

Knowledge Management Practices and Employee Performance: Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the impact of knowledge management practices (KMP) on employee performance, i.e. task performance, contextual performance, and counter-productive work behaviour. The study has further analysed the moderating role of emotional intelligence between the relationship of knowledge management practices (KMP) and the dimensions of employee performance (EP). This study is explanatory as an empirical approach to test the hypothesized model has been used. The data have been collected from the employees of colleges of Punjab, Pakistan. The sample size of the study is 277. Linear regression has been used for statistical analyses, and process macro has been applied for moderation analysis. The study results depict that knowledge management practices positively affect employee task and contextual performance, whereas it has a negative impact on counter-productive work behaviour. Moreover, Emotional Intelligence moderates the relationship between knowledge management practices, employee task performance, employee contextual performance and counter-productive work behaviour. The study results confirm that knowledge management practices enhance employee performance, and the employee's emotional intelligence affects this relationship.

Keywords: *employee performance, knowledge management practices, emotional intelligence*

Introduction

Organizations have realized that knowledge is valuable (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Knowledge resides within the employees; once an employee leaves the organization, knowledge departs too (Hislop et al., 2018). This phenomenon led to knowledge management which refers to the correct information that should be available to the right person at the right time (North & Kumta, 2018). Knowledge management is considered a source of the competitive and sustained advantage leading towards organizational performance (Lee et al., 2016; Namada, 2018). Employee Performance (EP) is the output for which every manager adopts different strategies (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016; Shields et al., 2015). The researchers have explored the variables that affect employee job performance (Budworth et al., 2015; Dall'Ora et al., 2016; Latorre et al., 2016). The performance of employees has been studied on three dimensions, i.e. employee task performance,

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employee contextual performance, and counter-productive work behaviours.

Another important variable that affects employee job performance is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) means understanding and managing one's own emotions and those of others (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016; Matteson et al., 2016; Naurzalina et al., 2015). It not only creates high job performers, but high levels of commitment can also be obtained by this variable (Khalili, 2017; Miao et al., 2017; Pradhan et al., 2016; Turnipseed, 2018). Emotional intelligence (EI) has been a significant factor in increasing organizational performance and making employees aware of the organizational needs, vision, and culture (Altındağ & Köseadağı, 2015; Blackwood & Blackwood, 2019; Huynh et al., 2018). Its role as moderator has also been studied and researched on various topics that helped increase employee performance (Şahin et al., 2016). Studies have discussed the impact of knowledge management on organizational performance (Abbas & Kumari, 2021) and employee performance (Baskoro et al., 2021) but there is a dearth of research on the impact of knowledge management on the individual dimensions of employee performance i.e. Task performance, Contextual performance and counterproductive work behaviours. This study intends to cover this gap in current literature.

Considering the importance of knowledge management practices in enhancing organizational performance (Mardani et al., 2018), this study proposes that knowledge management practices will enhance employee performance, an essential contributor to organizational performance. Moreover, the emotional intelligence of the employee will moderate this relationship. Therefore, the study's objectives are to determine the relationship between knowledge management practices and employee performance and explore the moderating role of emotional intelligence between knowledge management practices and employee performance.

Literature Review

Knowledge management is a process that deals with the acquisition, usage, retention, and distribution of knowledge and experience to improve the performance of the organization (Gupta et al., 2000). Knowledge Management practices (KMP) enhance firm performance and employee performance. Organizational performance is strongly dependent on employee performance that can add to the firm's competitive advantage (Otley, 1999; Schmidt et al., 1986). If knowledge is rare and inimitable, a firm can get a competitive and sustained advantage by managing it smoothly (Barney, 1991). Knowledge management in the services industry is extremely crucial and is strongly related to organizational performance.

