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Determining the Relation between Using Knowledge Management and Learning Organization to Perceived Competition-Creating Organizational Climate Based on the Mediation of Career Achievement Motivation

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Abstract

The objective of the present study was to determine the relationship of the use of knowledge management and learning organization to perceived competition-Creating organizational climate based on the mediation of career achievement motivation. The study is descriptive correlational research. The population comprised all professors of Islamic Azad University, Mahallat Branch in the academic year 2013-2014. Due to the small size of the population, all members of the population were selected as the sample. The research tools comprised four researcher-made questionnaires: 1.researcher-made questionnaire of components of knowledge management, 2.researcher-made questionnaire of learning organization, 3.researcher-made questionnaire of perceived competition-creating organizational climate, 4. researcher-made questionnaire of career achievement motivation. In general, the findings revealed that knowledge management and learning organization have a significant relation to perceived competition-creating organizational climate. The indirect effect of knowledge acquisition on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.034), the indirect effect of knowledge sharing (0.032), the indirect effect of knowledge use (0.030), the indirect effect of individual learning (0.031), the indirect effect of group learning (0.248), and the indirect effect of organizational learning (0.262) are significant at P<0.0000 level. According to the findings, RMSEA=0.059, RMR=0.026, GFI=0.95, AGFI=0.90, P (value) =0.0000, df=92, χ^2, and indicates the relative fitness of the model used in the study.

Keywords: knowledge management, learning organization, perceived competition-creating organizational climate, career achievement motivation.

Introduction

Management of organizations should be based on broader knowledge, more reasonable decision-making in important issues, and improvement of performance dependent on knowledge. Scholars have found that unlike other sorts of management, knowledge management is not ephemeral; rather, it has permanent effects. Only the organizations which could protect their competitiveness will have the chance to survive. Scholars in this area believe that maintaining organizations' competitiveness and their survival depends on knowledge management (Bakhtiari, 2009). According to Haggie and Kingston (2003), knowledge management is carefully designing processes, tools, and structures by using the Internet, with the use of advancing renovation, sharing, and improvement and application of knowledge in the three structural, social, and human elements of intelligent capita (Chen *et al.*, 2004). Kanter (1999) believes that knowledge manage is a systematic and organizational process for acquiring, organizing, and transferring explicit and implicit knowledge in order to enable others to use knowledge to promote productivity. Nonaka *et al.* (1995) believe that one of the benefits of knowledge management in organizations is

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the advancement of career motivation and competition. Establishment of knowledge management in organizations promotes employees' level of knowledge and information and causes them to compete with one another to achieve organizational objectives. Knowledge management leads to the dynamism of organizational climate. Organizational climate is a set of states, features, or characteristics dominating the organization, making it warm, cold, reliable, unreliable, scary, reinsuring, facilitating, or daunting, and leads to differentiation between two similar organizations (Aminpoor, 2002). Dynamic organizational climate is an appropriate foundation for establishing the learning organization. Senge (1990) defines the learning organization as an organization where individuals continuously promote their abilities to reach desirable outcomes; where new thought patterns are fostered, collective activities are free, and people continuously learn how to learn together (Song *et al.*, 2009). Competition in the learning organization – which is the result of the improvement of employees' level-, creates a constructive competition among employees such that it leads to the improvement of the organization. In the present enquiry, the perceived competition-creating organizational climate is the type of organizational climate which leads to the two scientific and educational competitions among university professors.

Theoretical framework

With respect to the relationship between knowledge management and competition-creating organizational climate, the studies by Rahimi (2007) shows that there is a significant correlation between the aspects of knowledge management and the amount of creativity and organizational competition. Shafipoor Motlagh (2010) shows that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment and, as a result, organizational competition.

According to Shafipoor Motlagh and Yarmohammadian (2012), organizational climate, career involvement, and organizational trust have a significant relationship to the culture of knowledge management.

According to Jones *et al.* (1979) and Schneider (1990), organizational climate is defined as common procedures, shared beliefs, and value systems existing in the organization. For individuals inside the organization, organizational climate appears as a set of features and expectations which describe the general pattern of organizational activities.

