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Effect of organizational culture on knowledge management based on Denison model

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Abstract

In 21st decade, organizations are faced with changes and must know how they learn and manage the learning to be powerful in comparative market. Knowledge management is the way to improve the conditions of stability of organization. When this way is successfully implemented in organization, the appropriate cultural field has already been paved the way for this system. Different researches show that knowing these two factors as the most important necessity is the priority of activities of organizations' managers, and the stability of organization is assured by planning organizational strategy. According to the importance of issue, Denison model is used to investigate the dimensions of organizational culture and Conrad and Newman models are used to evaluate the dimensions of knowledge management the process of knowledge management and the relation between them have been explained after mentioning the review of literature. Finally, in order to strengthen organizational culture and successful deployment of knowledge management offered suggestions.

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1. Introduction

Today's changeable world necessitated organizations to follow a new tool to survive. Knowledge management was one of these tools which could help organizations to provide these purposes. Knowledge management was a

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process helping organizations to find, select, organize and publish important information and it was an expertise being necessary for activities such as solving problem, dynamic learning, and conclusion. Knowledge management could enhance the range of qualities of organizational performances by empowering an organization to function very cleverly. In fact, knowledge was only sources that its value not only didn't reduce by using but also increased. Other pioneering theoreticians in an organization and management believed that investment of an organization in knowledge has been more profitable than materials, but it has not been sufficient. (Rading, 1998). And it was successfully performed in an organization when appropriate cultural domain has been coordinated with this system. Because, directing present knowledge of an organization was related to human resource and a subordinate of culture of organizational employees. Thus, an organization must have created culture proportional to it to perform knowledge management successfully and acted on the basis of it. Weak organizational culture prevented people from sharing their knowledge to maintain personal power and their efficiency. Thus, when sufficiently not knowing its organizational culture and its dimensions and indices, an organization was faced with many problems such as organizational opposition, lack of organizational cohesion and increasing performance practically. However, knowing culture helped managers to use its weakness by awareness and precision toward area governing an organization and to predict necessary strategies for weakness. (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010).

2. Organizational culture

Organizational culture was one of the interesting and important issues of organizational behavior (Amin Bidokhti, Makvand, Hosseini, & Ehsani, 2011). And this term was increasingly used from the early on 1980s (Seyed Javadein, Emami, & Rastegar, 2010) and was defined differently. One of the most complete definitions was related to Hokzinsky and Buchanan (2001) knowing organizational culture as quite monotonous set of values, beliefs, customs, traditions and stable methods transmitted by the members. This definition was useful because it attended the collective nature of culture and mentioned that there was culture in both belief level and behavior (Amin Bidokhti, Makvand, Hosseini, & Ehsani, 2011). Some knew organizational culture as system of belief being common among members of an organization, some knew it the hierarchy of the interdependent common values transmitted by stories, myths and catch phrase (Robbins 1999). Some of scholars and authorities emphasized values of organizational culture. Organizational culture indicated common perception of organizational members so that it affected their behavior. In each organization, there were values, symbols, ceremonies and myths having changed over time. These common values has identified how employees perceived their world and responded it (Rahimnia & Alizade, 2008). Some focused on intangible and unwritten parts in an organization; thus, they knew it as a correct phenomenon taught to beginner novice members and showed unwritten and intangible part of an organization (Hadizade-Moqadam & Hussein, 2004). Finally, some have attended to environmental factors to define organizational culture. Also, other have considered it as the impression of subculture of society having been formed inside industrial, trade and economic organizations (Bidokhti, 2000)

Culture has been important, because acting without knowing cultural forces (which have been involved) might have unpredicted and unwanted outcomes. Organizational culture having interacted with human resource, organizational structure and controlling system has included values (what was important? What was not important?) And beliefs (how did people act and how didn't they act?); as a result, it has established behavioral norms. Culture of an organization included common beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and expectations directing behaviors in the absence of a law or clear instructions. Culture could be a powerful resource of common identity purpose and flexible guidelines. Its effect on members has been so high that behavior, feeling, perceptions and attitudes of members could be found by investigating its dimensions, and it has investigated, predicted and directed their probable reaction to desired changes. Organizational culture principle could simply facilitate the changes and stabilize new orientations in an organization. It has been social label in which common values, symbolic strategies and social purpose have attached members to each other. Many researches were carried out on this field and showed that knowing organizational culture as an important necessity has been one of the priorities of activities of managers, because management could organize its short-term and long-term programs and prepare itself to conflict with market being full of changes and competitions and increase lasting coefficient in market by knowing it and its properties (Monavarian & Bakhtae, 2006). It influenced all aspects of an organization.

