

Role of Knowledge Management in Performance of the Forest, Rangeland, and Watershed Organization's managers in Iran

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of knowledge management in performance of the country's forest, rangeland, and watershed organization's managers. This is applied and non-experimental (descriptive) research. The methodology of research is correlation. Questionnaire is main instrument in research. Statistical population in this study was 300 executives of the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed of country; based on census, 239 respondents have completed the sent questionnaires. For measuring study tool's validity the questionnaire was given to researchers, experts, and the organization's managers associated with the subject in the ministry of Agricultural organization, and a primary-test by completing 30 questionnaires and for measuring reliability, the questionnaire was taken and the Cronnbach alpha coefficient was 84 percent. The results showed that the organization's managers familiarity with knowledge management was weak and In regarding the prioritizing dimensions of knowledge management, identifying knowledge was in highest priority. Multiple regression results showed that using knowledge, preserving knowledge and acquiring knowledge variables determined 31.5% the performance of managers of the country's forest, rangeland, and watershed organization.

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1. Introduction

Organizational growth and development depends on its managers` good and efficient management. In this way, outfitting managers with various capabilities is considered to ensure the success of organizations .In organizations, knowing, understanding, and using the management skills as one of the necessities of life in the modern era is only possible under the shadow of knowledge management (Thomson and Prosak, 2000).

Darker (1913) has expressed that knowledge, in the world today's economy, is not a source similar and along with other sources such as labor, capital, and land, but is considered as the only nowadays` meaningful resource (Rading, 2004).

Managers of tomorrow should be habituated to the knowledge management; otherwise, they can not success in the field of management. Currently, nonexistence of a thought based on knowledge is one the most challenges of the country and, particularly, the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad. Nonexistence of a thought based on knowledge management is one the most challenges of the country and, particularly, the forest, rangeland, and watershed organization. Considering that most modern organizations are unaware of the knowledge management quality which is the key element of their organizations progress, this study is aimed to review the status of knowledge management and organize the

organizational knowledge and introduce the role of knowledge management in organizations so that nonexistence of thought based on knowledge would cause no challenge for the organizations. Lack of knowledge management in organizations has problems including: nonexistence of innovation and introduction signs, lack of prioritization and use of knowledge branches, nonexistence of foreign knowledge and new knowledge learners, lack of information systems management, hiding and politicizing information, gaps in the organization caused by the experts disconnection, hoarding the knowledge rather than increasing it, forgetting the important and fundamental issues of the organization, limited use of available sciences, lack of documentation regarding the experiences obtained and inappropriate motivating systems for knowledge sharing and development , and many other such problems implicating the importance and role of knowledge management application by organizations` managers. Knowledge management is one of the important roles of management in management civilization. Like other roles of management, this role contains several steps, and various activities justify this role. Knowledge management includes identifying knowledge management objectives, knowledge identification, knowledge acquisition, knowledge development, knowledge emission and distribution, knowledge

using, knowledge preservation, and knowledge assessment. (Aidemark, 2009).

The main purpose of this study is evaluating the role of knowledge management of the country's forest, rangeland, and watershed organization's manager's performance. The objectives are: reviewing and prioritizing different aspects of knowledge management (Identifying knowledge, Acquiring knowledge Developing knowledge, Collective knowledge, Using knowledge, Preserving knowledge and Measuring Knowledge) in the country's forest, rangeland and watershed organization, organization's managers performance, the role of knowledge management `s various aspects and their components in the organization's managers performance, factors affecting the knowledge management of the organization's managers, barriers and problems of the organization in imparting knowledge management, personal characteristics of the organization's managers.

2. Material and Methods

The methodology of this research was descriptive, and it was carried out as a correlation. The instrument that was used for data collection was a questionnaire. The statistical population including 300 managers of the Forest, Rangeland and Watershed of country; based on census, questionnaire was sent to all provinces' natural resources organizations of which 239 questionnaires were received from 22 provinces and, subsequently, analyzed. Dependent variable of this study is the managers` performance and the independent variables are: identifying knowledge (considering the organizations needs of knowledge in the organizational objectives, attention rates to new knowledge culture in the organization, organizations` staff interact inside and outside of the organization), Acquiring knowledge (using the knowledge of university and research centers, research units of the organization's role in making new knowledge, level of organization's efforts to form working groups), Using knowledge (the rate of existing knowledge about how to identify tasks or activities, the rate of existing knowledge regarding the principles and theories governing the observable facts of organization, the rate of existing knowledge about the customer satisfaction), Collective knowledge (using internet, intranet and network for knowledge transfer, knowledge transfer rate of organizations as guidelines and so on, the rate of knowledge transfer through in-service training), Developing knowledge (activities of forest and rangeland research institute in favor of the specialized needs, organization's level of attention to savant human resource development, the rate of institutionalize the employee's experience in

the organization) and Preserving knowledge (the rate of documentation in the organization, level of organization databases and computer networks usage in knowledge preservation and success of the organization in report making and documentation).

Content and face validity were established by a panel of experts consisting of natural resources extension, researchers, experts and managers of the country's forest, rangeland, and watershed organization. Minor wording and structuring of the instrument were made based on the recommendation of the panel of experts.

