

Mediating Role of Knowledge Management in the Relationship of Organizational Culture with Tejarat Bank Employees' Creativity in Shiraz Branches

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Abstract

The present study aimed to explain the mediating role of knowledge management in the relationship of organizational culture with Tejarat Bank employees' creativity in Shiraz branches. The method of research was practical in terms of the purpose and was descriptive in terms of the nature and method and was a correlational study. The studied population included Tejarat Bank employees in Fars province branches that their number was up to 900 people. 296 individuals were selected via stratified random sampling for determining the sample size based on Krejcie - Morgan table. Measuring instruments in this study consists of three questionnaires of Torrance creativity, Sharon Lawson's knowledge management and Cameron and Queen's organizational culture. The validity and reliability of the measuring instruments were confirmed. Results of regression analysis and examination of correlation coefficients revealed that organizational culture has a meaningful and direct relationship with knowledge management. Organizational culture has a direct and meaningful relationship with creativity. Therefore, there is also a direct and meaningful relationship between knowledge management and creativity. Organizational culture is significantly able to positively predict the knowledge management. Knowledge management plays a mediator significant role between organizational culture and creativity.

Key words: Creativity, Knowledge management, Organizational culture

INTRODUCTION

In the today's competitive world, companies cannot survive without innovation and creativity. Also human capitals and creativity are among the issues that have a very special bond with each other and creativity and innovation in work have increasingly converted to determinant factors of performance, success and long-term life span in the organization.

Despite the fact that environmental evolutions have put two ways in front of organizations, being creative or being destroyed, but they do not have a correct understanding about effective factors which forms creativity and do

not know how to creatively raise their employees. Facing challenges is the most important reason for having creativity.

Nowadays organizations around the world are faced with two kinds of challenges; globalization and competition and access to ideas, programs and modern methods in dealing with them is the way they can overcome them (Khazayi, 2014). Creativity and innovation is something that is constantly felt in the organization. So, it should be institutionalized and become a part of the organization's work and culture. Whenever higher-level managers and policy-makers of the organization do not believe in creativity and innovation as essential activities, no activity will survive in this field. The establishment of research cores and innovation in the organization can facilitate and accelerate the work of creativity and innovation. Creating common beliefs for innovation and the ability to see creativity as a shared norm in the organization will need education. Toffler believes that the most important activity and the way to deal with great transformations and future life to accept the changes is education. Effective training helps people to

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achieve enough growth and ability in their jobs and work more effectively. Managers should know that one of the important objectives in education in the current turbulent and variable environment is learning the methods of creativity and innovation (Hassan Zarei, 1994).

Knowledge Management as a mediating variable may be effective in employees' creativity. Knowledge management is known as a systematic process for finding, selecting, organizing, abstracting and presenting information to increase employees' understanding in their particular area of interest. Knowledge management helps the organization in understanding the insight gained from their experience. Certain activities of knowledge management help the organization to focus on the acquisition, storage and application of knowledge for issues such as problem solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning and decision making (Bagheri, 2010). Knowledge Management is a process through which organization generates wealth or creates value from their intellectual and knowledge-based capitals. Knowledge Management is nothing but managing the funds until the end of its life (Shih and Ching, 2005).

Knowledge management helps the organization in planning, conducting and making correct decisions through information and knowledge. Knowledge can be distributed in the organization and most importantly, it should be appropriate for making decisions and thereby lead to competitive business for the organization. Knowledge Management is effective in improving the quality, increasing efficiency, having updated information, increasing the effectiveness, customer satisfaction, improving decision-making and creativity. Knowledge Management is essential in our organizations, because we are producing knowledge, experience and new golden hints every day that may have been produced in the past or be required again in the future. These treasures will be lost simply and will not be gained through interchanges or departure of other people. So Knowledge Management is a necessity issue for the survival of the organization. Knowledge is known as a key competitive factor in the global economy, so maintaining knowledge inside an organization is one of the competitive advantages of that organization (Rezaeian, 2003). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have introduced the components of Knowledge Management including knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, knowledge utilization and knowledge storage. The establishment of a knowledge management system plays an important role in creating an entrepreneurship atmosphere in the organizations (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; quoted by Rastegar 2016).

