

Knowledge Management and Organisational Excellence in Higher Education – Thematic Review of Literature

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Abstract: The rapid growth in the number of Higher Education institutions and the severe competition faced by them has raised an increasing interest towards quality improvement in the colleges. Knowledge Management a recently emerged concept in the corporate sector has also gained attention in the field of education. Many educational institutions have set up communities of practices to capture, store and share knowledge. This paper is an attempt to review the available literature to study relationship between knowledge management and organisational excellence in higher education institutions.

Keywords: *Organisational Excellence, Knowledge Management*

I. INTRODUCTION

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the global education industry undergoing rapid expansion. Currently, India's higher education system has enrolled over 70 million students while in less than two decades, India has managed to create additional capacity for over 40 million students. It witnesses spending of over Rs 46,200 crore (US\$ 6.93 billion). At this phase, re-thinking higher education practices has become essential. Efforts have been taken by Universities and colleges to identify curriculum that infuses experience-based real-world learning experiences and embrace new teaching technologies and techniques, build alliances with industry associates, share learning and refine approaches. This has led to enormous amount of knowledge generation in these learning centres which calls for a vital need to manage the knowledge that has been generated and use it effectively.

1. Views on Knowledge Management

Meredith Levinson defines "Knowledge Management is the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets". It is a set of information practices and learning strategies that help to share and use data.

2. Importance of Knowledge Management

The Indian Higher education system is heading towards quality and developing industry ready candidates for employment. An effective implementation of KM program will move the institutions towards organisational excellence.

3. Sources of Knowledge in Educational Institutions

Faculty in higher education institutions do not have a strong platform to share their knowledge with other faculty though this might create a tremendous impact in improving the institutional performance. This knowledge can be captured, stored and made accessible to everybody in the institution.

There are four major sources of knowledge:

- i. During the discourse of teaching-learning process knowledge is generated and this can be stored in the documents and the minds of the staff.
- ii. External sources such as published information from the government, research institutes, and other institutions.
- iii. Knowledge gained by staff outside the institution, such as their education, training, and work experience received before joining the organization.
- iv. Knowledge network of the organization or its staff, i.e. external subject matter experts that the organization or its staff can access readily.
- v. Knowledge Management primarily focuses on the teaching learning process and some aspects of the others.

4. Knowledge Management Cycle

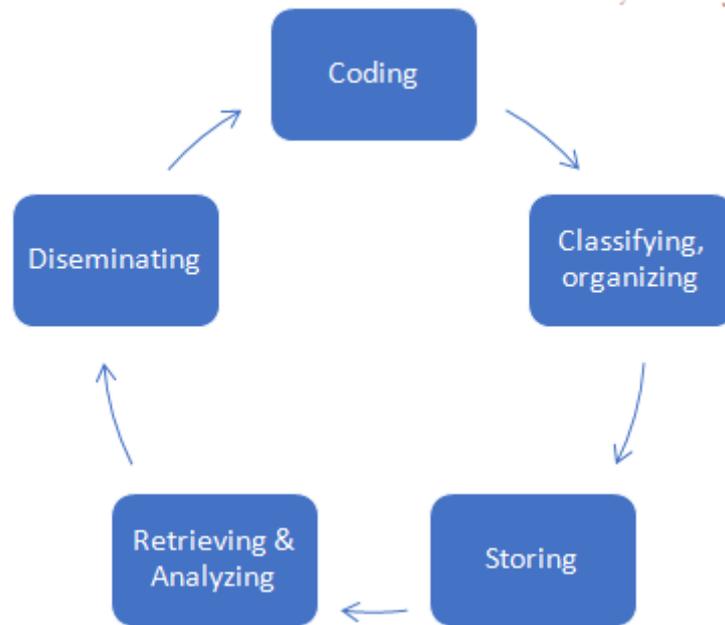


Figure 1

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To review and observe the various research works which have been conducted on the study with reference to higher education sector.
2. To study the significance of knowledge management in improving organisational excellence

III. METHODOLOGY

Secondary research has been conducted for the research analysing the research papers, dissertation and doctoral thesis.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Review

Jente Yang, (2007) empirically investigated the extent to which knowledge sharing and organizational learning affect organizational effectiveness in his paper. The results suggest that knowledge sharing would facilitate the transformation of collective individual knowledge to organizational knowledge. He also suggests that this would result in the improvement of organizational learning and ultimately, the enrichment of organizational effectiveness.

