Extracting Tacit Knowledge of Female Administrative Staff Letter Writing Skills at the King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah

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Abstract

This study identifies the importance of human resources on-the-job training in knowledge management and revealing the necessary skills and experiences when writing administrative letters to transfer distinguished female employees' tacit knowledge. In addition, it identifies the common mistakes in writing these letters and coming up with the job competencies that are needed when designing training programs for female administrative staff. It relied on the Delphi approach. The results show that the higher the qualification is, the fewer common errors related to the linguistic aspects, and the higher the qualification is, the greater the desire for performance enhancement. As well, the more the experience, the greater reading skills, and learning speed are. The results proved that this study sample agreed on the importance of the skills and competencies to enable them to write administrative letters and perform their work properly, which are in the following order according to the responses of the participants in this study: Accuracy at work, the desire to develop work and improve performance, computer skills, oral and written communication skills, continuous reading, and work organization. This study recommended the participation of these distinguished employees in training programs to transfer their experience to others.

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1 Introduction

To achieve success in the application of knowledge management, it is necessary to understand the infrastructure for knowledge management which is focusing on the need to provide

an encouraging and appropriate environment for applying the foundations of knowledge management to reach the maximum benefit from knowledge, experiences and skills and to create a cultural environment that gives confidence for human resources to contribute with information and raise the efficiency of work performance in the organization.

Hence emerges the importance of training and development of human resources, which is based on specific rules, principles and strategy. In light of the rationalization of financial resources, the Training and Qualification Center is very keen on excellence in performance, empowering employees, and expanding the horizons of human resources at the university through training programs and workshops in cooperation with the competent human cadres that work to acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to work. The final objective is to apply these capabilities during work and transferring this tacit knowledge to employees writing administrative letters. Thus, emerged the interest to prepare an applied study on administrative human resources in the field of writing administrative letters to transfer tacit knowledge and build a knowledge base of technical skills and training programs for writing administrative letters.

In fact, the importance of the study is derived from the subjects novelty. If information is the currency of the knowledge economy, then human experience is the bank in which it is preserved. This study confirms that the management of the tacit knowledge from within the minds of human resources is considered as an important asset for investment that is subject to renewal, development and creativity. Therefore, this study came to build a knowledge database for administrative skills and experiences within the Training and Qualification Center at King Abdulaziz University by collecting and organizing knowledge assets to be preserved and developed. To sum up, this study gains its importance through achieving the following:

The study is unique in that it deals for the first time with the dimensions of the application of knowledge management as a requirement for human resource management at the university. As well, it shed light on one of the concepts of knowledge management, which is the management of human resources as an internal source of knowledge through the training programs provided by the center in addition to paying attention to tacit knowledge that can be transformed into explicit knowledge to be employed and used in training programs.

Since human resources are an intellectual and cognitive force that helps in managing organizations and is the most important means of developing them, the Training and Qualification Center at King Abdulaziz University organizes many on-the-job training programs for university employees in all administrative and technical fields. One of these training programs is writing administrative letters. It is organized periodically twice a year. Given the researcher's experience in the field of training, and as one of the administrative leaders in the Training and Qualification Center at the university, the researcher noticed that the opinions of the trained female employees in the training programs vary ranging between positive and negative. Herein, came the current study seeking to confront one of the challenges of knowledge management in motivating human resources to share. Specifically focusing on motivating the contribution of distinguished

individuals with experience to write down their tacit knowledge in writing administrative letters as the first practice to record the skills and competencies necessary to improve the training programs provided in writing administrative letters. Moreover, following up the training programs and their results, and studying the employees' evaluation of what is provided to them, it was noticed that the majority of the female employees were asked to identify the applied technical skills that are not provided in most administrative training programs. The idea of the study came to benefit from the distinguished female employees in the various administrative sectors by transferring the tacit knowledge that made them excel in writing. For this purpose, the number of the distinguished female administrative staff has been limited to determine the skills and experiences associated with writing administrative letters, to identify common mistakes when writing administrative letters, which include the linguistic, technical, and administrative aspects, and to list the required skills and competencies enabling female employees to perform their tasks accurately, which would be presented in workshops to transfer tacit knowledge for employees with less skill and experience to spread the benefit for all. Therefore, the problem of the study can be expressed in the following direct question:

What are the methods of extracting tacit knowledge from distinguished female employees in writing administrative letters at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah - Sulaymaniyah section, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia? The aim is to build knowledge and skills in the field of writing administrative letters on the one hand, and on the other hand, raising the efficiency of the institution and increasing its competitive capabilities against other institutions.

