

The position of structural factors in Knowledge management achievements in organization: a case study in β company

Ali Saghir Amarghan, Reza JavanNezhad

Abstract— With entrance to knowledge age the effectiveness of knowledge management needs particular structural, cultural, technological and human prerequisites. The main purpose of the research is searching the needed structural factors for success of knowledge management in organization. The ongoing situation of the statistical population will be studied with regard to these factors and components. The population of this research comprises managers and superiors of β company. Random classified sampling is used to determine the sample of this research. Data gathering is done by personal questionnaire and survey. The method research is descriptive. The conclusion shows that structural factors have significant effects on knowledge manage There are meaningful difference among exist and appropriate condition of foregoing factors. Eventually based on research findings, some recommendations are told to scientific society and organization.

Index Terms— *Organizational culture, Knowledge Management, cultural dimension, and β company.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the current competitive world, knowledge is changed to a strategic source of many organizations .From Nonaka (1991) point of view, in present unstable conditions knowledge is the only reliable source to gain stable competitive advantage. Downport (2000) also believes that organizations must differentiate themselves from the others based on their knowledge [13].

Since 1990s knowledge management, changed to a kind of management style ,and refers to a systematic and integrate process of coordination in vast organization activities that includes : gaining , creating storing .share & use of knowledge by individuals , groups to reach organizations goals[26].Effect of KM projects on organizations total success is confirmed . However what factors & how they cause success, is a question that needs lots of surveys .Therefore in different studies which are done about it, effect of different hard and soft organizational factors are surveyed on management project success.

Among different job policies , the following factors are effective to create a kind of foundation to protect KM process ;HRM policies that concentrates on employment and keeping talented individuals, is a kind of organizational culture that welcomes new ideas and encourages learning technical

First Author name, Organizational development, Payame noor university, Tehran, Iran

Second Author name, Science and Research branch, Islamic Azad university, Tehran, Iran

instruments that have capability of knowledge gathering and distributing, facilitates a strategic approach to knowledge and a kind of organizational structure ,communications and interactions among individuals.

This article, regarding to importance and basic challenges in knowledge oriented economy that is foundation of most organizations , among different organizational factors which are effective on KM ,Surveys role and characters of suitable organizational structure to perform effective KM and structural necessities on success of KM. Organizational structure from one side is created by employees activities and from the other the other side forms foundation of their activities and if this foundation is not ready expected results of using KM process in organization could not be received having best employees and high investing on KM would be useless. Based on that, main question of the research is: What are structural aspects that proportionate KM in an organization. How is condition of surveyed population from ideal factor and aspects point of view? How much could it institutionalize this factor? How is relation between knowledge oriented structures with KM success?

II. ESSENTIALS OF THEORY

A) Knowledge management (In brief)

In a classification which is done by Job specialists, 1980s is quality movement decade, 1990s is reengineering decade and 2000 is named as KM decade. Famous expression to introduce this age is economics of idea. Economics of idea often refers to an unlimited potential to economic growth and success that based on that new KM innovations and products will be possible .This process is differentiated from the most traditional economic aspects, that visualizes limitation in increase of opportunities base on lack of physical resources principle, current work force, investment and etc. Comparing the first theories, economics of idea is more engaged with explanation of life quality increase and Wealth production [16].

At the moment individuals and organizations realized the important role of knowledge in competitive environments and this phenomenon approved its position among other wealth producing resources in a short time. Base on this many people believe that KM can effectively be used for technical activities in the current situation.[23]

Nevertheless more organizations haven't had methods and stages for KM.[27]1980 sees development of systems based on KM. This is based on researches, which is done in elite systems and artificial intelligence. The first articles and books about KM published in 1989.Some counselor companies

started KM programs in 1990. Innovation about KM was growing with internet by middle of 1990s and in 1995 Europe society wanted to allocate budget on KM research projects. Cost amount on KM was \$776,000,000 in 1998 and \$8,000,000,000 in 2003.

In current century the companies which are better in knowledge and management, will be more successful. Nonaco (1998) in HARWARD JOB MAGEZINE says: In an economy that the only existent confidence was non confidence, knowledge is the only confidant resource to create a fix advantage [7]. KM starts with emphasis on importance of human behavior and their work culture in place of technologic emphasis of information management. KM framework architecture is formed by two social and technical aspects .KM is still in childhood among industries and its structure & process hasn't developed adequately [20].

