

THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF LEARNING ORGANISATIONS AND EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOR IN THAILAND'S HOTEL INDUSTRIES CRISIS

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Citation: Widtayakornbundit, S., & Ativetin, T. (2022). THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF LEARNING ORGANISATIONS AND EMPLOYEES' BEHAVIOR IN THAILAND'S HOTEL INDUSTRIES CRISIS. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 44(4), 1319–1325. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.44417-949>

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find solutions to the epidemic crisis by using knowledge management (KM) and learning organization (LO) to assess their work engagement and organizational commitment in employees. The sample group in this study is 392 management personnel in the hotel industry in Bangkok, Thailand. The study uses the quantitative research methodology and the structural equation model analysis. The results of the study revealed that KM has a direct influence on the intermediate variable, namely, LO, and an indirect effect on LO with a correlation to work engagement and organisational commitment ($p < 0.05$). The study represented almost variables has impact to each other. Human resource development could take into account the context and adapt the organization to be flexible and enthusiastic about learning amid changing circumstances, as well as understanding the condition of personnel in the organisation.

Key words: knowledge management, learning organisation, organisation commitment, work engagement, hotel management

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INTRODUCTION

The service industry is the main economic factor that drives the country. Hotel business is considered to be one of the main revenues of the tourism industry as it is the center of service for foreign tourists. In 2019, the revenue generated from the hotel industry amounted to more than 200 billion baht (the data retrieve from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in Thailand: www.mots.go.th, within 2020 tourism statistic). However, in 2020, the hotel business value has declined due to the epidemic crisis, causing foreign tourists to be unable to travel to Thailand. The issuance of an epidemic prevention policy affects tourists in Thailand and abroad. The hotel management has changed in order to adapt to the current situation, taking into account the survival of the business, so there must be a new approach for human resource management in the service industry. Particularly, this involves working from home and applying technology at work, which is a trend of management that is expected in the years ahead. This study emphasizes the importance of knowledge management for employees in the epidemic situation, and explores the behavior resulting from the changing working style.

This study uses human resource development approaches as independent variables for studying how to transfer or generate new knowledge, being regarded as specific approaches for current knowledge management. During the crisis, the organization needs new knowledge and internal adaptation, and applies external knowledge to cope with change, including effective use of knowledge (Selivanovskikh et al., 2020). Knowledge management still generate organization performance by transfers and sharing knowledge among employees (Lai et al., 2022). This is linked to the science of organisation management that members of the organisation have to report arising problems and involve in dealing such problems.

It is the principle of the learning organisation that enables its members to access learning at all levels and to engage in learning as required by the organisation (Sinclair, 2017). The learning organisation is often influenced by knowledge management because the process of creating knowledge or applying knowledge is the source of formulating the policy or practice of managing the learning organisation (Chawla and Joshi, 2011). The outcome applied in this research is organisation commitment and work engagement. Organisational commitment is a sense of a dedication to the organisation when the organisation supports its employees properly (Rawashdeh and Tamimi, 2020).

