

The Necessity of Organizational Commitment for Knowledge Sharing

Case Study: Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

Mohammadreza Neyestani

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of
Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Maryam Piran

MSC in Educational Management, Shiraz University, Shiraz, Iran

Narjes Alsadat Nasabi

MSC in Human Resource Management, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran

Kamal Nosrati

MA, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Isfahan

Katayoon Maidanipour

MA of Educational Planning, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of
Tehran

Accepted: Jan 17, 2013 Published: Feb 23, 2013

Doi:10.5296/jsr.v4i1.2921

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v4i1.2921>

Abstract

Sustained success in the new organizations depends on the creation, sharing and applying knowledge as an intellectual capital. Among various organizational factors, organizational commitment and its relationship with knowledge sharing had less been considered. This study investigated the relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing from the perspective of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (SUMS) faculties. Organizational commitment includes affective, normative and continuous commitment. The research was descriptive-correlation. The sample consisted of 122 cases of SUMS faculties selected by simple random sampling. The research instruments were Meyer and Allen Organizational Commitment and MANDI Knowledge Sharing Questionnaires. The results revealed a positive correlation between organizational commitment and its dimensions and knowledge sharing. The affective, normative and continuous commitment can predict knowledge sharing, respectively. The only significant positive relationship between demographic variables and the main variables were related to the emotional level of service and commitment.

Keywords: Knowledge management (KM), Knowledge sharing (KS), Organizational Commitment (OC), Affective Commitment (AC), Normative Commitment (NC), Continuous Commitment (CC).

1. Introduction

In the wisdom era when Knowledge is introduced as the most critical asset, organizations focused on knowledge management more and more. Nowadays, this competitive turnover makes organizations control valuable knowledge and portion it for survival in modern contested environment (Han & Anantatmula, 2007). As King said, knowledge management is codified process in which knowledge created, refined, reserved and shared for more efficiency (King et al, 2008). Therefore, synergy and valuation will be unavoidable as a results of knowledge sharing and this can provide permanent competitive profit (Ahmadi zade et al, 2010). Concerning several studies, scientists represent the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational structure, human resource management, organizational culture and organizational commitment (Bhat, 2001; Scarbero & Carter, 2000; Davarpanah, 2007; Moradian, 2006). Many studies show the relationship between organizational commitment and personnel behavior and attitude. Knowledge sharing is also one of the organizational behaviors done arbitrarily and is influenced by organizational commitment (Yosefi et al, 2010). Organizational commitment is the organizational attitude that connects the personnel to the organization. From the point of Porter, organizational commitment is a kind of organizational goal patronage, attempts for goal attainment, and tendency to organizational membership (Gautam et al, 2004; Brown, 2003). Nevertheless, what is hidden from researchers' point of view is the key role of organizational commitment on knowledge sharing (Tabarsa & Ormazdy, 2008). Nowadays, it is completely accepted that human resource is the main element in knowledge management productivity especially knowledge sharing (Zahedi & Tejari, 2008). However, the ancient saying, "knowledge is power", makes the personnel reserved and conceals knowledge as power resource.

Based on assumptions described in previous research, this study analyzed Organizational Commitment and Knowledge Sharing.

Theoretical Background

Knowledge management converts human asset to the organized intellectual wealth in order to produce synergy at organization (Eslami Karam Shahlo, 2009; Connelly & Kelloway, 2003). In each system, knowledge management profits represented at two levels. In individual level, knowledge management provides an opportunity to the personnel to improve their skills and experiences through cooperation with others and bilateral learning. In organizational level, knowledge management results in organizational performance progress by efficiency, productivity, quality and innovation (Faraji, 2010). Nonaka divided knowledge in two groups. First, implicit Knowledge is based on personal knowledge and

experiences and includes inconspicuous factors such as personal beliefs, viewpoints and values and second, explicit knowledge is known as the implicit knowledge that is documented in some processes and granted easily (Nonaka & Konno, 2006). Researchers declared that an organization could manage its knowledge only by changing implicit knowledge to explicit (Hooff & Ridder, 2004). Theorists have announced several models for knowledge management in which a process with start and end by agreement is manifested (table 1).