A pilot study was conducted with 30 managers. Computed Cronbach's Alpha score was 84%, which indicated that the questionnaire was highly reliable.

3. Results

In this study, the average age of the respondents was 43 / 5 years; most of them were undergraduate and postgraduate and few had diploma and PhD degree. Their average years of service were 20 / 5 years and their management experience average was about 11 years. Rate of their familiarity with knowledge management was at intermediate level to low showing the weakness of the forest, rangeland and watershed organization's managers in understanding the knowledge management. Evaluations showed that 34% of respondents have only heard the name of this type of management. About 30.5 % have become familiar through media, 18.5 % have read article about that, 5.5 % have participated in knowledge management related conferences and 7 % have used knowledge management in the organization.

In regarding the prioritizing dimensions of knowledge management, as table 1 shows identifying knowledge is in highest priority. The other dimensions including using knowledge, collective knowledge, acquiring knowledge, preserving knowledge and developing knowledge, in respectively.

Table 1: prioritizing dimensions of knowledge management

Dimensions	Mean	SD
identifying knowledge	2.89	0.83
using knowledge	2.86	0.89
collective knowledge	2.65	0.90
acquiring knowledge	2.31	0.90
preserving knowledge	2.12	0.89
developing knowledge	2.02	0.86

Results of correlation coefficient among variables showed that there is a positive and significant relationship at a 5% level between

identifying knowledge, using knowledge, collective knowledge, developing knowledge, acquiring

knowledge and preserving knowledge variables with manager's performance (Table 2).

Table 2: Correlation between dimensions of knowledge management with manager's performance

Dimensions	r	p
identifying knowledge	0.393*	0.00
using knowledge	0.422*	0.00
collective knowledge	0.455*	0.00
acquiring knowledge	0.398*	0.00
preserving knowledge	0.462*	0.00
developing knowledge	0.437*	0.00

**p<0.05.

Results of multiple stepwise regression showed that using knowledge, preserving knowledge and acquiring knowledge variables have a positive effect on the forest, rangeland and watershed managers` performance while the mentioned variables have determined 31.5 % of the dependent variable's variance (Table 3).

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	B	Beta	Sig	Sig.
Constant	9.50	1.01	-	0.000
using knowledge (X1)			0.251	0.000
preserving knowledge (X2)	1.24		0.272	0.031
acquiring knowledge (X3)	0.77		0.188	

R²= 0.315

According to the following table, multiple regression linear equations are:

$$Y=9.50+ 1.01(X1) +1.24(X2) +0.77(X3)$$

$$Y=0.251 (X1) +0.272(X2) +0.188(X3)$$

4. Discussions

Research results conducted by Roozdar (2002) and Khansari (2005) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the knowledge management and managers performance. Studies conducted by Shah Gholiyan (2005) showed that components of knowledge management change the organization's knowledge level. Zolfaghari (2006) resulted that the implementation of knowledge management increases the effectiveness of teaching and learning and improves the performance of the organization`s employees. The study results of Safai (2005) showed that applying knowledge management principles using appropriate ICT have an effect on the managers learning and, compared with traditional methods, increase their performance. Research results of Holozky (2002) at the University of Oregon showed that people's believe in the organization, giving latitude, encouraging people to innovation, and risk taking of the organizations` superior managers would result in people's more efforts to create business ,development ,and knowledge sharing in the organization. Results of Mary Woods (2003) study entitled "The relationship between leadership

based on knowledge management and organizational culture" indicates that a successful organizations have an organizational culture that supports the creativity, employees` abilities, innovation, and record making. Organizations that have a headship based on a well-built knowledge management and organizational culture are more successful in knowledge gaining, information, and analysis of complex situations; these are confirmed in the present study.

1 - results showed that the acquiring knowledge variables had a positive effect on the performance of organization's managers and, on the other hand, acquiring knowledge components in the organization were at a low level so it is suggested that the organization uses universities, research centers and institutions to achieve the knowledge needed , highlights the role of research units of organizations in making new knowledge in the organization, and pays more attention to form working groups to consult and find new solutions for the current problems.

2 – In according to results. preserving knowledge variable had a positive effect on the performance of organization's managers and, on the

other hand, preserving knowledge components in the organization were at a low level so documenting the organization's previous failures and successes, organization's more effort in report making and documentation, and organization's more usage of databases and computer networks for preserving more knowledge are suggested.

3 - Using knowledge variable had a positive effect on the performance of organization's managers. Therefore, increasing the level of the organization's knowledge related to the organization's specific tasks or activities performance ways, the level of the organization's knowledge related to the theories and principles governing the organization's procedures, and the rate of knowledge usage in the organization to identify and tout customers is suggested.

4 - The organization's managers familiarity with knowledge management was weak and only 7 percent said that they applied knowledge management in organizations showing the weakness of managers concerning the understanding and applying the knowledge management which should be strengthened. Therefore, it is suggested that in-service training classes for managers (Junior and senior managers) on the subject of the knowledge management should be considered.

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