Yili Renko *et al.* (2001) believe that the development of a new product and process and innovation needs to use and combine knowledge from different parts. In their

research they stated that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and innovation. They believe the more powerful companies that gain knowledge from inside and outside of the organization, can reduce uncertainty. They can discover more opportunities to gain more technical and technological advantages and hence, create innovation in their product and service. Hung *et al.* (2010) concluded that innovation and creativity cover the process of structure, collecting, sharing and applying actual and implicit knowledge and has a direct and significant relationship with them. Tilgin and Asavy (2016) studied the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management activities and concluded that there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and Knowledge Management and components of organizational culture explain almost 71% of the Knowledge Management variance. About presenting the model of key success factors of knowledge management Hassan Begay (2010) says that to enhance creativity and organizational learning, when the relationship between dependent and individually independent variables and variables without interacting and the relationship between factors are considered, all seven key factors of knowledge management success have a positive impact on organizational creativity and organizational learning. But when the interaction and relationship of key factors of knowledge management success with each other and the impact of both independent variables on the dependent variables are examined, only two factors can simultaneously increase organizational innovation and organizational learning; strategies and knowledge-based policies and human resource management. Nir *et al.* (2010) investigated the relationship between Knowledge Management and creativity among librarians in academic libraries of Shiraz city. The results showed that there is a significant and positive relationship at the level of 0.013 between the two variables of knowledge management and creativity with regard to the correlation coefficient of 0.261. One of the other results was the positive and meaningful relationship between the scores of the "people" and "culture" components in librarians' knowledge management with their creativity score, respectively with correlation coefficients of 0.273 and 0.338. But there were no significant relationship between the scores of the components of "technology" and "process" with the librarians' score of creativity respectively, with correlation coefficients of 0.122 and 0.094. ANOVA test results showed that the level of education has a significant impact on librarians' knowledge management, while gender, work experience and level of education have no significant effect on librarians' creativity.

Another variable that may play a role in employees' creativity is organizational culture. In general, lack of attention to organizational culture, beliefs and values of

people, if do not lead toutter failureand not reaching goals and outlooks in the organization, at least creates serious problems in the trend of the organization's development and wastes a lot of energy to solve the problems caused by confrontation of predicted objectives with the common culture of the organization.

Organizational culture gives an organizational identity to the organizational employees. What highlights the successful organizations and distinguish them from others is their ability to attract, develop and keep talented and creative employeesand employees, in turn, will have a deep dependence toward the organization. So by creating a teamwork culture and by eliminating the conditions that lead to the employees' powerlessness the foundation for creativity could be provided. Today, the organizational culture, such as decision-makingand other related issuesto the systemhas become a common issue in all the studiesrelated to management and in organizational analysis, has allocated one of the important parts of research to itself in thefield of organizational behavior (Abdullahi and Naveh Ibrahim, 2006). The results of Woodman *et al.*(2014) shows that there is a positive relationshipbetween the rational, participatory, supportive, risk-taking culture and the individuals' creativityand a negative relationship between hierarchical and bureaucratic culture and the creativity of individuals. The results of Anderson's research (2014) indicated that there is a relationshipbetween the organizational culture and leadership styleand the creativity of employeesand in this regard, along with an increase in innovation, the employees' satisfaction and the effectiveness and productivity of the organization will also increase. Seyedi *et al.*(2014) in a research with the title of the relationship between organizational culture and creativity, change and innovationamong elementary school principals in Shiraz have concluded that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of organizational culture and creativity and among the dimensions of organizational culture, risk-takingdimensions, individualism and patriarchal genderhave the power to predict the creativity of managers. There is a significant relationship between the dimensions of organizational culture, change and innovation and among the dimensions of organizational culture, risk-taking dimensions and patriarchal genderhave the power to predict the creativity of managers.The creativity of female managers is more than their male counterparts.