Table1: Knowledge management process (Afraze, 2005; King et al, 2008; Sadeghi, 2009)

King & Omega 2006	Darenport & Prusak, 1998	Chauvel & Despres, 1999	Probst, Raub, Romhard, 1999	Jashapara, 2004	Aspinwall & Wong, 2004
Create	Obtain	Obtain	Goal Appointment	Survey	Needs Appointment
Obtain	Organize	Organize	Identify	Create & Obtain	Possession
Refine	Share	Reserve & Present	Obtain	Packing	Share
Reserve	Use	Share	Develop	Reserve	Use
Transmit	-	Evaluate	Maintain	Share	-
Share	-	-	Share	Use	-
Use	-	-	Evaluate	Reuse	-
performance	-	-	-	-	-

From the viewpoint of Gung Chi, knowledge sharing is a social communication culture that includes implicit and explicit knowledge, experiences and skills transmission inter-organizational departments (Jung Chi, 2006). An organization has a key role in knowledge sharing process, providing a suitable environment and headmaster patronage for team and group working knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The final goal of knowledge sharing is attempt to transform and exchange all skills, experiences and knowledge to organizational asset with aim of organizational effectiveness progress (Yang & Wan, 2004). All studies have focused on special personnel with high tendency to knowledge and experience sharing that starts and continues automatically and reaches the moral norms, customs and organizational behaviors (Holdt, 2007; Stemson, 2003). Therefore, knowledge sharing is one of the fundamental fields and the main criterion of knowledge management.

Another variable is organizational commitment. A significant factor in the job and organizational attitude that has been focused for many years. Gautam (2004) knows commitment as an attitude or tendency to the organization that connects personnel identity to

the organization (Gautam et al, 2004; Brown, 2003). Nowadays, one of the success and growth comparative indexes is human resource empowerment and their commitment and allegiance that will result in higher quality by extreme endeavor in organizational goals achievement. All researches identified positive and multiple effect of organizational commitment on performance; therefore, systems with higher personnel commitment level own higher performance level and lower delay (Kozechian & et al, 2003; Nehrir, 2001; Ching & Hae, 2009). There are two total viewpoints regarding the organizational commitment resources: First, organizational commitment is an attitudinal occasion defined as an interesting subject to the organization, which consists of three main factors:

1. Powerful trust to the organizational goals and values.
2. Tendency toward trying hard for goal accomplishment.
3. Keen trend to be an organization member (Mowday, 2003).

From the second viewpoint, organizational commitment is behavioral. The personnel are dedicated to their organization because of their investment and profits. Some investigators believe that these exert an influence on each other. As Allen and Meyer (1991) said, commitment is psychic mood that provides a kind of tendency and need for working at workplace (Chang et al, 2007).

With regards to this, they define three dimensions that are base of our study:

1. Affective commitment: affective tendency to the organization and its activities with strong responsibility.
2. Normative commitment: necessity to stay at organization.
3. Continuance commitment: perception of expenses that employee should pay by organization abandonment (Asgari, 2005).

In several studies, the effective factors on knowledge sharing include communication, team working, strategy, confidence, affective commitment, human resource management and knowledge (Hussein Ghole zade, 2010; Hooff & Ridder, 2004; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Hislop, 2002; Kellway & Barling, 2000; Scarbrough & Carter, 2000). Participative environment will cause more organizational commitment and more involvement in knowledge sharing process (Hislop, 2003); consequently high level of organizational commitment is a positive and dynamic attitude in knowledge sharing (Rabertson & O' Malley Hammersley, 2000).

Methodology

Shiraz University of Medical Sciences is one of the most successful and credible universities in Iran and Middle East where Medical and Paramedical educations is provided as well as health care and treatment services. This is a descriptive-correlation study. The sample consisted of 122 out of 650 academic staff selected through Cochran equation and Simple Random Sampling. All 122 questionnaires were statistically analyzed. Our empirical analyses are based on MANDI knowledge sharing and Allen and Meyer organizational commitment.

