

Analyzing Knowledge Management of Experts and Managers in Agricultural College of Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch

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The purpose of this study was analyzing perception of agricultural college experts and managers of Islamic Azad University Shoushtar Branch regarding development of knowledge management. Agricultural college experts and managers were considered as a statistical population (N=38). This research was conducted in June 2012 to April 2013. All individuals were investigated. After confirm the validity of the instrument by panel of experts, to determine the reliability was used Cronbach alpha coefficient. Cronbach alpha coefficient was obtained for all sections of the questionnaire over 0.81. Method of research was descriptive and correlative. Based on the results, the correlation between status of knowledge acquisition and absorption with knowledge management in 0.01 level, was significant. Also the correlation between organizational culture and perceptions of experts and managers in 0.05 level, was significant. The results also showed that organizational culture, leadership style and knowledge about IT can explain 74% of variance of perception of agricultural college experts and managers regarding the development of knowledge management. [Masoud Ahmadinejad. *Analyzing Knowledge Management of Experts and Managers in Agricultural College of Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch. International Journal of Agricultural Science, Research and Technology in Extension and Education Systems*, 2012; 2(4):171-174].

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Abstract

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1. Introduction

Knowledge management is an audit of "intellectual assets" that highlights unique sources, critical functions and potential bottlenecks, which hinder knowledge flows to the point of use. It protects intellectual assets from decay, seeks opportunities to enhance decisions, services and products through adding intelligence, increasing value and providing flexibility. KM complements and enhances other organizational initiatives such as total quality management (TQM), business process re-engineering (BPR) and organizational learning, providing a new and urgent focus to sustain competitive position (Bhojaraju, 2005). Thakur and Thakur (2003) defines KM as a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying managing and sharing of all of an enterprise's information assets. These information assets may include database documents, policies procedures as well as previously unarticulated expertise and experience resident in individual workers. Knowledge management issues include developing, implementing and maintaining the appropriate technical and organizational infrastructure to enable knowledge sharing.

According to Spoh (1997), "Knowledge management describes the way in which organizations are attempting to capture, enhance and

utilize the knowledge necessary for their survival." It encompasses the spectrum of management concerns from knowledge creation to knowledge exploitation. It embraces the rapid developments in information technology and their effective use for the benefit of organization. All these issues have brought the knowledge management a key business philosophy. Tremendous growth of knowledge has compelled the information technology industry to find the innovative ways of managing it.

There are a number of factors that have established knowledge management as the management discipline of the decade (Thakur and Thakur, 2003).

1. It makes money and increases profit.
2. It puts technology into perspective and promotes innovations.
3. It abridges the loss of intellectual capital from retiring, downsizing, attrition and leaving the company.
4. It reduces duplication of efforts of the knowledge workers.
5. It enhances individuals' and organizational ability to think, to learn from innovations and experiences and to implement decisions.
6. It helps to take quick decisions in business meetings.

7. It assists individuals to access and manage knowledge repositories captured through meetings, telephone conversations, computerized communication networks and documents.

8. It develops the knowledge-sharing culture in the organizations and breaks communication barriers within the organization.

9. It assists to develop the framework of Knowledge Management System to share information quickly across geographically dispersed units to compete global business.

10. It helps to capture and retain the employees' knowledge, experience and expertise during the corporate downsizing and restructuring, retiring of knowledge workers and anticipated exodus of employees.

11. It increases productivity and establishes company as leading one by providing knowledge more quickly and easily.

White (2002) sees knowledge management as capturing the inherent learning locked inside human brains and converting it to explicit knowledge which can be reused in future easily. According to Turban (2011) KM is a process that helps organizations identify, select, organize, disseminate, and transfer important information and expertise that are part of the organization's memory and that typically reside within the organization in an unstructured manner. Knowledge management is a capability built into the business processes that enables the company to apply and add to what it collectively knows and identify what it doesn't know (Bellaver & Lusa, 2002). According to Turban (2011) the goal of knowledge management is to identify, capture, store, maintain, and deliver useful knowledge in a meaningful form to anyone who needs it, anyplace and anytime, within an organization. The author sees knowledge management as being about sharing and collaborating at the organization level. KM initiatives focus on identifying knowledge, explicating it in such a way that it can be shared in a formal manner, and leveraging its value through reuse

2. Materials and methods

The type of research is applied research. The research method is descriptive and correlative. In this study agricultural department experts and managers of Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch considered as population (N=38).

