

STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERS' COMPETENCE (KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND SKILLS) AND ESTABLISHMENT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN EMPOWERING THE EMPLOYEES OF IRAN NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR REGISTRATION OF DEEDS AND PROPERTIES

(The main Office at General Headquarters for Registration of Deeds and Properties)

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ABSTRACT: *Nowadays, Knowledge is considered a prominent asset. It is a strategic and valuable resource. In order to be successful, organizations need to implement knowledge management strategies in the best way possible. Having competent workforce is one of the helpful factors for organizations to put knowledge management into practice successfully. This paper aims to study how managers' competence (knowledge, attitude, and skills) is associated with implementation of knowledge management. It is also attempted to explain the effective role of knowledge management in empowering the employees of Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties.*

The current study is a descriptive-correlational research. Our sample population consists of 80 managers at Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties. Using Systematic Random Sampling, 69 managers were selected. 5 valid research-made questionnaires were used to collect data, including 3 questionnaires to evaluate competence variables (knowledge, attitude, and skills), 1 questionnaire to assess employees' competence, and 1 questionnaire to identify the characteristics (gender, age, education, etc) of the sample population.

The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient ($\alpha=0.84$). Data was analyzed using SPSS and descriptive-inferential statistics. Correlation tests in inferential statistics show that manager's competence is related to empowerment of employees. Multiple regression tests reveal that "skill", among the others, has the biggest effect on empowerment of employees.

Keywords: knowledge, attitude, skill, competence, knowledge management, human recourse development, knowledge workers

INTRODUCTION

With the passage from industrial age to the information one and the changes in international paradigms of management, the role of traditional production factors is fading away and substituted by the role of knowledge as the only competitive advantage and the engine of organizational development.

In the current age, organizations that fail to understand new requirements and those who fail to adapt to the current changing environment will lead to an untimely decline in their life cycle. Development, growth, and being the lone competitor in international environments owe to a great deal of efforts by competent knowledge workers who works hard toward overcoming the constraints imposed by traditional atmosphere.

Knowledge management, as an approach in management, encompasses the process of creation, acquisition, capturing, publishing, and sharing the knowledge and lessons learned. In the light of such an approach employees are empowered and organizations develop. Training knowledge workers, in fact, is the main and the ultimate output of management.

While empowerment of employees and training knowledge workers -as the key to success for pioneering companies in international fields - are synonymous with the concept of human resource development, the noteworthy point is that human resource development cannot be realized as long as the tacit knowledge, the internalized knowledge rooted in individual's insight, activities, experience, values, and feelings, is not converted into explicit knowledge, that is, the ultimate goal of knowledge management.

Knowledge management, therefore, makes the talents and aptitude develop, realizes the capabilities and potentials in organizations, and creates values and competitive advantage.

Literature review

Salajeghi et al (2013) stated that since competent human resource is proved to be one of the most important factors in implementing knowledge management, relevant planning and investment are required to empower the employees.

Ghorbanzadeh (2009) showed that the process of converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge is associated with the feeling of competence in employees. Being competent refers to creating a situation to provide incentive to improve the performance of assigned duties through strengthening the feeling of self-efficacy.

Asgari et al (2012) found that creating knowledge is one of the key efforts in knowledge management. It has a huge effect on compatibility and organizational innovation. The role of human factor is highly prominent and irreplaceable. Improving employees' qualifications can significantly enhance their ability to create knowledge. Among the factors to improve the employees' capacity for creating knowledge are developing the feeling of being competent, job meaningfulness, having the right to choose and make decision, the feeling of being efficient and productive at work, and presence of confidence among the employees.

Theoretical background

A criticism of the management style in public organizations in Iran is that the employees' knowledge is not documented properly. This manifests when an experienced and skillful employee leaves an organization because of retirement, severance pay, death, firing, transferring, and so on. It is of

great importance to document the experience and knowledge in organizations where missions and duties are more specialized; and experiences as well as expertise play a prominent role.

National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties is one of the public organizations in Iran. Being more than 100 years old, it has experienced a great deal of changes in registry systems throughout the transition of industrial age to the current knowledge period. Not all of this experience has been documented due to the lack of familiarity with knowledge management concepts and strategies. Thus, the necessity of documentation, capturing, and transferring knowledge, particularly tacit knowledge, is still palpable.

