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STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS IN ADMINISTRATIVE, FINANCIAL EMPLOYEES OF NAMAZI AND FAGHIHI HOSPITALS IN SHIRAZ IN 2013

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ABSTRACT

The present research Study the relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management components in administrative, financial employees of these Hospitals in Shiraz in 2013. This study is a descriptive analytical study that has been conducted as a sectional study. The study sample consisted of 313 administrative, financial employees of Namazi and Faghihi Hospitals in Shiraz in 2013 and the statistical sample consisted of 60 subjects, who were randomly selected. To measure the studied variables Gomezh organizational learning questionnaire and knowledge management questionnaire were used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the two questionnaires was 0.78 and 0.93, respectively. For data analysis, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation test, t- test and Anova, was used by SPSS software. The results of this research suggest that organizational learning (mean 22.91 and SD 3.70) and knowledge management (mean 29.34 and SD 4.67) in these hospitals is poor, but the correlation between them is positive and significant. In this study, the highest score is assigned to the component of the transfer and integration and the lowest score is assigned to management commitment to organizational learning.

Keywords: *Organizational Learning, Knowledge Management, Namazi and Faghihi Hospitals*

INTRODUCTION

By developing science and technology, and expanding the scope of business, the business environment has become a competitive and challenging environment and new paradigms have emerged that have made survival difficult for many organizations. Thus, organizations are more successful that learn sooner, better and faster than their competitors, this is why the concept of the learning organization has increased substantially in recent years. In fact, today's organizations need to be learner to be successful not for survival, so they can better respond to the demands presented to the organization (customer needs). Given that in today's changing environment we have rapid changes in the field of science and technology and increasing complexity and dynamics of environmental factors ,this success is only for those organizations that are able to dynamically interact with their environment and finally, this aim is achieved at learning organizations. mahatnarG says that learning increases distribution of information, communication, awareness and the quality of decision making in organizations (Yaghoobi and Karimi, 2000).

Organizational learning and knowledge management are among important organizational improvement programs. These two interrelated processes of change, focused on helping organizations to develop and use knowledge to their own continuous change and improvement. Organizational learning increases an organization's ability to obtain and develop new knowledge and knowledge management focuses on how to organize and use that knowledge to improve the performance. Organizational learning and knowledge management are crucial in today's complex and rapidly changing environments and their importance will become more increased in the future. They can be a source of strategic renewal and enable organizations in the acquisition and application of knowledge more quickly and efficiently than competitors and, consequently, the establishment of sustainable competitive advantage. In addition, when the knowledge changes to new products and services, these programs can be a key source of wealth creation for the organizations. Considering the importance of organizational learning and knowledge management programs and the need for applying them to organizational improvement, it is required for custodians of

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organizational change to be completely familiar with various concepts and aspects of these programs (Jafari, 2011).

This study sought to examine the relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management components in Namazi and Faghihi hospitals in the south of the country that has a special place in the development of medical education and patient care operations and provide required feedback for the revision and reform programs in the management of these centers.

Research Literature

Organizational Learning

Some writers and pundits argue about the necessity and importance of learning in the organization development:

- 1- Learning as an important technique to achieve a specific goal is mainly to increase effectiveness and efficiency.
- 2- Learning is an important factor that relates different elements and people involved in the organization development process.
- 3- Learning is the heart of organizational change, transformation and improvement (Sobhaninejad, 2006). Organizational learning is a process in which knowledge about the operations, results and communication between the organization and the environment expands (Weick, 1984). Dagson (1993) defines organizational learning as a method created, completed and organized by organizations to develop normal knowledge and the normal processes of work related to activities and also to improve the organization performance through implementing extensive workforce skills.

