

The Study of Impact Tacit Knowledge Exchange between Sales and Marketing on Improving Marketing Performance Case Study: Isfahan Mobarakeh Steel

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Abstract

The present study was aimed to investigate the effect of implicit knowledge sharing between sales and marketing on the marketing performance improvement. This study has been done in Mobarake Steel Company in Isfahan. For this purpose, a main hypothesis and two secondary hypotheses have been developed and tested. This study is a practical research from purpose view and is a co relational-survey one from research methodology perspective. The statistical population of this study includes sales and marketing managers and professionals in Mobarake Steel Company. The population consists of 80 members. The consensus has been used for collecting the research data rather than sampling, as the population is limit. For this purpose, a self-administrated questionnaire with 46 items has been used. The validity of this questionnaire was acknowledged by supervisor and advisor professors and management experts. Also, the reliability of this questionnaire was supported by Cronbach's Alpha of 98%. Study questionnaire includes demographic questions and main questions for testing hypotheses. From 80 distributed questionnaires 72 were back (return rate= 82/5%). In addition, collected data were analyzed by statistical tests using AMOS and SPSS software in two levels including descriptive tests: frequency, percent cumulative percentage, mean and standard deviation and perceptive tests: regression modeling, ANOVA, nonparametric test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and nonparametric test of Friedman. Regarding the outputs of structural equations, DF and GFI, the goodness of fit indices, were appropriate. Based on study findings all of hypotheses were supported. Finally, the results showed that implicit

knowledge sharing in marketing and sales influences marketing innovation, productivity ratio, and effectiveness significantly. The results of this study indicated that the seventh hypothesis (the effect of implicit knowledge sharing between sales and marketing on the productivity ratio) has the most path coefficient (0.94) and the third hypothesis (the effect of social opportunities on the implicit knowledge sharing between sales and marketing) has the least path coefficient (0.004). Based on the results of this study, it can be said that implicit knowledge sharing between sale and marketing influences marketing performance significantly.

Keywords: Tacit knowledge, Performance Marketing, Quality Communication, Trust between partners, Social opportunities, Support from senior management, Conflict in the Workplace, Innovation in Marketing, Relative productivity, Effectiveness.

Introduction

Current era is the era of changes and transformations in technologies. An era which its intellectual structure is full of deepening information and noting participation of creative and knowledge oriented human force instead of functional human force. Accordingly, intelligent management is trying to use a tool named knowledge the more and the better in order to facing and encountering uncertainty factors, and retaining the position to develop its competitive arena, this requires that organization put knowledge management as a strategic and necessary need in its high priority plans by valuing it in order to get ahead in the competitiveness era. Knowledge based organizations acting in dynamic environments, need innovative strategies to offer new products and adapting themselves to dynamic environmental conditions. In such a situation, development of the capacity of creating new knowledge and organizational innovation can has significant impact on enhancing performance and continuing its survival. In this regard implicit knowledge as a basic driver in success and improvement of companies' performance enables organizations to utilize important information in operational activities which results in improvement in efficiency, creating added value and better financial performance. This could be possible by creative managers and employees and in the meantime the role of implicit knowledge has been emphasized as a key leverage in creating innovation. But, do companies create required conditions and environment? Are they familiar with appropriate leverages for optimizing innovation plans in marketing?

2. Literature review

2.1 Communication

In today's changing world, message sender seeks to gain common perception from a message for each receiver. Therefore, the purpose of communication is achieving a coordinated action between messenger and message receiver. This means that the concept arisen from one's inside makes it's way among others and is perceived by others. Based on this, communication is known as transmission of concepts or symbols and also delivering or exchanging messages. Some definitions of communication are as follow: communication is called as the process of exchanging information and transforming meanings with keeping its originality and receiving the original by receiver; in other words, communication is considered meanings and concepts from sender to receiver. Other definition of communication is immediate or mediated transmission and exchange of information, meanings and concepts and emotions between people in an organization (Robbins, 2005).

