



Studying the Knowledge Management Components from Viewpoint of the Faculty Members: A Study at the Dezfoul University of Medical Sciences in Southwest Iran

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Background: Production, distribution and application of knowledge are considered as the most institutionalized elements and existential philosophy of universities and higher education institutions, since the knowledge is recognized as the main output of universities. Therefore, this research examines the components of knowledge management from the point of view of the faculty members of Dezfoul University of Medical Sciences in southwestern Iran.

Methods: This descriptive research was conducted in 2018. The statistical population of this research included all faculty members of Dezfoul University of Medical Sciences in southwest of Iran. Finally, 43 members completed the Knowledge Management Standard Questionnaire (Conrad and Newman). Descriptive and inferential statistics as well as SPSS version 22 were used to analyze the data.

Results: According to the results of the research, the scores of different components of knowledge management were evaluated to be moderate as follows: knowledge creation (21.5 ± 3.8), knowledge preservation (15.8 ± 3.8), knowledge transfer (11.5 ± 3.3), and knowledge application (12.1 ± 3.5). Also, age, educational level, academic rank and experience had no effect on their knowledge management; however, male faculty members had higher knowledge management than female faculty members ($P = 0.019$).

Conclusion: Considering the 8-year activity of this university, according to our evaluation the various components of knowledge management among faculty members were moderate and relatively "desirable". It is necessary that this potential of knowledge management be actualized and its results be reflected in the university outputs, so it can be considered a worthy place in the ranking of Iranian and international medical universities.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Faculty Members, Dezfoul, Iran

دراسة مكونات إدارة المعرفة من وجهة نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس: دراسة في جامعة ديزفول للعلوم الطبية جنوب غرب إيران

الخلفية: يعتبر إنتاج المعرفة وتوزيعها وتطبيقها العنصر والفلسفة الأكثر مؤسسية في الجامعات ومعاهد التعليم العالي، ومن المسلم به أن المعرفة هي المخرجات الرئيسية للجامعات. لذلك، تبحث هذه الدراسة في مكونات إدارة المعرفة من وجهة نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة ديزفول للعلوم الطبية في جنوب غرب إيران.

الطريقة: تم إجراء هذا البحث الوصفي في عام 2018. وقد شمل المشاركون الإحصائيون لهذا البحث جميع أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة ديزفول للعلوم الطبية في جنوب غرب إيران. أخيراً، أكمل 43 عضواً استبيان معيار إدارة المعرفة (كونراد ونيومان). تم استخدام الإحصاءات الوصفية والاستنتاجية وكذلك برنامج SPSS (الإصدار 22) لتحليل البيانات.

النتائج: حسب نتائج البحث، تم تقييم درجات المكونات المختلفة لإدارة المعرفة لتكون معتدلة على النحو التالي: إنشاء المعرفة (21.5 ± 3.8)، الحفاظ على المعرفة (15.8 ± 3.8)، نقل المعرفة (11.5 ± 3.3)، وتطبيق المعرفة (12.1 ± 3.5). أيضاً، لم يكن للسن والمستوى التعليمي والترتبة الأكاديمية والخبرة أي تأثير على إدارة معارفهم؛ ومع ذلك، كان أعضاء هيئة التدريس الذكور إدارة المعرفة أعلى من أعضاء هيئة التدريس الإناث ($P = 0.019$).

الخلاصة: بالنظر إلى نشاط هذه الجامعة لمدة 8 سنوات، وفقاً لتقييمنا، كانت المكونات المختلفة لإدارة المعرفة بين أعضاء هيئة التدريس معتدلة و "مرغوبة" نسبياً. من الضروري أن تتحقق إمكانات إدارة المعرفة هذه وأن تنعكس نتائجها في مخرجات الجامعة، بحيث يمكن اعتبارها جامعة جيدة في تصنيف الجامعات الطبية الإيرانية والدولية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إدارة المعرفة، أعضاء الهيئة التدريسية، ديزفول، إيران

