



## Knowledge Management (KM) in Agricultural Colleges of Khuzestan Province, Iran

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was analyzing knowledge management in agricultural colleges Islamic Azad University of Khuzestan Province, Iran. The statistical population was (N=210). The sample size (n=108) were investigated. After confirm the validity of the instrument by panel of experts, to determine the reliability coefficient using Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for all sections of the questionnaire over 0.81 were calculated. Method of research was descriptive and correlative. Based on the results, research activities, job motivation, academic rank, social and cultural activity can explain 65.7% of variance of knowledge management.

### 1. Introduction

Knowledge management (KM) is about enhancing the use of organizational knowledge through sound practices of information management and organizational learning (Ahmad et al., 2017). Present time is fast changing era of knowledge. Every five years and a half size of knowledge are doubling, while the average life of less than four years. In such circumstances, knowledge as a "valuable strategic resource" and "property" is considered to require management. If the above conditions "intense competition in world markets," we added the importance of organizational knowledge management as a competitive advantage in knowledge-based economy is now double (Jalali et al, 2005).

In recent years one of the many topics that views managers of public and private organizations to have attracted is the topic "Knowledge Management (KM)". KM history dates back to ancient Greece. But in recent years this issue has been raised with more attention. Growth of knowledge management as a strategy for managing the organization is considered as a new approach. So far, several approaches have appeared in the field of management but have been gradually change shortly after. (Mehr Ali Zadeh, 2002).

Ahmad et al., (2017) indicated that knowledge management practices measured through information technology, organization, and knowledge

significantly affect organizational performance of the universities.

Knowledge management has become a conduit to entrepreneurs as a vehicle for adopting incoming knowledge spillovers (Cassiman and Veugelers 2002). Knowledge management also allows new knowledge to spill over within and between industries (Tavassoli et al. 2017), leading to regional economic development and dynamism (Hayter 2013; Caiazza et al. 2015).

Ahmadinejad (2012) indicated that, the correlation between status of knowledge acquisition and absorption with knowledge management was significant. Also the correlation between organizational culture and perceptions of experts and managers was significant. The results also showed that organizational culture, leadership style and knowledge about IT can explain 74% of variance of perception of agricultural college experts and managers regarding the development of knowledge management.

Organizational knowledge in the contemporary world of rapid, is an opportunity for organizations that do not know it well and they manage and yet a serious threat to organizations that reduce the environmental changes and do not know it. Now, knowledge management is a new concept and is considered popular and is a process that helps organizations to information and critical specials that

are part of the memory organization, usually there are no structures in the organization, identify, select, organize, distribut and deliver (Lajvardi and Khanbabaei, 2005).

## 2. Materials and methods

Purpose of research is analyzing knowledge management in agricultural colleges Islamic Azad University of Khuzestan Province; Iran. The research method is descriptive and correlative.

Faculty members, as the statistical population (N=210) have been considered. The sample size (n=108), determined based on randomly method. In order to validate research tools, panel of expert's method was used. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, 30 copies of the questionnaire has completed, then SPSS 20 software using Cronbach's coefficient alpha levels through a questionnaire reliability was investigated. According to the results of questionnaire reliability levels are acceptable, and in all items over than 0.81.

## 3. Results and discussion

First, faculty members characteristics described and then discussed the inferential statistics are presented. This study showed that based on level of education 79.6 percent of members had PhD degree (Table 1). Also, 61.11% of faculty members had assistant professor rank. Based on the results, 32.41% of respondent had moderate level of social and cultural activities.

In this study for analyzing knowledge of members regarding the development of knowledge management in universities of Khuzestan province, 9 items designed and to their responses on a five-level (very high, high, moderate, low and very low) did expression (Table 2). Based on the viewpoint of respondents, we classified them in to 5 groups. 51.85% of members had moderate level of knowledge regarding the development of knowledge management (Table 3).

Table 1. Frequency distribution of senior managers and experts studied by personal characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent	Cum percent
Education Level			
PhD	80	79.6	79.6
MSc	28	20.4	100
Academic Rank			
Instructor	28	25.93	25.93
Assistant Professor	66	61.11	87.04
Associate Professor	12	11.11	98.15
Professor	2	1.85	
Social and Cultural Activities			
Very High	15	13.89	13.89
High	24	22.22	36.11
Moderate	35	32.41	68.52
Low	23	21.30	89.81
Very Low	11	10.19	100.00

Table 2. The mean knowledge of faculty members regarding knowledge management items

Items	Mean*	sd
Record of experience	3.43	1.03
Easily using of past experience	2.98	1.05
Awareness of managers of up-to-date knowledge	2.46	1.12
Reduce cost of mistakes	3.02	1.08
Reduce Risk of decisions	3.65	1.16
Availability of knowledge sources	3.12	0.98
Increase motivations in organization	3.08	0.94
Increase productivity in organization	3.61	1.09
Increase teamwork activity	3.16	0.89

