

eISSN: 2981-1554

Original Article (Quantified)

Investigating the effect of knowledge management strategy on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediating variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses

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Receive:

11 March 2025

Revise:

07 May 2025

Accept:

12 June 2025

Keywords:

Knowledge management strategy, organizational trauma, emotional intelligence, small and medium-sized businesses

Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of knowledge management strategies for reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediating variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium businesses in Anar County. This research is applicable in terms of its purpose, and descriptive in terms of its type and nature. The statistical population of this study includes 250 employees of small and medium businesses in Anar County. Due to the relative limitation of the statistical population, all its members were selected as a sample, and questionnaires were distributed and collected among them using the census method. To determine the validity of the questionnaires, the content validity ratio (CVR) and content validity index (CVI) were used. Finally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires. In order to examine the research hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) through Smart PLS software was used. Based on the results, knowledge management strategy has a significant effect on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediator variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses.

Please cite this article as (APA): Naji, M. (2025). Investigating the effect of knowledge management strategy on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediating variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses. *Journal of New Approaches in Management and Marketing*, 4(1), 149-171.



<https://doi.org/10.22034/jnamm.2025.522461.1090>



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Publisher: Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In organizations, knowledge management strategy and emotional intelligence are key factors for reducing organizational trauma. Organizational trauma refers to the negative effects of traumatic events on individual and organizational performance, which can lead to a decrease in employee trust and motivation. Knowledge management includes the processes of creating, collecting, and sharing knowledge that can lead to competitive advantage, and is divided into two types of explicit and tacit knowledge. Emotional intelligence is related to the ability to understand and manage one's own and others' emotions and can facilitate the improvement of personal relationships and employee resilience. Combining knowledge management strategies and strengthening emotional intelligence can create a healthier work environment and make employees more resilient to traumatic events (Moallemian & et al., 2021). In today's world, especially in small and medium-sized businesses, psychological pressures and organizational crises have increased, and organizational trauma can lead to reduced productivity and burnout. Knowledge management as a strategic approach can help reduce organizational trauma by facilitating the flow of information and enhancing learning. Also, emotional intelligence as a mediating factor can strengthen the effectiveness of knowledge management in reducing organizational trauma. This research focuses on small and medium-sized businesses and identifies effective mechanisms in reducing psychological harm, while also paying attention to the lack of studies in this field (ILO, 2023). The results of this research will not only help improve mental health and increase productivity in SMEs, but can also be a model for other organizations in dealing with crises and human knowledge management; in other words, researchers seek to answer the question: does knowledge management strategy have a significant effect on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediator variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses?

Theoretical foundations

Knowledge management

Today, human life is influenced by cyberspace and new concepts such as knowledge-based society and knowledge management. The emergence of knowledge management as a response to organizational changes and knowledge-based jobs has led to flatter structures and reduced bureaucracy. These changes have necessitated the need for innovation and increased learning in organizations and have exacerbated the uncertainty of the business environment. Knowledge management is divided into two types of knowledge:

Explicit knowledge: objective and expressible knowledge available in information systems, documents, and databases.

Implicit knowledge: informal and experiential knowledge that is in the minds of individuals and is difficult to transfer (Behboudi & Sohrabi, 2019).

Organizational trauma

Organizational trauma theory addresses the trauma and emotional trauma that organizations experience. Similar to individual psychological trauma, this theory refers to the negative effects of frightening experiences on organizational performance and behavior (Abbasikhah & Behboudi, 2016). Spiegel (2008) defines trauma as a disorder in an individual's control, and Corsini (2002) considers it the result of painful events that have lasting effects on the individual's personality. Trauma can reduce an individual's ability to cope with adverse situations and can lead to symptoms such as desensitization and decreased immunity (Kelly, 2014). Horman and Vivan (2017) define organizational trauma as dysfunctional changes in organizational behavioral patterns that can have negative effects on the development and

identity of the organization (Venugopal, 2016). Failure to pay attention to this phenomenon can reduce the organization's ability to deal with crises (Kleinberg, 2016). Organizational trauma theory is known as a framework for understanding stressors and providing effective solutions for their management (Rozenky et al., 2016). This phenomenon is especially common in service organizations and can create an atmosphere of despair and hopelessness in the organization. Employees in these organizations are affected by the situation, and their skills and motivation may be affected (Jirek, 2020).