دزفول میڈیکل یونیورسٹی میں اکیڈمیک کونسل کی نظر تدابیر علمی کے عناصر کا جائزہ

بیک گراؤنڈ: علم کی پیداوار، اس سے دوسروں کو بھی فائدہ پہنچانا اور اسے عملی صورت میں لانا یونیورسٹیوں اور اعلیٰ تعلیمی اداروں کے وجود میں آنے کا فلسفہ ہے۔ یہ تحقیق دزفول میڈیکل یونیورسٹی کے اکیڈمیک کونسل کے ارکان کی نظر سے تدابیر علم کے عناصر کا جائزہ لینے کے لئے کی گئی ہے۔

روش: یہ تحقیق دوہزار اٹھارہ میں انجام دی گئی ایران کے جنوب مغربی شہر دزفول کی میڈیکل یونیورسٹی کی اکیڈمیک کونسل کے اراکین نے اس میں شرکت کی۔ ان افراد کو سوالنامہ دیا گیا تھا، انتالیس افراد نے سوالنامہ مکمل طرح سے پر کیا، نالج مینجمنٹ کے لئے یہ کتراڈ اینڈ نیومن کا ترتیب دیا گیا سوالنامہ تھا۔

نتیجے: اس تحقیق سے پتہ چلتا ہے کہ اس یونیورسٹی میں تدابیر علمی جیسے علم کی پیداوار، دوسروں کو بہرہ مند کرنا اور علم کے تحفظ جیسے امور متوسط ہیں، عمر، اعلیٰ تعلیم اور تدریسی تجربہ پر اثر انداز نہیں ہوا ہے البتہ اکیڈمیک کونسل کے مرد ارکان خواتین ارکان کی نسبت تدابیر علمی کی بہتر صلاحیتوں کے مالک پائے گئے۔

نتیجے: اس تحقیق سے پتہ چلتا ہے کہ اکیڈمیک کونسل کے ارکان مختلف شعبوں میں تدابیر علمی کی متوسط صلاحیتوں کے حامل ہیں، البتہ اس یونیورسٹی کو تاسیس ہوئے آٹھ سال گذرے ہیں اس مدت کے پیش نظر ابھی کوئی قطعی فیصلہ کرنا صحیح نہ ہوگا

کلیدی الفاظ: تدابیر علمی، اکیڈمیک کونسل، دزفول، ایران

بررسی مؤلفه‌های مدیریت دانش ازدیدگاه اعضای هیأت علمی دانشگاه علوم پزشکی دزفول در جنوب غربی ایران

زمینه و هدف: تولید، توزیع و کاربرد دانش به‌عنوان نهادینه‌ترین عنصر و فلسفه وجودی دانشگاهها و مؤسسات آموزش عالی به شمار می رود و دانش به‌عنوان خروجی اصلی دانشگاه‌ها شناخته می شود. لذا این پژوهش به بررسی مؤلفه‌های مدیریت دانش از دیدگاه اعضای هیأت علمی دانشگاه علوم پزشکی دزفول در جنوب غربی ایران می پردازد.

روش: این پژوهش توصیفی، در سال 2018 انجام گرفته است. جامعه آماری این پژوهش شامل همه اعضای هیأت علمی دانشگاه علوم پزشکی دزفول می باشند که در نهایت تعداد 43 نفر از آنها پرسشنامه‌ها را تکمیل کردند. از پرسشنامه استاندارد مدیریت دانش (کنراد و نیومن) برای جمع آوری اطلاعات استفاده شده است. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از آمار توصیفی و استنباطی و از ورتن 22 نرم افزار SPSS استفاده شده است.

یافته‌ها: با توجه به نتایج پژوهش، نمره های مؤلفه‌های مختلف مدیریت دانش یعنی: خلق دانش (21.5 ± 3.8)، حفظ و نگهداری دانش (15.8 ± 3.8)، انتقال دانش (11.5 ± 3.3)، و بکارگیری دانش (12.1 ± 3.5) در حد متوسط ارزیابی شده اند. همچنین سن، میزان تحصیلات، مرتبه علمی و سابقه خدمت تأثیری بر مدیریت دانش آنها نداشت. اما اعضای هیأت علمی مرد، نسبت به اعضای هیأت علمی زن از مدیریت دانش بالاتری برخوردار بوده اند ($P=0.019$).