2 Literature Review

Al-Jubeiri (2021) discovers the impact of training on the application of performance management in the public sector. By relied on the quantitative analytical approach, it presents the main stages of training and its ability to introduce the new performance management variable and the application of its operations in government agencies, as well as the establishment of a performance culture among employees. The results reveal the positive impact of training effects on the employee's ability to formulate smart goals and the positive relationship between effective training and the knowledge of the employee's capabilities and competencies. Also, effective training positively affects the stability of the information resulting from the training.

Bawazeer (2018) presented the actual reality of the mechanisms for extracting and transferring knowledge at the Prince Sultan Academy of Aviation Sciences and its impact on the efficiency of pilot training and building a model for a knowledge-based to extract the tacit knowledge of pilots and civilians. The study relied on the case study approach having a questionnaire as a tool for data collection. Extracting and transferring civilian pilots' knowledge (experiences) for pilot trainers contributes to reducing the percentage of errors during flight. Motivating pilot trainers to transfer the tacit knowledge they possess will benefit from it in the field of training. The study also came out with a conception of a knowledge-based model for training.

Al-Juhani (2018) identified the role of on-the-job training programs through knowing the relationship of training dimensions in raising the efficiency of workers' performance to achieve the vision of 2030. The study used the descriptive approach using the survey questionnaire method. The training program based on modern advanced methods contributes to raising the efficiency of employees' performance. There are also statistically significant differences in the role of on-the-job training programs in raising the efficiency of employee performance in government organizations.

Wickel (2016) described the possibility of translating company knowledge into knowledge maps and describe the method for extracting knowledge from employees. It relies heavily on transparency first in dealing with the employees who make up the structure, and a matrix should not be built for each employee because he extracted the knowledge and archived it under the tasks in advance.

Seidler-de and Hartmann (2008) used tacit knowledge in innovative organizations to learn how organizations promote and encourage knowledge sharing, leading to the development and improvement of successful innovation. It described the obstacles to the successful transfer of tacit knowledge and explained the success factors that help ensure the safe transfer of tacit knowledge. By comparing the available research sources on explicit knowledge, the use of tacit knowledge within companies is relatively unexplored. The study showed that gaining a positive competitive advantage occurs when companies appreciate their tacit knowledge.

3 Methodology

Based on the study's objectives and questions, this study used the Delphi method to solve the problem. It is the reality of monitoring methods of extracting tacit knowledge from distinguished female employees in writing administrative letters at King Abdulaziz University.

Indeed, in the context of using many research tools such as observation and questionnaires, the following tools have been relied upon:

3.1 Data Collection

• *The first round*: Two questionnaires were designed one was sent by e-mail to a random number of distinguished female directors of departments to find out the common errors in the letters, and how to overcome them in addition to taking their opinions and suggestions. The other questionnaire was designed to diagnose the actual reality of administrative letter writing skills. It was distributed to a random number of distinguished female staff to know the skills and competencies possessed by them, in addition to knowing the training programs that support that. The responses were submitted by the participating experts and the questionnaire was treated by the researcher.

• *The second round:* After that, information and knowledge were collected and prepared in a final questionnaire and circulated to the distinguished female employees and the departments' directors. The answers were re-sent to the group of experts so that each expert would review her answer in an attempt to reach a convergence of opinions between the members of the group of

experts. The data received after that was treated by consensus, and thus the Delphi cycle ended to come up with the skills and knowledge and to reach the job competencies in the field of writing administrative letters as a proposed model for building a knowledge base on the administrative skills necessary to perform administrative work with merit. This survey included 108 female employees including 77 distinguished female employees in writing administrative letters based on their assessment in their sectors that they are superior performers.

• To handle the study data, the SPSS statistical analysis program was used. Descriptive statistics indicators were used represented by arithmetic averages, Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was used to measure the significant correlation statistically along with the questionnaire items for administrative letters, experience, and educational qualification. The Chi-Square was used to compare the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards the items of the questionnaire related to administrative letters.

