



The Impact of Organizational Culture on Creativity: The Mediating Role of Knowledge Management (Case Study: Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present research was studying the effect of organizational culture on creativity with an emphasis on the mediating role of knowledge management. In terms of purpose, this is a practical research, in terms of data collection this is a descriptive survey research, and the collected data are quantitative (via questionnaire). The statistical population of the present research consisted of 301 people working in educational deputies, research and technology deputies, and cultural and scholastic deputies. From them, 170 individuals were selected as sample size, using Morgan and Krejcie tables, and Stratified Random Sampling method. The data analysis were performed by structural equation modelling and smart partial least squares (PLS) software. The results showed a positive and significant effect of organizational culture on the creativity of the employees, organizational culture on knowledge management and finally knowledge management on the creativity of the employees.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Knowledge Management, Creativity, Creating Knowledge

JEL Classifications: D83, M14

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the university system has an important role in the process of development as one of the sub-systems in the society. Hence, there is an urgent need for the inner development of such an organization which is the engine of all aspects of development (Feizi and Hayat, 2009). In the process of inner development in the university system, it is necessary to consider issues such as knowledge, learning, and creativity of the employees. The rate of development and the basic need to use new ideas in making management and organizational acts effective is one of the most important characteristics in organizational systems and the employees should be creative in order to keep their organization dynamic and effective in this turbulent environment where there are a need creative works (Naderi et al., 2009). The creativity of employees depends on several factors, one of which is knowledge management. In the recent years, organizations have begun to join the knowledge trend. Knowledge is considered as the main source of creativity which should be managed (Harris et al., 2013). In

such conditions, those organizations that are able to employ their knowledge as a competitive advantage can have a successful performance. Hence, knowledge management has become as one of the most important tasks in organizations which are trying to transform into a learner organization.

Therefore, in order to survive and development, and even to maintain the current situation, the flow of knowledge and innovativeness should be continued in the organization to prevent it from destruction, and it needs a proper culture to achieve this matter (Dong et al., 2011). The organizational culture should be able to provide organization survival and development in the direction of globalization. The organizational culture can perfume as a source to create sustainable competitive advantages because some cultures are difficult to imitate by the rivals (Davenport and Prusak, 2009). One cannot expect creative activities without having an effective organizational culture (Valencia et al., 2010) and also it cannot be expected that the knowledge and learning spread in all levels of the organization and every employee use

it to improve his/her performance. The knowledge management cannot be employed successfully without a good cooperative culture based on trust. If a culture does not encourage distribution and sharing of the knowledge, the knowledge management will face a challenge (Davenport and Prusak, 2009).

In universities such as Medical Sciences and Health Services University of Bushehr, this obvious concept as a capable and strong pillar in the country's scientific cycle, which results in high costs of education, increasing knowledge, and organizational learning for students, employees, and faculty members, must be the focus of attention; it must take measures to increase and improve scientific knowledge, and to share this knowledge as well as experiences with other individuals; because this university like many other organization is involved in complex activities such as incorporation and maintenance of documents, employees' educational and learning costs, and so on; hence, in order to survive, it must constantly receive three types of information: Information about surroundings, information about past, and finally information about the inside of the organization and its derivatives. Although such a university has experiences connected to management of physical and financial capitals, and although it uses other resources, there still are inadequacies in finding tools for gaining, creating, storing, publishing, and using intellectual capitals. The knowledge present in the minds employees are the most valuable organizational assets in information systems and the knowledge present in organizational culture. It can be said that facing different problems connected to intellectual thoughts as well as other factors such as a change in age pyramid, a sharp increase in information, and more specialization in activities has led to the emergence of a phenomenon called "knowledge management" in the late decades of the last century. Studies have shown that despite the increasing importance of knowledge, only thirty percent of it is used in organizations; and due to the inaccessibility of information, costly but preventable mistakes occur. And the risk of losing knowledge is more intense when individuals leave the organization. Another study has shown that 74% of respondents believed that the best type of knowledge in their organization is inaccessible, and 67% of them referred to the fact that mistakes are repeated (Sadooghi et al., 2011).