\*(5=Very High, 4=High, 3=Moderate, 2=Low and 1=Very Low)

Table 3. The frequency distribution of managers regarding level of knowledge

level of knowledge	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Very High	10	9.26	9.26
High	12	11.11	20.37
Moderate	56	51.85	72.22
Low	18	16.67	88.89
Very low	12	11.11	100.00
Sum	108	100	

Table 4. Correlation with level of knowledge management variables

First variable	Second variable	correlation coefficient	Significance
Academic Rank	Knowledge management	0.671**	0.000
Research Activities		0.149**	0.001
Social and Cultural Activity		0.409**	0.000
Job Motivation		0.198*	0.033
Level of Education		0.109	0.089

\*: Significant level of 0.05 , \*\*: Significant level of 0.01

Table 5. Results of multiple regression analysis step by step style

Independent variables	B	SE B	Beta	t	sig
Job Motivation (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.864	0.457	0.573	3.578	0.000
Academic Rank (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.714	0.257	0.567	2.294	0.000
Social and Cultural Activity (X <sub>3</sub> )	0.658	0.098	0.591	2.379	0.000
Research Activities (X <sub>4</sub> )	0.349	0.157	0.358	2.594	0.000
Constant	12.854	1.957	----	2.957	0.000

R<sup>2</sup>=0.657, Signif F=0.000 F= 11.579

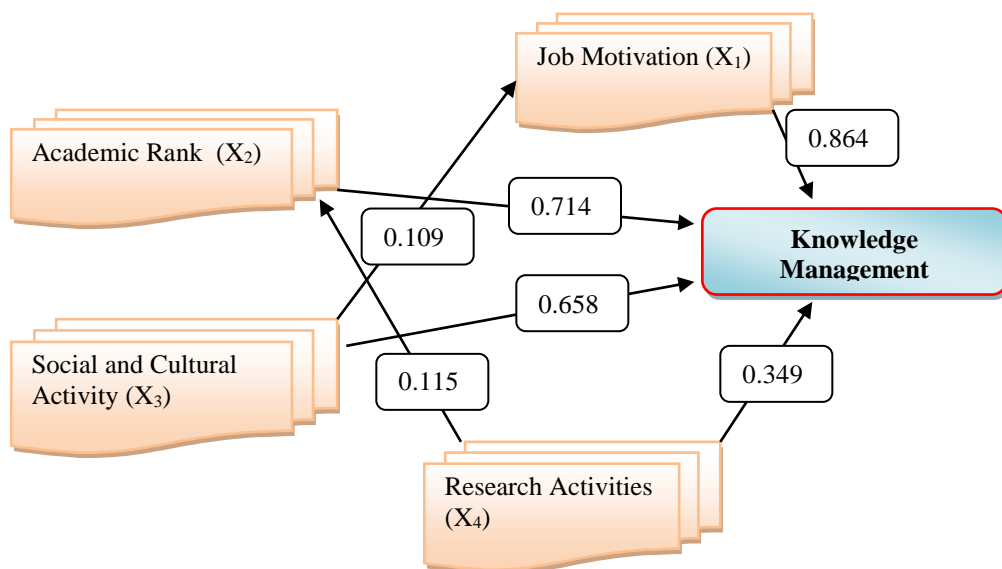


Figure 1. Filed Frame work of Research

To investigate the relationship between knowledge of faculty members regarding the development of knowledge management as dependent variables with independent variables, Spearman correlation coefficient was used. Based on the results presented in table 4, the correlation between academic rank, research activities, social and cultural activity, job motivation with knowledge management was significant.

According to the regression coefficients and the constant value obtained from multiple regression analysis stepwise method, regression equation under investigation form was obtained:

$$Y = 12.854 + 0.864X_1 + 0.714X_2 + 0.658X_3 + 0.349X_4$$

The results also showed that research activities, job motivation, academic rank, social and cultural activity can explain 65.7% of variance of knowledge of members regarding the development of knowledge management in agricultural colleges Islamic Azad University of Khuzestan Province (Table 5).

#### 4. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the results, the correlation between academic rank, research activities, social and cultural activity, job motivation with knowledge management was significant. Also, the results showed that research activities, job motivation, academic rank, social and cultural activity can explain 65.7% of variance of knowledge of members regarding the development of knowledge management in agricultural colleges Islamic Azad University of Khuzestan Province. Therefore, it is recommended that the necessary conditions be provided for the development of research activities as well as cultural and social activities. Also, based on the research results, it is recommended that job satisfaction indicators be considered and the necessary efforts be made to improve it.

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