Employee performance is the outcome of an employee's activities performed in the organization. Employee Task Performance (EPT), Employee Contextual Performance (EPC), and counter-productive behaviour (EPCP) are the three areas on which Employee Performance (EP) can be rated (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Task performance can be termed as employees' performance, which is expected from them as the core task and recognized as a part of the employees' job. All the tasks written in the job description and are expected by the employer from the employee to perform are termed task performance (Greenslade & Jimmieson, 2007). The employees' motivation can be considered the pivotal point that exacerbates employee engagement and task performance (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Kanfer, 1990). In the job characteristics model, five major components are mentioned which improve the employee task performance. These five components are task significance, task variety, task autonomy, skill variety, and feedback that facilitate an employee's efficient and effective job performance (Bowen et al., 1991; Murphy & Jackson, 1999).

Knowledge Management helps a great deal in the task performance of employees. A proper knowledge management system is required to enhance workers' performance, which should be task/technology fit (Lin et al., 2008). An important aspect of knowledge management is that it supports every work activity. It supports the technical core of the employees' work. It not only helps but evaluates the work and its consequences due to knowledge management practices (Burstein & Linger, 2008). So, from the above-cited literature following hypothesis has been derived.

H₁ Knowledge management practices enhance employee task performance.

The second dimension of employee performance is contextual performance (EPC). It can be related to employee commitment and employee engagement helping the organizations to achieve their desired tasks. A person whose behaviour supports the social and psychological context of the workplace can be termed as contextual work performance of employee (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993, p. 27). EPC tells us about the extra work other than the work in the job description. EPC can only be maximized in the case of employee commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour.

EPC is also measured as the second performance that affects the organization's goodwill (Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). These are the extra responsibilities that the employee takes by initiative. He is not forced to do these tasks, but doing that can increase his loyalty to the organization (Judge et al., 2006). The employees rated high in EPC tend to share knowledge with their colleagues and acquire new knowledge to go the extra mile for effective performance.

Knowledge management practices help employees to own their organization. However, in traditional systems, the knowledge is vested secretly in the managers, and they don't share it with their subordinates which creates an obstacle in their contextual performance. The firms practising knowledge management are open to sharing the knowledge, which helps in enhancing contextual performance. Moreover, the peers share knowledge and add colours to their resumes (Cope III et al., 2007).

So, from the above-cited literature following hypothesis has been derived.

H₂ Knowledge management practices have a positive relationship with employee contextual performance.

The third dimension of EP is counter-productive behaviour (EPCP). It can be defined as the behaviour of employees at work that is against the company's interest, and it hinders EP. EPCP is negatively related to organizational citizenship behaviour. The employees' policies and tactics against the organization's culture, values, and norms are counter-productive behaviour (Kaplan, 1975). Counter-productive behaviour demotivates employees and weakens organization citizenship and employee commitment (Dalal, 2005; Miles et al., 2002). Counter-productive behaviour can also be an outcome of weak organizational justice. If an organization is not providing justice to its employees, their negative emotions and EPCP start to develop (Penney & Spector, 2005; Spector & Fox, 2002).

These behaviours affect the organizational working environment and disturb the company's productivity level (Jelinek, 2012). Moreover, the employees think that they would not be found doing deviance, and they will walk through the gallows unattended and will not be proved guilty, so they do not stop deviance (Jensen & Patel, 2011). Researchers suggest that these negative behaviours rupture the organization's integrity and goodwill, reducing organizational effectiveness (Appelbaum et al., 2007). Counter-productive behaviours result in distrust among co-workers, leg-pulling, dishonesty with work, and disrespecting others (Nasir & Bashir, 2012). Knowledge management practices negatively influence counter-productive work behaviour as knowledge hiding of some employees affects other workers to do counter-productive work. Knowledge sharing of workers influences them not to be involved in EPCP (Serenko & Bontis, 2016). These knowledge management practices reduce absenteeism at work and increase organizational commitment, reducing EPCP (Chernyak & Tziner, 2014). KMP have been a major source of absorption. When the employees work with each other; they have good working relationships, absorb each other's behaviour and

become tolerant, reducing counter-productivity (Bogenrieder & Nooteboom, 2004).

KMP create a healthy working environment in the organization. The employees have a good working relationship and develop a positive organizational climate, preventing workplace aggression. Furthermore, due to their positive environment, the employees are not involved in bullying (Evans et al., 2015).

