

A Study on the Impact of Knowledge Management on Employee Performance in Organizations

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Abstract

This research investigates the relationship between knowledge management practices within organizations and the subsequent impact on employee performance. As organizations increasingly recognize the significance of knowledge as a strategic asset, understanding how effective knowledge management influences employee performance becomes crucial. Using a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews, the study aims to explore the implementation of knowledge management processes, their alignment with organizational goals, and the perceived influence on individual employee performance. Key objectives include assessing the extent to which knowledge sharing, learning, and utilization positively affect employee productivity, innovation, and overall job satisfaction. The study also aims to identify potential challenges or barriers in the implementation of knowledge management strategies and explore the role of organizational culture in fostering a knowledge-sharing environment. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to optimize knowledge management practices, enhance employee performance, and foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Employee Performance, Organizational Learning, Knowledge Sharing, Innovation, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Culture, Knowledge Utilization.

1. Introduction

Knowledge management (KM) is the process of capturing, developing, sharing, and effectively using organizational knowledge. It refers to a multi-disciplinary approach to achieving organizational objectives by making the best use of knowledge. An established discipline since 1991, KM includes courses taught in the fields of business administration, information systems, management, library, and information sciences. Other fields may contribute to KM research, including information and media, computer science, public health, and public policy. Several Universities offer dedicated Master of Science degrees in Knowledge Management. Many large companies, public institutions, and non-profit organizations have resources dedicated to internal KM efforts, often as

a part of their business strategy, information technology, or human resource management departments. Several consulting companies provide advice regarding KM to these organizations [1]. Knowledge management efforts typically focus on organizational objectives such as improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation, the sharing of lessons learned, integration, and continuous improvement of the organization. These efforts overlap with organizational learning and may be distinguished from that by a greater focus on the management of knowledge as a strategic asset and a focus on encouraging the sharing of knowledge. KM is an enabler of organizational learning.

- Techno-centric with a focus on technology, ideally those that enhance knowledge sharing and creation.
- Organizational with a focus on how an organization can be designed to facilitate knowledge

processes best.

- Ecological with a focus on the interaction of people, identity, knowledge, and environmental factors as a complex adaptive system akin to a natural ecosystem.

Regardless of the school of thought, core components of KM roughly include people/culture, processes/ structure and technology. The details depend on the perspective [2]. KM perspectives include:

- Community of Practice
- Social Network Analysis
- Intellectual Capital
- Information Theory
- Complexity Science
- Constructivism

The practical relevance of academic research in KM has been questioned with action research suggested as having more relevance and the need to translate the findings presented in academic journals to a practice. Over the last few years global markets have seen an economic turndown, which has yet to show signs of a reversal. Organizations and businesses are now facing new pressures and heightened competition which has led to restructuring and the loss of jobs. Whilst this may cut costs in the short term, the long-lasting effects of loss of personnel are further reaching that just a reduction in salary costs. Organizations invest a lot of time and money into developing and training their staff so they can acquire the Knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs effectively [3, 4]. When an employee leaves the organization, they take that Knowledge with them which could result in a knowledge deficit for the organization, which in turn will leave them disadvantaged in comparison to their competitors. One way of tackling this problem is to institute a knowledge management system in the organization. Knowledge management systems provide a way of harvesting talent from the organization and then storing it in an accessible format that allows employees to access it and unities it. They provide a way of getting scared resources to a wider audience and protect against the loss of information from the business. In addition, when designing a knowledge management system, the organization is encouraged to go through a period of consultation and reflection around its everyday practices which provides a unique insight into how the business is running. Knowledge management systems will require some initial expense to set up and the need for some enhanced I.T capability, however the benefits will outweigh these initial costs. Knowledge management systems have been proven to be successful in protecting Knowledge loss from companies that operate call centers or who employ front line customer facing staff, due to the typically high turnover of staff in these fields. However, any organization that employs people to work for them could benefit from Knowledge management systems as there are many reasons why an employee may choose to leave the company at any time. In these uncertain times it is important to keep any organization as protected as possible and Knowledge management systems are a great way of doing that [5].

