



Knowledge Management Practices in Universities for effective learning-An Explorative Study

Abstract

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Knowledge management is about enhancing the use of organizational knowledge through sound practices of KM and organizational learning. KM practices encompass the capture or acquisition of knowledge, its retention and organization, its propagation and reprocess and lastly responsiveness to the new knowledge. The focus of this study was on KM principles and practices that may be in place in the Universities. The present research approach is that KM and its survival principles and tools may help the institutions to improve performance. However, there is uncertainty about whether the use of KM principles and tools can partly solve the institutions approach to improving the quality of education it provides. Hence, the study attempt to identify the level of understanding among the faculties on Knowledge management practices and examines the challenges faced by individual faculties to share knowledge among them in various departments. This article also attempt to tap intend of policies on Knowledge management applications in selected departments in Kuvempu University with perceptive of faculties.

Key words: *Knowledge Management (KM), Faculties, Practices and Policies, Kuvempu University*

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1.0: Introduction

Knowledge management is a programme or system designed to create, capture, share and leverage knowledge towards the success of the organisation. This is easier said than done because instituting a knowledge management programme requires many change and support at all levels of the organisation. Furthermore, there are different forms of knowledge to contend with and understand.

Knowledge can be tacit or explicit, which requires different strategies to capture each type another challenge is to distil the practice of knowledge management into one neat concept. This course will provide you with the specific understanding you need to take away a good conceptual framework of knowledge management. This way you can communicate and manage knowledge management project with the tools for success.

The ability to manage knowledge is crucial in today's knowledge economy. The creation and diffusion of knowledge have become increasingly important factors in competitiveness. More and more, knowledge is being thought of as a valuable commodity that is embedded in product and embedded in the tacit knowledge of highly mobile employees. While knowledge is increasingly being viewed as a commodity or intellectual asset, there are some paradoxical characteristics of knowledge that are radically different from other valuable commodities.

2.0: Literature Review

Judith Madvodza et al (2009). In this article “**knowledge management practices at an institution of higher learning**” stated about the knowledge management is important for the organisation to exchange and share the knowledge in groups or individuals. Some organisations are unable to function of knowledge management because they have learning disabilities. Knowledge management is important to become strategic practices. It is need for all the institutions it helps to develop institution wide policies and practices for proper and well organized methods.



‘Applying Corporate Knowledge Management Practices in Higher Education’ an article by authors Jillinda et al (2000), outlines the basic concepts of knowledge management applied in the corporate sector, and considers various trends and explores how they might be applied in higher education, and whether higher education is ready to embrace them. KM techniques in higher education can lead to improved academic and administrative services, and reduced cost. The authors also compare explicit and implicit knowledge. This helps to better understand implicit knowledge, and also gives the difference between Knowledge Management and e-Business. Colleges and universities have significant opportunities to apply knowledge management practices to support every part of their mission, from education to public service to research. The authors also listed out the application and benefits of Knowledge Management for the Research process, Curriculum development process, Student and alumni services, administrative services and Strategic Planning.

‘Intellectual Capital Management as Part of Knowledge Management Initiatives at Institutions of Higher Learning’, by Andrew Kok (2007), suggests that aspects such as human capital, structural capital and customer capital are important variables of the whole intellectual capital management programme, which forms part of the knowledge management initiatives of institutes of higher learning. The skills and expertise of university staff as part of its human capital are discussed. Structural capital will encompass aspects such as the role of innovation and intellectual property rights. Customer capital of the university and the knowledge of stakeholders in the field of tertiary education are becoming more important. Bringing intellectual capital, knowledge management and enabling technologies together is an exciting challenge to leaders wishing to create an information age institution. It may be said that intellectual capital deals with articular, reasonable, knowledgeable and substantial fruits of the mind. It claims intangible (tacit) and tangible (explicit) dimensions, which do not mutually exclude, but actually complement each other. The conversion of knowledge into a valuable asset has come to be known as an intellectual asset or intellectual capital.

