

# **THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AS THE MODERATOR**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research was conducted to investigate the relationship between three underlying dimensions of knowledge management, i.e. knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination and responsiveness to knowledge; and organisational effectiveness with organisation culture as the moderator. Questionnaires were distributed to 159 respondents who held the position of supervisor and above in the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. The results of this study indicated that two dimensions of knowledge management namely knowledge dissemination and responsiveness to knowledge are significant and positively related to organisation effectiveness. Lastly, the results indicated that the organisation culture does not moderate any of the relationships between knowledge management and organisation effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Management; Organisational Effectiveness; Organisational Culture; Manufacturing Sector; PLS-SEM.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Knowledge management (KM) is considered as one of the important aspects in every organisation. Past researchers such as Kim and Hancer (2010), posit that KM is the practice of capturing and developing individual and collective knowledge in an organisation. Implementing KM enables the organisation in becoming more flexible and better at responding to intense global competition. By implementing KM, it allows knowledge to be shared among the employees who will eventually lead to organisational effectiveness and gaining competitive advantages. Past research have underlined a positive relationship between knowledge management and the organisation effectiveness (Munir et al., 2013). Additionally, organisational culture will contribute in

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organisational effectiveness by increasing the satisfaction level of the knowledge employees. Therefore, the implementation of knowledge management is important in order to boost up the organisational effectiveness and the result may be improved by the occurrence of organisation culture. In addition, there are literature which reflecting the growing awareness of the contingent and complex nature of culture (Wiener, 1998). Previous research also showed that organisational culture is related positively to the organisational effectiveness, however it does not directly influence on organisational effectiveness but exerts influence by shaping the members' behaviour (Zeng et al., 2010). This study attempts to determine the effect of organisation culture and the impact of KM on organisational effectiveness in the Malaysian manufacturing sector.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management is viewed as a key strategy for future organisation as future society is touted to be society of knowledge (Wu, Wu, Li & Huang, 2011). KM involves complicated process and activities that create, identifies, shares, and adjust of the organisation knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). It is an important strategy which can improve organisation competitiveness and performance as the implementation of knowledge will lead the organisation in becoming more adaptive, innovative, intelligent, and sustainable (Nurul Huda, 2007). As mentioned by Nonaka and von Krogh (2009), tacit knowledge is intangible which refers to the individual sense, experiences, skills, and unarticulated mental model. This is embedded in one action, commitments, ideas, emotions and others. On the other hand, explicit knowledge is tangible where it is presentable in written or graphic form that has universal character. It is a formal knowledge that can be access through awareness. Ang and Massingham (2007) elucidate that knowledge is the most valuable strategic resource of an organisation. There are a number of definitions of KM and for the purpose of this paper, KM is defined as comprising three dimensions, namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination and responsiveness to knowledge (Darroch, 2003).

### **2.2. Organisation Effectiveness**

Organisation effectiveness refers to how well an organisation is able to access the essential resources and achieves their objectives via core strategies (Suhaida, 2012). According to Zook (2015), organisational effectiveness describes organisation purpose, by providing important decision making information, highlighting organisation supports, demonstrate impact, increase accountability, and enhance researcher understanding. It also leads for organisation in building their strategy and practice. Furthermore, organisational effectiveness also helps the organisation to align their mission to be incorporated in its operations and actions. Zheng (2005), suggests that organisational effectiveness allows organisation to understand its goals. The measure of effectiveness can is dependent on the customers' perceptions on the organisation, such as customer satisfaction, employee relation, business process, learning and growth, and profitability. The mission of an organisation is to achieve highest level of organisation effectiveness and this is reflected by the organisation's social, technical system, culture, structure, and strategies; which are the main factors in reaching greater effectiveness.

### 3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

#### 3.1. *Knowledge acquisition and organisation effectiveness*

Knowledge acquisition deals with activities that involve the identification and attainment of external explicit or tacit knowledge that is important to the organisation's operations (Colakoglu, 2009). Moreover, knowledge acquisition deals with activities that may involve by employees to identify and acquire the external explicit or tacit knowledge that is important to the organisation's operations. Thus, in order to renew knowledge stock and create new knowledge, organisation needs to acquire the external knowledge. Knowledge acquisition is one of the key components of the knowledge management where it allows the organisation members to acquire the knowledge in an organisation. The knowledge acquired can be classified into explicit and tacit forms where it includes the customers' knowledge and problems solving knowledge. Past studies i.e. Rusly, Sun and Corner (2015) propose that the acquisition of knowledge has a positive impact on organisational effectiveness. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Knowledge acquisition is positively related to organisation effectiveness.