The results of Yazdi's research (2014) with the title of investigating the relationship between organizational culture and creativity of employees in branches of the National Bank of North Khorasanshowed that there is a direct and positive relationship between organizational culture and creativity. And the higher the organizational culture score, the more creativity can be

seen among employees; and among the indicators of organizational culture,adaptability in relation to other indices has a higher average score. Rezaei Sufi (2014) in a study titled examining the relationship between organizational culture and creativity and the productivity of faculty members of physical education in Payam Nour University, found that components of organizational culture, includingorganizational communication, conflict, management support, organizational cohesion, risk-taking, clarity of goals and rewards systems have a significant relationshipwith the creativity of faculty members. On the other hand, components of organizational culture such as organizational identity, individual creativity and controlhave no relationwith the creativity of faculty members of physical education in Payam Nour University. Also, the results showed that the components of organizational culture such as organizational communication, reward systems, organizational cohesion, control and individual creativity have a significant relationship with the productivity of faculty members of Payam Nour University. Besides, components such as conflict, corporate identity, and clarity of objectives, risk taking and management supportdo not have a significant relationship with the productivity of faculty members of Payamenoor University.

Nasiri Velik Bani and colleagues (2016) in a study titled investigating the organizational culture relationship and knowledge management with the mediating role of talent management found that there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and talent management, talent management and knowledge management and also between organizational culture and knowledge management.The results of structural equation modeling showed that talent management can have a mediating role in the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management.

Raeisi Sarteshnizi and colleagues (2016) in a study titled the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management cycle concluded that hierarchical culture, with an average rating of 3.16 is the dominant organizational culture in the police command of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province and thecomponent ofthe dominant knowledge management is the knowledge organization component with an average rating of 3.98. The Correlation test has also showed a significant and positive relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management with the correlation coefficient of 0.89 and theorganizational culture variable has the most relationship with the component of knowledge dissemination where the correlation coefficient is 0.87.

The main issue in the present study is that without the support of innovation and creativity, organizations cannot

grow and develop and the cleverness of managers is to use the talents and potentials of individuals in order to create and develop the foundation of creativity and innovation. According to what was said, it can be concluded that employees' creativity is among the most important goals of the sixth plan of development that have been addressed in this study. It seems that probable and practical outcomes of this study lead to an increase in the creativity of Tejarat Bank employees in the branches of Fars province. According to what has been said, the current study sought to answer this question that asks "does the knowledge management plays a significant mediating role in relation to the organizational culture and creativity of Tejarat Bank employees in Shiraz branches?"

Research Hypotheses

The main hypothesis

Knowledge management can significantly play the mediator role between organizational culture and creativity.

Subsidiary hypotheses

- Organizational culture has a meaningful relationship with knowledge management.
- Organizational culture has a meaningful relationship with their creativity.
- Knowledge management has a meaningful relationship with creativity.
- Organizational culture significantly is able to predict the knowledge management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research is practical in terms of the purpose and is descriptive in terms of the nature and method and is a correlational study. The studied population included Tejarat Bank employees in Fars province branches that their number is up to 900 people. 296 individuals were selected as the sample via stratified random sampling based on Krejcie - Morgan table.

The means coined by "Torrance" and translated by Moghimi (2001) was used in order to measure creativity. This scale assessed the creativity of faculty members in terms of fluency, flexibility, elaboration, originality and initiation. This instrument includes 28 items of Likert scale that the respondents state their opinion in a range of 5 degrees after studying each item (very low, low, medium, high and very high). The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by professors, scholars and educators. The reliability of the considered tools was obtained 0.80 by Yousefi Miyandeh (2010) using Cronbach's alpha in the community of high school teachers in Fars province. Also, the reliability has been reported 0.842 by the researcher in his study.