Chen (2004) believes that organizational climate plays a significant role in shaping employees' behaviour and influencing their understanding of knowledge management. Companies could encourage employees to freely think, share their ideas with one another, and seek unusual choices through formal and innovative atmosphere.

According to Chen Chung *et al.* (2007) and Chen Chung *et al.* (2010), organizational climate has a positive impact on knowledge management, and if it is supportive –i.e. if it is innovative and cooperative -, it facilitates the implementation of knowledge management.

Salehi *et al.* (2012) show that organizational climate has a positive impact on knowledge management. According to Adli (2010) and Eggen (2003), there is a significant relationship between organizational climate and knowledge management. The study by Musa Aghayi (2012) reveals that knowledge is food to the learning organization, and nutrients of knowledge enable the organization to grow. He considers knowledge management as the last conceptual model of the leaning organization, and views knowledge management as the updated concept of the learning organization.

Brown and Deguid (1991) believe that professional communities which form within the context of a learning organization are made dynamic on the basis of knowledge management.

As stated by Nadi and Damadi (2009), knowledge management has a direct impact on the learning organization. Studies by Loermans (2002) demonstrate that knowledge management is the prerequisite of the establishment of a learning organization, and some have even viewed knowledge management as a step beyond the establishment of the learning organization. According to Sutherland (2003), the learning organization is an organization where people in all levels, as individuals or as a group, continuously vary their ability so as to achieve their desirable outcome. Watkins and Marsick have identified the seven apparent and relevant aspects of the learning organization at three individual, group, and organizational levels. Individual learning level: individual learning is the process of changing skills, insights, and beliefs; and transformation of individual knowledge, attitudes, and values determined by the individual through individual study, education based on technology, observation and other ways of achieving knowledge brought about by converting and conveying experiences. The level of collective learning means that teams must be able to think and learn as a single identity (Hasani, 2009). Organizational learning level is a process whereby the organization creates a new knowledge and insight out of individuals' collective experiences in the organization, and it has the potential to penetrate

into the organization's behaviour and improve its abilities (Jimenez-Jimenez and Sanz-Valle, 2011).

The study by Beigi (2009) revealed that the objective of knowledge management to establish lasting integration between internal knowledge and the environment in order to adapt to internal and external changes of the organization, to solve the existing problems, and to have creativity in business. Accordingly, in order to realize such functions, the organization must create a learning environment to promote its manpower.

The study by Yaghoubi *et al.* (2010) showed that there is a correlation between organizational learning and the learning organization, and there is a significant relationship between the learning organization and knowledge management.

Studies by Baker (1992) revealed that organizational climate has a direct relationship to managers' ability to motivate employees by providing their psychological need such as achievement motivation, power, etc.

The study by Sadeghi and Fathi (2002) showed that organizational climate has a significant relationship to teachers' career satisfaction, and consequently to their organizational achievement motivation. Achievement motivation, and success motivation, is great enthusiasm or need to achieve success, which is the greatest need from the perspective of organizational behavior (Alavi and E'tesami, 2009). Herzberg believes that motivational factors, such as progress, gratitude, sense of responsibility, etc., which lead to employees' career satisfaction, develop employees' achievement motivation in the organization. Organizational achievement motivation is the desire or attempt manifested by a person to gain mastery over things, issues, people, thoughts, or an optimal criterion (Arizi and Abedi, 2003). Studies by Collins *et al.* (2004), Meece *et al.* (2006), and Ziegler (2010) show that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and employees' career achievement motivation. Based on the investigation of the mentioned results, the conceptual model of the research is designed as follows:

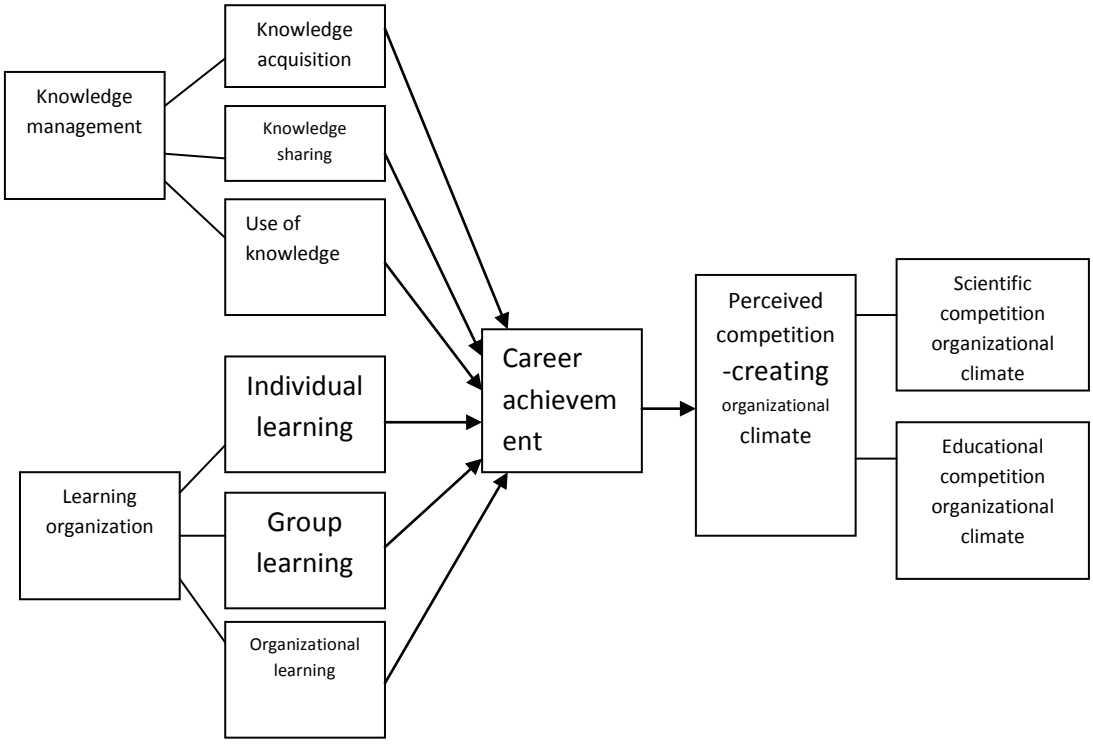

Figure 1. Conceptual research model for determining the relationship between the uses of knowledge management, learning organization, and perceived competition-creating organizational climate based on the mediation of career achievement motivation.

Research hypothesis

1. There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

2. There is a significant relationship between the learning organization and perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

3. Career achievement motivation mediates the relation of knowledge management and the learning organization to perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

Materials and Methods

This study was a descriptive-correlational enquiry. The population comprised all professors of Islamic Azad University, Mahallat Branch in the academic year 2013-2014. Due to the small size of the population, all members of the population were selected as the sample. The research tools comprised four researcher-made questionnaires: 1. researcher-made questionnaire of components of knowledge management, 2. researcher-made questionnaire of learning organization, 3. researcher-made questionnaire of perceived competition-creating organizational climate, 4. researcher-made questionnaire of career achievement motivation. In order to analyze the data multiple regressions test, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, and Structural Equations Modelling were employed. The research tools as well as their reliability coefficients are illustrated in Table (1).

Table 1. Reliability coefficients of research questionnaires

No.	Research questionnaires	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
1	Researcher-made questionnaire of knowledge management	21	0.91
2	Researcher-made questionnaire of components of learning organization	13	.85
3	Researcher-made questionnaire of career achievement motivation	9	0.93
4	Researcher-made questionnaire of perceived competition-creating organizational climate	18	0.89

Results

First hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

According to the findings presented in the above table, there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and perceived competition-creating organizational climate. According to the beta coefficient, for 1 unit of increase in knowledge creation, perceived competition-creating organizational climate increases 0.79 units; for 1 unit of increase in knowledge sharing, perceived competition-creating organizational climate increases 0.73 units; and for 1 unit of increase in knowledge use, perceived competition-creating organizational climate increases 0.69 units. The findings also reveal that knowledge creation accounts for 32 percent, knowledge sharing 69 percent, and knowledge use accounts for 14 percent of the variance of perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

Second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between the learning organization and perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

According to the findings illustrated in the above table, there is a significant relationship between the learning organization and perceived competition-creating organizational climate. According to the beta coefficient, for 1 unit f increase in individual learning, perceived competition-creating organizational climate increases 0.47 units; , for 1 unit f increase in group learning, perceived competition-creating organizational climate increases 0.92 units; and , for 1 unit f increase in organizational learning, perceived competition-creating organizational climate increases 0.41 units. The findings also demonstrate that individual learning accounts for 14 percent, group learning accounts for 28 percent, and organizational learning accounts for 53 percent of perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

Third hypothesis: Career achievement motivation mediates the relation of knowledge management and the learning organization to perceived competition-creating organizational climate.

