

Studying the impact of the dimensions of knowledge management on organization development

Nour Mohammad Yaghoubi*, Mahdieh Maleki

University of Sistan and Baluchestan

Abstract: The purpose of this research is to study the impact of the dimensions of knowledge management on organization development of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City – Iran. its population includes all the employees of the company, they are 170 people and using Morgan table, we have selected 118 of them as our sample. For data collection, we used library studies and questionnaire. Professors and experts of the related field have confirmed the validity of questionnaire of knowledge management and standard questionnaire of Paul Jared and by Cronbach's alpha test, we confirmed their reliability. Their alpha was more than standard rate and the questionnaires have reliability. Through descriptive and inferential tests (Pearson, regression and one-sample t-test) we analyzed data, in order to do that, we used SPSS software. Findings indicate all the dimensions of knowledge management (culture, services and documentation) have significant impact on organization development. In order to improve the concept of development at Water and Wastewater Department, it is better to pay serious attention to the component of openness and transparency of the system as well as other components such as trust in each other, feedback from inside and outside, employee engagement with each other, encouraging and empowering staff and thin layer of organizational structure.

Key words: Knowledge management; Culture of knowledge management; Services of knowledge management; Documentation; Organization development

1. Introduction

In the past, many organizations only had used knowledge of each employee to improve his or her performance; meanwhile, nowadays, organizations are trying to apply staff's knowledge throughout organization in order to achieve its objectives more than ever. This contributes to the spread of a new approach named knowledge management about administrative issues and related subjects. Nowadays, to coordinate with environmental changes, organizations need to improve and develop their operations. Organization development is a method for improving organization's performance, but mainly, it is based on a process for teaching and changing organization staff's values and attitudes. (Daft) It can be said, organization development is a response to transformation and it is a complicated educational strategy for changing beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organizations, so it could accept new techniques, markets, and challenges and adapts to the confusing pace of change better. (Tousi, 2001)

Organizations in the current economy recognize knowledge as a key economic resource and, therefore, it is considered important for sustaining competitive advantage. Needless to say, organizations must possess the right knowledge in the desired form and content under all

circumstances to be successful. The risks and uncertainties inherent in such dynamic environments have increased the importance of managing organizational knowledge (Rahimi et al., 2011)

On the other hand, age of knowledge has brought significant changes into programs and systems of organizations. Meanwhile, those organizations that are trying to strengthen and develop the institutional capacity to solve problems and increase intellectual capital have greater durability during external and internal competition arena. Knowledge management is an important and valuable approach, by establishing it, leading organizations could maintain their technical expertise and prevent loss of vital knowledge due to retirement, downsizing or firing employees, and changes in human memory. (Nonaka, 1991). Today, researchers believed that knowledge is the most important organizational source and its correct management and operation can create sustainable competitive advantage for the organization (Zakeri, 2012). Indeed, KM is a response to the serious need of the organizations to using knowledge source in the era in which knowledge is the most important capital or organizations. Today, in the advanced countries in the world, this issue is accepted that knowledge and using it is the most important factor that can distinguish the competitor organizations from each other leads to the growth or loss of the companies than their competitors (Rajayipour, 2012).

* Corresponding Au thor.

According to Snoden's theory (2000) knowledge management is identifying, optimizing and managing intellectual capitals. This knowledge can be available for individuals as an explicit knowledge in human's manufacture or as a tacit knowledge. Miller and Longdon (2004) say knowledge management has an emphasis on doing the right things instead of doing things right, they consider it as a framework for all the organization's processes that are based on knowledge management. (Yaghoubi and Nekoudori, 2011)

Movement of organization development was based in the second half of the twentieth century and it is being developing and growing in the current decade significantly, it is based on some assumptions and it is compatible with human values. Richard Backhard says organization development is an effort that is 1. Planned, 2. Throughout the organization, 3. Directed by the organization's senior, 4. Increases effectiveness and healthiness of organization, 5. Involved in planning of organizational processes through taking advantage of knowledge of behavioral science. (Mohammad Ali, 2001) Organization development is a process that an organization could develop its internal capacity through it in order to reach its maximum effectiveness and maintain it in the long run. (Feilbeen, 1999)