Narges midwifery institute started its midwifery training in Bushehr in (1983); in 1988, Nursing and Midwifery College and Paramedical College admitted students; and in 1990, for the first time, they admitted medical students in PhD level; and in 1995, Medical Sciences and Health Services University started in Bushehr; and in 2011, a Dentistry University was started. Bushehr's Medical Sciences University consisted of 5 colleges: Medical, dentistry, nursing and midwifery, health, paramedical; and three research centers for tropical and infectious medication in the Persian Gulf, nuclear medication in the Persian Gulf, Sea Biotech of the Persian Gulf, and 158 faculty members. Currently, over 2000 individuals are studying in the university in 22 fields of study for associate degree, 3 fields for BA, 4 fields for MA and PhD, and 3 fields for assistance (medical expertise).

Bushehr's Medical Sciences University's strategic plans are: Delivering distance services based on e-governance, enhancing

the delivery of services qualitatively and quantitatively, improving the culture of public health in the society, institutionalizing applied researches in a health system, increasing the share of the private sector, co-operating and doing charity for health services and reducing governmental dominance, increasing employees' motivation through available opportunities, reaching new financial resources necessary in universities through existing provincial capabilities, decreasing the costs of the system, providing a favorable atmosphere for increasing co-operation in the society, implementing and evaluating health services, reinforcing inter-sector co-operation with an emphasis on the environment, nutrition, lifestyles, and its quality, decreasing the load of contagious and non-contagious diseases, prioritizing health programs, and implementing health services classification (www.bpums.ac.ir).

Considering the strategic plans of the university such as distance services based on e-governance, institutionalizing applied researches in the health system, increasing employees' motivation through existing opportunities, reducing system costs, providing a favorable atmosphere for increasing social cooperation in decision-making, and so forth, we can realize the importance of creativity, organizational culture and knowledge management in the university.

A review of the current educational systems shows that there are various problems in the way of developing creative thinking, creativity and learning skills. Hence, in the present study, we are trying to answer the question, "What Impact does Organizational Culture on Creativity with the Mediating Role of Knowledge Management in Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr?"

2. RESEARCH LITERATURE

2.1. Knowledge Management

Today, all small and large organizations need to apply their knowledge management in order not to fall behind the competition. Knowledge management is a process which helps organizations to find, select, and publish important information, and it is an expertise that is necessary for activities such as problem-solving, dynamic learning and conclusion ability (Davenport, 1997). Knowledge management can improve a wide range of organizational performance features with making the organization "perform smarter". Knowledge management means transforming data into information and then transforming information into knowledge (Vaccaro et al., 2010; Gottschalk, 2007). Gloet and Terziovski (2004) define the knowledge management as accessing to the experiences, knowledge and specialties that create new abilities, encourage innovativeness and increase the value of the customer.

Generally, knowledge management and related areas emphasize on the fact that in the new world economy, achieving a sustainable competitive advantage depends on the capacity and ability of an organization in the development and proper use of resources which are based on the organizational knowledge (Joo and Lee, 2009). Newman and Conrad (2000) suggested that the knowledge flows

in the organization through processes in which the data transforms into information, the information changes into rudimentary knowledge and finally the rudimentary knowledge converts into Meta-knowledge. They described this process as a lifecycle and introduce it as a four-step cycle (Figure 1).

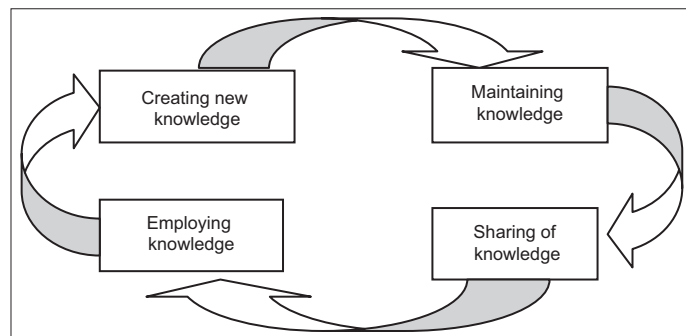
1. **Creating knowledge:** This step includes activities related to the new knowledge entering the system which consists of development, discovery and capturing the knowledge.
2. **Maintaining knowledge:** It includes activities that make the knowledge sustainable in the system. In this regard, scholars point out the most important factor which is the organizational memory, which means the ability of an organization the keep its knowledge.
3. **Transforming and sharing the knowledge:** It refers to the activities which consist of flowing the knowledge from one person to another and it includes translation, conversion, interpretation and purification of knowledge.
4. **Employing the knowledge:** It includes the activities that are related to the implementation of knowledge in the organizational processes (Newman and Conrad, 2000).