Measures of the commitment dimensions are derived from Allen and Meyer organizational commitment in 2004. Their questionnaire includes 18 items in three dimensions, each evaluated by 6 questions. Its reliability was 0.87 in total, 0.85 in affective commitment, 0.82 in normative commitment, and 0.7 in continuous commitment (Cronbach Alpha). The last version of MANDI knowledge sharing questionnaire was published with 27 items in 2010 (Minbaeva, 2010). Its reliability was 0.86 (Cronbach Alpha). With respect to standard and scientific point of view, both questionnaires had content validity. Both of them are in 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (=1) to strongly agree (=5) and in negative questions it is the opposite. Additionally, demographic data as to sex and years of work experience were collected. Organizational commitment and its traits were considered as independent and knowledge sharing as dependent variable. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS. P-value equal or lower than 0.01, was considered as statistically significant.

Results

All questionnaires were analyzed. 71.14% of participants were male and 27.86% female. According to the results, the years of work experience were 5.73% (1-5 yr), 35.25 (6-10 yr), 22.14% (11-15 yr), 20.49 16-20 yr) and 16.39 (21-30 yr).

The result of Pearson correlation test is given in Table 1. Knowledge sharing and organizational commitment were correlated with each other. Indexes of organizational commitment were significantly related to knowledge sharing as well. Concerning data analysis, the organizational commitment indexes and knowledge sharing were correlated with affective commitment, normative commitment and continuous commitment, respectively.

Table 2: Correlation of variables

	KS	OC	AC	NC	CC
KS	1				
OC	**0.72	1			
AC	**0.57	**0.33	1		
NC	**0.46	**0.24	**0.11	1	
CC	**0.66	**0.37	**0.33	**0.36	1

**P>0.01

Bi-variable regression was done to predict knowledge sharing according to the OC as OC and its dimensions are independent and KS was dependent (table 2). The results indicated that affective commitment by 0.35 (β) was the most powerful factor in predicting knowledge sharing followed by continuous and normative commitment, respectively. Therefore, each increase and decrease in OC and its indexes increase and decrease KS.

Table 3: Regression

model	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.	β	t	Sig.
OC	0.72	0.57	0.57	45.75	0.000	0.72	5.47	0.000
NC	0.57	0.34	0.329	92.14	0.000	0.57	11.17	0.000
CC	0.46	0.22	0.20	34.00	0.000	0.46	7.00	0.000
AC	0.66	0.41	0.399	67.05	0.000	0.66	9.05	0.000

Amount of R square in Table 3 showed that 72% adjusted R square of knowledge sharing was explained by affective commitment. So other indexes were excluded. With regard to these results, regression equation is defined as follow:

Knowledge Sharing = unstandardized coefficients (59.43) +0.847 (affective commitment)

Table 4: summery model of regression

model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	0.72	0.60	0.57	8.077

The results indicated the only significant relationship between main and demographic variables is that of affective commitment and the years of work experience. The other variables did not have any significant relationship.

Discussion

In this study, the role and importance of organizational commitment as one of the factors influencing knowledge sharing was emphasized and the need for further study in this regard is recommended. Organizational commitment of employees through the organization's loyalty responsibility, participation in organizational decisions, emotional attachment to the organization, participate in the life of the organization and supporting its goals and sense of responsibility in the organization process can enhance knowledge sharing among employees and promote the cause. The prerequisite information and knowledge sharing among employees is that people accept organizational goals and values at high level besides having serious tendency to attempt in order to achieve organizational goals, become interested in work and stay in the organization. The faculties and personnel were willing to share knowledge with their colleagues when they have high organizational commitment and sense of faithfulness, act consistently toward organizational goals and values, and tend to be committed to maintain organizational membership. They must define their identity with their organization; participate in organizational affairs, and be satisfied about his/her affiliation to the organization. They also have a deep and strong desire for continuous membership in the organization and considerable effort due to the organization itself and apart from its instrumental value. Knowledge sharing requires commitment at all organizational levels.

Without a high degree of employee commitment, knowledge sharing is not possible. About the mentioned importance and relationship between these components, this study investigates the relationship between organizational commitment components (Affective, Normative, and Continuous Commitment) and knowledge sharing.

