Investigating the Relationship between Knowledge Sharing and Improvement in the Employee Performance based on the ACHIEVE Model (Isfahan Steel Company as a Case Study)

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** Currently, the use of knowledge management is considered as a strategic and important asset. This is why that the studies of knowledge management attempt to promote the four-loop cycle of knowledge management. **Materials and Methods:** The present study sets knowledge sharing (one of the main loops of knowledge management) as its goal. The present study is a descriptive survey from the perspective of time-scale view. In order to investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and improvement of employee performance in Isfahan Steel Company, the ACHIEVE Model was employed. Based on the ACHIEVE Model, employee performance consists of seven dimensions. These include ability, clarity, help, incentive, evaluation, validity, and environment. In the second step, the relationship between each of these dimensions and knowledge management was investigated. The statistical population includes all employees of Isfahan Steel Company. A sample of 345 employees was selected. **Results:** A questionnaire was employed for collecting the research data. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were investigated and approved. Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was employed for investigating reliability of the questionnaire. The coefficient was 0.89 and approves reliability of the questionnaire. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and improvement of employee performance. **Conclusion:** Also the findings showed that there is a significant relationship between each of dimensions of employee performance and knowledge sharing.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Since human resource management plays an important role in the success of organizations and others institutes, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive studies in knowledge management and especially knowledge sharing. Conduction of such studies paves the way for finding obstacles of knowledge sharing and their solutions. The present study is a systematic attempt to recognize the importance of knowledge sharing and its prerequisites. This study also was aimed to investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and improvement in the employee performance. In this regard, the ACHIEVE model was employed for measuring employee performance. Based on this model, employee performance consists of seven dimensions including ability (knowledge and skills), clarity (role understanding and perception), help (organizational support), incentive (motivation and tendency), evaluation (education and performance feedback), validity (employees’ reliable and rightful actions), and environment (environmental appropriateness). The importance of knowledge management is recognized in the most of organizational theories. Indeed, organizational ability in transmitting and sharing knowledge is one of the important and key factors in knowledge management. Capability of knowledge management plays an important role in supporting and encouraging employees’ performance. Undoubtedly, it is not possible to manage organizational knowledge without knowledge sharing. In such as conditions, the organization loses its competitive advantage [10] (Nonaka, 1994). Organizational knowledge will be formed, and developed through social interaction between implicit and explicit knowledge. Based on the importance of knowledge sharing and its relationship with employee performance improvement, the present...
study was aimed to investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance improvement. Indeed, this study was determined to investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and dimensions of employee performance.

Review of literature:

Knowledge sharing:
Knowledge management is a system of business improvement which recognizes and improves the information of organizations. As a result, probability of organizational success will be increased [1]. Knowledge sharing refers to a set of behaviors which results in the exchange of information and helping others [2]. Understanding knowledge sharing refers to a fixed force in creating organizational innovation [2]. Knowledge conversion refers to the transition of implicit knowledge to explicit knowledge in which information will be managed properly. Otherwise, such knowledge remains individual.

Employee performance:
Performance refers to a formal method of recognizing employees’ characteristics based on the positive and negative feedback of their outcomes in doing functions. From organizational perspective, evaluation of employee performance is an inevitable function in terms of measuring employees’ progress in achieving organizational goals and missions. Indeed, performance evaluation results in awareness and feedback and also recognizes strengths and weaknesses of the organization in the dynamic and changing environment.

Modern models of performance:
One of the serious problems in the management process is that most managers aware their subordinated from problems and they cannot recognize causes of that problems. The ACHIEVE model was developed by Heresy and Goldsmith for helping managers to recognize the main causes of problems and develop their strategies. First step in the implementation of this model was recognizing the effective factors on the employee performance. In this regard, Heresy and Goldsmith recognize seven effective factors on the employee performance including ability, clarity, help, incentive, evaluation, validity, and environment. In the second step, managers should combine the factors so exactly that it is easy to remember those [15]. These factors are presented and described in the following section.