2.2 Conflicts

The conflict is defined as an opposition among the groups that encounter one another, and opposition among moral and religious ideals. According to Dubrin (2004), conflict among individuals and groups is a natural outcome of competitive environment. This occurs when there are differences between employees' needs, wants, goals, beliefs, and values with each other (Dubrin, 2004, p:193). Conrad and Scoot (2002) believe that conflict refers to the employees' individual interaction that depends to each other and perceive that their interest is in conflict with others' one (Conrad and Scoot, 2002: 134). Daft (2007) points out that conflict is a behavior among organizational groups that each of them thinks that other groups prevent from achieving each other's goals (Daft, 2007, p: 826). Rahim et al. (2002) defines conflict as an interactive process that reveals inter-group heterogeneity of every social institute (Srivasan, 2005). Also conflict means that employees interest their own viewpoints. On the other hand, it is should be remembered that a medium level of conflict is necessary to employees' individual and organizational growth .With regard to the evolution of the management approaches in recent years, three theories have been presented in conflict. The first is the traditional approach of conflict. Based on this approach, the conflict should be avoided, because it has several harmful functions. The second is the human relations approach. This approach considers conflict as a natural event that has possible positive outcomes in every organization. The third is the interactive approach. Based on this approach, the conflict not only creates a positive force in the organization, but also it is considered as an obvious necessity for organizational efforts (Rabbins, 2006, p: 293).

2.3 Social opportunities

Social opportunities refer to organizational mechanisms that create familiarity of personnel inside organization and personnel familiarity and convergence in cognitive plans among employees from different functional areas. Socialization mechanisms span from informal gatherings such as weekend ceremonies to formal occasions such as educational and multifunctional programs and cross functional groups. These positions provide opportunities for forming social communications. Without this communication, exchanging of implicit knowledge does not happen. As researchers in 2000 emphasized, "organizations' information often is achieved through socialization process by observation, conclusion and increasing participation not formal investigation". When individuals have opportunity to form social communication, barriers and problems are decreased among them which encourages information sharing (Denis et al., 2013).

2.4 Trust

The concept of trust was increasingly in the core of studying of organizations in past years. Today, the importance of trust in organizations is well unfold because connecting and meeting collaboration between individuals requires trust. In an era which relationships between individuals and groups has become weaker and are changing rapidly, trust which is mostly based on conclusions and interpretations about motivations, personality or others' conscience is the core issues of organizations which guarantees their growth and life .In fact, trust is a complicated concept with different dimensions. Regarding this chaotic problematic situation, some believe that discussions related to trust are still understandable. There are several definitions of trust. Oxford dictionary defines trust as a belief ones may depend on (Mirzaei, 2008).

2.5 Senior Management Support

Managers in different levels of a company influence moral and intention of their employees for continuing collaboration in different ways. In fact senior supportive leaders have more impact on employees' motivation and retention than direct supervisors of a section or department. Research carried out in this context showed that supportive managers can be beneficial for an organization in different conditions. These leaders can increase employees' satisfaction and their willingness to do more or extra job and at the same time reduce employment and training new forces costs the supportive role of senior managers provides organizations with a secure sphere and reduces many of tensions and organizational and occupational pressures. When employees of organization feel that they are supported by senior managers give their maximum intellectual and mental expertise and physical power to organization's objectives and mission (Denis et al., 2013).

2.6 Implicit knowledge

This refers to a type of skills, capabilities, and art on creation. In other words, it refers to the knowledge of "how". Transmitting this knowledge to others as information is somewhat difficult. Also the implicit knowledge is the only method of educating points through practice. The implicit knowledge is rarely explicit and derives from organizations' administrative operations. This usually refers to the organizational culture. The implicit knowledge includes relations, rules, values, and standardized practical methods. Because this type of knowledge can be broken into its details and duplicate and distribute it. Therefore, it can be considered as a fixed resource of competitive advantage (Sefoddin et al., 2006).

2.7 Productivity

if we want to present a general definition of productivity, we can say that productivity is acquiring maximum profit from workforce, human force's power, talent and skill, ground, machine, money, equipment, time, place and etc. in order to enhance social welfare so that increasing it is always considered by political and economic critics as a necessity to improve the level of human's life and building more wealthy society. But, there are several definitions of productivity. As it is concluded beyond all definitions, productivity is acquiring maximum possible profit from workforce, human force's power, talent and skill, ground, machine, money, equipment, time, place and etc. in order to enhance social welfare level and finally the purpose of improving productivity is optimized usage of material resources, human force, facilities etc. scientifically, reducing production costs, developing markets, increasing employment and attempts for increasing real wages and improving living criteria so that it is beneficial for worker, management and consumers (Denis et al., 2013).

