

Role and Contribution of Information Professionals toward Knowledge Management Initiatives: A Comparative Study of the Perceptions of Kuwaiti and American Managers

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of managers in two Kuwaiti companies: Kuwait Institute of Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait Oil company (KOC) - concerning KM (Knowledge Management) and the differences between IM (Information Management) and KM. The study further explores what KM initiatives have been undertaken in these two companies. The managers were also asked to identify skills and capabilities that they perceived valuable among information professionals for KM work. This study has repeated a previous research study that was conducted in 2004 in which six United States (US) companies were covered. It was found worthwhile to compare the findings of the study conducted in Kuwait with the findings of the 2004 study conducted in the US, as this comparison may help in understanding where the information professionals in this region stand vis-à-vis those in the developed world. This could serve as a useful benchmark for the purpose of planning and conduct of KM projects. Both the studies used survey methods for getting input from the information managers in corporate companies. It was found that a general conceptual understanding prevails about the fundamental concepts of KM and the difference between IM and KM among Kuwaiti managers, a finding they shared with their American counterparts. The American companies were found to be intensely engaged in KM strategies, whereas Kuwaiti companies had just completed their pilot projects with larger initiatives still to be taken. Further, it was found that the information professionals in the American companies played an active role in KM initiatives, whereas the role of information professionals in Kuwait was not as visible. There also existed differences about the needed skills of informa-

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tion professionals for KM roles. Some American managers found LIS skills to be very useful in the KM context, whereas no such appreciation was noted in the Kuwaiti setting.

Key words: Knowledge Management (KM), Information Management (IM), Information professional, Information Center, Information Skills (IS)

Background

During the last decade, knowledge management has served as a key differentiator between firms in terms of their sustainability, profitability, innovative capacity, and change management. The reason for this interest in knowledge management is the belief that knowledge and its applications are the means by which creativity can be fostered (Nonaka & Nishiguchi, 2000), innovation enabled (Hargadon, 1998), and competencies leveraged so as to improve overall organizational performance.

Perspectives on Knowledge Management

Definitions of knowledge management have generally been quite diverse, but these share an emphasis on its distinct nature from information management. Broadbent (1997: 16), defined it as a “form of expertise management which draws out tacit knowledge, making it accessible for specific purposes to improve the performance of organizations; about how the organizations know-how should be structured, organized, located and utilized to provide the most effective action at that point in time.” Similarly, Di Mattia & Oder (1997) maintained this theme, but introduced a technical component by blending company’s internal and external information and turning it into actionable knowledge via a technology platform. Nicholson (1997) viewed KM as an opportunity to maximize the return on investment in information and communication technology. Southon (2000) proposed an organizational approach, arguing that knowledge management was about conceptualizing the organization as an integrated information/knowledge system, and the management of the organization for the effective use of that information and knowledge.

Preparation of LIS professionals for KM roles

Library and information professionals have long considered themselves as knowledge workers, providing value-added service to their organization, especially in the organization and representation of knowledge. Broadbent (1997) maintained that librarians were generally driven by a desire to provide access to information sources, and they matched this desire with values that assumed information sharing as a good thing, which is critical for the practice of knowledge management. However, these

values alone are not sufficient. They need to be harnessed in two directions: towards specific organizational objectives that provide greater value to customers and clients; and, second, in the way in which library and information services are themselves managed. Broadbent made a point that no single group, organization, profession or industry had the claim of owning knowledge management. However, if library and information specialists wished to be the key players in the emerging domain of knowledge management, they needed to understand the multitude of perspectives of other players.

In a research conducted for the UK library and information commission, Tepl (1999) noted that LIS profession had developed and changed significantly during the last decade in a way that affected the roles and opportunities for information professionals. The Tepl research indicated that very few LIS professionals initially recognized that KM was not just another name for IM. They emphasized that KM presented a unique opportunity for LIS professionals if they recognized the complete picture on which an organization worked and the role of LIS as partners in that organization.

Abell & Oxbrow (2001) linked knowledge management competencies to information management skills by presenting five specific activities in which the information management expertise of the information professional can add significant value to the creation of the KM environment:

- By identifying and acquiring internal information sources (information audit).
- By structuring the organizations internal information-e.g. creating subject structures and thesauruses, developing organizational taxonomies, and designing records and coding tools.
- By outsourcing, acquiring and evaluating external information-e.g. negotiating advantageous contracts, specifying delivery formats, and monitoring the performance of selected sources.
- By integrating internal and external information.
- By enabling the timely delivery of relevant, usable information, as information professionals possess the expertise and experience to fine-tune information delivery.

