more dependent on development in technology not on capital or hardware, their competitive advantage is innovation in technology, and they dominate new markets quickly (Azimi et al, 2010). In their study, Ahmadi et al (2008) focused on prioritizing policy supports for newly established technology-based companies. According to the results of that study, financial supports, education of human resources, development of services and technical-managerial information, and development of incubator services are among the most important supports provided by the government to these companies. Gorman and McCarthy (2006) also carried out an investigation into the development of innovation companies or high-technology companies. They proposed suggestion to support companies that are at primary stages of their development,

including financing, helping the management, providing counseling services, and creating communication between companies. These findings have important outcomes for the governmental and private sectors that are interested in supporting local economic development by creating and developing knowledge-based companies (Akbarzade and Shafiezadeh. 2012). Despite of their economic and social importance and effect, knowledge-based companies are affected by organizational structure, in other words, in order to enhance the quality of knowledge-based organizations, organizational socialization techniques are used to teach appropriate behaviors to the employees so that they can be effective members in the organization. In the present study, knowledge-based companies are those that are known as knowledge-based companies by the country's legal authorities, or those that spend 60% of their budget for research and development, or those with at least 3 innovations per year. In this regard, the main issue of the present study was to explain and compare organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification in governmental and private knowledge-based organizations in Kurdistan Province.

In the present study, the institutional methods of Jones model were used, and the study's hypotheses were as follows:

**First hypothesis:** There is a difference between the employees of governmental and private knowledge-based organizations in terms of organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification.

**Second hypothesis:** There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification of the employees of governmental knowledge-based organizations.

**2.1.** There is a positive and significant relationship between collective method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of governmental

knowledge-based organizations.

**2.2.** There is a positive and significant relationship between fixed method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of governmental knowledge-based organizations.

**2.3.** There is a positive and significant relationship between formal method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of governmental knowledge-based organizations.

**2.4.** There is a positive and significant relationship between sequential method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of governmental knowledge-based organizations.

**2.5.** There is a positive and significant relationship between continuous method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of governmental knowledge-based organizations.

**2.6.** There is a positive and significant relationship between authentication method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of governmental knowledge-based organizations.

**Third Hypothesis:** There is a positive and significant relationship between organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

**3.1.** There is a positive and significant relationship between collective method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

**3.2.** There is a positive and significant relationship between fixed method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

**3.3.** There is a positive and significant relationship between formal method of

organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

**3.4.** There is a positive and significant relationship between sequential method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

**3.5.** There is a positive and significant relationship between continuous method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

**3.6.** There is a positive and significant relationship between authentication method of organizational socialization and organizational identification of the employees of private knowledge-based organizations.

## Methodology

Since the present study aimed to examine and compare organizational socialization and organizational identification in knowledge-based organizations, it was an applied research with regard to its objective, and a comparative one regarding its method. The statistical population included all employees working in governmental and private knowledge-based organizations of Kurdistan Province. Due to limited number of the statistical population, a purposive sampling method was used to select 140 employees according to the field of their knowledge activity and their ability to answer the study's questions. The study's questionnaires were sent to them to be completed. Since the main instrument of the study was questionnaire, the validity of the questionnaires were checked through content validity. In so doing, the questionnaires were examined by a number of experts with regard to socialization techniques and identification, and after appropriate modifications were carried out, the final questionnaire was compiled. In order to check its reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. In

**Table 1.** The Questionnaire’s Dimensions, Number of Items, and Cronbach’s Alpha

Concepts	The used refer-ence	Dimensions	N. of Ques-tions	Cronbach’s Alpha
<b>Socialization techniques</b>	<b>Benzinger (2016)</b>	Fixed method	3	0.811
		Formal method	3	0.823
		Sequential method	5	0.785
		Continuous method	5	0.871
		Authentication method	5	0.791
		Collective method	5	0.778
<b>Organizational identification</b>	<b>Lee (2013)</b>	Sense of belonging	2	0.806
		Loyalty	2	0.892
		Similarity	2	0.835

**Table 2.** The Results of Descriptive Statistics

Index	Frequency			
<b>Sex</b>	Female		Male	
<b>Governmental</b>	3.17 %		68.3%	
<b>Private</b>	42.6%		57.4%	
<b>Age</b>	Under 25 years	25-35 years	36-45 years	Over 45 years
<b>Governmental</b>	10.1%	33.8%	39.8%	16.3%
<b>Private</b>	13.3%	39.4%	28.1%	19.3%
<b>Education</b>	Diploma and A.A.	Bachelor’s	Master’s	Doctorate’s
<b>Governmental</b>	5.9%	25.5%	49.7%	19.9%
<b>Private</b>	-	23.8%	46.4%	29.8%

order to calculate Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient at the experimental stage, 30 members of the statistical population were randomly selected, then they were provided with the questionnaires, and after the questionnaires were collected, it was calculated using SPSS software. Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient and the dimensions and the number of the questions for the two variables are presented in **Table 1**.

