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**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL FORGETTING ON THE  
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ESTABLISHMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of organizational forgetting on the knowledge management establishment. This research has survey-analytical method and is applied in terms of objective. The statistical population consists of 526 librarians and library directors at non-medical universities of Tehran and then 169 subjects are selected based on random sampling and Morgan table and studied by the questionnaire. Pearson correlation coefficient is utilized for data analysis and then the construct validity of research variables and its derived indices are investigated by confirmatory factor analysis test. The obtained results suggest that the organizational forgetting (intentional and accidental) affects the creation, storage, sharing and application of knowledge and there is no different between them in terms of intensity.

**Keywords: Knowledge management establishment**

**INTRODUCTION**

The knowledge-based organizations, communities and human distinguish the current era from the rest of eras. In the last decades of the twentieth century, Drucker [5], replaced the new terms such as the knowledge workers and knowledge organizations with traditional organizations and workers and called the future successful organizations the knowledge-based organizations. Nowadays, his predictions are realized. The successful countries are the knowledge-based ones and the

successful organizations utilized the knowledge workers. Therefore, there is no way for development except for equipment with knowledge. Meanwhile, the "knowledge management" is an efficient tool for communities and organizations. Utilizing the knowledge management, the organizations identify, acquire, create, store, retrieve and disseminate the knowledge and overtake their competitors by relying on the knowledge.

However, the accumulation of knowledge and its non-refined structured reduce the value of knowledge, and it notes that the opportunity will not be provided for acquiring the new knowledge until we have not forgotten and left the previous methods and lessons. It is the starting point of "organizational forgetting". The organizational forgetting is in fact a kind of unlearning in which the people leave their previous knowledge and learning intentionally or accidentally and replace them with new learning. [3].

According to Tom Peters (1997), the organizational forgetting erases the extra information of organizational memory. In his book entitled, "The Circle of Innovation", he says a meaningful sentence: "You cannot live without an eraser". Furthermore, he notes that erasing the earlier learning and forgetting them is more important than learning in the organization.

As the people wisely forget, the organizations should also forget based on the plan [6].

Moreover, Turban et al have considered the knowledge management as the knowledge creation, storage and distribution in a way that its operation is possible in the organization. Barron has defined the knowledge management as an integrated systematic approach for understanding, applying and sharing the developed and non-developed experiences and expertise in the organization and a kind of knowledge discovery and creation within the organization[1].

The organizational forgetting is in fact the introduction to the utilization of new knowledge, and thus there is a close relationship between the organizational forgetting and the success in establishing the knowledge in the organizations. The aim of this study is to investigate this relationship in terms of different aspects and practical recommendations for creating the knowledge-based libraries through the knowledge management establishment.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This study is applied and is among the survey- analytical studies.

The statistical population of this research consists of 526 librarians at non-medical state universities located in Tehran. The

sample size is estimated equal to 169 based on Morgan Table.

The questionnaire is the measurement tool in this research and contains two sections:

- A) Demographic questions
- B) Specific questions which includes 2 categories. First, 16 questions about the organizational forgetting (intentional-accidental); they are collected from various texts including the research by De Holan & Phillips (2004) and Salvati (2013) and adapted to the library activities. Second, the questions associated with the knowledge management establishment in four

dimensions based on Heisig's model (2003) in four dimensions of knowledge creation, storage, sharing, and application which are modified in accordance with the type of library. The research validity is confirmed by visiting the professors, and the confirmatory factor analysis is utilized to assess the construct validity. Pearson correlation coefficient is applied to analyze data, and then the construct validity of research variables and its resulted indices are investigated by confirmatory factor analysis.

