

The Study of Relationship between Knowledge Management and Quality of Working Life

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to study the relationship between knowledge management and quality of working life. According to the objectives, this research could be considered as a practical one, and according to the methodology; it could be considered as descriptive – deductive. The statistical society included 540 employees of Lorestan Gas Organization, among whom 222 persons were selected as sample, using Morgan Table and random selection. We used two standard questionnaires, beside library research, according to Likert 5 dimension model and Richard Walton's model. The validity and reliability for the knowledge management questionnaire was 0/90 and for the quality of working life questionnaire was 0/94, which were tested through Alpha Coefficient, and then they were accepted. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and its factors and quality of working life.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Gaining, Knowledge Establishment, Knowledge Transformation, Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Usage, Quality of Working Life (QWL).

INTRODUCTION

Managers and the owners of knowledge and industry can use their knowledge and awareness in order to improve themselves in every fields of study to be efficient. Knowledge Management (KM) plays a very vital and important role in all organizations. Today's knowledge exists in the heart and center of world's economy. "As a result of their research, Kluge et al. (2001) tell us that knowledge management presents unique leadership challenges. "From a leadership perspective, knowledge management has been viewed more like a craft and less like a science" (*qtd. in wikibooks 2012*).

Besides, the clearest characteristic of organizations in 21st century is the emphasis on knowledge and information. Unlike past and traditional organizations, today's organizations possess new technologies and need to obtain, manage, and use knowledge and information in order to be effective against changes. "Knowledge is a powerful tool that can create changes in the world and make innovations possible" (*Mohammadi Fateh and et al 2008, p. 9*).

Moreover, information technology, knowledge management, using new technologies and other procedures alike have very significant effects on individuals' behaviours. People are aware of their surroundings' happenings. The level of life's standards has risen. People's needs and desires become doubled and people are no longer interested in what they need in life, but they are interested in looking and searching around and find what the best is. Social changes cause the importance of evaluation in working process especially according to global environment of working condition that is dominant in organizations.

Paying attention to "quality of working life" and "productivity" usually means putting the "emphasis" on ways and alternatives that changes the organizations to create "job satisfaction and efficiency" (*Dolan and Schuler 1994, p. 363*). This increases "performance" and reduces "stress, job quitting and absence from work" (*Dolan and Schuler 1994, p. 363*). Therefore, we can conclude that it is possible to reach all these objectives once.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Management: It refers to a kind of integrated regulation and a collection of alternatives to increase and flow information, awareness and values in organizations. Quintas, Lefrere and Jones, for example, define knowledge management as "a process of continually managing knowledge of all kinds to meet existing and emerging needs, to identify and exploit existing and acquired knowledge assets and to develop new opportunities" (1997, pp. 385-391). Knowledge management (KM) comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organisation to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organisations as processes or practices.

An established discipline since 1991, KM includes courses taught in the fields of business administration, information systems, management, and library and information sciences (Alavi & Leidner 1999, *qtd. in*

Nonaka, 1991 pp. 96–104.). More recently, other fields have started contributing to KM research; these include information and media, computer science, public health, and public policy. This definition covers individuals, information, working progress, best actions, unifications, and working groups.

Knowledge Gaining: Learning is the key to enter knowledge repertoire and therefore to increase thinking capital.

Knowledge Establishment: It refers to “storing, establishing, and keeping knowledge in form of a framework that saves the integration of its parts and therefore finds the ability to be recycled by the organization’s employees” (Gholi Pour 2009).

Knowledge Transformation: To be valuable, knowledge must be transformed to others. This transformation can be passive or active. Knowledge can be shared through informational systems or through individual cooperation. Knowledge can be combined in educational and entrepreneurship programs or be engaged in a procedure. It can be simply stored in a storehouse in a way that when it is needed, it can be accessed easily.

Knowledge Creation: It refers to “activities that are related to entering new knowledge to system including expanding, discovering and capturing knowledge” (Gholi Pour 2009).

