

The Relationship between Establishment of Knowledge Management and Self-efficacy among Principals of Boys' State High Schools in Tehran

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the potential relationship between the establishment of knowledge management and the self-efficacy among the principals of boys' state high schools in Tehran. This study was conducted within a descriptive framework through correlations and the statistical population included the principals of boys' state High schools in Tehran (204 individuals). From the mentioned population, 140 individuals were selected for this study based on Morgan's sample size table and through cluster and stratified sampling methods. The instruments used for this study included two researcher-made questionnaires which aimed to investigate self-efficacy and meta-cognition. The validity of the questionnaires was evaluated and confirmed through investigating theoretical principles as well as the comments provided by the experts and professors in the field and the reliability of the questionnaires was obtained through a pilot study. The data were analyzed by SPSS.16 through Pearson correlation coefficient as well as multiple regression and one-way ANOVA. The results of the data analysis revealed a significant relationship between establishment of knowledge management and self-efficacy among the principals. The results also indicated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management elements and self-efficacy. Multiple regression was used for examining the predicting power of independent variables for dependent variables. According to the findings, organizing the specialized working teams could be mentioned as the most effective factor for improving the self-efficacy among the school principals. The potential implications and recommendations for the future studies are discussed in the last section.

Key words: Knowledge Management, Self-Efficacy, Principals

Introduction

The increasing complexity of the conditions has motivated the organizations to seek a variety of solutions for environmental and competitive complexities. One of the most practical solutions recommended is encouraging the managers to devote their full capacities to the job and provide the organization with their perfect "self". This could result in developing creative and accountable personnel who are ready to respond to the changing and turbulent environments and conditions. Self-efficacy is one of the individual factors that have specifically captured the attention of organizational psychology researchers for successful completion of job. That is, many human behaviors are controlled and derived by self-mastery mechanisms which include personal self-efficacy as the most important and comprehensive mechanism (Bandura, 1997).

The concept of self-efficacy beliefs was introduced into the field of psychology for the first time by the paper that Bandura published in cognitive review journal. The psychological definition of self-efficacy involves the expectations of an individual for achieving success in a task or a valuable result through individual activities. This mental procedure includes goal setting, effort evaluation, and the abilities for achieving the goals and predicting the potential results (Reeve, 2009).

Over the past two decades, the concept of self-efficacy has gained increasing significance in organizational studies. Bandura defines self-efficacy as the individual's beliefs in one's abilities for organizing and implementing the set of practices needed for achieving specific objectives. The higher self-efficacy would result in more engagement and resistance in responsibility related behaviors in the individuals (Chen, 2002, p. 384).

The concept of self-efficacy includes three dimensions:

1. Magnitude: involves the level of difficulty of the tasks that the individual believes could he/she could handle.
2. Strength: refers to the belief in high or low magnitude.
3. Generality: shows the generalization of expectations in different situations (Gist, 1990, p. 472).

Bandura (1986) suggests that high self-efficacy expectations develop from four resources:

1. Past performance
2. Modeled behavior
3. Social persuasion or feedback from others
4. Physiological responses

Past performance is considered as the most significant and effective source of self-efficacy. The individuals naturally predict and interpret the results of their actions when they engage in activities and these data are used for developing the beliefs about the individuals' abilities for engaging in and handling future tasks and activities. The results interpreted as successful would increase the self-efficacy levels and vice versa (Pajares and Schunk, 2002). Self-efficacy plays a

key role in individual performance, since it directly affects the behaviors and determines other significant factors such as aspiration, outcome expectations, affective proclivity, and perceptions of opportunities and barriers in the social environment (Bandura, 2000, p. 75).