4 Results

This survey included 77 distinguished female employees, who constituted (71.3%) of the total participants, while female directors of departments constituted 28.7%.

The survey results showed that the majority of female employees, 78.7% hold a bachelor's degree qualification, 17.6% a master's degree, 1.9% hold a secondary school qualification, while 0.9% have an above university diploma qualification and 0.9% did not determine their academic qualification.

From the survey, the highest percentage of respondents had years of experience over fifteen years (33.3% of the total respondents), followed by those with years of experience ranging from 5-10 years (30.6%), 11-15 years (29.6%), while there is a 6.5% having years of experience less than five years. The average number of years of experience was 13.5 years with SD of 5.8 years.

4.1 Common Mistakes When Writing Administrative Letters, which include the Linguistic, Technical and Administrative Aspects

From the survey results, participants were asked about common mistakes when writing administrative letters, which were divided into linguistic aspect, technical aspect, and administrative aspect.

The results in Table 1 show that the most common mistakes when writing administrative letters, which are related to the linguistic aspect, are poor method in preparing letters (drafting) and spelling errors.

Table 1: The participants' responses to the common mistakes related to the linguistic aspect when writing administrative letters:

#	Items	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Sort by %
1	Poor method of preparing letters (drafting)	66	79.6%	22	20.4%	1
2	Spelling mistakes	57	52.8%	51	47.2%	2
3	incoherence in sentences	51	47.2%	57	52.8%	3
4	Using punctuation incorrectly	50	46.3%	58	53.7%	4
5	Not knowing the structure of the letter (introduction, body, conclusion)	50	46.3%	58	53.7%	4

The results in Table 2 show that the most common technical mistakes when writing administrative letters, were represented in the formal layout of the letter, where we find that 66.7% of the respondents answered with Yes.

Table 2: Participants' responses to common mistakes related to the technical aspect when writing administrative letters:

#	Items	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Formal layout of the letter (formatting, font type and size, margins, line spacing)	72	66.7%	36	33.3%

Table 3: Participants' responses to common mistakes related to the administrative aspect when writing administrative letters:

#	Items	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Sort by %
1	Sequence of actions, numbers and dates	69	63.9%	39	36.1%	1
2	Documents registering, if any	62	57.4%	46	42.6%	2
3	Knowing who is sending and receiving	42	38.9%	66	61.1%	3

The results in Table 3 showed the most common mistakes in the "sequence of procedures, numbers and dates", the majority of participants (63.9%) answered with "Yes".

4.2 Skills and Competencies Required to Enable Female Employees to Write Administrative Letters

With regard to the skills and competencies required to enable female employees to fully perform writing administrative letters, the results Table 4 showed that "accuracy at work" came among the most important skills and competencies required to enable female employees to perform their tasks. Where we find that (78.7%) of the participants answered with "Yes".

Table 4: The responses of the study sample towards the skills and competencies required to enable female employees to write administrative letters:

#	Items	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Sort by %
1	Accuracy at work	85	78.7%	23	21.3%	1
2	Desire to improve work and develop performance	79	73.1%	29	26.9%	2
3	sense of responsibility	69	63.9%	39	36.1%	3
4	Computer skills	69	63.9%	39	36.1%	3
5	Communication skills (verbal and written)	59	54.6%	49	45.4%	4
6	continuous reading	58	53.7%	50	46.3%	5
7	organization of work	45	41.7%	63	58.3%	6
8	fast learning	39	36.1%	69	63.9%	7

4.3 Training Programs and Administrative Procedures to Support Employees in Performing the Tasks

The results Table 5 showed that "practical training in writing and drafting administrative letters (workshop)" was one of the most important training programs and administrative procedures that would support them to perform their tasks, as we find that the majority of participants (93.5%) agreed with this.

