

Knowledge Management Readiness In Organizations

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Abstract: To generate a comprehensive model of Knowledge Management Readiness In Organizations intending greater value to its practical applicability. This study was based on both secondary and primary data grounded on the deductive paradigm of social research. Survey with 13 professionals in the current business setting was conducted to justify the research findings. The key criterion of KM Readiness In Organizations, i.e. its dependency on human acts was ignored in many traditional KM models although literary works paid substantial value to the aspect. Applicability of conventional KM models in the current context was also limited. The study lacked consideration to the influence of organizational characteristics on KM practices based on organizational readiness. The number of respondents was also limited for a wide research such as this. As this study was mainly guided by the contemporary beliefs and attributes of organizational management, the developed model is likely to find its worthy applicability in practical experiences. Due emphasis was provided to ethical soundness throughout the paper, confirming its originality and value in terms that anti-plagiarism strictness was taken into context and self-infliction of information was avoided entirely.

Index Terms: Knowledge Management; Organizational Readiness; Business Intelligence; Technology; Decision-making; Intellectual Capital.

1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, business practices have changed radically, witnessing transitions not only in the outbound nature of the enterprises eradicating geographic and socio-economic barriers but also in terms, which grounded conventional systems of businesses (Al-Ghassani, 2002)[1]. It has continuously become complex with the inclusion of new theories, dogmas and perceptual convocations in its multifaceted paradigms (Hahn, 2000)[2]. However, these inclusions were seldom unknown to business management context, but were mostly brewed from the changing qualities of its agenda. One of such dogmas emphasizes Knowledge Management (KM) (Hansen, 1999)[3]. As simple as it sounds, the concept deals with the principle facets of sharing information that in turn is supposed to nurture individual decision-making capacities and thereby, lead towards an intriguing process of innovation, which is much desired in businesses today to earn competitive advantages, sustainability and continuous growth (McAdam, 2000)[4]. Nonetheless, there are certain upheavals to the implementation of the concept those have, at often times, restricted it to such a simple definition (Gunjal, 2005)[5].

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Deciding on a suitable research method has never been deemed secondary to the effectiveness of the entire research process in itself. As my focus in this study draws me to the presupposition that there are lacunas persistent in the early concepts of KM, integrating "rich theoretical insights" in this process will be imperative to prove the notion (Dyer, 1991)[6].

It is only with the combination of research methods that I can obtain requisite understanding of the existing theories and concepts to base my arguments further in the direction of setting up a new theory to KM Readiness In Organizations. In accordance, previous researches have depicted that when aimed at obtaining critical understanding to the existing theoretical accounts, case study method seems most suitable. As (Gable, 1994)[7] argues, combining qualitative and quantitative methods are most common and can be found to have profound impacts on the worthiness of any research construct. In agreement with this notion, I intend to accumulate both the mechanisms of qualitative and quantitative groups. Hence, I will be constructing a mixed research study in order to develop a new and expectedly, a more relevant theory of KM Readiness In Organizations. Accordingly, I have selected a case study method and a survey method in combination for my study. The data that I will gather in relation to my stated concern of the study, will further be assessed through histograms (particularly for the survey data) and through descriptive or narrative analysis (for the secondary data from existing literatures) as well. To ensure that my study is "ethically viable" (Sikes, 2013)[8], I have also delivered due significance to obtaining free informed consent from my targeted respondents besides assuring that I will maintain utmost originality throughout the study, to avoid breach to any of the direct and indirect participants' of my study. In accordance, I made the use of the "interpretive paradigm" in my study wherein the discussion focused on deducting notions to the accomplishment of the research objective, i.e. to develop a theory of 'KM Readiness In Organizations' that shall be more adaptive to the current business situations.

3 THE MODEL FOR KM READINESS

In this section, focus will be delivered on assessing the underlying notions to the above-demonstrated assumptions those have been considered to ground this study. Presumably, there are seven different factors influencing the current practices of organizations related to KM Readiness In Organizations, based on which seven themes or hypotheses have been developed. These seven factors include, (i) Technology Tools for Communication, (ii) Identify critical knowledge for business activities, (iii) Strategic Program, (iv) Business Intelligence Information, (v) Identification of the Right Knowledge, (vi) Management constantly reviews and acts and

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(vii) Organization's intellectual capital. Correlation amid these variables, as learnt from the existing literatures has been depicted through a diagrammatic representation below.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

