Survey of Relationship between Strategic Thinking within Deployment of Knowledge Managment and Organizational Innovation in Miandoab NIOPDC

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Abstract

Strategic thinking is like a lever that paves the way for organization to achieve improved performance. But it should be noted that strategic thinking mostly emphasizes on activities that must not be performed. The purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship between strategic thinking and the establishment of knowledge management as well as organizational innovation. The sample consisted of all employees (180) of the National Oil Products Distribution Company in Miandoab region. According to Cochran formula, the sample is set equal to 120. The nature of this study is non-experimental, and its purpose is applied. To collect data, survey method was used. The type of the study is descriptive-analytical. The questionnaire, used as a measurement tool, had a good reliability and validity. To analyze the data, SPSS 18 and Lisrel 18.5 softwares were used and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Pearson correlation coefficient, and exploratory factor analysis were examined. The results of the study confirmed the researcher's hypothesis that there is a relationship between strategic thinking and the establishment of knowledge management and organizational innovation at the National Oil Products Distribution Company in Miandoab region.

Keywords: *strategic thinking, organizational achievement, and improved performance*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the managers of various organizations are aware of the importance of knowledge management function and its role in the organization and each organization is trying to acquire this new knowledge. Therefore, the use of strategic thinking for knowledge management can improve organizational goals. Another important factor that provides the necessary conditions for growth and innovation development is the creation of "strategic thinking" in the organization (1 & 2). Strategic thinking in both individual and organizational levels can provide integrity and certain foresight. On one hand, this can help staffs have a better understanding of the organization and its operating environment that results in their frequent creativity. On the other hand, this can provide communication and interaction between managers and employees that leads to the exploitation of the ingenuity and creativity of employees in the organization (3). According to "Heracles", strategic thinking is like double-loop learning: one challenges existing assumptions and the other develops new and innovative solutions which finally results in the more appropriate potential actions in an organization (4 & 5). Thus, if an organization can achieve a position that most managers and employees can think strategically and also consider the innovation issue strategically, they will always question the status quo in order to achieve newer and better solutions. In addition, they support and guide those who join their organization. In this way, people have a favorable perspective regarding the organization and themselves in future, and, within this framework, they will achieve a better understanding of the organization and its operating environment. Finally, creativity and innovation will be developed in order to achieve this favorable perspective and adapt the organization to the environment (6).

When the environmental conditions change, strategic thinking increases the appropriate and timely response capability. Strategic thinking is a collection of shared mental images of a society and reflects the beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and values of society. To the extent that these mental images and roles are more complete and higher in an organization and fit the organization's goals and strategies, the smoother the path of success for the organization will be. Different perceptions, thoughts, and mental images of individuals in dealing with issues have a significant impact on

strategic thought and culture (7 & 8).

Cultural and structural factors such as complexity, formalization, centralization, and organizational culture are the other factors that affect appropriate infrastructure to create and foster innovation. If the organization is complicated at the horizontal level (the number of jobs and tasks) or at the vertical level (the number of managerial positions) and its organizational relationships become more legal and formal, the possibility of group interaction is strongly reduced and this keeps the organization away from its innovative goals. Besides, if the organization has a high level of formalization, individuals do not have freedom of action, and tasks have not an acceptable and tolerable flexibility, the staffs will not have a creative and innovative behavior. In contrast, if the organization accepts learning, flexibility, and risktaking as the core principles, and also staffs can make proper decisions and judgements based on their own intellectual and administrative power and can design and produce appropriate reaction without concentration at the right time, the context for the use of individual creativity will be prepared (9, 10, & 11). It is worth mentioning that there have been plenty of studies on various subjects such as medical science, engineering, humanities, etc. in this geographical region, but there is a paucity of research on this important area (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21).

Therefore, the present study aims to explore the relationship between strategic thinking and knowledge management as well as organizational innovation at the National Oil Products Distribution Company in Miandoab region. Therefore, the question of this study is: what is the relationship between strategic thinking and knowledge management as well as organizational innovation at the National Oil Products Distribution Company in Miandoab region?

