

The Scope of Knowledge Management Practices Towards Sustainability

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Abstract

Knowledge management (KM) deals about detecting, categorizing, structuring, protecting and promoting, an organization's valuable knowledge. It involves the process of creating an environment where new relevant knowledge can be generated and stored. One of the main concerns about KM in the modern world includes the learning of deeper skills of how to understand practices, talents, the kinds of expertise and skills required for problem solving. Hence the focus towards knowledge management for sustainability includes the three factors like people, practices and values. The practice of knowledge management in organisations is relatively low and hence emphasis is put forward in analysing and adopting the best practices in this field to make organisational knowledge sharing and collaboration more effective. Furthermore, this paper discussed the challenges associated with KM towards a sustainable development, which included independent elements of the organization like organisation structure, culture, technology and processes. Finally, this paper concludes with an overview of the organization's KM practise in today's competitive world.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Deep experiential knowledge, Organizational Performance, Deep experiential knowledge.

1. Introduction

Organizations now have enormous opportunities to formalise acquisition, preservation, and application of knowledge to widespread availability of valuable resources by the use of high-speed networks. By encompassing the recent advancements in information processing technologies along with new software systems and procedures new knowledge can be created to extend throughout the organisation and interface with current information systems in order to achieve better quality in decision systems. The term "Knowledge Management" refers to all of these novel strategies. The essential point of knowledge management is to see how people collaborate effectively in organisations. This paper reveals how KM contributes to sustainability and clearly defines relationships, as well as the conceptions of sustainable growth in the organization and enabling it to have the ability to compete with its competitors.

Since a dominant focus on IT solutions to knowledge problems was considered to be a failure. Setting up a document sharing system becomes a tedious task and even when it is done it may not be reliable and it may result in a failed system most of the times. Knowledge management is about processes, practices, culture and technology that makes effective contribution to improve the quality and performance of the organization. From many researchers and practitioners, it is

evident that 25 percent of the investment and efforts are taken by the organisation to develop the technology and the remaining 75 percent to the process, organisation, practice and culture.

A knowledge management group involves users to be a part of the process or process with technology in the development of skilled knowledge work which is different for different contexts hence context dependent.

This can lead to an evolutionary model in the way of knowledge sharing works are fixed as it develops overtime as people use it as they develop their practices. A lot of effective knowledge sharing needs to cross boundaries between organisations. According to Martinkenaite (2010), the firm has been described as an efficient generator, a repository of knowledge to contribute to revenue and maintain a competitive advantage through knowledge transfer. This is evident in the transfer of knowledge, which plays an important role in organisational management strategy in order to compete with other life-changing events. Both terms denote different activities of the organisation, the impact on the business environment, and have been used immediately, rapidly, and interchangeably in terms of knowledge sharing.

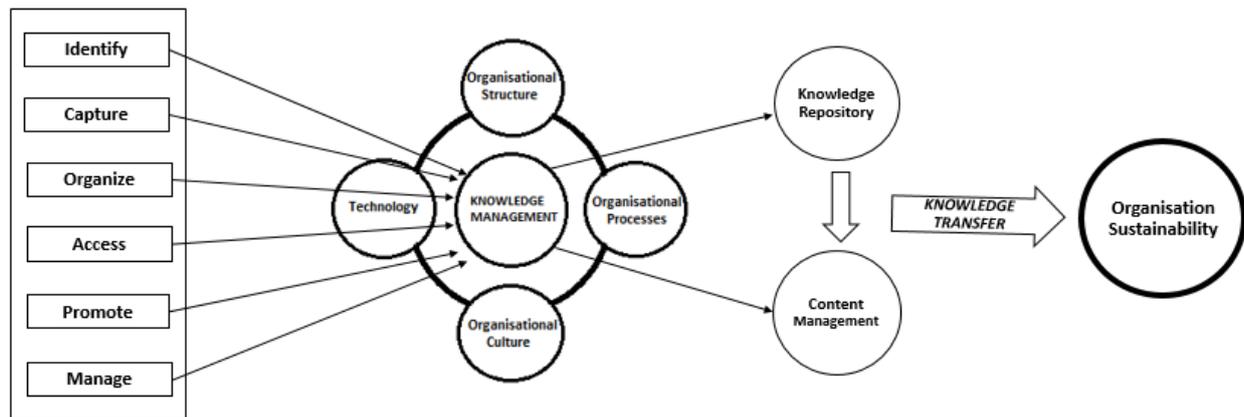


Figure 1. Knowledge Management and Organisational Sustainability.