2. Theoretical Framework

Knowledge Management (KM) is a relatively young concept, having been introduced less than 30 years ago. For many business management practitioners, KM is evolving into a proven strategy for their organizational success. But there are still many leaders out there that are struggling to understand the power of KM. There are many definitions for knowledge management, including Wikipedia's that states KM comprises of a range of practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. I'm partial to a definition I found in a thesis paper written by Dr. Michael Kull that simply defines KM as a business model for which companies can move from an industrial age of running a business into the information age. I don't know which one of Dr Kull's interviewees stated this definition, but for me, it sums up my feelings on how KM is changing the way businesses ought to be run today and into the future. KM is a relatively new model and has only been around since the mid-1980s. There have may pioneer who have written and spoken about KM, and Peter Drucker, a business management expert and author,

has been one of the most influential and prolific thinkers about the KM movement. The pioneers describe KM as having three phases from its inception. The approximate phase dates reflect the first phase occurring from 1985 to 1994 [6-8]. This phase was centered on collaboration and information sharing. The second phase, from 1994 to 2002, centered on information management and software advancements. The third phase, from 2002 to the present, centers knowledge innovation and the management of intellectual capital and intellectual assets as the primary business strategy. Phase three will continue to impact how leaders conduct business processes such as customer management, marketing management, information management and performance management. For example, with the advancement of Web 2.0 technologies, workers can communicate and share in multiple formats like the popular social media sites or in company blogs, wikis or private web portals known as intranets. The KM movement is shifting from the old school process of team meetings and water cooler discussions to the online private of instant messaging, emails, twitter (a micro blogging platform), Facebook and online virtual meetings. It is a larger model than just implementing change management initiatives seen during the total quality movement and six sigma days [9]. As workers and business processes continue to evolve with these technology enablers, leaders are being challenged to re-tool how they lead knowledge workers. The old management process of building organization charts in a hierarchy fashion is being enveloped by empowered workers who don't want to be controlled, but rather allowed to be innovative and creative to build customer value.

Knowledge is Power

-Bette Daoust, Ph.D.

Why do research and education play an important part in business relationships?

Have you ever attended a business briefing or meeting without reading the materials ahead of time? I know I certainly have, and I also know that I felt like a fool when asked a question. It was up to me to be informed about the meeting and to read the information, and I neglected to do so. When you attend a meeting for a potential client, you will often find that they have not read much about you and have not done their research. Make sure that it is the other party wearing those shoes and not you. Find out all you can about their business so that you have a fairly accurate understanding of their potential business needs. You may also discover some problems they may have in keeping up with the competition or other items of interest that you can discuss at the meeting. You want to make sure that you are better informed about their business than they are about you. Once you have gained an understanding of their business, spend some time in the meeting asking relevant questions about how they tackle certain aspects of their business. You are working towards forming a bond and a business relationship here, and not trying to sell your products or services. Have them speak on what they do best and what they think the competition's weaknesses are. Also give free advice on some possible solutions that you can discuss in detail further down the road. The main goal of the first meeting is an introduction and to get to the second meeting, nothing more and nothing less. You may discover in your research that the company has many strong points, but at the same time some weaknesses may be revealed. Do not play on those weaknesses but play to their strengths. If the weaknesses get in the way, it may be time to book a time with another client [10, 11].

3. Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management is the collection of processes that govern the creation, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge. In one form or another, knowledge management has been around for a very long time. Practitioners have included philosophers, priests, teachers, politicians, scribes, Liberians, etc. So, if Knowledge Management is such an ageless and broad topic what role does it serve in today's Information Age? These processes exist whether we acknowledge them or not and they have a profound effect on the decisions we make and the actions we take, both of which are enabled by knowledge of some type. If this is the case, and we agree that many of our decisions and actions have profound and long-lasting effects, it makes sense to recognize and understand the processes that effect or actions and decision and, where possible, take steps to improve the quality these processes and in turn improve the quality of those actions and decisions for which we are responsible? [12-15].