نتیجه گیری: مؤلفه‌های مختلف مدیریت دانش در بین اعضای هیأت علمی در حد متوسط ارزیابی شد که با توجه به فعالیت هشت ساله این دانشگاه، نسبتاً مطلوب ارزیابی می شود و لازم است که این پتانسیل بالقوه مدیریت دانش به بالفعل تبدیل شود و نتایج آن، در خروجی های این دانشگاه نمود پیدا کند و جایگاه شایسته ای در رتبه بندی دانشگاههای علوم پزشکی ایرانی و بین المللی داشته باشد.

واژه های کلیدی: مدیریت دانش، اعضای هیأت علمی، دزفول، ایران

INTRODUCTION

The term "knowledge management" was first used by Wig in 1986 (1). Since then, several definitions and patterns have been proposed for knowledge management (2). The KM process, based on the Newman and Conrad model, includes four dimensions: knowledge creation, knowledge application, knowledge transfer, and knowledge preservation (3). Organizations need to attempt for balancing knowledge management activities in order to transform knowledge into a capital good, but there are many barriers for creating and applying knowledge in organizations. The task of KM is to identify and remove these obstacles (4). Many organizations use knowledge management to capture the intellectual assets of employees. The key point of the knowledge management is that there is multiple knowledge of customers, processes, products and services available at all levels of the organization, and if this knowledge can be seized and transferred integrally, it will help organizations to be more successful and effective (5). Implementing KM projects first requires its cultural acceptance by the organization members and then their efforts to perform KM strategies. The need for guiding the faculty members while giving their worthy organizational and scientific place, seems necessary in both dimensions (6). The focus of the faculty members on managing knowledge will improve the performance of universities in knowledge management. On the other hand, the faculty members can have a considerable influence on the orientation and direction of knowledge-based activities. Production, distribution, and application of knowledge in universities and higher education institutions have been accepted as the most institutionalized element and *raison d'être* of these institutions, and knowledge is very important as the main output of universities (7). However, for reasons like distrust and personal interests, the employees are not often able or do not tend to share their knowledge and expertise with others (8-9). In the late 2017, Gilavand studied knowledge management at Iranian universities and described it as a very important competitive advantage that distinguishes universities from each other. Of course, he has concluded that universities can be more effective in furthering science through sharing knowledge and doing wider research (9). The results of the review of Karimi Moonaghi et al. in 2013, for assessing the status of knowledge management and its dimensions in medical sciences, showed that the staff of the faculty and non-faculty members and all beneficiaries of the health system tried to educate, learn, research and promote society's health through creating, distributing and applying knowledge, while converting hidden knowledge to the obvious one and its application in clinical guides (10). The results of the study done by Bahrami et al. (2012) indicated that in order to investigate the relationship between total quality management and knowledge management from the viewpoint of faculty members of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, focusing on the customer, information analysis, strategic planning, and Process management made the mean of all criteria for TQM higher than the average level (11). The most important challenge of managing universities is

identifying and combining two types of tacit and explicit knowledge that requires a creative and innovative approach to learning / teaching processes and the optimal use of modern technologies. But the absolute reliance on advanced technologies will be catastrophic. Faculty members should pay attention that the main priority is to increase the organizational efficiency that leads to mutual and collaborative communication (12). In 1985, medical education was merged with the Ministry of Health, and a new ministry was established under the name of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (13). Given the managers' support for knowledge management practices, helping to create a knowledge-based culture, and creating synergies between faculty members can help develop knowledge management at universities. Also the awareness of faculty members of the extent of knowledge management can play an effective role in developing appropriate strategies in this regard. Therefore, the present research aimed to investigate the components of knowledge management from the viewpoints of faculty members of Dezful University of Medical Sciences in southwestern Iran.

