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# The relation between knowledge management and organizational commitment

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### ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is a process that helps organizations to find important information, select, organize and publish them; and it's a proficiency that will be necessary for actions like solving problems, dynamic learning, decision making. Knowledge management can improve a wide range of organization performance properties by enabling company to more intelligent performance, but it's not enough alone; because knowledge management to be useful needs undertaking staff to organization and their job, that accept the knowledge management process with spirit and heart and perform it (Wiig, 1999:14). With considering the importance of this topic, the current discussion will study the relation between knowledge management and professional commitment of staff at a petroleum company in the south of Iran. Formation of this study was based on this question that with considering the importance of professional commitment and organizational commitment of staff, what the relation between knowledge management and professional commitment and organizational commitment of staff is. The tools of data collection in order to knowledge management evaluation is the 21 questions questionnaire of Proset et al., to evaluation of professional commitment and organizational commitment, that's combination and native 27 questions questionnaire of Allen and Meyer et al.; the stability of professional commitment and organizational commitment obtained 83% and the stability of knowledge management evaluation was 0.87 and because of being Kronbakh alpha of questionnaires both more than 0.7, both questionnaires had obligatory stability. To determine being normal, the data obtained of Colmogroph -Smirnoph was applied and confirmed the results of being normal test. Hypothesizes of the study were examined by performing of Spearman correlation test and their significant and positive effects were proved, this means that knowledge management totally has a direct and significant relation with organizational commitment and professional commitment.

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### Introduction

The present world with its various achievements is always exposed to unpredictable changes and evolutions. Elvin Tafeller believes "21<sup>st</sup> century as a super theory age will be attractive for people when present human can have necessary tolerance against changes of the century and appears courageously against it." This case will be accomplished when present human can prepare himself for very large changes in future world from now. This depends on knowledge, skill and dynamism. Living in the present world needs to fully understand and obtain skills to use of these tools. Without these tools, competition and living will be very difficult and leads to miss many chances in daily life of people and communities) Nonka, 1995:18).

Understanding of role and the actual position of organizations always helps to find an answer for the question that why some of organizations are always successful. Realization of this problem that what factors makes such continuity that it create the possibility of a allegro survival for organizations, depends closely to understanding of knowledge concept and method of application and use of that in the organization (Davoport, et al., 2001:13).

So managers of the organizations with emphasis to smart wisdom can pursue more reasonable decisions in important topics and they can improve performances based on knowledge. Therefore, wisdom managing is more important category than wisdom and it follows how to transfer information and

individual and organization learning to knowledge and individual and group skills (Probdt, 2000: 33).

But the first step in this way is that if persons and owners of this knowledge are prepare to support of the process or not. And this needs to undertaking staff to their professions and organizations. Because professional commitment and organizational commitment include complex part of values and ideas of staff; these values influence the method of attitude and finally behavior of persons in the work site; only with studying, changing, and increasing professional commitment and organizational commitment of persons can take advantage of knowledge management as a competitive benefit, therefore organizations should create a site for sharing, transferring and contrasting of knowledge between members, and they should train persons to make their interactions with notion) Nonka, 1995:18).

Today organizations, in addition to global competition, face a kind of challenge inside the organization too. On the one hand, they need basic changes and on the other hand, professional commitment and organizational commitment of staff are important for organization and they don't desire to reduce it. In such conditions, performing research in the field of knowledge management and , professional commitment and organizational commitment of staff is necessary, (Wiig, 2002:1)

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**Knowledge management**

In the early 1990, knowledge management seriously entered topics of organization, although discussion and negotiation about knowledge had started from a long time ago; in 1965 Marshall claims that a major part of capital includes knowledge. Also, he believe that knowledge is the most powerful engine of generation, so the organizations should increasingly focus on its management. Kohn (1970) insists that knowledge is per se the capital of a group. In 1972, Hubremass points to this matter that knowledge should not be considered as a abstract existence, but it's a product based on volition and sometimes non conscious activities of human. (Radding,1998:41)

Complexity and breadth of the concept of knowledge management has led that the same attitudes about knowledge management don't be formed. Therefore, different experts have seen that from different angles and paid to define it. Despite this fact, some of the most common definitions of knowledge management is expressed here:

Knowledge management refers to a series of regular and systematic activities of organization that is performed to obtain the larger value trough the available knowledge. The available knowledge includes all experiences and learning of organization persons and all documents and reports inside an organization (Marwick, 2001;2)

Knowledge management includes behaviors of human, attitudes and capabilities of human, philosophies of business, patterns, operations, procedures and complex technologies (Wiig, 2002:1).