In the contrary with other techniques, definition of KM isn't often easy because it includes a vast concepts, managerial duties, technologies and functions. KM is a system of process to understand and apply strategic and resource of knowledge in organization. KM is an structured approach that creates some methods to realize, evaluate, organize, store and apply knowledge to cover the needs and reach the organizations goals [1]. According to Schoolts KM is : challenge to discover individual data and change it to an informational subject in the way that can be stored in data bases, be interacted by others, be applied in routine process[6].there is another definition: KM is a way that organizations create gain, classify, modify, share and publish the knowledge or in the other word this concept is defined as a method transforms raw data to decoded information then interpreting that information to a useful knowledge: two main goals of KM could be expressed in this way; 1) do intelligently to performance degree, or enterprise activities in order to retention and total success. 2) Understanding value of the best knowledge properties of organization which are human resources[32].

B) Evaluation of Structural aspects:

Management paradigm has involved in some clear stages and in all stages, organizational structure was clearly noticed [9].since organizational structure forms the frame work of organizational decisions and processes therefore it was the first stimulus of the change. Organizational structure expresses way of work division and coordination among individuals and organizational units to perform organizational affairs [4]. Miller & Droge [20] define structure as a complete form of centralization, formalization .complexity & integration. Novam& colleagues also think that organizational structure is a way of dividing power, responsibility, work pressures among organization member .Each organizational factor follows to goals: First, shows that who are gathering together to perform a job effectively. second shows that who to which higher level reports in organizational hierarchy[5]. Organizational structure could be a stimulus or barrier in KM. Amount of centralization, formalization, how information is distributed among units, condition of organization's secret documents and etc... are important structural factors that situation and their characters , directly effects on creation ,conveying , storing and use of knowledge in organization[22]. Beside this aspect of formal

structure , there are other aspects that by interaction can form a suitable structure for effective function of KM[22]. Both formal & informal structures effect on KM.As formal structure prepare guideline for KM activities, informal structure; prepare necessary communicational channels for knowledge exchange [5].

Formal aspect:

Recent studies on organizational structure more emphasizes on tri aspect framework and based on that different kinds of organizational structure are described. For example shine defines structure based on three aspects: hierarchy, function, centralization [3]& Robins uses three factors of complexity, formalization, centralization to explain structure[4]. Formal aspect of organization expresses formal structure and organizational hierarchy. Robins introduces three factors of formalization, complexity, centralization as aspect of organizational structure [4].

A suitable combination of these three aspects only shows formal organizational structure whi8ch is clear in organizational table while in different studies informal structure is said to be as a key factor to gain competitive advantages. According to scientists low centralization and formalization can promote organizational effectiveness with increasing level of organizational interaction employees' motivation and flexibility [25]. Existence of formalization & centralization in making decision, decreases amount of creative solutions very much. While power distribution in organization causes spontaneous experimentalism, freedom of expression. This is the factors that form foundation of conveying & creation of knowledge [10, 22.15]. High formalization and centralization leads to employee's dependency and finally decrease of satisfaction and motivation. Decentralized organizational structure prepares an environment that employees participate voluntary to create and distribute knowledge. Participative environment with encouragement of organization member for participation, cause to facilitate, create, covey, store and use knowledge [30]. In most structural classification formal structure is emphasized & the hidden energy, running beyond this structural framework is neglected. This hidden energy stems from organization or informal relations, and it plays an important role in knowledge oriented organizations [31].

Informal relations that presented more realistic play of how to organize workforce & amount of dynamism and freedom in performance of jobs forms an important aspect of organizational structure and paying them high attention prepares a more complete acquaintance of structural factors. Transition period of structural evolution shows that hierarchal structure is transforming to a flexible, organic, structure in postmodern business world [25]. Because of this transition period, new organizational forms emerged such as: Network form organizations, knowledge oriented organizations, virtual organizations, modular organizations[31]. Totally these new kinds of organizations five main changes are visible: High flexibility, strategic network co working, decentralization , change in power relation [28]. In a helicopter view it can be said that structures change process has moved to more organic structures that flat, team oriented and division structure have extended in them and amount of centralization, formalization has decreased[11,12].

III. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES IN KNOWLEDGE ORIENTED ECONOMY

In a condition that organization's retention and competitive advantage highly depend on gaining, creation, using& conveying of knowledge, necessary conditions for this action in organization's structures must be prepared.

Some main structural necessities for effective managing of knowledge in organization are:

Relations based on reliance: Reliance, co working, coordination and integration among employees causes to form new ideas. Knowledge oriented structures because of high need to knowledge distribution, have to be based on reliance orientation in place of control orientation. For knowledge distribution need to have a high level of reliance and optimism among member of organization [31].

Exogenous relations: These relations emphasizes on inter organizational and extra organizational interactions and shows openness in organizational structure, dimness of intra

and extra organizational borders and dynamism of organizational environment. These relations could facilitate creation and distribution of knowledge [31].

Wide emotional relations: Existence of these relations in organizational structure let the employees to perform values, procedures, organizational competence according to their realization therefore employees' creativity, innovation, common sight , empowerment, self-management would be boosted [31].

Suitable combination of these characters that are expressed beside formal and informal aspects could answer structural needs of effective management of knowledge. Wang and Ahmad with use of three above mentioned factors, improvement in aspects of organizational structure with knowledge oriented approach in the following:

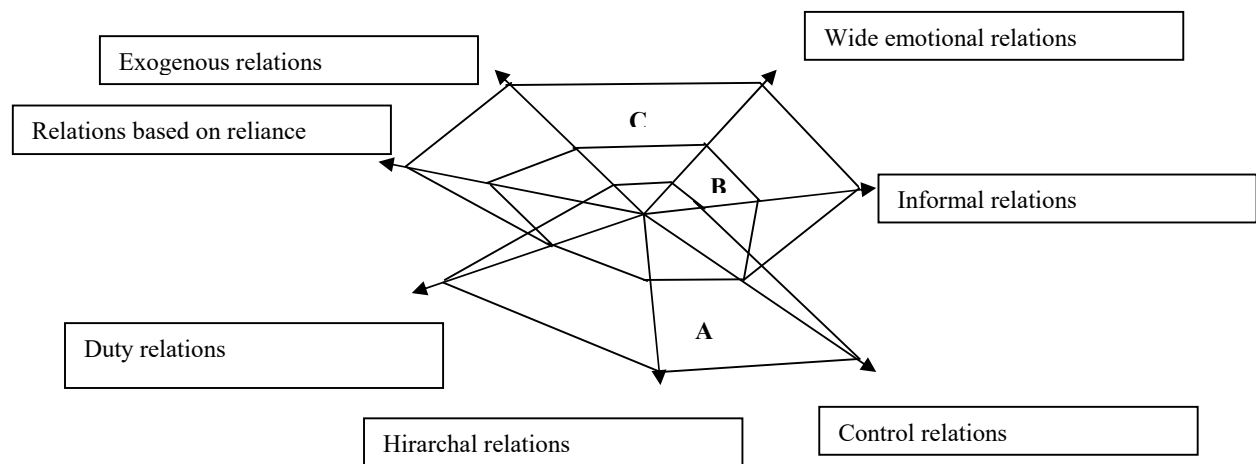


Fig 1. Improvement in aspects of organizational structure taken from[31], A: Mechanical structures , B:Organic structures, C:Knowledge oriented structures.

IV. STRUCTURAL NECESSITIES FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Vast changes in knowledge oriented economies and necessity of organizations compatibility with these changes have improved structures. The following processes are easily done in them: Creation, maintenance, conveying and use of knowledge.

These structures are different from variety of aspects with traditional structures. Surveying necessary characters of organizations in the way of knowledge orientation & KM shows that formal aspects and its hard parts are not enough to answer these conditions and structural aspects have to be seen deeply.

To create knowledge oriented organization in the form of work societies need to have a system of aspects in a higher level [6] that will be explained in the following:

Border annihilation and fluidity: Effective KM needs to be free of separating boundary limitation and needs to make a common thinking framework. By that we can create organizational nature and relations based on reliance. In this way storing of organizational knowledge could be expanded beyond the physical boundary limitations. Informal relations have main role to eradicate these boundaries [6].