Nonaka and Takeuchi (2006) define knowledge as the mental structure that includes beliefs, perspectives, concepts, judgments, expectations, methodologies and knowing the approaches that would lead to predicting future outcomes. Most of the studies conducted in this field have examined knowledge as the dichotomy of explicit and tacit knowledge. The explicit knowledge refers to the knowledge that resides in individuals' skills, memories, values, and perspectives. Consequently, the complex and wide concept of knowledge management and the emergence of several approaches toward knowledge management have limited the development of a unified attitude toward knowledge management.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994) distinguish between two types of knowledge. These two types of knowledge are in fact the two sides of a coin that make knowledge together: tacit knowledge could be defined as a set of experience, skills, attitudes, values and mental system in the mind of individuals that is difficult to transfer and is not stored in any database, rather it is located in the human minds and leads their actions. Explicit knowledge is objective by nature and it could be transferred formally through a systematic language. This type of knowledge is independent from the individuals and is stored as computer information systems, organizations documents, and etc. the explicit knowledge plays a key role in several aspects of human life including knowledge management. One of the fundamental challenges faced by the knowledge management is converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. The major point to be raised here is that knowledge flow could facilitate organizational development, since stagnant knowledge would not guarantee organizations success and this is comprised from overt and covert flows and forms the life cycle of organizations knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1994). Radding (2004) mentions six advantages for employing knowledge management in the organizations:

1. Saving and efficiency: the processes are conducted with greater efficiency which eliminates the need for reinventing the actions for completing the processes.
2. New chances: the new chances and markets are identified.
3. Change and innovation: the organizations are capable of locating the changes and showing efficient and timely reactions.
4. Productive use of human resources: the organizations manage to employ higher capacities of human resources.
5. The process speed: knowledge management allows the organizations to manage the time more skillfully and reduce the processes.
6. Permanence: in the organizations and industries with higher staff replacement, the knowledge management is considered as an effective mechanism which could transfer the knowledge from the senior staff to the freshmen and preserve the permanence of the organization productivity.

Along the same lines, Mills (2001) believes that the following skills are required for performing a role in the knowledge management team, besides other skills: communication, leadership, facilitation, networking, negotiation, coping, teamwork skills and etc. today, knowledge is considered as one of the essential sources for organizations' survival and the organizational success depends on achieving the deep knowledge and understanding at all levels (Orzwardi, 2007). Therefore, by accepting the central place of knowledge as one of the major factors in decision making practices, the organizations are motivated to expand their capacity for applying the relevant technologies that facilitate the process of knowledge management (Assadolahi, 2011). As the first step toward producing and transferring knowledge, the organizations need to ask whether those obtaining the knowledge are ready to support this process. This requires a supportive and coordinated culture with defined values that would affect the staff's attitudes and covers different parts of the organization (Zareyi, 1995). The human resources with self-efficacy and flexibility that could support the changes, give the organization competitive advantage, and coordinate the staff for achieving the goals, are necessary for producing and transferring the knowledge required in the organization. In addition, an effective organizational culture could create the backgrounds for absorbing the knowledge hold by staff and use this accumulated knowledge for future successes in different sections of organization.

Latifian (2000) investigated the epidemiology of test anxiety and how it related to self-efficacy. The results of this study revealed that there are significant multiple correlations between the predictor variables (self-efficacy, internal locus of control and intelligence) and criterion variable (test anxiety). In his study, Monavarian (2005) mentioned organizational culture, information technology, human resources, and training as the factors affecting knowledge management in the organizations. He highlighted the cultural factors as the most significant factor in conducting knowledge management in the organizations. Akhavan and his colleagues (2006) introduced 16 concepts as the key factors for implementing knowledge management in the organizations: knowledge strategy, architecture knowledge, network of experts, training programs, transparency in sharing knowledge, support and commitment to organizational culture, trust, organizational structure, business processes re-engineering, pilot, diagnosis, acquisition, storage and review of knowledge.