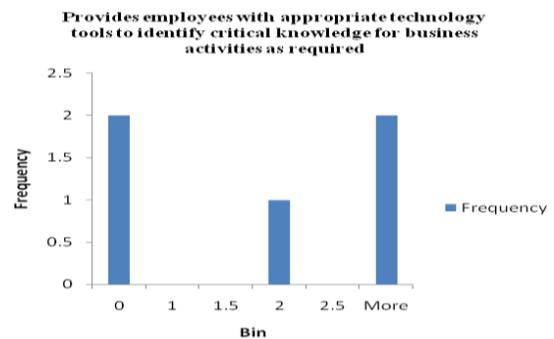
4.1 PROBLEM ENVIRONMENT

As mentioned in the initiation of this study, among the many divergences associated with the construction of KM concepts and frameworks, scholars have mostly agreed to its dependency on communication channels in use within an organization (Hassandoust, 2011)[9]. The association of communication and knowledge sharing has been conventional and to an extent (Von Krogh, 2001)[10]. While traditionally, communication within organizations mostly depended on interpersonal level of communications, with technology inventions, the communication tools used today are myriad (Desouza, 2003)[11]. Perhaps, it has been influenced by the presupposition that technology permits better communication, as it has often been attributed as a principle facet of modern techniques to KM Readiness In Organizations (Syed-Ikhsan, 2004)[12]. Nonetheless, no matter how simple the association seems, 'technology tools for communication' may not always have a direct and positive association with the degree of efficiency with which an organization practices KM Readiness In Organizations. As argued in (McDermott, 1999)[13], Information technology (referring to F1 of this study) depends on various factors in order to be effective in KM Readiness In Organizations. Among the various factors on which it depends are the causes to communication of a particular message, its "commercial potentials", its understanding and value to the communicator and the listener as well as the "human act" to experience knowledge are crucial (Eisenhardt, 2007)[14]

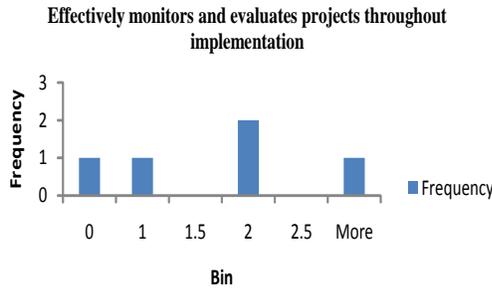
4.2 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Apparently, the above discussion based on the inferences drawn by scholars in researches existing in literatures, depicts certain lacunas or gaps that fail to address all the specifications, or rather the suppositions of the proposed model in this study (refer to Figure 1). In order to fill out this gap, the study has also emphasized primary data collection through survey mechanism, involving 15 respondents. The population considered for this study concentrated on the managers of business organizations, combining both small and large entities. Also noteworthy, out of the 15 respondents invited to participate in the survey, only 13 professionals agreed on free consent and thus, their responses were taken as valid in this study. To be mentioned in this regard, the data was collected through a face-to-face interaction with the respondents, on the basis of their informed free consent. The interview was thereby based on structured questionnaire, including only close-ended questions. It was further divided into three sections, wherein Section A indicated the demographic characteristics of the respondents, with the assumption that age, professional experiences and occupational title along with the sectorial division of operations imposes significant impacts on the perception of the respondents when concerning KM Readiness In Organizations. Findings from Section A: The respondents considered for this study were almost divided equally within the governmental and the private sectors, i.e. in a proportion of 53.85% and 46.15% respectively. Almost 80% of the organizations, to which, the

respondents belonged, were newly established, i.e. no more than 6 years of establishment, which also indicated that most of these organizations had a contemporary approach to management that in turn influenced their association with KM Readiness In Organizations. Assuming that the professional title of the respondents also had a strong influence on their perceptions concerning KM and thereby, influenced the degree of organizational readiness to KM, the fourth question was included in the questionnaire, which revealed that most of the respondents were either managers or assistant managers, while the rest of the respondents included 1 Director, 2 CEOs and 3 CFOs. Findings from Section B: This section in the questionnaire was framed with the intention to identify the degree of efficiency the organizations decipher in applying KM strategies, either conventional or contemporary in order to manage their decision-making accuracy. The obtained results however exhibited a major gap in the understanding of the strategies and its application by these leaders (i.e. the respondents). For instance, the primary data revealed that in most of the organizations studied either provided highest significance to technology tools in creating knowledge (F1) Observably, these measures were more apparent for smaller and larger private organizations than in governmental organizations.