Social networks and informal structures: For effectiveness of knowledge management, structure must be flexible and dynamic therefore organizational structures not only could be in a rigid form but also they are dynamic phenomenon that informal relations have an important role in them [5]. Social networks could be system of special relations among a clear group of individuals. These networks could be formal or informal and they could have a big role to motivate creative thought [13]. Work societies include individual groups that constantly participate in special cases, problems or a common subjects and they share their

interest group and knowledge and experience to get useful results for both individual improvement and learning [18].

Using teams and recompensing them: Teams are transforming to main work units. This is because of high dependence of duties, change in methods of organization, organization's flatness, technologies change. Green Guard (1998) expresses that: One of the most important duties in successful KM is organizing multi duty teams to gain knowledge and present it in the easiest form [14]. Team designing of performance evaluations systems and recompensing can motivate individuals to help each other in order to promote level of performance, help people, and share knowledge among group members [20].

Structural professionalism: Employees are in the center of KM process employees create and share the knowledge therefore managers are suggested to make creation and group work ability among their employees with empowerment plans, making team works in organization, power delegations of authorities [16]. Some factors that could strengthen structural professionalism are: creativity, skills, studies, experience [29, 17].

Posts and units of formal organization to improve knowledge processes: Choosing organizational structure that prepares current of information and knowledge. These studies on this subject, suggests many jobs and roles of KM and considers them as basic factors for effective managing of knowledge. Some roles are: senior managers of knowledge, knowledge managers, content managers, knowledge analysts [12].

Regarding mentioned subjects we can say that necessary structural aspects for organizing of knowledge, oriented organizations include special factors to facilitate KM process of organization, that are different from factors of traditional structures.

Table 1 presents different structural aspects, proportionate KM approach that are from different scientist's point of view:

Table 1. Factors of research model with researchers' name.

Researchers	Structural factors
Chooea (2000), Gold (2002), Wang&Ahmad (2003), Roland&syed-Ikhsan (2004), Salawati (2006), Migdadi (2005), Alalavi & Coleagues (2007), Oliver & Condadi (2007)	Formalization
Moherman (2001), Gold (2002), Wang & Ahmad (2003), Roland & syed-khsan (2004), Salawati (2006), Migdadi (2005), Alalavi & Coleagues (2007), Oliver & Condadi (2007)	Centralization
Wang & Ahmad (2003), Chooea (2000), Reygans (2002), Libo wits & Chen (2003), Park (2004), Sajadi & his colleagues (2007), Bastomanit (1999), Mach Callman (1996), Squarts (2002)	Debounrdy&Fluidity
Wan crew (2000), Park & his colleagues (2004), Chung hong & his coleages (2005), Pury (2007), Millen (2007), Roland & syed_Ikhsan	Team orientation & compensating it
Reygans (2002), Wang & Ahmad (2003), Roland & syed_Ikhsan, Park (2004), Pury (2007) , Oliver & Condadi (2006), Squarts (2002), Mier & Winot (1993), Smith & Rop (2002), Wang & Ahmad (2003), Litka (1999), Love & wanger (1991)	Informal structure&Networks
SkiremAmiden (1997), Downport & his colleagues (1998)), Libo wits (1999), Gordon (2002), Chordios (2003)	Informal Knowledge posts
Hal Sopol & jooshi (2000), Millen (2007), Woodman (1989), Lee & Chooe (2003), Glaser (1984)	Structural professionalism

Kind of research & study tool: This research from the goal point of view is descriptive, from kind of usage is applicable, from time aspect is temporary and from data point of view is quantitative. Main tool in this research is questionnaire that is designed according different scientists' criteria. Validity of questionnaire with using β cronbakh is %91& reliability of questionnaire with using content validity is surveyed & confirmed.

Population in this research is all managers & staff experts of β company in Tehran. In this research 256 people out of 844 people with using random classified sampling are selected. In addition to this population's point of view 30 elites' idea are used too.

Data analysis method: In this research for data analysis descriptive statistic techniques , to survey normal variable distribution Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, to survey entering of factors into model mono variable T students test, to survey existence of mean's significant difference in real& ideal form T student paired test and to survey relation of structural factors and KM success Coefficient Pierson are used.