In another definition, knowledge management is considered as a commercial process with two basic aspects (Future Development consults, 2007) :

- Considering of the element of knowledge in commercial processes: so that the element of knowledge displays prominently itself in all of strategies, lines and employing these principles.
- Creation of intellectual capitals of organization: that includes both explicit capitals(registered) and implicit capitals( individual knowledge) and it takes positive results of that.
- In practice, knowledge management is proposed to identify and characterize intellectual capitals and creating new knowledge to prefer competitive in the global scene outside the organization and to facilitate data availability, share appropriate processes, and obtain information and communication technology inside the organization) Barclay& Murray, 2000).
- Knowledge management is knowledge creating and sharing, transferring and retention process so that it can effectively apply it in the organization(Hoffman, Holster, Sheriff, 2005: 178)
- Knowledge management means improving knowledge word processes. Improving knowledge word requires reduction of top-down interferences. Staff should have freedom and necessary independence in their work until they can utilize their knowledge in problem solving and decision making.

Perost and Rebb and Romhard(2000) designed a model called " The model of cornerstones of knowledge management building" for knowledge management. The designers of this model see knowledge as a dynamic cycle that it is in constant rotation. The steps of this model includes eight subsets consisting of two outer and inner cycles.

**a)Outer cycle:**

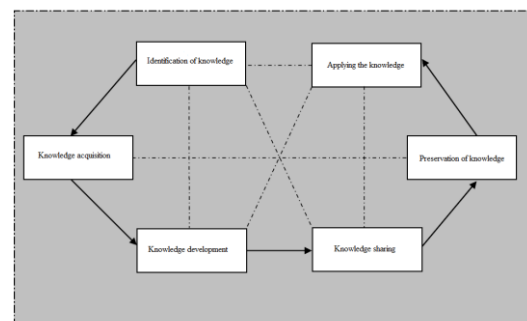
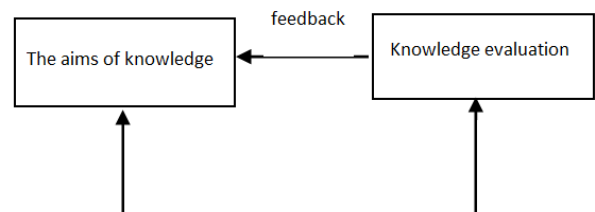
- 1.Determination of knowledge aims: the aims of knowledge management should rise the main aims of organization and should be characterize in two strategic and operational levels.
- 2.Knowledge evaluation: the method to achieve specific aims and use of its results as feedback, to aim determination or modification, relates to this section.

**b)Inner cycle:**

1. Identification of knowledge: outer knowledge is analyzing and explaining of environmental knowledge. Lack of transparency, leads to effectiveness of decisions and cause errors to be repeated.
2. Knowledge acquisition: many companies import a significant part of their knowledge from external resources. Communication with customers, suppliers, competitors and partners in cooperative and collaborative work is a considerable potential for providing knowledge.
3. Knowledge development: How to create a new specialty? Knowledge development is a cornerstone that it is the processor of process of knowledge acquisition. Its main focus is on developing new skills, new products, and better ideas and more efficient processes.
4. Knowledge sharing and distribution: How knowledge can be put in place right? Fundamental requirement for data conversion and individual experiences is something that organization will be able to use it. In this stage. the necessary preconditions are:
  - Everyone should know how much and with what level of knowledge about a problem and be able to do it.
  - **How to facilitate knowledge sharing?**

It's not necessary that everyone know everything. Therefore, the principle of dividing the people capability in the range of distribution and sharing of knowledge should be defined as significant. Here, the most important step is analysis of how knowledge transfer from individual to group and organization.
5. Applying the knowledge: How can we ensure that knowledge is used? Concept of knowledge management is to ensure that current knowledge in an organization be used to benefit the entire organization effectively and productively.
6. Preservation of knowledge: How can we ensure that we do not lose knowledge? Obtained abilities will not be forever available. Preservation and selection of information, documents and experiences require management. Organization have often complained of the fact that reorganization has caused them to lose a part of their memory, hence the selection process, the processes of storing and updating the knowledge that will be valuable in future should be organized with complete accuracy. If this is not done, valuable expertise will be unintentionally abandoned , (Probst ,Raub & Romhardt, 2000: 30).