Knowledge management questionnaire was designed by Sharon Lawson, (2003) and consists of 24 items. This questionnaire consists of six dimensions of knowledge production (items 1-4), knowledge acquisition (items 5-8) and Organizing knowledge (9-12 items), storage of knowledge (items 13-16), dissemination of knowledge (items 17-20), and knowledge application (items 21-24), which the validity of the knowledge management questionnaire has been demonstrated through the correlation between each of the questionnaire components by Lawson (2003). The Lawson reliability coefficient, based on Cronbach's alpha, has been obtained 0.84 for creating knowledge, 0.89 for attracting knowledge, 0.86 for organizing knowledge, 0.89 for storing knowledge and 0.80 for knowledge application.

The organizational culture questionnaire has been made by Cameron and Quinn in 1999 and has been translated into Persian by Moghimi in 2011; the questionnaire consists of the following dimensions: The dominant features, organizational leadership, staff management, Organization coherence, strategic emphases and success criteria. The validity of the organizational culture questionnaire of Cameron and Quinn (1999) has been used, in several researches and the results indicate the validity of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained 0.804 by Siah Khalesar (2012) using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is equal to 0.926 for organizational culture which is an acceptable percentage and the questionnaire has the adequate reliability.

RESULTS

Hypothesis number one – there is a meaningful relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management (Figure 1).

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis and the results can be seen in Table 1.

The output of Table 1: It can be concluded that organizational culture ($R = 0.686, P < 0.01$) has a direct and significant relationship with knowledge management. As the organizational culture of employees increase, their knowledge management will also improve.

Hypothesis number two – there is a meaningful relationship between organizational culture and their creativity.

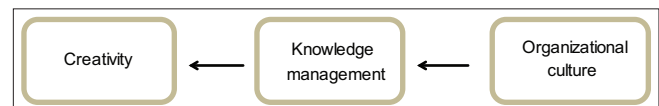


Figure 1: The mediating role of knowledge management in relation to the organizational culture and employee's creativity

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis and the results can be seen in Table 2.

The output of Table 2: It can be concluded that organizational culture ($r = 0.70, p < 0.01$) has a significant and direct relationship with creativity. The higher the organizational culture of Tejarat Bank employees, the more creativity can be seen in them.

Hypothesis number three – there is a meaningful relationship between knowledge management and their creativity.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test this hypothesis and the results can be seen in Table 3.

The output of Table 3: It can be concluded that knowledge management ($r = 0.367, p < 0.01$) has a direct and significant

relationship with creativity. As the knowledge management of employees improves, their creativity will also increase.

Hypothesis number four – organizational culture is able to significantly predict the knowledge management

Simple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis, and the results are visible in Table 4.

From the results of the variance analyzes test presented in Table 4: $[F(1,118) = 104.6, p < 0.01]$ It can be deduced that there is a significant linear relationship between the variable of organizational culture and knowledge management and organizational culture is significantly able to positively predict the knowledge management. The square multiple correlation coefficient is equal to 0.47, this means that about forty-seven percent of the knowledge management variance in bank employees is predictable through their organizational culture.

The main hypothesis- knowledge management can significantly play a mediating role between organizational culture and creativity. In order to test the mediating role of knowledge management between organizational culture and creativity, the method of path analysis, using hierarchical regression was carried out through the method of Baron and Kenny.

Table 5 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis based on hierarchical regression method to examine the mediating role of knowledge management in the relationship between organizational culture and creativity.

At a first order, organizational culture entered into the equation to predict creativity. In the second stage, the mediator variable of knowledge management entered into the equation. The results of this analysis showed

Table 1: Correlation matrix of organizational culture and knowledge management

	Knowledge management
Organizational culture	0.686**

*Significance level at 0.05 **significance level at 0.01

Table 2: Correlation matrix of organizational culture and creativity

	Creativity
Organizational culture	0.70**

*Significance level at 0.05, **significance level at 0.01

Table 3: Correlation matrix of knowledge management and creativity

	Creativity
Organizational culture	0.609**

*Significance level at 0.05, **significance level at 0.01

Table 4: Regression analysis results of knowledge management based on organizational culture

The criterion variable	Predictive variable	Beta	t	p	R	R2	F	df	p
Knowledge management	Organizational culture	0.686	1.23	0.00	0.686	0.47	104.6	1.118	0.00

