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Managerial
power and
credibility

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper examines the relationship between credibility, the dimensions of power and a number of knowledge acquisition attributes.

Design/methodology/approach – The study involves a questionnaire-based survey of employees from a number of organisations operating in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A total of 130 useable questionnaires were received from employees who are engaged in self-managing activities from seven companies. These were subjected to a series of correlational and regression analyses.

Findings – There are three major findings in this research. First, the relationship between expert power and the knowledge acquisition attributes of personal traits, control and negotiation is positive and significant. Second, the constructs of coercive and referent power are likely to have a negative influence on employees' knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing. Finally, the findings have clearly shown that the management dimension of credibility has a positive and significant impact on the knowledge acquisition attributes of control and negotiation.

Practical implications – The study shows that the real challenge for organisations in the UAE is to provide a working environment that encourages and fosters expert power and credibility and, by extension knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing.

Originality/value – There is a paucity of research in this area and this paper makes a contribution towards filling this gap.

Keywords Knowledge management, Management power, Self-managing teams, United Arab Emirates

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The latest buzzwords in organisational change and development literature are “knowledge management” and “knowledge transfer”, which proponents claim are successful ways of improving and enhancing employees' performance. According to Peter Drucker, land, labour and capital – the classical factors of production – have become secondary to knowledge as the primary resource for the new economy (Drucker, 1992). It is now said that value added in most businesses today is in the form of knowledge, not “stuff”. Most recently, Peter Drucker emphasised that the only competitive advantage of the developed countries is in the supply of knowledge workers (KWs); and that as “knowledge constantly makes itself obsolete”, the developed nations need to work continually and systematically “on the productivity of knowledge and knowledge workers” (Drucker, 1997, p. 22). The real challenge for organisations however is “capturing the tacit knowledge which is in people's memory and which is difficult to extract and share with others” (Abdullah *et al.*, 2002, p. 16).