‘What Makes Higher Education Knowledge - Compatible?’ by Ferenc Farkas et al (2009), suggest that the main goal of knowledge management is to raise the value of the organization with the application of the existing knowledge and intellectual capital within the organization. One basic assumption of knowledge management is that the enhancement of knowledge base can



support the organization in achieving a better position in competition. The authors examine the knowledge transfer between the higher education institutions (as knowledge intensive service providers) and the students (as clients). Students represent such networks the elements of which are capable of knowledge sharing and knowledge distribution among each other.

To be able to investigate on knowledge processes in higher education institutions, the authors suggest that one should have a look at the determining success factors of knowledge processes at first. Considering the discussion on knowledge processes in universities, the authors have found that characteristics of the organizations should have been considered. For this, the authors find it appropriate to view those features of universities, producing and delivering service to the public, which can have an impact on successful implementation of knowledge management programs.

‘Methodology for assessment of knowledge management in higher education institutions’ by Jasmina Arsenijev (2011), suggests that the introduction of knowledge management in higher education is inevitable due to current social and economic changes in the knowledge economy, research of its presence in higher education institutions is important not only for establishing its current state or for following the progress of its implementation, but also for establishing strong and weak points, predispositions and obstacles of HEIs for its implementation. The methodology was designed to provide several advantages. It begins with the inseparability of organizational aspects of KM in educational institutions and application of KM in educational process, so it examines both KM levels, as opposed to other similar studies. Furthermore, it encompasses perspectives of two most important groups within HEIs, teachers and students, and thus provides a clearer picture which is not affected by a subjective point of view of a specific and consistent group of respondents.

3.0: Objectives of the study

The study was undertaken to attain the following objectives.

- a) To identify the level of Understanding of knowledge management among employees in university.
- b) To examine the experience of sharing knowledge among faculties in other departments.



4.0: Research Methodology

Type and Scope of the Research: Earlier studies on Knowledge management in corporate and in education institutions revealed a tendency to more on application of Knowledge management to improve performance but neglected on the part of level of understanding among the stakeholders and their experience in sharing knowledge with reference to PG departments in Kuvempu University, Hence the study is explorative in nature.

Sources of Data and Sample Size: The required and relevant data are collected from Primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data obtained by faculties from PG departments in Kuvempu University and secondary data from Books, Journals and web-source.

4.1: Statistical Tools used for Data Analysis

The responses obtained from the respondents are tabulated using SPSS and are processed using Excel. To analyze the data and to interpret the analysis, simple Percentage and descriptive statistics are used. For the purpose of testing hypothesis of significance of the variance in factors qualified as influences on faculties responses, Chi-square test is used. With these details about the objectives and methodology, an analysis is made in the following paragraphs to identify and analyze the understanding and challenges of Knowledge management in universities.

Following hypothesis was formed for analysis:

- H0: Perception on sharing knowledge by individual faculties in other departments is insignificant
H1: Perception on sharing knowledge by individual faculties in other departments is significant.

5.0: Results and Discussions:

5.1: Demographic Profile of the respondents

In order to prove the above stated objectives demographics of the respondents are tabulated and presented below.

**Table No. 5.1: Classification of Respondents based on their Designation**

SL No.	Designation	Respondents	Percentage (%)
01	Professor	10	10
02	Associate-professors	18	18
03	Assistance-professors	25	25
04	Guest lecturers	47	47
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

The above table No. 5.1 depicts that the majority of the respondents 47 percent are guest lecturers, 25 percent are Assistant professors, 18 percent are Associate professors 10 percent are professors. Amongst questionnaire respondents 47 percent of them are Guest faculties working as full time faculties.

Table No. 5.2: Classification of respondents based on Experience.

Experience	Respondents	Percentage
0-5	32	32.0
5-10	42	42.0
10-15	8	8.0
15-20	14	14.0
20-25	2	2.0
25-above	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0



Source: Primary data

The table No. 5.2, depicts that, among 50 respondents 32 percent of faculties are having 0-5 years of experience, 42 percent of faculties are having 5-10 years of experience, 8 percent of faculties are having 10-15 years of experience, 14 percent of faculties are having 15-20 years of experience are having, 2 percent of faculties 20 -25 years of experience and 25 of faculties are having 25 and above years of experience. Hence, it is concluded as per the research conceived most of the respondent experience lies between 5 to 10 years amongst majority of respondents are Guest faculties and their turn over period is minimum 2 years and maximum more than 10 years.