The panel of expert's method was used for analyzing validity of research tool. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, 30 copies of the questionnaire in the water department has completed. Cronbach's coefficient alpha in all items over than 0.81.

3. Results and discussion

Descriptive Study

In this study for analyzing perceptions of experts and managers regarding the development of knowledge management in agricultural department of Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch, 8 items designed and their responses on a five-level (high agree, agree, unsure, disagree and high disagree) expressed (table 1). Based on the viewpoint of respondents, we classified them in to 5 groups. 31.57% of experts and managers had low level of perceptions regarding the development of knowledge management (table 2).

Correlation Study

To investigate the relationship between perception of agricultural experts and managers regarding the development of knowledge management in agricultural department as dependent variables with independents variables, Spearman correlation coefficient was used. Based on the results presented in table 3, between status of knowledge acquisition and absorption with dependent variable in 0.01 level correlations was significant. Also between organizational culture and perceptions of managers 0.05 level correlations was significant.

Multiple regression analysis step by step

According to the regression coefficients and the constant value that obtained from multiple regression analysis stepwise method, regression equation was obtained:

$$Y = 8.459 + 0.312X_1 + 0.158X_2 + 0.523X_3$$

The results also showed that organizational culture, leadership style and knowledge IT can explain 74% of variance of perception of experts and managers regarding the development of knowledge management (table 4).

Table 1. The perception of managers regarding knowledge management items

| Items | Mean | sd |
|---|------|------|
| Record of experience | 2.94 | 1.18 |
| Easily using of past experience | 2.64 | 1.13 |
| Awareness of managers of up-to-date knowledge | 2.52 | 1.32 |
| Reduce cost of mistakes | 2.09 | 1.15 |
| Reduce Risk of decisions | 2.54 | 1.14 |
| Availability of knowledge sources | 2.15 | 1.21 |
| Increase motivations in organization | 2.21 | 1.11 |
| Increase productivity in organization | 2.49 | 1.22 |
| Increase teamwork activity | 2.25 | 1.25 |

(5=high agree, 4=agree, 3=unsure, 2=disagree and 1=high disagree)

Table 2. The frequency distribution of managers regarding level of perception

| Perception in terms of knowledge management development | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative percent |
|---|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Very High | 2 | 5.26 | 5.26 |
| High | 10 | 26.31 | 31.57 |
| Moderate | 8 | 21.05 | 52.63 |
| Low | 12 | 31.57 | 84.21 |
| Very low | 6 | 15.78 | 100 |
| Total | 38 | 100 | |

Table 3. Correlation of independent variables with level of perception of agricultural experts and managers regarding the development of knowledge management

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | r | Significance |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------|
| Job motivation | Perception | 0.015 | 0.119 |
| Organizational Culture | Perception | 0.287* | 0.010 |
| Knowledge acquisition and absorption | Perception | 0.413** | 0.000 |
| Income | Perception | 0.042 | 0.387 |
| Service | Perception | 0.087 | 0.549 |
| Level of education | Perception | 0.012 | 0.875 |

*Significant level of 0.05, **: significant level of 0.01

Table 4. Results of multiple regression analysis step by step style

| Independent variables | B | SE B | Beta | t | sig |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Organizational culture (X ₁) | 0.312 | 0.112 | 0.453 | 2.522 | 0.000 |
| Leadership style (X ₂) | 0.158 | 0.045 | 0.387 | 2.344 | 0.000 |
| Knowledge IT (X ₃) | 0.523 | 0.374 | 0.298 | 2.937 | 0.000 |
| Constant | 8.459 | 3.325 | ---- | 4.564 | 0.000 |

R= 0.86 ,R²=0.74, Signif F=0.000 F= 8.253

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on results, between organizational culture and perceptions of experts and managers was a significant relationship. Accordingly, universities must make efforts to develop an organizational culture. Culture of partnership and teamwork must be developing. The university must corrections toward making organizational culture changes for create conditions in developing knowledge management efforts. In addition between acquisition and absorption of knowledge and perceptions of experts and managers was a significant relationship. In this

regard, the university must provide a suitable platform for the acquisition and absorption of knowledge and experiences. In-service training, valuing knowledge and experience of individuals and classified knowledge are important for knowledge management.

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