One of the most important duties of manager was to form and direct main values and an organizational culture. The main role of managers, in fact, was to manage values of an organization. Even some scholars evaluated high performance

by obtaining and dominating values and purposes in an organization. Many researchers, also, concluded that an organization could not reach its purpose without attending organizational culture, even if its purpose only was to be profitable. As a result, managers had to attend and invest in managing organizational culture (Rahimnia& Alizade 2009).

2.1. Denison model of evaluating organizational culture

In 2000, Professor Daniel Denison carried out researches on innovative and effective organizational culture. In his model, he considered following properties for culture:

- 1) Involvement, 2) Compatibility, 3) Adaptability, 4) Mission, 5) Flexible- Constant spectrum and internal- external centralization.

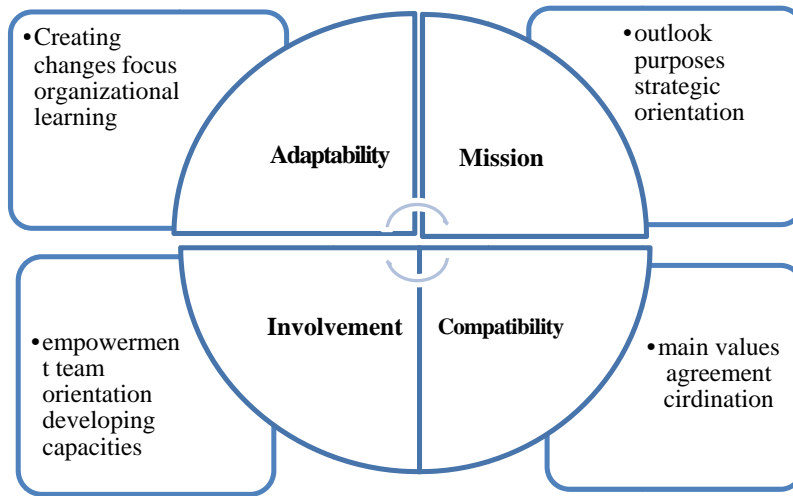


Figure 1. Cultural model of Denison (Imani, 2012)

These properties were pointed out in below; in the meanwhile, each of them were evaluated by three indices.

- 1) *Organizational participation (involvement)*: an effective and innovative organisation enabled their members, an established organisation on the basis of work group and developed capacity of human resource. Members of an organisation were obliged to their job and felt them as part of organisation body. In all levels, people felt that they played role in decision making and these decisions influenced their work and there were direct relation between their work and organisational purposes (Imani, 2012); in other word, involvement meant encouraging people in participating in different activities of an organisation and this participating caused members to feel possession and be responsible; and possession feeling caused obligation among them (Mortazavi-Abalvan, Shabani, Rajaeepoor, & Azarbakhsh, 2013).

Table 1. Indices of organisational participating

Empowerment	People had authority and ability to control their work. This issue created possession and responsibility feeling in an organization
Group orientation	In an organization, group work was important to common purposes so that employees like managers felt that they had to respond. an organization laid on group to perform
Capability development	To provide needs and remain in competition arena, an organization developed skills of employees. In an organization, innovator gathered and distributed information related to performance, competitive quality and customer in an organization.

2) *Compatibility (consistency)*: it has been values and systems forming a base of powerful culture. Integrity forming formed culture based on common systems of opinions , values and symbols understood by members of an organisation; these implicit and intangible systems of control based on internalized values could be effective tool of coordination and integrity (compared with external systems of control depending on clear rules) (Khakpoor, Pardakhtchi, Qahremani,& Abulqasemi,2009). Compatibility properties included three indices as follows;

Table 2.Compatibility indices

Core value	Members of an organization participated in a set of values which formed their identity and expectations.
Agreement	Members of an organization could agree in opposed issues and this agreement included both agreement in subordinate level and the ability of agreement in managerial level.
Coordination and integration	Organizational units with different performances could work with each other to reach common purposes. Organizational boundary was not disrupted with such working.

Researches showed that effective organisations have been stable and integrated and behaviour of members have resulted from main values. Leaders and followers have been skilled to reach agreement (even if they had opposed views) and organisational activities were coordinated well. Such organisation had strong and distinct culture and influenced behaviour of members (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010).