The work engagement is the result of work experience of employees whose perception is an outcome of the organization's job design or the appropriate assignment (Mostafa, 2019). The aforementioned behaviour is an indicator of the impact of management science on the attitudes towards the defined work and organization. External changes would affect the system of the organisation. Therefore, the research aims to find how to survive in a crisis along with developing personnel in the hotel industry. The sample consisted of 392 hotel executives or managers in Thailand who apply organisation knowledge management to the process of adjustment among staff under their supervision in the epidemic crisis. The intermediate variable is the learning organisation that affects organisational commitment and work engagement. The objective of this study is to find suitable models for crisis management in the hotel industry in Bangkok, and to further expand the results to other key service industries in order to justify the use of the learning management model.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a modern concept that enhances the interaction between technology and human so as to raise awareness necessary for self-knowledge management and to present knowledge to general public (Tergan et al., 2006), becoming a new perspective of learning and innovation by integrating technology with knowledge transmission into an absorptive capacity (Yoo et al., 2016). Knowledge management in the organisation must generate and transfer knowledge to members. The knowledge management concept can create new knowledge and work experience through employee behaviour (Martínez-Martínez et al., 2022). This involves the process of bringing information into the knowledge management system so as to enable learners to access learning resources as much as possible (Klerkx et al., 2011; Li and Herd, 2017). Knowledge management is a strategy that is a multidisciplinary integration, or contextually adapted to provide relevant personnel with the necessary information and to build on the effectiveness gained from organisational learning (Ammirato et al., 2021). It can be said that knowledge management is a guideline for managing information to support human capital to utilize the organisation's resources to the fullest potential. To ensure its consistence with a business context requires taking into account the resource perspective theory which addresses the economic management of the organisation in accessing resources to gain a competitive advantage (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). Knowledge management in the business sector is in a form of network learning in which knowledge acquisition is associated with knowledge exploitation to create an advantage for development, or create innovations for the organization's business (Ngwenya and Haggmann, 2011). Particularly, when economic values change dynamically, knowledge is an important asset, regardless of being information used in the network, knowledge sharing, or the relationship between both external and internal networks (Sulaiman et al., 2011). Knowledge management is therefore required to disseminate the knowledge available in both people and system to general public in a structured manner so that people in the network can apply their resources to the organization's context to their full capacity (Irma, 2001). Knowledge management seems to be the immune system against the effects of changes that knowledge within the organisational network works in line with supply chain management, with an adaptive pattern of knowledge management that allows knowledge flow and knowledge sharing between departments, leading to learning in a network and rightly judging the acquired knowledge (Kalogeraki et al., 2018). The knowledge management purpose is considered the business environment context to find the crucial role that encourage organization for sustainable competitive advantage

Learning Organisation

The organisational learning is like learning behaviours of people who acquire knowledge to drive organisational growth. Thus, the learning organisation provides a chance for personnel to continuously learn together (Senge, 2006) and coordinate to develop work at all levels of the unit of analysis (Sun, 2003). This will lead to the prosperity of the organisation through the learning process that is the essence of the evolution of human capital to drive the organisation towards success (Lau et al., 2017). This concept is a management principle that takes into account the organisational approach to adapt to the changing environment by developing the capability of personnel in the organisation in a sustainable manner. This adapts to learning culture in the organisation which might influence to the organisational behaviour and performance (Tan and Olaore, 2022). However, learning has to be reinforced. The use of the learning process is often reinforced by the origin of knowledge. To make it practical, it must be controlled and stabilized. Thus, the implementation of a learning organisation should emphasise knowledge management in all aspects, including the transformation of learning to become progressive and practical all the time (Chang et al., 2017). The study of Jung (2016) adopted the said concept to stabilise the organisational learning of different cultures in the organisation, and adapt the communication model from internally accumulated information to the unique organisational structure and the values that drive distinguished organisations so as to be applied by the management of the organisation for sustainable efficiency and effectiveness. Guidelines for the interaction of people within the organisation are therefore the exchange of knowledge for mutually developing the organisation. This is consistent with the study of Sidani and Reese (2020) which stated that the arrangement or meeting held to find a solution to the problem contributes to the psychological safety. In this regard, problems can be solved by knowledge workers who contribute to smooth operations. It could be said that the learning organisation responds positively to its members through the exchange of information, especially the knowledge essential for work. The identity of the acquired knowledge must be considered and classified to make it suitable for the members in the particular group.

Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment (OC) is referred to as a model that creates values among people in the organisation, places an emphasis on organisational goals, organisational values, including the creation of corporate benefits (Buchanan, 1974). Employee engagement is an important factor enabling productivity growth which is an indicator of performance in an organization. This is consistent with Ennis et al. (2018) describing the effects of organizational commitment that employees with emotional ties have a high demand to be a part of the organization because of their feelings without being forced by others. The forms of engagement describe the commitment to the organisation, depending on the individual characteristics making each individual feel satisfied with being a member of the organization, so the forms of engagement vary according to the management style of the organisation or various situations in the organisation. Therefore, adapting to changes in mission makes the engagement even more specific (Fayda-Kinik, 2022). The definition of organisational commitment differs from person to person, and depends on the linkage between the personal identity and proactive behaviour of the organisation in the management of all work environments. The functioning of organisational commitment is considered a psychological model of the relationship between the characteristics of employees and the organisation, and whether employees would be a part of the organisation. OC has therefore become the reason for other sequential behaviours,