Organization development is a long-range, planned and sustainable effort and it is based on a general strategy. It tries to identify difficulties rationally and regularly and mobilize all available forces and resources to perform a transformation program. Although in organization development, processes, procedures, regulations and so on will be changed, the main purpose of transformation focuses on individuals' attitude, behavior and performance within organization. Now, the question is how can we increase organization development? From the perspective of modern management, knowledge management in organizations is one of the methods for increasing organization development. Nowadays, researchers believe knowledge is the most important source in an organization, proper management and utilization of it could create sustainable competitive

advantage for organization. (Mehdzade and Molabashi, 2009)

In fact, knowledge management is a response to serious need of organizations to exploit source of knowledge in an era that knowledge is the most important capital of organizations. Today, it is accepted that in the world's developed countries, knowledge and application of it are the most important factors that can distinguish rival organizations from each other and they are the cause of growth or decline of companies compared to their competitors. (Rajaeipour et al., 2012:11) Organization development has significant importance at Water and Wastewater company, employees should be able to carry out their business activities better. According to this, using exploratory interviews and observations within the company, researcher realized its organization development is not at a high level. Thus, we are looking for the answer of the following question, does knowledge management affect organization development of staff of Water and Wastewater Company or not?

2. Research theoretical literature

2.1. Knowledge management

Frappaolo (2000) believes knowledge management deals with applying and growing knowledge assets of an organization and considers its goals. Armstrong (1999) says knowledge management means usage of information in order to achieve business facts and create value through intangible assets to get this aim. In other words, knowledge management is a strategy for creating knowledge on time via individuals in real time and it helps people to share information and improve organization's performance. This requires a transformation from individual knowledge to organizational knowledge. Therefore, there will be an effective relation between those who know and those who need to know.

Chmieleka (2004) believes knowledge management has some features, they are in figure 1:

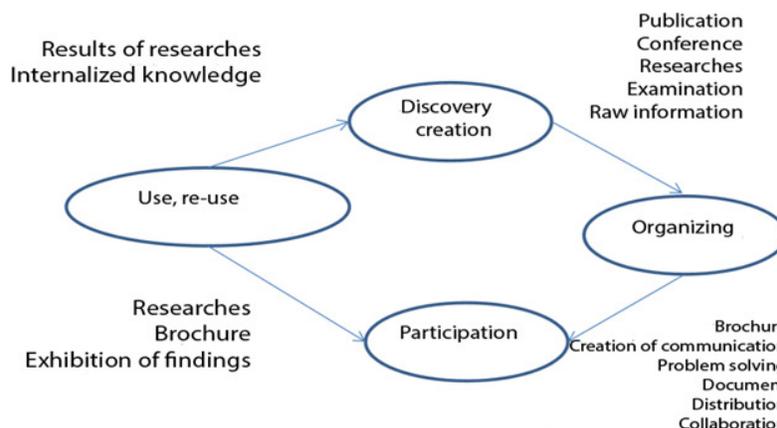


Fig.1: Chmieleka's knowledge cycle in 2004

2.1.1. Knowledge management of private and public organizations

There are different perspectives on knowledge management and its functions among private and public sectors and it is due to the structural difference of these economic sectors. Unlike private organizations, many public organizations do not sell their products, their products are usually exclusive. There is less freedom for managers of public organizations, workers of these organizations have different values, and public organizations compared to private ones are less effective. (Yao and Kam 2007)

McAdam and Reid (2000) compared public perceptions of public and private section, applied knowledge management, and identified the

differences between public and private sectors regarding people’s perceptions and acceptance of knowledge management. They concluded knowledge management as a philosophy of management exists in public sector and the reason for this view comes from a pressure to improve quality and efficiency in public sector.

To be able to make good use of the capabilities of knowledge management in public sector, it is necessary to exploit the best available experiences perfectly. In order to achieve that, we should identify the differences of knowledge management between public and private sectors and simulate the strengths of the private sector for public sector. (Asadnejhad et al., 2010) The difference between public and private organizations regarding some cases is in table below:

Table 1: Distinction between public and private organizations

Private organization	Public organization	Case	Row
Emphasis on development of networks for individuals’ communication for sharing tacit knowledge	Emphasis on development of electronic documents system that have been compiled, stored and distributed	Knowledge management strategy	1
Focus on investments with the objective of facilitating peaceful dialogue and the exchange of tacit knowledge	Focus on heavy investment in order to connect individuals to reusable codified knowledge	Information technology (Henson 1999)	2
Recruiting business executives who are interested in solving problems and can tolerate ambiguity	Recruiting fresh graduated people to reuse knowledge and apply solutions	Human resources (Henson 1999)	3
Training individuals through individual coaching - rewarding people for sharing knowledge with others directly	Training people in groups, distance computer-based learning – rewarding people for usage of databases and focus on documentation	Training (Henson 1999)	4

2.1.2. Different types of knowledge

The most important help we can do to knowledge management is recognizing the different types of knowledge and expressing their differences.