2. The conceptual framework and theoretical model

In today's dynamic and competitive environment, the importance of applying strategic thinking against competitors is obvious to every knowledgable manager. In today's dynamic and competitive market, the importance of adherence to appropriate competetive strategy thinking that suits against competitors leads to stabilizing the organization's position and creation of knowledge management and organizational innovation. Knowledge includes formal knowledge, patterns, rules, programs, procedures, skills, and experience of individuals. Besides, knowledge management includes official knowledge, interact, analyzing the situations, developing new solutions to problems, doing tasks of the organization, cultural issues, customs, and values such as contacting with the audience of the organization. Although knowledge management has been considered as a management tool to increase effeciency, efficiency and innovation are generally accepted as principles of knowledge management under development. At the same time, the position of the organization in relation to other players in the industry determine its profit, and the organization which is able to place itself in a suitable position compared to its competitors will gain higher profit than the average of that industry. Moreover, despite the existence of improper industrial structure, such an organization will prosper and return its investment rapidly.

Therefore, as said before, according to the concern of the National Oil Products Distribution Company of Miandoab, in order to assess the relationship between knowledge management and organizational innovation as well as other issues relating to this subject, this study used the following model. In fact, the conceptual model of this study is adapted from the model used in the reseach of Moon et al. (2013). This model connects internal and external variables to strategic thinking, which in turn are related to knowledge management and organizational innovation. Strategic thinking includes: long-term attitudes and attitude toward risk taking, reward system and top managers, formalization, centralization and internal teams, and the organization's resources and capabilities which are determined as deterrent domestic and encouraging strategic thinking variables at the organizational level. In addition, market volatility and instability of technology are considered as other strategic thinking variables. Finally, the relationship between strategic thinking and knowledge management as well as organizational innovation at the National Oil Products Distribution Company in Miandoab region is investigated.

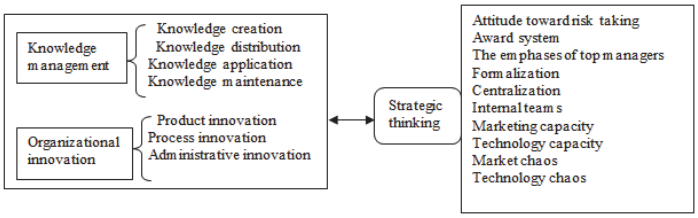

Figure A: The conceptual model of the study (Moon et al., 2013)

3. Methodology

This study is non-experimental in nature and its purpose is applied. For data collection, survey method was used. The type of the study is descriptive-analytical. When the purpose is to solve the problems of the organization using the results, the research is called applied. Survey is a method to obtain information about the attitudes, beliefs, opinions, motivations or the characteristics of a group of a community. Descriptive research deals with how things are done, and explanatory research deals with why things happen.

The sample of this study was all the staffs of the National Oil Products Distribution Company in Miandoab which is located in West Azerbaijan province in Iran. They were approximately 180 individuals. Therefore, using Cochran formula and Morgan table, 120 individuals were selected as sample.

In this study, in order to collect data and the necessary information to answer the research questions, documentary method (going to the library to gather resources and necessary information to review the theoretical and empirical literature) and field method (the completed questionnaire by the participants) were used. The material of the study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the conceptual model.

In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire. The following table shows the results:

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the strategic thinking questionnaire

Variables	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Top managers' attitude towards risk-taking	77%
Award systems	78%
The emphases of top managers	79%
Formalization in organizational structure	77%
Centralization in organizational structure	75%
Internal teams	77%
Marketing capacity	76%
Technology capacity	78%
Market chaos	76%
Technology chaos	77%

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the knowledge management questionnaire

Knowledge management variables	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Knowledge creation	81%
Knowledge distribution	82%
Knowledge application	79%
Knowledge maintenance	78%

Table 3: Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the organizational innovation questionnaire

The aspects of the organizational innovation	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Product innovation	79%
Process innovation	81%
Administrative innovation	81%

In order to analyze the data and applying statistical analysis, SPSS and Lisrel softwares were used. Exploratory factor analysis was used to assess the validity of variables.

4. Results

4.1 The distribution of the participants according to gender

Table 1: Frequency of the participants' distribution according to gender

Gender	Frequency
Male	20
Female	100
Total	120

The above table shows that 100 participants (83/3%) were male and 20 participants (23/7%) were female.