Table 5: Participants' responses to training programs and administrative procedures that would support them in performing their tasks:

#	Items	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage	Sort by %
1	Practical training on writing and drafting administrative letters (workshop)	101	93.5%	7	6.5%	1
2	Preparing a standard form for letters in terms of the formal layout (size, font type, and formatting of the margins)	85	78.7%	23	21.3%	2
3	Courses in punctuation and spelling errors	70	64.8%	38	35.2%	3
4	Courses in basic computer skills (MS office)	60	55.6%	48	44.4%	4
5	Technical workshop for training on margin settings, formatting and printing	50	46.3%	58	53.7%	5
6	Communication skills courses (oral and written)	48	44.4%	60	55.6%	6
7	Courses in administrative correspondence	43	39.8%	65	60.2%	7
8	Speed computer typing courses	9	8.3%	99	91.7%	8

4.4 The Relationship between Academic Qualification and Common Errors

To find out whether there are statistical relationships between the common mistakes of female employees and the educational qualification, we used Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient to see if there is a statistically significant correlation between the two variables.

From Table 6, there is a statistically significant correlation at 0.05 level, between the academic qualification of the participants and the common errors related to the linguistic aspect. The higher the educational qualification is, the less common errors related to the linguistic aspect are, as Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient reached 0.203.

Table 6: Results of Spearman's Rho test for common errors related to the linguistic aspect:

#	Competencies	Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient	Statistical significance
1	Spelling mistakes	0.0701	0.474
2	Poor method of preparing letters (drafting)	0.203	0.036
3	incoherence in sentences	0.074	0.450
4	Using punctuation incorrectly	0.083	0.393
5	Not knowing the structure of the letter (introduction, content, conclusion)	0.083	0.393

*Significant at the level (0.05)

Table 7 shows no statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 level between the academic qualifications of the participants and the common errors related to the technical side, and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient reached (-0.029) with a significance level greater than 0.05.

Table 7: Spearman's Rho test results for common errors related to the technical side

#	Competencies	Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient	Statistical significance
1	Technical aspect: the formal layout of the letter (formatting, font type and size, margins, line spacing,...)	0.029	0.765

Table 8: Results of the Spearman's Rho correlation test for common errors related to the administrative side:

#	Competencies	Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient	Statistical significance
1	Knowing who is sending and receiving	0.024	0.808
2	Sequence of actions, numbers and dates	0.142	0.144
3	Documentation regitering, if any	0.023	0.817

*Significant at the level (0.05)

Table 8 shows no statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.05 between the academic qualification of the participants and the common errors related to the administrative aspect, where the values of Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients came at a level of significance greater than 0.05.

4.4.1 The Relationship between Academic Qualifications and Competencies

Table 9, there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of 0.01 between the academic qualifications of the participants and the desire to improve work and develop performance. The higher the educational qualification is, the greater the desire to improve work and develop performance is, and Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient reached 0.259 at a level of significance less than 0.01.

Table 9: Results of correlations between the academic qualifications of the participants and competencies.

#	Competencies	Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient	Statistical significance
1	Continuous reading	0.106	0.275
2	Communication skills (verbal and written)	0.016	0.867
3	fast learning	0.158	0.105
4	Desire to improve work and develop performance	0.259	0.007
5	Organization of work	0.141	0.146
6	sense of responsibility	0.002	0.985
7	Computer skills	0.114	0.241
8	Work accuracy	0.083	0.393

*Significant at the level (0.05)

Table 10: Spearman's Rho correlation test results between the academic qualifications in relation to skill competencies.

#	Competencies	Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient	Statistical significance
1	Continuous reading	0.227	0.018
2	Fast learning	0.211	0.029

*Significant at the level (0.05)

From Table 10, there is a statistically significant correlation at the level of (0.05) between the academic qualification of the participants and the skills and competencies of (continuous reading) and (learning speed). The higher the academic qualification is, the higher the skills and competencies are. The Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were -0.227 and -0.211 at a significance level less than 0.05, respectively. This indicates a positive direct correlation between (continuous reading) skills and (learning speed) and the number of years of experience.

- o Comparing the results between the answers of the distinguished female employees and the directors of the departments towards linguistic errors:

It is evident from the chi-square test that there was no relationship between the distinguished female employees and directors of departments towards their responses with regard to linguistic errors, i.e., no differences in their responses towards them, where the chi-square values came at a level of significance greater than 0.05.