such as satisfaction, resignation, or loyalty, and so on. Creating an emotional attachment to the organisation is a challenge in management, for instance, making investments in employees, promoting goals and values to the organisation at the same time, including the unity between people and organisations (Huynh and Hua, 2020). Organising an environment or practice that is appropriate for people in the organisation will help create the OC, especially the human resource management approach, ranging from selecting the right man for the right job, boosting knowledge of people in the organisation, to implementing labor relations guidelines, all of which are complementary functions that help ensure work satisfaction of people in the organisation. This is the fundamental emotion in the OC that complements other emotional relationships (Guzeller and Celiker, 2020; Widtayakornbudit and Phinaitrup, 2021). The operations of the OC can be both emotionally responsive to organisational performance and can be an indicator of performance.

Work Engagement

Work engagement (WE) differs from employee engagement in its emphasis on the willingness to achieve the job, while employee engagement often focuses on organisational membership and satisfaction. The demand to achieve the job will provide additional incentives to ensure that the job meet the requirements (Håvold et al., 2020). It is a good attitude at work that will enable employees to continue working in the organisation through individual experiences, namely, vigour, dedication, and absorbing (Wirawan et al., 2020). Moreover, the impact of work engagement does not only affect the internal systems of the organisation, but also affects the productivity delivered to customers as a result of perceiving what customers want and how to achieve outcomes of the job (Yoo et al., 2020).

The definition of work engagement often focuses on the experience while working as perceived by employees. A positive attitude should result in good behaviour through work engagement. This concept responds to the idea of managing people that need to connect the organisational working systems together in order to determine the direction in which employees feel they can work without the internal obstacles (Kulkarni et al., 2022).

A single factor, such as work engagement, is often ineffective. Rationality is the explanation for the influence of the outcome of work engagement. For example, a study of Douglas and Roberts (2020) which examines the effects of age on work engagement reported that work engagement is high among older people because they have gained experiences from work, and the investment of the organisation in these human capitals are inputs that enhance individual motivation and satisfaction, or due to the challenging work. The use of knowledge or empowerment in making a decision encourages employees to have self-esteem, and perform behaviors of work engagement (Rai and Maheshwari, 2020). These studies show that work engagement is more often a linkage between independent and dependent variables because it helps raise understanding about the context of the research study. The independent variables applied in the study mostly make employees feel positive with themselves (Garg and Singh, 2020). The work engagement is a process, working in the form of the behavioural expansion as required for economic or internal employee outcomes (Guo and Hou, 2022).

THORETICAL FRAMWORK

KM is an important factor in behavioural design because it is responsible for human resource management in all organisations. Because the creation of knowledge or the accumulation of knowledge is applied by the organisation as a tool to measure the development of people in the organisation - this is to complement the work of a learning organisation that integrates between people, knowledge, and technology together (Yee et al., 2019), relationships are built by using knowledge that produces an LO as a situation-based integration that motivates employees. It is similar to a system that supports the integration of people with the necessary new knowledge. Another perspective of the relationship is the focus of the vision and mission by having organizational leaders present a strategy of organisational learning equipped with the knowledge necessary for the decision-making process (Chawla and Joshi, 2011). Knowledge transfer between people from different organizations can adapt and respond quickly to changing environment. This structural relationship raises the researcher's awareness of learning in the crisis when working in a learning organization evolves from an organisational context.

KM and LO's behavioural approaches tend to focus on improving employee retention because investments in employees usually have conditions about the different use of valuable resources. Learning arrangement for employees would expect long-term results. The study of Jha et al. (2019) describes the perception of the investment in human development by the organisation for employees, knowledge and skill enhancement through psychological agreement for logical outcomes and that is included in the KM process. Since the transfer of knowledge between people, groups and organisations brings about coordination and cooperation all the time, the use of KM (maturity) that adapts the requirements of the organisation to suit the development of individual knowledge will establish a sense of institution, and affect organizational ties as referred to the fact that if the organisation achieves its goals, an individual is deemed to achieve success as well (Marques et al., 2019). The study of the influence of employees on their assignment and the organisation must be linked to human resource development practices. The LO is the creation of continuous learning. Creating a supportive learning environment would increase the potential of work both on and off duty (Eldor, 2017). This is in line with the LO culture that drives personnel competencies in accordance with the organisational development (OD) by managing the appropriate environment to stimulate knowledge along with enhancing organisational competence (Joo et al., 2019), followed by the work improvement and emotional attachment to the organisation based on attitude awareness. Therefore, this type of relationship is an ongoing relationship in which LO is the mediator between human resource development practices and behaviours that arise from employee emotions towards work and the organisation.