4.2 Distribution of the participants according to age

Table 2: Distribution of the participants according to age

Age (year)	Frequency
25-30 years	20
31-36 years	20
37-42 years	30
43-48 years	30
49 years and older	20
Total	120

According to the above table, 20 participants (16/7%) were in the 25-30 age range, 20 participants (16/7%) were in the 31-36 age range, 30 participants (25%) were in the 37-42 age range, 30 participants (25%) were in the 43-48 age range, and 20 participants (16/7%) were 49 years and older.

4.3 Distribution of the participants according to education

Table 3: Distribution of the participants according to education

Education	Frequency
BA	45
MA	70
PhD	5
Total	120

As the above table indicates, in this study 45 participants (37/5%) had BA, 70 participants (58/4%) had MA, and 5 participants (4/16%) had PhD.

4.4 Distribution of the participants according to work experience

Table 4: Distribution of the participants according to work experience

Work experience	Frequency
5-10 years	25
11-16 years	45
17-22 years	35
23 years and above	15
Total	120

Accrding to table 4, 25 participants (20/9%) had 5-10 years work experience, 45 participants (37/5%) had 11-16 years work experience, 35 participants (29/1%) had 17-22 years work experience, and 15 participants had 23 years (12/5%) and more work experience.

5. Analysis and description of research variables

The descriptive findings of the research, statistical indices such as mean, standard deviation, and dispersion coefficient of all variables are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive indices of the research model variables

Statistical indices of variables	Average	Standard deviation	dispersion coefficient
Attitude toward risk	5/53	1/12	20/25
Award system	5/33	0/84	15/76
Emphases of top managers	5/33	1/02	19/14
Formalization	5/60	0/87	15/53

Centralization	4/56	1/27	27/85
Internal teams	5/57	0/83	14/90
Market capacity	5/28	0/95	17/99
Technology capacity	5/10	0/94	18/43
Market chaos	5/41	0/88	16/27
Technology chaos	5/70	0/80	14/03
Product innovation	1/41	0/64	28/48
Process innovation	1/27	0/88	26/73
Administrative innovation	1/34	0/88	28/81
Knowledge creation	5/28	0/95	17/99
Knowledge distribution	5/10	0/94	18/43
Knowledge application	5/33	0/84	15/76
Knowledge maintenance	5/33	1/02	19/14

According to KMO test result which is equal to 94/0, the study data are reducible to a number of underlying fundamental factors. The significance level of 0.000 Bartlett's test is significant at the error level of 0/01; this indicates that among the items, the matrix is not the same, and on the one hand there is a high correlation between items within each factor. On the other hand, there is no correlation between items of one factor with items of another factor.

5.1 The first confirmatory factor analysis of strategic thinking variable

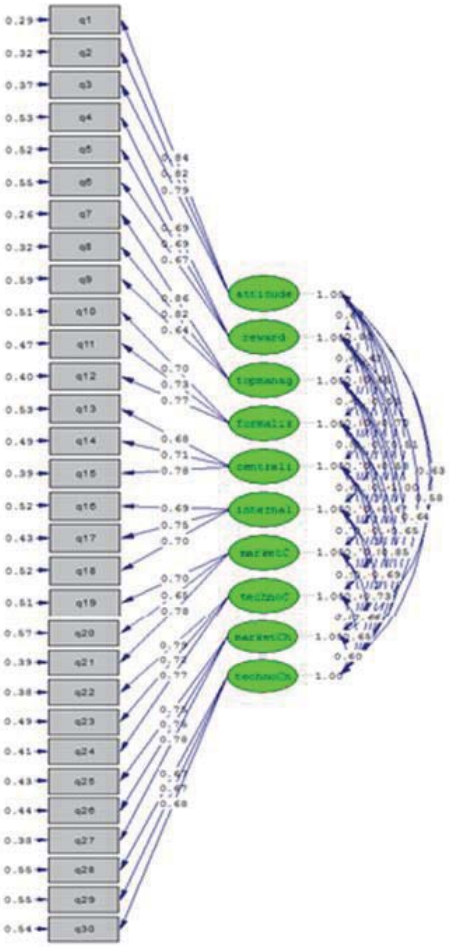

Diagram 1: The first confirmatory factor analysis of strategic thinking with standardized coefficients

The confirmatory factor analysis of strategic thinking is presented in diagram 10. Standard loadings of confirmatory factor analysis are obtained in order to assess the strength of the relationship between each factor (latent variables) with its observable variables (significant variable) in all aspects of higher than 3.0. According to Table 6, the fit indices are also placed in the proper range; therefore, it can be stated that the model has a good fit.