Ability (knowledge and skills):
It refers to the knowledge and skills of subordinated in doing their function successfully. It is necessary to remember that competency is not a general variable [6].

Clarity (role understanding and perception):
It refers to the understanding and accepting methods and location of jobs. The employees should be informed about overall goals and objectives of organizational missions and their achievement [15].

Help (organizational support):
It refers to the organizational help and support which employees need in doing their jobs [6].

Incentive (motivation and tendency):
This dimension refers to the motivation of employees in doing their functions successfully. It should be remembered in the evaluation of motivation that employees have more motivation to do which jobs and functions with internal and external rewards.

Evaluation (education and performance feedback):
It refers to daily feedback of performance. An appropriate process of feedback paves the way for employees being aware of job reasons and motivations. If employees do not be informed about their performance, it is not possible to improve their job.

Validity (employees’ reliable and rightful actions):
Managers should insure that organizational decisions are appropriate decisions.

Environment (environmental appropriateness):
It refers to the external uncontrollable factors which influences employees’ performance. Competition, variation in the market conditions, governmental procedures, legists, and other factors are obvious samples of environmental factors [6].
Related studies:

Ghojavand investigates the effect of organizational structure on the capability of knowledge sharing in the educational organization in the city of Isfahan. He found that organizational structure (including complexity, concentration, and formality) influences capability of knowledge sharing significantly. Maleki[9] identifies social trust, social networks, and shared goals as main components of social capital. He also studies the effect of social capital on the knowledge sharing. Padashi Rad [11] studies the knowledge transition and improvement in the social capital. Indeed, He studies organizational structure, trust-making, manager flexibility, and reward in the organization. HadizadeMoghadam et al. [5] investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovation in the financial services organizations. They determined to investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovation. They surveyed 96 employees of Refah Bank and found that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and innovation[5]. Yousefi et al. investigate the role of organizational commitment in employees’ knowledge sharing. Indeed, they determined to examine the relationship between employees’ organizational commitment and knowledge sharing. They found that there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing. Employees, who have higher commitment to their organization, participate in the knowledge sharing efforts actively. Connelly and Colowy[2] studied employees’ perception of knowledge sharing culture and found that organizational factors such as employee perception, managerial support from knowledge sharing, organization size, and technology of knowledge sharing influence employees’ perception of knowledge sharing culture. In addition, demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, and organizational position) influence employees’ perception of knowledge sharing culture. McNeill refers to the staff managers as facilitators of knowledge sharing in the working teams. Kecks studies maintenance and sharing of knowledge in the multinational organizations. He found that the use of different strategies in the conduction of knowledge sharing projects plays an important role in supporting knowledge sharing processes in that organizations. Pai studies the relationship between knowledge sharing and strategic management of technology/informational systems (IS/IT). Yao et al. [19] develop a model for knowledge sharing for public organization in China. Oonil and Adie investigate knowledge sharing and psychological contracts and found that psychological contracts influence employees’ knowledge sharing indirectly. Smith recognizes the importance of knowledge sharing and strategic capital of opinions leaders. Yuen and Majid study the knowledge sharing pattern among graduates in Singapore. Lin investigates the relationship between knowledge sharing and capability of organizational innovation. He attempts to study the effect of enjoyment of helping others in the effective knowledge sharing, senior management support factors, and technological factors such application of information and communication technology on the process of knowledge sharing. Zu et al. study the relationship between adaptability systems and knowledge broadcasting. Sandergard et al. study the implication of technological-social thought in the knowledge sharing. Lin studies the knowledge sharing and lack of knowledge sharing and develops a model in which exchange ideology is considered as a mediating factor. He also studies other important factors such as colleague appropriateness, perceived autonomous of function, organizational commitment, and cooperative decision making and their effect in knowledge sharing process. Patrick and Datsika study the internal knowledge development. Lee et al. study the perception of customer knowledge sharing in the boards of web-based broadcasting. They found that enjoyment of helping others is the most important factor in knowledge sharing by customers through websites. In addition, lack of knowledge self-efficiency is the most important effective factor on the lack of knowledge sharing. Chua study the dynamic nature of knowledge sharing. Cerenkov et al. investigate the relationship between organization size and knowledge process. They found that increase in the organization size results in the more effectiveness of knowledge sharing.

