

The challenges and barriers of promoting national philanthropy in the charity area: a mixed method study

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Abstract

Background: Nowadays, charitable activities are considered as one of the most important strategies to reduce poverty and response to social deprivation. This study was designed and implemented with the aim of investigating the challenges and barriers of promoting national philanthropy in the area of charity, considering the role of various governmental and social institutions.

Methods: This mixed study was conducted using two quantitative and qualitative phases. The quantitative phase included a descriptive-cross-sectional study that was conducted on 300 employees of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee Organization in Kerman province, and the qualitative phase was conducted using the institutional mapping method. The participants in this section included experts in the philanthropy sector at the level of Kerman province. The multi-stage model includes various information and analyzes that will be obtained from the studies of the institutional mapping project, which include: the first step included the review of secondary source documents and the second step included interviews with experts.

Results: The results of this study showed that the mean score of the participants in the organizational performance scale was estimated at 118.74 ± 14.74 . The results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between education ($p=0.013$), gender ($p=0.040$) and performing spontaneous promotional activities and attracting philanthropists in the last six months with organizational performance scores.

Conclusion: The present research indicated that there are various barriers in the area of national philanthropy, and it is recommended that institutions and organizations operating in the relevant areas pay attention to the identified factors.

Keywords: Charities; Humanities; Organizations.

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Introduction

There are different dimensions of charitable actions in the new era, including international charitable donations (1), and charitable organizations (2). Also, non-governmental centers with diverse goals, including health and hygiene, free education and human services, aiming

at developing social capital, are considered as an important source of support (3). These centers and institutions consider poverty and deprivation as one of the most important social determinants (4), so that charitable organizations are working with different approaches all over the world with

the aim of reducing poverty and social inequalities (5). In our country, Iran, the problems caused by poverty are evident and can be considered, indicating the necessity of doing charitable activities (6).

Despite the importance of charity, according to the available evidence, unfortunately, many organizations neglect the principles of charity. The effects and negative consequences of this neglect are such that it has led to a serious problem in all social fields. (7). For this reason, the need to pay attention to charity at the organizational and policy-making level along with people's participation as an important aspect of sustainable development is being felt more than ever (8, 9). Thus, in today's world, the extensive participation of organizations in all political, social and economic activities is considered as one of the requirements for achieving development (10, 11).

Based on to the results of the studies, charitable acts and the sense of social responsibility have decreased in various societies, especially in Iran. Hence, considering the basic need of the society to develop and nurture the spirit of charity, the role of various governmental and social institutions in promoting the spirit of charity at the national level should be determined. Also, based on the literature review, most of the studies have focused on the effective factors and challenges at the non-organizational level (12-14), and no study has been conducted with a national approach and from a policy-making viewpoint. Accordingly, the present study was designed and implemented with the aim of investigating the challenges and barriers of promoting national philanthropy in the area of charity considering the role of various governmental and social institutions. Thus, it is expected to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each responsible organization in this area by examining the role of these institutions, identify the existing gaps, and provide relevant practical solutions based on them.

Methods

Paradigm perspective

This study was designed based on the pragmatism paradigm and with a mixed method approach. Given the aim of the study, which is to identify the challenges and barriers of promoting national philanthropy in the area of charity at the organizational level and governmental dimensions, adopting two different methodologies can lead to enrich knowledge in the relevant area. The information obtained from in-depth interviews with community experts has achieved the main objective of the study and the quantitative data obtained from people working at different levels of the organization is effective in completing and clarifying and increasing the validity of the data. As a result, the present study uses a qualitative approach and was conducted in two phases, quantitative and qualitative, simultaneously.

Quantitative phase

This phase of the study was cross-sectional with a descriptive approach. The statistical population of the study included 300 people working in the organization of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee as the largest institution and government organization operating in charitable affairs.

Sample size and sampling method

Cluster random sampling method was used in this study. Accordingly, at first, among the centers of the Imam Khomeini relief committee located in the cities of Kerman province, 5 centers were randomly selected from the prepared list. Then, using a table of random numbers based on the list prepared of the names of managers and employees of the centers, each of which was marked with a numerical code, 60 people were randomly selected among all 5 centers and invited to participate in the study.

Study implementation method

At first, after obtaining the informed consent of all the participants, the link of the demographic information form and the desired questionnaire, which was designed and adjusted using the press line, was sent to the participants via SMS and social networks.