**RESULTS**

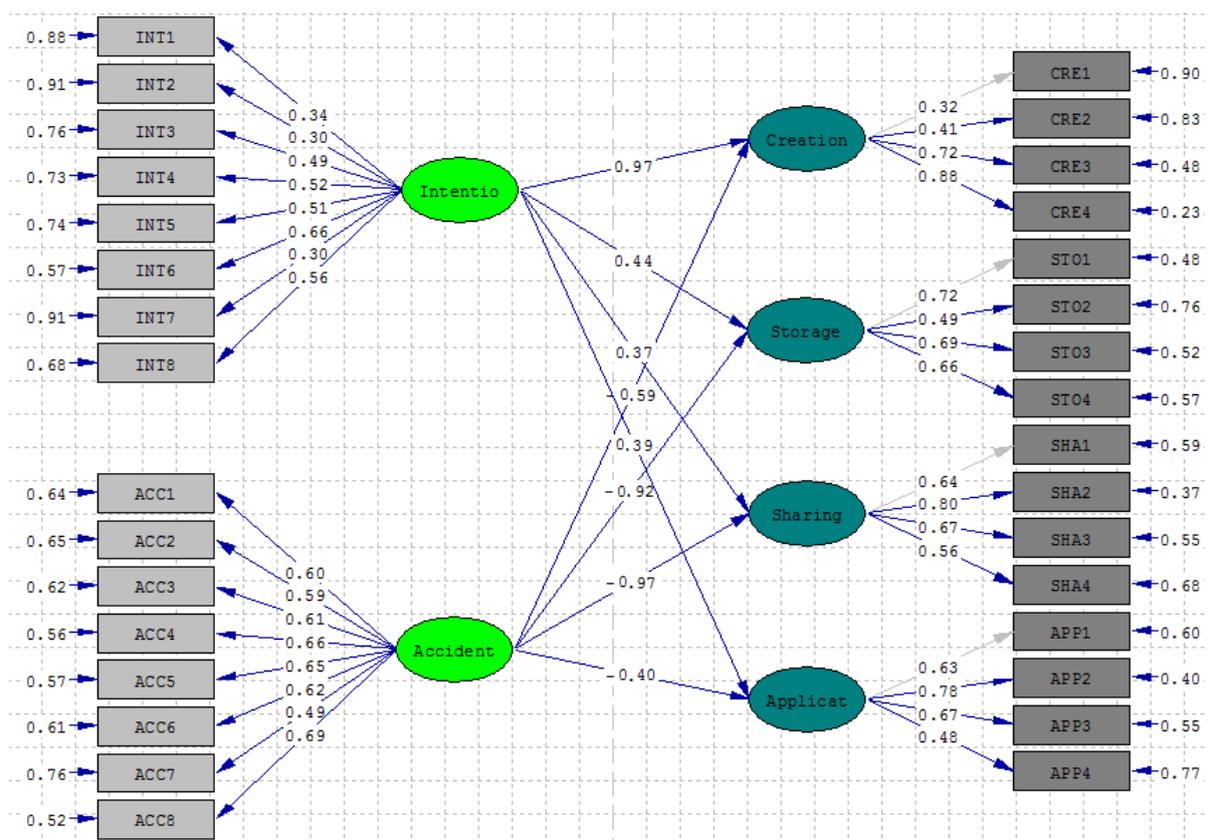


Figure 1: Estimating the standardized factor loadings of conceptual research model

