



# Investigating the Relationship between Knowledge Management and Organizational Culture of Employees of Narxoz University in 2018

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## ARTICLE INFO

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### Article history:

Received 13 Apr 2020

Received in revised form 23 May 2020

Accepted 05 Aug 2020

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### Keywords:

Knowledge Management,

Organizational Culture,

Narxoz University

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## ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to investigate the relationship between knowledge management and the organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University in 2018. The research method is applied-survey and with nature of descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of this study consists of all 4169 employees of Narxoz University. The sample size is determined using Krejcie and Morgan table and 351 is selected using simple random sampling. Sharon Lawson's Knowledge Management Questionnaire (2003) and Cameron Quinn's Organizational Culture Questionnaire (2006) were used for data collection. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by relevant professors and other previous researches. The reliability of the questionnaire of knowledge management and the organizational culture was reported 0.84 and 0.82 based on Cronbach's alpha. The data were analyzed using spss24 software and Pearson test. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and the culture of employees of Narxoz University. There is also a significant relationship between the components of knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge retention, and knowledge storage and knowledge distribution with the culture of employees Narxoz University. Therefore, it is suggested that the employees of the Narxoz University through training and processes to increase their ability to acquire knowledge, create knowledge, distribute knowledge, and in general manage their knowledge, thereby organizational culture to be increased.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the issue of knowledge and knowledge management has become a topic of discussion in scientific circles and practical fields. Knowledge creates competitive advantage and organizations that are unable for acquiring the required business knowledge and utilizing it properly are doomed to failure in the arena of competition. One of the tools that can help organizations to achieve these goals is knowledge management. Knowledge management is a process that helps organizations to identify, select, organize, and disseminate important information and skills that are considered as organizational memory and are typically unorganized (Akhavan and Bagheri, 2011). But knowledge management alone is not enough, because the success of an organization in implementing any strategy, including knowledge management, to a large extent depends on the support of the organizational culture of that strategy. Organizational culture is recognized as the dominant behaviors in the organization, and it is defined as values of all beliefs, ways, and differences that are common in members of an organization (Esisigde, citing from Meshbeki, 2010). The effort of organizations to become knowledge-based organizations will be successful if there are cultural characteristics required to implement knowledge management in the organization. Knowledge can be effectively created and shared if it is supported by culture. Organizational culture can be used as a powerful leverage to strengthen organizational behavior. Weak organizational culture prevents individuals from sharing and disseminating their knowledge in an effort to maintain their personal power base and efficiency (Haghighat Monfared and Hoshyar, 2010).

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24200/jmas.vol8iss03pp62-67>

There is a long gap between the present status of the university and its desirable status. One of the issues that currently separated the academic organization of other developed countries from the Iran is the application of knowledge. Since organizational culture is a system of common values, beliefs, and customs among members of the organization and interacts with different parts of the organization, therefore, it is considered an effective tool in applying knowledge management in the organization. Research conducted at advanced academic institutions of the world states that the culture of a healthy cooperation can be the most important factor for success as an incentive to share knowledge. Unfortunately, changing the culture of knowledge is one of the problematic measures of academic organizations. There are many factors that prevent people of organization from sharing knowledge. These factors include employees' resistance to change, if employees believe that knowledge sharing is critical to the organization, they will use any technology and methods to share knowledge and learning (Sharifzadeh & Budlai, 2011). Therefore, the performance and efficiency of the organization largely depend on the effort of employees to accept the tasks and roles beyond the assigned role and task in the job description. Undoubtedly, the differentiate aspect of effective organizations from ineffective ones is its employees (Akbari, 2009). Therefore the role of university employees in creating knowledge and culture is very evident. As most education scholars believe that the university is as the main teaching-learning institution in the community in order to cope with the challenges of the new millennium, inevitably transforming to learning communities, creating a knowledge-sharing culture, and using the efficient strategy of knowledge management. (Nemati, 2006).

Therefore, given that today's organizations, especially educational and academic centers that are in relation with different strata of society, are operating in a dynamic and development environment, according to the importance of knowledge management and organizational culture in the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations, paying attention to these variables and identifying their relationships is very important. In other words, this study seeks to answer the key question whether there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University.

