

Chapter 12

The Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Learning in Universities

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ABSTRACT

In today's information and technology-driven markets, knowledge has an important role to play in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage and improving organizational performance. Since knowledge is the most important competitive advantage tool, effective management of knowledge will increase organizational performance. The knowledge management process is a process that includes activities related to the systematic acquisition, transformation, use, and protection of knowledge in order to better achieve organizational goals. This process develops depending on technology, culture, organizational structure, and human factors. The aim of this study is to determine the effects of knowledge management on organizational learning for 650 academicians working at universities in Istanbul. As a result of the structural equation model, a positive 68.1% increasing relationship was determined between the knowledge management and organizational learning.

INTRODUCTION

Today, knowledge is recognized as an important organizational and individual asset. For this reason, individual and organizational learning, which are ways of acquiring knowledge, are becoming increasingly important. In business and organizational life, especially with the effect of globalization and competition, information is used effectively in the production of products and services (Nouri et al., 2017:195). In this context, it has emerged as a necessity to know the methods of accessing information and integrating information with activities in order for the organization to survive and compete. The phrase “knowledge is power” refers to an understanding that brings the individual to the forefront today, as well as an understanding that realizes the acquisition, sharing, transfer and effective use of knowledge for organizations through appropriate channels. In an organization, knowledge obtained from the internal and external

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environment is the common value of that organization and needs to be shared (Yang, 2011:17). Shared knowledge creates individual and organizational synergy that will lead the organization to success and creates the idea that knowledge is the common property and/or value of the organization.

Today's organizations' constant need for information and the necessity to use information in their activities have led to the emergence of knowledge and information-based practices such as knowledge management, information management, document management and organizational learning (Ainissyifa, 2012:81). Identifying, obtaining, processing, storing and sharing information related to activities and using it in organizational activities is possible through the conscious and programmed implementation of knowledge management (Cheng et al., 2017:179). For organizations, knowing where knowledge is located is of little use; knowledge becomes a valuable company asset only when it can be accessed. As the level of accessibility increases, the value of information undoubtedly increases at the same rate (Donate & Pablo, 2015:364).

Through the act of learning, which is one of the ways of accessing knowledge, both individuals and organizations make efforts to obtain the necessary knowledge for their activities. As the world changes rapidly, the level of uncertainty increases at the same rate. Past experience is therefore often not reliable enough for decision-making. Continuous learning is needed to anticipate and respond to changes and achieve efficiencies (Watanabe & Senoo, 2011:112). For this reason, it is a natural necessity for organizations to become learning organizations and to make organizational learning an organizational policy (Thambi & O'Toole, 2012:94). In this context, a learning organization is a knowledge-based organization that adapts all its elements and possibilities to the changing environmental conditions it is in, obtains the necessary information in various ways and disseminates it within the organization within a system, and uses the information effectively and efficiently in its activities (Stylianou & Savva, 2016:1517).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Knowledge Management

The fact that organizations that structuralize the process of knowledge creation, in other words, that give it an institutional quality, will have the most important competitive tool of the information age as organizations that can manage knowledge, makes the management of organizational knowledge mandatory. In this sense, knowledge management is a strategic concept that today's organizations need to focus on and gain skills in. The aim of knowledge management is primarily to identify valuable new information, to deliver it to the relevant units and to keep the accumulation of knowledge alive. In this sense, searching for, finding and accessing new information related to the work done, recording and accurate use of information, communicating and sharing it to other employees, updating and archiving outdated and unused information are the activities of knowledge management (Dahou et al., 2019:5). The aim of knowledge-age organizations, which focus on making better use of their knowledge capacities by improving the flow of knowledge among organizational members, is to gain competitive advantage through the effective dissemination of knowledge. In the last decade, driven by rapid advances in information technology and a dynamic global environment, knowledge has become a crucial resource that facilitates and enhances sustainable competitive advantage (Mohajan, 2017:8). Knowledge management is an important capability of the learning organization. Knowledge management is the acquisition, evaluation and sharing of knowledge in a way that achieves organizational value. Since the idea of producing and

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