- Tacit knowledge: It is not observed and is hidden in experiences, culture and values of a person or an organization.
- Explicit knowledge: It is revealed and coded.
- Theoretical knowledge: It is the knowledge based on the deep specializations of people. The feature of this type of knowledge is mostly similar to tacit knowledge (Litrace, 2002).

2.2. Organization development

Theorists have been considering, writing and discussing the basic principles of organizational development and improvement over decades, there is no general agreement on its range and parameters. (Wakolaweski, 2006) In other words, there are a lot of disagreements about the crux of organization improvement (Norouzian, 2005) Organization development is chosen over ‘organizational development’ phrase. Sometimes, phrase such as

‘organizational culture’ or ‘organizational optimization’ or even ‘organizational development’ will be used. It is believed that organization development phrase is more compatible with its fundamental meaning and purpose than others (Faridian, 1999).

Although organization development is a relatively new scientific endeavor that was emerged in the years after World War II and there is still no consensus on many of its features, its main and specific purposes are as follows: (Tousi, 2001)

- Raising the level of trust and support from members of organization
- Increasing the frequency of coping with organizational difficulties, both within groups and between groups
- Creating an environment where the authority of the official role improves by personal knowledge and skills
- Raising the level of openness and openness of horizontal, vertical and corner to corner or side to side communications
- Raising the level of joy and personal satisfaction in the organization
- Finding creative methods for groups to eliminate problems that occur very frequently

- Raising the level of personal and collective responsibility in the planning and execution of tasks

Table 2: The structure type and dominance of different types of knowledge

Tacit	Coded	Theoretical	Type of knowledge
+	-	-	Simple structure
-	+	-	Machine bureaucracy
+	+	-	Structure of each section
-	+	+	Professional bureaucracy
+	-	-	adhocracy

2.3. KM and its strategic role in Organization Development of employees

In recent years, the growth of knowledge and information are rapid and now the present era is the information explosion era as 80% of the technology and knowledge results and 90% of technical information and knowledge in the world are produced in century 20. While, in each five and half years, it is doubled and most of them get old in less than 4 years.

Despite new products, knowledge can lead into sustainable advantage. Finally, all the competitors bring the cost and quality of their goods to the good level of the market and quality level and prices of the pioneer companies but the companies using the KM and the enrichment of wealth progress and achieve a high degree of quality, innovation and efficiency as the company can benefit more profit and it continues as specific trend. Despite the materialistic capitals, that in case of using, their value is reduced, the value of knowledge capital is increased as it is used (Davenport and Grover, 2001). The knowledge-based companies don't lose their new thoughts and they create new thoughts and improve the performance level of their forces. The KM activities focus on using gained knowledge as one of the most effective components of this management. In other words, total consideration of the KM is on the point that existing knowledge in organizations is applied to lead into the organization profitability. Unfortunately, the great importance of knowledge doesn't guarantee its implementation in organization activities. In this issue, the stages of measuring tacit knowledge and available skills should be considered. The combination of the daily duties with the knowledge-management related duties, support of top managers and using knowledge are effective for competition and increasing efficiency and lead into the creativity and innovation in employees, their empowerment and creation of a learning organization. Empowerment and sustainable development of the employees is the principle by which the quality of productions and services to

customers are improved continually (Beikzade and Marzbani, 2008).

It can be said that effective factors on Organization Development of employees is information, knowledge and job skill by which KM is achieved. To provide this factor, the facilities to develop the job skills in organization, the grounds of effective and efficient training in organization and having technical and specialized information with the positions are useful.

3. Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework of a research is a structure that research is based on it. Theoretical framework identifies and indicates the relationships between those important factors and variables that have a role in the creation of issues. (Skaran 2007:8) For this research, we used the dimensions of knowledge management (culture of knowledge management, services of knowledge management and documentation) Nanouka (2000), we estimate the impact of these dimensions on organization development (Paul Jared 2006). Its model is in Fig. 2.