### **1.1. Theoretical Foundations**

Organizational culture is one of the most important and interesting topics in managing organizational behavior. Researchers and scientific centers attempted a lot to define, recognize and influence on behavior of employees. One of the most comprehensive definitions of organizational culture is related to the definition of Huxinsky and Buchanan (2001), who considers organizational culture as a relatively uniform set of values, beliefs, customs, traditions and sustainable practices that are shared by members of the organization. This definition is useful because it considers the collective nature of culture and states that culture exists at both levels of beliefs and behaviors (Seifollahi & Davari, 2008).

Organizational culture is a framework that defines organizational values, behaviors and attitudes specific to that organization. Organizational culture determines a special identity for the organization (Chouang et al., 2004). Cameron & Quinn (2006) also believes that organizational culture is a set of assumed values, core beliefs, group memory, expectations, and definitions of success within an organization that it reflects a common ideology that individuals have in mind and it expresses the sense of identity of the employees. Organizational culture provides unwritten rules and unspoken guidelines for compromise with others in the organization and increase the stability of the social system.

One of the aspects of complexity of organizational culture is how it is created. How two organizations with similar environmental backgrounds and leaders act differently over the years (Sharifzadeh and Kazemi, 1998). From Scholes' perspective, organizational culture is shaped along three dimensions of evolutionary, internal and external. Evolutionary culture states that organizational culture evolves over time and in stages, as members of the organization face the challenge stopping or changing their current culture. In terms of the internal formation of culture, Scholes states that organizational culture is the result of the internal conditions that the organization operates in it (Arjmandi, 2006).

Cameron & Quinn stated four types of organizational culture, based on 39 key indicators of effectiveness of Campbell et al., according to two basic dimensions (Introversion vs. extraversion, control and stability vs. flexibility). According to Cameron and Quinn, these criteria of organization effectiveness are important in this view that they represent the characteristics that people consider them valuable regarding the performance of an organization. Cameron and Quinn suggested that the framework of competitive values can be used to examine the deep structure of organizational culture, core beliefs, motivations, leadership, decision making, effectiveness, values, and other organizational cases. This framework of competing values consists of four types of culture: hierarchical culture, market culture, tribal culture, adhocracy culture.

In hierarchical culture, the focus is on stability, control, and internal position. The organization is highly structured and formalized. Procedures determine what individuals should do and leaders are the best coordinators and organizers of thought in productivity. In market culture, the focus is on stability and control and the external position. Such culture emphasizes monitoring and sustainability. What link the components together are the emphasis on victory and long-term concepts, competitive operations and the emphasis on achieving success and achieving goals. In an organization that (group) tribe culture is dominated, it tends to less monitoring and sustainability rather than hierarchical. Its focus is on flexibility and internal position. There are characteristics of tribe culture, i.e teamwork, participation programs of employees, organizational commitment. With such a culture, the organization is better managed through group culture and development of human resources. In adhocracy culture, the focus is on the flexibility and external position. What causes the difference of characteristics of adhocracy culture with three previous cultures are innovation, innovation, freedom, initiative, and pioneering that organizations succeed by providing new services and future products (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

Many definitions are provided from knowledge management. Knowledge management can be defined in a simple way: Knowledge management is a scientific discipline that encourages and enhances the reciprocal support for the creation, capture, organizing and use of information (Haney, 2003).

Knowledge management is the study of strategy, process, and technology in order to acquire, select, organize, decide, and apply the expertise and vital information for new business to improve the quality of decision making and productivity of an organization (Rich, 2005). At a general level, knowledge management can be defined as a set of processes that observes the creation, dissemination and use of knowledge. This definition requires the creation of organizational, supportive structures, facilitating the relationships on members, the use of information technology tools in the network, and explaining knowledge (Gupta & Sharma, 2004).