Table 5: The results of the multiple regression based on hierarchical regression method to examine the mediating role of knowledge management

Order	Research variables	Beta	t	p	R	R2	F	df	p
First	Organizational culture	0.700	10.660	0.000	0.700	0.491	113.64	1.118	0.000
Second	Organizational culture	0.534	6.077	0.000	0.722	0.522	63.88	2.117	0.000
	Knowledge management	0.243	2.772	0.000	-	-	-	-	-

[F (1,118) = 113.64, p <0.01] in the first order and [F (2,117) = 63.88, p <0.01] in the second order. The results indicated that generally, in this model, fifty-two percent of creativity variance is explained by organizational culture and knowledge management. The results of hierarchical regression analysis in Table 5 show that knowledge management plays a mediatory role between the organizational culture and creativity (P <0/01). Also, the reduction of beta coefficient of organizational culture from 0.700 in the first stage to 0.534 in the second stage is emphasizing the partial mediating role of knowledge management in the relationship between organizational culture and creativity. In the following, the significance of reduction in the regression coefficient (from 0.700 in the first stage to 0.534 in the second stage) is tested. The hypothesis of indirect effect (partial mediation), is statistically significant according to the Sobel, Ariane and Goodman statistics (p <0.01) (Figure 2).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results showed that organizational culture has a direct and significant relationship with knowledge management. As the organizational culture of employees increase, their knowledge management will also improve. Also the results showed that there is a significant linear relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management and organizational culture is significantly able to positively predict the knowledge management. This part of findings is compatible with the research results of Nasiri Valikbani *et al.*, (2016) and Raisi Sarteshnizi *et al.*, (2016). In explaining these assumptions it should be said that since the organization’s culture affects human behavior, it would be possible to realize the causes of success and failure of an organization by studying their culture. Also, one can understand the organization’s culture and explore its relationship with other variables to share knowledge in the organization. Organizational culture as a character

and the foundation of organization has an effective role in establishing knowledge management. And first of all, the organization must pay attention to the organizational culture to be able to effectively improve the knowledge system and spread it into the entire organization. As much the organizational culture is stronger, the implementation of knowledge management will be carried out more successfully. Changing and creating a suitable and flexible organizational culture can gradually alter the pattern of interaction between people in the organization and take advantage from knowledge management as a competitive advantage.

A dynamic, collaborative and flexible cultural that members of the organization understand and believe it can perfectly react to changes and put the organization on the path of progress and excellence.

The results showed that there is a significant and direct relationship between organizational culture and creativity. As the organizational culture of the employees increases, their creativity will also raise. This part of the findings is consistent with the results of Woodman *et al.* (2014), Anderson (2014), seyedi *et al.* (2014), Yazdi (2014), Rezaei Sufi (2014). Through the adjustment of organization’s culture, creativity can be increased or decreased in the organization. So that as the culture of an organization become close to the collaborative culture, the creativity of that organization will be higher and vice versa. To institutionalize the creativity and innovation, it is necessary for the manager to enter or strengthen creativity and innovation as a high value in the organizational culture by using different ways. Tejarat Bank can make an agreement on values and beliefs of employees, adapting or alternating, paying attention to people, coordination in work and aligning the organizational and secondary goals to help boost individual’s creativity. Planners also cannot establish the basis and increase the creativity of people regardless of their organizational culture. So it can be said that organizations in which people are encouraged to implement their ideas and also tolerate failures, more innovation can be seen. Also, according to the findings of this study, it is deduced that organizations are able to help in boosting individual’s creativity through making an agreement on the existed values and beliefs of the organization, adaptation or alteration, paying attention to people, coordination in work and aligning the organizational and secondary goals to help. Planners also cannot establish the basis and increase the creativity of people regardless of their organizational culture.