Knowledge management is not a, "a technology thing" or a, "computer thing" If we accept the premise that knowledge management is concerned with the entire process of discovery and creation of knowledge, dissemination of knowledge, and the utilization of knowledge then we are strongly driven to accept that knowledge management is much more than a "technology thing" and that elements of it exist in each of our jobs. Knowledge management is the management of the organization towards the continuous renewal of the organizational knowledge base - this means e.g., creation of supportive organizational structures, facilitation of organizational members, putting Private Banks- instruments with emphasis on teamwork and diffusion of knowledge (as e.g., groupware) into place [16].

3.1 Knowledge Definition

Knowledge is the full utilization of information and data, coupled with the potential of people's skills, competencies, ideas, intuitions, commitments, and motivations. In today's economy, knowledge is people, money, leverage, learning, flexibility, power, and competitive advantage. Knowledge is more relevant to sustained business than capital, labor, or land. Nevertheless, it remains the most neglected asset. It is more than justified true belief and is essential for action, performance, and adaptation. Knowledge provides the ability to respond to novel situations. A holistic view considers knowledge to be present in ideas, judgments, talents, root causes, relationships, perspectives, and concepts. Knowledge is stored in the individual brain or encoded in organizational processes, documents, products, services, facilities, and systems. Knowledge is the basis for, and the driver of, our post-industrial economy [17]. Knowledge is the result of learning which provides the only sustainable competitive advantage. Knowledge is the next paradigm shift in computing following data processing 1945-1965 and information management 1966-1995. Knowledge is action, focused innovation, pooled expertise, special relationships, and alliances. Knowledge is value-added behavior and activities. For knowledge to be of value it must be focused, current, tested, and shared.

3.2 Knowledge Management Definition

Knowledge management is an audit of "intellectual assets" that highlights unique sources, critical functions and potential bottlenecks which hinder knowledge flowing to the point of use. It protects intellectual assets from decay, seeks opportunities to enhance decisions, services, and products through adding intelligence, increasing value, and providing flexibility. Knowledge management complements and enhances other organizational initiatives such as total quality management (TQM), business process re-engineering (BPR) and organizational learning, providing a new and urgent focus to sustain competitive position [18].

4. Applications of Knowledge Management

To serve customers well and remain in business companies must: reduce their cycle times, operate with minimum fixed assets and overhead (people, inventory, and facilities), shorten product development time, improve customer service, empower employees, innovate, and deliver high quality products, enhance flexibility and adaption, capture information, create knowledge, share and learn. None of this is possible without a continual focus on the creation, updating, availability, quality, and use of knowledge by all employees and teams, at work and in the marketplace [19]. The challenge of deploying the knowledge assets of an organization to create competitive advantage becomes more crucial as:

- The marketplace is increasingly competitive, and the rate of innovation is rising, so that knowledge must evolve and be assimilated at an ever-faster rate.
- Corporations are organizing their businesses to focus on creating customer value. Staff functions are being reduced as are management structures. There is a need to replace the informal knowledge management of the staff function with formal methods in customer aligned business processes.
- Competitive pressures are reducing the size of the workforce which holds this knowledge.
- Knowledge takes time to experience and acquire. Employees have less and less time for this.
- There are trends for employees to retire earlier and for increasing mobility, leading to loss of knowledge.
- There is a need to manage increasing complexity as small operating companies are trans-national

sourcing operations.

A change in strategic direction may result in the loss of knowledge in a specific area. A subsequent reversal in policy may then lead to a renewed requirement for this knowledge, but the employees with that knowledge may no longer be there [20].

5. Difficulties of Knowledge Management

There are many problems associated with identifying these knowledge assets and being able to use them and manage them in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Enterprises need:

- To have an enterprise-wide vocabulary to ensure that the knowledge is correctly understood.
- To be able to identify, model and explicitly represent their knowledge.
- To share and re-use their knowledge among differing applications for various types of users; this implies being able to share existing knowledge sources and future ones.
- To create a culture that encourages knowledge sharing.