METHODS

This cross-sectional descriptive research was conducted in 2018 at Dezful University of Medical Sciences in southwestern Iran. The statistical population of this research included all 74 faculty members of Dezful University of Medical Sciences. The questionnaires were distributed by census sampling method. Finally, 43 members completed the questionnaires. Inclusion requirements for participating in study included the membership of the respondent as a faculty member of Dezful University of Medical Sciences. Exclusion criteria included dissatisfaction with participation in the study. The data collection method was the questionnaire, as well as the constitution of two parts of the demographic characteristics (age, sex, degree of education, academic degree and service record) and standard knowledge management questionnaire (Conrad and Newman). Initially, all participants completed written consent form for research in order to comply with ethics in the research. Their validity and reliability have been proven through numerous studies internationally as well as in Iran. The reliability of this questionnaire was re-evaluated and confirmed. The reliability of the test was confirmed by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 79%. The KM questionnaire had 21 questions and included the components of knowledge creation, knowledge application, knowledge transfer, knowledge preservation on which the respondents expressed their opinion through the 5-point Likert scale (including "very low" score 1, "low" score 2, "in some extent" score 3, "High" score 4 and "Very High" score 5). To interpret the findings, the average score of more than 4 was "appropriate", between 3 and 4 "relatively appropriate", and between 2 and 3 "relatively inappropriate" and less than 2 "inappropriate". The average of the five dimensions represented the score of knowledge management. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percent) and inferential statistics (Mann-Whitney test) were used for data analysis and SPSS version 22 software.

RESULTS

Dezful University of Medical Sciences, located in southwestern Iran, was established in 2010. Now the university has 74 faculty members 43 of whom completed the questionnaires of this research. Their specifications have been shown in Table 1. According to Table 1, 22 (51.2%) of them are women and 20 (46.5) are men. 35 (81.4%) members are under 40 and 6 (13.9%) members are above 40 years old. 20 (46.5%) of them had MSc degrees and 20 (46.5%) had PhD degrees. 19 of them (44.2%) had a work experience of less than 5 years, 13 (30.2%) of them had a work experience of 5-10 years and 8 (18.6%) of them were with work experience of 11-20 years. Academic degree of 23 (53.5%) members was instructor and 15 of them (34.9%) were assistant professors.

According to Table 2, the most responses to the knowledge creation component were "to some extent" (38.5%), the

highest response to knowledge preservation, "to some extent" (41.1%), the highest response to component of Knowledge transfer, "to some extent" (32%), and the highest response to the component of knowledge application, was "to some extent" (36%).

According to Table 3, the variables such as education, age, academic rank, and experience of faculty members did not have a significant effect on their knowledge management ($P < 0.05$). However, the gender of faculty members had a significant effect on their knowledge management scores. Male faculty members had higher knowledge management than female faculty members ($P = 0.019$).

According to Table 4 and Table 5, the mean scores of components of knowledge creation (21.5 ± 3.8), knowledge preservation (15.8 ± 3.8), knowledge transfer (11.5 ± 3.3), and knowledge application (12.1 ± 3.5) have been evaluated to be moderate.

Variable	Number	Percent	
Gender	Male	20	5.46
	Female	22	2.51
	Incomplete information	1	3.2
Age	Under 40 years	35	4.81
	Over 40 years	6	9.13
	Incomplete information	2	7.4
Education	MSc	20	5.46
	PhD	20	5.46
	Incomplete information	3	7
Experience	<5	19	2.44
	5-10	13	2.30
	11-20	8	6.18
	Incomplete information	3	7
Degree	Instructor	23	5.53
	Assistant Professor	15	9.34
	Incomplete information	5	6.11

Response	Knowledge creation	Knowledge preservation	Knowledge transfer	Knowledge application
	Number (percent)	Number (percent)	Number (percent)	Number (percent)
Very low	27(9)	23(8.9)	15(8.6)	14(8.2)
Low	43(14.3)	81(31.4)	40(23.3)	33(19.2)
To some extent	116(38.5)	106(41.1)	55(32)	62(36)
High	70(23.3)	25(9.7)	47(27.3)	43(25)
Very high	28(9.3)	9(3.5)	7(4.1)	11(6.4)
Without response	17(5.6)	14(5.4)	8(4.7)	9(5.2)
Total	301(100)	258(100)	172(100)	127(100)

Table 3. Assessing the impact of faculty members' personal characteristics on their knowledge management

Variable		Mean	Standard Deviation	Test	P
Gender	Male	64.6	12.3	Mann-Whitney	0.019
	Female	53.1	19		
Age	Under 40 years	62.1	10.7	Mann-Whitney	0.155
	Over 40 years	56.2	17.4		
Education	MSc	60.2	15.4	Kruskal Wallis	0.346
	PhD	58	7.4		
Experience	<5	57.6	17.6	Kruskal Wallis	0.742
	5-10	56.8	19.4		
	11-20	61.3	14.8		
Degree	Instructor	59.1	16.4	Mann-Whitney	0.244
	Assistant professor	54.3	19.8		