Table 6: Goodness-of-fit indices of the strategic thinking model

Fit index	CMIN/DF	SRMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	NNFI	IFI
Acceptable values	<3	<0.05	<0.08	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Calculated values	2.07	0.048	0.060	0.86	0.82	0.96	0.98	0.98

Table 7: Fit indices

Symbol	Full name of fit index	Acceptable values
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation(RMSEA)	<0.08
CMIN/DF	-	3
GFI	Goodness of fit	>=0.90
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit	>=0.90
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual	<0.05
NFI	Normed Fit Index	>=0.90
NNFI	Non- Normed Fit Index	>=0.90
IFI	Incremental Fit Index	>=0.90

Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA): This index is based on non-central parameter and is less affected by sample size. This index can measure the mean of fit lack for each degree of freedom. In this model, the amount of it is equal to 0/06; thus, the model has a good fit.

Goodness of Fit (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI): These values are influenced by sample size and for the models that have been determined to be weak can be great. The values greater than 9.0 for these two indices indicate a very good fit of model on the data. In this study, GFI was equal to 0/86 and AGEI was equal to 0/82; this indicates that the data of this study did not fit the model. But considering the suitability of other comparative fit indices (NFI, NNFI and IFI), it can be stated that the fit of model is suitable.

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR): Values less than 0/5 show the fit of a good model. In this study, SRMR was equal to 0/04.

Normed Fit Index (NFI), Non- Normed Fit Index (NNFI), and Incremental Fit Index(CFI): Values greater than 0/9 indicate the goodness of fit model for this indices. NFI for this model was 0/96, NNFI was 0/98, and IFI was 0/98. Thus, indices are more than 0/9, and data can fit the model well.

5.2 The second confirmatory factor analysis of strategic thinking variable

According to the results of the first confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis of all the items simultaneously was confirmed with the strategic thinking model. The relationship between each of the variables of the strategic thinking variable in a second-order factor analysis was as follows:

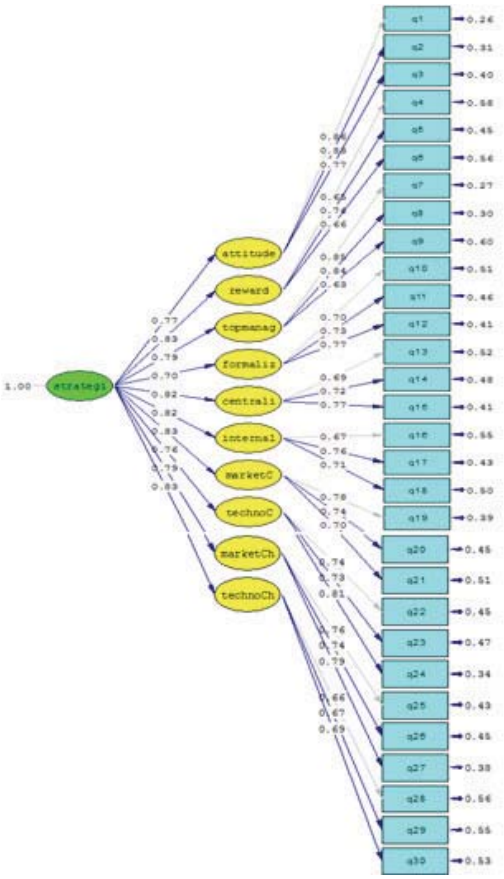

Diagram 2: The second confirmatory factor analysis of strategic thinking with standardized coefficients

The second measurement model seeks to explore first-order latent in the final latent. Because fit indices, that is RMSEA, is 0/07 and smaller than 0/08, and the degree of freedom of the chi-square is equal to 2/89, as well as fit indices of NFI = .94, NNFI = .96, IFI = .96 are higher than 90, the model has a suitable fit.