Types of Organizational Learning

Argyris and Schon have described three types of organizational learning and in other words, three levels of learning as follows:

- 1- Single-loop learning: Single-loop learning occurs when errors are detected and corrected in the context of the organization's goals and current policies. Single-loop learning has been called an adaptive learning by Senge, low level learning by Fayol and Laylz and non strategic learning by Mason.
- 2- Double-loop learning: This type of learning occurs when organizations discover and correct errors and challenge norms, practices, policies and objectives and to modify and amend them. The double-loop learning is called productive learning by Senge, high level learning by Fayol and Laylz and strategic learning by Mayson.
- 3- Triple-loop learning: Occurs when organizations learn how to run single loop and double-loop learning. In other words, Triple-loop learning is learning about others. If organizations are not aware that learning should happen two forms of learning do not take place; this means that knowing about learning styles and processes and structures is prerequisite to promote the learning (Sobhaninejad, 2006 and Argyris, 1996).

Organizational learning capabilities examined in this study include: management commitment to organizational learning, systems perspective, openness and experimentation, and the transfer and integration of knowledge (Aghdasi and Khakzar, 2008).

Dimensions of Organizational Learning

- **Management Commitment to Organizational Learning**

Management should understand the importance of learning and develop a culture in the organization to expand the acquisition, creation and transfer of knowledge as basic values in organization (Garvin, 1999).

- **Systematic View**

All employees and various parts of the organization must have a clear vision of the goals and know how they can help to develop them (Lee *et al.*, 1996).

- **Open Space and Experimentation**

Dynamic and creative learning needs open space to emphasize new ideas inside or outside of the organization (Slocum *et al.*, 1994).

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• **Transferring and Integration of Knowledge**

Transformation is a range created by employees within organizations, especially through conversation and interaction among them. In other words, transfer process is performed through the flow of communication, dialogue and negotiation, transfer (Slocum *et al.*, 1994).

Knowledge

Kinds of Knowledge

Polanyi was the first one who defined explicit and tacit knowledge of organizations and distinguished between them. Explicit knowledge is a kind of tangible, rational and technical knowledge (data, policies, procedures, software, documents, etc.). Tacit knowledge is usually in the range of cognitive, conceptual and empirical learning and is very personal and difficult to formalize (Abbasi, 2007).

Explicit knowledge includes policies, procedures guidelines, government reports, reports, plans, products, strategies, objectives, missions and competitive advantages of the company and IT infrastructure. . This knowledge has been developed in such a way that can be distributed among people or can be changed to a process or strategy without the involvement of people. Explicit knowledge is also called the leaky knowledge, because after documentation, knowledge can easily be separated from the individuals or organizations.

Tacit knowledge, which is also known as latent knowledge, usually is located in the minds of individuals or in group interactions within a department or branch of the organization. Tacit knowledge generally includes high levels of expertise or skill. Usually its transmission is slow and costly and may be confused by vague issues. Latent knowledge is also called sticky knowledge because separating it from its source, is relatively difficult (Perez, 1999).

Knowledge Management

In definition of the field of management, knowledge management has been considered as "organizational strategic effort" that tries to gain supremacy in competition through control and use of intellectual properties of organization's employees and supporters. Obtaining, storing and distributing knowledge (= KM) makes the organization employees work smarter, reduce redoing, and ultimately produce more innovative products and services that fulfill customers' need better (Afshar and Nozari, 2004). Knowledge management is a systematic and integrated approach to identify, manage and sharing all the organization's information assets, including databases, documents, policies and procedures (Jones, 2003). Peter Drucker says, "The secret of the success of organizations in the twentieth century is a proper implementation of knowledge management." So the implementation of knowledge management in the third millennium organizations is necessary and institutions should implement by proper planning. Organizations' success is increasingly dependent on the topic of how an organization can effectively collect, store and retrieve knowledge among employees of different levels (Hassan, 2011).

Dimensions of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management dimensions that constitute the knowledge management process in Bass view (2004) include: managing the process of creating, recording, refining, distribution and applying knowledge.

• **Knowledge Creation**

Retrieving and using knowledge to make decisions and solve problems (Thomas *et al.*, 2000).