So, from the above-cited literature following has been derived.

H₃ Knowledge management practices have a negative relationship with counter-productive work behaviour.

Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is one of the phenomena widely researched due to its impact on employee performance (EP). Intelligence is the aggregate or natural capacity of the individual to act purposefully, reason, and deal effectively with the environment (Wechsler, 1943). The majority of the problems faced by humans are directly related to emotions' ignorance either at work or home (violence, sickness, addiction, anxiety, and war) (Payne, 1985).

EI explains that people have a self-perception about how well they are in understanding, handling, and managing emotions of him/themselves and others (Petrides et al., 2016; Serrat, 2017). EI is further divided into three sub-dimensions; emotional, social, and personal (Mayer et al., 2016). EI, organizational culture and spiritual intelligence are the key factors influencing EP (Sancoko & Thoyib, 2012). Apart from a lot of work that has been done on EI, the emotions related to the job are still to be worked on (Bande et al., 2015). Frontline employees being an asset for the organizations are very important. Their job performance and job satisfaction are affected by EI as emotions desired by organizations are vital, and deep level acting is desirous of employees (Sony & Mekoth, 2016).

EI can also be used as the manipulation of emotions. The emotions of colleagues, immediate bosses, and immediate subordinates can be manipulated and transformed using emotional skills. The EI of a person knowing the feelings of others can cause others to work for their motives (Austin et al., 2007). The EI of employees can persuade their bosses for unjustified promotion because they know when to trigger which emotion. These emotionally intelligent persons work below standards but have never been pointed out due to their quality to understand and then react to the emotions of others depending on the present situation.

So, from the above-cited literature following hypothesis has been derived

H₄ Emotional Intelligence plays a moderating role in the relationship between knowledge management and employee performance.

Theoretical Framework

Grounded in the Knowledge Based View (Grant, 1996), the current study examines the impact of knowledge management practices on employee's task and contextual performance along with counter productive work behaviours. It also studies the moderation of knowledge management enabler (Emotional Intelligence). Knowledge management practices and emotional intelligence have been used as composite variables, while employee performance has been studied as the three dimensions of the variable.

Figure 1 depicts the schematic diagram of the theoretical framework.

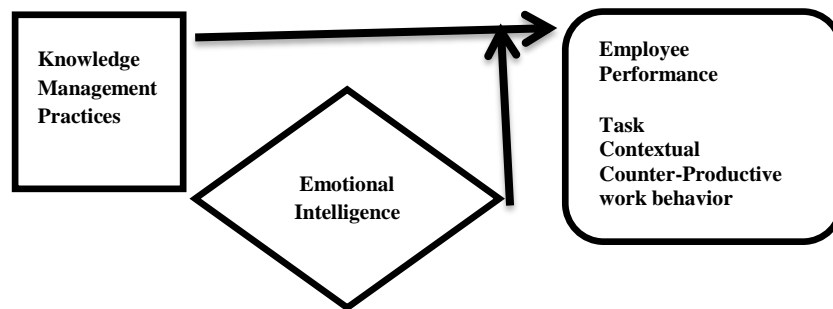


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Methodology

This is an explanatory study with a cross-sectional design. Individual employees are the unit of analysis.

Convenience sampling has been used for data collection. Convenience sampling is used where the sampling frame is not available. The sampling frame was not available in this study because the colleges' administrations were not willing to share the list of employees or even the total number of employees working in their institution. Moreover, convenience sampling has been used by different researchers who were conducting surveys on knowledge management. The researchers used convenience sampling to find clinical practice knowledge management (Dawes & Sampson, 2003). Convenience sampling was also used in the research to implement knowledge management in IZGAZ (Zaim, 2006). The research on knowledge management sources was also done through convenience sampling (Gray & Meister, 2006). A study of the influence of the ethical climate of the organization by KMP was also done by using convenience sampling (Tseng & Fan, 2011).

