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Knowledge management and its relationship to administrative empowerment: An analytical and evaluative study

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Abstract---This study aims to deepen understanding and explore the relationship between knowledge management and administrative empowerment, and how both variables impact organizational effectiveness, as a result of the transformations brought about by the technological and information revolution, where Knowledge has become the most important strategic resource for creating wealth and achieving excellence and creativity, given the availability of intellectual data, especially true given organizations' search for solutions and systems that help them achieve success.

Keywords---Knowledge management, Administrative empowerment, Organizations, Institutions, Digital transformation.

1. Introduction:

Knowledge is considered one of the most prominent challenges of the current century, as organizations of all types seek to identify, capture, and utilize critical information in administrative and other processes, where the organization's success is linked to its ability to leverage its knowledge; In this context, the concept of knowledge management has emerged, which lies in placing acquired knowledge and skills in the hands of employees at the appropriate time and form, making it as easy as possible to leverage to achieve higher levels of achievement.

Knowledge management for contemporary organizations ensures the generation, distribution, and application of knowledge to aid in administrative decision-making, encourage creativity, achieve competitiveness, achieve strategic

objectives, increase their value, and enhance performance, while the concept of administrative empowerment, is based on senior management granting employees the authority and confidence to perform their tasks freely, which contributes to creating an atmosphere of comfort and a sense of self-importance, increasing their sense of responsibility, and creating a positive feeling among employees, which serves as an important motivation for work.

2. Theoretical Framework of the Study:

2.1 Objectives and Importance of the Study:

- To identify the extent of the impact of knowledge management on administrative empowerment;
- To reveal the contribution of knowledge management to improving administrative empowerment;
- To identify the role of knowledge management and administrative empowerment in the excellence and success of an organization;
- To determine the extent to which knowledge management and administrative empowerment can gain the loyalty and trust of internal audiences;
- To reveal the role of administrative empowerment in human resources management;
- To determine the extent to which administrative empowerment contributes to effectively increasing employee performance in the organization;
- To determine the extent to which administrative empowerment contributes to expanding the scope of knowledge and knowledge management within the organization;
- To identify the obstacles to the implementation of knowledge management and administrative empowerment.

2.2 Importance of the Study:

- The success of the role of administrative empowerment and knowledge management in foreign organizations has shed light on the importance of studying these two terms;
- The urgent need to study topics related to organizations and management, especially in the age of technology and increasing competition among organizations;
- Explaining the relationship between knowledge management and administrative empowerment.

3. Defining the Concept of Knowledge Management and Administrative Empowerment:

3.1 The Concept of Knowledge Management:

Finneran defined knowledge management as: "A close system that helps disseminate knowledge, whether at the individual or collective level, throughout the organization, to raise the level of business management, it seeks to obtain the right information in the right context at the right time for the appropriate intended action" (Al-dhaher, 2009, p. 78)

The French Large Enterprise IT Club (CIGEF) defines it as: "A set of organizational and technological procedures aimed at creating, collecting, organizing, storing, sharing, using, and transforming knowledge within an organization, this knowledge is embodied in internal or external documents, as well as in the form of intellectual capital and the immersive expertise of assistants or specialists in the field".

The Graduate School of Business at the University of Texas at Washington defines knowledge management as: "the systematic processes of finding, obtaining, organizing, refining, and presenting information in a way that improves the capabilities of the individual working in the organization in his field of work" (Ghazali, 2015, p. 30)

3.2 The concept of administrative empowerment:

It is defined as: "Giving employees authority and responsibilities, encouraging them to participate and take the initiative in making appropriate decisions, and granting them the freedom and confidence to perform their work in their own way without direct interference from management" (Aissa Abd Ennasser, 2016, p. 04). There are others who defined empowerment as: "Giving employees greater authority and freedom in the specific field of the job according to its job description, and on the other hand, it is granting employees the freedom to participate, express opinions, and make decisions in matters related to the job" (Matar Al-Zaidani, 2006, p. 30).

It is also known as: "Delegating powers to workers related to their activity within the organization by providing them with the required information at the specified time, and complete freedom to perform their work in the manner they see fit" (Aichin, 2015, p. 31)

4. The Conceptual Framework of Knowledge Management:

4.1 The Importance of Knowledge Management:

It is an indicator of a comprehensive and clear approach to understanding knowledge management initiatives in removing constraints and restructuring, which aids development and change to keep pace with the demands of the economic environment, it increases company revenues, employee satisfaction, and loyalty, and improves competitive position by focusing on intangible assets that are difficult to measure, with long-term results.

Accordingly, the role played by knowledge management through its processes and practices achieves impressive results in the organizational context, as it enriches work, enhances productivity, and makes customers happy in their dealings with the organization. Some researchers have indicated that the emergence and importance of knowledge management are due to a set of challenges, including:

- Tracking customers and serving their needs across the global network.
- Using information technology to gain market share and position by establishing the concept of organizational learning to deepen and build the company's functional values.