Naderi, Heidrai, and Mashal Pour (2009) examined the potential relationship between flexibility and positive and negative affections on the one hand and self-efficacy and job satisfaction on the other hand. The results of this study indicated that flexibility and negative affection could predict self-efficacy and job satisfaction. In addition, these results showed that although job satisfaction includes satisfaction from the payments, this variable did not showed the same significance as other job satisfaction variables. Along the same lines, Rajaee Pour and Rahimi (2009) conducted an investigation on the knowledge management and faculty members' performance in Isfahan. The results obtained by this study revealed a positive and significant relationship between the knowledge management process and the performance of faculty members. Madhooshi, M. and Sadati (2011) investigated the effectiveness of knowledge management on entrepreneurship in small businesses. According to the findings of this study, sharing knowledge affect the process of organizational entrepreneurship directly and indirectly while employing knowledge affect it directly.

Davenport and his colleagues (1998) conducted an exploratory study in order to determine the factors affecting knowledge management. They reported these factors as the most significant factors that determine success in knowledge management process: clear goals, standard and flexible knowledge structure, multiple channels of knowledge transfer, knowledge culture, technological and organizational infrastructure, changing motivational practices, support provided by senior management. Gold and his colleagues (2001) reported that the capacities provided by the process of knowledge management in the organization affects the organizational performance significantly. Chourides and his colleagues (2003) highlighted a set of factors in five areas of organizational practices including strategy, human resources management, information technology, quality and marketing. In another study, the same researchers classified the factors supporting knowledge management success under five groups: leadership, culture, structure, roles and responsibilities, information technology and management infrastructures. The study by Montana and Charnov (2008) indicated that tacit knowledge acts as a significant motivator in the process of organizational creativity and innovation and plays a leading role as the success factor.

The present study seeks to investigate the potential relationship between the establishment of knowledge management and self-efficacy among the boys' high school principals in Tehran. In fact, the researchers raise the question that whether the establishment of knowledge management would result in developing self-efficacy in school principals. Therefore, in this study the researchers try to examine the variables affecting knowledge management and measure their potential effects on the self-efficacy of principals.

For achieving the discussed goals, the following hypotheses are considered:

1. There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and self-efficacy levels among the school principals.
2. There is a significant relationship between the formation of specialized working groups, using information and communication technologies, new organizational culture, and in-service training on the one side and the self-efficacy levels of the principals on the other side.
3. The scores of knowledge management scales could predict the level of self-efficacy in principals.

Methodology

In this study, the researchers investigated the potential relationship between establishing knowledge management and self-efficacy levels in boys' high school principals in Tehran. This study is an applied research with regard to the goals and it is conducted through descriptive and correlation approach.

The statistical population for this study was the boy's high school principals in Tehran which included 204 individuals. From this population, 140 individuals were selected as the subjects for the study through Morgan table and cluster random sampling.

In this study, a researcher-made questionnaire was used for the purpose of measuring knowledge management. In addition to studying the relevant theoretical and practical basis

precisely and clarifying the questions through test preparation techniques, the researchers used the comments provided by some faculty members and experts in the field. The final and revised draft of questionnaire was reviewed by the faculty members and the repeated questions were eliminated and replaced by new ones. The final draft was administered to 40 principals in the pilot phase. The reliability of the questionnaires was obtained through Cronbach's alpha and the data collected in the pilot phase. The calculated reliability was .91 and .88 for knowledge management and self-efficacy questionnaires, respectively.

The research data were analyzed through descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage tables, the measure of central tendency and variability such as mean, median, standard deviation, and variance. In addition to the descriptive stage, the data were analyzed by the SPSS and Pearson correlation coefficient in the inferential stage. The potential relationship between the variables was evaluated through multiple regression.