The data were collected from various private and government colleges of Punjab, Pakistan. The sampling size is 277, which is a good number for this research to get accurate results, representing the population (Kulkarni et al., 2006). Approximately the same number was used as a sample in the same type of studies (Schiuma et al., 2012). A sample size of less than 200 was taken to analyse KMP (Zaim et al., 2007).

For data collection, the questionnaire comprised of three subscales to measure knowledge management practices (KMP) (Darroch, 2002), employee performance (EP) (Koopmans, 2014), and emotional intelligence (EI) (Law, Wong & Song 2004). The questionnaire has 48 items, 06 demographic factors. KMP has 16 items, whereas EP has 17 items and 15 items of EI. A 05-point Likert scale was used to get responses.

Data Analysis and Results

Reliability Analysis

It is a measure used to understand and analyse the consistency of the data collected. The value of Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.5 is considered acceptable and as the value goes higher, so does the reliability of the questionnaire (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Table 1:

Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
KMP	16	.780
EPT	5	.642
EPC	7	.751
EPCP	5	.558
EI	15	.829
Total	48	.858

Note: KMP= knowledge management practices, EPT= employee task performance, EPC= employee contextual performance, EPCP= employee counter productive work behaviours, EI= emotional intelligence

Table 1 shows that the reliability of the scales used in the study is well within the acceptable range.

Regression Analysis

In this study, knowledge management practices (KMP) is the independent variable; employee performance (EP) is the dependent variable and has three dimensions; employees task performance (EPT), employee contextual performance (EPC), and employee counter-productive work behaviour (EPCP), while emotional intelligence (EI) is the moderating variable. To measure the relationship among the variables, multiple regression has been used.

SPSS has been used for Multiple regression, while moderation analysis has been conducted through process macros by Andrew F. Hayes. Before conducting regression analysis, the assumptions of regression were checked. The data was found to be normal as the ranges of the skewness of all the variables were under ± 10 and kurtosis values were ± 3 . Mahalanobis D2 test was conducted and no significant outlier was found.

For regression, three models were run, taking three dimensions of the dependent variable one by one. Table 2 shows the values of regression analysis for the three models used.

Table 2
Regression Analysis

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	Sig Value	Beta Value
(1) EPC	.504	.254	.251	0.000	.535
(2) EPT	.498	.248	.245	0.000	.508
(3) EPCP	-.252	.064	.060	0.000	-.257

Predictor: KMP

Note: KMP= knowledge management practices, EPT= employee task performance, EPC= employee contextual performance, EPCP= employee counter productive work behaviours

According to table 2, all three models are significant. There is a significant and positive relationship between knowledge management practices and task and contextual performance while the relationship between counter-productive behaviours and knowledge management practice is significant and negative.

Moderation Analysis

In the current study, EI is a moderator while analysing the impact of KMP on three dimensions of EP, namely EPT, EPC, and EPCP. Andrew F Hayes (2019) process version 3 was used for the moderation analysis of this study.

Table 3
Moderation Analysis Model 1 EPT and KMP with EI

	Co-efficient	Se	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-3.2913	1.7951	.0678	-6.8252	.2426
KMP	1.5624	.4693	.0010	.6386	2.4863
EI	1.4109	.4126	.0007	.5986	2.2232
Intl_1	-.2714	.1068	.0116	-.4818	-.0611

Note: KMP= knowledge management practices, EPT= employee task performance, EI= emotional intelligence

Table 4
Moderation Analysis Model 1 Employee task and KMP with EI

EI	EFFECT	P	LLCI	ULCI
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3.8508	.5172	0.000	.3659	.6685
4.2295	.4144	0.000	.3046	.5242
4.6082	.3116	0.000	.1937	.4296
R ²	.3262	R ² change	.0159	

In the moderation analysis of EI with KMP as an independent variable and EPT as a dependent variable, the moderation is significant as the p-value is 0.0116. The effect column shows the decreasing tendency as employee task and EPC decreases with an increase in EI.