4. Research hypotheses

Main hypothesis: the dimensions of knowledge management have impact on organization development.

Sub-hypotheses:

- Culture of knowledge management has significant impact on organization development.
- Services of knowledge management have significant impact on organization development.
- Documentation has significant impact on organization development.

5. Methodology

This paper has descriptive correlation method. Its population includes 170 employees of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City and 118 people among them based on Morgan table are considered as sample. Data collection and

distribution of questionnaire are simple random, because any employee can contribute to this research. For data collection we used two standard questionnaires, according to professors, researchers and different studies, the validity of questionnaire of knowledge management is confirmed, moreover, according to Cornbrash's alpha, its reliability is 87.4%. The second questionnaire is for estimating organization development of employees; Paul Jared

(2006) designed it. The validity of this questionnaire through different studies and professors is confirmed and it equals 81.3%. Their alphas indicate a strong reliability. In order to analyze the data, we used inferential statistics such as Pearson test and multivariate regression, using SPSS software version 16.

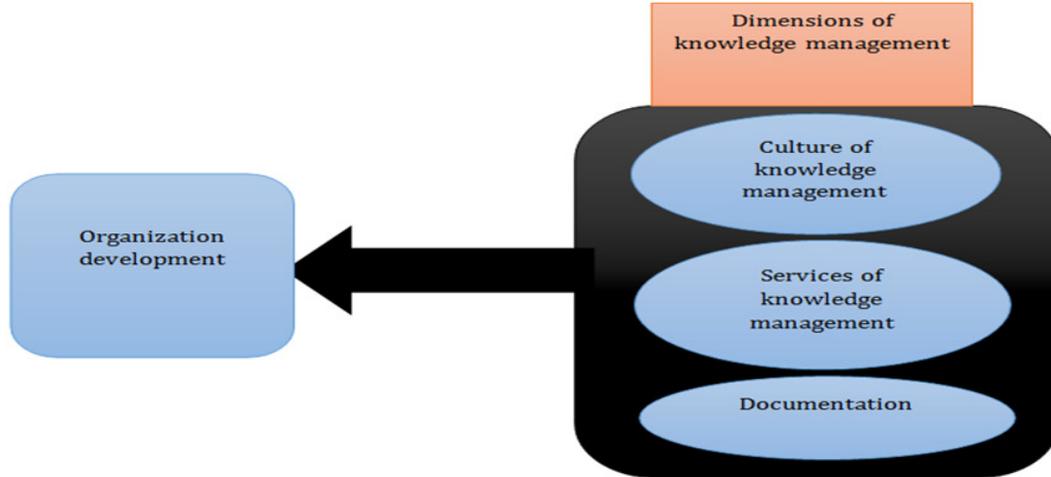


Fig. 2: Conceptual model of the research

6. Findings

6.1. Hypotheses testing

Main hypothesis: the dimensions of knowledge management have significant impact on organization development of employees of Water and Wastewater Company in Zahedan City.

To study the effect, we analyzed the regression of the model and it is as follows. Hence, to study and offer a model for knowledge management (Y) and organization development (X), we evaluate its adequacy indices, they are in table below, and then we will offer a processed model.

Table 2: Estimation of regression model of knowledge management and organization development

Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	SD of error
.216	.047	.038	9

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable is 0.216. Coefficient of determination is 0.047; it indicates 4.7% of changes of knowledge management relate to organization development. Since this amount does not take the degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination and it equals 3.8%. According to the mentioned indices, the model has adequate efficiency, but its influence is very low.

According to the table above, significance level of this statistic is 0.024 and it shows the regression is significant at 95-percent level.

Sub-hypothesis 1: culture of knowledge management has significant impact on organization development of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

To study the effect, we analyzed the regression of the model and it is as follows. Hence, to study and

offer a model for culture of knowledge management (Y) and organization development (X), we evaluate its adequacy indices, they are in table below, and then we will offer a processed model.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variables is 0.265. The coefficient of determination is 0.070 and it shows 7 percent of changes of culture of knowledge management relate to organization development. Since this amount does not take degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination and for this study, it is 6.8%. According to the indices, the model has adequate efficiency.

According to the table above, significance level of this statistic is 0.049 and it shows the regression is significant at 95-percent level.