Table 2. Stepwise multiple regressions for predicting perceived competition-creating organizational climate based on knowledge management

	β	Sted. error	βeta	t	sig	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	sig
First stage										
Constant coefficient	482/4	236/1		267/3	001/0	562/0	316/0	639/0	344/415	001/0
Knowledge acquisition	563/7	735/0	426/0	278/4	001/0					
Second stage										
Constant coefficient	427/6	328/1		629/3	001/0	832/0	692/0	724/0	728/526	001/0
Knowledge acquisition	286/2	414/0	438/0	467/5	001/0					
Knowledge sharing	249/4	672/0	527/0	383/3	001/0					
Third stage										
Constant coefficient	529/3	623/0		347/7	001/0					
Knowledge acquisition	285/7	436/0	792/0	592/4	001/0	369/0	136/0	586/0	437/839	001/0
Knowledge sharing	369/4	721/0	735/0	846/5	001/0					
Use of knowledge	386/3	528/0	691/0	673/3	001/0					

Table 3. Stepwise multiple regressions for predicting perceived competition-creating organizational climate based on learning organization

	β	Sted. error	βeta	t	sig	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F	sig
First stage										
Constant coefficient	346/2	256/1		256/3	001/0	379/0	144/0	819/0	428/879	001/0
Individual learning	470/8	618/3	527/0	492/5	001/0					
Second stage										
Constant coefficient	638/4	564/2		439/6	001/0	527/0	277/0	593/0	392/425	001/0
Individual learning	672/3	537/0	235/0	865/4	001/0					
Group learning	368/4	498/0	634/0	596/3	001/0					
Third stage										
Constant coefficient				459/4	001/0					
Individual learning	676/4	734/3	476/0	674/6	001/0	734/0	538/0	765/0	496/628	001/0
Group learning	482/7	236/0	925/0	328/3	001/0					
Organizational learning	580/8	623/1	412/0	593/8	001/0					

Table 4. Routes examined in Structural equations modelling

No.	Research variables	Perceived competition-creating organizational climate			Career achievement motivation		
		Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
1	Career achievement motivation	251/0	0	251/0	0	0	0
2	Knowledge acquisition	235/0	034/0	269/0	138/0	0	138/0
3	Knowledge sharing	214/0	032/0	246/0	129/0	0	129/0
4	Use of knowledge	183/0	030/0	213/0	123/0	0	123/0
5	Individual learning	157/0	031/0	188/0	125/0	0	125/0
6	Group learning	248/0	033/0	281/0	134/0	0	134/0
7	Organizational learning	262/0	031/0	293/0	127/0	0	127/0

Based on Structural Equations Modelling, the direct effect of career achievement motivation on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.251) is significant; and the direct effect of knowledge creation on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.235), the direct effect of knowledge sharing (0.214), and the direct effect of knowledge use (0.183) are significant, too. In addition, the direct effect of individual learning on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.031), the direct effect of group learning on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.033), and the direct effect of organizational learning on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.031) are significant. The findings also demonstrate that the indirect effect of knowledge creation on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.034), the direct effect of knowledge sharing (0.032), and the direct effect of knowledge use (0.030) are significant. Besides, the direct effect of individual learning on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.031), the direct effect of group learning on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.248), and the direct effect of organizational learning on perceived competition-creating organizational climate (0.26) are significant too.

