

The Impact of Knowledge Management on the Learning Organization: An Empirical Study on the Telecommunications Sector in Damascus City

Mohammad Reda Alrefaai

Dept. of Human Resource Management, Higher Institute of Business Administration
Damascus, Syria
E-mail: ridaalrefie@hotmail.com

Abdul Hamid AL Khalil

Director of Human Resource Management Program, Higher Institute of Business
Administration, Damascus, Syria
E-mail: abdulhamidkhalil@yahoo.com

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i12/6792>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i12/6792

Published Date: 29 December 2019

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the Impact of knowledge management on the learning organization in the public and private telecommunications companies in Damascus. The sample consisted of 154 employees at the public and private telecommunications companies in Damascus from administrative levels and two scales were used in this study : (marsick, Watkins) scale to measure the learning organization and (Gold)scale to measure the knowledge management . The study found significant impact of the knowledge management on the learning organization.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Knowledge Management, Telecommunications Companies.

Introduction

After the world went through the period of the industrial revolution with all the changes it underwent to our world it was clear that it was one of the most affected aspects is the management of business and that was the necessity of the result of the ability of most organizations to produce in quantities and types close made the competition move from this field to competition in the human element, Which has become increasingly available as the ability of organizations to gain competitive advantage in the field has diminished. Organizations have continued to try to have a competitive advantage in the human resource. This has increased after

technological progress, which some saw as having an effect or greater on the industrial revolution. Where organizations have increased their interest in trying to acquire this advantage, which over time has become the most important feature that organizations seek to obtain by employing the skills of the human element in the optimal manner and in the optimal position and the development of these skills and dissemination among employees and storage and acquisition. This is what we call knowledge management, which, Which, through their well-implemented application, each human element acquires the knowledge required as a result of the sharing of knowledge within the organization and storing it and reaching the educated organization.

Aside from knowledge management (KM), “another way organizations can proactively manage change is to make continuous growth part of its culture – to become a Learning Organization” (Robbins and Judge, 2009, p. 669). Learning organization (LO) complements KM as it involves intricately carving what has been learned into the keystones of a successful organization. (Firestone, McElroy, 2004) emphasize that KM possesses an organizational structure that coincidentally corresponds with the notion of the idealized LO. There exists a significant relationship between the two concepts. Although the terminology varies, the concerns are immensely the same. According to (Loermans, 2002), one cannot exist without the other. Understanding the relation between LO and KM can be vague and misleading (Aggestam, 2006), (Macleod, 1999), (Gourlay, 1999), (Schein, 1997). Nevertheless, some researchers are well-aware of the close relationship between them and vividly recognize the evident connection, while others don’t even attempt to identify such relationship (Aktharasha, Anisa, 2011); (Aggestam, 2006); (Leonard, 1998); (Sierhuis, Clancey, 1997); (Allee, 1997); (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995). However, to the researchers’ knowledge, no study has empirically tested the dependency between the two concepts. Thus, the ultimate goal of this research paper is to empirically assess whether these concepts are distinct, and if so, to test whether KM enhances LO or vice versa.

Learning Organization

Despite the modernity of the concept of a learning organization, it has taken a great deal of interest from researchers. It is difficult to arrive at a precise and comprehensive definition of this term because the concept of a learning organization includes a large number of terms and issues rooted in multiple scientific fields (Higan, 1998).

Hence, in addition to the existence of many definitions of the learning organization by the researchers there was also more than a term to express this concept, such as the knowing organization, thinking organization and qualified organization, but most researchers agree on the term learning Organization (Rifai, Shibab, Rawabdeh, 2013) (Choo, 2001).

