

지식경영 및 조직성과와 관련된 변인들에 관한 연구: 개념적 모델과 시사점

A Study on Factors Related to Knowledge Management and Organizational Performance: A Conceptual Model and Implications

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요약

선행연구에 따르면 조직문화 및 조직내 커뮤니케이션이 지식경영과 조직성과에 영향을 미칠 수 있지만, 이런 모든 변인들 간의 관계를 보여주는 보다 통합적인 연구가 여전히 필요하다. 이 논문은 이러한 변인들의 상호간 관계 및 영향력을 제시함으로써, 지식경영 및 관련된 변인들을 통해 조직성과를 향상시키는 통합적인 접근방법을 개발하기 위한 다양한 방법들을 제시한다. 따라서 이 연구의 목적은 국가문화, 조직문화, 조직내 커뮤니케이션, 지식경영, 조직성과 간의 상호관계를 고찰하는 것이다. 이러한 변인들 간의 관계에 대한 종합적 문헌연구방법을 통해 상호관계가 개념적 모델로서 요약되었다. 이 모델에 의하면 조직내 커뮤니케이션, 지식경영, 조직문화는 조직성과에 영향을 미치며, 또한 조직내 커뮤니케이션과 조직문화는 지식경영에도 영향을 미친다. 이러한 개념적 모델에 기반하여, 조직성과를 최대한 향상시킬 방법을 찾고자 하는 인적자원 연구자 및 실무자들을 위한 시사점들이 제시되었다.

■ 중심어 : | 지식경영 | 조직성과 | 조직문화 | 조직내 커뮤니케이션 | 개념적 모델 | 인적자원 |

Abstract

Although previous studies show that organizational culture and organizational communication could be influential factors in knowledge management and organizational performance, the more integrated research to indicate relationships among all of the factors is still needed. By indicating the inter-relationships among the factors and the direction of the influence, this paper suggests various ways to develop an integrated approach to the improvement of organizational performance through knowledge management and other related factors. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships among national culture, organizational culture, organizational communication, knowledge management, and organizational performance. Based on a comprehensive review of extant literature on the relationships among these factors, the relationships are summarized in the conceptual model. According to the model, organizational performance is influenced by knowledge management, organizational communication, and organizational culture, and knowledge management is influenced by organizational communication and organizational culture. Based on the conceptual model, implications for human resource (HR) researchers and practitioners seeking to optimally improve organizational performance are presented.

■ keyword : | Knowledge Management | Organizational Performance | Organizational Culture | Organizational Communication | Conceptual Model | Human Resource (HR) |

I. Introduction and Purpose of the Study

In the competitive business environment, numerous methods to enhance organizational performance have been suggested by researchers and practitioners in various fields for the successful operation of an organization. In particular, knowledge management has attracted considerable attention of researchers and practitioners in human resource field as an effective managerial tool that might allow an organization to accomplish the improvement of organizational performance[9][16][28][37]. However, only a limited number of organizations could be successful in the improvement of organizational performance through knowledge management implementation and as a result, studies have been conducted to find factors that have positive influence on knowledge management and organizational performance.

According to the integrative research by McGivern and Tvorik (1997)[48], a number of previous studies on the antecedents of organizational performance can be categorized into five sets: organizational alignment and culture; organizational capabilities and learning; industry structure and strategic groups; organizational resources; and leadership and vision. Although the second set of organizational alignment and culture can be represented by knowledge management, the influence of the first set of organizational alignment and culture on knowledge management needs to be closely examined. Especially, the relationships among organizational culture, organizational communication, and knowledge management should receive more attention by research and practice in order to foster the organizational environment essential to the improvement of organizational performance.

According to the studies, organizational culture and organizational communication were influential factors

in knowledge management and organizational performance[20][22][28][30][75][78]. However, the more integrated research to indicate relationships among all of the factors is still needed because a more comprehensive approach to the improvement of organizational performance through knowledge management could be developed as a result of better understanding of relationships among the factors.

