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An Investigation of the Impact of Knowledge Management on Human Resource Performance in Management of Keshavarzi Bank Branches in Tehran

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Abstract

This article attempts at several foci. Its main objective is to explore the impact of knowledge management (KM) on human resource (HR) performance in management of Keshavarzi bank branches in Tehran. It also considers prioritization of various elements of HR performance and proposes suggestions for improvement of performance through utilization of KM components. For purposes of this study, a questionnaire, including 21 questions, was implemented. First, reliability analysis was conducted to identify and eliminate irrelevant variables. The researchers also used Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to consider the normality of variables' distribution. Friedman rank order test was also performed on employee performance components. Finally, to analyze the impact of KM on employee performance and its components, one-sample t-tests were performed. In light of the results, KM significantly influenced HR performance as well as all performance components, except for environment. Directions for further research are also proposed.

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1. Introduction

“The success of a firm lies more in its capabilities related to knowledge and learning than in its physical assets.” (Noh, Kim, & Jang, 2014, p. 1)

Nowadays, the role of knowledge management (KM) and the processes for managing it has become vital for the survival of organizations. Although KM is an evolving paradigm in management (Gourlay, 2001), it still plays a strategic business function in organizations and influences human capital, teamwork, and overall organizational performance and effectiveness (Feng, Chen, & Liou, 2005; Lee, Lee, & Kang, 2005; Marques & Simon, 2006; Yenyurt, Cavusgil, & Hult, 2005). Among different organizations, performance improvement of banks, as intermediaries among monetary and financial markets and organizations active in different economic sectors, is of prominent importance. Improvement of bank performance directly and severely impacts improvement of different economic sectors. Additionally, banks and organizations, in general, owe their performance improvement to employee performance improvement. Thus, a particularly interesting question for organizations is how to improve organizational performance which, in itself, entails the question of which factors lead to improved HR performance. As conceptualized in literature, the semiotic link between knowledge and performance is of paramount importance to success and well-being of organizations (Akdere, 2009). Furthermore, studies have found that effective management of knowledge is a valuable source of competitive advantage (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These have given rise to increased attention to KM. This possible has even had greater impact on bank and has, indeed, become a cause of major concern for them.

It should also be noted that organizations which recognize the critical importance of KM appoint chief knowledge officers for knowledge creation, diffusion, and utilization and establish KM systems. An effective mechanism for employee and organizational performance improvement is designing and establishment of KM systems. Such a system enables an accurate definition of knowledge and information, knowledge development, and knowledge sharing which brings about improvement of employee performance. The debate over the role of KM in organizations has become more complex during the past decade because the nature of knowledge utilized and consumed on a daily basis in a given organization has also become complex due to continuous progress in technological advances and inventions and their implications for the workplace (Ciborra & Andreu, 2001; Dutta, 1997; Gottschalk, 2000).

Myriad of factors may influence HR performance in Keshavarzi bank, to name just a few, job satisfaction, appropriate indicators of evaluation, non-discrimination among employees, job security, suitable work environment, and appropriate management styles. This article's aim is to contribute to an improved understanding of the impact of KM on HR performance. It addresses these related questions: 1) Does KM influence HR performance? and 2) Does KM influences components of HR performance? The article goes on to consider how employee performance may improve in Keshavarzi bank branches in Tehran.

2. Literature

A precise definition of knowledge is central to KM discussions. In order to propose a clear definition of knowledge, first different levels of KM hierarchy should be examined namely data, information, knowledge, and science.

The first level of KM is data which includes special numbers, figures, diagrams, or characteristics derived from observation, experience, or estimation. Data, by themselves, do not carry a specific meaning. Rather, one can regard data as raw material for decision-making. Information forms the second level of KM. It includes data in a specific area. At this level, data is classified, recycled, and organized to be able to carry meaning. In other words, when data is logically classified for a particular purpose, it is transformed into information. (Jamshidi & Mirabi, 2011).

When information is analyzed, processed, and inserted into a text, it is converted into knowledge. In fact, knowledge includes inferring and identifying uncommon patterns, underlying trends, and exceptions in data or

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