Michael Zack, James McKeen, Satyendra Singh(2009) in their study Knowledge management and organizational performance: an exploratory analysis, examine the relationship between KM practices and performance outcomes on organizations from North America and Australia. KM practices showed a direct relationship with intermediate measures of organizational performance, and organizational performance showed a significant and direct relationship to financial performance.

Higher Education Sector Review

According to Mohammed Abdulsalaam M. S. AL-Hayaly1 & Fayeze Jomah S. Alnajjar(2016) universities are a form of organizations, knowledge management contributes to the development of the universities performance, because the way for teaching and learning, research and discovery is knowledge to pursue the academic excellence. From here started the practical attempts to increase the interest in the knowledge source, and using knowledge management in improving the universities performance and increasing the improvement level through caring about the influencing factors. The most important are quality assurance standards in the universities, because quality institutions performance, and their procedures and outputs appropriateness in favour of the society.

According to **Samy S Abu Naser, Mazen J Al-Shobaki and Youssef M Abu Amuna(2016)** Knowledge Maturity Model is suitable for measuring and lead to performance excellence in higher education institutions. The study has employed a knowledge maturity concept in Palestinian universities using a model designed by top eight manufacturing countries in Asia. Findings suggest that the most significant factors effecting performance excellence are: KM leadership, Processes, People, KM Outcomes. The limitation of this study is that it was conducted in two Palestinian universities in one geographical region and recommends comparison study between different regions for more reliability.

Dr. Abdul Rahman Zaki and Shameel Ahmad Zubairi(2012) in their study Role of Knowledge Management in Higher Education – A Qualitative Model correlate knowledge management through its working framework with current quality practices of higher education as prevailing in the under developed countries such as Pakistan. Empirical witnesses proved that if applied properly, presence of knowledge framework (s) enhances the overall learning practices in academia effectively which eventually contributes to maintain the quality practices.

The authors **Mamta Bhusry** and **Jayanti Ranjanhave(2011)** have presented a conceptual framework for the development and refinement of knowledge management systems in higher educational institutions. They recommend that the suggested framework if implemented will yield more benefits to improve the quality of knowledge sharing and use. It will aid higher educational institutes in proactively responding to the needs of the stakeholders and acquire enhanced capability to plan and develop. It has been conferred in the paper that IT based KM intervention in HEIs can prove to be a promising techno management tool to enhance performance in the key areas of teaching and learning, research and administrative services. Knowledge helps an organisation to enhance skills and experiences, accelerate value addition and achieve customers desires and enable it to progress towards competitive advantage and excellence.

Dr. Atallah Basheer Alnaweigah (July 2013) in his study to assess the effect of Knowledge Management Functions on the Organizational Excellence found that there is a statistically significant impact of the knowledge management dimensions on the dimensions of organizational excellence among the staff of Al-Taif University. It was also found that there is a statistically significant difference in the sample individuals' estimates of the level of knowledge management which can be attributed to their functional and demographic characteristics.

According to **Marjan Laal(2010)** an institution wide approach to knowledge can lead to exponential improvements in sharing knowledge and surge benefits. By leveraging knowledge capital, the organisations become more effective with better decision making capabilities, improved academic and administrative services and reduced cost.

Giustina Secundo, Alessandro Margherita, Gianluca Elia, Giuseppina Passiante (2010) in their study to identify if intangible assets in higher education are a mission or performance. They have undertaken a review of existing theories and practical experiences to build the core conceptual model and a dashboard of indicators and applied to investigate the mission and performance angles of intellectual capital with reference to an Italian higher education and research institution. The findings of the study suggest that creating intangible assets is at the core of the mission of education and research organizations. The identification and measurement of intellectual capital are thus an operational priority to evaluate the alignment between strategic orientation and performance within such institutions. The limitations of the study is that it was limited to a single case

J.D. McKeen, M.H. Zack, Satyendra Singh (2006) have carried out a study on ninety organisations Knowledge Management and Organizational Performance. Results showed that these KM practices were directly related to organizational performance which, in turn, was directly related to financial performance. A significant gap exists between the KM practices that firms believe to be important and those that turned out to be directly related to organizational performance. The implications of this study are significant for both practitioners and academics.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The review of the literature made in this article has supported the need for using knowledge management from the organisation and higher education institutions' perspective. Though there is similarity in the need and impact of KM practices from both the perspectives, currently not many studies have been conducted from the aspect of organisational excellence in the Indian higher education sector setting. This thematic review of literature provides scope for further exploring the impact of KM on organizational excellence in the Indian Higher education sector.

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