While there is an increasing understanding that LIS skills are relevant within KM environment, Tepl's research found that the LIS profession appeared to have had little impact on knowledge management in organizations, and that this related largely to a perception among organizations that it was a profession seldom engaged directly with the business. Tepl recommends that within LIS profession, an understanding

had to be developed of knowledge management concepts and strategies, the skills and competencies needed for KM, and the context within which they are applied.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of the information managers of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) about their understanding of KM concepts, differences between IM and KM, contribution of information professionals to KM initiatives, and needed skills and capabilities of information professionals for knowledge work. Since the study repeats an earlier 2004 study of six US companies (Marouf, 2004), this study additionally compares the situation of companies in Kuwait and the United States. The findings may help in understanding where the information professionals in this region stand vis-à-vis those in the developed world. This may serve as a useful benchmark for the purpose of planning and conduct of KM projects.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for this study:

- 1 - What are the perceptions of the Kuwaiti managers concerning KM concepts as compared to the views of the information managers of the six US companies?
- 2 - What are the perceptions of the Kuwaiti managers concerning the differences in IM and KM as compared to the views of the information managers of six US companies?
- 3 - What are the contributions of information professionals toward KM initiatives and strategies in the Kuwaiti companies as compared to the findings of the study of the managers of the six US companies?
- 4 - What are the perceptions of the Kuwaiti managers concerning the needed skills and capabilities of information professionals for KM work as compared to the views of the information managers of the six US companies?

Procedures

Since this is a repetition of an earlier study conducted in 2004, similar procedures were followed. Marouf (2004) had studied the perceptions and contribution of information professionals in six US companies that were actively engaged in KM implementation. The findings of that study were based on data collected through telephonic interviews due to geographic

constraints. The researcher used five open-ended questions, each focusing on one area. Answers were recorded on a response form and later analyzed.

The following procedures were used for this study:

- 1 - For the selection of subjects, the researcher used the same criteria that had been used in the study conducted in the States, which included the following:
 - (i) Size of the organization must be medium to large, meaning that an organization with fewer than 500 employees could not be considered.
 - (ii) The organization should have been involved in KM work for at least three years.
 - (iii) Information professionals must be involved in KM work.

The researcher faced difficulty in identifying Kuwaiti organizations that had undertaken KM initiatives and also had information professionals working in them. The researcher was only able to identify two organizations; KISR and KOC, that satisfied the specified criteria. Consequently, two information professionals from the two Kuwaiti organizations participated in this study as compared to their six American counterparts.

- 2 - Data were collected through face to face interviews; open-ended questions including the five research questions used in the earlier study. A convenient day and time was arranged between the researcher and participants through several rounds of e-mail exchanges. Interviews lasted for 45-60 minutes.

Participants Profile

The two Kuwaiti organizations that satisfied the criteria and participated in this study are the following: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait Oil Company (KOC). These are two large public organizations and their involvement in KM initiatives is at different stages. KISR's information center, called National Scientific & Technical Information Center (NSTIC), has the following four departments and two information centers:

- Information Services Department (ISD)
- Technical Services Department (TSD)
- Systems Development Department (SDD)
- Computer Technology and Communications Department (CTCD)
- Kuwait Distance Learning Center (KDLC)
- Kuwait Geographical Information Systems Center (KGISC)

Sixty-three employees work in NSTIC; fourteen who work in the technical and information services department have degrees in Library & Information Science. The second company, Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), is the leading Kuwaiti company in the oil sector. At KOC, an Information Systems Team functions within the Information Technology Group. This group is responsible for initiating and implementing KM. The IT group consists of one hundred twenty six employees; nine of whom work on its information system team. One employee with an information science and computer science background is dedicated to the KM initiative.

The six American organizations that took part in the 2004 study are Microsoft, 3M, Nike, Engelhard, Ford, and Boeing.

Findings and Discussion

Perceptions about Knowledge Management

The first question was what perceptions the participants had about KM at KISR and KOC. Additionally, these perceptions had to be compared with those held in the six American companies. When the information professionals in KISR were asked about their perceptions, they defined KM as follows:

- The process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge base assets.
- The sharing of information among employees and other organizations.
- An effort to devise the best practices.
- Information technology facilitates KM.