Although the idea of a learning organization began in the 1970s from Ergris and Schon (1978), and also to the Revans (1983), Senge, in his book *The FIF discipline* (1990), first laid down the principles of a learning organization and has defined it as an organization in which everyone works independently or collaboratively to constantly develop their abilities to achieve the desired results. They seek to develop new patterns of thinking and set a set of collective goals and aspirations where their members continuously learn how to learn collectively, (Lessem, 1991), it is the learning organization that facilitates the development of collective and creative capacities

between individuals on the one hand and the organization on the other, in social and technological ways, and (Brooks, 1992) saw the learning organization as a kind of system that encourages transformation through learning. (Marsick, Watkins, 1994) that an learning organization is an organization that has the capacity to empower workers and encourage learning, cooperation, dialogue and recognition of the interplay between individuals, organization and communities, while Pedler and others (peddler et al., 1991) defined the learning organization as an organization that facilitates learning for all its members Enabling it to continuously and continuously transform itself (Carvin, 1993) explains that the learning organization is the skilled organization in the creation, acquisition, transfer, and transformation of knowledge that imparts knowledge and insight. (Auluck, 2002) defines it as the organization that can create, exchange, interpret knowledge and modify its behavior based on that knowledge (Chunharas, 2006) as an organization whose environment is organized to facilitate learning and exchange of knowledge among members or employees in which (Marsick, Watkins, 2003) developed a questionnaire that assesses learning activities at all organizational levels. They identified seven dimensions of LO based on hierarchical levels. The dimensions pertaining to the individual level include “Continuous Learning” opportunities (embedding learning in work such that individuals are able to learn on the job; opportunities are available for continued education and development), “Inquiry and Dialogue” (through which individuals gain effective analytical skills to convey their views, the ability to listen and inquire into others’ views and opinions; the culture encourages inquiring, experimenting and feedback). The dimension “Team Learning” pertains to the group level category and involves structuring the job to promote group work in order to exploit the different thinking modes of individuals; the culture highly values collaborative efforts. Moreover, two other dimensions extend to the organizational level and include: “Embedded Systems” and “Empowerment”. The first entails integrating technology systems into work to endorse capturing and sharing of learning; systems are always maintained and access is allowed. The second, “Empowerment”, entitles individuals to set, own, and implement a collaborative vision. The last two dimensions are “System Connections” and “Strategic Leadership.” While “System Connections” involve connecting the firm to its environment and community and allowing individuals to view how their work affects the whole organization, “Strategic Leadership” is when leaders support and strategically employ learning for obtaining superior outcomes (Marsick, Watkins, 2003).

Knowledge Management

The emergence of knowledge management dates back to Erik sveiby in his 1986 book *Intangible Assets*, in which he introduced the term intangible assets, which he considered one of the success factors and called for the need to find a management deal with the knowledge that looked at it as an activity not as a goal.

Don march was the first to use the term knowledge management at the beginning of the eighties of the last century and considered it the final stage of the assumptions related to the development of information systems but was not referred to independently or as an independent work. As the importance of knowledge management increases as a result of its need, which has been increasing with all progress and development in various areas of life, researchers have

begun to develop definitions of this concept. (Wiig, 2002). Knowledge management consists of a large number of practical methods and best practices, systems, Knowledge management processes within organizations. Knowledge management is a system to provide the basis for conducting research, providing curriculum and training or to develop increasingly effective methodologies and methods. It is also a practice and management philosophy by managers who follow knowledge management to implement new or new business strategies. In addition to being a social movement, globalization makes knowledge management an activity necessary to sustain or improve the competitive situation. (Chong, 2000) defines it as the process of raising and organizing the skills and expertise of employees supported by information technology, and (Bhatt, 2001) has defined it as the process of creating knowledge (Rastogi, 2004) Knowledge management is defined as a systematic and integrated process to coordinate the organization's activities in the acquisition, creation, storage, participation, distribution, development and dissemination of knowledge by individuals and groups in order to achieve the main objectives of the Organization It's the process (Newell et al., 2003) that knowledge management seeks to develop a strategy for the effective acquisition, use and transfer of knowledge across the organization in order to improve efficiency and provide a sustainable competitive advantage. (Dalkir, 2005) defines knowledge management as the systematic and structured coordination of people, technology, processes and organizational structure in order to add value through reuse and innovation. This coordination is achieved through knowledge generation, participation and application, as well as through the provision of lessons (Wiig, 1993) is defined as a set of clear and defined approaches and processes to be used in different types of operations, management and identification of new products or strategies, and enhanced human resources management. (Allee, 2000) defines knowledge management as a systematic management of activities, practices and programs of knowledge within the organization. Despite the differences in knowledge management processes, there are four basic processes of knowledge management (Gold, 2001)