Active managers in various fields are one of the important resources in Iran Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties. One to be appointed as a manager needs to acquire knowledge and expertise in several organizational fields. Moreover, since managers' attitudes toward the future of the organization arise from their experience, studying managers' attitudes and methodology opens new doors to compilation and documentation of organizational knowledge. In addition, studying managers' skills will demonstrate how documented organizational knowledge is implemented.

The conceptual model and development of hypotheses

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of the research.

On the basis of what was stated above, our hypotheses are developed as follow:

Hypothesis 1: Establishment of knowledge management is related to empowerment of employees of Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties.

Hypothesis 2: Manager's knowledge, attitude, and skills are associated with establishment of knowledge management systems in Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties.

Sub-hypothesis 1: knowledge management is significantly related to empowerment of employees and administrative registration operations in Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties.

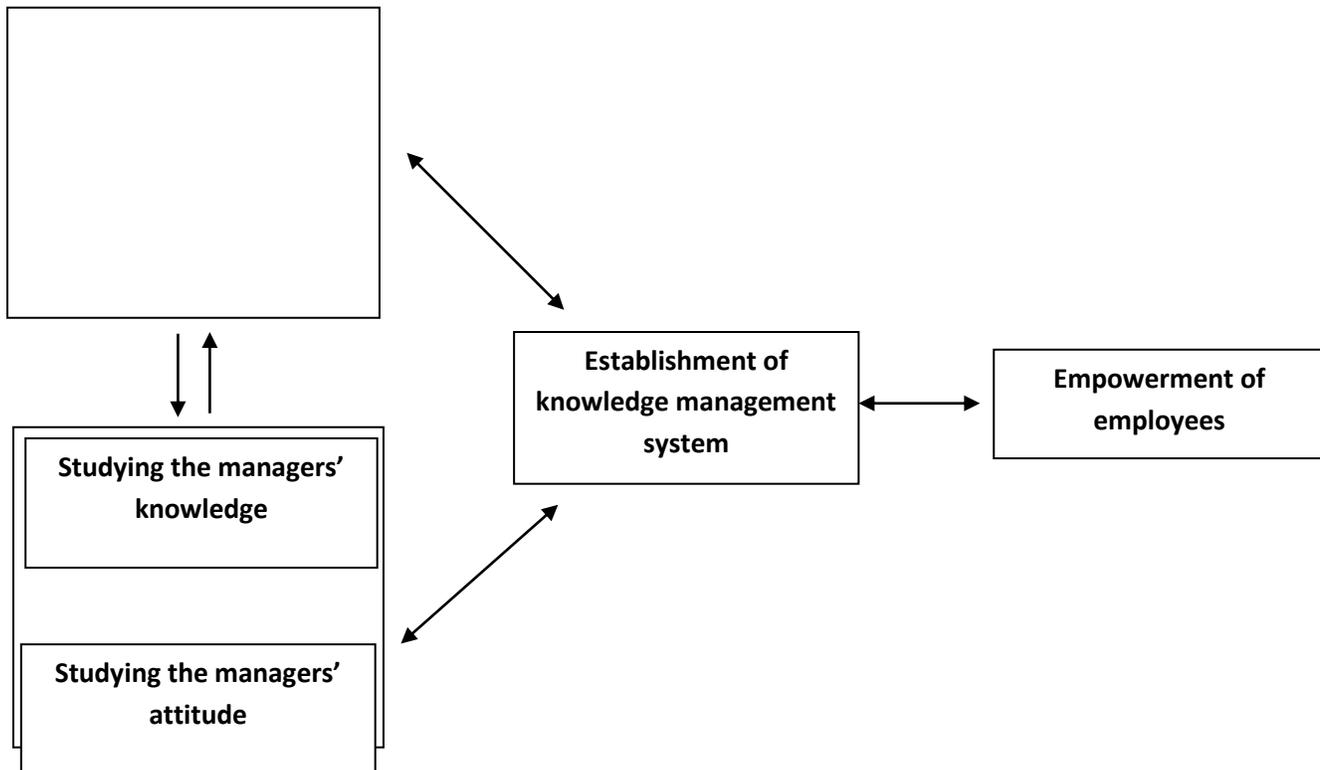
Sub-hypothesis 2: knowledge management is significantly related to training experts in Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties.

Sub-hypothesis 3: knowledge management is significantly related to decision making in Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties.

Empowerment

The term "empowerment" in Concise Oxford English Dictionary is defined as "to give official authority to; delegate legal power to; commission; authorize". It implies giving freedom and authority to control oneself. Empowerment in an organizational context refers to a process whereby employees control their own activities and take more responsibilities (Lawler, 1994).