This paper aims to improve the understanding of relationships among organizational culture, organizational communication, knowledge management, and organizational performance and for this purpose; extant literatures on the relationships among the factors will be thoroughly reviewed. Through the review of extant literature, this paper will indicate how the factors are closely related to each other and play a crucial role in achieving intended organizational goals such as the improvement of organizational performance. This paper will also examine the influence of national culture on organizational culture, one of the most influential factors in knowledge management and organizational performance, by reviewing extant literature on the relationship between the two factors. By indicating the inter-relationships between factors and the direction of the influence, this paper will suggest various ways to develop an integrated approach to the improvement of organizational performance through the influence of national culture, organizational culture, organizational communication, and knowledge management.

II. Theoretical Framework: The Factors Influencing Knowledge Management and Organizational Performance and the Relationships among Them

1. The Review of National Culture

National culture refers to a collective mental

programming, which is a part of people's conditioning that they share with other members of their nation[34][69]. Since each group of people has a distinctive collective programming of mind, national culture distinguishes one group from another group. Triandis(1996)[68] emphasized that the distinction between individualism and collectivism is crucial for the understanding of national culture and explained that the four attributes to distinguish collectivism and individualism are the meaning of self, the structure of goals, the function of norms and attitudes, and the needs of the in-group or social exchanges. On the basis of his empirical study, Hofstede(1980)[33] suggested power distance, masculinity, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance as national culture dimensions for explaining the cultural differences among various countries. Power distance is about the extent to which an unequal distribution of power is accepted by less powerful organizational members in organizations, and masculinity is about how central a role male value play in a society. Individualism is about whether a society is based on a loose cooperation of individuals, as opposed to integrating people into cohesive groups, and uncertainty avoidance is about the extent to which uncertain situations are seen as a threat. Hofstede(1988)[35] also added long-term orientation as the fifth national culture dimension to distinguish the difference of thinking among various countries. Long-term orientation refers to a positive, dynamic, and future-oriented culture linked with four positive Confucian values such as persistence, ordering relationships by status and observing this order, thrift, and having a sense of shame[25].

2. The Review of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and practices of the people in the organization

[57]. As the shared values, beliefs, and practices vary in organizations, each organization has its unique organizational culture[2]. As a result, each organizational culture represents the identity of each organization, and the organizational culture has both visible and invisible dimensions. Whereas the visible dimension is reflected in espoused values of the organization, the invisible dimension is reflected in unspoken values of the organization, which are related to organizational members' behaviors and perceptions[47]. Organizational culture is a multilayer concept, and according to Schein (1985)[57], there are three levels in organizational culture. The deepest level is basic assumptions that represent an unconscious level of organizational culture. As basic assumptions are created over time by organizational members, it is difficult to change basic assumptions in the organization. Espoused values, the second deepest level of organizational culture, represent the more visible manifestation of organizational culture that signifies espoused beliefs identifying what is important to a particular organization[3]. Espoused values provide a mechanism through which organizational members interpret signals, events, and issues and indicate enduring beliefs that a given norm of behavior is preferable over its opposite norm[5]. Artifacts are the most manifest level of organizational culture such as organizational structures and processes. The distinctive aspect of artifacts is that artifacts are visible and audible because they are in the surface level of organizational culture. Therefore, artifacts are easy to be discerned although it is still hard to interpret artifacts[57].

3. The Influence of National Culture on Organizational Culture

Studies of the relationship between national culture and organizational culture have indicated that national

