

The study of the relation between organizational climate and knowledge sharing behavior among employees at Isfahan university of medical sciences

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to study the relation between organizational climate and knowledge sharing behavior among employee at Isfahan University of medical sciences. For this purpose, 60 employees at medical school and pharmacy school were selected randomly. Two questionnaires of organizational climate designed by Lettwin & Stranger including 30 items, and self-made questionnaire for knowledge sharing behavior with 39 items were executed. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson regression coefficient test. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relation between organizational climate and knowledge sharing behavior at $P < 0.05$. Findings also indicated that among organizational climate dimensions, reward, standard and identity are best predictor for employees knowledge sharing behavior. Based on findings, it is suggested that executives at University pay special attention to organizational climate dimensions especially reward, standard and identity.

Keywords: Organizational climate, knowledge sharing

Introduction

Knowledge is a combination of experiences, values, information and specialized attitudes that provide a framework for evaluation and utilizing new information (Moradegan, 2006). Although some believe that knowledge is power, it seems that knowledge is not, but what brings power is that part of knowledge which is shared with others (Mahmood

Salehi, 2012). Knowledge sharing is a key area in the process of knowledge management (Mahmood Salehi, 2012). Transfer and sharing of knowledge are the collection of behaviors that leads to knowledge transaction. These are done purposefully from sender to receiver (Connelly and Kelloway, 2003). Further, knowledge sharing takes place at individual organizational levels. At individual level, it is to help others to do their duties better and faster. At organizational level, it deals with organizing knowledge so that it leads to increase in employees effectiveness (Shuhual and Hu, 2005). Knowledge sharing is essential for organizations (Hsiu-Fen, 2007), that is an instrument for innovation and gaining competitive advantage (Shuhual and Hu, 2005). In fact, to be successful in a changing environment, organizations need to value their intellectual capital more than ever before (Alipour Darvishi, 2010). In this process, human resources are the most valuable asset in every organization and is considered as a capital. Human is a social being and work together collectively that leads to common values which shape their behavior. The type of relation people having in an organization shapes organizational climate. Organizational climate is a set of work environment traits through which people work in. These characteristics points out to traits that people see them, define organization, separate them from each other, people are affected by them, show personal independence, and the amounts that goals, rules and regulations are clarified to employees by supervisions and managers.

Organizational climate can make an organization cad, warm, friendly, trustful, facilitating or fearful. In this regard, it has clear dimensions as follows:

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a) Responsibility: it is delegated to employees to do their job without subordinate control and hence they feel that they are participated in decision making process.

b) Structure: The ways that activities are divided and coordinated in an organization.

c) Reward: The feeling that if employees have higher performance, they will be recognized and rewarded by organization.

d) Warmth: The feeling that a friendly behavior exists in organization and people enjoy working together.

e) Support: people are supported by management and other employees when they need help.

f) Identity: people are proud to be a member of organization and have the feeling of belonging.

g) Risk-taking: the extent that risk-taking are encouraged in decision-making when facing unpredictable situation.

h) Conflict: amount of tolerance and accepting different point of views and strategies for solving problems.

i) Standards: attention to clear objectives, regulation and performance.

One sector in which organizational climate plays a very important role is higher education. Students, curriculum, faculty members and employees are elements of climate at a university. At a university, where people are respected, ideas are provided and participatory performance are valued, a dynamic climate help people to be more creative and more effective in teaching and learning. This situation calls for an environment to transfer knowledge and experiences into educational departments. Those universities that are familiar with knowledge sharing concepts are able to empower their human and organizational capital and hence, improve knowledge based competencies.

External motives, social and psychological factor, and organizational climate are all effective factors in knowledge sharing behavior. In this case, universities are playing a key role in production and sharing of knowledge in public and private sectors. One of the best ways to improve knowledge sharing performance is identifying present situation and moving toward optimal condition.

With regard to the previous studies done in this area, the present research tries to answer the following two questions:

A. Is there any significant relation between organizational climate and employees knowledge sharing behavior?

B. Among O.C.dimensions, which one is a better predictor for employees knowledge sharing behavior?

Materials and Methods

For doing the present study, all employees working at Isfahan medical science university were selected. Then, by using random sampling method, 30 employees in Pharmacy college and 30 in Medical college were elected.

For gathering data, a research-made questionnaire relating to knowledge sharing and organizational atmosphere obtained from Litwin & Stringer (1968)'s questionnaire was used. It was just given to those employees having the criteria considered for this study in Esfahan Medical university. This questionnaire included 5 Likert scale items (completely agree or completely disagree). The amount of Cronbach Alpha of this questionnaire was .95, indicating the high amount of reliability.

Further, the questionnaire of organizational climate designed by Litwin & Stringer (1968) and having 30 questions was given to the selected participants. It includes 9 parameters including responsibility, structure, reward, sincerity, support acceptance risk, contact and standard. This questionnaire had 5 Likert scale answers (completely agree or completely disagree). Regarding the reliability, the amount of Cronbach Alpha was .98.

Results

In order to answer the first question "there is a significant relation between organizational climate and knowledge sharing behavior of university employees", Pearson coefficient correlation was used. As it is clear from table 1, there is a positive and meaningful relationship between organizational climate and knowledge sharing behavior ($r = .76$) at the significance level ($p < 0/05$). Also, there is a positive relationship between the variables of structure, award, risk-taking, friendship, support, standard, contact and identity of organizational atmosphere and the behavior of knowledge sharing among employees ($p > 0/05$). However, there is no significant relation between responsibility and the behavior of knowledge sharing ($P > 0.05$).