Table 3: Significance of regression using F-test

Model	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean sum of squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	435.16	1	435.16	5.26	0.024
Remaining	8852.10	107	82.73		
Total	9287.26	108			

Table 4: Estimation of regression model between culture of knowledge management and organization development

Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	SD of error
.265	.070	.068	9.29

Table 5: Significance of regression by F-test

Model	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean sum of squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	390.78	1	390.78	4.45	0.049
Remaining	9247.47	107	86.42		
Total	9287.26	108			

Sub-hypothesis 2: services of knowledge management have significant effect on organization development of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

To study the effect, we analyzed the regression of the model and it is as follows. Hence, to study and offer a model for services of knowledge management (Y) and organization development (X), we evaluate its adequacy indices, they are in table below, and then we will offer a processed model.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable is 0.351. Coefficient of

determination is 0.123 and this shows that 12.3 percent of changes of services of knowledge management relate to organization development. Since this amount does not take degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination and here it is 11 percent. According to the mentioned indices, the model has adequate efficiency.

Table 6: Estimation of regression model between services of knowledge management and organization development

Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	SD of error
.351	.123	.115	8.72

According to the table above, the significance level of this statistic is 0.000 and it shows the regression is significant at 99-percent level.

Sub-hypothesis 3: documentation has significant effect on organization development of employees of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

To study the effect, we analyzed the regression of the model and it is as follows. Hence, to study and offer a model for documentation (Y) and organization development (X), we evaluate its

adequacy indices, they are in table below, and then we will offer a processed model.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable is 0.393. Coefficient of determination is 0.155 and this amount indicates 15.5 percent of changes of documentation relate to the organization development. Since this amount does not take degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination, it is 15.2 percent for this test. According to the

mentioned indices, the model has adequate efficiency.

According to the table above, significant level of this statistic is 0.008 and it indicates the regression is significant at 95-percent level.

Table 7: Significant of regression by F-test

Model	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean sum of squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	1142.53	1	1142.53	15.01	0.000
Remaining	8144.72	107	76.11		
Total	9287.26	108			

Table 8: Estimation of regression model for documentation of knowledge management and organization development

Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	SD of error
0.393	0.155	0.152	9.27

Table 9: Significance of regression through F-test

Model	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean sum of squares	F-statistic	Sig.
Regression	79.03	1	79.03	0.918	0.008
Remaining	9208.23	107	86.05		
Total	9287.26	108			

7. Conclusion

7.1. Discussion

The impact of knowledge management on model of organization development is evident in all the organizations; therefore, we should consider changes in three factors called human resources, processes and technology interactively. When knowledge management is a part of business model of an organization, culture change in organization is applicable with fewer issues, because no changes are possible without awareness, preparedness, and enough energy. Hence, gaining competitive knowledge for steps of quality execution in order to make organization ready for changing seems necessary. Accordingly, leader has a pivotal role in development of strategies, and human resources will have correct information for proper budgeting, accurate decisions and creation of an environment that fosters innovation. Participation in value chain and strategic processes between organizations, with an increase in partners' power will be possible and we could evaluate products and offer customers high quality services. Those organizations that want to have a better status than their rivals, should meet their customers' needs and expectations using competitive knowledge of the organizations. Therefore, establishment of knowledge as valuable and strategic asset of organization, and model of

organization development as a tool for identifying the potential of organizational improvement, will increase competitiveness and competencies in the value chain.

7.2. Conclusion based on the hypotheses results

Main hypothesis: the dimensions of knowledge management have significant effect on organization development of employees of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable is 0.216. Coefficient of determination is 0.047; it indicates 4.7% of changes of knowledge management relate to organization development. Since this amount does not take the degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination and it equals 3.8%. According to the mentioned indices, the model has adequate efficiency, but its influence is very low.

We can calculate regression equation using column of unstandardized coefficients as follows:

Organization development = 49.38 + (0.374) knowledge management

It can be said that with an increase in one unit of each independent variable, dependent variable will increase as much as the mentioned coefficient. In other words, with an increase in one unit of knowledge management, 0.374 of standard deviation of organization development will improve, consequently, they have a positive relationship.

Therefore, the field of knowledge development in these organizations requires more improvement and support.