All participants were examined in terms of inclusion criteria. They included employment in the organization on an official, contractual or official-experimental basis and willingness to participate in the study. Also, to avoid losing the questionnaire questions, the Press Line program was designed in such a way that it could be saved only if all the questions included in the program were answered. Finally, after reaching the desired number of samples, the data of the study were analyzed using SPSS- 25 software.

Data collection tools

The data collection tool in the present study included two demographic information questionnaires and Hersey and Goldsmith organizational performance questionnaire.

1. Demographic information questionnaire:

This questionnaire included personal information, including age, gender, duration of employment in the organization, organization position, etc.

2. Organizational performance questionnaire

Hersey and Goldsmith organizational performance questionnaire (1980) has 42 items and seven components. The components of this scale include: ability, clarity, help, incentive, evaluation, validity and environment. This questionnaire is based on the Likert scale, scored from 1 to 5. If the total score of the questionnaire is between 42 and 84, the level of organizational performance in this society will be weak. If the scores of the questionnaire are between 84 and 126, the level of organizational performance will be at the moderate level. If the scores are

above 210, the level of organizational performance will be very good. The validity of the questionnaire in Iran has been well evaluated and confirmed by using the opinions of supervisors and advisors. Also, in the study conducted by Asadi & Ghorbani, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained at 0.86 (15).

Data analysis method

To analyze statistical data based on the type of research variables, descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used in table format. t-test and ANOVA were used when appropriate.

Qualitative phase

This phase of the study was conducted with a qualitative approach and institutional mapping method.

Participants

The participants in the approval section of the institutions and functions of the charity sector included the experts of the charity sector, including managers and employees of the welfare, relief committee, non-governmental organizations and university professors at the level of Kerman province.

Statistical sample of the study

The size of the statistical population is uncertain in the qualitative stage. The snowball sampling method (interviewed experts also introduce other people with interview conditions) and interviews with the participants continued until the opinions were saturated, and 12 people were selected as participants.

Procedure

The steps of the study were based on a multi-step model to explain the institutional mapping, which in this article is related to the results of the first three steps of the study.

Step 1) Examining documents of secondary sources

Step 2) Interviews with experts: conducting in-depth exploratory interviews with experts to clarify the various angles of the country's charitable system status in a completely open and semi-guided manner.

Step 3) final summarization and compiling the results: making the necessary modifications and corrections and compiling the results

Step 4) Determining existing key goals or functions

Step 5) Identifying the most important organizations or institutions in each of the functions

Step 6) drawing and analyzing the matrix of purpose/function-institutions/organizations

Step 7) Analyzing and extracting solutions for institutional improvement

Data analysis methods

Institutional mapping method was used for data analysis. Institutional mapping provides useful insight into a country's specific institutional arrangement for policy-making and provides information beyond statistics. Accordingly, by using institutional mapping, it is possible to observe the incompatibility, overlapping and defects of support programs.

Appropriate institutional arrangement helps to improve policy coordination, increase transparency and reduce system inconsistency. Also, one of the useful applications of institutional mapping is tracing the flow of tacit knowledge (16).

Results

Quantitative section

Based on the results of the study, most of the participants in the study were male (67.67%), had an organizational position of employee (69.66%), had a bachelor's degree (62.34%), and had an employment history of more than 6 years (54.3%). Also, the majority of participants (91%) were not willing to participate in research activities Table 1.

According to the results of the study, the mean score of the participants in this scale is 118.74 ± 14.74 . Regarding the sub-scales, the lowest score based on the number of questions related to each dimension of the environment was 11.90 ± 5.59 Table 2.

After examining the relationship between demographic factors and organizational performance scores, the results showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between education ($p=0.013$), gender ($p=0.040$) and performing

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

Statistic variable		N	%
education	Bachelor	187	62.34%
	Master	81	27%
	PhD	32	10.66%
employment history in the organization	Less than 2 years	37	12.33%
	2-6 years	100	33.3%
	More than 6 years	163	54.3%
gender	Female	97	32.3%
	Male	203	67.66%
Organizational position	Employee	209	69.67%
	Manager	91	30.33%
Willingness to participate in research activities	Yes	27	9%
	no	273	91%
Performing spontaneous promotional activities and attracting philanthropists in the last six months	Yes	54	18%
	No	246	82%

spontaneous promotional activities and attracting philanthropists in the last six months ($p=0.019$) and organizational performance, so that participants at the master's and PhD level of education, female gender and participants who were active in charitable activities reported higher score in the overall scale of organizational performance Table 3.