Table 5
Moderation Analysis Model 2 EPC and KMP with EI

	Co-efficient	Se	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	-4.8504	1.7769	.0068	-8.3486	-1.3522
KMP	1.8387	.4645	.0001	.9241	2.7532
EI	1.7510	.4084	.0000	.9469	2.5551
Intl_1	-.3332	.1058	.0018	-.5414	-.1250

Table 6
Moderation Analysis Model 2 Employee contextual and KMP with EI

EI	EFFECT	P	LLCI	ULCI
3.8508	.5557	0.000	.4059	.7055
4.2295	.4295	0.000	.3209	.5382
4.6082	.3034	0.000	.1866	.4201
R ²	.3906	R ² change	.0222	

In the moderating analysis of EI with KMP as an independent variable and EPC as a dependent variable, moderation is significant as the p-value is 0.0018. The effect column shows the decreasing tendency as employee task and EPC decreases with an increase in EI.

Table 7
Moderation Analysis Model 3 Employee CP work behaviour and KMP with EI

	Co-efficient	Se	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	10.065	1.8985	0.000	6.3274	13.8026
KMP	-1.9248	.4940	0.001	-2.9073	-.9424
EI	-1.7779	.4411	0.001	-2.6463	-.9095
Intl_1	.4026	.1149	0.005	.1764	.6287

Table 8
Moderation Analysis Model 3 Employee CP work behaviour and KMP with EI

EI	EFFECT	P	LLCI	ULCI
3.8429	-.3778	0.0000	-.5369	-.2187
4.2269	-.2232	0.0003	-.3432	-.1032
4.4000	-.1535	0.0124	-.2736	-.0335
R ²	.1420	R ² change	.0386	

In the moderating analysis of EI with KMP as an independent variable and employee CP work behaviour as a dependent variable, the moderation is significant as the p-value is 0.0050. The effect column shows the increasing tendency as employee CP work behaviour increases with EI.

Discussion

KMP help the organization to give knowledge to all the employees at the right place and at the right time. KMP have given the organization leverage to eliminate the employees who exploit the organization because they are a source of knowledge. The organization cannot afford to lose them as they are experienced, and losing them will create hurdles in their work efficiency.

When these employees leave the organization, they don't go alone; they take a lot of knowledge and information, which is irreplaceable in a short period. These employees often threaten the organization to leave their jobs and the organizations have no other option to compensate these employees. But with the advent of KMP, the knowledge is continuously shared among the employees through a proper channel. So, when employees leave the organization, they do not take the knowledge and information with them. The employees cannot threaten the organization and cannot exploit the organization for their vested interests.

Knowledge management helps the organization for better and effective working and helps the employees of the organization. The employees tend to love and work for those organizations which have established KMP. The modern-day employee believes that there are more growth opportunities in organizations working on KMP (Salojärvi et al., 2005). In this study, KMP was tested on three dimensions of employee performance i.e. employee task performance, contextual and counter-productive work behaviours. Employees' task and contextual performance depicts positive dimensions of performance while counter-productive behaviours explain the negative dimension. The study found a significant relationship between employee performance and knowledge management. Many studies have found the positive relationship between these variables,

but most of these studies used employee performance as cumulative dimension (Akram & Abdullah, 2018). This study has taken a step further by exploring the impact of individual dimensions of performance and knowledge management. A positive relationship between task performance and knowledge management practises has been found. Edikpa and colleagues (2018) also found a positive relationship between knowledge management and task performance in secondary school teaching staff. The colleges where KMP are implemented, employees are well aware of their job description and the colleges are market-responsive and proactive towards technology that enhances the task performance.

Contextual performance is the type of performance that is not written in the job description, but the employee is expected to do those tasks. The study revealed that in the colleges where KMP are implemented, the employees are more inclined towards EPC because they like to relate with that college. They believe that more growth opportunities in that college, and their system is more integrated. EPC is the type of performance that is the dire need of the organization in a modern dynamic world and its knowledge sharing helps in enhancing the contextual performance (Paçacı, 2019). Organizations nowadays expect this type of performance to improve efficiency and effectiveness (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999).