culture has a strong influence on organizational culture[36][53]. Soeters and Schreuder(1998)[62] studied the relationship between the national culture and the organizational cultures of American accounting firms in the Netherlands. They compared the organization culture of American accounting firms with the organizational culture of Dutch accounting firms operating in the same country, the Netherlands, and discovered that national culture of the United States strongly influences the organizational cultures of American accounting firms although the American accounting firms are operating outside of the United States. The scores in power distance, individualism, and masculinity dimensions of American accounting firms were higher than those of Dutch accounting firms, and the score in uncertainty avoidance dimension of American accounting firms was lower than that of Dutch accounting firms. This result is consistent with the result of Hofstede(1980)[33] as well as implies that the influence of national culture on organizational culture is present even when an organization is operating outside the home country. The difference in national culture also has an impact on interpreting and managing organizational strategic issues[58]. According to Sullivan and Nonaka (1988)[56], Japanese managers' styles of interpreting issues are different from American managers' styles. In their research, Japanese managers are more likely than American managers to interpret the issue as a threat and to restrict information sharing in the organization. The difference between the interpretation style of Japanese managers and American managers indicates that organizational culture such as interpreting an issue of an organization and sharing the issue in the organization might be influenced by organizational members' national cultural backgrounds. Wang, Wang, Ruona, and Rojewski(2005)[76] studied several aspects and

dimensions of Confucian values in Chinese organizations. According to their research, Confucian values is a critical factor related to interpersonal relationships, decision making processes, and HR practices of Chinese organizations, which have been influenced by Confucian values for a long time. The study results indicate that organizations in specific national culture are unlikely to be free from the influence of national culture.

On the other hand, some researchers argued that in recent years the influence of national culture on organizational culture became less significant than in the past. Van Muijen and Koopman(1994)[74], for example, conducted a comparative study in 10 countries that examines the influence of national culture on organizational culture. The 10 countries in their research were classified by their power distance dimension and uncertainty avoidance dimension scores, and were divided into two groups. One group consisted of countries that earned relatively high scores on power distance and uncertainty avoidance, and the other group consisted of countries that earned relatively low scores on power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Each group's preference for the rule-orientated organizational culture and the innovation-orientated organizational culture was examined. If national culture has a strong influence on organizational culture, each group's preference for the rule-orientated organizational culture and the innovation-orientated organizational culture should have been clearly delineated. In the test to examine each group's preference for the rule-orientated organizational culture and the innovation-orientated organizational culture, however, the preference of each group was not clearly evident. The result implies that the influence of national culture on organizational culture might be weaker than before, and other strong factors can influence organizational

culture instead of national culture.

4. The Review of Organizational Communication

Organizational communication implies that organizational members are willing to share their thoughts and ideas although the thoughts and ideas go against the grain of popular opinion[65]. As a subfield of higher discipline of communication studies, organizational communication refers to the study of sending and receiving messages that create and maintain a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more individuals[66]. Since organization is a system of interacting individuals and communication is an interactive behavior between the individuals, organizational communication researchers focus on how organizational members can achieve their intended outcomes through organizational communication[54]. As a result, the various influences of organizational communication on organizational issues such as organizational culture and power are examined. Organizational communication is composed of several dimensions because it is based on the various interactions among organizational members. Johnson (1992)[40] insisted that organizational communication is structured by relationships, entities, configurations, contexts, and temporal stabilities. According to him, organizational communication structure can be understood by analyzing the five dimensions because the dimensions are closely related to the formation of a specific organizational communication structure. In other words, organizational communication structure is determined by various factors and therefore, understanding of the several factors of organizational communication structure is necessary to investigate the relationship between organizational communication and other factors.

5. The Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Communication

Researchers have maintained that organizational culture is one of the most influential factors in organizational communication[30][61]. In their case study, Brown and Starkey(1994)[10] investigated the influence of organizational culture on communication in the organization and discovered that communication in the organization has its root in its organizational culture. If a culture strongly prefers oral communication in the organization, for example, the preference is reflected in the real oral communication in the organization and as a result, the interpersonal relationship among organizational members is facilitated. As this study showed, a cultural factor in the organization could be an influential factor to organizational communication. Chen and Chung(1994) [13] examined how Confucian organizational culture influences organizational communication of countries with Confucian background. According to their research, Confucianism plays a decisive role in determining organizational communication styles in their countries. For instance, Confucian organizational culture influenced organizational communication style of organizational members by promoting them to make a strong distinction between the in-group and the out-group. Therefore, creativity in the organization might be decreased because Confucianism-influenced organizational members hesitate to communicate with those who do not belong to their in-groups.