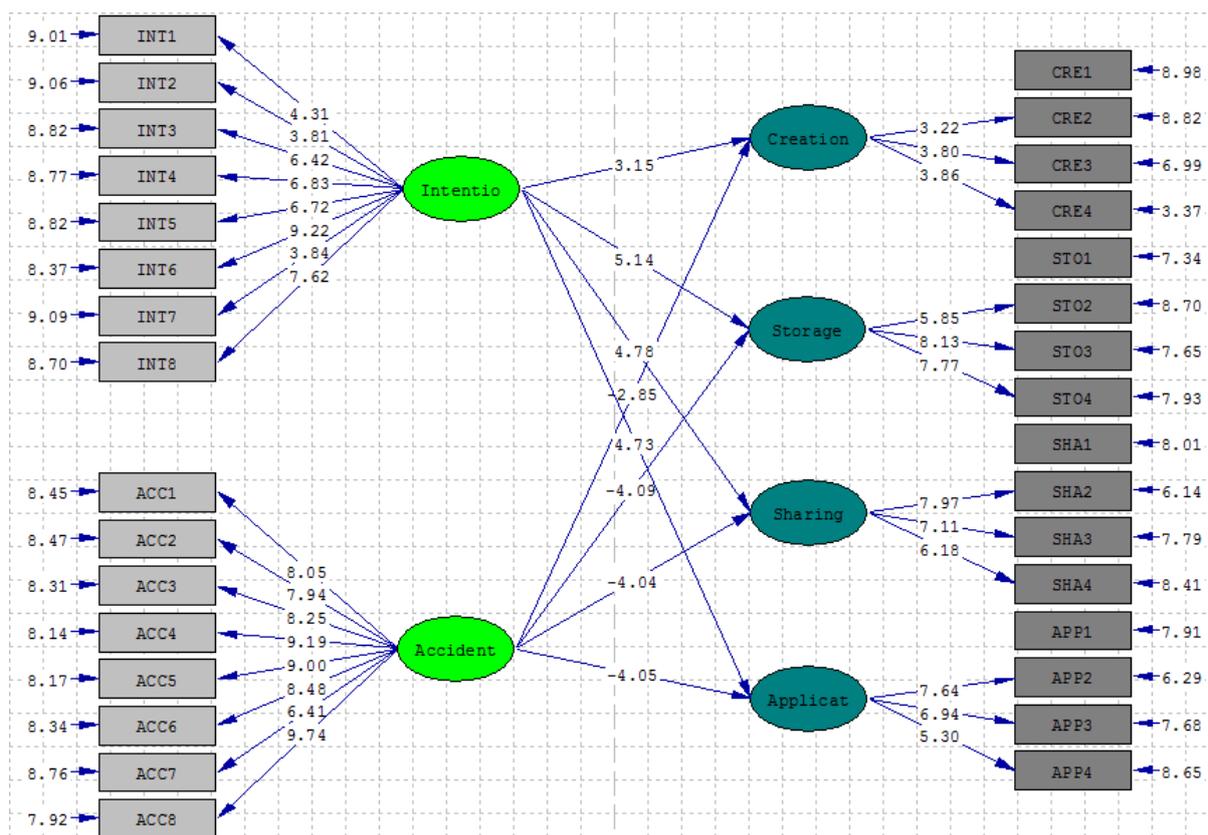


Figure 2: Student's t statistic of conceptual research model

**Main question:**

How is the impact of organizational forgetting on the knowledge management establishment at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained results indicate that all relationships between the intentional and accidental forgetting with knowledge creation, storage, sharing and application are meaningful and there is no significant difference between them in terms of intensity.

There is a positive relationship between the organizational forgetting and four dependent variables, and the accidental forgetting has a negative relationship with mentioned variables. In terms of intensity, the maximum correlation is between the

intentional forgetting and knowledge creation and also between the accidental forgetting and knowledge sharing.

**Sub-question 1**

How is the impact of intentional organizational forgetting on the knowledge creation at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to 3.15 for impact of intentional organizational forgetting on knowledge creation at studied universities, and this value is more than 1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge creation at non-medical universities, and the intentional organizational forgetting variable has a

significant effect equal to 0.97 on the knowledge creation as the dependent variable; and this correlation is positive and very strong.

### **Sub-question 2**

How is the impact of intentional organizational forgetting on the knowledge storage at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to 5.14 for impact of intentional organizational forgetting on knowledge storage at studied universities, and this value is more than 1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge storage at non-medical universities, and the intentional organizational forgetting variable has a significant effect equal to 0.44 on the knowledge storage as the dependent variable; and this correlation is positive and at medium level.

### **Sub-question 3**

How is the impact of intentional organizational forgetting on the knowledge sharing at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to 4.78 for impact of intentional organizational forgetting on knowledge sharing at studied universities, and this value is more than 1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a

significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge sharing at non-medical universities, and the intentional organizational forgetting variable has a significant effect equal to 0.37 on the knowledge sharing as the dependent variable; and this correlation is positive and almost weak.

### **Sub-question 4**

How is the impact of intentional organizational forgetting on the knowledge application at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to 4.73 for impact of intentional organizational forgetting on knowledge creation at studied universities, and this value is more than 1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge application at non-medical universities, and the intentional organizational forgetting variable has a significant effect equal to 0.39 on the knowledge application as the dependent variable; and this correlation is positive and almost weak.

### **Sub-question 5**

How is the impact of accidental organizational forgetting on the knowledge creation at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to -2.85 for impact of accidental organizational forgetting on the knowledge creation at studied universities, and this value is more than -1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge creation at non-medical universities, and the intentional organizational forgetting variable has a significant negative effect equal to -0.59 on the knowledge creation as the dependent variable; and this correlation is negative and almost strong.

#### **Sub-question 6**

How is the impact of accidental organizational forgetting on the knowledge storage at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to -4.09 for impact of accidental organizational forgetting on knowledge storage at studied universities, and this value is more than -1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge storage at non-medical universities, and the accidental organizational forgetting variable has a significant effect equal to -0.92 on the knowledge storage as the dependent variable; and this correlation is negative and very strong.

#### **Sub-question 7**

How is the impact of accidental organizational forgetting on the knowledge sharing at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to -4.04 for impact of accidental organizational forgetting on knowledge sharing at studied universities, and this value is more than -1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge sharing at non-medical universities, and the accidental organizational forgetting variable has a significant effect equal to -0.97 on the knowledge sharing as the dependent variable; and this correlation is negative and very strong.

#### **Sub-question 8**

How is the impact of accidental organizational forgetting on the knowledge application at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?