The hypotheses based on the research framework and study paradigm can be identified from the Figure 1 as follows:

H1: Knowledge management of the organisation influences the creation of a learning organisation for the personnel in the organisation.

- H2:** Knowledge management of the organisation influences organisational commitment.
- H3:** Knowledge management of the organisation influences changing work engagement.
- H4:** Learning organisation of the organisation influences organizational commitment.
- H5:** Learning organisation of the organisation influences changing work engagement.

Table 1. Assessment of discriminant validity (Fornell-Larker criterion)

| Variable | CR | AVE | \sqrt{AVE} | KM | LO | WE | OC |
|----------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|----|
| KM | 0.890 | 0.539 | 0.734 | 1 | | | |
| LO | 0.909 | 0.589 | 0.767 | 0.209 | 1 | | |
| WE | 0.837 | 0.796 | 0.776 | 0.172 | 0.415 | 1 | |
| OC | 0.870 | 0.734 | 0.634 | 0.169 | 0.583 | 0.585 | 1 |

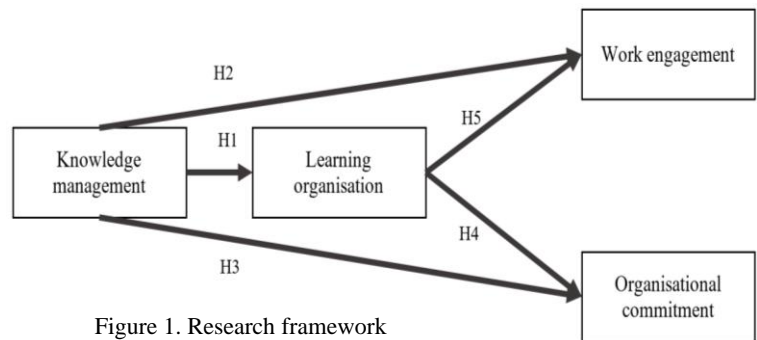


Figure 1. Research framework

METHODOLOGY

Research design – This research utilizes a survey method to determine the relationship between the independent variable, i.e., knowledge management, the intermediate variable, i.e., learning organisation, comprising 7 dimensions: continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded system, empowerment, system connection, and strategic leadership, and the dependent variables, i.e., organisational commitment, and work engagement. The unit of analysis in this study is service workers in the hotel industry at the management level, managers, or entrepreneurs who have previously operated the business in normal conditions for more than 1 year and the hotel business has remained in service. This research uses the survey method at a particular time in the form of a cross-section data. The hypothesis testing is based on the scores of a questionnaire with a Likert scale. Then, the SEM statistical analysis is conducted to analyze the CFA to determine the factor loading values and adjust the studied variables. Afterwards, the multiple regression analysis and path analysis is conducted to find correlation between variables, while summarizing the results from the statistical analysis.

Population - The population used in this study are 392 entrepreneurs, executives, or managers in the hotel industry in Bangkok. The selection is based on the inclusion criteria as follows: Must have more than 1 year experience in hotel management and must operate the business in normal conditions before the epidemic; have at least a bachelor's degree or a high vocational certificate in hospitality field in order to comply with the criteria of the Thai Hotels Association. Then, the probability sampling is employed by using purposive sampling and convenient sampling to collect data. Such data collection has a minimum sample limit based on the number of variables used in SEM analysis, consisting of 4 latent variables. The number of samples included in the study is 40-80. However, when using the maximum likelihood method, the minimum of the research sample must not be less than 200 for the SEM analysis purpose.