Fig1. The model of cornerstones of knowledge management



Source:) Probst, Raub& Romhardt, 2000)

### **Commitment**

In the early 1980s, organizational commitment of staff was one of the most important issues that had attracted attention of more researchers and extensive research on this subject was done. Even Klein and Ryty in their book entitled "Understanding organizational behaviors", have pointed to the importance of commitment. They say:" lack of commitment is much more dangerous than something that as a "lack of morality" is referred. Lack of commitment casts a shadow over the organization and can reduce the effectiveness of it in almost all activities (Jyue & Fang,1984:12)

But in 1980, Walton, in his famous article entitled "Management's commitment to the" published. He reminded need to move management based on control to management based on commitment and he gave direction to researches in this areas with his work. There is very little agreement on the nature of commitment. (MC Kenna,S, 2005;16) Commitment is often defined as a desire to maintain their relationship. Sometimes, it's defined as commitment of one person to another. Recently, commitment is defined as resistance to change. Commitment is rooted in identification, shared values, belonging, dedication and parallelism (Fullerton,2003:334).

In simpler terms, commitment means allocate themselves or a part of their power for a specific purpose(Amiri and Zamani, 2000: 188).

Because most of people's time is spent in organizations, therefore, investigation the various forms of commitment in the workplace is necessary to understand the behavior of individuals in organizations( Baruch&Cohen,2007:241)

### **Organizational commitment**

Organizational commitment is a structure that has provided a different definition of that. For example, Marrow in 1999 determined more than 25 concepts related to organizational commitment. Porter et. Al in 1974 defined commitment as follows:" the extent to which a person sees himself belonging to an organization and identifies himself with that." They used motivation, recognition of values of the organization, willingness of staff to join in the organization, to assay and measure that. Buchanan, also, in 1974 defined commitment as follows:" the extent of emotional belonging of organization fans to organizational goals and values, to own role related to these goals and values, and to the organization because of the organization itself that's partly because of benefits that organization has for them.

Than staff commitment can be studied from different viewpoints. In 1986, Oreilly and Chatman based on Kaleman ideas, characterized mental belonging(that means psychological attachment of person to the organization) as the main and key topic in staff commitment. They defined psychological attachment as follows:" The psychological attachment reflecting the extent or degree that persons accept viewpoints or properties of organization and internalize that. Oreilly and Chatman(1986) put the base of staff's psychological attachment on the following three cases that were similar to cases discussed by Kaleman (1958) , (Durkin & Bennett, 1999: 127)

Accept or tool presence of staff at organization because of given external rewards.

1. Diagnosis or the presence of staff in the organization based on tend to correlate.
2. Internalizing, or active participation of staff in organization based on matching individual and organizational values.

However, this multi-factor approach to staff commitment is accepted by other researchers. For example, Jaros et al.(1993) using factor analysis confirmed this multi-factor approach to

commitment and they concluded that single-factor models of organizational commitment, both conceptually and empirically are not acceptable. Each of the dimensions listed in the commitment(internalized, accept, diagnosis) are associated with organization change process. Indeed, commitment of staff play key role in change process management. On the other hand, high commitment of staff will reinforce the changes made and it will also ensure success of change programs( Bennett, 2002:433) One of more important studies that were performed in the context of being multi-factor, is from Meyer and Allen. There are three types of commitment from their perspective:

### **Affective Commitment:**

Which was referred to the emotional commitment of staff to organization, their sense of oneness to organization and their active participation in organization. Employees who usually have a sense of affective commitment, tend to remain in the organization and this is one of their dreams.

### **Continuance Commitment:**

It's related to the benefits and costs that is related to stay in the organization or leave it. Employees who usually have continuance commitment remain within the organization until leaving the organization has high cost for them.