#### 3.2. *Knowledge dissemination and organisation effectiveness*

Knowledge dissemination is considered as having an increasing role in wealth generation (Ghadar & Loughran, 2014). Lin (2013) postulates knowledge dissemination regarded as the business process where knowledge is distributed between individuals that participating in the process activities. Knowledge dissemination had shown its impact on different aspects of organisation. Past studies (Bharadwaj, Chauhan & Raman 2015; Rowley, 2000) suggest that knowledge dissemination contributes towards organisational effectiveness and is crucial for organisation as it can share unwritten knowledge. Moreover, the terms "dissemination", "sharing", "transmission", or "transfer" of knowledge are used to describe the intra-organisational flow of knowledge (Salojärvi, Saarenketo, & Puimalainen, 2013). Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Knowledge dissemination is positively related to organisation effectiveness.

#### 3.3. *Responsiveness to knowledge and organisation effectiveness*

Responsiveness to knowledge can be defined as the reaction of an organisation toward various types of knowledge that it accessed (Darroch, 2003). Responsiveness to knowledge relates to the response of employees towards the organisation's knowledge. It is important to determine the responsiveness of employees to knowledge so that improvement can be made by the organisation to encourage positive respond of employees towards knowledge. According to Melhem (2004), responsiveness to knowledge will contribute to organisational effectiveness as the employees will apply the knowledge learnt in their response to their customers' needs and behaviours. The knowledge stored in written or unwritten forms will allows the employees to save their time in finding solution to the previously solved problems (Berraies, Achour, & Chaher, 2015). This proved that there is a relationship between responsiveness to knowledge and organisation effectiveness. Therefore, this study aims to confirm the following hypothesis:

H3: Responsiveness to knowledge is positively related to organisation effectiveness.

### **3.4. *The Moderating Effect of Organisational Culture***

Organisational culture is regarded as important for organisations as it plays a crucial role in organisational performance (Naikal & Chandra, 2013). It involves the collection of norms and value shared by individual and group in the organisation (Hill, Jones, & Schilling, 2014). These norms and value will likely have an impact on the behaviour of the members of the organisation when they interact with each other as well as with stakeholders.

Culture comprises of the expected identity and distinctive culture as the identity of the organisation. It is formed when an organisation is established where it relied on the initial successes (Schein, 2010; Giberson, 2001). Zheng et al. (2010), elucidate that organisational culture is positively related to organisation effectiveness and it can be employed to augment the relationship of organisation effectiveness. In this study, it is used to enhance the relationship between the dimensions of knowledge management and organisational effectiveness. Organisational culture is said to impact various aspects and has been applied as a moderator (Penelope & Pattison, 2012; Allard, 2010). In a study by Ambroz and Praprotnik (2008), it was found that there is significant relationship between organisation culture and organisational effectiveness where organisational culture is positively affected the organisation effectiveness. Moreover, Park, Whitelock, and Giroud (2009) mentioned that knowledge acquisition is related to organisation culture. Thus, this research attempts to investigate the moderating impact of organisation culture on the linkage between knowledge acquisition and organisation effectiveness. Therefore, the following proposition is developed:

H4: The positive linkage between knowledge acquisition and organisation effectiveness will be increased when organisational culture is high.

The relationship among organisational culture, knowledge dissemination, and organisation effectiveness have also been studied in the past research. Organisational culture was found to have a strong effect on organisation effectiveness (Anita, Shuibo, & Meiyung, 2006). This is in tandem with a research by Supyuenyong, Islam, and Kulkarni (2009) who found a significant relationship between knowledge dissemination and organisation culture. As such, a hypothesis is framed as follows:

H5: The positive linkage between knowledge dissemination and organisation effectiveness will be increased when organisation culture is high.

The study of effect of organisational culture as a moderator on the knowledge management dimensions and organisational effectiveness is also available in the past research. The relationship between knowledge management and organisational effectiveness can be enhanced by organisational culture in the service sector (Danish, Munir, & Butt, 2012). Furthermore, organisational culture also found to enhance the responsiveness to knowledge (Chen & Mohamed, 2010). These researches had shown that there are relations between organisation culture, responsiveness to knowledge, and organisation effectiveness. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H6: The positive linkage between responsiveness to knowledge and organisation effectiveness will be increased when organisation culture is high.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the respondents comprise of managers employed at manufacturing companies in the Malaysian states of Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Penang. In selecting the respondents, a systematic random sampling was adopted. To determine the sample size, Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, and Mena (2012) suggested that a sample is to be derived from a rule of thumb proposed by Barclay, Higgins, and Thompson (1995) of "using a minimum sample size of ten times the highest number of directions targeting at any constructs in the outer and inner modules". The sampling frame was derived from the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing Directory from the three states, which produce a list of 1,286 companies. From this list, 159 responses were collected, giving a response rate of 12%. A sample of respondents is collected through a survey questionnaire that is divided into four sections. In Section A, there are total of 31 questions to measure the 3 dimensions of knowledge management, adopted from Chen and Mohamed, (2008). Section B comprises of 17 questions to evaluate the construct of organisational effectiveness while in Section C, 12 questions are adopted to determine organisation culture. Both constructs are based on Grosbois (2013). All the items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Finally, Section D includes 6 items of the respondents' demographic information which consists of the respondents' gender, age, number of years at employed at current organisation, their position, education qualification, and the category of their manufacturing industry. This study utilises SmartPLS 3.0 to measure the model.