Conceptual model of study:

Based on the review of literature, the conceptual model of our study is developed as following. Indeed, the relationship between each dimensions of employee performance (ability, clarity, help, incentive, evaluation, validity, and environment) and knowledge sharing is the main purpose of this study.

![Fig. 1: conceptual model of study][6]
Hypotheses development:
The hypotheses of this study are presented in the following section.

Main hypothesis:
There is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance.
H1: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and ability.
H2: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and clarity.
H3: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and help.
H4: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and incentive.
H5: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and evaluation.
H6: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and validity.
H7: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and environment.

Research methodology:
The present study is practical research from purpose view and is a descriptive-correlational one from research methodology view. In order to collect the research data, a survey has been conducted. Both library and field study methods were employed for collecting the research data. The survey data was collected through questionnaires of employee performance and knowledge sharing. In order to examine and insure validity of the questionnaires, their face and content validity have been examined based on the review of academic experts. Reliability of the questionnaire has been measured through Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient. The coefficient was 0.89 for our questionnaire which approves questionnaire reliability. Both descriptive statistics (frequencies, average, percentages, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation coefficient test, two-sample t test, and analysis of variance) were employed for summarizing and analyzing the research data and concluding hypotheses in the SPSS20.

Data analysis:
Based on the findings of our study, the K-S-Z values are not significant for none of research variables. This means that all of the research variables have normal distribution.
The main hypothesis of our study indicates that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance.
H0: there is not any significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance.
H1: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance.

Table 1: the results of main hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Improvement in employee improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0.923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results of table 1, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance. The relationship is positive and it can be said that increase in the level of knowledge sharing results in more improvement in employee improvement. As a result, the hypothesis is supported.
The first hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and ability.
H0: there is not any significant relationship between knowledge sharing and ability.
H1: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and ability.

Table 2: the results of first hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results of table 2 revealed, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee ability. The relationship is positive and it can be said that increase in the level of knowledge sharing results in more improvement in employee ability. As a result, the hypothesis is supported.
The second hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and clarity.
H0: there is not any significant relationship between knowledge sharing and clarity.
H1: there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and clarity.
As the results of table 3 revealed, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee clarity. The relationship is positive and it can be said that increase in the level of knowledge sharing results in more improvement in employee clarity. As a result, the hypothesis is supported.

The third hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and help.

Table 3: the results of second hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>clarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: the results of second hypothesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Correlation coefficient</td>
<td>0.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results of 4, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and employee help. The relationship is positive and it can be said that increase in the level of knowledge sharing results in more improvement in employee help. As a result, the hypothesis is supported.

Our findings about other hypotheses indicate that hypotheses 4, 5, 6, and 7 are approved. In other words there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and incentive; there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and clarity; there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and environment.

Discussion and conclusion:

The manager should ask his/her employees in their performance analysis that “are the employees have necessary knowledge and skills of doing job successfully?” If the response is “no”, the following solutions can be effective: especial novitiate, education, formal educational periods, functions refereeing, and certain responsibilities. The employees should participate in the formal and informal novitiates to improve their performance. They should receive sufficient salaries and rewards based on the standards. If the employees have motivational problem, the use of rewards and punishment is the first step. Employees should be informed that there is a significant relationship among their performance, salaries, rewards, promotion, recognition, and job security. If organizational help and supports be decreased, the managers should act in a Franck manner so exactly that find the sound source of problem. Also employees should be informed about strategic goals and missions of their organization. The managers should insure that there is comprehensive agreement among employees about organizational goals. For this purpose, they should encourage employees to ask frankly. Also the manager should insure that all of the organizational departments have similar procedures and trends. In order to promote environmental aspect of employee performance, employee should respect job disciplines and its rules and regulations. In this regard, employees be informed about the results and feedback of their performance evaluation.

REFERENCES


