

Organizational Culture Reform of Universities With the Implementation of Knowledge Management

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Abstract

The implementation of knowledge management has always involved a major organizational change, and whether it will be successfully implemented or not is closely related to organizational culture. By virtue of the Competing Values Framework Model, this paper analyzes the present organizational culture of universities and the direction of organizational culture reform with the implementation of knowledge management.

Key words: University teaching; Knowledge management; Organizational culture reform; Competing values framework

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INTRODUCTION

In the late 1990s, educational organizations began to introduce the concept of knowledge management. The purpose is to enhance the teaching level and comprehensive strength of universities through strengthening knowledge integration, promoting knowledge creation, facilitating knowledge transfer and implementing knowledge application. Teaching knowledge includes teaching theory, teaching method,

teaching form, teaching means and so on. Teaching knowledge management mainly solves the problem of what knowledge do educators pass on to students and how to pass it on, and the focus is the sharing of tacit knowledge (Dalkir, 2017).

Organizational culture is closely related to knowledge management. On the one hand, because the teaching work requires universities to closely contact and cooperate with each other, in order to cultivate high-quality compound talents; if the organization lacks such a culture that supports communication, and the division of knowledge is inevitable. On the other hand, organizational culture determines the breadth and depth of communication between universities and the outside world, consequently this will affect the practicability of the teaching content and the strategic height and development prospect of the university. Therefore, how to establish an organizational culture compatible with teaching knowledge management is a very realistic problem.

1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

1.1 Organizational Culture and Its Functions

For organizational culture, scholars have proposed several definitions based on different research purposes. To be specific, organizational culture contains the values, codes of conduct, team consciousness, way of thinking, work style, psychological expectations and group belonging and some other group consciousness that are accepted by all members of the organization. Richard w. Stackman et al. summarized the concept of organizational culture as: culture is common to all members of an organization, and as a combination of a series of values, guiding ideas, insights and ways of thinking imparted by truth to new members, it is an unwritten and emotional part of the organization (Palmer, Dunford, & Akin, 2016).

The reason why organizational culture is ranked in an important and significant position in the study of organizational development and organizational change, and this is largely because organizational culture creates stability and adaptability for organizations: organizational culture maintains organizational continuity and consistency through the persistence of a series of shared values; at the same time, in designing new strategies to deal with new environments, and culture can cultivate organizational adaptability through a set of clear principles. In short, culture plays two important roles in organizations: one is to bring its members together so that they know how to deal with the relationship between each other; the other is to help the organization adapt to the external environment.

1.2 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management refers to a systematic and organized process of specifying information processing, and the process can be used to acquire, organize and communicate tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge of some organization members. Later, other members can use this knowledge to improve their work efficiency and thus become more productive.

Among the main challenges facing knowledge management, and the acquisition and integration of knowledge is more important than the creation of knowledge (Hislop, Bosua, & Helms, 2018). In organizations, knowledge is of limited value if it is not shared. The integration and application of the expertise owned by each member of the organization is the basis of the enterprise's ability to create and maintain competitive advantages (Rhem, 2016). There have always been ways to share and spread knowledge, such as face-to-face communication, guidance, job rotation and staff training, etc. But as markets and organizations become increasingly global and move toward virtual forms, therefore, more efficient electronic means are needed. On the other hand, knowledge will not necessarily spread freely within the organization simply because of the technology that supports it.

In fact, technologies like Lotus Notes have not led to changes in information sharing and communication patterns. Vandenbosch and Ginzberg found in a study that those members of the organization who were willing to communicate regularly and frequently before Lotus Notes was implemented, and they often communicate using Lotus Notes, on the contrary, members who had not communicated often before, after the implementation of the system, will not yet communicate (Hislop, Bosua, & Helms, 2018). Therefore, in the absence of a better, clear strategy for creating and integrating knowledge within the organization, a computer system that facilitates communication and information sharing, at best, it plays a random role.

