

Analyzing Knowledge Conversion Processes in the Scientific and Cultural Practices of Imam Reza (A.S.)

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Abstract

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Islam, as a knowledge-based doctrine, has always emphasized the value of knowledge and awareness, directing Islamic societies towards the codification and application of knowledge management principles. Although knowledge management is considered a recent phenomenon (since the 1990s) in modern literature, an examination of the scientific and cultural conduct of the Infallible Imams (A.S.), particularly Imam Reza (A.S.), reveals that the concepts and processes of knowledge management were profoundly and systematically embedded in their practices. This library research, utilizing the framework of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) Knowledge Conversion model (SECI), analyzes the knowledge management measures undertaken by Imam Reza (A.S.). The findings indicate that establishing scientific circles (Socialization), engaging in debates and authoring treatises (Externalization), integrating religious knowledge with other sciences (Combination), and training knowledgeable disciples (Internalization) are all prominent examples of knowledge management in the Razavi conduct. Furthermore, by integrating rational and revelatory knowledge and mastering different languages and cultures, Imam Reza (A.S.) presented a model that transcends conventional frameworks. This research is a step towards elucidating an indigenous and Islamic model of knowledge management based on the conduct of the Infallible Imams (A.S.), and can provide a framework for contemporary scientific organizations and institutions.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Imam Reza (A.S.), Scientific and Cultural Practices, Knowledge Management Model.



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1. Introduction

Knowledge Management, as one of the new domains of management, has been discussed in academic literature since the 1990s. However, an examination of the conduct (sirah) of the Infallible Imams (A.S.) reveals that the concepts and processes of knowledge management existed profoundly and systematically in their practices. This research, focusing on the scientific and cultural conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) and utilizing the framework of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) Knowledge Conversion model (SECI), investigates the manifestations of knowledge management in his actions. The significance of this research lies in explaining an indigenous and Islamic model for knowledge management that can provide a framework for contemporary scientific and managerial institutions.

2. Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research are:

To examine the alignment of Imam Reza (A.S.) actions with the four processes of the Nonaka and Takeuchi model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization).

To identify objective instances of knowledge management in the Razavi conduct and to explain the distinctions between the Razavi conduct and conventional knowledge management models.

To present an indigenous and Islamic model for knowledge management based on the conduct of the Infallible Imams (A.S.).

3. Methodology

This research was conducted using a library-based method and qualitative content analysis of reliable sources related to the conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.). The required data were collected through the study of historical, hadith, exegetical works, and monographs related to his life and teachings. Then, using a descriptive-analytical approach, the components of knowledge management in his conduct were extracted and examined within the framework of the Nonaka and Takeuchi model.

4. Findings

The examination of the scientific and cultural conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) within the framework of the Nonaka and Takeuchi model demonstrates that his actions are a complete manifestation of the four knowledge conversion processes. The findings

indicate that by intelligently employing these processes, Imam Reza (A.S.) not only transferred knowledge but also acted to create and develop integrated knowledge systems.

In the domain of Socialization (converting tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge), the formation of scientific circles and the mentoring of students formed the core of this process. This action was not limited to the transmission of scientific concepts; rather, it led to the creation of a knowledge ecosystem where the subtle, tacit knowledge based on the Imam's insight, character, and scientific method was transferred to the next generation through direct interaction and scientific coexistence. In this environment, students internalized not only scientific facts but also the Imam's intellectual style, scholarly etiquette, and methodology of inference.

In the domain of Externalization (converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge), scientific debates and the authorship of treatises were the primary tools for converting profound, pure religious knowledge into clear and structured expression. In his debates, by using tangible metaphors, logical analogies, and mastery of different languages, the Imam made complex theological concepts understandable for diverse audiences. Authoring works such as the *Al-Risalah al-Dhahabiyyah* (The Golden Treatise) on medicine and *Sahifat Reza / Mahd al-Islam* (The Pure Code of Islam) on beliefs are enduring examples of the documentation and systematization of his knowledge.

In the process of Combination (converting explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge), Imam Reza (A.S.) engaged in the intelligent integration of different knowledges to create new knowledge frameworks. In his debates and works, by combining Quranic verses, narrations (ahadith), rational proofs, and the empirical knowledge of his time, he provided novel models of comparative theology and interdisciplinary sciences. This holistic perspective led to the creation of new paradigms in the field of Islamic medicine and Quranic exegesis.

In the process of Internalization (converting explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge), we witness a profound transformation within the students. This process, going beyond learning information, led to the conversion of knowledge into wisdom (hikmah) and the formation of the students' scientific identity. Through direct observation of the Imam's scientific conduct, active participation in discussions, and understanding the philosophy behind religious rulings, students were transformed into scholars who possessed the ability for live inference and creating novel arguments for new issues.

Furthermore, the present research has identified two fundamental components in the Razavi conduct that the Nonaka model is unable to fully explain: Trans-cultural Mastery and the stage of “From Revelation to the Tacit.” These two components open a horizon beyond conventional knowledge management models and provide a transcendent paradigm.

5. Conclusion

This research demonstrated that the conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.) not only aligns with the Nonaka and Takeuchi model but also elevates it in terms of conceptual depth and applicative richness. The proposed “Razavi Knowledge Management Model” can be outlined along three main axes:

Fundamental Principles: God-Centricity (Khoda-Mehvari), Integration of Rationality and Revelation, and Wisdom-Orientation (Hikmat-Gerayi).

Enhanced Processes: Adding the stage of “Reception from the Source of Revelation” and emphasizing the “Conversion of Knowledge to Wisdom.”

Facilitating Constructs: The leadership of a Wise Scholar (Rahbari-ye Alem-e Ha-keem), and the formation of dynamic scientific communities.

Suggestions:

Conduct a comparative study of the Razavi model with other knowledge management theories.

Investigate the conduct of other Infallible Imams (A.S.) using this framework.

Indigenous and empirically test the Razavi Knowledge Management model in various organizations.

Conduct interdisciplinary research to design operational models.

Keywords: Imam Reza (A.S.), Knowledge Management, Scientific and Cultural Practices, Knowledge Management Models.