2.2. Organizational Culture

Today, culture is an important element in management and its role and effects on the organizational activities have been shown to the management scholars. Thus, the managers are obligated to pay attention to the culture (Valencia et al., 2010). According to Wang (2011), the organizational culture is an important deriving force in organizational movements (Wang et al., 2011). It refers to a series of beliefs and shared values among the members of an organization which affects their behavior and thoughts and it can be a starting point to movement and dynamicity or an obstacle in the way of development (Beydokhti and Shahriari 2012). Hung et al. (2005) defined the organizational culture as the education and engagement of the employees in the decision-making, planning, and evaluation, responsibility in sharing and distributing knowledge and as critical factors in updating knowledge management. The organizational culture is known as something that has been taught to the new members as a right phenomenon and represents the unwritten and sensible part of the organization.

The organizational culture falls into different categories. One of them, and maybe the most comprehensive one, is the classification of Quin and Kerth. Moradi (2012) defined the organizational culture as the main values, assumptions, interpretation in

Figure 1: Basic model of knowledge management. Adapted form Newman and Conrad (2000)



approaches that specify the characteristics of an organization which appears in four types of organizational culture (Moradi et al., 2012). These four types consist of hierarchical culture (Jobs in the order of precedence in terms of order in an organization), rational culture (assumptions and core values of this culture is based on clear goals and energetic strategy towards profitability and efficiency), ideological culture (this culture emphasize on change and the surrounding environment), and the consensus culture (the strategies are establishing through interlocution and mutual adjustment of members in the organization and as a matter of fact it does not obey from a central leader) (Hirsh and Smircich, 2009). Generally, the organizational culture is important since it has many functions such as giving employees the sense of identity, making group commitment easy, encouraging stability of the social system, and forming the members' behavior in the work environment by helping them to understand the surrounding environment. This is exemplified by having a creative and innovative working environment.

2.3. Creativity

Today, creativity form an important part of our lives, because rapid comprehensive global variations have changed the operating environment of organizations so that their managers have to find new ways in order to adapt to these global developments (Moghali and Maleki, 2009). Creativity is the ability to discover new things which are useful for a certain amount of time (Woerkum and van Aarts, 2007). Castiglione (2008) defined the creativity as one's ability to produce new thoughts, visions and effective acts in which they have high social, economic and scientific function (Castiglione, 2008). In fact, creativity is the interaction between talent, process and the environment which produces an understandable product that is both novel and useful and defined as a social context (Makel and Plucker, 2008). According to Rashidi and Shararay (2008) creativity is the combination of four aspects including fluency (the ability of forming a relationship between thought and expression); originality (the ability of unusual thinking and on the contrary to common habit); flexibility (the ability of thinking in different ways to solve a new problem); and elaboration (the ability of attention to the details during an activity) (Rashidi and Shararay, 2008).

The relationship between creativity and the variables in organizational culture and knowledge management and other organizational variables such as the method of leadership, organizational structure, job satisfaction, efficiency, organizational commitment, etc. has been the focus of many types of research. Researches that study the relationship between organizational culture and creativity can be described as follows: Mclean (2005) (the significant relationship between organizational culture and creativity); Keskin (2006) (Organizational culture the reason of creativity and innovation in an organization); Castiglione (2008) (Flourishing the potential capacity of individual creativity for proper organizational culture); Wang (2011) (Organizational culture determines strategies of creativity and innovations); and Altinay and Wang (2011) (The positive and significant effect of cultural-social characteristics on the creativity and entrepreneurial orientation in people). Some of the domestic researches are the studies of Arabioun et al. (2012), Tabarsa et al. (2010), Moghali

and Maleki (2009), and each one studied the relationship between organizational culture and organizational creativity in a way and concluded that there is significant relationship between these two structures.

There are some other studies that investigate the relationship between knowledge management and creativity. These are include: Chen and Chen (2013) and Barnier (2012) (knowledge and intellectual as important factors in creativity, creative behavior and entrepreneurial activities), Yours, C. (2006) quoting from Mirzaee et al. (2011) (the role of incorrect information or monopoly information in the levels of organization as the fundamental obstacle to the development of ideas); Runco et al. (2006) (The role of information and skills and knowledge of employees in organizational creativity); Shoghi et al. (2012) (The positive and significant relationship between aspects of knowledge management and its effective key factors and creativity of employees); and Mirzaee et al. (2011) (Knowledge management as one of the effective factors on creativity of people in an organization).