2.3 The Relationship Between Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management

Since 1997, the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the American productivity & Quality Center (APQC) have collaborated on the benchmarking project, looking for outstanding practice cases in knowledge management, and the questionnaires were conducted from November 2001 to January 2002. Survey results show, the five key elements of knowledge management are culture, motivation and skills, promotion of senior management, organizational structure and process, and information technology. Among them, organizational culture accounts for 47.1% of the success factors (Rhem, 2016).

Although most knowledge management projects begin with the implementation of technology-based solutions, however, the two major success factors of the project are culture and leadership (Palmer, Dunford, & Akin, 2016). The application of modern IT technology and network communication platform makes the communication and transfer of university knowledge easier, but without the appropriate organizational culture, this exchange, based on technology alone, is still limited.

2. ANALYZES THE TEACHING ORGANIZATION OF UNIVERSITIES BY USING THE COMPETING VALUES FRAMEWORK MODEL

In order to facilitate the diagnosis of organizational culture in universities and the reform of organizational culture in the implementation of teaching knowledge management, this paper analyzes the teaching organization culture in universities based on the Competing Values Framework Model.

2.1 The Competing Values Framework Model

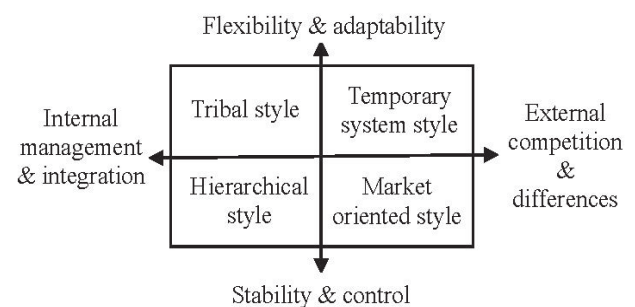


Figure 1
Competing values framework model

The competing values framework was originally derived from the study of organizational efficiency. John Campbell created a list of 39 indicators to represent all possible standards of organizational efficiency. Bob Quinn and John Robert conducted statistical analysis on these

39 indicators and finally divided them into four groups (Rhem, 2016).

As shown in the figure, both ends of each coordinate represent an extreme: Stability and control and flexibility and adaptability, focus on internal management and integration and focus on external competition and differences. The four quadrants represent completely opposite or competitive cultural assumptions. These opposing or competing quadrants constitute the competing values framework we are discussing. In short, the typical characteristic of hierarchical culture is the dominance of hierarchy, and the core of management is control; tribal emphasis on team, sharing, and the core of management is participation; a temporary institutional culture is suitable for highly dynamic and highly changing organizations, and the core of management is the change; the market-oriented culture mainly faces the external environment, and the core of management is competition.

It should be noted that, branches in large organizations may often present different organizational cultures, for example, the R&D department is approaching the

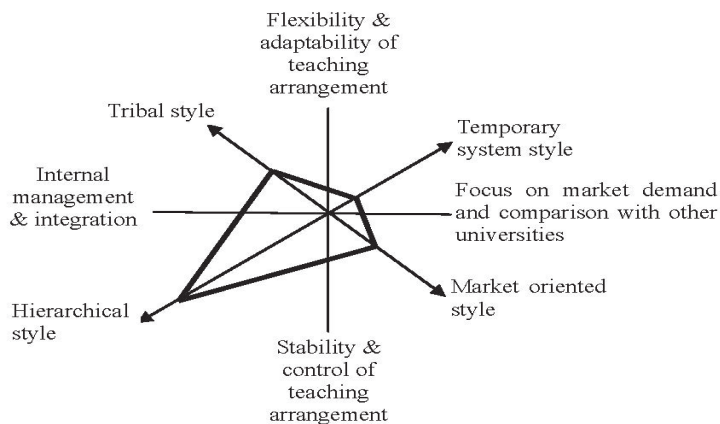


Figure 2
Outline of current organizational culture in universities

Figure 2 draws the outline of organizational culture in universities (Palmer, Dunford, & Akin, 2016). Among them, in order to facilitate interpretation and make analysis more targeted, in combination with the teaching in universities, the names of the four dimensions of the competing values framework are changed.

As can be seen from the figure, in the current teaching of general universities in China, hierarchical organizational culture dominates. Its features mainly include: multi-level grade level, bureaucracy, the mastery of knowledge is one of the indicators for the promotion of members.