Results

Table 1: the results of descriptive statistics and K-S test for knowledge management components

Variables Indices	In-service training	Using information technology	Establishing new organizational culture	Forming specialized working groups	Knowledge management
Mean	3.5469	3.5949	3.5776	3.7060	3.6026
SD	.7479	.7108	.73022	.74068	.60306
Median	3.5714	3.5714	3.6429	.8333	3.6296
Variance	.559	.505	.533	.549	.364

Table 2: descriptive indices for self-efficacy components

Variables Indices	Trust in one's job qualifications	Self- regulation	Self- efficacy
Mean	3.7448	3.6643	3.7353
SD	3.866	3.500	3.8235
Median	.5829	.7714	.5750
Variance	.340	.595	.331

The Pearson correlation coefficient or method of enter was used for investigating the first hypothesis regarding the potential relationship between establishment of knowledge management and self-efficacy levels in high school principals. The results obtained for correlation coefficients are presented in table 3. According to table 3, Adjusted R Square (R^2) was .291 which indicates that 29 percent of the self-efficacy changes could be explained by knowledge management and 71 percent by other factors. On the other hand, the multiple correlation coefficient was .544 that reveals the potential level of correlation. The significance of the data was examined by F test and the results are presented in table 4.

Table 3: the results of regression based on enter method for self-efficacy and establishment of knowledge management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.544	.296	.291	.4841

Table 4 shows the results of F test conducted for knowledge management and self-efficacy. As it could be seen in table 4, the result of F test (58.132) with 139 degree of freedom at the .05 significance level is greater than the critical F. It could suggest that there are significant relationships among the variables under study which might not be assigned to chance. As a response to the major question of this study, it could be said that the findings revealed a significant relationship between the establishment of knowledge management and self-efficacy in the boy's high school principals in Tehran. In addition, according to the results of correlation tests, in schools which established knowledge management the principals showed higher levels of self-efficacy.

Table 4: the results of F tests for significant correlation between knowledge management establishment and self-efficacy

Model	Sum of square	df	Mean of square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.625	1	13.625	58.132	.00
residual	138	.234			
Total	139				

According to the data presented in table 5 indicates, Beta shows the significance of knowledge management establishment in predicting self-efficacy. As table 5 shows, Beta Coefficient for knowledge management establishment is .544 which means that one unit of change in the standard deviation of this variable would lead to .544 unit of change in self-efficacy.

Table 5: multiple regression model for knowledge management

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
constant	1.865	.249		7.499	.00
Knowledge management establishment	.519	.068	.544	7.624	.00

Dependent variable: self-efficacy

The findings of this study confirmed the significant relationship between forming specialized working groups, using information and communication technologies, new organizational culture, and in-service training on the one hand and the level of self-efficacy in the principals on the other hand. Therefore, according to the Pearson correlation coefficients reported in table 3, the second hypothesis of this study is supported. The findings presented in table 6 indicate that, based on the correlation coefficients calculated for the organizational intelligence components have significant relationship with organizational learning. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is supported for the mentioned variables.

Table 6: correlation coefficients of regression analysis for knowledge management components and self-efficacy of the principals

Variable	Group	Source virility	SST Sum of square	df	Mean Square	Observ ed F	Sig.
1 In-service training	Principal s	Regressi on	5.92	1	5.92	20.41	.000
		Residual	40.40	138	.290		
		total	45.96	139			
2 Information and communication technology	Principal s	Regressi on	8.23	1	8.23	30.11	.000
		Residual	37.73	138	.273		
		total	45.96	139			
3 New organizational culture	Principal s	Regressi on	9.514	1	9.514	36.015	.000
		Residual	36.455	138	.264		
		total	45.969	139			
4 Specialized working groups	Principal s	Regressi on	15.181 8	1	15.181 8	68.048	.000
		Residual		30.7 88	138	.223	
		total	45.969	139			

Table 7: the results of regression (prediction of self-efficacy in principals based on knowledge management)

Variable	Group	constant	B	β	Observed t	Sig.	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	SD
1 In-service training	Principals	constant	2.75		12.44	.000	.35	.129	.123	.538
		Residual	40.40	.359	4.51	.000		0		
2 Information and communication technology	Principals	constant	2.5		10.94	.000	.423	.179	.173	.522
		Residual	37.73	.423	5.48					
3 New organizational culture	Principals	constant	2.454		11.257	.000	.45	.207	.201	.513
		Residual	36.455	.455	6.001	.000				
4 Specialized working groups		constant	2.082		10.185	.000	.57	.330	.325	.427
	Principals	Residual	30.788	.575	8.249					