Knowledge sharing, fostering and bridging of communities gets ailed off once the support is not provided from the higher management. On the other hand, the organisation benefits much more from the people who are sharing their work in progress and essentially placing themselves on the line to help others and progress in all situations.

2. The organisational structure in Knowledge Management

The efficiency of a company's sustainability initiatives is greatly influenced by its organisational structure. It deals about how people are governed, how information is gathered and disseminated, how choices are made, and how resources are allocated (Doppelt, 2003). This is crucial for enhancing the overall organisational sustainability goals when employees are learning new sustainability concepts and trying to apply them to a new organisational sustainability strategy that might be very different from the ones, they are accustomed to. Knowledge management work that includes work establishment by means of systems is efficiency work because it is an attempt to consolidate resources in the organisation and also to create a unified organisation presenting one face to the customer or to the public. So, there are companies that create central databases or portals, that are used to establish the rules and other

useful information needed by anyone in the organisation. This involves a lot of knowledge management efforts to be taken into account, but the counter pressure associated with this is standardizing. In order to achieve standardization, suitable processes, methods and standard-based technologies must be developed, promoted, and perhaps mandated. And also, there should be a perfect balance between the organisation needs which leads to a system and the needs to personalise it, enabling the system to be more transparent and flexible. Such a system should be evolved to promote components include transparency, objectivity, unanimity, effectiveness, significance, and stability. Therefore, the need to involve users in creating their own knowledge sharing tools whether it is an online, shared workspace, or a repository or it can denote any other way that they meet together. This enables sameness in the organisation and the tolerance for differences is very important. The evolution of allowing these systems and the ways of behaviour to evolve is quite difficult in today's present situation.

Finally, the organisational structure influences how knowledge of sustainability spreads within organisations. By allowing employees to collaborate across functions, and lowering the formal structures of the horizontal management system the organisations can assist in empowering the teams and in turn boost innovation and creativity. However, in order to make real progress, both KM and sustainability require the support of top management. Cross-functional project groups, champions, and the inclusion of sustainability and knowledge performance in job descriptions are all ways to support KM for SD without requiring major structural changes.

3. The organisational culture in Knowledge Management

Values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that characterise and contribute to an organization's unique social and emotional work environment are referred to as organisational culture, also known as corporate culture. (Pemberton and Stonehouse, 2000). It also addresses the ways of pursuing sustainability. Measuring the value of knowledge inside the organisation is equally important to prove the credibility of it. And the most important thing in the measuring issue is that there is a powerful link between the support of senior leaders and the need to measure. Another feature is about the lively exchange of knowledge without having cultural barriers.

To achieve long-term success and sustainable development, organisations must emphasise on practicing knowledge management activities and include the appropriate KM elements to their core culture. Organizations must foster a culture in which employees are motivated to share knowledge as a result of achieving personal and organisational goals. Organizations should place a special emphasis on staff knowledge sharing gained from internal and external resources (Park, M. J., Dulambazar, T., and Rho, J. J. (2015). From the standpoint of knowledge management, organisational culture governs two critical areas: collaboration readiness and employee trust. Human interaction, an exchange of ideas, and openness are required for knowledge sharing (Alavi et al., 2001; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Wong, 2005).

4. The Role of Published Folder in KM

Knowledge sharing in organisations also should be allowed to evolve and to be built based on what is envisioned on a knowledge sharing system called as the published folders. The idea of a published folder is that once an information or report about an activity in the organisation is completed, it could be moved to a source, called as the published folder. These folders act as central repositories holding valuable information inside the organisation, and people who are in need of any specific information could easily access it by means of using valid keywords to

search the contents inside the published folders. Also, in a published folder there is always a high level of quality demanded. They could also be mentioned as Central Docs which enables all users to view Documents/Folders/Links that are centrally shared with all users inside the organisation. With the approval of KMS Admin, this document could be created and published by admin or centrally shared by any user. This attribute is very useful for reducing redundancy in document storage.