The influence of organizational structure on organizational communication is widely investigated. According to Hage, Aiken, and Marrett(1973)[31], organizational structure is one of the most influential cultural factors in organizational communication. They investigated the influence of various dimensions of organizational structure such as complexity, centralization, and formalization on organizational

communication. The finding of the study was that horizontal, decentralized, and less formalized organizational structure is positively related to improved organizational communication. Also, organizational members' perception of organizational climate has influence on organizational communication. According to Vakola and Bouradas (2005)[72], employees' perception of the organizational climate of silence in their workplaces has significant impact on organizational silence. They argued that the perceived lack of top management openness to voice, the perceived lack of supervisors' openness to voice, and communication opportunity are positively related to the likelihood and extent of employees' silent behavior. In other words, organizational members' perception of their organizational climate is a decisive factor to cause employees to be silent in their organizations. This study implies that the establishment of organizational culture that can be perceived as being supportive of organizational communication is necessary to facilitate communication in the organization.

6. The Review of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management refers to the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge through the synergistic combinations of data and information processing capacity of information technologies and the creative and innovative capacity of human beings[16]. Knowledge management encompasses various managerial efforts to facilitate activities of acquiring, creating, sharing, developing, and deploying knowledge within the organization by organizational members and sub groups[21][55][63]. A simple sum of individual knowledge cannot be organizational knowledge although the individual knowledge is essential for the creation and development of the organizational

knowledge base[8]. In order to be organizational knowledge, individual knowledge should be converted as a form of organizational knowledge through specific patterns of interaction between organizational members and technologies in organizations. Ajmal and Koskinen(2008)[1] also claimed that knowledge management is not simply about transferring knowledge, but about fostering an organizational culture that facilitates and encourages the creation, sharing, and utilization of knowledge.

Knowledge management plays a decisive role in facilitating learning in the organization. According to Tsai(2001)[70], learning in the organization might depend on knowledge transfer among different organizational units. In other words, knowledge transfer can be a vital factor of learning. Goh (1998)[27] insisted that knowledge transfer is a requisite for the learning organization because learning can occur when knowledge is transferred between each organization unit to resolve problems or to create new insights. One of the most crucial factors in the successful knowledge transfer is the ability of organizational members to share what they know and what they learn[64]. With regard to the successful knowledge transfer, Davenport, De Long, and Beers (1998)[17] emphasized the importance of multiple channels to transfer knowledge in the organization. To sum up, knowledge management is an integral part of learning in the organization, and the way to transfer knowledge determines the effectiveness of knowledge management.

7. The Influence of Organizational Culture on Knowledge Management

Numerous studies of the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management have indicated that organizational culture has significantly related to knowledge management

implementation[3][11][18][67]. De Long and Fahey (2000)[19] argued that organizational culture influences the effectiveness of knowledge management implementation and proposed a framework that represents the link between organizational culture and knowledge management. According to the framework, organizational culture shapes assumptions about what knowledge is and which knowledge is worth managing. Organizational culture also links individual knowledge and organizational knowledge as well as creates a context for social interaction that determines how effective an organization can be at creating, sharing, and applying knowledge. In a nutshell, organizational culture plays a central role in creating and developing appropriate conditions for the successful knowledge management implementation. Janz and Prasarnphanich (2003)[39] insisted that organizational culture should be always knowledge-centered for encouraging and supporting knowledge-related activities in the organization because knowledge-centered organizational culture is an integral part for creating proper environment for knowledge exchange and accessibility in the organization. Davenport and Prusak(1998)[18] and Davenport, De Long, and Beers(1998)[17] also emphasized the importance of creating a knowledge-friendly organizational culture for facilitating knowledge management related behaviors in the organization. The essence of these various assertions can be summarized that the establishment of organizational culture that is supportive of knowledge management related activities in the organization is the key to success of knowledge management. In other words, organizational culture as a facilitating environment for knowledge management is essential for its successful implementation. Some organizational culture, however, might impede knowledge management. Sharratt and Usoro(2003)[60] insisted that a

bureaucratic and centralized organizational culture prohibits knowledge management implementation whereas the non-hierarchical and decentralized organizational culture promotes knowledge management implementation. This implies that the establishment of proper organizational culture is needed as the first step for the successful knowledge management implementation. Since organizational culture promotes organizational members' attitude and behavior to enhance knowledge management performance, organizations should establish proper organizational culture for encouraging and motivating organizational members to participate in the knowledge management related activities[32].