Knowledge Usage: The ways of using knowledge and gaining awareness are depending upon culture and also organization’s activities. This is the philosophy of management that forces employees to do their bests and use the knowledge obtained to be more effective. Organizations should be “creative” in using procedures and new “technologies” if they want to be “effective” (Kondalkar 2009, p. 23).

Quality of Working Life: It is one of the most important features for each organization to improve the performance by means of making working condition more human and democratic and also participating employees in the process of decision making. Totally, according to the definitions given, it can be concluded that “improving quality of working life means creating a kind of balance between objectives and needs of organizations and employees” (Pardakhti and et al 2010, p. 129-130).

R.S.M.Lau in his research (2000) under the title of “Quality of work life and performance” in the school of business, university of South Dakota studied the variables mentioned and found out that there was a significant and direct relationship between them. Moreover there was a negative relationship between job satisfaction and employees’ replacement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is descriptive – correlative, and has applied its objective in a practical manner by means of library research. Since, it measures the relationship between two variables; therefore, it can be considered as a correlative one. The statistical population 540 employees of Lorestan Gas Organization, among whom 222 persons were selected as sample, using Morgan Table and random selection. To collect the data needed, both field work and library-based studies are employed. For the theoretical foundations and the literature review, a library-based approach including a variety of books and research papers as well as English & Persian publications, is used; according to Likert 5 dimension model and Richard Walton’s model. The validity and reliability for the knowledge management questionnaire was 0/90 and for the quality of working life questionnaire was 0/94, which were tested through Alpha Coefficient, and then they were accepted. Then, SPSS Software was used to analyze the data using Spearman correlation coefficient test and Chi-square test.

FINDINGS

This research contains five alternative hypotheses and one main hypothesis whose variables and results are analyzed.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between paired variable and impaired variable.

The alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between paired variable and impaired variable.

The 1st alternative hypothesis test: The relationship between knowledge gaining and quality of working life.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between knowledge gaining and quality of working life.

The 1st alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between knowledge gaining and quality of working life.

Table 1

Model	Total	Degree	Mean	F	Significancy
1					
Regression	39.185	1	39.185	160.436	0.000
Rest	53.724	220	0.244		
Total	92.909	221			

Table 2 (Regression Coefficient)

Model		Non-standard Coefficient		Standard Coefficient	T	Significancy
1						
Dependent	Independent	B	Deviation	Beta		
Quality of Working Life	Constant	1.404	0.111		12.640	0.000
	Knowledge Gaining	0.514	0.041	0.649	12.667	0.000

The result of the 1st alternative hypothesis: According to table 1 and 2, because of the significancy and other numbers, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a relationship between knowledge gaining and quality of working life.

The 2nd alternative hypothesis test: The relationship between knowledge establishment and quality of working life.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between knowledge establishment and quality of working life.

The 2nd alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between knowledge establishment and quality of working life.

Table 3

Model	Total	Degree	Mean	F	Significancy	
1	Regression	85.172	1	85.172	2421.623	0.000
	Rest	7.738	220	0.035		
	Total	92.909	221			

Table 4 (Regression Coefficient)

Model		Non-standard Coefficient	Standard Coefficient	T	Significancy	
1						
Dependent	Independent	B	Deviation	Beta		
Quality of Working Life	Constant	1.154	0.035		33.229	0.000
	Knowledge Establishment	0.602	0.12	0.957	49.210	0.000

The result of the 2nd alternative hypothesis: According to table 3 and 4, because of the significancy and other numbers, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a relationship between knowledge establishment and quality of working life.

The 3rd alternative hypothesis test: The relationship between knowledge transformation and quality of working life.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between knowledge transformation and quality of working life.

The 3rd alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between knowledge transformation and quality of working life.