Then, the power of each OC components in predicting knowledge sharing was determined from the viewpoint of faculties. Research results represent a significant positive relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing of faculty members in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. The results of this study are consistent with those of Hoof & Ridder (2004). Therefore, organizational commitment and the atmosphere of computer-based communication have the greatest impact on knowledge sharing representation (Hislop, 2003). Thus, as Robertson et al. emphasized, high levels of organizational commitment and positive attitude of the staff is relevant to knowledge sharing (Robertson & O' Malley Hammersley, 2000). Lack of commitment leads to personnel dissatisfaction and this in the organization will reduce the incentive to create, transfer and share knowledge. Employees' commitment to the organization generates intangible assets. Knowledge and its sharing of intangible assets in the organization are very important in expanding the organizational commitment of employees. The finding based on research revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the three components of organizational commitment and sharing of knowledge. This reflects the fact that the faculty members believe that the more their emotional bond with the values and goals, the more they are willing to share their knowledge with other members of the organization. The increased costs imposed on the person through leaving the organization and the high sense of responsibility, faith and moral commitment to the organization, cause faculty members' willingness to be actively involved in knowledge sharing activities. The results of regression analysis showed that organizational commitment and its components is positive predictor of knowledge sharing. In addition, among the three dimensions of organizational commitment, affective commitment is the most important predicator of knowledge sharing following continuous and normative commitment, respectively, in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences faculties' viewpoint. Overall, each increase or decrease in the dimensions can increase or decrease knowledge sharing. So, we can conclude that more attention to the affective, continuous and normative commitment lead to increased knowledge sharing and its development in the organization.

Consequently, it seems organizational commitment must be defined as an important and effective factor on knowledge sharing process in organizations; this needs to be expanded and further attended. Finally, some important strategies for improving organizational commitment in order to help to facilitate knowledge sharing process in an organization are as follows:

1. Involving the personnel in organizational goals gaining by enhancing the affective commitment.
2. Improving social network and employee participation.
3. Involving the personnel in decision-making and greater cooperation.
4. Emphasizing the aspects that are of social value.

5. Establishing appropriate systems of reward and punishment.
6. Eliminating discrimination and poor relationships in the workplace.
7. Promoting of job security.
8. Developing trust in organization.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dr. Nasrin Shokrpour at Center for Development of Clinical Research of Namazi Hospital for editorial assistance.

Bibliography

- [1] Afraze, A. 2005. *Knowledge management (Concepts, models, measurement and implementation)*, Tehran, Amir Kabir University, School of Industrial Engineering.
- [2] Ahmadizade A., Fartoukzadeh, H. R., and Eshraghi, H. 2010. *Dynamic Modeling of Customer Knowledge to Increase Competition Commercial Companies and Institutes*, second Iranian Knowledge Management Conference, Iran, Tehran.
- [3] Asgari, M. R. 2005. Organizational commitment and its relationship with organizational culture, *Basirat*, 11th, 32: 252-258.
- [4] Bhat. G. D. 2001. Knowledge management in organizations examining the interaction between technologies, techniques and people, *journal of knowledge management*, 5, 1: 68-75.
- [5] Brown, R. 2003. *Organizational Commitment in perspective: Re- Configuring the multi dimensional approach*, California State University.
- [6] Chang, H. T., Chi, M. W., and Miao, M. C. 2007. testing the relationship between three components organizational/ occupational commitment and organizational/ occupational turnover intention using a none-recursive model, *journal of vocational behavior*, 2: 320-335.
- [7] Ching, S. C., and Hae, CC. 2009. Perceptions of internal marketing and organizational commitment by nurses, *J Adv Nurs*, 65, 1: 92.
- [8] Connelly, C.E., and Kelloway, E.K. 2003. Predictors of employees' perceptions of knowledge sharing culture, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 24, 5/6: 294-305.
- [9] Davarpanah, M. R. 2007. Commitment to knowledge management, strategic factor for organizational development, *Journal of Library and Information Science*, VI, 4: 4-16.
- [10] Eslami Karam Shahlo, V. 2009. Steps in implementing knowledge management and organizational barriers to its establishment, *the Second National Conference on Knowledge Management*, Tehran, Razi International Conference Center, 10 and 11 February.
- [11] Faraji, A. 2010. Knowledge management-based Model for improving Productivity in Operational units of Petroleum Ministry, *second Iranian Knowledge Management Conference*, Razi international conference center, Jan 30-31.
- [12] Gautam T., Van Dick R., and Wagner U. 2004. Organizational identification and organizational commitment: Distinct aspects of two related concepts, *Asian Journal of*