Knowledge engineering methods and tools have come a long way towards addressing the use of a company's knowledge assets. They provide disciplined approaches to designing and building knowledge-based applications. There are tools to support the capture, modelling, validation, verification, and maintenance of the knowledge in these applications. However, these tools do not extend to supporting the processes for managing knowledge at all levels within the organization. At the strategic level the organization needs to be able to analyze and plan its business in terms of the knowledge it currently has and the knowledge it needs for future business processes. At the tactical level the organization is concerned with identifying and formalizing existing knowledge, acquiring new knowledge for future use, archiving it in organizational memories and creating systems that enable effective and efficient application of the knowledge within the organization. At the operational level knowledge is used in everyday practice by professional personnel who need access to the right knowledge, at the right time, in the right location [21, 22].

6. Knowledge Management Process

Knowledge management is the concept of taking data and turning it into useful and applicable knowledge in a business environment. There is no one specific way that this done, and there's really no one specific definition of the process or the concept. The ideas are more general, though there are many specific benefits of knowledge management that can be named as well as some specific steps that must be included, no matter how simple or complex an organization's concept of knowledge management is. The knowledge management process can have a few steps or dozens, but those steps fall into the falling basic categories:

- **Data Capture:** Raw data must be collected somehow before it can be turned into knowledge, or wisdom as the last step in the process is often called.
- **Data Storage:** There must be a place to keep the collected information. Data storage for most businesses and even individuals today is digital, but even a filing cabinet is a data storage solution.
- **Data Organization:** Once the data is collected it must be organized into a useful structure. For instance, a piece of paper that contains raw data like sales figures numbers, number of employees, prices of products, employee attendance numbers and last quarter's profits is full of raw data, but it's a collection that's not organized and can't be easily used in this format.
- **Data Analysis:** This often melds in with the organization step, as the act of organizing data often requires analysis. Once the data is analyzed, then it's more likely to be knowledge than just raw information because the way the information works together and things like cause and effect become more obvious. Patterns become obvious, and those can be used to illustrate general concepts. This turns the information into useful knowledge.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** At this point, the raw data has become useful knowledge or wisdom. While this is an improvement over raw, unorganized data, it's necessary to determine the best way to share this wisdom with employees to make it truly useful daily, and to use it to reach organizational goals.

6.1 Purpose of the Knowledge Management

The entire point of gathering data, storing it, organizing, analyzing it and sharing it is so that the

company can use vital business information to see what needs to be done, what needs to be improved, what can be eliminated, what needs to be maximized and what's possible in the future. The knowledge from this information processing cycle can be used to reach goals, whether those goals are more sales, more clients, less waste, more employee productivity, a better public image or almost any type of goal a company could have. Knowledge can be used to further those goals if it's gathered and processed correctly. The knowledge management process has not always been something that companies have focused on, at least not in a formal way [23]. Few people in a company several years ago would have used the term "knowledge management." But companies that were successful have always practiced knowledge management whether they called it that or not. Gathering data and turning it into useful information and shared knowledge has always been crucial.

6.2 An Organization's Knowledge Management Process

A company can't set sales goals (resulting from wisdom rather than just guesses) without proper knowledge about past sales, trends, potential obstacles, and which items sell best and why (data that's organized to have relevant meaning). Likewise, a company that wants to improve employee productivity can't do so without understanding that productivity in the past and looking at knowledge that would suggest what has worked and what hasn't. While the idea of a knowledge management process might sound complicated in general terms, when you look at the specific steps it becomes something that people and companies do every day without even realizing it. By nailing the process down and following the steps deliberately, more associations between data are readily made and goal setting and results can be improved even more.