Table 8: The second confirmatory factor analysis of strategic thinking

Dimensions	Dimensions' codes	Symbol	Standard coefficient	Significant value	The relationship approval or rejection
Attitude toward risk	Attitude	X1	0/77	12/82	Approved
Award system	Reward	X2	0/83	10/04	Approved
Emphases of top managers	Top manager	X3	0/79	12/91	Approved
Formalization	Formalization	X4	0/70	9/43	Approved
Centralization	Centralization	X5	0/82	10/73	Approved
Internal team	Internalteam	X6	0/82	10/36	Approved
Market capacity	marketC	X7	0/83	10/32	Approved
Technology capacity	TechnoC	X8	0/76	10/78	Approved
Market chaos	MarketChaos	X9	0/79	11/40	Approved
Technology chaos	technoChaos	X10	0/83	10/18	Approved

As can be seen in the above table, the relationship between all variables with strategic thinking can be confirmed (the

significant value is higher than 1/69). Market capacity, award system, and technology chaos variables with the standard coefficient of 0/83 were most correlated with strategic thinking, and the formalization variable had the lowest correlation with the strategic thinking. The following is the formula of this relationship:

ST=.77x1+.83x2+.79x3+.70x4+.82x5+.82x6+.83x7+.76x8+.79X9+.83X10

5.3 Test hypotheses using structural equation modeling

Structural model of research in standardized coefficients and significant value

Table 9: Fit indices

Fit index	CMIN/DF	SRMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	NFI	NNFI	IFI
Acceptable values	<3	<0.05	<0.08	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Calculated values	2.23	0.042	0.064	0.94	0.90	0.97	0.98	0.99

As table 9 shows, the model had suitable fit indices, because the proportion of chi-square to degree of freedom is equal to 2/23 and smaller than the allowed amount of 3, and the RMSEA is smaller than 0/08. The other fit indices are shown in table 9 which are suitable. Generally, it can be stated that the structural model has a suitable fit.

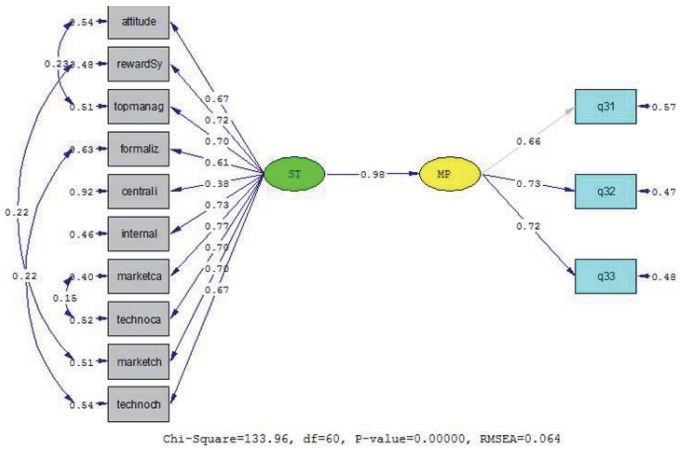

Diagram 3: Structural model of research at standard coefficient mode

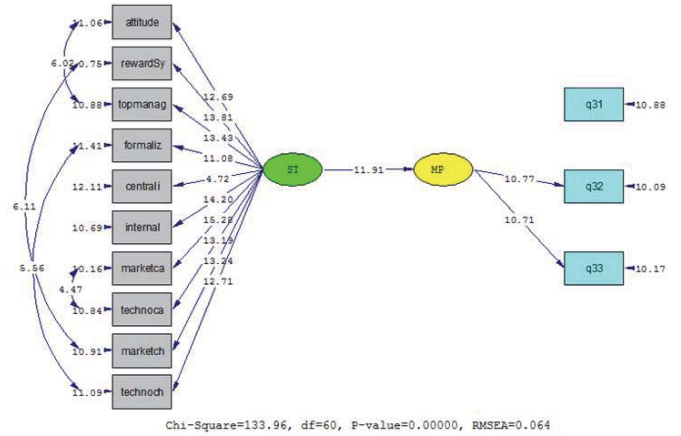

Diagram 4: Structural model of research at significant value mode

As char 3 and 4 indicate, the relationship between strategic thinking and organizational innovation is very powerful because significant value is 11/91 and higher than 1/96.