- social Psychology*, 7: 301-15.
- [13] Han, B., and Anantatmula, V. 2007. Knowledge sharing in large IT organizing: a Case study, *Journal of information on and knowledge management system*, 37, 4: 421-439.
- [14] Hislop, D. 2002. Managing Knowledge and the Problem of Commitment, *Proceedings of the 3rd European Conference on Organizational Knowledge, Learning and Capabilities*, ALBA, Athens.
- [15] Hislop, D. 2003. Linking Human Resource Management and Knowledge Management via Commitment: A Review and Research Agenda, *Employee Relations*, 25: 182-202.
- [16] Holdt, C.P. 2007. Knowledge sharing Moving Away from the obsession with Best Practices, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 11, 1: 36-47.
- [17] Hooff, B., and Ridder, J. 2004. Knowledge sharing in context: The Influence of Organizational Commitment, Communication Climate and CMC Use on Knowledge Sharing, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 8 (6).
- [18] Hussein Qolizadeh R., and Merkmaly, S. M. 2010. The key factors affecting knowledge sharing (Case of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology), *Journal of Higher Education in Iran*, Third Year, No. 1, Summer.
- [19] Jung-Chi P. 2006. An empirical study of the relationship between knowledge sharing and IS/IT strategic planning (ISSP), *Management Decision*, 44, 1: 105-122.
- [20] Kelloway, E., and Kelvin Barling, J. 2000. Knowledge works as organizational behavior, *International Journal of management Reviews*, 2, 3: 287-304.
- [21] King, W. R., Chung, T. R., and Haney, M. H. 2008. Knowledge Management and organizational Learning, *The International Journal of Management Science*, Omega, 36: 167-172.
- [22] Kouzechian, H., Zare'ie, J., and Talebpour, M. 2003. Relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction of male managers and teachers of Khorasan province schools, *Olympic*, 11, 1, 2: 43-52.
- [23] Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. 1997. *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, Inc.
- [24] Minbaeva Dana, MANDI knowledge sharing questionnaire, Department of International Economics and Management, Copenhagen Business School, Tel. 3815 2527, 2248 2343, Email: dm.int@cbs.dk.
- [25] Moradian, M. 2006. Key components of knowledge sharing, *Journal of Information Technology*, Year II, 3: 28-31.
- [26] Nehrir, B. 2001. Comparative relationship of organizational commitment and job satisfaction of nurses working in chose Tehran hospitals [Master Thesis]. *Tehran: Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences*, [Persian].
- [27] Nonaka, I., and Takeuchi, H. 1995. *The Knowledge Creating Company*, Oxford University Press.
- [28] Nonaka, I., and Konno, N. 2006. the concept of "Ba" Building a foundation for knowledge creation, www.iranpm.com.
- [29] Robertson, M., and O'Malley Hammersley, G. 2000. Knowledge Management Practices within a Knowledge-Intensive Firm: the Significance of the people Management Dimension, *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 24: 241-253.

-
- [30] Sadeghi Arani, Z. 2009. Performance of professional services organizations in applying knowledge management process (case study: Yazd city hospitals), the *Second National Conference on Knowledge Management*, International Conference Center, Tehran Razi, 10 and 11 February.
- [31] Scarbrough, H., and Carter, C. 2000. Investigating Knowledge Management, CIPD, London.
- [32] Stenson, R. 2003. Measuring Community Strength and Social Capital, *Fin Land, ERSA*, 92-101.
- [33] Tabarsa, G. A., and Ormazdi, N. 2008. Explain and assess the underlying factors for knowledge management (case study in the broadcast of the National Iranian Oil Products), *Payam Modiriat*, 26: 39-69.
- [34] Yang, J.T. and Wan, C.S. 2004. Advancing Organizational Effectiveness and Knowledge Management Implementation, *Tourism Management*, 25: 593-601.
- [35] Yosofi, S., Moradi, M., and Teshevarz, M. K. 2010. The role of personnel organizational commitment in Knowledge sharing, *the police Journal of human development*, the seventh year, No. 30, August and September, 24-36.
- [36] Zahedi, S., and Tejari, R. 2008. Productivity of human resources and knowledge management, *Payk Noor*, the sixth year, the first issue, spring, 3-13.