In order to answer the second research question which stated that which variables can predict the behavior of knowledge sharing among university employees more. For this purpose, step-by-step regression was used. Table 2 indicates the results.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient t between organizational climate and knowledge sharing

coefficients organizational climate	Knowledge sharing			Coefficients organizational climate	Knowledge sharing		
	R	P	N		r	P	N
Structure	0/308*	0/017	60	Support	0/623*	0/001	60
Responsibility	0/129	0/308	60	Standard	0/468*	0/001	60
Reward	0/623*	0/001	60	Contact	0/725*	0/001	60
Risk	0/523*	0/001	60	Identity	0/631*	0/001	60
Sincerity	0/686*	0/001	60	organizational climate	0/752*	0/001	60

*= $P < 0/05$

Table 2. Regression between organizational climate and knowledge sharing.

Variable	Structure	responsibility	Award	Risk-taking	Friendship	Support	Standard	Contact	Identity
B	0/10	-0/024	0/32	0/09	0/28	-0/10	0/34	0/66	0/25
t	1/10	-0/26	3/46	0/79	1/91	-0/57	4/29	8/25	2/20
sig	0/27	0/79	0/001	0/42	0/06	0/56	0/001	0/001	0/03

As it is clear from table 2, among the variables of organizational climate, award, standard, contact, and identity can be considered as the most predicting variables for the behavior of knowledge sharing among university employees.

Discussion

Today, one of challenges most institutions and organization are coping with is how they can use the mental capacities of individuals to deal with the problem-solving processes, knowledge promotion, improving individual skills, and increasing quality in doing their duties. As most people consider personal knowledge as the source that is powerful, and as a guaranty for continuing this job and are not interested in sharing their knowledge with others. However, they do not know that having positive ideas to knowledge sharing can create new opportunities and innovations in the space organized and pave the way for creating better situations in the organizations and people in response to environmental changes and developing new capacities. In such situations, organizations and people can have better conditions in execution and have better performance in necessary conditions, because, if the hidden knowledge in people's mind can't be shared effectively and usefully, it will be darkened in people's mind gradually and it may lose its usefulness and efficiency (Alvani et al, 2011). Knowledge sharing is the act of transfer of knowledge

to colleagues in the process of inter- and intra-organizational operations and the concept of knowledge is the knowledge that has been acquired inside the organization (Alizadeh, 2011). The results of this study showed that organizational climate is related to knowledge sharing and can help knowledge sharing among employees. The results of this study showed that common perception of employees of policy habits and methods, whether formal or informal (organizational climate) has direct relationship with the tendency of knowledge owners in transferring knowledge and with those who like to receive knowledge in relation to receiving knowledge owners. The results of this study is in harmony with the previous research (Hsu, I-chieh, 2008; Bock et al, 2005; Shuhual and Hu, 2005; Chung, 2007; He-Feng, and Qing- Guo, 2007; Zhi-Hong, 2010).

In the present study, among the variables of organizational climate, only responsibility with knowledge sharing behavior does not have any relation with organizational knowledge. In some organizations, for doing some projects, individual responsibilities are given to some employees and consequently they feel that without controlling managers, they can adopt the necessary decisions and solve the related problems (Yang, Chen, and L-Ch., 2007). Also, the results showed that personal responsibilities of employees, without controlling the managers of organization, cannot lead to the behavior of knowledge sharing among employees.

Further, in the present study, the results indicated that, among the variables of organizational climate, the variables of reward, standard, contact and identity can have a better predictor for knowledge sharing among employees. In order to explain these results, we can mention the following issues:

Motivation is one of the most obvious variables in organizational behaviors. Motivation is an internal state that encourages people to perform certain activities. Some experts have motivated the need, want, desire or inner strength to know that people are willing to do the work. Two kinds of motivation have been explored in organization including: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation originates inside the inner feelings of the person on the job and tasks. The intrinsic rewards include feelings, advancement, challenging, and work responsibilities. Extrinsic motivation is tangible and visible, and external factors (people and organizations) are unique. Remuneration, compensation, promotion or mail promotion and dignity can be considered as the examples of extrinsic motivation in organizations today. Remuneration plays an important role in motivating employees to perform tasks. The results of awarding indicate that employees feel that they have higher performance in different areas if they are encouraged (Zhi-Hong, et al, 2012). Award based on performance can influence on the sense of their competence and increase their confidence with respect to their effectiveness in the sphere of work and their enterprise (Gecas and Burke, 1995).

Reward leads to the satisfaction and productivity of employees, particularly employees who are productive in performance and the desired results (Abdollahi and Heydari, 2009). Award also encourages them to apply and transfer knowledge effectively by optimizing performance synergies for the purpose of helping the organization.

Today's workforce as the main organizational asset and its competitive advantage is considered as a part of the organization's most valuable resource. Therefore, the importance of attracting, retaining and empowering the investor should always be considered.

Identity is also a means through which to communicate with the community so that it shows that to which culture that person belongs to (Zahra, Neubaum, and Larraneta, 2007). One of the important issues in the field of self-perception is the discussion of personal identity, social identity and organizational identity (Shayan Jahroomi, et al,

2009). Corporate identity means that a person feels a part of the organization and is proud of belonging to the organization. Identity is an important topic in employees' relations. So, when the employees of an organization feel a sense of identity, they are more willing to communicate and interact to exchange, and share their knowledge.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and knowledge sharing behavior among the employees in the university while there is no relationship between the organizational climate and the liability component is no significant relation between responsibility and knowledge sharing behaviors. The results also suggest that the organizational climate, the components of remuneration, standard, contact and identity better predictor of knowledge sharing behavior are considered.

The results of this study suggest that the university authorities to improve knowledge sharing behavior in academia, organizational climate and its components, especially components of remuneration, standard, contact and identity should be considered.

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