As the table 7 reports, among the sub-scales of knowledge management, the specialized working groups could be considered as the most suitable variable for improving self-efficacy levels in principals, since it could predict 57 percent of self-efficacy variance. In addition, the multiple correlation coefficients for the variables under study show the intensity of the potential correlation among these variables. The results of F tests reported in table 7 determine the significance of the coefficients. These data reveals significant relationships among the variables under study which could not be attributed to chance. Therefore, regarding the third research question, it could be concluded that there is a significant relationship between in-

service training and self-efficacy of the principals and those who have passed in-service courses showed greater self-efficacy.

According to the results obtained from F tests, significant relationships exist between using information technology, establishing a new organizational culture, and forming specialized working groups. In other words, the principals who used information technology more frequently, supported a new organizational culture, and tried to form specialized working groups in the schools had higher self-efficacy in comparison to other principals.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the establishment of knowledge management and self-efficacy of high school principals. In addition, the findings confirmed the significant relationship between each component of knowledge management on the one side (in-service training, using information technology, establishing new organizational culture, and forming specialized working groups) with the level of principals' self-efficacy on the other side. In other words, the components defined for knowledge management could be considered as reliable predictors for self-efficacy in principals, hence they could be used as factors that lead to improvement in principals' performance. Among the components of knowledge management, forming specialized working group showed the greatest correlation with principals' self-efficacy which confirms the potentials of knowledge management for enhancing the self-efficacy of the staff and the organizations (Ja'afari and Kalantar, 2003). Therefore, identifying the knowledge needs as well as the knowledge available in the organizations could be considered as the first step in the process of establishing knowledge management. The organizations need to optimally employ all the available capacities and identify the needs for competitive strategies in order to maintain competitive advantage.

These findings are in agreement with the findings obtained by other study in this field. Hasani Nasab and Ramesheh (2000) reported a significant correlation between intelligence on the one side and self-efficacy, test anxiety, high level cognitive strategies, and self-regulation on the other side. The findings of this study revealed that self-efficacy, self-regulation, and test anxiety showed the greatest correlations with intelligence, respectively. Akhavan and his colleagues (2006) identified a set of key factors affecting success in the organizations that sought to implement knowledge management mechanisms. The results of the present study are in agreement with the key concepts presented by these authors including knowledge strategy, architecture knowledge, network of experts, training programs, transparency in sharing knowledge, support and commitment to organizational culture, trust, organizational structure, business processes re-engineering, pilot, diagnosis, acquisition, storage and review of knowledge.

Finally, the following recommendations are presented according to the findings of this study. The education system needs to devote greater attention to empowering the school principals through efficient approaches that would enhance their motivation such as encouraging them to continue higher education, providing performance-based rewards, showing understanding and

cooperation in eliminating principals' needs. The motivational aspect should be highlighted since it guarantees the staff attempts toward school improvement.

At the school level, it is recommended that the principals should step toward creating a friendly and cooperative atmosphere among the school staff and value and seek their ideas regarding official and educational issues for improving school competitive advantage. In addition, the principals are recommended not to prevent informal communications among the staff and give them freedom in performing job responsibilities. The principals should inform the staff regarding the current issues and engage them in decision making practices through establishing mutual trust and commitment.

Additionally, it is recommended that the principals should keep up with the recent up-dates through holding in-service courses. Improving the communications among the principals could facilitate the process of sharing valuable experiences for enhancing the staff and school.

From the population under study, 90 percent had higher education degrees, hence the researcher suggest that future studies might focus on the schools where the staff has lower degrees in order to identify the potential effects of knowledge management on the self-efficacy of the principals and staff with lower degrees.

Future studies might focus on other educational settings such as universities and girls' schools and investigate the effects of implementing knowledge management systems on principals' performance and the improvement of schools in comparison with each other.

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