At KOC, the following observations were made about their understanding of KM:

- Capturing and sharing KOCs information assets and accumulated experience of their employees.
- Creating an environment where staff can collaborate and share with each other across physical, geographical, and organizational barriers.
- Facilitating effortless identification of experts and expertise to satisfy KOC staff business requirements.
- Information technology enables all of the above.

It is clear that the information professionals in both organizations have a holistic view of what knowledge management is really all about. Participants in KISR mentioned the additional point that KM dealt with sharing with other organizations; in other words, external sources.

In the six U.S companies, 4 of the 6 participants noted a people focus of KM, dealing with connections between people to people and people to knowledge. They noted that it dealt with the bigger picture and positive integration between external and internal information. Another major perception shared by two participants was that KM meant sharing knowledge all across the organization, or in other words, institutionalizing KM. One interesting contrast in perspective was noted between the participants from US where some asserted that it was management of technology, whereas the others emphasized the cultural and organizational issues, treating IT as an enabler.

Compared to the responses of the six organizations in the States, we note that the Kuwaiti respondents generally agreed about the fundamental concepts. Variations in perceptions could be attributable to the peculiarities of organizations and the emphasis each placed on its operations and services.

Differences between IM and KM

The second research question was related to the perceptions of participants about the differences between the two fields of IM and KM. Both Kuwaiti participants pointed to people as the primary difference between IM and KM. The participants from KISR believed that the difference between IM and KM is that KM is based on the intellectual wealth and human resources capital, and not mere technology, whereas information management deals with and depends totally on technology, and it deals more with data and information as compared to knowledge. The participants from KOC, on the other hand, found that the main difference was the human factor. It is through human behavior and willingness to share that played a key role from the KM perspective, whereas it is not the case with IM.. The participants considered that KM dealt with how people create, validate, codify, and share knowledge, and hence, make decisions, whereas IM focuses on the manipulation of data and information. In addition, the two professionals also believed that technology is the major and foremost component of IM, while it is one of many in KM.

When we examine the perceptions of the US companies, their participants noted that IM was process centric that dealt with dry data and information, whereas KM was people centric. Some of the participants, however, observed that KM is merely IM in new robes, with certain enhancements. However, the majority of them articulated key differences between IM and KM with some sharp contrasts in their characteristics. It

was also reflected in the expressions they used, with IM being largely technical and service oriented, and KM being a people-centric approach.

Both the Kuwaiti participants articulated well their understanding of the difference between data, information, and knowledge accordingly, and how management of information differed from management of knowledge. When we compare these findings with the perceptions of the American information professionals, we note a slight difference in both perceptions. While all participants have a general agreement about the differences between IM and KM, a couple of American participants were not as comfortable about the KM phenomenon and noted that KM was the same old IM with a new label.

KM Initiatives and Strategies

The next research question was about the KM initiatives and strategies that had been undertaken at both KISR and KOC, and how these differed from the six US companies. KISR embarked on the KM initiative in 2003. Their main focus has been on achieving strategic objectives which were defined as part of e-KISR vision, in which a leading consulting firm was engaged to conduct the following:

- Study the existing KISR business operations and knowledge environment
- Audit the existing knowledge environment
- Document as-is processes and design to-be processes for core research operations
- Prepare a knowledge management strategy
- Define content sources and knowledge islands
- Define a data warehousing strategy to enrich the content to be made available on the KISR KM portal
- Assess and recommend an IT security framework to protect knowledge assets
- Define and implement a KM implementation strategy to take this initiative forward

The initiative was later developed into a project with four major tasks: content management; business process improvement; communication and change management; and IT application task. Each task was then tested in a pilot project in order to identify weaknesses, strengths, and opportunities. The pilot project was built on an actual research project matrix between three divisions. Currently, KISR is at the stage of assessing the RFP, where bids for a KM system are being studied. Thus far, the progress at KISR has indicated that the content management component of the

KM system is now in place; taxonomy has been designed and a metadata structure has been established. Also, an awareness campaign has been going on for about a year that includes workshops, training courses, seminars, and newsletters.

