

The Effects of E-Learning on Knowledge Management: An Organizational Perspective

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Abstract:

Knowledge Management has become, in the past few years, a common and mainstream term in the technology-based society we live in.

Knowledge is a vital factor of an organization, but knowledge does not appear out of nowhere, it depends on the level of learning that takes place in the organization. The more one learns, the more knowledge produced and shared with others, creating the knowledge management and learning loop necessary to enable what the literature calls "**the learning organization**".

Learning in the classic classroom setting cannot advance an organization in the knowledge era, as many organizations are geographically dispersed and may work on different projects at the same time. The answer to this problem is **e-learning**.

E-learning promotes the learning organization and Knowledge Management, as it enables independent learning, personalized content and advancement and the social notion that learning is a task that holds benefits to the individual.

This research aimed to study the influences of Knowledge Management and e-learning on the organization from a macro point of view, studying the actual influence such a system has had on an organization – **the Israeli Air Force** – by comparing its management of knowledge and learning habits before and after the incorporation of such a system.

This research is a qualitative case study; in-depth interviews were held with the population in the organization, in their natural working environment. This method was chosen so as to achieve a holistic and subjective picture of the aims studies.

The population chosen were management-level individuals responsible for the incorporation and adoption of the Knowledge Management and e-learning

system in the organization. The population consisted of managers in the R&D unit of the organization (which developed the system studied here), and managers in the technical unit (from two levels of management, in order to enrich the study and receive a broader picture). This population was chosen because it's managers all incorporated the system and had the ability to compare Knowledge Management and e-learning (and other learning methods) before and after the system, and because of their homogeneity (profession, education and ranks), maintaining the focus on the topic itself and not on the population.

The uniqueness of this research originates in the one-time window of opportunity of the timing the research took place in. Such timing provides the ability to see a picture of the organization before and after the incorporation of the system – such a timing that occurs only once in the lifetime of an organization.

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