Generating and Acquiring Knowledge

Identifying and identifying knowledge needs is the first step in generating knowledge. To generate these needs, the knowledge environment within the organization should be defined and analyzed to discover the knowledge required in that environment and to identify new and useful knowledge that should be captured and drawn from the external environment.

Knowledge Storage

Knowledge storage includes the preservation of information owned by employees in the organization's systems and structures, which includes documents, records, and anything else that provides meaningful information on how the organization should operate. This is to transform their knowledge into an internal system that involves the removal of implicit knowledge from their minds through training and dialogue. The process of authentication based on the use of a wide range of advanced storage media provides an appropriate way to preserve the apparent knowledge.

Distribution and Conversion of Knowledge

In the framework of the distribution of knowledge, all processes related to the terms of exchange, publishing, participation and sharing of knowledge. The spread of knowledge within the organization is a vital person, as it must first determine who should know? and what? And when? How can you make the distribution easy and cost less? The distribution of knowledge has become available and easy using advanced technology such as the Internet and networks.

Application of Knowledge

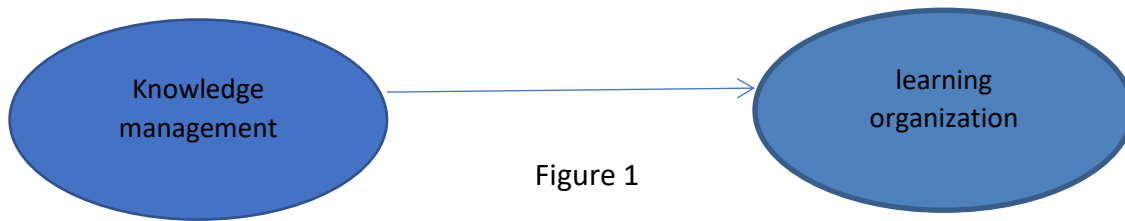
In the application of knowledge, use and reuse

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Studies on the impact of knowledge management in the learning organization (Ahmar, Rofiq, Hadiwidjoj, 2014) were conducted on administrative staff at the University of Braujaya in Indonesia, which resulted in an impact of knowledge management in the learning organization, as found in the study of (Ambuia, 2017) applied to 108 large manufacturing companies in Kenya, where the study confirmed that knowledge management affects the learning organization. This is what the study (Chawla, Joshi, 2013) agreed with. The Indian organizations included 57 executive directors from 16 Indian organizations from the two sectors (Nghah, Tai, Bontis, 2016), which has been applied as a road and transport system by a government agency in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The result of the analysis of managers' responses was a relationship between knowledge management and the learning organization. The Salleh study (2014), conducted at Malaysia's largest institution of higher education in terms of size and number, has seen tremendous growth since its founding in 1956 and has expanded throughout the country and is expected to become a world-class university by 2020. The sample was 900 academics from 26 colleges and the results were a relationship between knowledge management and the learning organization. And the study of (Nodehi, Nehardani, et al., 2013) applied to the Islamic University of Azad in Iran found a relationship between the management of knowledge and the organization of learning did not change the results in the Arab studies and the study (Obaid, Rabaya, 2016) applied to the faculty members Of the 132 Arab American University students found an impact on knowledge management in the learning organization, as well as the study (Al-Tarawi, Atwi, 2014), which applied to 325 employees at the University of Kufa.

Based on the above, from previous studies the following research hypothesis is assumed: there is an impact of Knowledge management on learning organization at public and private telecommunications companies in Damascus.