5. The Role of Transfer Folder and Deep experiential knowledge in KM

Knowledge transfer derived from the application of knowledge management activities which has emerged as one of the strategic resources of a firm (Narteh, 2008). Indeed, knowledge can be transferred among people at different levels of the organization's hierarchy as well as between units and departments (Nguyen and Burgess, 2014) Knowledge transfer is a practical problem in organisations that involves transferring knowledge from one part of the organisation to another. Knowledge transfer, for example, aims to organise, create, capture, or distribute knowledge and ensure its availability for future users. Indeed, knowledge can be transferred among people at different levels of the organization's hierarchy as well as between units and departments (Nguyen and Burgess, 2014) Knowledge transfer is a practical problem in organisations that involves transferring knowledge from one part of the organisation to another. Knowledge transfer, for example, aims to organise, create, capture, or distribute knowledge and ensure its availability for future users. The need to focus knowledge exchange efforts is very essential to answer these questions like what is it we are trying to do? What problem we are trying to solve? In other words, it is important to have a clarity of purpose and identify what knowledge is required to solve a particular problem, what knowledge is required to be used in the next ten or fifteen years, this is essentially called as the gap analysis which denotes what knowledge is available, what is lacking and how to pursue and acquire the knowledge. The answers to these questions may be found using the "Deep Smarts" which is nothing but deep experiential knowledge also called as "DEK" which involves the process of gaining knowledge through experience (Dorothy Leonard, 2004). Deep experiential knowledge is a robust and collective form of knowledge, generated over time. In 1976, Borkman introduced the term 'experiential knowledge' to characterize the knowledge produced as "truth based on personal experience with a phenomenon" (1976: 445). The term deep experiential knowledge (DEK) is intended to convey both the significance and ambiguity of experiential knowledge. We also employ the term to describe an expansiveness as the various interpretations of others' observations are intertwined over time, in a dynamic perspective.

6. Factors Influencing KM in Organisations and its Effects on Organizational Performance:

Knowledge is a valuable asset that empowers the organisation to establish a rapid and long-term competitive advantage in real-world situations. There are several factors influencing knowledge management, empowerment and implementation in organisations. These factors, however, can be commonly divided into three categories organisational impacts, social and economic resources, and the whole organisational climate. Organisational factors stem from institutional collaborators personally accountable for knowledge creation. The approach categorizes these things into four categories namely: cooperation and collaboration, influence and governance, quantification and evaluation, and teamwork in knowledge management (Asiedu, 2015). Coordination is required, which includes determining the activities and knowledge assets by the

way in which knowledge activities are developed and performed and in what order the knowledge assets are required to function according to activity. Coordination primarily seeks to co-ordinate actions within an organisation by making sure that adequate resources are used at specific times and that they are reasonably related to each other as events unfold. Collaboration also has a significant impact on information management within an organization. Organizations' main challenge is understanding organisational learning, information systems and ways to integrate it in the KMS, and many companies and organisations around the world have already invested in knowledge management.

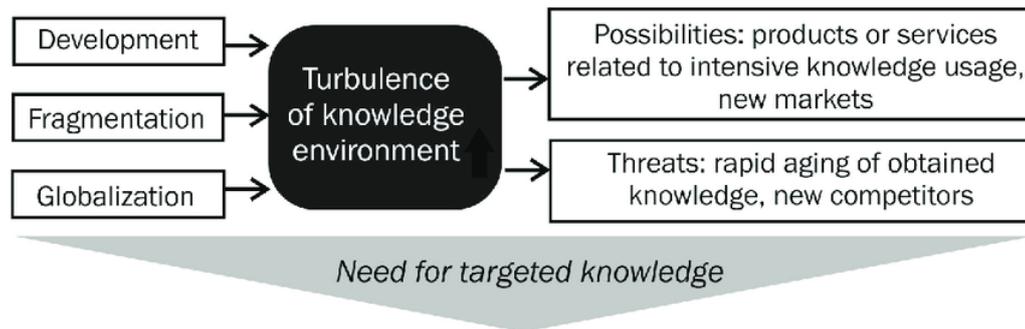


Figure 2. Tendencies of knowledge society

Source: Probst, 2006.