- Embracing the concept of creativity by encouraging the principle of the free flow of ideas.
- Helping to build a "knowledge pool," a person or persons with knowledge about a particular subject or specialty; furthermore, we can say that knowledge management works to dedicate knowledge to the organization by producing knowledge that is placed in a single crucible, applied across all parts of the organization, and benefits the organization as a whole (Halmous, 2017, p. 66)

4.2 Objectives of Knowledge Management:

The objectives of knowledge management are numerous and varied, but here we can summarize some of them as follows:

- Helping achieve productive efficiency, enabling organizational members to address numerous issues, especially new ones, by equipping them with the necessary capacity to make decisions efficiently and effectively, and shaping employees' future visions.
- Improving customer service by reducing the time required to provide required services.
- Improving the organization's image and developing its relationships.
- Facilitating the process of knowledge sharing.
- Contributing to streamlining operations and reducing costs by eliminating unnecessary or unnecessary procedures.
- Increasing financial returns by marketing products and services more effectively.
- Embracing the concept of creativity by encouraging the principle of the free flow of ideas.
- Assisting senior leadership and decision-makers in utilizing the organization's available resources appropriately, at the appropriate time, using wisdom and intelligence in implementation, without significant effort or difficulty.
- Improving the institution's position in facing difficulties and maintaining its survival (Bourakwa, 2011, p. 10).
- Empower and contribute to improving employee performance.
- Create an interactive environment for collecting, documenting, and transferring cumulative experiences gained during daily practice.

4.3 Elements of Knowledge Management:

Researchers differ in defining the elements of knowledge management. Some have limited them to the following points:

- **Collaboration:** Promoting a culture of collaboration impacts the process of knowledge creation by increasing the level of knowledge exchange between individuals and departments.
- **Trust:** Maintaining a distinct and mutual level of belief in each other's capabilities at the behavioral level.
- **Learning:** The process of acquiring new knowledge by individuals who are capable and willing to use that knowledge in decision-making.
- **Centralization:** Refers to the concentration of decision-making and oversight powers in the hands of the organization's highest authority.

- **Formalization:** The extent to which formal rules and policies govern decision-making and work relationships within an organization.
- Broad, deep expertise: Individuals' expertise is broad, diverse, and deep.
- **Information technology facilitation and support:** A critical component of knowledge creation.
- **Organizational creativity:** The ability to create value, services, ideas, or useful processes through the innovations of individuals working together within a complex social system (Al-Rachidi, 2020, p. 30).

Many researchers agree that knowledge management encompasses data, information, capabilities, trends, technology, and people. Here, the researchers argue that the issue requires both managing and encouraging innovation and creativity to ensure the continuity of research and development, therefore, it is possible to acknowledge the fact that knowledge is not merely documents, files, and programs; more precisely, it is a collection of experiences and expertise embedded in the minds of competent human beings within the category of knowledge workers, where the responsibility of the organization is to provide information and communication technologies to leverage them to raise performance levels and support and assist decision-making.

5. Knowledge Management Functions:

The functions of knowledge management can be summarized in the following elements:

- Focusing on the human element in terms of attracting and processing them.
- Establishing a special incentive system, or contributing to it.
- Focusing on an organizational culture that supports knowledge in terms of its generation, sharing, and use.
- Providing the necessary creative means for knowledge workers.
- Focusing on the legal and ethical aspects of knowledge in all its processes, ensuring that they are legal and ethical.
- Preparing the necessary knowledge infrastructure, including computers, software, and the necessary means of communication.

From the above, it becomes clear that the primary function of knowledge management is to work to provide all the facilities and means that lead to knowledge, in addition to attracting the human element capable of generating knowledge from within or outside the organization, with an emphasis on establishing a cultural environment that encourages the exchange of knowledge among individuals for the benefit of all parties.

6. Elements Required for Successful Knowledge Management Use:

- Providing the necessary infrastructure, represented by technology.
- Providing the necessary human resources.
- A flexible organizational structure (Abd Ellatif, 2007, p. 788).
- The cultural factor, which is considered important by creating a positive culture that supports knowledge.

Among the factors that can lead to the success of knowledge management in organizations are the following:

- Focusing on the organization's values and importance, and ensuring financial support from senior management.
- Providing a standard and flexible knowledge structure capable of keeping pace with the organization's business processes and the use of available knowledge.
- Support from senior management is essential for the success of a knowledge management system (Abd Ellatif, 2007, p. 788).

7. The Concept of Administrative Empowerment:

7.1 Methods of Administrative Empowerment:

Contemporary writings on empowerment have addressed several trends and methods of empowerment, including:

- **Leadership Style:** Empowering subordinates is a modern leadership style that contributes to increasing organizational effectiveness, it is based on the role of the leader or manager in empowering employees, as this style indicates that an empowered organization includes a broad span of supervision, meaning that the ratio of employees to managers is high, compared to traditional organizations, where it also includes granting greater authority to lower management levels within the organization, and this style focuses specifically on delegating authority or power from the top down.

- **Employee Empowerment Style:** This style centers on the individual, through what is called "self-empowerment." Empowerment emerges here when the individual's cognitive factors begin to shift toward accepting responsibility and independence in decision-making.