Knowledge management has many benefits for organizations. The benefits of knowledge management in an organization is at the individual and organizational level; at the individual level, knowledge management enables employees to enhance their skills and experiences by collaborating with others and sharing their knowledge and learning to achieve professional development. At the organizational level, knowledge management has four major benefits for an organization; promoting the organization's performance through efficiency, productivity, quality and innovation; therefore, organizations consider knowledge management as a strategy and competitive advantage (Seifollahi & Davari, 2008).

The four main applications of knowledge management are based on a model that considers the primary role of knowledge management as knowledge sharing across the organization. Mediation, externalization, internalization of cognition. Mediation is the communication between knowledge and man. Mediation is an essential step in the internal and external response. Its role is to relate the knowledge seeker with that person's desirable sources of knowledge for the seeker. Externalization is the relation of knowledge to knowledge. The externalization of knowledge focuses on the ordering of external and internal awareness. Internalization is the relationship between knowledge and research. It is the extraction of knowledge from the external source and its refinement in order to establish a personal relation with the seeker of knowledge. Recognition is the process of creating or representing decisions based on existing knowledge. In the simplest form, recognition is obtained from the use of experience to determine the most appropriate outcome for a new and innovative event, opportunity or challenge (Ibid.).

The principles of knowledge management can be stated from the perspective of two people of the most famous knowledge management experts. Davenport and DeLong (1998) proposes the principles of knowledge management as: knowledge is derived from the thoughts of individuals and is embedded in the thoughts of individuals. Sharing knowledge requires trust. Technology makes new knowledge behaviors possible. Sharing knowledge should be encouraged and rewarded. Management support and resource allocation (for knowledge management) is essential. Knowledge management programs should begin with experimenting program (Davenport et al., 1998). Depending on different views on knowledge, the focus of knowledge management will be different. If knowledge is considered as a goal, then the focus of knowledge management is on the flow of knowledge and processes of knowledge creation, sharing and creation. If knowledge is considered as a capability, knowledge management focuses on creating the core capability, understanding the strategic advantage of technical knowledge and creating intelligence capital (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Also, DeLong and Fahey (2004) believe that 80% of knowledge management is related to individuals, organizational culture and 20% related to technologies of knowledge management. Hence the type of culture within an organization is critical to the success of knowledge management. Much research has been conducted regarding organizational culture and knowledge management both in the country and abroad, which are presented in two separate sections:

- Soltan Hosseini and Mousavi (2012) in their study titled determining the relative contribution of knowledge management to organizational health in the General Directorate of Physical Education and Sport Committees, showed a positive and significant correlation between the knowledge management and organizational health of the employees of the General Directorate of Physical Education and Sport Committees. Isfahan showed. Also, there was a positive and significant correlation between knowledge socialization, knowledge internalization, knowledge outsourcing, and knowledge integration with some components of organizational health.

- Gol Mohammadnejad and Mahdavi (2011) in a study titled investigating the relationship between social capital and knowledge management in girls' high schools in Tabriz concluded that there was a significant and direct relationship between social capital and five components of knowledge management such as knowledge registration, knowledge transfer, knowledge creation and Knowledge application.

- Henry (2011) in a study titled designing structural equation model of social capital and knowledge management in sports organizations concluded that in order to properly manage and develop organizational knowledge in the sports organizations, providing an atmosphere in organization full of trust, effective communication and appropriate interactions between members in a way that facilitates the exchange of ideas and thoughts among employees, and encourages innovation in the organization, is essential by the management of the organization.

- Zomorodian and Rostami (2010) in a study titled the deployment of knowledge management system based on organizational strategy (Case study: Islamic Azad University units of the district (8) concluded that there was a significant difference between the status of five factors of readiness of deploying knowledge management. Therefore, it can be said that the factors related to readiness of deploying knowledge management do not have the same rankings, so that the most is related to the content of change and the least related to organizational structure.

- Khodadadi, (2008) examined the relationship between knowledge management and management productivity of offices in East Azarbaijan province. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between all components of knowledge management and organizational intelligence.

- How et al. (2012) examined the effect of personal motivation and social capital on employees' tendency to share implicit and explicit knowledge in different industries. The results showed that organizational rewards had a negative effect on the tendency to share tacit knowledge but also had a positive effect on the tendency to share explicit knowledge. The result shows that social capital has significantly affected the tendency of employees to share explicit and implicit knowledge.