Also, there are researches that studies the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management such as: Moradi et al. (2012) (The existence of significant relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management in Malaysian universities); Sheikh (2011) and Hinkelman and Genzberger (2008) (The crucial role of proper culture in performing knowledge management strategy); Sehien (2010) (The relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management to increase the chance of success in organizational decision-making); and the studies of Beydokhti et al. (2011); Rahimian and Shami (2011) and Jafari (2009) are some of the Iranian researches that achieve similar results and suggest that there is a significant relationship between these two structures.

Thus, based on the literature and history of the research, the following assumptions are presented which are shown in Figure 2.

Main assumption (H_a): The organizational culture has impact on the creativity of employees in Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr.

Subsidiary hypothesis 1 (H_{b1}): The organizational culture has impact on the knowledge management of employees in Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr.

Subsidiary hypothesis 2 (H_{b2}): Knowledge management has impact on the knowledge management of employees in the Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In terms of purpose, this is a practical research, in terms of data collection this is a descriptive survey research, and the collected data are quantitative. In this context, some questionnaires were distributed to get views of employees in Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr. Structural equation model was used to study the conceptual model and assumptions in the research. On the one hand, the accuracy of indices and variables can be measured via this method, and on the other hand, the casual relations between the latent variable and the variance can be studied (Kalantari, 2009. p. 34). The modeling of structural equation defines in two parts of measurement model and structural model and the model variables divided into latent variables and observed variables.

In the present study organizational culture, creativity and knowledge management considered as the latent variables and each question will be seen as the observed variable.

The statistical population of the research consisted of 301 employees working in educational deputies, research and technology deputies, and cultural and student deputies. Form them, 170 individuals were selected as sample size, using Morgan and Krejcie table as well as Stratified Random Sampling method. In this research, groups included educational deputies, research and technology deputies, and cultural and student deputies.

Also, in order to collect the data, Denison's standard questionnaire (2000), Torrance's standard questionnaire (1959) quoted from Rezaee and Manochehri (2008) was used for creativity variable, and Darroch's standard questionnaire (2003. p. 49) was used for knowledge management variable.

The composite reliability was measured by calculating the value of Cronbach's alpha using collected data from questionnaires and smart PLS statistical software. Since the values more than 0.7 in these two criterion show reliability, current study presents results from this two criterion in Table 1 and as it can be seen, all the values are more than 0.7, which shows the reliability of the questionnaire.

The reliability of the questionnaire studied via two convergent and divergent validity criteria using PLS method. In convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) was used and the results for this criterion are shown in Table 1. The value of the criteria for the AVE level of acceptance is 0.5 (Hulland, 1999). As it can be seen from Table 1, all values of AVE regarding the structures are more than 0.5 which shows the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire in the present study.

In divergent validity, the square root of AVE of main variables with the correlation coefficient between them was compared using

Figure 2: Conceptual model of the research

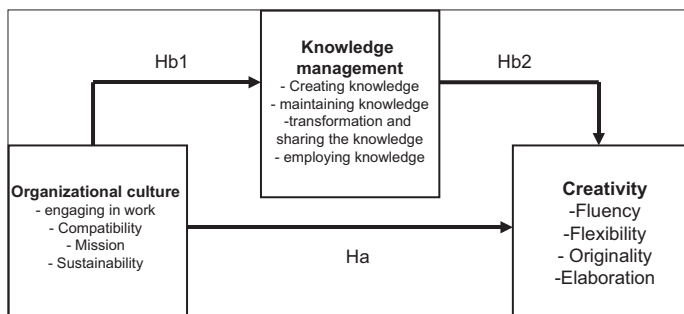


Table 1: The Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability

Variables Aspects of variables	Organizational culture			Creativity			Knowledge management					
	Engaging in work	Compatibility	Mission	Sustainability	Fluency	Flexibility	Originality	Elaboration	Creating knowledge	Maintaining knowledge	Sharing knowledge	Employing knowledge
Cronbach's alpha	0.700	0.693	0.790	0.704	0.703	0.747	0.838	0.821	0.898	0.820	0.810	0.819
Composite reliability	0.731	0.724	0.822	0.728	0.793	0.790	0.840	0.830	0.918	0.799	0.794	0.870
AVE	0.691	0.588	0.621	0.600	0.594	0.599	0.722	0.832	0.707	0.744	0.629	0.685

AVE: Average variance extracted

a table. The values on the main diagonal are AVE coefficient the values below and above the main diagonal are the correlation coefficient of each aspect with another one (Table 2).