There is a greater impact in making use of knowledge management to implement objectives for sustainability, places a high value on intangible assets, productive resources, novel ideas and innovative thoughts that promote the exchange of both positive and negative experiences, and assuring collaboration of technology, skills, and standards that are advantageous and beneficial to the organisation as a whole. This promotes the economy, and develops the environment of continuous learning (Bykusenge, Johannessen, 2017; Molodchik, Shakina, and Bykova 2012, 2017; Bischoff, Vladova, and Jeschke, 2012,). Despite the achievements many organisations, have failed. A variety of conditions, circumstances, and complexities seem to contribute to an organization's knowledge management activity's ultimate success or failure.

7. Knowledge as a valued asset in Organisations

The value of knowledge as an asset serves as the foundation for all other knowledge principles. It is critical to create a culture that values knowledge if people are to freely share and capture knowledge and if organisational leaders are to promote and support knowledge management. Knowledge is an asset which is fundamental to the efficient and effective delivery of public services.

This principle emphasises the importance of an organisation recognising that the seeking and sharing of knowledge leads to better outcomes, such as:

- Development of better learning community and culture.
- Enhanced collaboration.
- Enhanced reliability.
- Improved customer experience.
- Improved decision-making and reduced duplication of effort.

- Enhanced business resilience.
- Continuous improvement.

8. Integrating Sustainability into organisational strategy using KM

Management can be viewed in two ways when analysing a company's success-one is viewed as market-based and the other one is resource-based. In line with business perspectives, the organisation's performance will be determined by the market structure (Heml et al. 2014). KM and sustainability are united together in order to perform the main function of decision making. Decisions are premised on the two important attributes; they are knowledge and values. Knowledge management is a complex process that extends beyond simple electronic paperwork. Structured models are required for the creation and management of knowledge repositories. It has been demonstrated that KM systems have significant benefits, including progressing organisational strategies, resolving issues quickly, publicising the best practises, positive impact on global products and services, rising innovation opportunities, facilitate business to compete more effectively, significantly reducing redundant information, enhancing internal operations, eliminating errors, boosting workforce involvement in decision-making, and sustaining organisational knowledge assets (Dubois and Wilkerson, 2008; Lee et al., 2014).