Emotional Intelligence

As one of the key topics in psychology, intelligence includes traits and talents that are not directly observable. In 1958, Gardner proposed the theory of multiple intelligences, one of which is emotional intelligence (Kelishami et al., 2016). Mayer and Salovey defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize and manage one's own and others' emotions (Rezaei Dizgah et al., 2018). Research shows that emotional intelligence can predict mental health and lead to a positive outlook, optimism, and more stable social relationships (Dakal, 2016).

Research Background

Zhang and Zheng (2023) conducted a study entitled "Investigating how emotional intelligence affects knowledge management strategies and its impact on organizational resilience." The results show that emotional intelligence can act as a mediator in improving knowledge management strategies.

Mohammad and Ali (2022) conducted a study entitled Investigating the Effect of Knowledge Management Strategies on Reducing Organizational Trauma and the Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence. The results indicate the importance of emotional intelligence in improving the positive effects of knowledge management.

Research Methodology

This study is "applicable" in terms of its purpose, and "descriptive" in terms of the method of data collection. The statistical population of this study included 250 employees of small and medium-sized businesses in Anar County. Given the relative limitations of the statistical population, all its members were selected as a sample and a questionnaire was distributed and collected among them using the census method. 8 items and 2 components (written knowledge management strategy, personal knowledge management strategy) were extracted from the Knowledge Management Strategy Questionnaire by Lopez-Nicolas and Merono-Cardin (2011);, 22 items and 5 components (goals, structure, technology, people, environment) from Organizational Trauma Questionnaire (Dihim and Dolati, 2017); and 28 items and 4 components (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management) from Bradbury and Graves' (2004) Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. Also, the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) and Content Validity Index (CVI) were utilized to determine the validity of the questionnaires. Finally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaires. Structural equations were used to analyze the data and examine the relationships between variables. This method allows us to examine the direct and indirect effects of variables and identify more complex structures. The use of structural equations in this study helps to comprehensively and accurately analyze the relationships between knowledge management strategy, emotional intelligence, and organizational trauma.

Findings

There is a significant effect between knowledge management strategy on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediator variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses.

The path coefficient of the variable between knowledge management strategy and organizational trauma in small and medium-sized businesses is -0.520, and the t-statistic is -4.902. The path coefficient of the variable between knowledge management strategy and emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses is -0.968, and the t-statistic is -13.768. The path coefficient of the variable between emotional intelligence and organizational trauma in small and medium-sized businesses is -0.751, and the t-statistic is -6.445. Therefore, there is a significant effect between knowledge management strategy on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediating variable of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of knowledge management strategies on reducing organizational trauma with respect to the mediating role of emotional intelligence in small and medium-sized businesses. The results of the main hypothesis showed that knowledge management strategies lead to an increase in the emotional intelligence of employees and, as a result, organizational trauma is reduced. These findings are consistent with the results of previous research of Moallemian et al. (2021) and Karimian Eqbal (2019), and emphasize the importance of knowledge management and emotional intelligence in reducing organizational trauma. Based on the studies conducted, it can be concluded that knowledge management strategies not only help reduce organizational trauma, but also play a positive role in strengthening the emotional intelligence of employees. These communications can help small and medium-sized business managers to improve organizational conditions and prevent the occurrence of organizational trauma by effectively applying these strategies. Knowledge management strategies include collecting, storing, and sharing information and knowledge in organizations. These strategies can help reduce organizational trauma because they increase the sense of security and trust in employees by creating a learning culture and improving internal communications. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Morris et al. (2021) and Johnson et al. (2021).

Knowledge management strategies can help develop emotional intelligence in employees. By providing learning opportunities and sharing experiences, employees can strengthen their social and emotional skills. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Smith et al. (2020) and Nicholas et al. (2019).

Emotional intelligence is known as a key factor in managing stress and coping with challenges. People with high emotional intelligence are better able to cope with organizational pressures and prevent organizational trauma. The results of this study are consistent with the research of Harris et al. (2020) and Garcia et al. (2019).