The Barrier of Hierarchical Dominant Organizational Culture to the Implementation of Knowledge Management in Universities

Although the hierarchical culture of the hierarchy has maintained the stability of the large-scale organization in the university, but for teaching management, and hierarchical organizational culture is not conducive to knowledge exchange and innovation, and thus restrict the

temporary system, and the financial sector tends to be hierarchical. In addition, there are often contradictions in the outline of organizational culture, for example, organizations that perform well are both tribal and market-first. Beyond that, the dominant culture of the organization is not immutable; organizational development, changes in the external environment, intensified competition and high-level changes may lead to changes in organizational culture. When the dominant culture is matched with the management style, role, manpower and efficiency, it can greatly improve the performance of the organization; on the contrary, that would be enough trouble to change the system. So for an organization, "What is most needed is not a balance of culture, but the ability to shift to the right culture when times change ((hem, 2016)."

2.2 Analysis of Organizational Culture in Universities Based on the Framework of Competing Values

The Organizational Culture of Universities Is Basically Hierarchical and Strict

development of universities. For example, the teaching content often lags behind the market demand, and the curriculum and teaching staff arrangements tend to be conservative and fixed. The barriers of hierarchical culture to the implementation of knowledge management in universities are as follow:

Individual level: Monopoly knowledge, retain knowledge, psychological conflict.

Organization level: Sense of hierarchy, lack of cooperation between departments, avoiding mistakes.

3. DIRECTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE REFORM IN UNIVERSITIES UNDER KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Research shows, among institutions of higher learning, those that emphasize both innovation and change (temporary system) and insist on stability and control (hierarchical) do best (Hislop, Bosua, & Helms, 2018).

In fact, in the implementation of knowledge management in universities, and we are not seeking a balance of four cultures, instead, they try to align organizational culture with change.

As a historical existence, hierarchical organizational culture has its own rationality, and it is unnecessary and damaging to change the culture completely and indiscriminately, and it's very harmful. But without the necessary changes in the culture, it will be very unfavorable to the smooth implementation of knowledge management; in particular, the sharing of tacit knowledge can cause great obstacles. Numerous practices in the business community have proved, the implementation of knowledge management is not a matter of installing a

knowledge management technology into an organization's network system, and successful implementation of knowledge management is closely related to successful organizational change. The successful organizational change is the change of organizational culture. This law also applies to universities as large knowledge-intensive organizations. So, on the premise of insisting on the necessary hierarchical cultural elements, according to different tasks and different organizational areas, it is necessary to proceed with the cultural change of the organization.

Figure 3 plans the cultural change direction of university organizations.

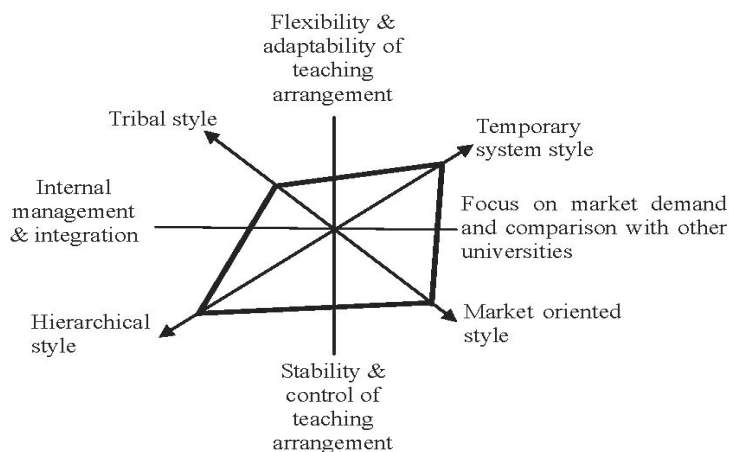


Figure 3
Outline of changed organizational culture in universities
3.1 Teaching Strategy Closing to the Market Oriented Style

Knowledge is different from data and information, and knowledge can be thought of as a resource in a process or task, at the same time, knowledge can also be the product of a process or task. The ultimate goal of knowledge acquisition, transmission and creation is to transform into productivity and value. Universities send a large number of talents to the society every year, social and production practices test college knowledge, in turn, college knowledge promotes social development and productivity. Therefore, in the implementation of knowledge management, college teaching strategy should be close to the market-oriented culture. Specific measures are as follows:

Focus on the combination of academic and social needs. For example, to promote the cooperation of the school and enterprise, and encourage teachers to work part-time in enterprises, and employ enterprise personnel to teach in universities, and carry out the practice of students, etc. and these exchanges or practical experience are stored in the knowledge base in a timely manner.