Table 5.3: Level of Understanding of knowledge management among faculties

Level of understanding	Agree	Percent (%)	Neutral	Percent (%)	Disagree	Percent (%)
Information and knowledge mean the same thing	4	10	5	12	32	78
Knowledge depends on information	36	88	1	2	4	10
Knowledge management is the same as information management	4	10	6	15	31	75
Knowledge management includes information management	33	80	5	12	3	8

Source: Primary data

The Research findings indicate that there was a convinced level of understanding of Knowledge Management concepts at Kuvempu University. This was reflected by the fact that in the questionnaire, when asked if information and knowledge have the same meaning, 32 (78%) of the respondents disagreed with the conception that they mean the same thing, whilst 5 (12%) did not give an opinion, and only 4 (10%) agreed. The question of Knowledge Management including information management had 33 (80%) respondents agreeing, 5 (12%) remaining hesitant, and 3 (8%) disagreeing with it. Concerning whether Knowledge Management is the same as information management, 31 (75%) disagreed, 6 (15%) give an unrevealing response,



and 4 (10%) agreed. Amongst all respondents, 36 (88%) agreed that knowledge depends on information, 1 (2%) was hesitant about giving an opinion, whilst 4 (10%) disagreed. These perceptions are shown in Table 5.3. The intent of undertaking this analysis is to understand whether the opinion of individual faculties on sharing knowledge in other departments is same or not in the Kuvempu University.

Table No. 5.4: Individual Faculty challenges faced in sharing information with people from other departments within the University.

Experience	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Colleagues do not seem to perceived that there is an urgent need to share	14	8	10	32
I do not see an urgent need to share information	20	10	12	42
Lack of open-minded information sharing	4	4	0	8
Lack of trust of other people's knowledge	8	4	2	14
My tasks do not require cross-department information sharing	2	0	0	2
I do not know about other people's knowledge needs	2	0	0	2
Total	50	26	24	100

Source: Primary data

This was confirmed by 14 questionnaire respondents who gave no opinion about colleagues' failure to perceive that there was an urgent need to share information, 8 who agreed and 10 who disagreed with that perception. Furthermore, 10 gave neutral opinion about their own failure to realise an urgent need to share information, whilst 20 agreed, but 12 disagreed with that view; 4 gave a non-committal response about the lack of an open-minded sharing environment at Kuvempu university, 8 agreed, 4 gave no opinion about the lack of trust in other people's



knowledge, but 2 disagreed. Some respondents felt that their tasks did not require cross-departmental information sharing; this was not confirmed in which who agreed only 2, none of the respondents who are neither neutral nor disagreed, these data reflect the need and relevance of an institutional culture in information and knowledge sharing to facilitate knowledge acquisition. The individual do not know about other people’s knowledge needs agreed only 2, none of the respondents who are neither neutral nor disagreed, Hence the study concludes that the use of internal and external knowledge and information can improve the process of decision making and enhance the development of innovative capacity, which will result in better effectiveness and efficiency. The discussed perceptions are demonstrated in Table 4.

To prove further the above table the present study following hypothesis has been drawn with Chi-square test;

H0: Perception on sharing knowledge by individual faculties in other departments is insignificant
H1: Perception on sharing knowledge by individual faculties in other departments is significant.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Table No. 5.5: Pearson Chi-square test result