Researchers reported the influence of organizational culture on knowledge sharing in the organization. According to Bollinger and Smith(2001)[9], and Cummings(2004)[15], organizational culture plays an important role in promoting and stimulating knowledge sharing between organizational members in the organization. Also, Cabrera and Cabrera (2005)[11] maintained that knowledge sharing is promoted by the creation of an supportive cultural environment in which organizational members have social norms with regard to the importance of sharing knowledge and motivation to share their knowledge with other organizational members. Kelloway and Barling(2000)[42] emphasized the importance of positive social interactions among organizational members for the successful knowledge sharing. They insisted that an organizational culture with positive social interactions among organizational members allows organizational members to trust each other and to be willing to share their knowledge with each other. Connelly and Kelloway(2003)[14] claimed that knowledge sharing can be encouraged by social interactions among organizational members because the social interactions help organizational members be

more likely to learn and to remember knowledge of other organizational members. In other words, if an organization has organizational culture that promotes social interaction among organizational members, the organization might be likely to successful in knowledge sharing.

8. The Influence of Organizational Communication on Knowledge Management

Studies on the relationship between organizational communication and knowledge management showed that organizational communication plays a positive role in the successful knowledge management implementation[28][75]. Organizational communication is a crucial factor in the effective knowledge sharing. Van den Hooff and De Ridder(2004)[73] examined the effect of organizational communication climate on knowledge sharing, and their finding was that constructive organizational communication climate has positive influence on knowledge sharing in the organization. Also, open exchange of information, accessibility of coworkers, confirming and cooperative interactions, and overall culture of sharing knowledge are suggested as the main characteristics of constructive organizational communication climate in the research. In order to open exchange of information, the development of information flow system is essential. Mei, Lee, and Al-Hawamdeh (2004)[49] emphasized the important role of organizational communication in facilitating knowledge sharing in the organization. They conducted research on the relationship between organizational communication and knowledge management. In their study, organizational communication was proved as a tool to overcome barriers to knowledge management implementation in the organization. Therefore, they concluded that the creation of effective organizational

communication strategies is essential for the successful knowledge management implementation. They also suggested that organizational communication should be planed and developed for raising awareness of organizational members and allowing them to understand benefits they can get from knowledge management implementation through the organizational communication strategies.

9. The Review of Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to the achievement of an enterprise with respect to some criteria[45]. Even though many organizational performance researchers have traditionally focused on the financial performance of organizations, other researchers have raised their doubts about the sufficiency of financial performance for the measurement of organizational performance. Kaplan and Norton(1996)[41] pointed out that the traditional financial performance measures are not enough to reflect other significant aspects of organizational performance such as continuous organizational improvement and innovation. Huselid(1995)[38] suggested turnover and productivity as the dimensions of organizational performance in addition to financial performance.

According to Maltz, Shenhar, and Reilly(2003)[46], organizational performance might be measured in five performance dimensions including financial performance, market and customer, process, people development, and future. Financial performance represents the traditional way to organizational success and involves sales, profit, and return on investment. Market and customer indicate the relationship between organizations and their customers, and the performance in market and customer is generally measured by customer retention rate, customer satisfaction, customer benefits from product or

services, and service quality. Process reflects organizational efficiency and improvement. In order to assess the process dimension, quality of manufacturing processes and quality initiative processes are frequently measured. People development means the critical roles of stakeholders in organizational success, and the level of employee skills and the retention rate of top employees are typically measured for assessing people development in an organization. Future is the expression of foresight, and the key performance measures for future are depth and quality of strategic planning, anticipating and preparing for unexpected changes in the external environment, and investment in research and development. Since organizations might have various goals to achieve beyond a high financial performance, organizational performance should be measured in various dimensions and for this reason, the meaning of organizational performance in this study will not be limited to financial performance of organizations, but be extended to other dimensions in the study of Maltz, Shenhar, and Reilly(2003)[43].