Instrument - The questionnaire is the primary tool for collecting this research data. The possible variables are identified by the questionnaire type, so the operational variables derived from the survey are taken into consideration. Then, the validity and reliability testing are conducted. The questionnaire is prepared in the Likert scale format to measure opinions and attitudes towards research variables, comprising 5 levels as follows: (1) strongly disagree - (5) strongly agree. Measurements in each variable are taken from the review of relevant literature and theories, translated into Thai questionnaires, and applied to the context in Thailand. The measurements can be divided as follows: The measurement from the independent variable, i.e., KM, is applied from the questionnaire on KM acquisition process of Gold et al. (2001), and 7 items are applied after the adjustment. The intermediate group, i.e., LO, is developed from DLOQ (Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaires) of Song et al. (2009) containing 21 items, and the dependent variable, i.e., organizational commitment, is adapted from the commitment scale (Angle and Perry, 1981) containing 10 items, including work engagement which is developed from Utrecht work engagement scale (Vallières et al., 2017) totaling 9 items. The number of items in the questionnaire is derived from the reliability test and the factor loading analysis using the CFA method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the average variance extracted (AVE) value may exceed 0.5. If AVE value is yield below 0.5, The composite reliability (CR) for the each construct must greater than 0.6 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally, 1967). This values are derived from the CFA analysis, with the values of each variable being not less than 0.5 based on the criteria of (Hair et al., 2010). As for the construct validity from the multitrait-multimethod analysis is for verify convergent validity. The assessment of the square root of the AVE testing, an acceptable level required to be higher than the correlation value, in order to imply that the latent variable had suitable discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (Table 1)

The results of the structural equation analysis can be reported as follows: CMIN/DF is 2.150; p-value is 0.000; GFI is 0.960; CFI is 0.980; AGFI is 0.933 and RMSEA is 0.054. The results meet the required criteria as follows: Chi-square/df value is not more than 5.00; GFI, CFI, and AGFI is greater than or equal to 0.90; RMSEA value is less than 0.08; and HOELTER .05 value is 249 > 200. This indicates that the sample size is suitable. Therefore, it can be concluded that the structural equations using the independent variable of KM with the intermediate variable of LO are harmonized with the empirical data. Thus, the measurement model fits the theoretical model at an acceptable level. All values meet the criteria. It means that the structural equations of this model have a good fit according to the specified criteria. The estimated value from the square multiple correlation value indicates that KM model affects work engagement at 18% and organisational

commitment at 48.2%. It can be explained that this model can predict the effect on organisational commitment which has more influence than work engagement. Nonetheless, the path coefficient of KM towards work engagement is 0.087 with a p-value of 0.087, and the path coefficient of KM towards organizational commitment is 0.011 with a p-value of 0.750, which shows a significance level of higher than 0.05. The findings revealed that there is no causal significance between KM and work engagement. The table showing the path coefficient describes that there are three levels of significance ($p = *.05, **.01, ***.001$). In case of achieving a significance level, such as LO, the standardized regression weight for organisational commitment is greater than work engagement ($0.413 > 0.397$). All of these are shown in the Table 2.