Counter-productive behaviours include all those deviant acts and behaviours that make the employees do all the work that is against their job description and make the employees harmful in their performances at the workplace. In the organizations where KMP are implemented, employees show a decreasing trend towards EPCP. This trend is evident because the colleges where KMP values the attitudes and opinions of its employees and the employees tend to relate with those colleges; that is why EPCP is lower in those organizations.

The moderating role of EI was also analysed in the relationship of KMP and EP with its three dimensions i.e. EPT, EPC, and EPCP. EI as a moderator can have a positive or negative role in the relationship between KMP and EP. In past studies, EI has been considered a positive indicator of EP, and as a moderator, it has shown a positive trend in the relationship between KMP and EP (Law et al., 2008). In this study, the results suggested that the employees in the colleges who are emotionally intelligent are more inclined towards counter-productive behaviours and less towards the task and contextual performance. Recent studies have focused on the other side of the coin, and EI is now considered a relative term that can be used positively and negatively. The other side of EI is the dark one (Nagler et al., 2014).

Dark intelligence has three dimensions “Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy”, which are prevalent nowadays. The researchers have found that intelligent employees try to

manipulate their subordinates' emotions, peer groups, and, most importantly, their supervisors. The results of the moderation analysis support this claim that the people having dark triad are manipulating their supervisors' emotions, especially in the colleges of Punjab, Pakistan. The results endorse the facts that employees use EI as a tool to use others as stairs for self-vested interests (Austin et al., 2007). Both task and the contextual performance had a negative association with EI. When EI was introduced in a relationship, it showed a decline in the task as well as the contextual performance of employees at the workplace, which supports the fact that the emotionally intelligent employees know the triggering point of others, so do not work hard and use buttering and flattering (Kilduff et al., 2010). They intelligently work less and use smart words and actions that do not come under the radar of performance measures (Lubit, 2003). It is also reflected in the case of counter-productive behaviours; when tested with EI, the results reflect that emotionally intelligent employees are more involved in counter-productive behaviours.

Research Implications

Most of the studies on knowledge management practices are conducted in western countries. Still, this research can add to the existing literature in the eastern countries, especially South Asia, where the cultures are different. The current study explored the impact of knowledge management practices on three dimensions of employee performance i.e. employee task performance, contextual performance, and counter-productive work behaviour, which will add to the literature as the current literature on the individual dimension is scarce. Moreover, this study has ascertained the negative side of emotional intelligence, which has not been researched widely, and a vast research gap exists. This research has highlighted the dark side of emotional intelligence and opened a new avenue of research for future researchers.

The study findings are also significant for the managers; they should be well aware of the employees who do all of the flattery but are low in performance and remain unchecked due to their ability to manipulate emotions and become an unidentified cause of deteriorating organizational performance.

Limitations of Study

This study is cross-sectional as the sample was tested once, but its results can vary if we analyse it through longitudinal research design. This study has been done mainly on the college employees of Punjab, Pakistan, but it is not generalizable to the whole education sector. The findings cannot be generalized to the manufacturing industry.

Conclusion

This research was designed to study the relationship of knowledge management practices with three dimensions of employee performance i.e. employee task performance, contextual performance, and counter-productive work behaviour and the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the colleges of Punjab, Pakistan. The results depict a positive and significant relationship between knowledge management practices and employee task performance and contextual performance and a negative relationship with counter-productive work behaviour.

The performance of employees excels with the knowledge management practices. The employees tend to work more efficiently and effectively in those colleges where knowledge management practices are implemented. The moderating role of emotional intelligence was found to be negative in this particular study as it weakens the relationship of the knowledge management practices and employee performance which indicates that the employees who are emotionally intelligent use their skills to use others for their interests, and these employees lack in the task as well as contextual performance because they focus on triggering the emotions of their bosses and their colleagues according to their will. These employees don't concentrate on their task and contextual performance as they spend time pleasing and praising their bosses. With the concept of looking busy and doing nothing, these employees have counter-productive work behaviour.

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