As it can be observed from the above matrix, the square root of AVE (the values on the main diagonal) are more than the correlation coefficient in that aspect and other aspects, which shows the divergent reliability.

3.1. Research Findings

In this step, the cause and reason relationship between organizational culture and creativity of the employees and also the mediating role of management in the framework of structural model are evaluated. As it can be seen from Figure 3 and Table 3, the effect of organizational culture on the creativity of employees with the casual factor of 0.69 is significant and positive (confirmation of the main hypothesis). Additionally, the organizational culture has 55% positive effect on the knowledge management (confirmation of the subsidiary hypothesis (1) and knowledge management has 73% positive and significant effect on the creativity of the employees (confirmation of subsidiary hypothesis, (2) which shows the significance of the mediating role of knowledge management. The casual factors in the Figure 3 show the effect of the variable on each other and as it can be observed all coefficients are more than 0.5 which demonstrate the proper and strong effect of the variables in the model.

The output of smart PLS software proves the main hypothesis and also subsidiary hypothesis in the research which are shown in the Table 3. Since all the t values are more than 1.96, all hypothesis are confirmed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As it was stated, the organization need the creative employees in order to survive in this turbulent environment and to hope for development in the future and using this valuable treasure, they will be able to adapt themselves with the new circumstances take steps to keep pace with the changes. Various factors mentioned that are effective in creativity and we tried in this research to study the effect of two structures of organizational culture and knowledge management on the creativity. The results showed that these two structures have a positive and significant impact on the creativity of employees in the Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr.

By confirmation of the main hypothesis, it was found that the organizational culture has a positive effect on the creativity of employees in the Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr. The organizational culture refers to core values, beliefs and fundamental ethics that play an important role in an organizational management system. Organizational culture as a key factor has an effective role in creating a creative and innovative atmosphere among the people in an organization. Therefore, one should focus on the organizational culture in order to create a creative and innovative atmosphere among the employees and to take steps toward coordination of values and norms of the employees with those of the organization. Altinay and Wang (2011)

Table 2: Investigation of divergent reliability using PLS method

Aspects of variables	Fluency	Elaboration	Flexibility	Originality	Creating knowledge	Maintaining knowledge	Sharing knowledge	Employing knowledge	Engaging in work	Compatibility	Mission	Sustainability
Fluency	0.773											
Elaboration	0.240	0.913										
Flexibility	0.400	0.111	0.776									
Originality	0.332	0.104	0.318	0.851								
Creating knowledge	0.391	0.108	0.299	0.309	0.842							
Maintaining knowledge	0.308	0.189	0.286	0.297	0.308	0.864						
Sharing knowledge	0.401	0.372	0.357	0.410	0.301	0.214	0.795					
Employing knowledge	0.114	0.308	0.238	0.142	0.390	0.297	0.253	0.829				
Engaging in work	0.292	0.303	0.428	0.341	0.388	0.102	0.236	0.220	0.833			
Compatibility	0.511	0.111	0.141	0.108	0.421	0.118	0.270	0.228	0.182	0.775		
Mission sustainability	0.118	0.288	0.105	0.209	0.217	0.100	0.191	0.206	0.175	0.231	0.790	
	0.350	0.142	0.401	0.123	0.301	0.200	0.143	0.260	0.199	0.111	0.205	0.777

PLS: Partial least squares

suggest that having a proper organizational culture will create a creative atmosphere in the organization that causes flourishing the ideas and as a result people perform better. The result of this hypothesis was in consistent with the studies of Valencia et al. (2011), Castiglione (2008), Arabioun et al. (2012) and Tabarsa et al. (2010) who argue that organizational culture is one of the effective factors on the creativity of people.

The results from the first subsidiary hypothesis show that organizational culture has a positive and significant impact on the knowledge management of employees in the Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr. The organizational culture is one aspect of knowledge management. Finding a culture that is associated with knowledge management has always been one of the crucial issues in the literature of knowledge management (Jones, 2009). In an organization that creating working teams and has collaboration and trust among the employees is known as its cultural issues, these will cause that the flow of knowledge spread across the organization more freely and also, they have an important role in creating, capturing and sharing the knowledge. Therefore, it can be concluded that the more an organization gives freedom to its employees and people act more cooperatively, the more the organization will be successful in achieving, creating, developing and employing knowledge. So, the organization culture can be seen both as the catalyst and the obstacle in the way of successful knowledge management. The conducted researches clearly support the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management, however, it is not clear that which aspect of organizational culture facilitate or hinder the knowledge management or which one has the most effect on the success of failure of an organization. The results of current hypothesis are in consistent with previous researches such as Moradi et al. (2012), Sheikh (2011) and Beydokhti et al. (2011); Rahimian and Shami (2011) argued that the organizational culture is known as a key factor in its sharing and managing in different levels of organization and in the case of lack of proper organizational culture, the knowledge management does not support very well.