Table 4. Mean and standard deviation of knowledge management components score

Components (range of score changes)	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Knowledge creation (7-35)	21.5	3.8	11	31
Preservation of knowledge (6-30)	15.8	3.8	8	27
Knowledge transfer (4-20)	11.8	3.3	4	18
Knowledge application (4-20)	12.1	3.5	4	19

Table 5. Analysis and interpretation based on the score of the questionnaire

Components (range of score changes)	Minimum score	Average score	Maximum score
Knowledge creation (7-35)	16-7	25-16	35-25
Preservation of knowledge (6-30)	14-6	22-14	30-22
Knowledge transfer (4-20)	9-4	14-9	20-14
Knowledge application (4-20)	9-4	14-9	20-14

DISCUSSION

According to the results of the present research, the scores of different components of knowledge management, knowledge creation, knowledge preservation, knowledge transfer, and knowledge application were evaluated as moderate from the point of view of faculty members of Dezful University of Medical Sciences in the southwest of Iran. It is consistent with the results of the research of Adineh Ghahremani et al. (2), Mohammadi et al. (7), Bahrami et al. (11), Mirheydari et al (14), Feizi et al. (15), Nazem et al. (16), and Tabibi et al. (17). Also, the results of this research showed that the variables such as education, age, academic status and experience of faculty members had no significant effect on their knowledge management, but the gender factor of faculty members had an impact on their knowledge management score. This difference shows that male faculty members have higher knowledge management than the

female faculty members, which is in line with the results of research done by Rajaeepour et al. (18) and Nemati et al. (19). However, there are several studies that have assessed the status of knowledge management in poorly qualified knowledge-based environments (8, 20-22). In the study of knowledge management at the level of selected Iranian universities it was indicated that despite the expectations of universities as the centers of creation, acquisition, transfer, production and application of knowledge including management indices, they have not provided a proper status (23). In another research, it was demonstrated that the components of knowledge management establishment have been underestimated in the faculties of the University of Medical Sciences (24). Some studies also suggest that faculty members do not assess the status of organizational culture and the organizational structure of universities to implement appropriate knowledge management (25). A university study in Thailand indicated that knowledge management at this

university is moderate, and the faculty and faculty members do not focus on knowledge management processes (26). A study done in China reported that Chinese companies are in the early stages of knowledge management, and most of them do not invest in this area (27). The findings of these studies are not consistent with our study.

The various components of knowledge management were moderate among faculty members, which are relatively desirable due to the 8-year activity of this university; it is necessary that this potential of knowledge management be actualized and its results be appeared in the outputs of this university, so that it can have a worthy place in the ranking of Iranian and international medical universities.

The activity of universities in modern times has affected the monopoly mission of knowledge production and has turned universities into the service enterprises to solve regional, national and global problems. This increases the responsibility of universities in improving the quality and quantity of knowledge sharing. Knowledge management is a challenging process, since it is difficult to know its value, and it is more difficult to apply it desirably for creating the competitive advantages for organizations. To take advantage of these valuable opportunities, they should be considered as an integral part of academic processes. Knowledge management helps faculty members identify, through knowledge learning and reproduction, changes and respond to them timely. In the management of knowledge, the capital-orientation has been replaced with the orientation toward thinking, knowledge and student, as well as the sharing of knowledge and experience and free scientific interactions are considered as its main axes. Focusing on creation and recognition of tacit knowledge, the

reengineering of the culture within the organization, and the creative and efficient leadership are considered as the main factors of the success of universities in competitive markets. Also, developing policies of knowledge management establishment in universities oriented on applied knowledge, society and customer can provide a part of the costs of knowledge development processes and developing sciences. Using experiences from other countries and organizations can be useful.

Due to the wide range of work, this research was conducted only among the faculty members of Dezfoul University of Medical Sciences in southwestern Iran. In future research, it is necessary to conduct some studies among the faculty members of other medical universities in Iran and compare them with other international universities.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues (including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc.) have been completely observed by the authors.

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