At KOC, the KM project was divided into the following two phases: (1) KM Business Readiness Assessment Study, and (2) a pilot project. The scope of the project was defined as follows:

- Building foundation for ensuring that KM solutions are linked directly to the long-term needs of the company's business
- Developing a knowledge-based culture
- Implementing the most suitable KM solution

The objective of the project was to assess KOC's readiness in developing a knowledge-based culture where information is integrated, easily shared, and readily accessed. The KM Business Readiness Assessment Study recommended to model KM implementation around the Drilling Operations Group as the first business group, keeping in view cost and management considerations. The pilot plan has been successful and it has already delivered the following products:

- 1 - Development of KM policies and procedures
- 2 - Development of KM roles and responsibilities
- 3 - Development of collaboration architecture tools
- 4 - KM portal (Web)
- 5 - Corporate directory design document
- 6 - Search Engine configuration document
- 7 - Search Engine (on the portal)
- 8 - CoP Governance document
- 9 - Technical CoP
- 10 - Bulletin Board design document
- 11 - Rewards and recognition scheme
- 12 - KM retention processes and measures
- 13 - Corporate staff directory
- 14 - Best Practice and Operations Manuals repositories - design document
- 15 - KM user training

Table 1 provides a general depiction of the KM initiatives and strategies in the two Kuwait companies, together with a comparative presentation of data from the six US companies. In the 2004 study, it was found that the KM initiatives and strategies in the six U.S. companies started much earlier than in the Kuwaiti companies. Most of them started during the mid-90s. It was found that five of the six American companies

had created databases of best practices, knowledge bases or repositories, and lessons learned. Four of them reported use of an Intranet for metadata, groupware, outreach, and as a window to other resources. Four of them had developed databases of profiles and directories. Microsoft and Nike noted strategies for innovation, creativity, and ideas. Two others reported use of portals for resource capitalization. Microsoft and 3M reported long-term culture-based initiatives, with 3M using the strategies of lifelong employment and promotion from within. 3M and Boeing also mentioned initiation of an appropriate reward system and compensation plan to encourage knowledge sharing. Microsoft had a clear strategy of using technology to connect people who had information and knowledge all around the company. It was stated that at Boeing, through the use of the KASKNI system, they linked people across the organization by integrating computing, networking, and media technologies. Additional strategies mentioned by one participant each included trust development, use of company retreats, decentralization of KM activities including knowledge bases to the departmental level, and networking for distance learning opportunities. However, each company's primary focus is distinctly evident: Microsoft asserts revolutionizing the way people use technology to create and share information and knowledge; 3M focuses on a sense of sharing culture; Boeing emphasizes protection of the rights of innovators; and, Nike declares its primary focus as culture of innovation and creativity. Ford appeared to be leaning more toward IM dimension, whereas Engelhard noted the decentralized approach to be the most crucial one in KM strategic initiatives.

When we compare the situation of the American and Kuwaiti organizations, it is quite clear that the American companies are by and large quite advanced in their KM initiatives. The two Kuwaiti organizations are still in the initial stage of their KM projects. While the Kuwaiti organizations have conducted feasibility studies and pilot projects which have also introduced a number of KM initiatives, they are still awaiting for some strategic decisions about the organization-wide implementation. In addition, we find that in the Kuwaiti companies, the focus in the early stage has been on the IT side of KM without placing as much an emphasis on the people side. This could create imbalance that would trigger problems at the implementation stage. Having the technological components of KM in place does not guarantee that people will switch over to KM. Other factors like social relationships, HR strategies, leadership, and culture should also be placed on the agenda of KM initiatives with as much vigour as the technological factors in order to be successful in these endeavours.

Table 1
Strategies, Operations, and Services of Corporate Information Professionals in KM Implementation

Strategies/Operations/Services	KISR	KOC	Micro- soft	3M	Boeing	Nike	Ford	Engel- hard
Intranet/portal/Web development		X	X		X	X	X	X
Managing IT systems and resources	X					X		
Information architecture				X	X			
Directory of experts, networking people	X	X	X	X				X
Indexing tools, thesauruses, taxation	X		X		X	X		
Content development and management			X	X	X		X	
Databases, knowledge repositories, best practices			X	X	X	X	X	
Data mining	X						X	
Searching tools and services		X	X	X	X		X	X
Virtual library development and management			X		X	X	X	X
Customer-oriented services: surveys, user feedback			X				X	
Measuring usability and effectiveness			X					
Information literacy		X		X		X		X
Providing information/answering questions				X	X			
Current awareness services				X				
Exhibitions, promoting innovations and new designs						X		
Managing security issues							X	

Contributions of information professionals toward KM initiatives and strategies

The next research question was about the involvement of information professionals in KM initiatives.