2.8 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is a method by which organizations evaluate their visions actualization through organizational strategies. In other words, organizational effectiveness can be measured in the frame of extent and degree of goal achievement. Organizational goal should indicate the organization's vision and its short-term and long-term goals. The goals draw the future ideal condition on which organization focuses its efforts and activities. Therefore, effectiveness evaluation and measurement refers to measurement of organization's success in achieving its goals and purposes (Daft, 2007).

2.9 Innovation

Today, innovation is one most important factor in survival, growth and competition of company. Also, it is claimed that in the long term innovation is the only effective way to compete in the market (Kmieciak et al., 2012, 708). Innovation refers to the degree of freshness of product characteristics, performance and benefits. Innovation should be viewed from customer's perspective not only company's view (Boisvert, 2012, 549). Also, innovation refers to this point that how company is ready to support new ideas, creative news and processes and therefore new products and technologies (Uzcurt, 2013, 96). Previous research (Line et al., 2008) shows that innovation has impact on performance of company's capacity with innovative orientation and consequently increasing the abilities of company to adapt with permanent customers' preferences. Also, innovation has positive impact on brand management system (Santos et al., 2013, 152). In the marketing literature innovation is defined as intention to follow new and different items. Innovativeness and innovation has been defined differently (Hyun, 2012, 177). However, innovativeness is generally defined as follow: the company willingness and ability to introduce innovation and innovation definition is utilizing a new product or process or improved one or a new marketing or organizational method or improved one. Thus, innovativeness is described as: "the capacity of introducing of new process, product or idea in organization" and "company's willingness to enter new ideas, new things, experience and creative processes and supporting them which result in technologic products, services or processes". The ultimate reason for companies to be innovative is that to achieve advantages such as superiority in competition and improved performance. The relationship between innovation and performance has been widely studied in large companies. Generally, empirical studies show that innovation has positive relationship with company's performance although, any direct effect has not found in some studies. It is likely that findings depend on sample characteristics, measuring innovation and measuring company's performance which used in study (Kmieciak et al., 2012, 709).

Furthermore, main obstacles in increasing the level of innovation in less innovative companies are often as follow:

- Values, culture, ethics, obsolete norms in organization members and especially managers.
- Lack of innovative culture
- Negative attitude toward risk and unwillingness to accept risk
- One way understanding of innovation, while innovation often restricted by technical and technological innovations.
- Service sector and public supervisory which are developed less than needed.
- Low efficiency of investment in research and development and poor cooperation between public and private sectors of organization and research centers. And
- They don't see management of entrepreneurial activities as an opportunity to development of organization (Nedelko&Potocan, 2012, 38).

3. Hypotheses

Main hypotheses: Exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing has significant impact on improvement of marketing performance.

H1: Quality of communication has significant impact on exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing.

H2: Trust between coworkers has significant impact on exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing.

H3: Social opportunities have significant impact on exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing.

H4: Conflict in work area on exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing.

H5: Senior management support has significant impact on exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing.