3) *Adaptability*: integrated organisations changed hardly; thus internal integration and external adaptability could be an advantage of these organisations. Compatible organisations were directed by customers, risked and learnt through their mistakes and had the capacity and experience of creating change. They continuously improved the ability of an organisation to grant customer, these organisations usually experienced the increase of selling and the market share (Imani, 2012). This quality was investigated by three indices:

Table 3.Adaptability indices

Creating change	Organizational could create change and know environment and respond current stimulus and overtake future changes to provide needs.
Customer focus	Organizations understood customers and responded them and sought to satisfy them. In fact, customer focus showed the degree in which organizations were directed toward satisfying customers.
Organizational learning	It measured the amount of environmental marks which organization received, translated and interpreted and opportunities which they created to encourage, creativity and knowledge style and developing ability.

4) *Mission*: it could be said that the most important property of organisational culture is mission. Organizations that did not know where they moved and what their current condition was usually were unsuccessful. Successful organisations had clear perception of purpose and their orientation so that they defined organisational and strategic purposes and drew organisational scene clear (Imani 2012). Organisations that were forced to change their main mission were the troublesome ones. When an organisation was forced to change its mission, it was necessary to change strategy, structure, culture and behaviour. In this condition, powerful leader identified outlook of an organisation and created a culture supporting this outlook (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010).

Table 4.Mission indices

Strategic direction and intent	Clear strategic direction showed organizational purposes and each person could participate him/herself in that part.
Goal and objective	Purposes integrated with strategy and vision of an organization and identified work direction of employees.
Outlook	An organization had a common vision about future, it showed core value and integrated

with thought and heart of human source and identified direction.

5) *Constant – flexible spectrum and internal-external focus*: Denison model had two pivots: vertical and horizontal, which divided it into four quarters of circle. Vertical pivot included amount and type of organisational culture focus. It, on the one hand, ended in internal focus and external focus on the other hand. Horizontal pivot pointed the flexibility amount of an organisation which directed, on the one hand, to dynamic culture flexibly and to culture on the other hand (Imani, 2012). Compared with other organisational culture models, organisational culture model of Denison had following advantages:

- It evaluated group behaviour instead of evaluating personality
- It performed the measurement to the lowest organisational levels
- It had been used in all organisational levels (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010).

3. Knowledge management

Today, knowledge has been the main key of competition of organizations. New organizations have been based on knowledge; it meant that they had to be planned in such way that they could know their organizational knowledge, save it and use it (if necessary). Set of these factors has made new paradigm called "knowledge management" in management domain. In a definition, knowledge management included combination of obtaining and accumulating implicit knowledge with managing intellectual properties. Today, organizations have found that nothing could maintain them in competitive world other than knowledge. Thus, organizational employees have been attended as knowledge owners and the most important property of an organization. Knowledge management as a tool being able to gather and arrange available knowledge and spread it in an organization has been important. Accordingly, organizations had to create environment to share, transmit and confront it among members and teach them conceptualization of their interact. Investigation, changing and creating an appropriate and flexible organizational culture could only change interactive pattern among employees and knowledge management has been used as competitive advantage (Karami, Gholami, Qanbari, & Sahafi, 2014). Haney believed (2003) that knowledge management has been scientific field strengthening and encouraging the method of using mutual support to create, possess, organize and use information. Generally, knowledge management could be defined as set of process controlling the creation, spread and use of knowledge. This definition required the creation of organizing and supportive structures, facilitation of relation among members, use of information technology tools and the explanation of knowledge. Malhotra (2005) knew it as doing correct actions than doing action correctly; in other word, he emphasized effectiveness than efficiency. Skyrme (2003) mentioned that it was systematic and implicit knowledge management related to processes of creating, gathering, spreading and using knowledge, but there were two important issues to use it: sharing knowledge and innovating knowledge. Scientific definition of knowledge has been to surround technological tool with usual process of organizational activities in parts overlapping each other.

It has had many benefits for organizations in both individual and organizational level. In individual level, it enabled employees to promote their skills and experience by cooperating with others and sharing their knowledge and learning to reach professional development. In organizational level, it had has four main advantages for organizations: promoting organizational performance by efficiency, profitability, quality and innovation. Thus, knowledge management has been considered as a competitive approach and advantage (Amin Bidokhti, Makvand, Hosseini, & Ehsani, 2011).

3-1. General model of knowledge in an organisation

In this research, General Conrad and Newman models (1999) having been proposed as two models of knowledge process to investigate knowledge management has been used, International Corporation Form Of Knowledge Management (ICFOKM) has suggested and used it.