- Fedricki waskalouvic (2012) in a study titled the relationship between organizational culture, job satisfaction, and organizational strategy concluded that self-confidence and dimensions of organizational culture of employees has a positive effect on organizational strategy. The results also indicate that employees' organizational culture has the opposite result with fatigue and resignation.

- Mendelson and Ziegler (2010) have shown in their research that organizational culture has a strong influence on financial performance of organizations. Organizations with a high organizational culture have had more productivity and profitability.

- Lim (2010) in a study titled the relationship between organizational culture, job satisfaction, and training organizational culture in a Korean private organization concluded that the results of this study empower HR and CEOs practitioners, regarding the role of commitment, organizational culture and other variables that can play an important role in an organization's interventions and practices.

Cho and Chane (2008) in their research have examined the relationship between social capital and knowledge sharing in different companies and considered social capital dimensions including social networking, social trust and sharing goals, but considered the concept of knowledge management

totally. The result shows that social networking and sharing goals have a significant relationship with organizational knowledge sharing, but social trust does not have a direct effect on organizational knowledge sharing.

- Robert dimai fild (2008), in a study entitled the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management in the power generation industry, concluded that an organizational culture in which HRM processes, training, productivity and modeling is the fundamental principle can be considered the main factor in achieving goals of knowledge management.

## 2. Research Methodology

This research is applied objectively. The statistical population includes all the employees employed at the University of Narxoz in 2018 which is 4169 employees. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table and 351 employees were selected using simple random sampling. In the present study, documentary and library method were used in the theoretical section. In the section of answering questions, the data was conducted using the field method. The research questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part contains 24 questions of Sharon Lawson's knowledge management questionnaire in 5-point Likert scale and the second part contains 24 questions of Cameron Quinn organizational culture questionnaire in 5-point Likert scale and Pearson correlation coefficient test was used in inferential analysis. . Research data and information were analyzed using SPSS software.

## 3. Research findings

Is there a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University?

**Table 1. Pearson correlation test of knowledge management and organizational culture**

organizational culture		knowledge management
761/0	Pearson correlation	
000/0	Significant level	
351	Number	

## 4. Result

Pearson correlation test ( $r = 0.761$ ) and significance level (0.00) regarding the relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture indicate that the hypothesis is significant statistically with confidence (0.95%) and at the level ( $P < 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis is rejected and there is a positive correlation between knowledge management and organizational culture. It means that, as the knowledge management of employees is increased, organizational culture will be increased. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that there is a direct relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture.

Is there a significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University?

**Table 2. Pearson correlation test of knowledge acquisition and organizational culture**

knowledge acquisition		organizational culture
474/0	Pearson correlation coefficient	
00/0	Significant level	
351	Number	

The result of Pearson correlation test ( $r = 0.474$ ) and significance level (0.00) regarding the relationship between organizational culture and sub-scale of knowledge acquisition indicate that the hypothesis is significant statistically with confidence (0.95%) and at the level ( $P < 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis is rejected and there is a positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge acquisition. It means that, as the knowledge acquisition of employees is increased, organizational culture will be increased. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that there is a direct relationship between knowledge acquisition and organizational culture.

Is there a significant relationship between knowledge creation and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University?

**Table 3. Pearson correlation test of knowledge creation and organizational culture**

organizational culture		knowledge creation
580/0	Pearson correlation coefficient	
000/0	Significant level	
351	Number	

The result of Pearson correlation test ( $r = 0.580$ ) and significance level (0.00) regarding the relationship between organizational culture and sub-scale of knowledge creation indicate that the hypothesis is significant statistically with confidence (0.95%) and at the level ( $P < 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis is rejected and there is a positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge creation. It means that, as the knowledge creation of employees is increased, organizational culture will be increased. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that there is a direct relationship between knowledge creation and organizational culture.

Is there a significant relationship between knowledge storage and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University?