Sun-hypothesis 1: culture of knowledge management has significant effect on organization development of employees of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variables is 0.265. The coefficient of determination is 0.070 and it shows 7 percent of changes of culture of knowledge management relate to organization development. Since this amount does not take degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination and for this study, it is 6.8%. According to the indices, the model has adequate efficiency.

We can calculate regression equation using column of unstandardized coefficients as follows:

Organization development = $66.50 + (0.248)$ culture of knowledge management

It can be said that with an improvement in one unit of any independent variable, dependent variable will improve as much as the mentioned coefficient. In other words, with an increase in one unit of culture of knowledge management, 0.248 unit of standard deviation of organization development will develop, consequently, they have a positive relationship. Hence, the culture of processes, infrastructures, and technologies in an organization should propagate in order to attract, develop and optimize knowledge capital of organization to make the achievement of strategic objectives possible.

Sub-hypothesis 2: services of knowledge management have significant effect on organization development of employees of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable is 0.351. Coefficient of determination is 0.123 and this shows that 12.3 percent of changes of services of knowledge management relate to organization development. Since this amount does not take degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination and here it is 11 percent. According to the mentioned indices, the model has adequate efficiency.

We can calculate regression equation using column of unstandardized coefficients as follows:

Organization development = $43.75 + (1.40)$ services of knowledge management

It can be said that with an improvement in one unit of any independent variable, dependent variable will improve as much as the mentioned coefficient. In other words, with an increase in one unit of services of knowledge management, 1.40 unit of standard deviation of organization development will develop; consequently, they have a positive relationship. Therefore, in order to apply knowledge management, organizations need some facilities. By services of knowledge management, we mean the existence of facilities and circumstances in an organization for implementing knowledge management.

Sub-hypothesis 3: documentation has significant effect on organization development of employees of Water and Wastewater Company of Zahedan City.

Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable is 0.393. Coefficient of determination is 0.155 and this amount indicates 15.5 percent of changes of documentation relate to the organization development. Since this amount does not take degree of freedom into account, we will use adjusted coefficient of determination, it is 15.2 percent for this test. According to the mentioned indices, the model has adequate efficiency.

We can calculate regression equation using column of unstandardized coefficients as follows:

Organization development = $65.78 + (0.422)$ documentation

It can be said that with an improvement in one unit of any independent variable, dependent variable will improve as much as the mentioned coefficient. In other words, with an increase in one unit of documentation, 0.422 unit of standard deviation of organization development will develop, consequently, they have a positive relationship. Hence, one way to improve circumstances of survival of organization is the establishment of knowledge management and documentation and transforming it to organizational knowledge and wisdom, hence, guiding knowledge of an organization relates to human resources. Therefore, organizations must pay attention to all the components of knowledge management such as perspective, teamwork, open communications, empowering employees and information technology in order to implement knowledge management and they should analyze them through identifying their current situations.

8. Recommendations

In order to improve the concept of development of Water and Wastewater Department, it is better to pay serious attention to the component of openness and transparency of the system as well as other components such as trust in each other, feedback from inside and outside, employee engagement with each other, encouraging and empowering staff and thin layer of organizational structure.

Effort of senior management of organization in creating organizational culture and providing necessary services for employees and organizational units to share knowledge as well as creating proper circumstances for receiving benefit from knowledge in order to increase the share of creation and growth of organization development is important.

Some measures from senior management for identifying required knowledge and developing knowledge of organization seem necessary.

Due to score of development regarding knowledge management that is lower than average, senior managers should consider some management arrangements for knowledge management in order to increase organization management.

Organization should have a strong culture of teamwork and there should be some activities for groups to improve processes.

Self-scrutiny is necessary for organization development. Senior and middle managers must know what is going on within organization.

Information must be available throughout organization. By establishing a good internal relationship between personnel and managers, ideas will be shared and transferred from one side to another side.

To apply knowledge management at Water and Wastewater Company scientifically, managers should determine a strategy based on knowledge, identify perspective, long-term and short-term goals, determine path, required resources and frameworks, and consider a basis for performance evaluation.

Using experienced consultants of knowledge management and creating change group for implementing knowledge management process

We recommend managers to use databases, special journals, books, magazines, different conferences (video, audio, visual and verbal), the Internet and emails.

Providing specialized courses and necessary facilities for employees to be familiar with and use information technology and communication, is recommended.

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