5.4 Structural models to test secondary hypotheses of research

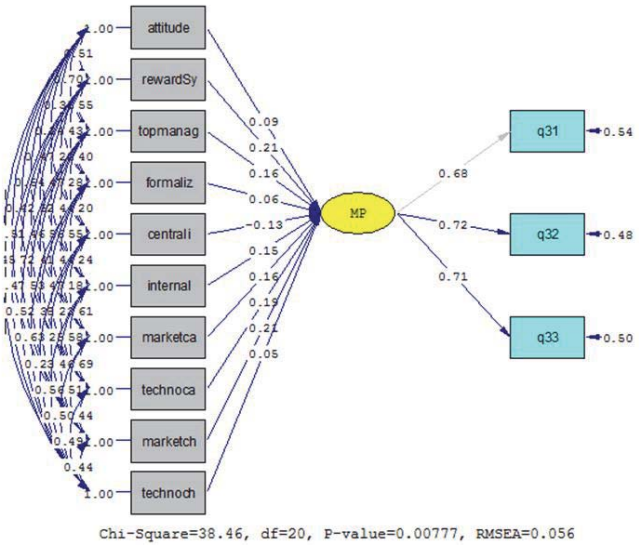

Diagram 5: Structural model of research to test secondary hypotheses in standard coefficient mode

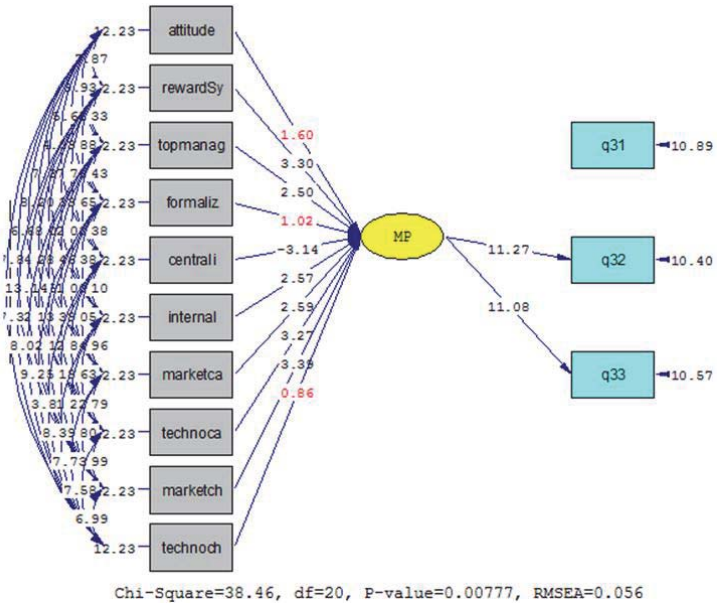

Diagram 6: Structural model of research to test secondary hypotheses in significant value mode

Table 10: The results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Coding in diagram	Standard coefficient	Significant value	Test result
Strategic thinking-organizational innovation	ST- MP	0/98	11/91	Approved
Attitude toward risk-organizational innovation	Attitude-MP	0/09	1/60	Rejected
Award system-organizational innovation	rewardS-MP	0/21	2/30	Approved
Emphases of top managers-organizational innovation	Topmanager-MP	0/16	2/50	Approved
Formalizaion-organizational innovation	Formalization-MP	0/06	1/02	Rejected
Centralization-organizational innovation	Centralization-MP	-0/13	-3/14	Approved
Internal teams-organizational innovation	Internalteam-MP	0/15	2/57	Approved
Market capacity-organizational innovation	MarketC-MP	0/16	2/59	Approved
Technology capacity-organizational innovation	TechnoC-MP	0/19	3/27	Approved
Market chaos-organizational innovation	MarketingChaos-MP	0/21	3/39	Approved
Technology chaos-organizational innovation	technoChaos-MP	0/05	0/86	Rejected

Main hypothesis: strategic thinking has a significant relationship with organizational innovation.

Null hypothesis: strategic thinking has not a significant relationship with organizational innovation.

Research hypothesis: strategic thinking has a significant relationship with organizational innovation.

The equation of main hypothesis relationship = direct effect + indirect effect

MP=.98ST +0

This means that by changing a single unit in strategic thinking, 98% of organizational innovation changes.