**Table 4. Pearson correlation test of knowledge storage and organizational culture**

organizational culture		knowledge storage
612/0	Pearson correlation coefficient	
000/0	Significant level	
351	Number	

The analysis table of knowledge storage and knowledge management shows that the level of significance between the organizational culture variable and the knowledge storage subscale is less than (0.05) or ( $P < 0.05$ ) and it is at the level of (0.000). This indicates that the hypothesis is significant and there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and employees' knowledge storage. The Pearson correlation coefficient for these two variables was ( $r = 0.612$ ). There is a positive correlation between knowledge management and knowledge storage. It means that, as the knowledge storage of employees is increased, organizational culture will be increased.

Is there a significant relationship between knowledge distribution and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University?

**Table 5. Pearson correlation test of knowledge distribution and organizational culture**

organizational culture		knowledge distribution
648/0	Pearson correlation coefficient	
000/0	Significant level	
351	Number	

The above statistical analysis table shows that the level of significance obtained is between the organizational culture and the knowledge distribution is ( $P < 0.05$ ) and at the level of zero, the hypothesis is significant and the null hypothesis is rejected. The Pearson correlation coefficient for these two variables is ( $r = 0.648$ ). It can be said that there is a positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge distribution. As the knowledge distribution of employees is increased, organizational culture will be increased.

Is there a significant relationship between knowledge retention and organizational culture of employees of Narxoz University?

**Table 6. Pearson correlation test of knowledge retention and organizational culture**

organizational culture		knowledge retention
707/0	Pearson correlation coefficient	
000/0	Significant level	
351	Number	

The analysis table of knowledge retention scale and organizational culture factor shows that the significance level between organizational culture variable and sub-scale of knowledge retention is less than (0.05) or ( $p < 0.05$  and ( $p < 0.00$ )) and indicates that the hypothesis is significant, and there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and employees' knowledge retention. Pearson's correlation coefficient for these two variables is ( $r = 0.707$ ). It can be said that there is a positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge retention; it means that the more the knowledge retention of employees is increased, the more the organizational culture of employees will be increased.

## 5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture. The result of correlation test showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between knowledge management and organizational culture. These results are consistent with the findings of Haghighat Monfared (2010) that there is a significant and positive relationship between knowledge management and organizational culture. Therefore, knowledge management will increase as the organizational culture will increase.

Regarding the research sub-components, Pearson correlation test showed that there is a significant and positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge acquisition. This finding is consistent with the result of Sattari and Ghahfarokhi (2007) which found a positive and significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and organizational culture of employees of Isfahan Steel Company. Therefore, as the knowledge acquisition of employees is increased, because of the direct relationship, the organizational culture of the employees will be increased and the employees will show a more appropriate organizational culture. Pearson correlation test showed a significant relationship between knowledge creation and organizational culture. This

finding is consistent with the research result of Azizi (2007) which found a significant relationship between knowledge creation and organizational culture. Therefore, by increasing knowledge creation, the organizational culture also increases or vice versa. Pearson correlation test showed a significant and direct relationship between organizational culture and knowledge storage. This finding is consistent with research result of Pajuhani (2008) that obtained the significant relationship between organizational culture and knowledge storage. Therefore, by increasing knowledge storage of Narxoz University, their organizational culture is increased. Pearson correlation test showed a significant and direct relationship between organizational culture and knowledge distribution. This finding is consistent with the research result of Maleki (2011) which obtained a positive and significant relationship between organizational culture and knowledge distribution. By increasing the knowledge distribution, the organizational culture of employees increases. Pearson correlation test showed a significant and positive relationship between organizational culture and knowledge retention. This finding is consistent with the research result of My Fild (2008) that obtained a significant relationship between organizational culture and knowledge retention. Therefore, by increasing knowledge retention, the organizational culture of employees increases.

Therefore, considering that there is a significant relationship between the components of knowledge management and organizational culture of employees, to increase the organizational culture, it is recommended to employees of Narxoz University to increase their relationship with colleagues and exchange information in different fields. It is also recommended that senior managers of universities provide the opportunity to create an atmosphere of interaction through dialogue between informal groups. Obviously, this issue enhances the organizational culture of employees.

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