10. The Influence of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance

Extant research on the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance indicated that organizational culture plays a decisive role in the improvement of organizational performance in various ways[20][22][29][43][78].

Organizational culture enhances organizational performance by being a source of competitive advantages of an organization[12]. Peters and Waterman(1982)[51] asserted that superior organizational performance of IBM, Hewlett Packard, and other high performance organizations might be, at least partly, influenced by their organizational culture. These studies emphasized the uniqueness of organizational culture of each high performance organization as the

foundation of competitive advantages of each organization. As organizational culture might lead the improvement of organizational performance as the basis of competitive advantage, the organizational culture should not be easily imitable. Barney(1986)[6] argued that an organization with valuable, rare, and imperfectly imitable organizational culture should develop and nurture the culture as a source of sustainable competitive advantages of the organization because the culture can continuously enable the organizations to improve their organizational performance. To sum up, organizational culture might be a basis of competitive advantages of an organization; thus, the development of unique and inimitable organizational culture can be important for the sustainable improvement of organizational performance.

Denison and Mishra(1995)[22] reported that specific traits of organizational culture have influence on overall organizational performance. They investigated the influences of four traits of organizational culture such as consistency, mission, involvement, and adaptability on organizational performance. In their study, consistency and mission were proved to be indicators of integration and predictors of profitability. Involvement and adaptability were revealed as indicators of flexibility, openness, and responsiveness as well as predictors of the growth of organizations. All of the four traits of organizational culture were also turned out as predictors of employee satisfaction and overall organizational performance. This study implied that various traits of organizational culture might have influence on the organizational performance in different ways; therefore, just making an effort to develop any of these traits will be helpful to enhance organizational performance.

11. The Influence of Organizational Communication on Organizational Performance

Organizational communication is one of the most influential factors in the improvement of organizational performance. Feldman(2003)[26] declared that organizational communication can play a key role in the improvement of organizational performance by allowing organizational members to recognize the importance of organizational performance enhancement. According to her study, communication among organizational members drew the organizational members' attention to organizational performance; thus, the improvement of organizational performance was recognized as a crucial one to be discussed in the organization. This result implies that organizational communication has influence on the improvement of organizational performance by leading organizational members to think about how to improve organizational performance. Schuler(1979)[59] investigated the relationship among various communication dimensions and organizational performance to prove that informative communication was positively related with organizational performance. His research showed that informative communication had positive influence on satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with fellow worker, and performance. This finding indicates that organizational communication might play an important role in the improvement of organizational performance by helping organizational members get necessary information regarding their tasks and other crucial issues in their organizations. Tucker, Meyer, and Westerman(1996)[71] studied the role of organizational communication as an internal strategic competitive advantage and the influence of organizational communication on organizational performance. Their finding is that organizations with

effective and efficient organizational communication systems showed better financial performance because the organizational communication systems improved the organizations' internal strategic capabilities. Some research focused on how organizational members' satisfaction with organizational communication might play a crucial role in the improvement of organizational performance. Pincus(2006)[52] studied the relationship between organizational members' perceived satisfaction with organizational communication and their job satisfaction and job performance, and the result indicated that there was a positive relationship between organizational members' perceived satisfaction with organizational communication and their job satisfaction and job performance. In the study, supervisor communication, personal feedback, and communication climate were proved as influential factors in job satisfaction and job performance.