• **Knowledge Recording**

Introducing the united memory in knowledge storage tank and a variety of its patterns (Rokninezhad, 2011)

• **Knowledge Refinement**

Refinement process is against withdrawing process that allows each kind of knowledge to enter the organization. The organization shall use reasonable mechanisms to prevent the entry of unnecessary knowledge and only useful and applicable knowledge should have been allowed to enter the organization (Thomas *et al.*, 2000).

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• **Knowledge Distribution**

Knowledge distribution is knowledge sharing and development process that is currently implemented within organizations. Knowledge must be shared with others to be valuable. Transferring and distributing can be active or passive (Parker, 2005).

• **Knowledge Application**

Restoring and using knowledge in decision-making, problem-solving, and automating, work supporting and Jobs helping and Training (Rokninezhad, 2011)

In this research, the knowledge management component consists of five components including creating, recording, refinement, distribution and application of knowledge as independent variables and organizational learning component includes four components: management commitment, Systemic view, transferring and integration of knowledge and openness and experimentation are considered as dependent variables and their relationship are examined.

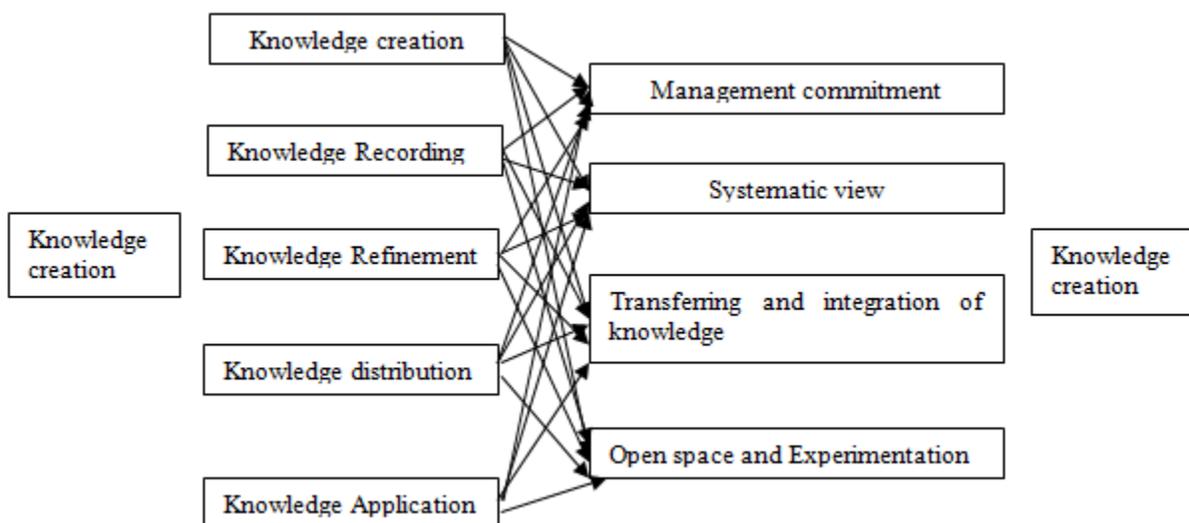


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Research

Research Hypotheses

- 1- The organizational learning and each of its components are high among employees.
- 2- The knowledge management and each of its components are high among employees.
- 3- There is a correlation between each of organizational learning components and knowledge creation.
- 4- There is a correlation between each of organizational learning components and knowledge recording.
- 5- There is a correlation between each of organizational learning components and knowledge refinement.
- 6- There is a correlation between each of organizational learning components and knowledge dissemination.
- 7- There is a correlation between each of organizational learning components and knowledge application.
- 8- There is a correlation between organizational learning and demographic data.
- 9- There is a correlation between and demographic data.
- 10- There is a correlation between organizational learning and knowledge management.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is functional descriptive analysis that has been done in cross-sectional manner. The study sample included all administrative, financial and academic employees of Faghihi and Namazi hospitals in Shiraz in 2013 consisting of 126 cases from Faghihi hospital and 187 cases from Namazi hospital. In the present study we have used a stratified random sampling proportional to the sample size. To determine the sample size 14 Pilot questionnaires were distributed among among administrative,