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. Amount of formalization has a significant relation with KM success.

2. Amount of centralization has a significant relation with KM success.
3. Fluidity and border annihilation has significant relation with KM success.
4. Team orientation and recompensing it have a significant relation with KM success.
5. Informal structure & networks have a significant relation with KM success.
6. Knowledge informal posts have a significant relation with KM success.
7. Structural professionalism have a significant relation with KM success.

VI. RESULTS

Because of standard distribution of factors and based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, to survey entrance of independent variables into model, mono variable T student test is used. Null and alternative hypothesis for all above researching hypothesis are in the following form:

$$\mu > 3, \mu \leq 3$$

Table 2. Mono sample T test to survey entrance of independent variable into model from employees' & experts' point of view:

Research hypothesis	Population	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation	T Statistic	Degree of freedom	Significant number	Test result
Formalization	Employees	264	4/00	0/51	31/563	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/02	0/47	11/891	29	0	RH0
Centralization	Employees	264	4/01	0/56	29/095	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/04	0/64	8/833	29	0	RH0
Fluidity& border annihilation	Employees	264	4/01	0/56	29/095	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/13	0/38	16/034	29	0	RH0
Team orientation& recompense	Employees	264	3/95	0/60	25/703	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/08	0/46	12/882	29	0	RH0
Organizational professionalism	Employees	264	4/26	0/58	35/163	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/15	0/53	11/770	29	0	RH0
Formal knowledge posts	Employees	264	4/31	0/55	38/625	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/26	0/48	14/285	29	0	RH0
Informal structure& networks	Employees	264	4/42	0/45	50/551	263	0	RH0
	Elites	30	4/40	0/44	17/406	29	0	RH0

As it is observed in table 2 , amount of significant number for all hypotheses are almost zero, that that is lower than standard significant level (0/05). Therefore null hypothesis are not confirmed on%95 confidence level for all hypotheses.

It means that answers to all hypotheses don't have medium mean ($\mu = 3$) and because statistic symbol is positive T statistic so it could be said that hypotheses answers have tendency to choices higher than T mean level and all factors are effective in success of knowledge management process. In the next stage of research real factors and ideal factors are

compared: It means that if there is a significant difference between real factors and ideal factors in the population. Therefore, the hypothesis is: there is a significant difference among all factors in the real situation an ideal situation .In the other words, Null and alternative hypothesis are as the following:

$$\mu_1 = \mu_2, \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$$

Table 3. Pair samples T test results about condition of real & ideal factors

Research hypotheses	factors	Frequency	Mean	T statistic	Freedom degree	Significant number
Formality	Real formality	264	3/22	12/46	263	0/00
	Ideal formality	264	2/60			
Centralization	Real centralization	264	3/28	10/187	263	0/00
	Ideal centralization	264	2/82			
Border annihilation & fluidity	Real border annihilation & fluidity	264	2/64	-30/903	263	0/00
	Ideal border annihilation & fluidity	264	4/12			
Team orientation & compensation	Real informal structure	264	2/25	-30/270	263	0/00
	Ideal informal structure	264	3/95			
Structural professionalism	Real team using & compensate	264	2/07	-40/461	263	0/00
	Ideal team using & compensate	264	4/26			
Formal knowledge post	Real formal knowledge organizational posts	264	1/73	-40/926	263	0/00
	Ideal formal knowledge organizational posts	264	4/31			
Informal structure and networks	Real professionalism	263	2/76	-34/703	262	0/00
	Ideal professionalism	263	4/42			

Regarding table 3, significant number was almost zero that lower than standard significant level (%5). Therefore null hypothesis isn't confirmed in (%95) confidence level. It means that there is a significant difference among people about all factors in the real or ideal conditions. In the next stage for grading structural factors, Freedman variance analysis test is used. Based on table 4 significant number related to Freedman variance analysis test was almost

zero. This is lower than Error level ($\beta = %5$). Therefore there is a significant difference among levels of structural factors mean. Factors priority for modification is mentioned in table 5. As they are printed centralization factor has the highest degree & formal knowledge organizational post has the lowest degree.

Table 4. Results of freedman variance analysis test which is related to structural factors

Test statistic	Freedom degree	Significant number
765/413	6	0/000

Table 5. Mean level & structural factors priority.