Table Value	Calculated Value	D/F	Significance
24.996	16.171	15	5

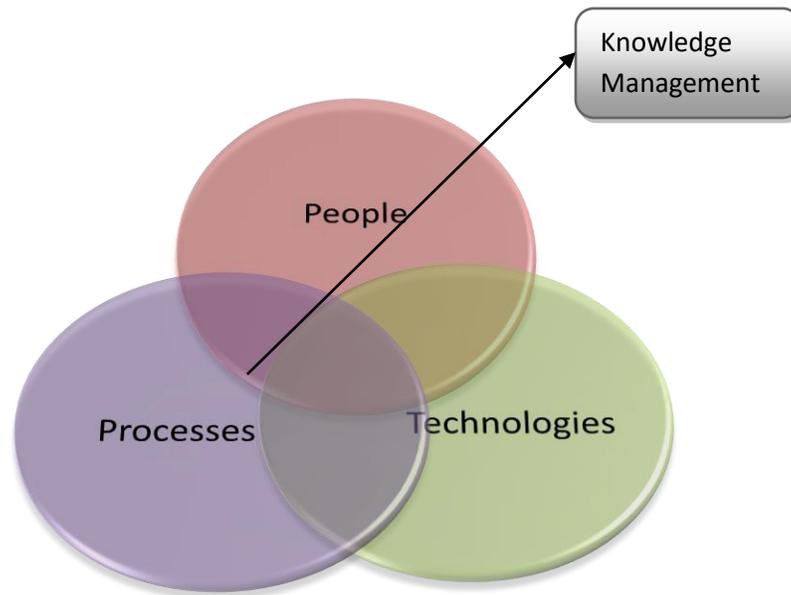
Source: SPSS result

Since X² value at 5 percent significance level for 15 df is 24.996. The calculated value of X² is less than this table value. Hence, Null Hypothesis [H0] accepted, Perception on sharing knowledge by individual faculties in other departments in the same university is insignificant. Therefore, it is concluded that, Knowledge management practices in same university is based on stated policies by IQAC, PME and Administrative body although practices is different form department to department.



6.0: Suggestions

- a) To become aware of a Knowledge management, an evaluation of the current circumstances needs to be carried out by highlighting existing KM activities and experience, outlining the benefits and its outcomes, and exposing barriers to further progress through workshops, conference and training and development programmes to both permanent and guest faculties. This will show how current KM practice affects the ability of the faculties in various departments to meet intended goals and will demonstrate the connection between faculty, office staff, students and other departments.
- b) It is essential to map the knowledge management strategies in the university. Identifying expertise as committee based enables the department to push the sharing of best practices. This can be done by examining the performance results of faculties. If best practices and styles are already in place, like PME, IQAC and NACC peer committee it is better to use them to enhance performance rather than routine customary practices.
- c) The people who need knowledge in university level should be identified by attempting invention in new ways. It is very important to focus on mission-critical based on knowledge management criteria and tools rather than just trendy knowledge practices.
- d) It is important for university members to have easy access to knowledge. Manuals, instructions, Circular, Notice, catalogues, notices, computer facility and databases help in making knowledge evident so that it can be transferred easily around the university in various departments and enable departments to use such knowledge for planning and making decisions.
- e) Knowledge management initiatives should be developed with updated methods. It is necessary to facilitate knowledge growth through departmental culture and the culture improves the ultimate measuring of the effectiveness and success of implementing Knowledge Management tools and principles.
- f) Knowledge management brings together three core organizational resources People, Processes and Technologies; to enables organization to use and share information more effectively. Hence it is necessary to integrate Knowledge with these resources to built Knowledge module in Universities. The module presented below **Figure 1;**

Figure 1: The Key Territory of Knowledge Management

7.0: Conclusion

The map to use Knowledge Management practices implies the need to understand the context that different types of knowledge requires, as well as organising information in the manner most useful to the University community, particularly in an information environment that uses social networking functionalities extensively. It becomes possible to learn from previous experiences and situations, and be able to anticipate the specific requirements of Knowledge in Higher education institutions like Universities.

In Universities level, establishing and maintaining a strong technological base focusing on the intended teaching– learning environment and promoting research activities, and creating and organising technology-based knowledge and knowledge-based networking are essential initiatives. Additionally Knowledge Management practices need to be spouted from institutional skills and the already existing intellectual capital. A supportive Knowledge climate can therefore bring systemic transformation to the entire University in premier level.



8.0: References

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