When we analyze the situation of KISR, Kuwait, we note that NSTIC is the unit that is responsible for information operations and services in the organization. It was reported that though NSTIC had been involved in initiating the KM project in KISR from the start, they are solely

responsible for content management and IT components at this stage. The Information Systems Team of the Information Technology Group at KOC, on the other hand, carried out the KM assignments fully from the initial stage of developing a rationale of the KM initiative to the comprehensive implementation of the pilot project in the Drilling Operations Group. Notably, the two organizations are still at the initial stage of implementation; hence we find limited participation of information professionals in KM work as compared to the professionals working in the six American companies who appear to be fully engaged in different activities and KM services.

Skills and Capabilities of Information Professionals

The last research question dealt with the perceptions of managers about the skills and capabilities that information professionals needed in order for them to assume effective KM roles and responsibilities. The participants from the two Kuwaiti organizations emphasized analytical skills, business awareness, capability in running business, understanding business strategies, and vision. The participant from KOC noted the importance of team skills for working with people and developing partnerships with effective communication and interpersonal competencies. She also stressed that cross-functional teamwork has become a crucial skill. Both participants mentioned IT skills so as to keep a technological edge. Table 2 displays responses of the two information managers together with perceptions of the six US managers.

In the 2004 study, the participants from two of the six American companies emphasized that it was crucial that the information professionals understood the organizational mission and culture. Another two emphasized sharing skills. The following additional skills were also mentioned, each by one of the participants: taxonomy, leadership, accountability, database design, and the use of different tools other than KM. The Nike manager asserted that professionals had to appreciate that, KM is high touch and not high tech, obviously referring to the vitality of the people dimension. These skills have quite a clear emphasis on relationship capabilities, business acumen and understanding, and IT competence. The Microsoft manager maintained that library education must address the gaps in their educational programs. According to her, librarians lacked in taking a position, obviously referring to the weaknesses in their decision-making and leadership capabilities. The 3M manager noted skills for reference interviewing and the understanding of

different learning styles besides the basic skills of librarianship as important skills.

Table 2
Needed Skills for Information Professionals for Effective
Participation in KM Programs

Skills	KISR	KOC	Micro- soft	3M	Boeing	Nike	Ford	Engel- hard
Business acumen		X	X		X	X	X	X
Understanding of organizational mission, culture and functions	X	X		X			X	X
Interpersonal relations, team building and partnership cultivation		X	X			X		X
Leadership skills			X	X		X		
Assertiveness skills				X				X
Decision making skills		X				X		
Marketing skills						X		
Project management		X						
Change management		X						
Communication skills	X		X		X		X	
Accounting skills			X					
KM applications		X						
Sharing skills	X		X	X				
Learning skills			X					
Library and Information skills				X	X			
Taxation knowledge								X
IT infusion and management skills	X	X			X	X		X
Database design skills		X				X		
Web and content publishing skills		X						
Intranets		X						

As we compare the perceptions of the managers of American and Kuwaiti organizations, we notice that Kuwaiti the managers did not mention basic library and information skills at all, whereas two American participants, Boeing and 3M, viewed it as an essential skill. Participants

from both sides emphasized the need of management, leadership, interpersonal, and IT skills. In other words, a combination of different skills is considered to be essential if an informational professional wishes to become an active player in the KM team.

Conclusion

This paper has brought forth the perceptions of two information managers in Kuwaiti companies that have initiated KM projects and made some progress. A comparison of the perceptions and insights of the Kuwaiti managers with their counterparts in the six US companies was provided to gain a better understanding of where the information professionals in this region stand vis-à-vis those in the developed world.

It was noted that the Kuwaiti KM managers are able to clearly articulate their understanding of the primary concepts of KM and the differences between IM and KM. This is indeed the foundation on which viable KM programs can be based. In this regard, these managers have a common ground of understanding with those working in the six leading US companies.

A marked difference was noted in KM applications in Kuwaiti and American companies. A clear emphasis on IT was noted in the Kuwaiti companies with a neglect on the people side, whereas American companies were trying to strike a balance between the IT side and the people side, or what is called the soft side. Since both Kuwaiti organizations are still in their initial stages of KM implementation, they have yet to move to the next stage of organization-wide implementation. It was found that the American organizations had undertaken a significant number of KM activities. These initiatives consisted of a wide range from small to large-scale, unit-specific, or having organization-wide application, both fragmented and integrated. The information professionals in these organizations were responsible for the vital segments of Intranets, work flows, taxation development, KM networks, and leveraging of the best practices. There were some who mentioned enhancing the conditions in which knowledge is generated, used and shared. From this discussion we may infer that it might be the distinct circumstances of an organization that would dictate how, and to what extent, their information professionals would be involved in KM work.

