

Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Creativity of Educational Staff with Mediating Role of Professional Development

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Abstract

Purpose: The role of knowledge and specialized human resources is essential for organizational success. The education sector, as a large and complex organization, is no exception, as reflected in the emphasis on developing general, professional, and specialized competencies within teacher ranking regulations. This study aims to examine the relationship between knowledge management (KM) and organizational creativity (OC), with professional development (PD) considered as a mediating variable.

Methodology: This applied study employed a descriptive-correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM). The research population consisted of 140 education staff members in Khorramabad City. Using stratified random sampling method and the Krejcie and Morgan table, 103 participants were selected. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS software.

Findings: The results indicated that KM had a significant positive effect on OC ($\beta = 0.357$). KM also had a significant positive effect on PD ($\beta = 0.531$). Furthermore, PD showed a significant positive impact on OC ($\beta = 0.241$).

Conclusion: Knowledge management significantly enhances organizational creativity both directly and indirectly, with a total effect of $\beta = 0.485$, while professional development functions as a mediating variable.

Value: Organizational creativity can be strengthened by converting employees' tacit knowledge and experiences into explicit knowledge that can be shared across the organization and by aligning knowledge-enhancement programs with employees' professional needs. These mechanisms support professional development and subsequently foster organizational creativity.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management, Organizational Creativity, Professional Development, Education Staff; Structural Equation Modeling*

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Extended Abstract

Introduction: The transition from an industrial economy to a knowledge-based economy has led organizations to place greater emphasis on their knowledge assets. Organizational knowledge assets consist of a wide range of explicit and tacit work-related experiences and learning, including ideas, innovations, skills, documented knowledge, problem-solving methods, insights from expert or specialist meetings, and project evaluations. Effective management of these assets facilitates the transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and individual knowledge into collective organizational knowledge, thereby promoting the flow and sharing of knowledge within the organization. Such processes create an environment that supports continuous mutual learning among employees and strengthens their professional development by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. As a result, occupational errors can be reduced, creative ideas can be generated and refined, and innovative work behaviors can be strengthened. In this regard, knowledge management—through the transformation of organizational environments, structures, and cultures toward knowledge-centered processes—enables organizations to utilize employees' intellectual capital more effectively, foster creativity, and support the systematic renewal of the organization. In today's competitive and knowledge-driven world, an organization's ability to generate, share, and effectively utilize knowledge is essential for its long-term growth and sustainability. This capability is also considered a critical factor in organizational success and advancement. Consequently, the effective management of knowledge processes has become a fundamental requirement for achieving organizational performance and sustainable success in both public and private sectors.

Purpose: Educational organizations, given their inherently knowledge-oriented nature, offer an ideal context for examining knowledge management, professional development, and organizational creativity. Iran's educational transformation programs and strategic documents—including the Comprehensive Human Resources Plan and the Teacher Ranking Regulations—highlight the importance of developing general, specialized, and professional competencies such as creativity and thinking skills among staff. Despite this emphasis, professional development has often been overlooked as a critical link connecting knowledge management to organizational creativity. Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between knowledge management and organizational creativity and to examine the mediating role of employee professional development.

Methodology: This applied study employed a descriptive–correlational design using structural equation modeling (SEM). The research population consisted of 140 education staff members in Khorramabad City. A stratified random sampling method was applied, and 103 participants were selected according to the Krejcie and Morgan table. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS software.

Findings: The analysis of demographic data from 100 completed questionnaires showed that 29 respondents were female and 71 were male. Regarding educational attainment, 15 respondents held a high school diploma, 11 held an associate degree, 43 held a bachelor's degree, 26 held a master's degree, and 5 held a doctorate. In terms of work experience, 10 respondents had less than 10 years of experience, 37 had between 11 to 20 years, and 53 had more than 21 years of experience. Descriptive



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statistics for the research variables indicated that the mean scores for knowledge management, professional development, and organizational creativity were 3.325, 3.190, and 3.690, respectively (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Knowledge Management	3.325	0.933
Professional Development	3.190	0.825
Organizational Creativity	3.690	0.818

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the path coefficient for the effect of knowledge management on organizational creativity is 0.357 with a t-statistic of 2.890. The effect of knowledge management on professional development is 0.531 ($t = 4.499$), and the effect of professional development on organizational creativity is 0.241 ($t = 2.101$). All coefficients are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. According to the standardized coefficients, knowledge management directly explains 35.7% ($\beta = 0.357$) of the variance in organizational creativity and 53.1% ($\beta = 0.531$) of the variance in professional development. In addition, professional development directly explains 24.1% ($\beta = 0.241$) of the variance in organizational creativity.



Table 2. Research Hypothesis Testing Direct Relationships

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Direction	Dependent Variable	β	T-Statistic	p-value	Result
H1	Knowledge Management	→	Organizational Creativity	0.357	2.890	0.004*	Supported
H2	Knowledge Management	→	Professional Development	0.531	4.499	0.001*	Supported
H3	Professional Development	→	Organizational Creativity	0.241	2.101	0.036*	Supported

Note: β = standardized path coefficients; * indicates statistical significance at $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 3, the Sobel test statistic for the mediating variable is 2.025, indicating a statistically significant mediating effect ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, at the 95% confidence level, the mediating role of professional development in the relationship between knowledge management and organizational creativity is confirmed. The indirect effect of knowledge management on organizational creativity is $\beta = 0.128$, indicating that a one-standard-deviation increase in knowledge management leads to a 0.128 standard-deviation increase in organizational creativity indirectly through professional development. Furthermore, the total effect of knowledge management on organizational creativity is $\beta = 0.485$.

Table 3. Research Hypothesis Testing (Mediating Relationship)

Hypothesis	Pathway	Effect Type	IV→Mediator Coefficient	Mediator→DV Coefficient	Sobel z-Statistic	Test Result
H4	Effect of Knowledge Management on Organizational Creativity through Professional Development	Indirect ($\beta=0.128$) Direct: ($\beta=0.357$) Total: ($\beta=0.485$)	$\beta = 0.531$ ($t= 4.499$)	$\beta= 0.241$ ($t= 2.101$)	2.025	Supported

Note: IV = Independent Variable, DV = Dependent Variable

Conclusion: Knowledge management (KM) had a significant positive effect on organizational creativity (OC) ($\beta = 0.357$). KM also significantly and positively influenced professional development (PD) ($\beta = 0.531$). In turn, PD demonstrated a significant positive impact on OC ($\beta = 0.241$). Overall, KM enhances OC both directly and indirectly (total effect $\beta = 0.485$), with PD functioning as a mediating variable.

Value: In summary, knowledge management enhances organizational creativity in the education system through both direct and indirect pathways. By establishing a systematic framework for identifying, sharing, and utilizing knowledge, organizations can foster continuous learning and idea generation, thereby creating a strong foundation for creativity. Additionally, by empowering human capital, knowledge management facilitates employees' professional development. This process converts organizational knowledge into individual skills, competencies, and professional confidence, ultimately leading to greater creative outcomes. Thus, professional development functions not merely as an outcome but as a key mediating mechanism that transforms static knowledge into dynamic creative capability.



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