### **Normative Commitment:**

That refers to obligation or duty to employees to stay in the organization. So long as staff will remain in the organization that from their perspective staying in the organization is just right. So organizational commitment can be considered as an attitude about the loyalty of employees and a continuous process that is determined through participation in the organization, person assist to the organization and the success and prosperity of the organization(Moghim, 2005:392).

Like job satisfaction, high levels of organizational commitment influences various aspects of organization and personal performance. According to research, job high relocation, absence from work, weak personal performance are caused by low organizational commitment; new research shows that high organizational commitment, also causes high loyalty of the customers, because customers don't like to see high relocation of staff.(Mcshane, 2000: 209)

Also, research shows that people who have high commitment to the organization, have more tendency to indicate organizational citizenship behaviors (Bolon, 1997:221).

### **Professional commitment**

The term of professional commitment, is taken from the psychology and it's developed from more common concept of organizational commitment. Its trajectory study is similar to organizational commitment (Hall et al,2005:90) Definitions related to the professional commitment varies from the extent to which one person get involved specific tasks to the extent of importance that the job plays in the person's life (Somech &Bogler, 2002:557)

Professional commitment is considered as a one of the most important factors determining the behavior of person's work and it's the topic that it has attracted attention of many executives and people in the educational environment (Kannan & Pillai,2008:218)

"Theory of professional commitment" also states that how much a person invests on commitment to a series of things, its commitment is more difficult to deny. So how much a person be encouraged to enter the job and how much more work be done to encourage, more likely to that the person remains committed to the job (Tayler,1988:48). Professionals, see themselves as persons that are engaged in a full-time career and they should spend their best efforts and they should have unconditional

commitment to their careers because they believe that this is a worthwhile career (Favela&Fuzessery,1974:320)

Professional commitment as a person's attitude towards his job or career is defined (Fjortof & W.l. lee,1994:370). Professional commitment makes reference to the attachment that people have to their careers. Indeed professional commitment include having faith in the goals and values of the career and believing them, tending to show considerable efforts for the career, and maintaining membership in the job) Elias,2006:84).

Professional commitment as a degree of allocation was defined as a degree of allocation by the working standards of performance (Jones,2000:52). Wallace and colleagues definition of professional commitment is similar to Allen and Meyer's definition of organizational commitment, the researcher and his colleagues have distinguished three dimensions of effective, continuous and normative for professional commitment and they defined professional commitment as sense of identity by a job, need for service continuity in a job, and high sense of responsibility towards that (Osinsky & Mueller.2004:197)

Arniya, Pollack, and Ermnick in a study about professional commitment of accountants, with replacing the word of professional instead of organizational in the Porter's definition of organizational commitment, have defined professional commitment as follows:

- 1- Having faith in the goals and values of the career and believing them;
- 2- Tending to show considerable efforts for the career;
- 3- Tending to continue and maintain membership in the job.

Therefore people who have high commitment to their job, spend all their efforts to their job, that it leads to internalize business success and failure as their success and failure. (Giffords,2003:8)

Considering the commitment as a desirable professional value, rises from initial work which has been done on the professional features (Tayler,1988:48). Interest in professional commitment has been created more by Gouldner who identified a dichotomy between commitment to the organization and commitment to the profession. And in addition, this interest to professional commitment arose when the researchers realized that people's commitment to their profession has many positive effects (Hall et al,2005:90)

Lee and others express four reasons to study the importance of professional commitment :

- 1-One person spends too much time for working;
- 2-Because professional commitment influence maintenance and retention and remembering, then has important implications for human resources management;
- 3-Because professional skills occurs from work experience, then work performance can be associated with professional commitment;
- 4-More studies on professional commitment may lead to understand this point that how persons combine and integrate types of commitment in workplace and outside it (Elias,2007:82).

Professional commitment is related to significant outputs such as improving work performance, reducing mobility intentions and more satisfaction in the enterprise-level and professional level(Elias,2006:85). Studies have shown that high levels of employee commitment leads to greater motivation and satisfaction and it reduces possibility of leaving the organization (Huang,2006:32).