The obtained Student's t statistic is equal to -4.05 for impact of accidental organizational forgetting on knowledge application at studied universities, and this value is more than -1.96, thus it can be concluded that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge application at non-medical universities, and the accidental

organizational forgetting variable has a significant effect equal to -0.40 on the knowledge application as the dependent variable; and this correlation is negative and at the medium level.

Salvati, Baghbanian and Zandi [9], conducted a research entitled "The organizational forgetting and resistance to change" and their research is indirectly similar to this study because their research has considered the negative correlation between the accidental forgetting and knowledge management. It can conclude that the accidental forgetting will lead to the lack of new knowledge application.

## **CONCLUSION**

In response to the question, how is the impact of organizational forgetting on the knowledge management establishment at non-medical state universities of Tehran City?, the results indicate that all relationships between the intentional and accidental forgetting with knowledge creation, storage, sharing and application are significant and there is no significant difference between them in terms of intensity.

The status of knowledge management establishment is investigated in a research by Mohammadi Ostani, Shabani and Rajaeipour [8], and their views are consistent with this research in terms of knowledge establishment.

In response to the first sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge creation at non-medical universities and this correlation is positive and very strong.

In a research on the correlation between the purposive organizational forgetting and organizational innovation, Zeng and Chen [11], have concluded that the purposive forgetting is essential for innovation. In this research, the knowledge creation, which is a kind of innovation, indicates the necessity for intentional forgetting.

In response to the second sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge storage at non-medical universities and this correlation is positive and at the medium level.

Carmona [4], investigated the correlation between the organizational forgetting and information systems. Their results indicate that if the organization does not provide the necessary preparations, the organizational forgetting (accidental) occurs and it is not proper for organization. Therefore, their research is consistent with results of this study on the negative impact of accidental forgetting and the necessity for

implementing the knowledge storage in the organizations.

In response to the third sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge sharing at non-medical universities and this correlation is positive and almost weak.

Carmona and Gronlund [4], investigate the role of motivation in working groups in the rate of organizational forgetting. This study concludes that the educational and motivational mechanisms should be utilized for intentional forgetting, and we should pave the way for knowledge sharing among the employees by these strategies.

In response to the fourth sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant correlation between the intentional organizational forgetting and knowledge application at non-medical universities and this correlation is positive and almost weak.

According to the research by Mahmoudvand [7], there is a significant correlation between the organizational forgetting and organizational changes, and thus his research is consistent with some results of this research in this regard.

In response to the fifth sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between the

accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge creation at non-medical universities.

Boker [3], has considered the organizational forgetting useful if it will lead to the knowledge creation and production. The results of this research emphasize on the impact of intentional forgetting on the successful knowledge management establishment and confirm the negative effect of accidental forgetting on the knowledge creation as one of the components of knowledge management.

In response to the sixth sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge storage at non-medical universities.

Upadhyay [10], considers the inability to retrieve the information as the reason for organizational forgetting. The analysis of questions in the questionnaire of this research also confirms the same result and refers to the need for implementing the policies in line with knowledge storage.

In response to the seventh sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge sharing at non-medical universities.

In a research on the organizational forgetting, Benkard [2], concludes that a part of organizational knowledge is forgotten over time. In our research, the accidental forgetting indicates the forgotten knowledge and experience over time. The knowledge can be share more than before in order to prevent forgotten knowledge.

In response to the eighth sub-question, the obtained results indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between the accidental organizational forgetting and knowledge application at non-medical universities.

Salvati, Baghbanian and Zandi (2013) conducted a research entitled "the organizational forgetting and resistance to change". Their research is indirectly consistent with this study because their study has also considered a negative correlation between the accidental forgetting and knowledge management. It can be concluded that the accidental forgetting leads to the lack of applied new knowledge. The overall results indicate that all relationships between the intentional and accidental forgetting with knowledge creation, storage, sharing and application are meaningful and there is no significant difference between them in terms of intensity.

The intentional organizational forgetting has a positive correlation with four dependent

variables, but the accidental forgetting has a negative correlation with those variables at studied universities. In terms of intensity, the maximum correlation is between the intentional forgetting and knowledge creation and also between the accidental forgetting and knowledge sharing.

The statistical analyses indicate the negative effect of accidental organizational forgetting and the positive effect of intentional organizational forgetting. Experimentally, it can be justified that the accidental knowledge forgetting leads to the negative effects on studied libraries and thus the intentional abandonment of some old types of knowledge will lead to the positive effects.

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