Table 5

Model	Total	Degree	Mean	F	Significancy	
1	Regression	38.578	1	38.578	156.211	0.000
	Rest	54.331	220	0.247		
	Total	92.909	221			

Table 6 (Regression Coefficient)

Model		Non-standard Coefficient	Standard Coefficient	T	Significancy	
1						
Dependent	Independent	B	Deviation	Beta		
Quality of Working Life	Constant	1.534	0.103		14.951	0.000
	Knowledge Transformation	0.477	0.038	0.644	12.498	0.000

The result of the 3rd alternative hypothesis: According to table 5 and 6, because of the significancy and other numbers, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a relationship between knowledge transformation and quality of working life.

The 4th alternative hypothesis test: The relationship between knowledge creation and quality of working life.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between knowledge creation and quality of working life.

The 4th alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between knowledge creation and quality of working life.

Table 7

Model	Total	Degree	Mean	F	Significancy	
1	Regression	83.799	1	83.799	2023.511	0.000
	Rest	9.111	220	0.041		
	Total	92.909	221			

Table 8 (Regression Coefficient)

Model 1		Non- standard Coefficient	Standard Coefficient	T	Significancy	
Dependent	Independent	B	Deviation	Beta		
Quality of Working Life	Constant	1.207	0.037		32.775	0.000
	Knowledge Creation	0.670	0.015	0.950	44.983	0.000

The result of the 4th alternative hypothesis: According to table 7 and 8, because of the significancy and other numbers, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a relationship between knowledge creation and quality of working life.

The 5th alternative hypothesis test: The relationship between knowledge usage and quality of working life.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between knowledge usage and quality of working life.

The 5th alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between knowledge usage and quality of working life.

Table 9

Model	Total	Degree	Mean	F	Significancy	
1	Regression	47.434	1	47.434	229.480	0.000
	Rest	45.475	220	0.207		
	Total	92.909	221			

Table 10 (Regression Coefficient)

Model 1		Non- standard Coefficient	Standard Coefficient	T	Significancy	
Dependent	Independent	B	Deviation	Beta		
Quality of Working Life	Constant	1.479	0.089		16.613	0.000
	Knowledge Usage	0.476	0.031	0.715	15.149	0.000

The result of the 5th alternative hypothesis: According to table 9 and 10, because of the significancy and other numbers, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a relationship between knowledge Usage and quality of working life.

The main hypothesis test: The relationship between knowledge management and quality of working life.

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between knowledge management and quality of working life.

The alternative hypothesis: There is a relationship between knowledge management and quality of working life.

Table 11

Model	Total	Degree	Mean	F	Significancy	
1	Regression	75.311	1	75.311	941.497	0.000
	Rest	17.598	220	0.080		
	Total	92.909	221			

Table 12 (Regression Coefficient)

Model 1		Non- standard Coefficient	Standard Coefficient	T	Significancy	
Dependent	Independent	B	Deviation	Beta		
Quality of Working Life	Constant	0.910	0.063		14.499	0.000
	Knowledge Management	0.719	0.023	0.900	30.684	0.000

The result of the alternative hypothesis: According to table 11 and 12, because of the significancy and other numbers, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Consequently, there is a relationship between knowledge management and quality of working life.

CONCLUSION

In this research, we studied the relationship between knowledge management and quality of working life. According to the objectives, this research could be considered as a practical one, and according to the methodology; it could be considered as descriptive – deductive. The statistical society included 540 employees of Lorestan Gas

Organization, among whom 222 persons were selected as sample, using Morgan Table and random selection. We used two standard questionnaires, beside library research, according to Likert 5 dimension model and Richard Walton's model.

Results showed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and its factors and quality of working life. Moreover, among the variables, respectively knowledge establishment with the coefficient of 0.957, knowledge creation with the coefficient of 0.950, knowledge usage with the coefficient of 0.715, knowledge gaining 0.649, and knowledge transformation with the coefficient of 0.644 have the most important influence on quality of working life for employees.

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