Conceptual Framework



Hypothesized model of the Effect of Independent Variable on Dependent Variable.

Research Method

Sample

Data for the study of the impact of knowledge management on learning organization ratings were collected from 154 employees in public and private telecommunications companies in Damascus city. The distribution of the sample was according to gender 59.1% were Male and 40.1% were Female. In addition, 64.9% of the respondents were working in the public sector and 35.1% of the respondents were working in the private sector. Also, 13.6% had worked in the telecommunications companies for less than 5 years, 13.6% between 5 and 10 years of Experience and 72.7% had worked More than 15 years. The demographic data of the sample used in analysis is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.
Socio-Demographic data

	N	%
Demographics		
Gender		
Male	91	59.1
Female	63	40.9
Education		
Secondary and less	21	13.6
Bachelor	104	67.5
Master and Ph.D. degree	29	18.8
Years of working		
5 and less	21	13.6
6-10	21	13.6
11 and more	112	72.7
sector		
public	100	64.9
private	54	35.1

Measures

The main aim of the study is to investigate the impact of Knowledge management on learning organization at public and private telecommunications companies in Damascus. Therefore, the study adopts the quantitative research paradigm which has the power to predict causal relationships (Mack, et al., 2005), and to statistically generalize findings to the whole population (Sarantakos, 2004).

The (Marsick , Watkins, 2003) measure was used to measure the learning organization of 21 words divided into 7 dimensions (continuous learning 3 expressions, inquiry and dialogue 3

expressions, encouragement of cooperation and collective learning 3 expressions, creation and sharing of knowledge 3 expressions, empowerment 3 Phrases, linking system 3 phrases, driving strategy 3 phrases).

The (Gold, 2001) measure was used to measure knowledge management consisting of 42 words divided into four dimensions (knowledge acquisition 10 expressions, conversion and knowledge distribution 10 phrases, knowledge application 12 words, protection and knowledge saving 10 phrases).

Study Results

The model was tested by using structural equations modeling (SEM) in response to the study question, which examines the impact of knowledge management on the organization of learning in public and private telecommunications companies in Damascus,

The results of the model test showed that the path coefficient was significant and that the test indicators of the model were all positive as shown in Table 2

GFI	0.93
CMIN/DF	2.548
CFI	0.960
RMR	0.032
RMSEA	0.072

Based on the model and the results of its testing, we conclude that knowledge management has a significant effect on the learning organization. The coefficient of (0.650) and the correlation coefficient (0.903) and the probability value are less than (0.001). This supports the validity of the hypothesis. Which indicates that knowledge management plays an important role. It is essential for the organization to reach the level of the learning organization. From the point of view of the researcher, acquiring, generating, and imparting knowledge is the best way to continuously learn and encourage cooperation. The application of knowledge leads to empowering individuals and the preservation and protection of knowledge leads over time to the leadership's commitment to a strategy that leads, with previous factors to transform the organization into learning organization.

Discussion and Conclusions

The validation of the hypothesis that knowledge management has a significant impact on the learning organization shows that knowledge management plays an important and essential role in reaching the organization to the level of a learning organization. From the point of view of the Researchers, acquiring, generating and imparting knowledge is the best way to continuously learn and encourage cooperation. The application of knowledge leads to the empowerment of individuals and the preservation and protection of knowledge leads over time to the leadership's commitment to a strategy that leads and the former factors to transform the organization into

an educated organization. This is consistent with the study (Ambuia, 2017) and the study (Chawla, Joshi, 2013) (Nghah, Tai, Bontis, 2016), (Salleh, 2014), and study (Nodehi, Nehardani, et al., 2013) and Head (Obaid, Rbayah, 2016) and study (Alteraaooa, Atawi, 2014), which applied to societies and different environments.