Professional commitment likely has an impact on people's working behaviors such as their observable attitudes, their judgments about the work end, and their involvement in professional groups. Professional commitment is related to

positive behaviors which is useful for organization and people with high levels of professional commitment subsequently are less involved in activities that is harmful to the organization (Greenfield,2008:422).

A committed person tends to continue membership or also shows great efforts, not because it has gains for him but because he believes that he should have such behavior because it is true and he is expected to ( Raju & Shrivastava,1994:7).

In a survey conducted by Anderson Fele in 2004 as knowledge management and organizational commitment, model of organizational learning (OLSM) and Allen's organizational commitment framework were used. Based on the model of OLSM, knowledge management includes environmental deliberating, knowledge creation, sharing knowledge, and organizational memory and includes the model of Allen and Meyer's organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitment). These seven variables of knowledge management and organizational commitment has been studied through the gauging method. Finally, after analyzing the solidarity, the correlation between these variables was significant and the requisite of establishment of knowledge management has been recognized existence of staff with high organizational commitment.

In a survey conducted by Annonuiaz in2005 as evaluation of the relation between knowledge management and professional commitment and in the transportation industry, 31 institutions active in this industry were studied from the viewpoint of technologies, persons and knowledge. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and qualitative data were collected through interviews and observation and they were analyzed. The research findings showed those who were allocated a high score to themselves, they also had achieved high scores in professional commitment.

#### **The research objectives**

In this study, according to the importance of knowledge management, professional and organizational commitment of staff pursues the following goals:

- 1-Investigation of the relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment of staff at a petroleum company in the south of Iran;
- 2-Investigation of the relationship between knowledge management and professional commitment of staff at a petroleum company in the south of Iran;
- 3-Provide the necessary solutions for promoting knowledge management in order to increase organizational and professional commitment of staff according to research findings.

#### **The research hypotheses**

According to the research objectives, assumptions in the two main hypotheses in the relationship between knowledge management and organizational and professional commitment has developed as following:

The main hypothesis 1

There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment at a petroleum company in the south of Iran.

#### **The main hypothesis 2**

There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and professional commitment at a petroleum company in the south of Iran.

#### **Research method**

Since in this study, researchers is seeking to identify and examine the relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment and professional commitment at a petroleum company in the south of Iran, this research based on



research methods is of the descriptive research and of traversal branch.

Statistical Society had 150 members of staff of the company. Sample survey based on the following formula is 74 persons that finally 80 questionnaires were collected and were analyzed.

$$n = \frac{(150)(1/96)^2(0/5)(0/5)}{(0.5)^2(150-1) + (1/96)^2(0/5)(0/5)} = 74$$

Information needed to perform this study were collected in two ways.

**The library method**

In this method for collecting information about the literature and background research, books, theses, articles, databases and the internet were used.

**The field method**

In this field, tools such as consultancy and interviews with experts in questionnaire design and analysis that were used. In the present study, the main instrument for evaluation is questionnaire which is one common research tools and direct method for obtaining data for research. Two types of questionnaires have been used to measure variables that one is Allen and Meyer and colleagues combinatorial and naturalize questionnaire to measure organizational and professional commitment of staff and the other questionnaire is provided to measure the components of knowledge management. The organizational and professional commitment questionnaire consists of 27 questions. The knowledge management questionnaire consists of 27 questions which investigate the current status of knowledge management based on Proust et al. knowledge management foundations model. Likert five-degree range was used in both questionnaires. In this research, to describe and analyze the collected data, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The tests used in this study include Kolmogorov - Smirnov tests, Spearman correlation coefficient.

**Research findings**

In this research, to test the research hypothesis must first determine whether the collected data distribution is normal or not. Normal or abnormal data is measured using Kolmogorov - Smirnov statistical test that results of Kolmogorov - Smirnov test is the following table:

As you can see in table 1, the test statistic value is in the level of 0.05 less than critical value. So the zero hypothesis of normal data is acceptable and the other hypothesis which proves data being non-normal is to be rejected. Hence with attention to normal data, Spearman correlation coefficient test is used to test these hypotheses.

According to the research objectives, two main hypotheses were discussed and were examined that the results are as follows:

**The first main hypothesis**

There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment at a petroleum company in the south of Iran.