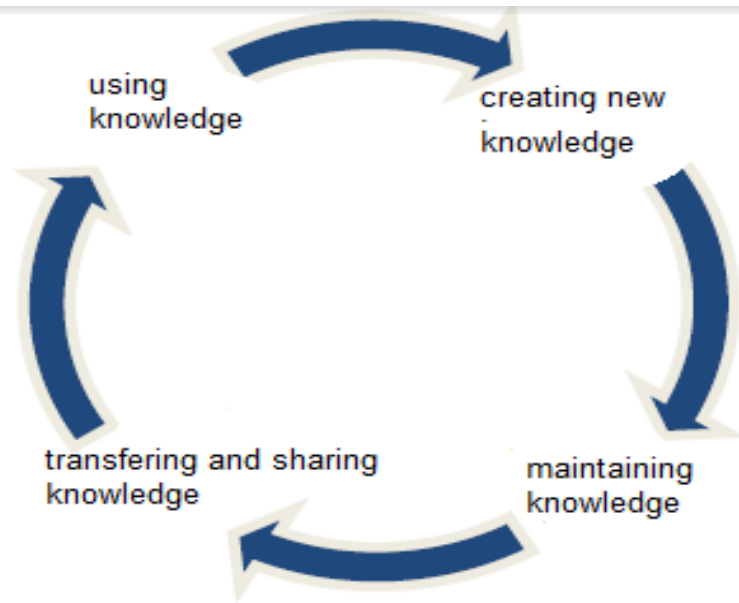


Figure 2: general model of knowledge management (Haqiqat-Monfared&Hooshyar, 2010)

In this model, its life cycle has formed a pivot ranging from acquisition, organizing to establishing and reusing or spreading knowledge. Acquiring knowledge occurred where people have spent their time to acquire it. Knowledge components have been obtained separately and organized by different technology. Certain knowledge has been obtained through communication among people. People have been knowledge source and its users and played main role in knowledge management. It was important that people have participated in process of sharing knowledge through groups, societies or organizational groups (HaqiqatMonfared& Hooshyar, 2010). There were four processes in this model:

1) Creating knowledge: this stage included activities related to entering new knowledge to system and consisted of knowledge development, discovery, and acquisition.

2) Maintaining knowledge: it has been activity stabilizing knowledge in system. Meanwhile, authorities emphasized organisational memory as important factor including the ability of an organisation to maintain the knowledge (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010). If organisations sought to obtain an effective knowledge management, they could not content themselves with the creation and usage of organisational memory. They mentioned other memory as "individual memory". This memory has been the most important source of hidden knowledge. Knowledge management had been effective when these two types of organisational memory existed beside each other and strengthened each other (Newman & Conrad, 1999).

3) Transferring knowledge: it pointed to activities including transferring knowledge process from a part or person to other part or person and consisting of communications, translation, conversion and interpretation of knowledge (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010). Knowledge was transferred not only by human, but also by other automated systems and factors having played mediator role. Sharing knowledge has been attributed to its transferring or spreading and has pointed to a process by which knowledge has been transferred from a person to another one, from individuals to groups or from group to other group (Newman and Conrad, 1999)

4) Using knowledge: it included activities which have been in relation to performing knowledge in organisational process (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010). Knowledge itself has not been valuable. When it was used, it has been valuable. The knowledge of scholar has not been valuable for others when he /she did not use it. Generally, organisational knowledge

had to be used for services, processes and productions of an organisation. If an organisation simply was not able to identify the correct form of knowledge in its suitable situation, it could be faced with problem to maintain its competitive advantages. When innovation and creativity has been the way of success in today's world, an organisation must have accelerated to find correct type of knowledge (Haqiqat-Monfared&Hooshyar, 2010).

4. Relationship of knowledge management with organizational culture

Studies of Robins (1999) showed that organizational culture influenced all aspects of an organization and this effect has been identifiable in individual behaviors, organizational performances, motivation, job satisfaction, creativity and innovation. Today, organizations have been concerned about quick changes in job environment and this issue caused competition to be increased among organizations; according to authorities, using present organizational knowledge and directing it toward successful management could help organizations. Studies of Glosser showed that discovery and distribution of knowledge has positively influenced both performance rapidity and performance quality in organizational level. Improving the performance rapidity and promoting performance quality of an organization increased the satisfaction level of customer. But, how the organizational knowledge has been administered was important, and this issue required knowledge management. Studies of Delong & Fahey showed that organizational culture could influence knowledge management in four ways:

- The role played by organisational culture about knowledge identity and its importance for organisational management.
- The role played by culture to create relation between people and knowledge of an organisation.
- Cultural patterns which identified how knowledge had to be used in special situation.
- Processes making, legitimating and spread knowledge in an organisation (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010).