The contributions of the study could be of high importance. On one hand, because it examines the impact of knowledge management in the learning organization, which is one of the most important goals that organizations seek to acquire to gain a competitive advantage, On the other hand, this study has been applied to the telecommunications sector, which is one of the most important sectors and the most needed for continuous development. The researcher suggests that the relationship be tested on telecommunications companies in the whole of the country. And also test the relationship to other sectors and using other measures

References

- AlAhmara, G. O., Rofiqb, A., & Hadiwidjojo, D. (2014). "The Impact of Knowledge Management, Learning Organization, and Educations Organization on Organization Performance: A Case in Brawijaya University". *Asia-Pacific Management and Business Application*. 3 (1): 28 – 47.
- Alkraawi, M., Ibrahim, H., Atawi, M., & Hamid, Y. (2014). "Verification of the relationship between knowledge management capabilities and organizations educated in the Office of the University of Kufa". *cilh Economic Sciences of others and administrative*. 8 (31).
- Al-Rifai, M., Al-Shiab, A., & Al-Rawabdah, M. (2013). "The level of application of the educational organization and its obstacles as seen by workers in Jordanian public institutions in Irbid Governorate". *For the Jordanian Journal of Business Administration*. 9(1): 119-158.
- Auluck, R. (2002). "Benchmarking: A tool for facilitating organizational learning?". *Public administration and development*. 22(2): 109-122.
- Brooks, K. (1992). "Building learning organization: The individual culture interaction". *Human Resource Development Quarterly*. 3(4): 323-344.
- Chawla, D., & Joshi, H. (2013). "Impact of Knowledge Management on Learning Organization in Indian Organizations—A Comparison". *Knowledge and Process Management*. 18 (4): 266–277.
- Choo, C. W. (2001). "The knowing organization as learning organization". *Educational and Training*. 43 (4/5): 197-205.
- Chunharas, S. (2006). "An Interactive Integrative Approach to Translating Knowledge and Building a "Learning organization" in health services management". *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. 84 (8): 1-10.
- Firestone, J., & McElroy, M. (2004). "Organizational learning and knowledge management: the relationship". *The Learning Organization*. 11 (2): 177-184.
- Garvin, D. (1993). "Building Learning Organizations". *Harvard Business Review*. 71 (4): 78–91.
- Gold, A. H., Malhotra, A., & Segars, A. H. (2001). "Knowledge management: An organizational capabilities perspective". *Journal of Management Information Systems*. 18(1): 185-214.
- Higan, Rahman, A., & Bin, A. (1998). "organizational learning input to build viable organizations for learning". *Public administration*. 37. (4).

- Loermans, J. (2002), "Synergizing the learning organization and knowledge management". *Journal of Knowledge Management*. 6 (3): 285-294.
- Marsick, V. J., & Watkins, K. E. (2003). *Facilitating Learning Organizations: Making Learning Count*. Gower Publishing. Aldershot.
- Ngah, R., Tai, T., & Bontis, Nick. (2016). "Knowledge Management Capabilities and Organizational Performance in Roads and Transport Authority of Dubai: The mediating role of Learning Organization". *Knowledge and Process Management*: 23 (3): 184–193.
- Nodehi, H., Nehardani, H., & keavanlou, Farzaneh. (2013). "The Relationship between learning organization and knowledge management". *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*: 2251-838 (10): 1303-1306.
- Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J., & Boydell, T. (1991). *The Learning Company: A Strategy for Sustainable Development*. McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Peter, Senge. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice Of The Learning Organization*. Currency Doubleday, New York.
- Rastogi, P. N. (2000). "Knowledge Management and Intellectual Capital the New Virtuous Reality of Competitiveness". *Human Systems Management*.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2009). *Organizational Behavior*, 12th ed, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Salleh, K. (2014). "Learning Organization and Knowledge Management: Transfer Process of Tacit Knowledge in Public University for Academic Excellence". kalsom816@salam.uitm.edu.my.
- Wiig, K. (2003). *Knowledge Management Foundations: Thinking about Thinking*. (Arlington: Schema Press).