12. The Influence of Knowledge Management on Organizational Performance

Knowledge management has been recognized as a useful and strong managerial tool for the improvement of organizational performance, and studies on the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance showed that knowledge management is one of the most crucial factors in the improvement of organizational performance[23][28][37][44]. Knowledge management can be also described as a solution to knowledge loss in the organization through creating knowledge retention strategies in the organization. The effective strategies for achieving knowledge retention in the organization are retaining the best organizational members, using mentoring and coaching, sharing the best practices, learned lessons, and documentation. As these efforts might be developed and organized by knowledge management implementation, the

accomplishment of knowledge retention in the organization is one of the main contributions of knowledge management to the organization. The improvement of organizational productivity is another significant contribution of knowledge management to the organization. Wiig and Jooste(2003)[77] insisted that knowledge management principles should be applied to improve organizational productivity. According to them, proper knowledge allows organizational members to handle their tasks more efficiently when the organizational members apply the knowledge in an appropriate way. As the efficiency of tasks might reduce unnecessary consumption of resources, organizational productivity will be improved. In addition, knowledge management helps organizational members select and perform the most appropriate processes and make the best possible decisions. Becerra-Fernandez, González, and Sabherwal(2004)[7] stated that knowledge management helps organizational members avoid repeating past mistakes, foresee potential problems, and reduce the need to modify plans. Also, knowledge management encourages innovation, one of the key drivers in an organization's long-term success. In order to improve organizational productivity, therefore, knowledge should be applied in a proper way through the effective knowledge management. Knowledge management contributes to the enhancement of the empowerment and responsibility of organizational members by allowing organizational members to be empowered for creating a knowledge sharing organization. In a knowledge sharing organization, organizational members have the responsibility to participate in sharing and developing their knowledge for improving individual competencies and enhancing organizational performance[4]. Knowledge management might provide organizations with competitive advantages. Hult (2003)[37] described knowledge

management as the well organized systematic process of generating and disseminating information, and selecting, distilling, and deploying knowledge for developing unique values that can be used to achieve competitive advantages in the marketplace. Bollinger and Smith (2001)[9] emphasized the role of knowledge management in enhancing organizational competencies. According to them, knowledge management might be a key factor that allows organizations to be competitive; thus, organizations should recognize knowledge as a valuable strategic asset and develop a strong organizational knowledge base. Earl and Scott(1999)[24] argued that knowledge management provides a source of competitive advantages because knowledge helps organizational members solve organizational problems and seize opportunities. O'Dell and Grayson(1999)[50] claimed that knowledge management provides organizations with financial benefits by discussing examples of Chevron and Texas Instrument. Through the efforts of knowledge management, Chevron was able to reduce its operating cost structure by more than \$2 billion in seven years and Texas Instrument was able to increase its annual fabrication capacity by \$1.5 billion by comparing and transferring best practices among its fabrication plants. As the examples indicated, knowledge management can play a crucial role in improving organizational financial performance as well.

III. Conceptual Model

The primary purpose of this study is investigating the relationships among national culture, organizational culture, organizational communication, knowledge management, and organizational performance. These relationships are depicted in the following conceptual

model. According to the model, organizational performance is influenced by knowledge management, organizational communication, and organizational culture, and knowledge management is influenced by organizational communication and organizational culture. Also, organizational communication is influenced by organizational culture, which is influenced by national culture. In other words, the influence of national culture on organizational performance is mediated by organizational culture, and the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance is mediated by knowledge management and organizational communication as well as transferred directly. The influence of organizational communication on organizational performance is mediated by knowledge management and transferred directly.

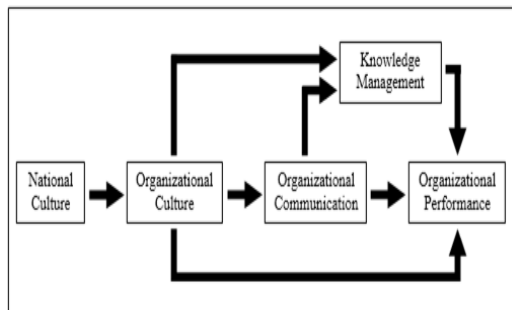


Figure 1. Conceptual Model: Relationships among factors related to knowledge management and organizational performance

As extant research indicated, national culture has influence on organizational culture, and organizational culture and organizational communication have influence on knowledge management. Also, organizational communication is affected by organizational culture, and organizational performance is affected by organizational communication, knowledge management, and organizational culture.