6.3 Knowledge Management Process and Resources

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7. Knowledge Management Strategy

While the knowledge management processes section dealt with the general ways knowledge can be managed, this section tackles long-term knowledge management strategy. Strategic investments represent the company's choices/options to enable and enhance the processes outlined earlier (e.g., knowledge sharing) and to offer help define which knowledge is relevant (i.e., in line with strategic objectives) and which is not [24, 25]. This section is based on the strategic part of the integrated knowledge management model, which includes:

7.1 Knowledge Management Strategic Initiatives

Invest: Support of existing structures, competencies, culture, external network, and knowledge management systems. Implement changes to structures, competencies, culture, external network, and knowledge management systems. The articles that follow are based solely on the points under "invest". Based on that we arrive at the following headings:

- KM and Organizational Structures
- KM and Organizational Culture
- KM and Core Competencies
- KM and External Knowledge Network
- KM and Knowledge Management Systems

As many of you might realize, many of the strategic initiatives deal with aspects that extend into different branches of management. I will endeavor to stick to the scope of this subsection and, for the most part, limit my discussion only to aspects relevant to knowledge management strategy. Furthermore, at all stages of the following discussion on knowledge management strategy, I will also refer to different knowledge types and to IT systems, whenever necessary. However, the subsection dealing with knowledge management systems was the first that focuses specifically on Private banks. It will discuss the general implementation issues, leading to the subsequent section that looks at some specific systems and tools. At the end, I will present a summary of all the conclusions and recommendations made throughout this section and the one on knowledge management processes, in a subsection titled Knowledge Management Best Practices. This will serve to provide a quick

overview of knowledge management strategy and could be read on its own by readers who are not interested in a more detailed account.

8. Industry Profile - Private Banks

Knowledge Management (KM) is an effort to increase useful knowledge in the organization. It is a natural outgrowth of late twentieth century movements to make organizational management and operations more effective, of higher quality, and more responsive to constituents in a rapidly changing global environment. This document traces the evolution of KM in organizations, summarizing the most influential research and literature in the field. It also presents an overview of selected common and current practices in knowledge management, including the relationship between knowledge management and decision making, with the intention of making a case for KM as a series of processes and not necessarily a manipulation of things. The final section highlights the use of social networking and commonly adopted Web applications to increase the value of social capital and to connect practitioners with clients and colleagues. The framework has two dimensions. The knowledge management outcomes of knowledge creation, retention, and transfer are represented along one dimension. Properties of the context within which knowledge management occurs are represented in the other dimension. These properties, which affect knowledge management outcomes, can be organized according to whether they are properties of a unit (e.g., individual, group, organization) involved in knowledge management, properties of relationships between units or properties of the knowledge itself. The framework is used to identify where research findings about knowledge management converge and where gaps in our understanding exist. Drawing from the lessons of experience for launching a broad knowledge management program in a global organizations like the Private Banks, eight pillars were instrumental to support the Private Banks initiative defining a clear strategy based on the business needs of the organization; keeping small the central KM unit which oversees overall implementation; making available a budget to allow communities to function; supporting the development of communities of practice; keeping information technology user-friendly and responsive to its user's needs; orchestrating systematic communications to explain what knowledge means and to keep everyone informed; introducing new incentives to accelerate the shift towards a knowledge culture; and developing a set of metrics to measure progress. Defining a knowledge sharing strategy which was endorsed by senior management and front-line staff is a difficult but essential first step. The strategy should clearly articulate why the organization should share its know-how, what the organization will share, with whom the organization will share and how the organization will share. Given the characteristics of the global economy, and the plummeting costs of communication and computing, the Private Banks perceived that sharing knowledge would enhance its organizational performance, and therefore, its global impact on poverty. This was a business decision anchored on the realization that the new opportunities were worth the shock of cultural and technological transformations that the Private Banks were going to introduce. Knowledge management was not undertaken for its own good. It was motivated by a decision to increase the speed and quality of service delivery, lower the cost of operations by avoiding rework, accelerate innovation, and widen the Private Banks partnerships to fight poverty. The knowledge sharing program of the Private Banks is designed to share country and sector know-how, and global best practices and research in the field of development. The program would have been designed differently if the knowledge of competitive intelligence, processes or individual clients would have been at the core of the Private Banks business. The issue of the quality and authentication of what is being shared is addressed by the thematic group leaders. The knowledge-sharing vision of the Private Banks is ambitious. It drives the institution to share its development know-how both internally with staff at headquarters and in the field, and externally with clients, partners, and stakeholders. Internally, the audience is the members of the thematic groups, and the objective is to collect and make accessible the latest and best sector and country development knowledge that exists globally to allow operational staff to bring higher quality advice to their clients while saving time and costs. Collecting, synthesizing, and authenticating this knowledge is already an endeavor. External knowledge sharing