- o A comparison between the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards technical errors

Table 11: The results of the Chi-square test to compare the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards technical errors:

Item	Answer	Category				Chi-square value	Statistical significance
		Distinguished employees		Department directors			
		Number	%	Number	%		
Formal form of the letter (formatting, font type and size, margins, line spacing,)	Yes	47	61.0%	25	80.6%	3.823	*0.05
	No	30	39.0%	6	19.4%		

*Significant at the level (0.05)

From Table 11, the chi-square test showed that there is a relationship between the study sample (distinguished female employees and directors of departments) towards their responses with regard to technical errors, where the value of the chi-square was (3.823) with a statistical significance value equal to (0.05). In fact, the percentage of the distinguished female employees who answered with "Yes" to the statement saying that (the formal layout of the letter (formatting, font type and size, margins, and line spacing,) is considered a technical error) (60%) was more than the percentage of those who answered with No. While we find the percentage of those who answered with Yes among the directors of the departments to the statement saying that (the formal layout of the letter (formatting, font type and size, margins, and line spacing,) is considered a technical error) (80.6%) was more than those who answered with No (19.4%). This indicates that the department directors' approval degree in relation to technical errors was more than the distinguished employees' approval degree.

o Comparing the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards administrative errors using the results of the Chi-square test:

Table 12, the chi-square test did not show a relationship between the study sample (distinguished female employees and directors of departments) towards their responses with regard to administrative errors, that is, there are no differences in their responses towards them, where the chi-square values came at a level of significance greater than 0.05.

Table 12: Results of the Chi-square test to compare the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards administrative errors:

Item	Answer	Category				Chi-square value	Statistical significance
		Distinguished employees		Department directors			
		Number	%	Number	%		
Knowing who is sending and receiving	Yes	32	41.60%	10	32.30%	0.804	0.370
	No	45	58.40%	21	67.70%		
Sequence of actions, numbers and dates	Yes	48	62.30%	21	67.70%	0.280	0.597
	No	29	37.70%	10	32.30%		
Documents registering, if any	Yes	43	55.80%	19	61.30%	0.268	0.605
	No	34	44.20%	12	38.70%		

o • Comparison between the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards skills and competencies:

When using the chi-square test, it was found that there was no relationship between the study sample (distinguished female employees and directors of departments) towards their

responses with regard to skills and competencies, meaning that there were no differences in their responses towards them, as the chi-square values came at a significance level greater than (0.05). This result indicates that both distinguished female employees and department directors agree on the importance of these skills and competencies.

- o Comparing the responses of distinguished female employees and directors of departments towards training programs and administrative procedures

Table 13: Results of the Chi-square test to compare the responses of female employees and directors of departments towards training programs and administrative procedures:

Item	Answer	Category				Chi-square value	Statistical significance
		Distinguished employees		Department directors			
		Number	%	Number	%		
Courses in basic computer skills (Microsoft office)	Yes	48	62.30%	12	38.70%	4.997	*0.025
	No	29	37.70%	19	61.30%		
	No	17	22.10%	6	19.40%		
	No	26	33.80%	12	38.70%		
Speed Computer typing courses	Yes	0	0.00%	9	29.00%	24.387	**0.000
	No	77	100.0%	22	71.00%		

Table 13, the chi-square test indicated a relationship between (distinguished female employees and directors of departments) and their responses towards courses in basic computer skills (MS office and courses in the speed of computer typing) as one of the training programs and administrative procedures that support their tasks. The Chi-square values came with a statistical significance level of less than (0.05), indicating there are differences in the approval of distinguished female employees and directors towards these programs and training courses.

5 Conclusion

The results statistically proved the higher the qualification is, the fewer common errors related to the linguistic aspect are. In addition, the higher the academic qualification is, the greater the desire to improve work and develop performance. The results also statistically showed the more the experience is, the higher skills and competencies of (continuous reading) and (learning speed) are. Moreover, results proved the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the study sample (distinguished female employees, directors of departments) towards their responses with regard to technical errors (the formal layout of the letter in terms of formatting, font type and size, margins, and line spacing). The directors of the department's degree of approval to technical errors was more than the distinguished employees' approval degree. Finally, it was proved the agreement of the study sample on the importance of the skills and competencies required in enabling female employees to perform their work, and they are in the following order according to the responses of the participants in the study. The most important skills and competencies required to enable them to write administrative letters were: Accuracy in work performance, desire to develop work, improve performance, computer skills, and oral and written communication skills, continuous reading, organization of work and speed of learning.

6 Availability of Data and Material

All information is included in this study.

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