Table 2. Determining the mean score of the organizational performance scale and its subscales in the research samples

Dimensions	Mean	SD
Ability	12.5	3.63
Clarity	17.43	5.33
Help	12.60	3.60
incentive	17.81	4.34
Evaluation	27.2	7.86
Validity	19.30	6.12
Environment	11.90	5.59
Total	118.74	14.74

Qualitative section

In this section, 12 experts were interviewed in this area. They were mainly active in charitable organizations and organizations. The results of qualitative data analysis in this chapter have been presented using the institutional mapping approach. The results are presented in the main areas of policy-making, support and financing, health and treatment, construction, education and research:

Table 3. Examining the mean score of organizational performance based on the demographic variables of the participants

Variable		mean±SD	p-value
Demographic factors			
Education	bachelor	12.11±101.18	0.013
	Master	13.19±115.24	
	PhD	14.42±127.24	
Gender	Male	14.10±103.24	0.040
	Female	15.13±123.05	
Employment history	Less than 2 years	14.10±119.68	0.063
	2-6 years	15.78±117	
	More than 6 years	14.02±118.11	
Organizational position	employee	118.19±14.25	0.079
	Manager	118.92±13.72	
Willingness to participate in research activities	No	118.60±14.21	0.063
	Yes	119.049±13.69	
Performing spontaneous promotional activities and attracting philanthropists in the last six months	No	117.17±13.25	0.019
	yes	121.72±14.82	

Existing shortcomings in the policy-making sector in the area of charity

- Lack of specialized policy centers
- Economic and social problems of the country during the past few years
- The governmental nature of these institutions (such as welfare, medical centers, etc.)

- Redundant and cumbersome regulations that instead of encouraging regulations, in some cases, have become a barrier for the development of non-governmental organizations and charitable organizations.

Shortcomings in the support and financing sector in the charity sector

- Lack of hard and soft infrastructures for support and financing in the area of charity

- Lack of combating against poverty

- Lack of a specific plan to provide resources

- Lack of a specific plan for spending resources

Shortcomings in the health and treatment sector in the charity sector

- Financial dependence and weak internal capability

- People insufficient knowledge of the benefits of participation in NGOs

- Inadequate communication between government organizations and target groups
- Lack of network connection with other NGOs

The most important shortcomings in the construction sector in the charity sector

- Lack of identification of construction needs in areas (underprivileged areas)
- Inadequate communication between government organizations and target groups
- Lack of predicting and equipping with the required credits
- Sometimes not using the most up-to-date standards and modeling techniques

The most important shortcomings in the area of education:

- Lack of classrooms and other educational spaces
- Lack of proper educational facilities
- Density of students
- Educational function

The most important challenges of the charity system in the area of research:

- Lack of incentive to conduct applied research
- Non-use of the results of the conducted research
- Lack of specialized centers for researching the components affecting the charity system
- Lack of clear main national priorities to direct the activities of research centers

Discussion

The present study was designed and implemented with the aim of investigating the challenges and barriers in the area of charity with a mixed approach, and the results of both quantitative and qualitative sections are discussed in an integrated manner. Based on the results of the study,

the overall mean score of the participants in the organizational performance scale is estimated to be lower than the moderate level. Also, based on other information in the subscales, the participants scored lower than the moderate level. Therefore, based on the results, it can be stated that the employees of the studied charitable organizations are not at an acceptable and ideal level in terms of organizational performance components.

The results of the study in the qualitative section which investigated the shortcomings in the policy-making sector in the charity sector indicate that the lack of specialized policy centers, unnecessary and cumbersome regulations in some cases are a barrier to the development of non-governmental organizations and charitable organizations and non-participation of non-governmental organizations and charitable organizations in decision-making and policy-making has been one of the most important barriers in the area of policy-making. In this regard, the results of a qualitative study carried out by Masoodipoor & Nasrabadi, with the aim of prioritizing key issues in the governance system of Iran's governmental and non-governmental sector in the area of charity indicated that the largest non-governmental charitable organizations are a government institution in Iran, but the structure of organizational levels and organizational power in this institution have not yet been properly formed, which is one of the most important reasons for the weakness of the relevant organization in the policy-making sector (17). Also, in this regard, Kuruppu & Lodhia, examined the disruption in the management of non-governmental organizations with changes in the internal and external environment of these organizations. The results suggest that the management systems and processes of non-governmental organizations are formed in ways that may not lead to achieving the overall goal of these organizations. Paying more attention to planning and accuracy in design is essential to have more

responsible, more fluid and decentralized and agile organizational management structures for non-governmental organizations operating in the government policy-making environment (18).

