

Chapter 22

Knowledge Management in the Palestinian Public Sector

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ABSTRACT

The importance of the study stems from both theory and practice. In theory, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the attention of researchers to conduct further applied studies in this important field, in addition to administrative literature. For this reason, it is rare for local Palestinian studies to be conducted in this context, despite the efforts of some local studies on knowledge management but not their reflection on organizational innovation. In practical terms, its importance derives from the fact that it is conducted on an important and vital sector in the Palestinian economy, namely, the public sector, for the sector's effective efforts to develop the Palestinian society in various fields.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations of all kinds are facing a wave of rapid changes and development that has swept the world today; the most significant and influential change is the information and technology revolution which adopts the advanced scientific knowledge and the optimal use of information flowing from the great advances in computer technology and the Internet. Consequently, knowledge has become the most important strategic source as well as the most powerful and influential factor in the success or failure of the organization (Al-Zatma, 2011, p. 2).

Knowledge management is considered as one of the contemporary intellectual developments that has been initially proposed as a new framework and approaches to the study and understanding of institutional work. It has rapidly become a practical application more appropriate to rapid changes in the business world. Its role has increased after it has been shown that building and maintaining competitive

advantage depends primarily on knowledge assets and investment in these assets in order to promote continuous creativity which is also one of the components of the growth of competitive advantage for as long periods as possible (Al-Khoury, 2015, p. 7).

Knowledge management is what ensures the generation, distribution and application of knowledge in today's organizations to help them make rational management decisions, promote creativity, increase competitiveness, achieve strategic objectives of these organizations, increase their value, and finally improve their performance. It has been argued that not all information is knowledge and not all knowledge is valuable; therefore, organizational management should capture and employ useful knowledge in the organization's activities and operations (Al-Faris, 2010, p. 60).

In order to achieve the desired benefit of adopting the knowledge management approach in organizations, the role of the organization's management should focus on the effective use of this approach by employing it until they achieve the strategic goals and operational objectives of the organizations, enhance the organization's various capabilities as well as the skills of its cadres, and achieve the development, improvement and sustainability of these capabilities and skills. The management of the organization should focus on directing knowledge management processes towards achieving and institutionalizing the concept of institutionalization of knowledge. Emphasis should be placed on the implementation of a knowledge strategy which ensures that knowledge management operations in all organizational units are effectively integrated (Olayan, 2008, p.2).

Linking knowledge management to performance is one of the most modern and vital concepts where serious attempts have been made to measure and apply them in the light of the rapid economic, social, and political changes as well as the fluctuations in the local and global levels. This is reflected in the performance level in business organizations which is considered as the borderline between success and failure. The process of making important decisions in an organization (e.g., determining the trends of the organization's activity, determining the whether they are close or away from achieving their goals, implementing plans and programs, and rationalizing the use of resources and the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization) is based on performance (Al-Faris, 2010). P. 61).

Knowledge and Knowledge Management

In literature, the terms data, information and knowledge have significant and discrete meanings within the KM domain. Pearlson and Saunders (2006) state that Data are specific, objective facts or observations standing alone, such facts have no intrinsic meaning, but can be easily captured, transmitted, and stored electronically. Turban *et al.* (2005) define Information as data that are organized and analyzed in a meaningful way. Alavi and Leidner (1999) state that knowledge is not radically different from information, but Pearlson and Saunders (2006) clarify the difference and define Knowledge as a mix of contextual information, experiences, rules and values.

Turban *et al.* (2005) also differentiate between Information and Knowledge and define knowledge as the understanding, awareness, or familiarity acquired through education or experience; anything that has been learned, perceived, discovered, inferred or understood. Likewise, Hoffer *et al.* (2002) have the same opinion regarding the differentiation between data, information and knowledge. They state that according to information technology context, knowledge is extremely different from data and information. Whereas data are a collection of facts, measurements and statistics; information is an organized or processed data; but knowledge is information that is contextual, relevant and actionable. Pearlson and Saunders (2006) highlight that knowledge is richer and deeper than information and more valuable be-

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