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financial employees of Faghihi and Namazi hospitals, then by analyzing the data, using the following formula and taking into account ($\alpha= 0.05$), ($\beta= 0.10$) and ($r= 0.36$); Sample size (n) was determined for $n = 60$.

$$n = \left[\frac{Z_{\alpha} + Z_{\beta}}{c} \right]^2$$

$$c = 0.5 * Ln[(1 + r)/(1 - r)]$$

The data collection tool is questionnaire which is composed of three sections. The first section measures demographic characteristics, and the second and the third section include knowledge management and organizational learning. Organizational learning questionnaire has been Gomez *et al.*, questionnaire containing 16 questions that measures 4 components of (management commitment to organizational learning, systemic view, open space, experimentation and knowledge transfer and integration) and they have calculated its reliability coefficient and its Cronbach's α is ($r= 0.78$). Also in another questionnaire related to knowledge management which is designed based on the five elements (creating, recording, refining, distribution and application of knowledge); these questions are localized by the same researchers and questionnaire has been pilot by an initial inquiry and its reliability coefficient has been calculated and its Cronbach α is ($r= 0.93$) (Yaghoobi *et al.*, 2009).

For data analysis, statistical tests were used, including ANOVA, t-test and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Data Analysis

The First Hypothesis

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of organizational learning and its dimensions

Variable	Organizational learning	Knowledge transferring	Open space	Systemic view	Management commitment
Mean	22.91	6.28	5.57	5.89	5.17
SD	3.79	2.37	1.78	1.53	1.90

In this study, the highest mean in components of organizational learning is related to knowledge transferring and integration (6.28) and the lowest mean is related to management's commitment to learning (5.17). Organizational learning is 35.8 percent with a mean of 22.91 of 64 (mean) which is weak. (Mean from 0-32: is considered as weak and from 33 to 64 is considered as good).

The Second Hypothesis

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of KM and its dimensions

Knowledge management	Knowledge application	Knowledge Distribution	Knowledge refinement	Knowledge recording	Knowledge creation	Variable
29.34	5.16	9.64	2.52	4.96	7.06	Mean
4.67	2.29	2.23	1.27	1.85	2.08	SD

In this study, the component of knowledge recording has the highest level (41.4) and the component of knowledge refinement has the lowest level (0.21) among knowledge management dimensions.

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Knowledge management is 34.04 percent and the mean is 29.34 of 84 percent, which is weak (The mean from 0-42: is considered as weak and from 43 to 84 is considered as good).

The Third Hypothesis

Table 3: Evaluation of the relationship between dimensions of organizational learning and knowledge creation

Dimensions	Organizational learning	Transferring and Integration	Open space	Systemic view	Management commitment
Knowledge creation	r=0.68 p=0.00	r=0.22 p=0.00	r=0.62 p=0.03	r=0.35 p=0.02	r=0.71 p=0.00

According to Table (3) there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and all its components that have been examined in this study with knowledge creation.

The Forth Hypothesis

Table 4: Evaluation of the relationship between dimensions organizational learning and knowledge recording

Dimensions	Organizational learning	Transferring and Integration	Open space	Systemic view	Management commitment
Knowledge recording	r=0.71 p=0.00	r=0.25 p=0.003	r=0.53 p=0.00	r=0.41 p=0.003	r=0.42 p=0.02

According to Table (4) there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and all its components that have been examined in this study with knowledge recording.

The Fifth Hypothesis

Table 5: Evaluation of the relationship between dimensions of organizational learning and knowledge refinement

Dimensions	Organizational learning	Transferring and Integration	Open space	Systemic view	Management commitment
Knowledge refinement	r=0.66 p=0.00	r=0.11 p=0.03	r=0.65 p=0.00	r=0.41 p=0.001	r=0.20 p=0.00

According to Table (5) there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and all its components that have been examined in this study with knowledge refinement.