The respondents also revealed that their organizations delivered utmost significance in managing business intelligence through defined strategic programs (F3). In accordance as well, the management was also reflected as strong committed to identify the right knowledge (F5) to facilitate KM Readiness within the organization. Findings from Section C: In this section, focus was delivered on the identification of the various attributes that would signify if the organizations, practicing the above discussed strategies, were actually performing well, so as to relate KM Readiness with organizational performance. As observed, performance of the organizations, especially when concerning their communication with external and internal stakeholders in the form of reporting financial and strategic data was seemingly vague. It is principally owing to the fact that most of the private firms, especially the smaller ones, intended to maintain their confidentiality and thus restricted disclosure of information to its stakeholders. It must also be noted that majority of the organizations studied had no mandatory policy to disclose data and information to external stakeholders, which however, did not influence their performances.



5 CONTRIBUTIONS AND NEW INSIGHTS:

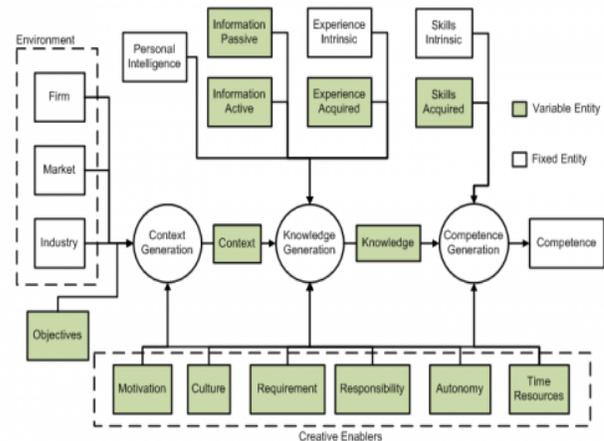
The study proved highly effective in testing the assumed dimensions of KM, in linkage with organizational performances. As per the results obtained, ‘Technology tools for communication’, ‘Critical knowledge for business activities’, ‘Strategic program’, ‘Business intelligence’ and ‘Organizational intellectual capital’ were observed as directly associated with the KM Readiness In Organizations strategies applied by the organizations. However, it must be noted that the influence of ‘human acts’ in applying these strategies, referring to the managerial involvement and decision-making, was found to be high in this context. Such dependency reflected through the study findings that ‘Identification of right knowledge’ largely relied on the expertise of the leaders in these organizations and their intention to deliver significance to the knowledge persistent within the human resources of the organizations. Similarly, ‘constant reviews and acts by management’ depended on the policy measures of the organizations, which was although found on almost all the organizations studied, were also noted to be time consuming and costly by the leaders, who thus, restrained from its continuous application (Pawlowski, 2012)[15]. Therefore, in the practical sense, F6 and F7 were observed as barriers to KM Readiness in Organizations. Relating the same with the data obtained through secondary sources, these presumptions were also found to be noteworthy and true in the present context of organizational behavior.



6 AN INTEGRATIVE MANAGEMENT MODEL SYSTEM

This model links both strategy and process while offering specific initiatives that are offered at different stages. It is sequential, and it offers a simplified view that enables ease of understanding. The information system supports all the processes and plays a significant role in feeding the information back in the system and tracking progress. However, this model is not all encompassing because adding more elements to the model makes it more complicated until it

has no meaning. This is because KM is a very broad discipline with a lot of elements.



7 CONCLUSION

Throughout the study, various dimensions to the conceptual notions of KM Readiness In Organizations were studied with the intention to develop a well-justified and all-inclusive model for the same. Undoubtedly, KM Readiness In Organizations has emerged as an important facet to the current day practices of organizations. Its intrinsic association with organizational performances is strictly not deniable. While previous theories were observed to deliver considerable importance to such an association, those lacked a proper inclusion of a vital characteristic of KM Readiness In Organizations— its high dependency on human acts. On the either way, models and conceptual maps of KM Readiness In Organizations those linked human acts proved to be too complex with limited applicability in the practical field of experiences. Thus, based on secondary research and survey data, this study proved effective in developing a model, which is expectedly more applicable and comprehensible in the practical domain today. Nevertheless, effectiveness of the model relies on its future application, which widens the scope for future researches grounded on the suppositions drawn in this study.

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