The relationships among the aforementioned factors are reviewed in this study once more. The findings imply that organizations should establish an appropriate organizational culture that can have positive influence on knowledge management, organizational communication, and organizational performance. The case of Hewlett Packard and Nokia showed that organizational culture should be formed in a non-hierarchical and decentralized way for having constructive influence on knowledge management, organizational communication, and organizational performance. Additionally, organizational members need to focus knowledge management and organizational communication, which are decisive factors for the improvement of organizational performance. The extant research indicated that open organizational communication and well-structured knowledge management systems are essential to the improvement of organizational performance. Therefore, organizational members should make effort to maintain open organizational communication channels and well-structured knowledge management systems. The communication channels should be also developed for encouraging various knowledge management-related behaviors in the organization. Finally, organizational members should consider the influence of national culture on organizational culture. Because of globalization, numerous organizations are operated in various sites in the world under the influence of various national cultures and therefore, understanding of various national cultures is crucial for the successful organizational operation.

VI. Implications for Research and Practice

1. Recommendations for HR researchers

The first recommendation for human resource (HR) researchers is investigating the relationships among variables relevant to organizational performance more extensively. There might be much more variables that have influence on organizational performance; therefore, HR researchers should try to examine relationships between the variables and organizational performance for providing strong theoretical background to develop ways to maximize the positive influence of the factors on organizational performance. Therefore, more extensive studies to investigate the influence of various factors related to organizational culture and organizational performance should be conducted.

HR researchers also need to study the influence of national culture on organizational culture more deeply and extensively. In multinational companies, particularly, the influence of national culture on organizational culture might be very important because they operate in various sites in the world under the influence of various national cultures. In the globalized world, the influence of other national cultures on organizational culture is inevitable; therefore, HR researchers should find solutions to take advantage of the influence of other national cultures on organizational culture in more constructive ways and help organizations to be more competitive in the globalized and competitive world.

Finally, HR researchers should conduct their research in interdisciplinary ways. Since the factors that can have influence on organizational performance are numerous and complex, HR researchers need to collaborate with researchers in other areas. In order to investigate the influence of communication on organizational performance, for example, HR researchers might collaborate with Communication researchers. Through this collaboration, HR researchers should strengthen the interdisciplinary

approach to their studies. Furthermore, empirical research should be conducted in the near future within a variety of organizations to closely examine in-depth relationships among the variables in the practice based on the conceptual model proposed in the current study.

2. Recommendations for HR practitioners

The recommendations for HR practitioners are slightly different from those for HR researchers. One of the several recommendations for HR practitioners is helping organizational members build suitable communication channels for their organizations by providing them with relevant advice. To show organizational members the way to develop effective organizational communication channels, HR practitioners need to have deep understanding and extensive knowledge in establishing organizational communication channels. Also, HR practitioners should persuade organizational leaders to have positive attitude towards open communication in their organizations and to make effort to establish a favorable organizational culture for the effective organizational communication and the successful implementation of knowledge management. HR practitioners need to emphasize the importance of organizational leaders' supports to create a favorable organizational culture for the implementation of knowledge management as well as the improvement of organizational performance by indicating various benefits they can get from the supportive organizational culture.

Another recommendation for HR practitioners is helping organizational members understand that knowledge management as a solution to various organizational problems exists at all levels of organizations, not exclusively at the upper levels of organizations. Through this, HR practitioners

encourage organizational members to participate in knowledge management related activities and to play a leading role in enhancing organizational performance. In order to facilitate their participation in knowledge management related activities, HR practitioners might ask organizational leaders' supports to set a reward system for their participation.

Finally, HR practitioners need to help organizational members successfully develop their own organizational culture and take advantage of the organizational culture as their basis of the competitive advantage. HR practitioners should provide organizational members with proper advice to build their own organizational culture, which is differentiated from other organizational cultures as well as difficult to imitate. HR practitioners should assist organizational members to find ways to use the organizational culture for achieving superior organizational performance. In order to help organizational members, excellent insight and ability to observe complicated cultural phenomena in the organization might be needed for HR practitioners.

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