

Evaluation of Effective Factors on Knowledge Exchange among Employees (Case Study: Islamic Azad University, 4th Zone)¹

Sayed Mohammad Reza Davoodi

Ph.D Student, Department of Management, Dehaghan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

Email: smrdavoodi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Knowledge is the driving motor of knowledge-oriented development and paying attention to it will have an ever-increasing role in the growth of societies. Today, gaining knowledge related to work is not sufficient at all. Produced information and key knowledge in the organization must be exchanged and shared with colleagues that need such knowledge in order to better performing of their working tasks in the organization so that the organization could achieve stable competitive advantage.

Islamic Azad University must be more active in the field of learner organization and knowledge management given to its knowledge nature. Recognizing the effective factors on knowledge exchange and implementation of knowledge management process and main factors of its success in Islamic Azad University are objectives of the present survey. One-hundred eighty one (181) persons were selected among employees of Islamic Azad University located at 4th zone in this survey. Research hypotheses were tested by SPSS software and these results were obtained: 1- There is a significant relationship between informal conversations of employees and their confidence level with employees' knowledge sharing. 2- Using knowledge sharing in the standards of job promotion and reward won't be led to encourage employees to exchange their knowledge with others.

Keywords: *data, information, knowledge, knowledge management*

1. Introduction

Various definitions have already been represented for organizational knowledge. For some people organizational knowledge is wisdom that is conclusion and experience; for some other it is just learning or just experience; for others it is related to data and information. By evolution of knowledge management, human's decision-making considered as a kind of individual knowledge and ability and it was determined that information technology could not be useful in

¹ All rights of this article are related to Islamic Azad University.(dehaghan branch)

this regard or replaced the human element. Thus, knowledge management too was changed from trying for supplementation or replacement of human proficiency to encouragement and facilitation of its sharing.

Park believes that knowledge management is to identify exchange and share the required knowledge. Of course such knowledge should have characteristics too: be controllable and maintained and is used to complete organizational purposes (Park, 2006). Most companies are not able to develop the knowledge they need because of fast growing of knowledge and its dispersion. Therefore, the required knowledge should be gained in some way. Companies import a main part of their knowledge from external resources. Gaining knowledge as the major purpose of knowledge management has been emphasized and includes two dimensions: cognitive dimension that considers knowledge as something that could be coded, organized, saved and be available if needed and technical-specialized dimension that stresses the role of modern information and communicative technologies in the process of gaining knowledge (Ekiba and Hara, 2008).

2. Knowledge Exchange

Knowledge exchange is defined as a set of behaviors that cause information exchange to others. There are different factors which could affect behaviors of knowledge sharing and dissemination. These factors include tools, technologies and providing of incentives in order to encourage to knowledge sharing (Ang and Massingham, 2007). Confidence among the colleagues is the necessary prerequisite for preparation of knowledge exchange among the individuals. Informal relations among colleagues about studying innovative ideas are much determinant. Knowledge exchange is led to increase group correlation instead of creating competition among individuals in the organization. Knowledge sharing beside performance of informal relations is important in enhancement of confidence (Wang et al, 2006). Knowledge exchange is defined as knowledge dissemination management in the organization to encourage innovation, increase awareness from previous good procedures and stimulate employees to adopt better procedures in decision-making processes in the future. The degrees by which employees participate in knowledge exchange process of the company affect quality of new products (Yang, 2008). Organizational culture, personal values, national culture, confidence, attention, human resources like time, space and having access to knowledgeable individuals in the organization are among the factors that could affect knowledge exchange in the organization (Chennamaneni, 2006).

3. Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses are studied in this survey:

- 1- Informal visits of employees encourage them to share their knowledge with others.
- 2- Using knowledge sharing in standards of job promotion and reward encourage employees to exchange their knowledge with others.
- 3- Attitude towards knowledge sharing among individuals in the organization is increased by improving the confidence level.