poses further issues such as the confidentiality of information given to the Private Banks by its clients and partners, copyright of documents, and for the Private Banks activities supporting the private sector, the protection of proprietary assets. Instead of developing constraining procedures to address these issues, the Private Banks are dealing with them as they arise. The company uses a multitude of different channels to share various forms of knowledge. For instance, a few thematic groups are providing a mentor for each recruit to quickly familiarize them with sector strategies, lending procedures and key professional contacts. Every member of staff can also call a help desk, where packets of information and referral services are available. Seasoned professionals will attend and contribute to technical clinics (working lunches of one-to-two hours) or search the knowledge collections on the Intranet. Externally, knowledge sharing takes place virtually on the Web, and face-to-face with clients and partners, either during field missions or during sector weeks organized annually by sector boards and their thematic groups. The present practices in Private Banks lay the foundations for the best practices in knowledge management and investigates the degree of awareness and implementation of KM principles and practices in Indian information technology (Private Banks) companies [26]. The various phases of knowledge management (knowledge generation, knowledge codification, and knowledge transfer and knowledge application) were considered and data were interpreted based on weighted scores for each parameter at each phase. It was very clear that though people are aware of the importance of documentation, and it is being prepared to some extent, a lot needs to be done in this field. Only very critical information is documented and maintained in archives, whereas general information (which forms 30%-40% of daily work input) is not documented. The common perception was that there should be a mechanism through which the ideas of engineers/programmers can be implemented since the company can gain only if ideas are translated into tangible benefits. The Knowledge Management Index for awareness of intellectual property in Private Banks companies was found to be too low, which is an area of concern, but the same was high for information technology. It was also revealed that HR professionals must realize that true competitive advantage lies in the people and the best HR practices should be aligned to strengthen knowledge management [27].

9. Suggestions

- The private banks should follow and maintain the knowledge management process as it has massive impact by leveraging know-how-throughout the organization.
- The management should Update the database which will result in having the most recent and relevant information and knowledge stored and easily accessible by any employee who may need any specific information.
- The private banks should measure the effectiveness of Knowledge management so as to secure and replenish the learning experiences, as well as the work products, of the individuals who comprise an organization.
- The private banks should consider the facts that knowledge management eliminates redundant processes, streamlines operations, and enhances employee retention rates. So, the organization should make sure that sufficient budget is allotted to the knowledge management.
- Organization should provide appropriate knowledge management courses to efficient employees.

Conclusion

Knowledge Management is not owned by any one group in an organization, nor by any one profession or industry. Knowledge management requires a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to the management process and an understanding of the dimensions of knowledge work. It is an evolution of good management practice sensibly and purposely applied. But librarians and information specialists, if they want to be, key players in the emerging knowledge management phenomenon, have to understand the multiple perspectives of the other players. Knowledge Management occupies a very outstanding position in the creation of the knowledge innovation system of an organization. Knowledge Management has become a powerful tool for promoting innovation and realizing re-engineering the various walks of life. Ultimately knowledge literate people are those who have learnt

how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information. And how to hue information in such a way that others can learn from them. The training programs are being conducted in the companies and the knowledge is transferred for better employee performance and growth prospects of the organization. There are people prepared for lifelong learning became they can always find the information needed for any task or decisions at hand. A large number of companies have really started to recognize the benefits of direct these and send their employees to Knowledge based training programs especially private banks.

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