



The Role of Tacit Knowledge Transfer in Empowering the Employees of Physical Education Departments

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ABSTRACT: Today, empowerment of employees is considered as one of the important issues of human resource management in the organizations. In the meantime, the feeling of each organizational member about their empowerment is important. In empowering employees, the role of tacit knowledge and convert it into explicit and transferable knowledge among other employees is clearly noticeable. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the tacit knowledge transfers with a sense of empowerment in Mazandaran province's physical education department employees. The research was in surveying mode and required data are collected by using questionnaires and random sampling method among the 173 employees. The research tools were Spritz empowerment questionnaire and Madisch tacit knowledge transfer questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by ten members of sports management professors. The reliability of the questionnaire is obtained 0.85 in Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the empowerment questionnaire and 0.92 in tacit knowledge transfer questionnaire. Spearman correlation test was used to test the hypothesis. The results suggest a significant relationship between the variables. This means that, there is a significant positive relationship between tacit knowledge transfer from one side and the ability of employees in decision making, acceptance of responsibility for decision-making by employees, access of employees to related tools for decision making and implementation, and finally, acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of their decisions on the other side.

Keywords: Knowledge management, tacit knowledge transfer, empowerment, decision making, responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

The application of knowledge management in organizations is undeniable. Factors such as globalization, downsizing of the governments, citizen-centering and necessity of citizen participation require special attention to the knowledge management. Organizations must be able to effectively manage their knowledge assets (Abtahi and Salvati, 1385). Knowledge management is a challenging process, because it is difficult to recognize its real value and thus, applying it in a desirable manner to create a competitive advantage for an organization is more difficult. Now the managers are trying to extract the accumulated knowledge in the minds of organization members through knowledge management and share it among all participants. In this case, the stored knowledge in the system converts to a usable permanent source and provides a sustainable

competitive advantage for organizations (Heisman, 2006). Knowledge management includes human behavior, attitudes and human capabilities, business philosophies, patterns, practices, processes and complex technologies (Vij, 2002). Knowledge management is the process of creating and sharing, transferring and retaining knowledge so that it can be an effective way to apply in organizations (Hoffman, Hulsher and Sharif, 2005). Nonaka cites two types of knowledge and distinguishes between them. Actually, these two kinds of knowledge are two sides of a coin and shape the total knowledge.

A. Tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge can be a set of experiences, skills, work perspectives and intellectual and value system inside a person which can't be told and it is not stored in any database, but also its place is in the human mind and forms his activities.

B. Explicit knowledge

Explicit Knowledge is an objective knowledge and can be expressed in formal and in systematic language. This type of knowledge is independent from the employees and it exists in computer information systems, organizational documents and etc.

Tacit knowledge has a key role in the affairs and plays a major role in knowledge management. The main challenge of knowledge management is to further convert of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. The more important point is that knowledge flow is the thing that causes the growth of the organization; because stagnant and static knowledge do not guarantee the success of the organization. This flow arises from the interaction of both explicit and tacit knowledge and forms the organization's knowledge life cycle (Nonaka, 1994).

However, an important factor in the survival and viability of organizations is empowering the human resources. In other words, importance of human resources is higher than new technologies, financial and material resources. This means that, the main difference of organizations is in knowledge not material possessions. The role of efficient and capable human resources is undeniable in achieving the organization's objectives. Human resource is the most important, most expensive and most valuable assets of an organization. Formidable human resource creates formidable organization. A formidable organization is an environment in which employees in different departments cooperate with each other in performing the activities. Empowerment of human resources, as a new approach to intrinsic motivation jobs is releasing the internal forces of employees and providing meaningful contexts and creating opportunities to flourish talents, abilities and competencies of individuals. Empowerment begins with changes in beliefs, thoughts and attitudes of employees. This means that, they need to believe that they have the required skills and competencies to perform duties successfully and they need to feel that they have freedom and independence in performing the activities. They need to believe that they have influence and control capacity on job's outcome and they need to feel that they are following meaningful and valuable career goals and believe that they are being treated honestly and fairly. Sense of empowerment has a great influence on the performance of the organization's employees; if people have the sense of empowerment, several organizational and personal benefits such as creativity, flexibility, problem solving, high quality job performance, job satisfaction, mental health will be yielded. In addition, empowerment people are self-control and self-adjusting. They readily accept responsibility, and have a positive view of themselves; others and the environment, and they are optimistic

about their career life and fundamentally look others as a colleague and partner, not a competitor. When conflicts or problems occur in job status, they search the solutions rather than being indifferent and evade their responsibility. They are criticizable and they are constantly learning. One of the effective factors on empowering employees is information, education and job skills. Bowen and Lawler consider empowerment as sharing the front line employees in the four elements of information, knowledge, rewards and power (Bowen and Lawler, 1992).