Delong & Fahey (2000) believed that 80% of knowledge management related to people and organizational culture and 20% related to technologies of knowledge management. Accordingly, present culture in an organization has been vital for success of knowledge management. Goh (2002) claimed that the important condition of transferring knowledge among people, in cooperative culture, has been the interaction of people, the share of their knowledge and idea. However, it has been necessary in this section to investigate two related issues: first, the range in which organizational culture could influenced attitude of people to participate in knowledge innovation, second, the range in which managerial efforts could create positive and suitable knowledge culture. McDermott & O'Dell (2001) mentioned that cultural issues were the main reasons of failure of primary knowledge management innovations. Although, Brandt Michael (2009) believed organizations required formal program of knowledge management to reach necessary profitability, they required the coordination with organizational culture so that these programs could be effective. Also, Balthazar & Cook (2004) believed that knowing organizational culture has been necessary for people proposing strategies of knowledge management; because it influenced both necessary knowledge process to propose knowledge management and complete cooperation and obligation of members toward knowledge management.

5. Discussion and conclusion

According to P.F.Drucher, the principle of organizations of 21th century has not been money, wealth, even technology, but it has been knowledge. Today, the success criterion of an organization has included the amount of intellectual property, its monopolistic (has created competitive advantage for it) and the ability to use intellectual property and knowledge. Facilitating knowledge and information exchange has been one of the main processes of knowledge management in today's organizations. Although knowledge management has had many advantages for people, organizations and groups, its implementation has been faced with many limitations. Among factors influencing activities of knowledge management, organizational culture has had special position. When Robert Bachman was asked to name three vital factors of knowledge management, he said: "culture, culture and culture" (O'Dell & Grayson, 1998). Organizational culture has been "a system of common beliefs and values found in behavioral norms and it has identified method of organizational life" (Koberg & Chusmir, 1987). The pattern of interaction among people could be changed by investigating, creating and changing suitable and flexible

organizational culture, and knowledge management could be used as competitive advantage. The presence of weak culture in an organization caused employees to become accustomed to present organizational procedures and not to have any tendency to innovation and new ideas; on the other hand, they were afraid of sharing knowledge with others and changing it to skills influencing the problem solving, while a dynamic and flexible culture to which members of an organization have known and believed has reacted toward quick changes and developed an organization (Shafee, Qaderzade, Lavee, 2010). Transferring and creating knowledge required the presence of organizational culture in which people and groups have tended to cooperate with each other and share their knowledge in the direction of mutual interests. Dominating individualism culture on an organization caused people to withhold knowledge transferring, while confidence, cooperation and culture of sharing knowledge caused the increase of knowledge exchange among employees. In organizational culture, emphasis on learning influenced the ability of an organization to create new knowledge; organizations helped their employees to play active role in creating knowledge by emphasizing learning. To be success in knowledge management, organizations had to develop learning culture in itself and provided necessary conditions for continuous learning. To perform each new program in an organization, it has been necessary to attend culture of that organization. Because creating changes could simply be facilitated by culture and it stabilized new orientation of an organization. The relation between organizational culture and knowledge management showed that knowledge management has been successfully performed in an organization when appropriate culture has already been coordinated with the system, because directing present knowledge has been popular issue and the subordinate of culture of employees. Thus, organizations must have created culture proportion to it and acted on its basis to manage knowledge successfully (Rahimnia & Alizade, 2008). To strengthen organizational culture, suggestions presented in below to establish knowledge management successfully:

Organisational culture and creating knowledge

- Changing attitude and view of authorities toward knowledge role and position.
- Using commendatory tools for employees having good performance, innovative and risk.
- Performing strategic programs for knowledge management.
- Establishing rooms for thought, conversation and discussion.

Organisational culture and knowledge management

- Creating confidence in organisation so that employees have not felt danger from transferring their job knowledge to others.
- Encouraging knowledge-based employees to transfer knowledge to others and defining the processes on which knowledge of rivals could be used.
- Strengthening supportive and friendly environment in an organisation.

Organisational culture and knowledge reserve

- Forming group work to comply process to maintain data and information in an organisation.
- Identifying main knowledge-based employees or those being about to retire and the manager must have set a program to increase loyalty and belonging to an organisation, and they must have prevented them from leaving an organisation.
- Showing reaction toward activities and works of employees.

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