## 5. FINDINGS

### 5.1. *Assessment of the Measurement Model*

To assess the measurement model, it is imperative to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the discriminant validity, convergent validity and reliability of the scale. As presented in Table 1, all the item loadings exceed the suggested point of 0.5 (Bagozzi, Yi, & Philipps, 1991). Moreover, all the composite reliability (CR) registered the minimum point of 0.7 (Gefen et al., 2000). All the loadings presented are above 0.5 or  $p < 0.01$ . In accordance to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), all the average variance extracted (AVE) are greater than 0.5, while the CR are more than 0.7 (Gefen et al., 2000) hence, realising the convergent validity. Table 2 depicts the discriminant validity whereby AVE was square rooted to reflect against the intercorrelations of the model's construct. This is to validate discriminant validity (Chin, 1998a, 1998b). The readings demonstrate that the AVE square root exceeded the connection against other dimensions.

### 5.2. *Assessment of the Structural Model*

In measuring the structural model and testing the proposed hypotheses, PLS-SEM was employed. In order to use PLS-SEM, two criteria should be contemplated and inferred: the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to quantify the endogenous constructs and the path coefficients (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). It is imperative for the path coefficients to be significant; conversely, the  $R^2$  value can vary conditional on the area of research. In evaluating  $R^2$ , the figures of 0.19, 0.33 and 0.67 are correspondingly considered as weak, moderate and substantial (Chin, 1998b). In this study, it was found that the  $R^2$  for OE is 0.654.

**Table 1: Results of Assessment Models**

Construct	Measurement Items	Loadings	AVE <sup>a</sup>	CR <sup>b</sup>
Knowledge acquisition	KA4	0.731	0.607	0.885
	KA8	0.785		
	KA10	0.791		
	KA11	0.827		
	KA12	0.758		
Knowledge dissemination	KD2	0.748	0.699	0.902
	KD6	0.835		
	KD7	0.875		
	KD8	0.880		
Responsiveness to knowledge	KR1	0.788	0.728	0.914
	KR2	0.882		
	KR4	0.845		
	KR6	0.893		
Organisation effectiveness	OE3	0.794	0.623	0.908
	OE4	0.841		
	OE7	0.865		
	OE10	0.749		
	OE14	0.716		
	OE16	0.759		
Organisation culture	OC4	0.758	0.574	0.8901
	OC7	0.785		
	OC8	0.776		
	OC9	0.755		
	OC10	0.748		
	OC11	0.721		

Notes: <sup>a</sup>AVE= Average Variance Extracted, <sup>b</sup>CR= Composite Reliability

**Table 2: Discriminant validity of constructs**

Constructs	KA	KD	KR	OE	OC
KA	<b>0.779</b>				
KD	0.593	<b>0.836</b>			
KR	0.470	0.469	<b>0.853</b>		
OE	0.622	0.617	0.563	<b>0.789</b>	
OC	0.609	0.568	0.498	0.734	<b>0.758</b>

Note: KA= Knowledge Acquisition, KD= Knowledge Dissemination, KR= Responsiveness to Knowledge, OE= Organisation Effectiveness, OC= Organisation Culture

**Table 3: Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	Knowledge Acquisition -> Organisation Effectiveness	0.170	0.057	Not Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	Knowledge Dissemination -> Organisation Effectiveness	0.209	0.003	Supported

**Table 3: Path Coefficients and Hypotheses Testing (cont.)**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	p-value	Decision
H <sub>3</sub>	Responsiveness to Knowledge -> Organisation Effectiveness	0.148	0.027	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	Knowledge Acquisition * Organisation Culture -> Organisation Effectiveness	0.131	0.122	Not Supported
H <sub>5</sub>	Knowledge Dissemination * Organisation Culture -> Organisation Effectiveness	-0.062	0.357	Not Supported
H <sub>6</sub>	Responsiveness to Knowledge * Organisation Culture -> Organisation Effectiveness	-0.124	0.083	Not Supported