Since power in organizations is normally limited to the framework of legal authority, it indicates entrusting authority. Empowerment of individuals means to encourage them to cooperate in the process of decision making. In other words it



means to provide opportunities for people to show their ability to create great ideas and make them realized. The common definition of empowerment is to explain values motivations, and initiatives in relation to delegating authority and power among the organization employees.

Knowledge management

Knowledge management is the systematic process of discovering, selecting, organizing, summarizing, and developing information, so that it improves people understanding in their favorable field and helps organizations focus on capturing and implementing the knowledge obtained from prior experiences to solve the problems, train the employees, plan programs, and make strategic decisions.

Competency

David McClland, the founder of the modern competency movement for his 1973 paper, "Testing for Competence rather than Intelligence", argues that aptitude and intelligence tests, school grades and certificates have no real power in predicting competence in real life outcomes. His findings led him to fill up the gaps. He identified variables to predict job performance which were also applicable to life in general, not just to workplace. He named his variables "competency". According to the first full definition of competency by Wiley and sons in 1982, competency is an underlying individual characteristic casually related to effective or superior performance of job (Gholamzade, 2007).

Competency is generally defined as a set of relevant behaviors or activities, practical or theoretical knowledge, skills, and motivations which constructs the behavioral, technical, and motivational prerequisites people need to be successful in their jobs. Figure 2 shows the components of competency.

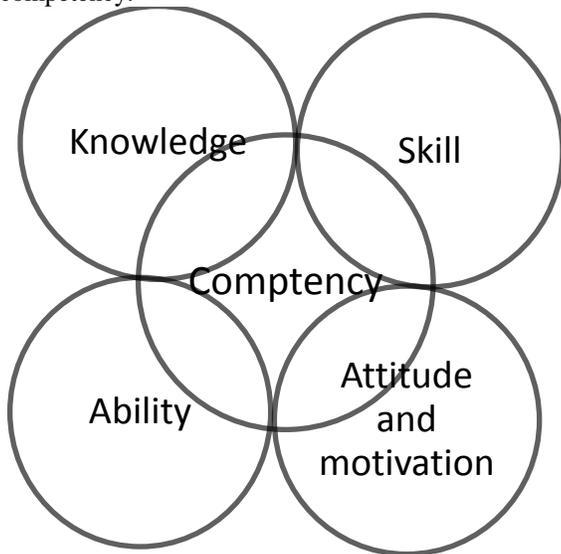


Figure 2: The components of competency

METHODOLOGY

With respect to its aim, this research is an applied one, because its findings can be used in solving inter-organizational problems. It is a descriptive-correlation study with respect to the method of collecting data. Library research method was used to collect required data.

Our sample population consists of 80 managers in Iran National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties. Using Systematic Random Sampling, 69 managers were selected. The measurement tool was researcher-made questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient ($\alpha=0.84$). Data was analyzed using SPSS and descriptive-inferential statistics.

Findings

Statistical results (CL=%95, $p<0.51$) show that empowerment of employees is related to establishment of knowledge management. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to prove the hypotheses. P-value=0.000, %95 CL, and correlation coefficient <0.4 (≈ 0.62) reveal that there is a direct, positive, and strong association. Accordingly, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between establishment of knowledge management and empowerment of employees. Findings also suggest that empowerment of employees is related to manager's knowledge, attitude, and skills. Table 1 shows the relationship between empowerment of employees and competency components.

Table 1: empowerment of employees association with competency components

Component	Correlation Coefficient	The relationship
Skills	0.90	Strong and positive
Attitude	0.60	Strong and positive
knowledge	0.58	Strong and positive

CONCLUSION

Findings from hypothesis 1 reveal that there is a significant relationship between establishment of knowledge management and empowerment of employees. Chief Managers, therefore, must welcome implementation of knowledge management to empower their employees.

In addition, our findings show that variable "skill", in comparison to "knowledge" and "attitude", has the highest correlation coefficient. It is suggested that managers develop their knowledge of implementation of knowledge management.

Multiple-correlation coefficient for Model 1 with variable "skill" is 0.09. It increases by including another variable to the linear regression model. In Model 2, with both skill and knowledge variables included in the regression, MCC is 0.917. R^2 for Model 1 is 0.84 of which 0.16 is explained by another variable. The least value belongs to variable attitude. It can be concluded that empowerment of employees is significantly associated with managers' knowledge, attitude, and skills.

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