Factors	Mean level	Priority
Centralization	4/83	Fist
Formality	4/66	Second
Professionalism	4/55	Third
Border annihilation & Flexibility	4/22	Forth

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Informal structure	3/16	Fifth
Using team & recompensing	2/55	Sixth
Formal knowledge organizational posts	2/03	Eighth

In the last stage significant relation between knowledge oriented structures and KM success will be discussed. The researching hypothesis is: There is a significant relation

between all factors of knowledge oriented structure and KM success. Null hypothesis & alternative hypotheses are:
 $r = 0$, $r \neq 0$

Table 6. Coefficient of correlation test to survey significant relation between factors of knowledge oriented structures and KM success.

Research hypotheses	Frequency	Coefficient of correlation	Freedom degree	Significant number
First hypothesis	264	0648	263	0/002
Second hypothesis	264	0728	263	0/010
Third hypothesis	264	0791	263	0/004
Forth hypothesis	264	0662	263	0/028
Fifth hypothesis	264	0821	263	0/00
Sixth hypothesis	264	0524	263	0/010
Seventh hypothesis	264	0621	263	0/012

Regarding to Coefficient of correlation between structural factors, KM success and less than (%5) significant number, null hypotheses based on no correlation are rejected. It means that according to coefficient of correlation, structural factors express changes of variance in KM. Therefore it could be expected with more structural factors in organization KM success will be promoted.

VII. CONCLUSION

Knowledge oriented economy has created special obligations or organizations. Many functions and specialties that cause organization success in traditional economies have lost their importance & use in knowledge oriented economies. Organizations for retention & success in these conditions have created basic & vast downsizing in their structure and process. For success of organizations all organizational factors such as: organizational structure, organizational culture, technologies, must have special characters and they must be coordinated and integrated. Knowing structural factors to success of KM is basic goal of this research. Therefore in this article with knowledge of main structural factors their conditions in population are surveyed. The following suggestions based on research findings could help organization to create a kind of knowledge atmosphere that proportionate KM approach.

About formalization factor these are suggested to organization managers: Reduction of rules, regulation, formal and written procedures about duties performance, organizational activities, limitless relations & communications in formal & predefined procedures of organization, possible neglecting of defined procedures & methods in order to manage some conditions and performing affairs based on informal agreement among individuals. Such morality in managers encourages knowledge orientation

morality in organization's employees. Of course it must be noticed that deregulation doesn't mean trampling the rules and regulation. Justice, fairness, sympathy, compassion are philosophy of rule writing. If many rules & regulations are made, omission of all the rules & regulations is not the only solution.

About organizational centralization the following suggestions could be offered to managers: Increasing relations and informal interactions in organization, increasing delegation to employees about way of duty performance, increasing action freedom and employees authority in making decision, decreasing emphasis on exact observation of instructions & confirmed procedures, communications facilitating among different units of organization, increase possibility of decision making in each level that has the best information, regular meeting to convey information among managers and employees, increase employees accessibility to needed information and document.

Bureaucracy is a control tool and emphasizes on strict control. This point of view about knowledgeable employees has to be changed. These employees have professional expertness and according to many scientists this kind of expertness causes commitment. Control tools of these people are different with each other. Therefore it is suggested to managers in the moving to knowledgeable organizations use internal mechanisms of control about knowledgeable employees.

Knowledge oriented economy needs to change or modify structures. In some cases based on past solutions, structures are being formed which make no added value for organizations and has to be modified or replaced with flexible and flat structures.

Therefore to vertical & horizontal complexity in organization these actions are necessary: using informational & communicational technology, team buildings, performance

evaluation system, bonus based on team performance, making formal organizational posts & units to manage knowledgeable and creative activities in organization.

According to systematic point of view on organization, human resources are the most important resources of organization. To use these resources in the best way, it is suggested to change organizational policy into employment of individuals have knowledgeable characters. Some characters that have to be noticed are listed in the following: capability of making new ideas, capability of solving problems , giving suitable working methods, intelligence and creativity to know key factors of organizational success, university degrees, variety in expertise& skill, employees experience, understanding relation between our specialized activities and other skills & specialties, necessary education to create and enrich mentioned characters.

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