4. Research Methodology

Historical study and field study methods including studying texts and questionnaire have been used in this survey and it could be said that it is a descriptive-filed survey based on the nature and methodology of research. Statistical population included all employees in thirty six (36) units of Islamic Azad University at the 4th zone that were equal to 2780 persons. The sample volume was determined equal to 181 persons after a preliminary study by means of Kucran formula at confidence level 95%. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire were studied and its reliability was obtained through cronbach alpha coefficient equal to 0.77 that was accepted.

Questionnaires were distributed and collected randomly and data was analyzed by SPSS software. Pierson correlation coefficient, regression coefficients and t-test were used to test hypotheses. The following information was obtained from descriptive statistics:

Education: 0.08 diploma (14 persons), 0.06 associates (11 persons), 0.066 B.A (120 persons), 0.016 M.A (29 persons), 0.04 PhD (7 persons)

Gender: 0.076 male participants (137 persons), 0.024 female participants (44 persons)

Working experience: average amount of working experience was achieved equal to 10.3 years with standard deviation of 4.9.

5. Inferential Results

These are the results of findings related to testing of the research hypotheses.

After studying the first hypothesis it has been determined that Pierson correlation coefficient is equal to 0.71 and its error is lower than 0.05, so hypothesis one is confirmed. It means that there is a significant relationship between informal conversations of employees and their knowledge sharing.

Table1- coefficients and significant levels related to testing of the first hypothesis

Coefficients	significant levels of coefficients		
Correlation coefficient	0.71		0.041
Regression coefficients	Informal conversations of employees	0.65	0.041
	intercept	1.75	0.000

Analysis of results related to the second hypothesis reveal that it is not lower than error amount of 0.05 at significance level and null hypothesis is not rejected. This is observable through average difference of responses with amount 3 and very insignificant amount of the statistic. We can say that using knowledge sharing in standards of job promotion and reward won't encourage employees to exchange their knowledge with others.

Table 2- t-test to determine the effect size

Sample standards	t-test				
	Standard deviation	Number	Amount of statistic	Degree of freedom	Significance level
2.45	0.54	181	-13.73	180	0.999

Studying of findings related to the third hypothesis show that correlation coefficient is equal to 0.75 and its significant level is lower than the error 0.05, thus this hypothesis is confirmed. We can say that there is a significant relationship between employees' confidence level and knowledge sharing.

Table 3- coefficients and significant levels of the third hypothesis

Coefficients	significant levels of coefficients		
Pierson correlation coefficient	0.75		0.012
Regression coefficients	Confidence level of employees	0.5	0.012
	intercept	2.5	0.000

6. Conclusion

Given to confirmation of hypothesis one, an internal network should be created in Islamic Azad University to establish extensive relations and cooperation for sharing of explicit knowledge. Supporting of senior management, harmonization of opinions, confidence and motivation are main elements of knowledge management culture. Given to confirmation of hypothesis three, confidence level among the employees must be increased and if such process is continued, it will be leaded to knowledge management success. Due to rejection of the second hypothesis, we must try to create accurate motivations for employees to share or apply knowledge and offer them suitable feedback and evaluate standards of employees' promotion.

Acknowledgement

This article is extracted from the research project, which has been carried out with financial support from Islamic Azad University (Dehaghan branch).

References

Ang Z, Massingham P. (2007).National Gulter and the Standardization Versus adaptation of knowledge management. *The Journal of knowledge Management*, 11(2):pp133-147.

Chennamaneni A. (2009).Determinants of knowledge sharing behavior: Developing and testing an integrated theoretical model. *Journal of knowledge Management*, 10(2): pp 9-10.

Ekiba HR, Hara N. (2008).The quality of evidence in knowledge management research. *The Journal of Information Science*, pp: 110-126.

Park. (2005). A review of the knowledge management model based on empirical survey of Korean expert. Doctoral dissertation. University of Kyushu. Korea.

Wany J, Peter HP, Guan J. (2006). Factors influencing knowledge productivity in German research groups: Lessens for developing countries. *Journal of knowledge Management*, 10(4):pp113-126.

Yang J.(2008). Managing knowledge for quality assurance: An empirical Study, *International Journal of Quality of Reliability Management*, 25(2):pp109-129.