- Respect students' interests, and focus on students' expectations and feelings, and encourage innovations.
- Focus on the transformation from theory to practice, and respect the test of theory by practice.

- Strengthening inter-school cooperation, through the vertical comparison within the university and the horizontal comparison with other universities evaluate the quality of teaching. Keep up with the academic frontier, and learn from successful experiences, complement each other's advantages, and make full use of resources, in order to improve the teaching level and comprehensive competitiveness of universities.

- Establish a graduate tracking system. On the one hand, universities can continue to provide knowledge in certain areas to students who have already left school, and promote students' career development; on the other hand, providing such a channel enables the graduates of the first-line to feed back to the school the problems that are actually encountered in the work, finally, it is applied to practical teaching, in order to gradually reduce the lag time between teaching content and work practice.

3.2 Teaching Management Closing to Tribal Style

Typical characteristics of tribal culture include: share values and goals, work in unity and close cooperation, teachers have more autonomy. Tribalism can simply be seen as a friendly place, here people can share with each other. In this culture, success is defined as sensitivity to students and concern for teachers. For knowledge management, the visualization of tacit knowledge is

a key link, but mutual trust among members of an organization is the cornerstone for the smooth transfer of knowledge, building a culture of sharing and trust is crucial to the successful implementation of knowledge management. So the corresponding, the academic atmosphere should be more tribal: lower rank bondage, implement people-oriented, encourage innovations, tolerance error, in order to enhance trust among members of the organization and promote the transfer of knowledge and innovation.

3.3 Specific Teaching Tasks Closing to the Temporary System Style

A temporary institutional culture emphasizes adaptability, flexibility and creativity, and the long-term goal is rapid growth and access to new resources. A culture of AD hoc institutions is embodied in specific business processes: the team is temporarily established according to the specific business, and the team is automatically disbanded after the end of the task. For example, the deployment of teaching staff can be free from the constraints of departments, and universities can allocate the most suitable personnel for specific teaching tasks, several teachers may work together on the same subject, or jointly responsible for the training of the same group of students for a long time. In college, some teachers have rich production practice experience, some teachers have made great achievements in the frontier of new subjects; some teachers delve deeply into textbooks, and some teachers are better at communicating with students. The temporary system is not only conducive to the improvement of work efficiency and the training of teachers' comprehensive ability, and it is also conducive to the rational utilization of teachers' resources.

The temporary system broke the restrictions of the colleges and departments, and it effectively avoids the division of knowledge, and it promotes knowledge fusion. This combination is full of challenges and innovation, and there is often a collision of sparks of thought, and this is extremely important for knowledge innovation.

SUMMARY

Knowledge management has been implemented in universities, and the essence of this is a major organizational change. The four kinds of organizational culture are not good or bad, and the key is whether the dominant culture matches the organizational environment, whether cultural types meet long-term goals, styles and trends, etc. When considering the organization's long-term goals, the diagnosis of organizational culture helps researchers and managers to understand what are the ideal organizational attributes and qualities.

This paper emphasizes that reasonable organizational culture reform is one of the preconditions for effective implementation of teaching knowledge management in universities, and also puts forward the direction and measures of organizational culture reform. The implementation of knowledge management not only needs the corresponding organizational culture change, and it also needs its organizational structure to match, however, this paper does not make an in-depth exploration of the organizational structure of universities. In addition, the application of knowledge management in universities is at the initial stage, and this paper discusses the direction of organizational culture change in universities under knowledge management, and it has certain theoretical guiding significance to the implementation of knowledge management in universities, however, the implementation details still need to be verified in practice.

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