## 6. DISCUSSION

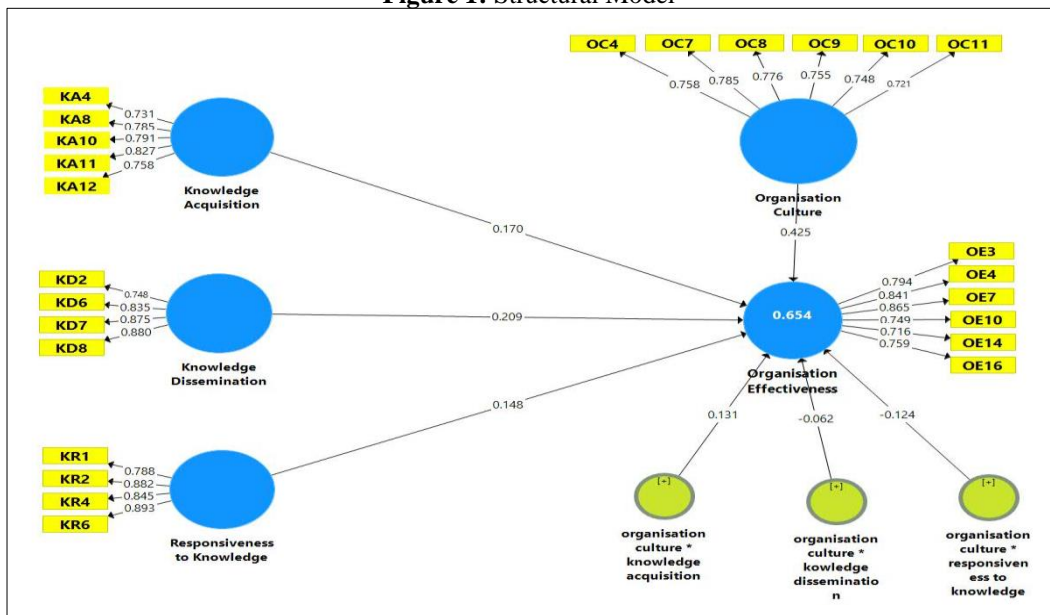
The findings of this research showed some important assessment on the relationships within the model. The result in this study shows that there is no significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and organisation effectiveness (H1) which challenges Rusly, Sun and Corner's (2012) claim that the acquisition of knowledge will lead to a more effective organisation. Interestingly, Abd Rahman, Imm, Sambasiva, and Wong (2013) suggest that not every dimensions of knowledge management would have a direct impact on organisation effectiveness, unless it is coupled with knowledge conversion and application. Additionally, the findings show that knowledge dissemination is positively related to the organisation effectiveness thus lend support to H2. The findings harmonise with a study by Rowley (2000), who claimed that knowledge dissemination will enhance the organisation effectiveness. Likewise, Bharadwaj, Chauhan and Raman (2015) elucidate that the process of knowledge dissemination plays an important role in improving the organisation effectiveness. In evaluating the impact of responsiveness to knowledge on organisation effectiveness (H3), the results indicate positive and significant relationship. In evaluating the moderating role of organisational culture, none of the hypotheses (H4 - H6) showed significant findings. This deviates from a claim by Cooper et al. (2016), who propose that culture moderates the relationship of knowledge management. Previous study by Stock, McFadden, and Gowen, (2010), highlights that culture is negatively associated with knowledge dissemination. This complement with the study by Al Mehairi (2013) who suggests that culture does not enhance the intention to disseminate knowledge as this could be due to Middle Eastern country settings, whereby the country's culture may have an influence on the organisation's culture.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study provides some important theoretical and practical implications for practitioners, and scholars in management and manufacturing area. The findings of this research have contributed to the body of knowledge by bridging the gap and showing the importance of knowledge management on organisation effectiveness in Malaysia manufacturing sector. Knowledge dissemination and responsiveness to knowledge are important factors for knowledge management in manufacturing

sector, but there are only limited studies carried out to investigate the direct relationship of these dimensions of knowledge management and organisation effectiveness in the context of Malaysia manufacturing sector. This study also discovers that the other one dimension of knowledge management has least influence on the organisation effectiveness in manufacturing sector compared with the others two dimensions. This clearly shows that knowledge acquisition and responsiveness to knowledge have most contribution in organisation effectiveness based the findings of this research. Thus, this provides clear direction for the policy makers to focus on acquiring knowledge and how best to respond to it. It is imperative for policy makers to ensure knowledge is suitably acquired and how best to make use to the knowledge in order to ensure a more effective organisations that would lead to a better economic and financial performances for the Malaysia.

Figure 1: Structural Model



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