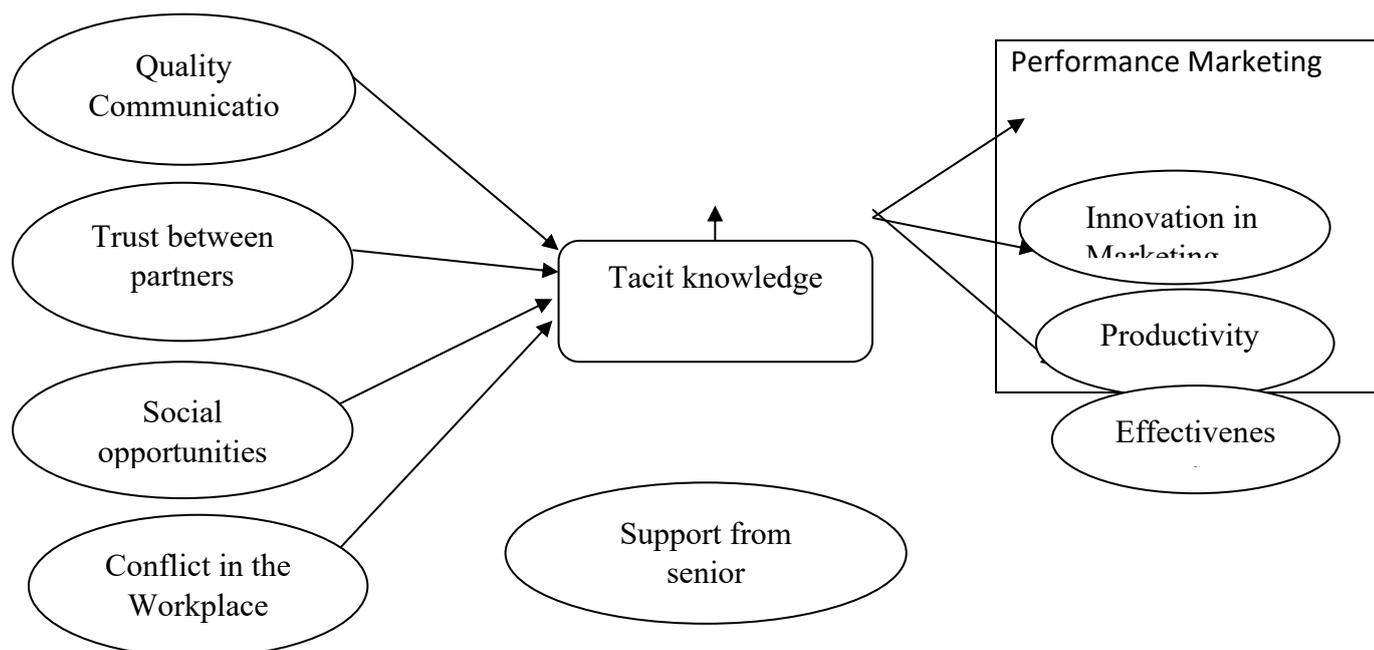
H6: Exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing has significant impact on innovation in marketing.

H7: Exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing has significant impact on productivity ratio in marketing.

H8: Exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing has significant impact on effectiveness ratio in marketing.

4. The Conceptual Framework

Model is relationship between theoretical design and the job of data collection and analyzing of information. In social science models include symbols and signals that is characteristics of some of empirical phenomenon (including components and their relationships) relate reasonably through concepts related to each other. Therefore, model reflects fact and figures out given aspects of real world that related to the investigated problem. Model shed light on mentioned aspects and eventually makes empirical test of theory possible regarding the nature of these relationships. After testing model, better understanding of some parts of real world is achieved. In summary, model is a set that consists of concepts, hypotheses and measures which facilitates selection and collection of required information to test the hypotheses. In order to make an analytic model, researcher finally can act in two ways which there is no significant difference between them: either begins with setting hypotheses and then works on concepts or goes through a reverse way (Ghasemi, 2010). Therefore, regarding the above reasoning, defined hypotheses, professors' and experts' point of view in the context of management and marketing and also according to the theoretical basics, model has been designed and established as follows:



5. Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive research from methodological view and is a practical one from purpose perspective. Also this study is a co relational research from identity view.

The relationship between research variables will be analyzed based on the research purposes in this study. Also the relationship and its type between independent and dependent variables will be examined in this study. In order to collect the research data, library and field study methods have been followed. This is why that it can be said that this study is a field study based on identity and research methodology. Finally, it should be said that this study is a descriptive-survey study.

6. Statistical Population and Sample

The statistical population of this study includes sales managers, marketing managers, senior managers, and research and development managers of Isfahan Mobarakeh Steel. This population consists of 80 persons. Because this population was as small as that it is not necessary to sampling.

7. Data-Collection Method In order to collect the research data for testing the research hypotheses, a questionnaire has been used with 35 items. 5 questions of this questionnaire refer to the demographic variables including gender, age, job situation, educational levels, and job experiences and the remaining 30 questions refer to the research variables. About 80 questionnaires have been distributed among respondents that 76 of them were submitted by respondents. Unfortunately, 4 questionnaires were not indicated completely by respondents and so 72 questionnaires were used in final analysis.

8. Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

Although the questionnaire has been standardized by its developer but it is better to examine its reliability and validity. This is why that reliability and validity of this questionnaire has been examined and its results have been indicated in the following section.

8.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

Validity refers to this fact the data-collection instrument can measure the research variables. The importance of validity is that the insufficient and inappropriate instrument can make the research and its finding unusable and invalid. Validity of every data-collection instrument can be measured and determined by any expert in that field. In order to this, the academic experts and professors were asked to review the questionnaire and indicate their modifications and corrections.

8.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

When a data-collection instrument is reliable, there is a powerful correlation between scores and observation and actual scores. In order to examine reliability of this questionnaire, Cronbachs' Alpha Coefficient has been used in this study. In order to this, 42 questions of 30 primary questionnaires have been entreated to the SPSS and then its coefficient was calculated that is 0.98. These findings have been indicated in table 1.

Table 1: scale, frequency of the questions, and Cronbachs' Alpha coefficient of the questions

Variables	Scale type	Number of questions	Cronbachs' Alpha coefficient
Trust between partners	Likert five-point	6	88%
Quality Communication	Likert five-point	4	79%

Conflict in the Workplace	Likert five-point	6	81%
Social opportunities	Likert five-point	4	80%
Support senior management	Likert five-point	4	88%
tacit knowledge	Likert five-point	5	89%
Innovation in Marketing	Likert five-point	5	87%
Effectiveness	Likert five-point	5	85%
Relative productivity	Likert five-point	3	70%

9. Findings

Before testing hypotheses, mean, standard deviation and variance of study variables should be considered (table 2). Among the variables new product performance has the highest value and the contingency reward appropriate for developing product has the lowest value.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for study variables

Variable	Number	Friedman test	Standard deviation	Variance
Trust between partners	1-6	7.32	.76131	.580
Quality Communication	7-10	5.42	.70633	.499
Conflict in the Workplace	11-16	5.35	.67445	.455
Social opportunities	17-20	5.39	.73507	.540
Support senior management	21-24	5.16	.84866	.720
tacit knowledge	25-29	3.66	.845445	.715
Innovation in Marketing	30-34	4.66	.79811	.637
Effectiveness	35-39	7.32	.76131	.580
Relative productivity	40-42	5.42	.70633	.499

10. Data Analysis

10.1. The Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

As indicated in past section, five questions have been developed for describing the respondents' demographic characteristics. As the results of descriptive statistics indicated, 86.36% of the respondents were male and 13.63% of them were female. From age view, 36.4% of the respondents had 30-40 years old that indicate they are young respondents. About 48.5% of the respondents had academic educational levels (M.Sc.). Finally, the findings showed that 39.4% of the respondents had 6-10 years job experiences. These results have been indicated in table 3.

Table 3: the respondents' demographic characteristics

Variable	Levels	%	Variable	Levels	%
Gender	Male	86.36	Educational levels	Less than M.Sc.	7.6
				M.Sc.	48.5
	Female	13.63		M.A.	43.9
Age	>30	31.8	Job experiences	>5	28.8
	30-40	36.4		6-10	39.4
	40-49	24.2		11-15	12.1
	<50	7.6		16-20	10.6

11. Measurement Model

Generally, two main models are tested in the structural equation models. The first is measurement model for latent variables. This model refers to the factor loadings of observed variables for latent variables. The goodness of fit measures has been indicated in the following table for all of the latent variables. As indicated in table 3, all of the goodness of fit indexes is unacceptable and in desirable range.

Table4. Goodness of fit indices for latent variables measuring models

The fit indices	indexes	Secondary model
	NPAR	35
	DF	10
	P >0.05	0.097
Implicit	CMIN (Chi Square)	16.098
	AGFI >0.9	.780
	GFI >0.9	.951
Comparative	TLI > 0.9	.963
	NFI > 0.9	.974
	CFI > 0.9	.990
Thrifty	PNFI > 0.5	.271
		.275