The Sixth Hypothesis

Table 6: Evaluation of the relationship between dimensions of organizational learning and knowledge dissemination

Dimensions	Organizational learning	Transferring and Integration	Open space	Systemic view	Management commitment
Knowledge dissemination	r=0.71 p=0.00	r=0.68 p=0.04	r=0.32 p=0.03	r=0.51 p=0.00	r=0.72 p=0.03

According to Table (6) there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and all its components that have been examined in this study with knowledge dissemination.

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The Seventh Hypothesis

Table 7: Evaluation of the relationship between dimensions of organizational learning and knowledge application

Dimensions	Organizational learning	Transferring and integration	Open space	Systemic view	Management commitment
Knowledge application	r=0.19 p=0.002	r=0.25 p=0.04	r=0.52 p=0.04	r=0.21 p=0.00	r=0.33 p=0.01

According to Table (7) there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and all its components that have been examined in this study with knowledge application.

The Eighth and Ninth Hypothesis

Table 8: Relationship between Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning and demographic variables

Dimensions	Field of work	Type of Employment	Educational Degree	Work experience	Age	Gender
Organizational learning	p=0.01	p=0.01	p=0.93	p=0.03	p=0.067	p=0.06
Knowledge management	p=0.02	p=0.05	p=0.86	p=0.03	p=0.072	p=0.55

Information obtained from table 8 includes the following:

Statistical t-test suggests that there is no significant relationship between gender characteristics of employees with organizational learning and knowledge management.

Using Anova test it was concluded that there is no relationship between age of employees and organizational learning and knowledge management. Also it was concluded that there is a relationship between work experience and organizational learning and knowledge management. Anova statistical test suggests that there is no relationship between educational degree of employees and organizational learning and knowledge management. It was concluded that there is a significant relationship between type of employment and organizational learning but there is no relationship between type of employment and knowledge management. There is a significant relationship between employees' field of work and organizational learning and knowledge management.

The Tenth Hypothesis

Table 9: The relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management

Knowledge management		Organizational learning
p	r	
0.034	0.32	

As Table 9 shows, Pearson's correlation coefficient has been obtained 0.32 and since the decision criterion value has been obtained 0.034 and is less than 0.05, so there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and knowledge management. This means that an increase in one will lead to another increase.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The First Hypothesis

According to Table 1, the mean of OL was 22.91, which shows the weakness of this important component in these centers and it requires more efforts of managers and employees of the hospitals to increase the mean of organizational learning and creating a learning environment, also, among the studied factors, the highest score of 6.28 is related to the transferring and integration of knowledge and the lowest score of 5.17 is related to the management commitment to organizational learning.

Organization Management by applying good management practices can create the required conditions for development the other three components and all employees shape and maintain the dynamics of these three components in an organization. While component of management commitment to organizational learning, relates to organizational management practices and employees don't have direct impact on it. Also weakness of organizational learning among employees can be because of considering employees and managers' learning no important because understanding the importance of learning, is a key factor in the success of an organization. Managers should remove the old mental models and beliefs, although the old beliefs may help to change the realities of the past, but now they may be a barrier to learning (Aghdasi and Khakzar, 2008).

Aghdasi and Khakzar (2008) in their study reached the conclusion that the four components of organizational learning in both public and private hospitals was lower than average and the highest and lowest scores in both hospitals and in total, respectively, is related to the components of the transferring and integration of management knowledge and commitment to learning. Vanda (2005) announced organizational learning mean in his study as 59.2.

The Second Hypothesis

According to table 2, the mean and standard deviation of KM were obtained 29.34 and 4.67, respectively, which shows our hospitals are in a bad situation from the perspective of knowledge management, so the highest and lowest scores are for knowledge recording and knowledge refinement. The studied hospitals have been able to store knowledge in the appropriate data bases, but they have poorly acted in applying this new knowledge in the area that was supposed to be applied.