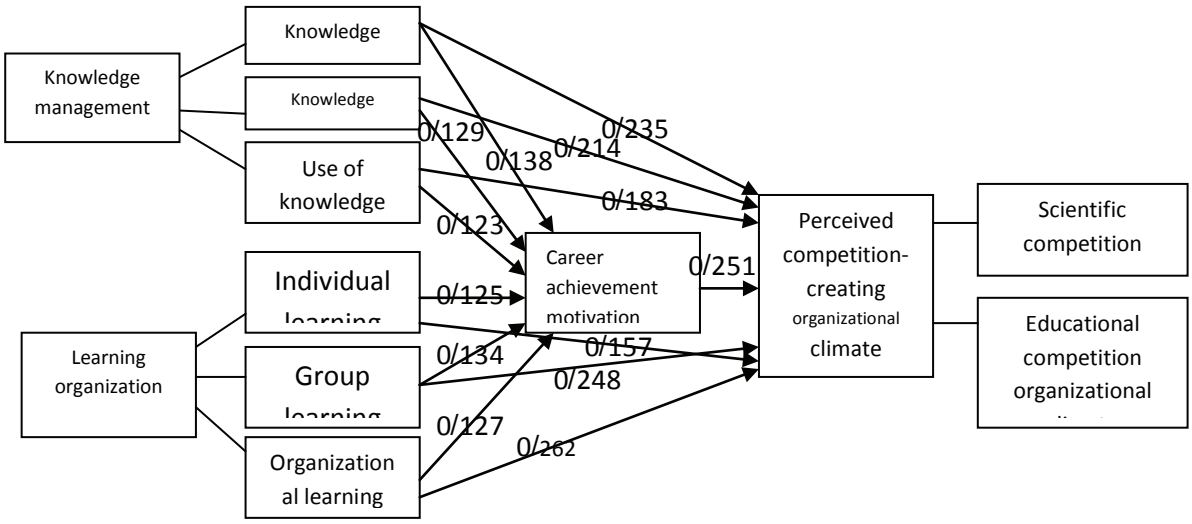

Figure 2. Empirical research model for determining the relation of the use of knowledge management and learning organization to perceived competition-creating organizational climate with the mediation of career achievement motivation

Table 5. Variables of the empirical model of the research

RMSEA	RMR	GFI	AGFI	P(value)	df	χ^2
059/0	026/0	95/0	90/0	0000/0	92	482/275

According to the findings, RMSEA = 0.059, RMR = 0.026, GFI = 0.95, AGFI = 0.90, P (value)= = 0.0000, and $\chi^2 = 275.482$, which indicate the relative fitness of the research model.

Discussion and conclusion

According to the findings of the present research, the first hypothesis assuming that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and perceived competition-creating organizational climate is proven.

Studies by Rahimi (2007) show that there is positive, significant relationship between the components of knowledge management and organizational competition. Studies by Shafipoor Motlagh (2010) reveal that knowledge management has a significant relationship to organizational commitment and, as a result, to organizational competition.

Shafipoor Motlagh and Yarmohammadian (2012) show the job involvement and organizational trust have a significant relationship to knowledge management.

According to Chen *et al.* (2007) and Chen Chung (2010), organizational climate has a positive effect on

management, and if it is supportive – i.e. in case it has an innovative and cooperative atmosphere – it eases the implementation of knowledge management.

Also, Mahmoud Salehi *et al* (2012) show that organizational climate has positive impacts on knowledge management. According to the findings of the present research, the second hypothesis assuming a significant relation between the learning organization and perceived competition-creating organizational climate is proved.

Studies by Yaghoubi *et al*. (2010) show that there is a correlation between organizational learning and the learning organization, and the learning organization has a significant relationship to knowledge management.

Senge (990) defines the learning organization as organizations where people continuously promote their abilities in order achieve desirable results; where new thought patterns are fostered; group activities are allowed; and people continuously learn how to learn together (Song *et al*. 2009).

The findings of this enquiry also prove the third hypothesis assuming that career achievement motivation mediates the relationship between knowledge management and the learning organization.

Studies by Collins *et al*. (2004), Meece *et al*. (2006), and Ziegler (2010) reveal that there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and employees' career achievement motivation. Research done by Baker (1992) reveals that organizational climate has a direct relationship to managers' ability to motivate employees by providing their psychological needs such as achievement motivation, power, etc.

Sadeghi and Fathi (2002) show that organizational climate has a significant relationship to the teachers' job satisfaction, and subsequently to organizational achievement motivation. According to the findings, RMSEA=0.059, RMR=0.026, GFI=0.95, AGFI=0.90, P(value)=0.0000, and χ^2=275.482, which indicate the relative fitness of the research model.

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