And the rest is interpreted likewise.

5.5 The first confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable:

Diagram 7 shows the significant value of the first confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable. According to the diagram, all the available routes are at significant levels (all the estimated parameters are more than 1/96). Therefore, internal correlation between dimensions is significant, and the correlation between questions and dimensions has reached a significant level.

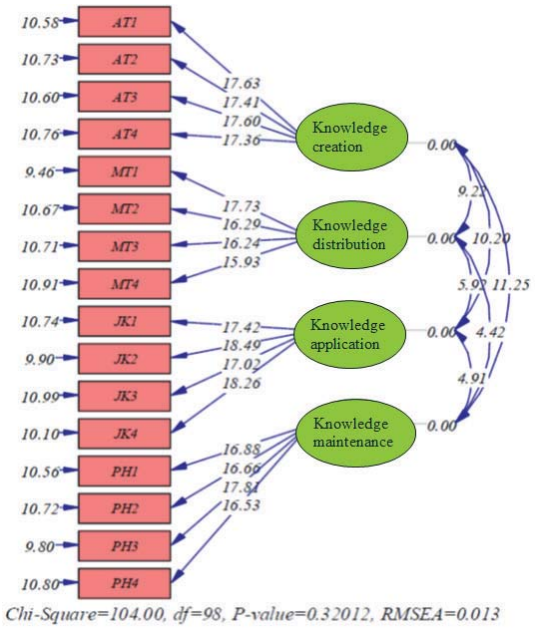

Diagram 7: The significant values of the first confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable

5.6 The second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable:

Considering the fact that the first confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable confirmed the internal correlations of dimensions and dimensions with questions, in order to investigate whether the relationship between knowledge management variable and its dimensions is significant, the second confirmatory factor analysis was run. Diagram 8 shows the significant values of the second factor analysis. According to this diagram, the estimated parameters for all the routs are significant; thus, the knowledge management structure is reliable. Diagram 9 presents the estimated coefficients of the second-order factor analysis for knowledge management variable in order to prioritize the effects of each dimension on the variable. Table 11 shows the fit indices of the second factor analysis of this variable. According to this table, all the indices are at a favorable level and this structure fits the collected data and is reliable.

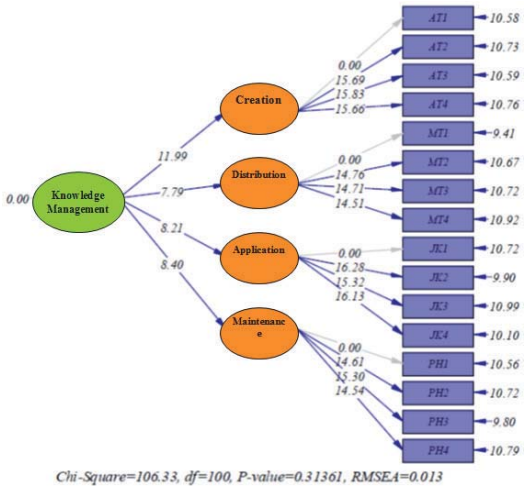

Diagram 8: The significant values of the second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable

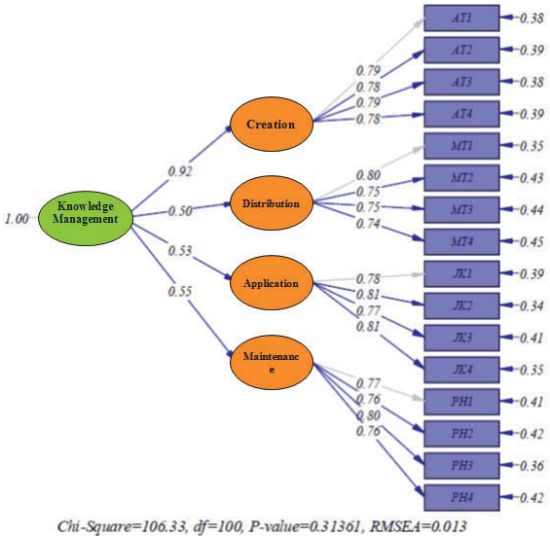

Diagram 9: Coefficients of the standard estimation of the second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable

Table 11: Fit indices of the second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable

Fit index	Suitable amount	Result
χ^2/df	<3/00	1/0633
GFI(goodness of fit index)	>0/90	0/97
RMSEA(Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	<0/08	0/013
RMR(root mean square residual)	<0/05	0/024
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	>0/90	0/98
NNFI (Non-Normed Fit Index)	>0/90	1/00
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	>0/90	1/00

In order to easily interpret the results of the the second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable, the estimated parameters of these two diagrams are summarized in table 12.