In the present study, the independent or predictive variable was socialization techniques. The independent variable is a feature of the physical or social environment, which accepts some values after it is selected, interfered, and manipulated by the researcher

so that its effect on another variable can be seen (Sarmad et al, 2007). The dependent variable was organizational identification.

**Results**

After the required data were collected, they were descriptively and inferentially analyzed using SPSS. In descriptive section, the collected data were examined regarding the participants’ sex, age, and education, the results of which are presented in **Table 2**.

The results of testing the first main hypothesis are provided in **Table 3**. As seen, the relationship between organizational

**Table 3.** The Results of Checking the Main Hypothesis of the Study

Predictive variable	Independent variable	Knowledge-based organization	r	Zr	Z	P
Organizational socialization	Organizational identification	Governmental	0.562**	1.738	-0.424	NS
		Private	0.536**	1.738		

n1=140, n2=140

**Table 4.** The Results of Checking the Secondary Hypothesis of the Study for Governmental Knowledge-Based Organizations

Model B		Nonstandard coefficients		Standard coefficients	T statistics	Sig.
		Standard error	Beta			
	Constant coefficient	0.162	0.165	-	0.910	0.004
1	Collective method	0.111	0.091	0.148	0.225	0.022
	Fixed method	0.037	0.053	0.261	0.399	0.025
	Formal method	0.017	0.076	0.220	0.230	0.018
	Sequential method	0.028	0.084	0.237	0.333	0.040
	Continuous method	0.005	0.077	0.236	0.261	0.041
	Authentication method	0.061	0.056	0.183	0.188	0.038

**Table 5.** The Results of Checking the Secondary Hypothesis of the Study for Private Knowledge-Based Organizations

Model B		Nonstandard coefficients		Standard coefficients	T statistics	Sig.
		Standard error	Beta			
	Constant coefficient	0.345	0.241	-	1.432	0.043
2	Collective method	0.215	0.056	0.217	3.867	0.000
	Fixed method	0.088	0.061	0.102	1.437	0.032
	Formal method	0.224	0.081	0.235	2.766	0.006
	Sequential method	0.332	0.098	0.427	2329	0.038
	Continuous method	0.184	0.072	0.162	2.545	0.012
	Authentication method	0.704	0.088	0.519	7.970	0.000

socialization and organizational identification in governmental and private companies is respectively 0.562 and 0.536, and since the level of significance is below 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification among the employees working in private and governmental knowledge-based organizations. In order to examine the difference between research variables in governmental and private knowledge-based organizations, since statistics Z is a negative number and significance of P is not defined, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification of the employees working in private and governmental organizations.

In order to check the secondary hypotheses of the study, regression was utilized. This test is presented in two sections: governmental knowledge-based organizations (**Table 4**) and private knowledge-based organizations (**Table 5**). Since in both tables the significance level of all paths is below 0.05, all secondary hypotheses are proved.

### Conclusion

An important process relevant to human resources is the newcomers' organizational socialization process whereby they become familiar the organization's values, norms, and behavioral patterns and adapt themselves to the culture of knowledge-based organizations, which shows that development of industry is more dependent on development of technology not on capital or hardware.

By focusing on knowledge-based organizations, the present study was aimed at comparing organizational socialization techniques with organizational identification among the employees of such organizations. According to the results presented in Table 3, there was no significant difference between the governmental and private knowledge-based organizations in

terms of organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification. As opposed to private organizations, most governmental organizations are exclusive. Managers are given less freedom of action in governmental organizations which are less efficient than private organizations (Yao et al, 2007). Both types of organizations require better access to domestic and foreign information or knowledge, effective decision making, and innovation and adaptation ability (Rubenstein-Montano et al, 2001). It seems reasonable that there is difference between governmental and private knowledge-based governments in terms of their attitude toward socialization techniques. Murray (1975) believes that all organizations need to consider and put emphasis on this point that there are similarities and similar limitations for private and governmental organizations. Organizations in either private or governmental sectors have clear and certain goals, written laws and regulations, plan to reach their goals, systems to evaluate their performance, and organizing the position within the organization. An essential knowledge-based economic infrastructure and the prerequisite of actualization of the knowledge-based companies' strategy is creative, innovative, and knowledgeable human resources. According to definitions, a knowledge-based company is the one in which 1 to 100% of the shares belong to a university or a research center, or 51-100% of them belong to the faculty members of universities or research centers. If the share of the university is less than 50%, the knowledge-based company is private, otherwise, it is governmental. Since only faculty members owned the organizations in both cases, there was not a significant difference between them regarding organizational socialization techniques and identification of their employees.