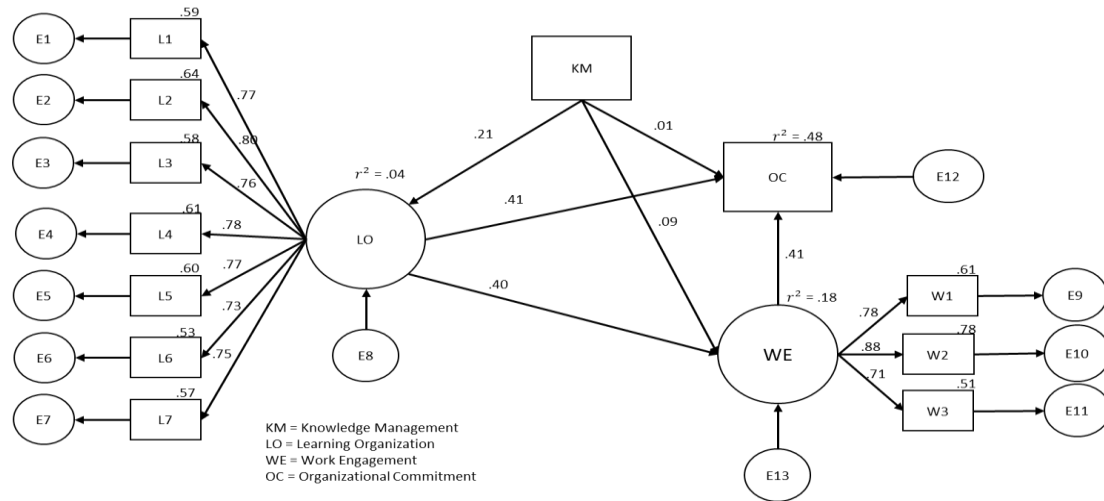


Figure 2. Model Test Result

Table 2. Explained Variance: Knowledge management model

| Variable | | | standardized regression weight | | regression weight | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------|---------|
| | | | Path Coefficient | Estimate | S.E. | C.R. | P-value |
| Knowledge management | ----> | Learning organisation | 0.209 | 0.165 | 0.042 | 3.909 | *** |
| | ----> | Org. commitment | 0.013 | 0.011 | 0.034 | 0.314 | 0.754 |
| | ----> | Work engagement | 0.089 | 0.087 | 0.051 | 1.709 | 0.087 |
| Learning Organisation | ----> | Org. commitment | 0.413 | 0.441 | 0.055 | 7.981 | *** |
| | ----> | Work engagement | 0.397 | 0.513 | 0.075 | 6.822 | *** |
| Work engagement | ----> | Org. commitment | 0.413 | 0.369 | 0.045 | 8.228 | *** |

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The results are consistent with the hypotheses: H1, H4, H5 and not consistent with the hypotheses: H2 and H3, while both hypotheses have no relationship between KM of the company and organisational commitment ($p < .05$) and work engagement ($p < .05$). However, KM has a direct influence on LO which achieves a significance level.

As a result, it is acceptable that the direct influence arising in H1 and LO continues to affect H4 and H5, demonstrating the direct effect of LO on organisational commitment and work engagement which achieves a significance level. This means the consistent with the hypotheses (H4 and H5) encouraged the relationship from KM through LO that influenced to organisational commitment and work engagement.

DISCUSSION

This study found that knowledge management through an intermediate variable, i.e., the learning organisation, has an effect on employee behavior, including both work engagement and organizational commitment. The analysis of structural equations is conducted to examine whether the used model is appropriate with the current context.

As a consequence, the model has a very good fitness index. If there is an intermediate variable, i.e., a learning organization, implementing knowledge management that is passed on to employees, it will be a reinforcement of behavior that enables employees to adapt their work experience to the epidemic crisis. Thus, management is a form of integrating personnel and organizations to advance simultaneously. KM is like a resource that will support LO to ensure full work efficiency (Chawla and Lenka, 2015; Sahibzada et al., 2022). As for working with the KM process during the crisis, the knowledge can be acquired by interacting through the information system. Therefore, the KM model has to be done through LO which reinforces teamwork and executes strategies quickly, using the human resources approach and technological structure (Caputo et al., 2019). When facing the economic recession in the crisis and the rising unemployment rate, utilizing existing knowledge workers is an essential way to reduce costs of the company. It is better to retain employees and enable them to adapt to their existing jobs rather than recruiting new ones in the current situation.

This is because despite a crisis, there are still great challenges of globalisation, and the organisation needs survival and sustainability. To encourage existing workers to develop based on experience should be less vulnerable than recruiting new personnel without knowledge on the working system. To support continuous learning helps enhance work engagement among personnel and add value to the organization (Malik and Garg, 2017). To make the learning organisation possible requires having commitment and coming up with an idea that the organizational success is also

their success. In a crisis, the courageous to express an opinion to solve a problem is to contribute to the organisation (Delić et al., 2017). This study proves the correlation of human capital management, using limited space to share knowledge and transfer experiences in solving problems to one another for the survival of organizations in a crisis. This clearly demonstrates the concept of KM in LO through the behavioural expression of organisational members.

CONCLUSION

The KM and LO foundations are difficult in critical situations if lacking members' behaviour. If a good organization has previously built the foundation for their members, the development of human capital will be able to adapt to changes. Building a learning culture will strengthen the development of necessary competencies. In addition, the working environment management of the organization will help create a unity. All of these things are interdependent and serve as an immune system for the organisation to overcome the current crisis.

The mechanism of the organization is driven by economic principles. It is undeniable that human capital plays a vital role in working and giving services both directly and indirectly. The knowledge provided by the organisation creates a cycle of experience that human capital takes and return knowledge to the organisation through their real experience. Taking a deep consideration, working is a social exchange that results from interactions with organizations and outside entities. The behavior of employees is something to be learned by the organisation, as well as creating blueprints to build the stability of the working system for the organisation.

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