Table 12: The results of the second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable

Variable	Dimensions	Significant Value (t-value)	Path coefficient β	Rank	Squared multiple correlation (R^2)	Error variance
Knowledge management	Knowledge creation	11/99	0/92	1	0/84	0/16
	Knowledge distribution	7/79	0/50	4	0/25	0/75
	Knowledge application	8/21	0/53	3	0/28	0/72
	Knowledge maintenance	8/40	0/55	2	0/31	0/69

Table 12 shows the interpretation of the results of the estimation of the second confirmatory factor analysis of knowledge management variable. For instance, one of the dimensions is explained below:

The significant level between knowledge management and knowledge creation dimension is 11/99 which is larger than 1/96. This indicates that the relationship between knowledge management variable and knowledge creation dimension is significant at 99% level. The multiple correlations square of this path is 0/84 which indicates that knowledge creation dimension (84%) explains the changes of knowledge management variable. In addition, the coefficient path between these two variables is 0/92 which shows the effectiveness of knowledge creation dimension as an effective factor on knowledge management. Knowledge creation dimension is the most effective factor on knowledge management in comparison with other coefficients.

Composite reliability of the knowledge management structure was 0/73 using the following formula. Because the composite reliability is higher than 0/6, knowledge management structure has an acceptable reliability.

$$P_c = (0/92 + 0/50 + 0/53 + 0/55)^2 \div [\,(0/92 + 0/50 + 0/53 + 0/55)^2 + (0/16 + 0/75 + 0/72 + 69)\,] = 0/73$$

6. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of the main and subsidiary hypotheses, it can be concluded that all the dimensions and components (such as attitude of the top managers toward risk taking, award systems, emphases of top managers, formalization in organizational structure, centralization in organizational structure, internal organizational teams, marketing capacity, technology capacity, market chaos, technology chaos) had correlation with knowledge management and organizational innovation.

The findings showed that formalization in organization, award systems, emphases of top managers, attitudes of top managers toward risk taking had correlation with knowledge management as well as organizational innovation. In addition, centralization in organizational structure, marketing capacity, and internal teams had correlation with knowledge management and organizational innovation; these results are in line with the findings of Moon et al. (2013). (9)

The results indicated that marketing and technology capacity had correlation with knowledge management and organizational innovation. Moreover, marketing and technology chaos had correlation with knowledge management and organizational innovation. These findings are consistent with the findings of Moon et al. (2013). (9)

7. Suggestions

1. According to the results of the study, it is suggested that in developing organizational procedures, attitudes and perpectives of top managers regarding konowledge management, organizational innovation, and risk taking should be taken into account.
2. It is suggested that top managers should pay attention to creativity in organization and make sure that creativity becomes a part of the organization's personality and becomes its cornerstone. Harnessing the energies and talents of people requires understanding of the factors that foster innovation and creativity.
3. It is suggested that managers should be accountable and avoid baming. They should collaborate to fix the employees' problems and seek solution. Moreover, they should unite different individuals with different thoughts.
4. Managers should follow unity, synergy, and centralization in the form of strategic thinking management.
5. It is also suggested that managers focus on strategic thinking with various working groups of the organizarion based on cooperation between individuals within the organization which will have strategic importance for the organization within 5 or 10 years.
6. According to the results, it is also suggested that managers should highlight strategic thinking in both individual and organizational level so that senior managers become capable of drawing a wider range of possible strategies to improve strategic thinking in their organizations.
7. It is suggested that the capacity of the strategy-driven technologies should be reflected in knowledge management and organizational innovation.
8. Finally, it is suggested that managers should design a warning system; that is, a scenario, a rapid response system for the management and marketing during the economic crisis and other chaotic conditions must be designed.

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