The results of examining the second main hypothesis regarding the relationship between organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification of the employees working in governmental knowledge-based

organizations and the results presented in Table 3 showed a positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.562$ ,  $sig=0.0$ ). With regard to the extent of the effect of socialization techniques, fixed method of socialization with a coefficient of 0.399 had the greatest effect on the employees' organizational identification, which can happen in many governmental organizations of our country, because one of the principles in our organizations is that they prefer to employ individuals that carry out exactly what the organizations require them. As a result, due to uncertainty about labor market and to preserve their occupational status, individuals prefer to be provided with precise information so that they can perform exactly as the organization expect. In fixed method, the newcomers receive precise information about the timetable of each phase of socialization process (Gruman et al, 2006). According to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), fixed method can lead to innovation because it enhances certainty and reduces concern about the future. However, Jones (1986) believes that the certainty related to fixed method reduces innovation, because if the individuals' future occupational paths are completely obvious, they will have no tendency to risk by selecting innovative solutions.

The results of testing the third main hypothesis proved that there was a relationship between organizational socialization techniques and organizational identification of the employees working in the private knowledge-based organizations, and Table 3 proved a positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.536$ ,  $sig=0.0$ ). Regarding the effect of socialization techniques, authentication method with a coefficient of 0.519 had the greatest effect on the employees' organizational identification, which can be attributed to the fact that newcomers are accepted as they are, and the organization does not try to change them, and considers their skills and values as an advantage and strengthens them. Authentication processes boost the newcomers' beliefs about their

qualifications and innovative behavior. In authentication socializations, the newcomers' previous experiences and identity are given value, and they are encouraged to use their experiences in their new roles (Gruman et al, 2006). According to Jones (1986), positive support pertinent to authentication processes reduces the possibility of innovation among the newcomers.

In general, given the positive relationship between organizational socialization and organizational identification, it can be concluded that correct education of organizational socialization can lead to an increase in the employees' emotional commitment and identification in an organization, and a decrease in fear and uncertainty and the new employees' trust is considered as an educational issue. Human resources management should take into account educating of new employees about individual integration in the organization (Lee, 2013). Identification occurs through socialization process and has its roots in "social identity" theory in which the individual becomes aware of the values, norms, and expectations of the organization and internalize them. Through identification, the employees absorb the important features of the organization as its good characteristics (Dina et al, 2014). In an experimental study, Ge et al (2010) studied organizational socialization, organizational identification, and organizational citizenship behavior in high-technology manufacturing companies in China, and concluded a positive relationship between organizational socialization and organizational identification. In a study, Lee (2013) proved that socialization had a positive and significant effect on organizational identification among employees.

As the results of the present study showed, there was a positive and significant relationship between socialization techniques and the employees' organizational identification; therefore, all managers especially those of governmental and private knowledge-based organizations are recommended that:

- Pay more attention to the employees' capacities and appreciate their skills so that they can utilize their skills to achieve the organization's goals more than before.
- Provide the newcomers with explicit information about the sequence of occupational activities and phases in the organization through brochures and educational classes, because if the newcomers are aware of their occupational future, their mistrust drops and they come to know how to act in order to receive reward and job promotion.
- Use the findings of the present study in employing newcomers or transferring them within the organization, and utilize fixed and authentication methods, which are more effective, to achieve the organizational goals.

The present study had some limitations, because it was carried out only based on the data collected from the knowledge-based employees in Kurdistan Province, which led to have a small study sample. As a result, similar studies in other organizational, commercial, or industrial sectors need to be carried out in order to generalize the results. The newcomers to an organization are immediately faced with a socialization challenge. Decreasing fear and uncertainty and the new employees' trust is an educational issue in the organization. Proper education of organizational socialization can lead to an increase in the employees' emotional commitment and identification in any organization, and such an education needs to be carried out at the organization's level regardless of the individuals' primary background and personal conditions. Therefore, it should honestly be stated that the researcher in the present study have no reason to claim that the obtained results are unique to the country's knowledge-based institutions. Although the study sample was small, the obtained results were all significant. However, further studies need to be conducted to compare the similarity of the coefficients and  $R^2$  values.

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