	PCFI > 0.5	
	RMSEA < 0.08	0.081
	CMIN/DF < 0.5	1.610

11.1. Structural Model

It is necessary to test the structural model after testing the measurement model. It is possible through structural equation modeling. In order to this, the Amos has been employed. The conceptual model of this study has been showed in figure 2. In order to use Amos, it is should be remembered that γ refers to the effects of external variables on the internal variables and the β refers to the effects of internal variables on each other. In order to examine significance of β and γ , it is necessary to examine t-value of every path. If the t-value is more than 2 and is significant, it can be said that all of the paths are confirmed. Therefore, it can be said that all of the research hypotheses are confirmed and all of the paths are significant

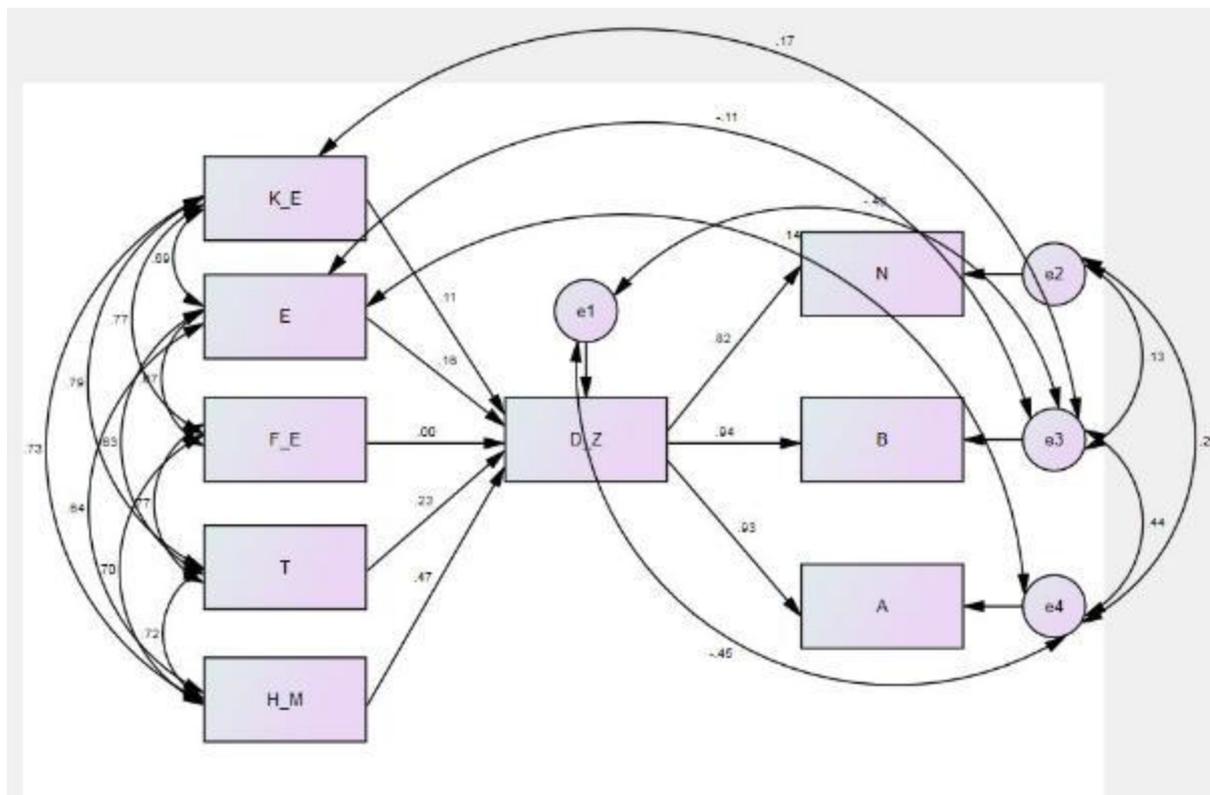


Fig2: The model of study (path analysis model)

The coefficient of path can be examined through P-value. If the value is less than 0.05, the coefficients are acceptable and vice versa. Therefore, it can be said that all of the research hypotheses are confirmed. The results of examining direct and indirect effects of independent variables on dependent variable have been indicated in table 5