Based on other results presented in the quantitative section of the study, the lowest mean organizational performance scale is related to the environment subscale. This subscale deals with intra-organizational and extra-organizational communication of people, which is one of the most important skills needed in charitable organizations. In this regard, the results obtained from the qualitative section also showed that in examining the relationship between functions and institutions in the area of charity, weakness in inter-organizational communication is one of the main challenges of these organizations. In this regard, the results of a study conducted by Sisaye, also showed that the lack of coordination and weakness in organizational interactions is one of the most important barriers in the promotion of non-governmental organizations (19). These results are in line with the results of the present study. In the analysis of the results, it can be stated that weakness in policies and organizational values will be a significant problem in the growth of the charitable organizations.

Based on the other results of the study, only 18% of the employees had participated in promotion and charitable activities in the last six months, which is significantly low considering the goals of the relevant organization. Also, the results of the study showed that people who have been active in attracting philanthropists during the past six months have significantly reported more favorable organizational performance than the group that did not participate. Since support and financing among institutions and in the area of philanthropy can improve the social performance of such organizations and institutions and provide the basis for doing charitable actions and deeds, it is important to clarify the goals of

charitable organizations and increase the motivation of employees for promotional activities.

"Health and treatment" is one of the other functions that have been recognized as charitable functions in this research, and providing services in this area has been one of the duties of these institutions and organizations. If this function is implemented and performed correctly in these institutions, many health and treatment problems will be solved. Based on the results of the study, various challenges have been identified in this area, two of which include: financial dependence and weak internal capability and insufficient knowledge of people about the benefits of participation in NGOs. In this regard, the results of a study conducted by Nekoeimokadam et al., showed that health issues were not the priority of these institutions and this important issue has been neglected in the institutions' activities. Also, people helps considered for collecting income is not a reliable source and specific income should be considered. Helps should be used guided towards the goals of institutions, and spending resources on goals and investment needs more attention. Also, legal and administrative barriers should be completely removed (20).

Also, the results of the study show that there are many weaknesses and challenges in the area of business and construction services that require paying serious attention. The mentioned results are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Power & Taylor. The results of mentioned study revealed that charitable activities have received less attention in the area of business. Paying to this issue results in development of business in the society (21). Construction function is one of the functions of non-governmental organizations and charitable organizations.

There are many charitable organizations in this area, including school and hospital building charitable organizations and research and scientific centers, libraries,

etc., and all these charitable organizations focus on providing services to people who need these services. However, the lack of proper management of barriers and challenges can be a major threat in the area of construction. The educational function is one of the other functions that non-governmental organizations must perform and be committed to. If children and people who need education in the society do not have the opportunity to access it, charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations should work in this area and provide the basis for these people to acquire skills. In this area, some studies have been conducted that are in line with the results of the present study. Kaiser & Menkhoff, believe that the support of charitable elites for educational endowments creates a culture of advanced literacy in the society (22).

Odabasi Cimer, also state that the improvement of the conditions of the educational system is due to public help in the society, which not only motivates the teachers, but also leads to better performance and causes civil development and social welfare (23). Saliani & Vosoughi, found that the educational function is one of the functions of non-governmental organizations and many non-governmental organizations provide good services in this area and paves the way for increasing the literacy level of people (24). The results of investigating the relationship between functions and institutions in the philanthropy area showed that the research function is performed by charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations at low levels and their research results are not given importance. The results reported in the quantitative section also showed that most of the participants in the study had no willingness to participate in research activities.

Conclusion

The charitable activities can solve many economic, social and cultural problems and pave the way for the sustainable

development and progress of the country. Needy people and groups that need support have always existed in human societies. In the past, these needs were usually met by relatives, the government, or philanthropists. However, regarding the mentioned cases, non-governmental public institutions and charitable organizations nowadays play a major role in this area. The results of the present study have explained various challenges and barriers in the area of philanthropy. Therefore, the identification of these factors in the form of a mixed study can have a significant impact on the policies related to non-governmental organizations, including charitable organizations. Also, the results of the present study can be provided as a knowledge base to these organizations to be considered in adopting executive plans.

Research limitations

One of the limitations of the study was lack of similar work in this area so that the researcher could ensure the correctness of his research results by analyzing relationships and interactions.

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Author's contribution

Masoudeh Parvaresh and Hamid Taboli developed the study concept and design. Mohammad Ziaaddini acquired the data. Masoudeh Parvaresh and Hamid Taboli analyzed and interpreted the data, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the intellectual content, manuscript editing and read and approved the final manuscript.

Informed consent

Questionnaires were filled with the participants' satisfaction and written

consent was obtained from the participants in this study.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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