The above statistical hypothesis is :

$H_0 : \rho = 0$	There's not a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment of staff
$H_1 : \rho \neq 0$	There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment of staff

With performing the respective test, at confidence level of 99%, p-value is sig=.00 that it is less than 5% and zero hypothesis  $H_0$  is to be rejected and we accept the other hypothesis  $H_1$ , in other words there is a significant relationship

between knowledge management and organizational commitment of staff at a confidence level of 99%.

**The second main hypothesis**

There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and professional commitment at a petroleum company in the south of Iran.

The above statistical hypothesis is :

$H_0 : \rho = 0$	There's not a significant relationship between knowledge management and professional commitment of staff
$H_1 : \rho \neq 0$	There is a significant relationship between knowledge management and professional commitment of staff

With performing the respective test, at confidence level of 99%, p-value is sig=.00 that it is less than 5% and zero hypothesis  $H_0$  is to be rejected and we accept the other hypothesis  $H_1$ , in other words there is a significant relationship between knowledge management and professional commitment of staff at a confidence level of 99%.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

The current period of human life is associated with amazing developments and changes. Organizations as a subset of human life, should be ready to deal with these major developments (Druker, 2002). Knowledge management is a process which helps organizations to find important information, select, organize and publish them and it is a proficiency which is necessary for activities such as problem solving, dynamic learning and decision making. Knowledge management can improve a range of organizational performance features with enabling the company to function more intelligently (Wiig, 1999:14). But this alone is not enough, because knowledge management needs for committed to their organization and profession to be usable. Because professional and organizational commitment include a complex part of values beliefs of staff; these values influence attitudes and ultimately behaviours in the workplace; only to review, modify and enhance professional and organizational commitment of people, knowledge management as a competitive advantage can be utilized. Hence organizations must create an environment for knowledge sharing, transferring and mutuality among members and teach persons in order to make their interactions conceptual( Nonka, 1995:18).

According to listed contents and the importance of knowledge management, in this research relation between knowledge management and organizational commitment and professional commitment of staff at a petroleum company in the south of Iran was investigated. Two main hypotheses have been raised and Spearman correlation test was to test hypotheses and the results suggest a positive and significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational and professional commitment of staff that it confirms the previous research (Anderson Fel, 2004: Anoyobazi, 2005)

According to research goals and obtained results and researcher's observations during the study, the following suggestions are made:

- 1-Sharing all persons on the information(Public participation in information). Managers should provide necessary information for them to create an enabling field of staff, if we really want people to take timely and appropriate decisions and act responsibly, they should be aware about organizational performance of mission, programs, objectives and budgets, results of meetings of managers and policy makers and in general what is going on the organization.
- 2-Delegating authority to staff in order to do tasks associated with their job and when decisions should be taken immediately. Relinquish power and authority cause developing motivation in staff, when given field to staff, they will feel that they can be effective and with the power they have more incentive and

motivation to perform tasks. Generally transfer of authority helps to learn skills, professional growth and trust.

3-Encouraging staff to present their views and comments to manage organization affairs and utilizing constructive and helpful comments presented in the organization planning in the operation phase. Few of the methods of participatory management are: the proposals system, total quality management, quality control groups, working groups, autonomous groups, staff ownership schemes, middle management committees, industrial democracy and management based on objective.

4-Designing and implementing effective training and based on employment needs and abilities of job receptionist. Increasing staff abilities in relation to job through these periods, will increase their skills against the challenges ahead. Briefly, the organization should enhance the capacity of staff through held

5-training courses for the new issues raised in the job and intuiting them of new trends in employment, and also perform team building with the creation of working groups and establish friendly and cooperative atmosphere among employees . and finally develop staff capabilities by offering timely and appropriate rewards and punishment and creating necessary incentives until all of them eventually lead to a commitment to participate in the organization.

6-Establishing a clear set of values and support them by senior managers (as the value of knowledge transfer to the others and support by financial incentives). Ethical rules to guide employee behavior in organizations should be established until as a result, things right from wrong can be easily detected and it will provide the field of integration and coordination.

7-Giving feedback to employees regarding work. In this case, employees are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and will try to make themselves close to favorable conditions.

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