Table 5. Testing study hypotheses

	Result	p-value	C.R. Critical ratio	Standard error	Standard coefficient
Quality Communication tacit knowledge	→ 0.13	0.123	1.103	0.270	Reject
Trust between partners tacit knowledge	→ 0.163	0.099	1.847	0.065	Reject
Social opportunities tacit knowledge	→ 0.04	0.107	0.47	0.962	Reject
Conflict in the Workplace tacit knowledge	→ 0.231	0.118	2.461	0.014	confirmed
Support senior management tacit knowledge	→ 0.473	0.084	5.583	***	confirmed
tacit knowledge Innovation in Marketing	→ 0.817	0.067	11.436	***	confirmed
tacit knowledge Relative productivity	→ 0.942	0.068	10.636	***	confirmed

tacit knowledge	→	0.9 27	0. 83	10. 979	***	confir med
Effectiven ess						
P < 0.001						

12. Conclusion

Now by using carried out analyses and findings according to table (7) hypotheses were tested and results are as follow:

H1: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between quality of communication and exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing we can say that path coefficient is 0.113 and t-value (critical ratio) is 1.103 which is less than 1.96. This value is not significant at level of 0.05. Therefore first sub-hypothesis is not supported. Finding from testing this hypothesis is not consisted with results of Ahmad and Rafi (2003).

H2: regarding findings from data analysis on relationship between trust among coworkers and exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing we can say that path coefficient is 0.163 and t-value (critical ratio) is 1.847 which is less than 1.96. This value is not significant at level of 0.05. Therefore second hypothesis is not supported. Finding from testing this hypothesis is not consisted with results of LI (2007).

H3: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between social opportunities and exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing we can say that path coefficient is 0.004 and t-value (critical ratio) is 0.047 which is less than 1.96. This value is not significant at level of 0.05. Therefore third hypothesis is not supported. Finding from testing this hypothesis is not consisted with results of Arnet (2000).

H4: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between conflict and exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing we can say that path coefficient is 0.231 and t-value (critical ratio) is 2.461 which is more than 1.96. This value is significant at level of 0.05. Therefore fourth hypothesis is supported. A finding from testing this hypothesis is consisted with results of Anderson and Whites (1992).

H5: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between support among senior management and exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing we can say that path coefficient (standard coefficient) is 0.473 and t-value (critical ratio) is 5.583 which is more than 1.96. This value is significant at level of 0.05. Therefore fifth sub-hypothesis is supported. Finding from testing this hypothesis is consisted with results of Denison et al. (2013).

H6: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing and innovation in marketing we can say that path coefficient (standard coefficient) is 0.817 and t-value (critical ratio) is 11.436 which is more than 1.96. This value is significant at level of 0.05. Therefore sixth sub-hypothesis is supported. Findings from testing this hypothesis is consisted with results from Lopez and Nicolas study (2013).

H7: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing and productivity ratio we can say that path coefficient (standard coefficient) is 0.086 and t-value (critical ratio) is 10.636 which is more than 1.96. This value is significant at level of 0.05. Therefore researcher's claim is confirmed and seventh sub-hypothesis is supported. Findings from testing this hypothesis is consisted with results from Harlow study (2008).

H8: regarding results from data analysis on relationship between exchanging implicit knowledge in sales and marketing and effectiveness we can say that path coefficient (standard coefficient) is 0.927 and t-value (critical ratio) is 10.797 which is more than 1.96. This value is significant at level of 0.05. Therefore researcher's claim is confirmed and with 95% of confidence we can say there is a significant relationship between exchanging of implicit knowledge and effectiveness. Therefore eighth sub-hypothesis is supported. Findings from testing this hypothesis is consistent with results from Denison et al. study (2000).

13. Limitations

In every research even it is comprehensive and complete, researcher faces problems and limitations during doing research which these limitations make a research cannot be expanded to all aspects. Identifying these limitations makes possible the capability of better interpretation of study results and also improving the quality level of future research. In this study, with excluding some measures such as anonymous questionnaire, motivating the respondents and full explanation about study target we attempted to lessen the probable errors in the study. Nonetheless, study results should be observed accurately. Because respondents were managers and senior employees of organization, some of them during responding to study questions used a conservative way, so presenting inaccurate and incorrect points of view which each research usually faces is the first limitation. Difficulty of getting access to the senior managers is another limitation in this study beside frequent follow ups finally we get connect to them directly or indirectly and we tried to get their points of view.

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