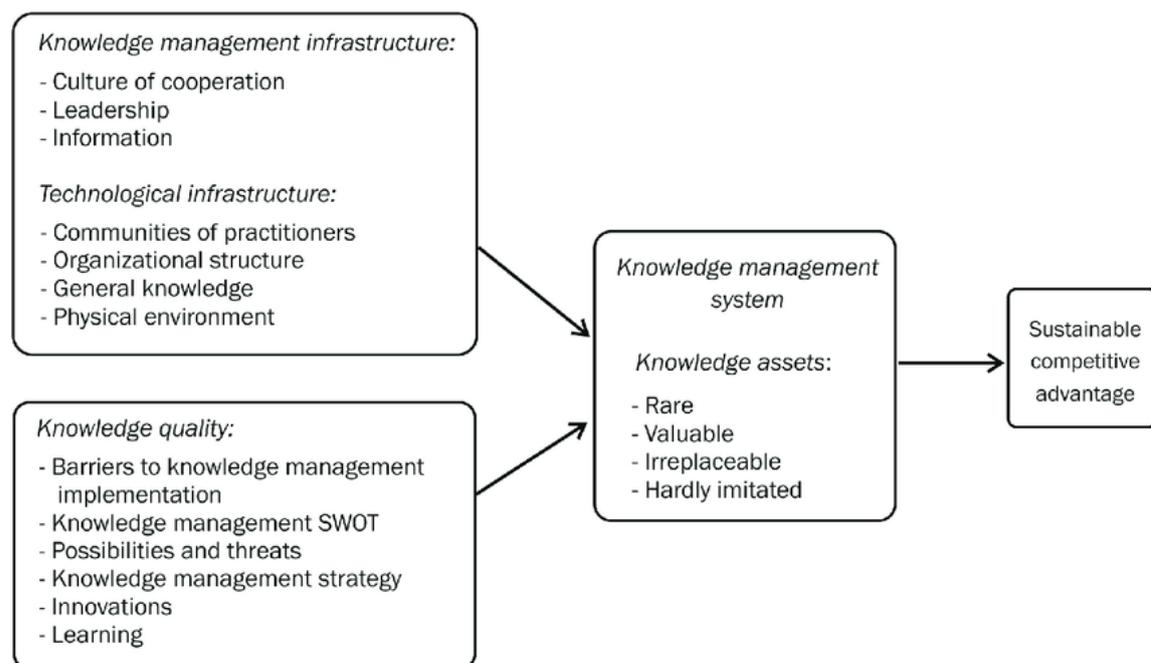


Figure 3. Sustainable competitive advantage

Source: Zehr, 2016

KM sustainability is to harness the information and the knowledge that resides within the organisation. This also deals about how organisations make sure that when people come to them bring new knowledge, adds to the organisation and aid to sustainability, this helps the organisations itself to grow as an entity in terms of repositories that are holding assets (valuable information) to be able to make right decisions, otherwise this may lead to turnover when the old community of people leave and new ones arrive. Hence, if organisations are not paying attention

on KM sustainability, then within the organisation there is a possible creation of blackhole which may incur huge financial losses to organisations. Therefore, recording the information and putting them into an aspect of learning from system and structural failures, learning from past experiences and making sure of having counter measures to overcome these obstacles in the future. This will not only focus in the context of cost and other financial losses but also in the context of time and business opportunity building that ability to strategies on how the organisation is going to be a learning organisation that grows and flourishes in this competitive environment.

Knowledge Processes are governed with the primary goal of increasing workers' ability to participate in sustainable development. The create & acquire process necessitates an organization's structure that fosters innovation, understanding and application of one another's thoughts, insights, concepts and significance. Strategic objective is developed by taking a comprehensive view of the organization's overall organisational structure and attempting to address all three aspects simultaneously. Only when an organisation is sustainable, it makes positive contributions to the overall well-being of society, invests in its employees and regards them as the most valuable resource, participates in a network of relationships, recognises its commitment towards sustainable development and protects the global resources (Sanguankaew, P, 2019).

The key thing with sustainability is analysing that how will sustainability aid the organisation for problem solving by making better decisions during uncertainty situations and how will it enable people to be in better positions of having their decisions informed.

Conclusion

The most challenging part of KM and sustainable development is to know about how knowledge is interlinked with sustainability and how likely it enables the organisation to survive and flourish over the long term. The next challenge is that it is worth noting about the organizational effectiveness which depends on the way of how structured decisions are made with the help of people and technology keeping an eye on the core relationships which basically requires their interests and a lot more of research and make use of the awareness and understanding that drives towards the organisation's goal. Many research-based approaches also prove that there is a level of iteration that happens when selecting the optimum solution from the available set of alternatives to a given problem as this involves a deeper level of critical thinking and analysis, and also this evaluation may lead to outcomes that progresses the organisation to the next successful level. This whole iterative process of looking at how the organisation manages knowledge is not just only about restoring the knowledge but also in the possible ways of application of that knowledge to yield better business outcomes for the future. Hence the communication of the entire process and the entire purpose has to be reachable to everyone in the organisation only then the efforts played by the people could effectively contribute to the sustainable feature. KM sustainability also throws an insight for people to reinforce their actions for managing the knowledge in making better decisions.

This paper aids organizational executives and human resources to use organizational tools, techniques and resources to implement KM in organisations and enhance KM practises and human resources in the organisation for having a competitive advantage in today's competitive world. Therefore, KM sustainability is the key driver to swift the organisation from its current state of strategic misstep or failure that leads to deterioration of an organisation and progress it

through various uncertainties in order to focus on the very survival and puts forth the strategies for a sustainable future.

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