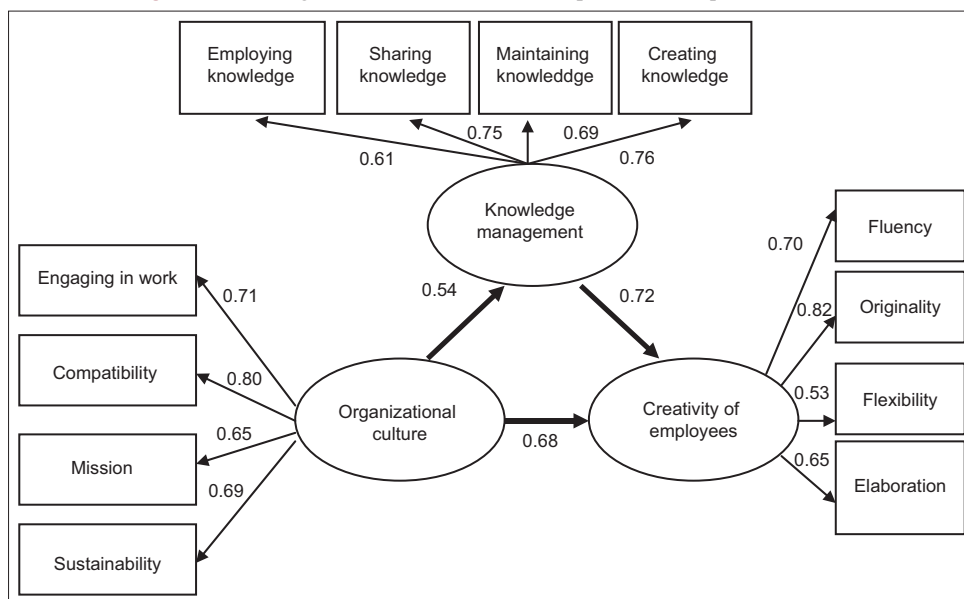
The results from the second subsidiary hypothesis show that the knowledge management has a positive and significant impact on the creativity of employees in the Medical Sciences and Health Services University in Bushehr. It can be argued that it has been shown in the previous studies that knowledge management plays an important role in the process of creativeness and innovativeness by creating a useful and valuable culture and also establishing the cooperative culture in organizations.

Researchers emphasize the key role of knowledge management especially in creating a supportive working atmosphere (Mirfakhorddini et al., 2009). The studies of Gloet and Terziowski (2004) who suggested that there is a positive and significant relationship between knowledge management and creativity and innovation in organizations, confirms the finding of the current hypothesis. In addition, these results are in consistent with studies such as Chen and Chen (2013), Barnier (2012), Shoghi et al. (2012) and Mirzaee et al. (2011) who generally define the knowledge management as the efforts to capturing required knowledge,

Table 3: The results from testing the hypotheses

Hypotheses	Casual factors	t-value statistics	Conclusion
Organizational culture→creativity of employees	0.68	15.50	Hypothesis confirmed
Organizational culture→knowledge management	0.54	14.00	Hypothesis confirmed
Knowledge management→creativity of employees	0.72	17.61	Hypothesis confirmed

Figure 3: Running research model with smart partial least squares software



sharing information in an organization and emphasize in the strengthening the organizational memory in order to improve the process of decision-making, increasing production and encouraging people to creativity and innovativeness.

Finally, based on the results of the current research, in order to institutionalize the proper organizational culture to improve knowledge and learning and creativity among the employees in university, it is recommended that:

- The authorities in the university avoid any direct control and emphasizing the straight roles;
- Providing a condition to increase creative activities by creating alignment between personal goals and objectives of people and organization;
- The authorities support creative and innovative people and try the keep them;
- It is necessary that the decision-making is collective and the collaborative organizational culture will be established;
- And it is recommended that the authorities in university apply the automation system in the organization and with putting the information, such as solutions to increase creativity, in this system increase the knowledge of employees in order to achieve the organizational goals.

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