- **Team Empowerment:** Teamwork is a method used to empower employees and a justification for developing their capabilities and enhancing institutional performance, as team empowerment aligns with structural changes in organizations, including expanding the scope of supervision and shifting to horizontal and flat structures instead of hierarchical ones. Empowering the team gives it a greater role in improving performance levels, as interdependence among team members leads to greater value from individual independence, where added value is also realized from team members' collaboration when the skill and knowledge requirements of each team member are met, and when each offers a qualitative contribution that adds something new to the collective decision, rather than relying on individual opinion, which is subject to error and shortcomings (Al-Chammari, 2017, p. 11).

7.2 Benefits of Administrative Empowerment:

When senior management adopts the application of administrative empowerment, it is effective in granting employees greater freedom to perform their work according to their skills and abilities, enhancing self-confidence, and giving them greater scope to utilize their intelligence and experience, which facilitates decision-making and problem-solving at work. The most important benefits of empowerment can be identified as follows:

- Accelerating the decision-making process by reducing time.
- Unleashing creativity and innovation.
- Achieving job satisfaction, motivation, and job commitment.
- Helping employees gain a greater sense of achievement in their work.

- Reducing the burden on managers and superiors at senior administrative levels, reducing their direct review and supervision of subordinates, it also contributes to satisfying individual needs, alleviating work pressure, increasing self-confidence, encouraging creativity and commitment to team spirit, increasing self-motivation, developing a sense of responsibility, and strengthening organizational loyalty (Djawad Abdul Hussein, 2012, p. 85).

8. Steps to Achieving Administrative Empowerment:

Organizations' adoption of administrative empowerment requires providing appropriate environmental conditions and a conviction of the importance of implementing this concept, as the most important steps can be identified as follows:

- Neutralizing obstacles preventing the granting of authority: through training, practice, and gaining experience, as well as implementing changes in the organization, leadership style, incentive system, and job content.
- Raising the profile of the job linked to self-efficacy: Convincing and assisting individuals to enhance the profile and value of the jobs and work they perform through support and freedom in performing their professional roles.
- Employees' awareness of empowerment: Employees' awareness of empowerment through the previous steps will lead to their awareness and practice of empowerment.
- Performance: Convincing employees that using their decision-making authority has a positive impact on their performance, which contributes to increased efficiency and productivity.

9. Obstacles to Administrative Empowerment:

Organizations face several difficulties or obstacles to implementing and disseminating the concept of administrative empowerment, the most prominent of which are:

- Senior management's lack of awareness and conviction of the importance of administrative empowerment (Djawad Abdul Hussein, 2012, p. 86).
- Managers' preoccupation with their positions and job titles.
- Weak employee skills and their inability to assume responsibility.
- Monotony of the organizational structure and its multiple administrative levels.
- Unhealthy organizational climate, which negatively impacts employee morale and performance.
- Unfair incentive system.

10. Suggestions for the Success of the Administrative Empowerment Process:

Several factors and measures have been identified to mitigate the difficulties and obstacles that contribute to the successful implementation of administrative empowerment, including:

- Helping employees gain control over their work.
- Granting employees freedom to manage and perform their work, and holding them accountable for the results, allowing them greater control over their work.

- Providing employees with the results of their work successes, enabling them to share their success stories with their colleagues.
- Using social reinforcement and persuasion, providing awards and rewards, encouraging and providing feedback, and increasing confidence and self-affirmation.
- Providing emotional support and working to reduce stress, anxiety, and job instability.

11. Conclusion:

Knowledge management is a relatively new field and topic, primarily aimed at managing, organizing, directing, and controlling knowledge activities and efforts to achieve organizational goals, it is also considered one of the most important modern management methods necessary for bringing about development and change in our current era, where it has succeeded in bringing about a qualitative shift in the performance and effectiveness of institutions of all kinds, given that knowledge is more advanced and comprehensive than the concept of information, as it represents the optimal use of expertise, capabilities, and skills to understand and comprehend phenomena, events, and facts, because it has become a source of distinction for institutions and the foundation for their advancement and success.

Employee or worker involvement and empowerment is a long-term commitment, a new way of conducting work, and a fundamental change in policies and strategies, therefore, management must devote sufficient time to achieving the desired goal of this program.

12. Suggestions and Recommendations:

Based on the results of this study, the researchers propose the following recommendations:

- The greater the employee's level of knowledge, the more capable and capable they are of completing the administrative tasks assigned to them. Therefore, we emphasize the need to intensify training programs for employees in their administrative specialization.
- To achieve knowledge and empowerment for employees in the field of management, they must be given the freedom to act in the performance and management of their work, where they are evaluated and held accountable based on the results achieved.
- Provide them with the results of their work successes and share their success stories with their colleagues.
- Use social reinforcement and persuasion, awards, and bonuses, encourage and provide feedback, and increase confidence and self-affirmation.
- Provide employees with emotional support and work to alleviate stress, anxiety, and job instability.
- Create a conflict-free organizational environment to ensure employee stability, maintain job satisfaction, and increase productivity and creativity.

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