Nikbakht and Colleagues (2011) in their study found that the average responses to KM components have been from 3.6 to 3.94 and knowledge recording has the highest score. In this study, the five dimensions of knowledge creating, recording, refinement, application and distribution have been used. The results of this research are also consistent with our results.

The Third Hypothesis

According to Table 3, there is a significant positive correlation between all the components of organizational learning and knowledge creation component of knowledge management. That means the more ways of knowledge entry into the organization and the more employees bring skills and experience into the organization, employees' organizational learning will increase.

The Forth Hypothesis

According to Table 4, there is a significant positive correlation among all the components of organizational learning and knowledge recording of knowledge management component. These results suggest that if the created knowledge in the organization can be recorded in their original form, employees' learning staff will be increased.

The Fifth Hypothesis

According to Table (5), there is a significant positive correlation between all organizational learning components and knowledge refinement of knowledge management. Yaghoobi *et al.*, (2009) in a similar study, obtained the same results that are consistent with our results ($r= 0.84$).

The Sixth Hypothesis

According to Table (6), there is a significant positive correlation between all organizational learning components and knowledge distribution of knowledge management. The more practical recorded knowledge creates the possibility that employees increase their level of learning.

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The Seventh Hypothesis

According to Table (7), there is a significant positive correlation between all organizational learning components and knowledge application of knowledge management. This result suggests that when the organization uses the knowledge created in its required place (to produce goods and services), this knowledge learning will be increased and it is followed by the increasing innovation and creativity of employees.

The eighth and ninth hypothesis

According to Table (8), there is no significant correlation between organizational learning and knowledge management components with employees' age. In research conducted by Yaghoobi and Colleagues (2011) and Rajai (2008) it is found there is no significant relationship between employees' age and management knowledge, and this is consistent with our results.

Also there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management with experience of work. In other words, the more experience of work, the more increasing of organizational learning and knowledge management. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that information (knowledge) is rapidly changing in an organization and the organization works with the aim of progressing in the competition and transfers knowledge to the organization's employees who are the efficient factors in the organization and so it is possible to increase employees' knowledge management and organizational learning by increasing their work experience.

Also, there is no significant relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management with gender of workers and the mean of organizational learning and knowledge management in men is only slightly more than women. In other words, gender has no effect on the level of organizational learning and knowledge management; because there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of individual ability or problem solving skills to analyze issues, competition, dynamism, motivation, leadership and learning (Akhbarfar, 1996).

According to the study, there is a significant relationship between organizational learning and type of employment but there is no significant relationship between knowledge management and type of employment. The mean of organizational learning in formal employees is more than others, but temporary employees have given a higher score to knowledge management. It may be because of these employees' new knowledge than others. Yaghoobi *et al.*, (2009) in a similar study concluded that there is a significant correlation between organizational learning and type of employment. There is consistency between organizational learning and type of employment in terms of relationship.

The Tenth Hypothesis

According to Table 9, there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and knowledge management. Demosky and Sherolaj (2003), in a study entitled "Organisational Learning and information and communication technology, a promising link", showed there is a significant positive correlation between organizational learning and information and communication technology. Vanda (2005) in his study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management ($r=78.0$) and the results of these two studies are consistent with our results.

Recommendations

1. Understanding Today's organizations need to learn for senior management and the creation of a special task force to plan and continuing pursue to strengthen organizational learning and knowledge management.
2. Beginning the participatory management and participating employees in defining organization objectives can reinforce the systemic view.
3. The use of new technologies in communications and encourage employees to publish and distribute their knowledge and experiences, and providing this valuable information in different communication channels before the leaving the organization in different ways.
4. The material and moral support to the creators of organizational changes and owners of new ideas to create experimentation and open space

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5. Encouraging and supporting employees to create required facilities to enhance the scientific and technical capabilities, and attention to individual capabilities of the employees.

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