According to this definition, it is observed that one of the leading factors to empowering the employees is knowledge. Today, all of the working and scientific groups recognize that they should be centered on science activities to have sustained presence in the business and competitive world. Conceptual knowledge is beyond the data and information. Knowledge is organized data sets, practical solution related to it, results of applying the various decisions and related training. Knowledge is the foundation of skills, experience and expertise of each individual (Drucker, 1999). Therefore, the collection of knowledge and its management can empower people. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is gradual, so, it needs time passing and wasting it should be avoided. This knowledge should be converted into explicit knowledge and it should be transferred to other employees and it should be used in a way to empower them. At the first time, Michael Polanyi proposed the concept of tacit knowledge by stipulating to the fact that we know more than what we can say. He believes that tacit knowledge is in personal area and involves the intersection between the individual and the culture to which he belongs. From the perspective of Polanyi, tacit knowledge can only be learned implicitly. This is rooted in his conception of tacit knowledge as the mind tacit power and integration power and its relation to comprehension (Mason and Mc Gary, 2007). Tacit knowledge as an important stimulus in the process of creativity and innovation plays an important role as an organizational resource and success factor in the organization.

Due to the rapid environmental changes and human resources competition in organizations to update themselves, empowerment is one of the best ways to adapt to these changes.

On the other hand, due to the dynamic environment of physical education departments and many changes that occur in sport organizations, they need to have flexible forces and employees should be initiated and accept the responsibility of their administration. This will be done by empowering them to do things better. Also physical education departments have a large number of experienced human resources in retirement borders and have years of experience and valuable knowledge.

This knowledge gained from experience that should be used to empower other employees, requires good knowledge management.

This requires that provincial physical education departments with respecting the knowledge management and mutually empowering individuals put it in one of its priority programs as a strategic and necessary need in pioneering in the field of competitiveness.

According to this description, it seems logical that tacit knowledge transfer relationship with the sense of empowerment in physical education departments' employees be studied and examined. In this regard, the following secondary objectives were evaluated:

- Identifying the role of tacit knowledge transfer on the ability of employees in decision making
- Identifying the role of tacit knowledge transfer on the accepting responsibility for implementing the decisions of the employees
- Identifying the role of tacit knowledge transfer on the employees access to related tools for decision making and implementation
- Identifying the role of tacit knowledge transfer on the accepting responsibility for consequences of decisions taken by the employees.

Findings of this study can be used in improving the plans of human resources in deputy of physical education departments in general and Sports and Physical Education Vice President in particular. Results show that there is a significant relationship between organizational structure and empowering, so that the bureaucratic organizational structure has a negative relationship with empowering (Sabzikaran, 1389). There is a significant relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational entrepreneurship (Zare, 1386). Psychological empowerment in the relationship between organizational empowering and job satisfaction can't play a mediating role, because empowering has a strong and direct effect on job satisfaction (Cheng, 2009). According to Haddad Alawi (1386), tacit knowledge is inherently personal. It has a direct relationship with the skills and it is field-centered. In addition, tacit knowledge has a practical orientation with an emphasis on practical learning, applied learning and practical intelligence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is a correlation study and it is an applied research. The population of the study: Include all employees of Mazandaran province's physical education departments. The population was 316

patients of which, 173 patients were randomly selected as the sample.

In this study, the main assessment tool is the questionnaire.

1. Empowering questionnaire: Spritz empowerment questionnaire (1995) was used to measure the empowerment. This questionnaire consists of five components: a sense of significance, authority, competence, effectiveness and trust that was standardized in 1384 in Iran by Abdollahi.

2. Madisch tacit knowledge transfer questionnaire: Madisch tacit knowledge transfer questionnaire was used to measure the transmission of tacit knowledge, which consists of five components: altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. The scale of both questionnaires is Likert-type. In this study, validity of the questionnaires was approved by using the sport and governmental experts' opinions and reliability of the questionnaires obtained respectively 0.85 and 0.92 through Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

RESULTS

The results of the first sub-hypothesis indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between tacit knowledge transfer and the ability of employees in decision making ($r = 0.43$). In other words, tacit knowledge transfer has an essential role in the ability of employees in decision making in province's physical education departments and the more the transfer of tacit knowledge increases; the more the ability of decision making by employees will increase. The results of the second sub-hypothesis suggest that there is a positive and significant relationship between tacit knowledge transfer and accepting responsibility among employees in implementation of decisions. In other words, the transfer of tacit knowledge plays an essential role in accepting responsibility among employees in implementation of decisions and the more the transfer of tacit knowledge increases, the more the responsibility acceptance among employees in implementation of decisions will increase. Results also show a significant positive relationship between tacit knowledge transfer and access to related tools for decision making and implementation in the studied population. This means that, the transfer of tacit knowledge plays an essential role in employees access to related tools for decision making and implementation in the physical education departments and the more the transfer of tacit knowledge increases, the more the employees access to related tools for decision making and implementation will increase.

On the other hand, the relationship between tacit knowledge transfer and acceptance of responsibility for the consequences of employees' decision is positive and significant. In other words, the transfer of tacit knowledge plays an essential role in employees' responsibility for the consequences of decisions in Mazandaran's physical education departments and it is predicted that the more the transfer of tacit knowledge increases, the more employees' responsibility for the consequences of the decision will increase.