This study has shed some light on the involvement of information

professionals in KM strategies both in Kuwait and the US. Apparently, this role goes little beyond the traditional domain of IM. Most activities could be considered as a natural part of records management, information management, and data capture and analysis. Information professionals appear to be little engaged in other activities such as connecting people with people and helping in creating a knowledge-sharing culture.

It needs to be realized that traditional library and information skills have a great deal of relevance to the KM tools and strategies. Some American managers emphasized that their professionals had to be grounded in these capabilities. However, the two Kuwaiti managers did not report a perceived need of LIS capabilities among their information professionals. It is obvious that if the information professionals are equipped with appropriate capabilities, both traditional and KM-specific, they would find challenging roles in KM projects. At present, information professionals in both Kuwaiti organizations are not playing a significant role yet in KM initiatives. For that matter, they need a combination of technological and behavioral capabilities. Library skills have to be recognized and appreciated as essential skills that are part of the needed capabilities in KM applications. Kuwaiti organizations are starting to show great interest in the KM concept and information professionals here in Kuwait have a great opportunity to be part of the KM teams in these organizations if they equip themselves with the needed skills and learn how to market their capabilities.

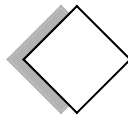
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Submitted: May 2007

Approved: October 2007



دور اختصاصي المعلومات وإسهامه في إدارة المعرفة: دراسة مقارنة لمدى إدراك كل من المديرين الكويتيين والأمريكيين لهذا المجال

ليل معروف*

ملخص: إن هدف الدراسة هو وصف مدى إدراك المديرين في مؤسستين كويتيتين - وهما بالتحديد: معهد الكويت للأبحاث العلمية وشركة نفط الكويت - فيما يخص إدارة المعرفة وكذلك مدى الاختلاف بين إدارة المعلومات وإدارة المعرفة (Knowledge Management). تلقي الدراسة الضوء أيضاً على مبادرات إدارة المعرفة في كلتا الشركتين. وقد طلب من المديرين تحديد المهارات والقدرات التي يعتقدون أنها ذات أهمية لاختصاص المعلومات للعمل في إدارة المعرفة. إن هذه الدراسة في الواقع هي إعادة لدراسة بحثية أجريت عام 2004، وشملت ست شركات في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. إن مقارنة نتائج الدراسة التي أجريت في كل من الكويت والولايات المتحدة ستساعد على تحديد مدى فهم المديرين في هذه المنطقة لهذا المجال مقارنة بأولئك في الدول المتقدمة، ومن ثم ستساعد في تخطيط مشاريع إدارة المعرفة وتنفيذها في المستقبل. كلتا الدراستين استخدمت منهجية المسح (Survey) للحصول على البيانات من مديري المعلومات في الشركات.

تبين من الدراسة وجود تفهم عام لدى المديرين في الشركات الكويتية للمفاهيم الأساسية لإدارة المعرفة والاختلاف بين إدارة المعلومات وإدارة المعرفة، وهي نتيجة يشترك فيها المديرون في كل من الكويت والولايات المتحدة. كما تبين أن الشركات

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الأمريكية تتعامل بشكل مكثف مع استراتيجيات إدارة المعرفة، وبالمقابل فإن الشركات الكويتية قد أنهت مؤخراً بعض المشاريع التجريبية الأولية ولا تزال هناك خطوات أخرى كبيرة بحاجة إلى التنفيذ. وتبين أيضاً أن اختصاصيي المعلومات في الشركات الأمريكية قد أدوا دوراً رئيسياً في مبادرات مشاريع إدارة المعرفة، بينما لم يكن لنظرائهم في الشركات الكويتية دور مماثل أو واضح. وأخيراً تبين أن هناك اختلافاً في أهمية المهارات المعلوماتية للعمل في مجال إدارة المعرفة، حيث إن بعض المديرين في الشركات الأمريكية يرى فائدة ملموسة لمجال إدارة المعرفة في المهارات المتوافرة من خلال علم المعلومات والمكتبات، بينما لم تجد الدراسة رؤية مماثلة لدى الشركات الكويتية.

المصطلحات الأساسية: إدارة المعرفة، إدارة المعلومات، اختصاصي المعلومات، مركز المعلومات، المهارات المعلوماتية.