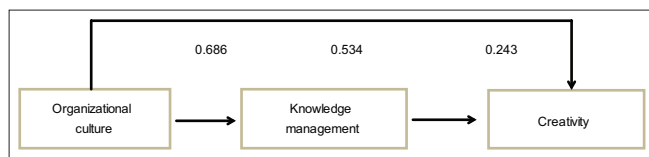


Figure 2: The assumed model for partial intermediation of knowledge management in the relationship between organizational culture and creativity

Table 4-7: Direct and indirect effect of organizational culture and knowledge management on creativity

Research variables	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Organizational culture	0.534	0.166	0.700
Knowledge management	0.243	-	0.243

Results showed that knowledge management has a direct and significant relationship with creativity. As the knowledge management of bank employees improves, their creativity

will also increase. This part of the research is consistent with the findings of Yili Renko (2001), Hong *et al.* (2010), Taghi-Zadeh (2008), and Hassan Begay (2010), Najmeh. Nir *et al.*, (2010). Knowledge management as a key management tool of the new century provides the background of reading, creating, growing, sharing and exchange, organizational promoting, storing and dissemination of knowledge throughout the organization, particularly in the sector levels that can lead to the formation of new approaches in training methods, effective use of existing knowledge, readiness to receive and use information and new knowledge in order to develop knowledge and technology which results in an increase in the organization's creativity. In today's dynamic and complex environment, it is essential for all organizations to constantly apply new knowledge in form of creating, validating and application in their products and services. Also, organizations need knowledge management to remain in the competition, adjustment with the changes of innovation environment and meet the demands of the market, enhance their capacity and maintain good communication with providers, customers and partners. Knowledge management makes access to the experiences, knowledge and skills that create new abilities, power to carry out further operations, encouraging creativity and innovation, methods for better applying the organization's existing knowledge and better use of knowledge in everyday business processes in the organization.

The results of hierarchical regression analysis show that knowledge management plays a mediating role between organizational culture and creativity. Also, the reduction of beta coefficient in organizational culture from 0.700 in the first phase to 0.534 in the second phase emphasizes the partial and mediator role of knowledge management in the relationship between culture and creativity. This part of the findings is consistent with the research results of Yili Renko (2001), Hong *et al.* (2010), Taghi-Zadeh (2008), and Hassan Begay (2010), Najmeh. Nir *et al.*, (2010). Knowledge management is one of the tools that provides the background for creating and enhancing creativity and enables the organizations to gain their required working knowledge and using it appropriately. But this alone is not enough, because the success of the organization in implementing any strategy including knowledge management to a large extent depends on how the organizational culture supports that strategy. Knowledge can effectively be created and shared in the organization only if it is protected and supported by the culture of the organization. A weak organizational culture prevents the emergence of individual's creativity and effort to keep their personal power station and efficiency and is an obstacle on the way of sharing and dissemination of knowledge. A powerful and positive culture makes people to feel better

about what they are doing and encourages them to do their job in the best form of it which can increase creativity. Organizations with a suitable organizational culture naturally have cheerful, innovative, creative and social staffs that cause a stronger confidence in that organization. Generally, in order to keep pace with changes in the society and to survive in the current period, the background for increasing creativity and innovation should be created through an organizational culture which supports the knowledge management and gives freedom to employees, involves them in activities, generating coordination and cohesion, creates inside and outside motivation, work attractions and systematic punishment and reward based on meritocracy. Based on the findings, organizational culture has a strong and effective relationship with the establishment of knowledge management. For establishment of knowledge management, organizational culture is more important than technology and the like. Therefore, by managing the changes in organizational culture, useful and effective cultural characteristics of knowledge management will be maintained and developed, and undesirable and ineffective characteristics will be changed or modified. In order to have practical results, it is recommended that the bank's management create an environment in the organization in which provides the conditions to use past job experiences for employees at all levels. On the other hand, the exchange of valuable knowledge and useful job information, encouraging employees to form working groups and do their tasks as a team, using information technology tools (such as office automation systems, information technology, management information, decision support, etc.) using the knowledge of experienced or retired staff and moral and material support of people who have knowledge-based performance can provide conditions in order to increase the level of knowledge and consequently to improve the level of creativity and innovative activities among staff.

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