The results of the main hypothesis show that the correlation coefficient is equal to 6.0 and this indicates that, in general, there is a positive and significant relationship between the transfer of tacit knowledge and sense of empowerment among employees. In other words, the transfer of tacit knowledge plays an essential role in the sense of employee empowerment in the studied physical education departments and the more transfer of tacit knowledge increases, the more the sense of employee empowerment will increase.

Table 1. Results of the hypotheses tests.

Hypotheses	Level of significance	Spearman correlation coefficients	Test Results
The main hypothesis: The tacit knowledge transfer has a positive and significant relationship with a sense of empowerment.	0/000	0/58	Approved
Sub-hypothesis 1: The tacit knowledge transfer has a positive and significant relationship with the ability of employees in decision making.	0/000	0/50	Approved
Sub-hypothesis 2: The tacit knowledge transfer has a positive and significant relationship with responsibility of employees in implementing the decision.	0/000	0/40	Approved
Sub-Hypothesis 3: The tacit knowledge transfer has a positive and significant relationship with the access of employees to related tools for decision making and implementation.	0/000	0/60	Approved
Sub Hypothesis 4: The employees' tacit knowledge transfer has a positive and significant relationship with accepting responsibility for the consequences of decisions.	0/000	0/45	Approved

CONCLUSION

The findings of this paper indicate that the transfer of tacit knowledge and its conversion into explicit knowledge have correlation with the participation of employees in decision making. This finding is consistent with the results of Lawler. Bowen and Lawler (1992) consider empowering as a strategy to further contribution of employees in power. Bowen and Lawler's empowering model, access to information plays an important role in decision making. Bowen and Lawler believe that, empowerment exists when companies distribute their power, information, knowledge and rewards in the organizations. Approval of the tacit knowledge transfer relationship with the capabilities of employees in this study is consistent with the research of Conger and Kanungo. Conger and Kanungo (1988), consider empowerment as the process of self-efficacy enhancing feelings in individuals by identifying and eliminating conditions that caused the employees' disability (Conger and Kanungo, 1988). In their paper entitled "The empowerment process: the unity of theory and practice", they consider empowerment as a motivational approach means being able.

Being capable of creating conditions for increasing motivation and perform assigned duties by strengthening their self-efficacy feelings implies that, according to the results of this study tacit knowledge transfer is the disability removal factor. Another point that should be noted in conclusion is that the transfer of knowledge can contribute to the distribution of power in the organization. These results of the research are commensurate with the Harley research. He believes that empowerment is a strategy that in which a manager can achieve employees' commitment in granting them some control. Also, the essence of empowerment is changes in the distribution and applying power in the organizations. According to this study, this distribution of power and authority is possible through the transfer of tacit knowledge. Abdullahi and Nave Ebrahim believe that, empowerment includes three most important factors: Strategies and management behavior, perceived self-efficacy of employees and organizational conditions and factors (Abdullahi and Nave Ebrahim, 1386). Here, the knowledge management and tacit knowledge transfer can be considered as a component of management strategies which cause the employee empowerment.

Then, according to the findings of this study, the following is recommended for the studied organization:

-Employees should be trained in their job field and the knowledge related to employees' responsibility should be given to them, so that after acquiring the necessary education and their sense of empowerment, they be allowed to make decisions in their job responsibilities.

-Employees should be encouraged with documenting the tacit knowledge and its transfer among colleagues, to accept the responsibilities of the decision implementation.

-The required information and knowledge should be provided for employees to make decisions about the manager's delegated duties to them. In this way, the manager provides necessary information instead of offering ways to the employees or making personal decisions, so that they can make their own decisions.

-The rewards which are given to the employees for proper decision making and implementation should be granted to them in a ceremony attended by the entire employees, so that they ensure the timely acknowledgment of their activities. This will increase the confidence and strengthening the capabilities of the encouraged employees.

-Before doing anything, organizations should pay attention to participation culture and contribute to their mental models; the culture that encourages the knowledge transport and sharing in the organization.

-A solution for these employees to feel the ability of performing works is that the opportunity to successful performing of harder works which leads to the achievement of desired goals should be given to them. This can be done by breaking large tasks into components and then assigning only one segment of it at any time to the employees and capabilities can be supported through the feedback of work's results.

-Managers are recommended to provide their knowledge for employees to make it a culture as a pattern and the employees exchange their knowledge with each other. This removes the confidentiality of information and knowledge.

-It is recommended that, the regulations and policies which limit the access to information and knowledge be removed and increase the speed of access to knowledge and its exchange in the organization, such as the use of office automation.

-It is suggested that, with periodic displacement of people in different parts of the organization, the possibility of transmission of knowledge and thus empowerment of people should be provided.

-It is recommended that, the organizations with the participation of the employees in external training

courses provide the possibility of acquiring knowledge from outside the organization for the employees.

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