

Knowledge Management Implementation in Information Society: A Review of IIUM Library KM Strategy

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ABSTRACT

Most organizations implementing knowledge management are thrilled by the numerous opportunities it offers and the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) library is not left behind in the innovative shift. Even though knowledge management practice is demanded in information society, it does not exist as a full-fledged solution in most organizations yet. The reality in IIUM library is that it already employs certain elements of knowledge management through the use of IT to support various activities from administrative jobs to user education. Among the IT support system used include: the staff intranet and email to share and exchange information, library database to capture and store data and the digital library facilities to serve the diverse interest of its numerous customers. These imply that the strategies employed by IIUM library include: intellectual asset management strategy, personal knowledge asset responsibility strategy and mostly customer-focused knowledge strategy. The purpose of this study lies in its concern for whether the elements of knowledge management involved in the administration of IIUM library is achieving the goals of knowledge management and whether the staff and customers of IIUM library are maximizing the benefits of knowledge management in information societies.

Keywords: Information Society, Innovative Shift, Knowledge Management (KM) Strategy, Library, Management Practice

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management even though is recently advocated by most organizations has been in existence since inception of man. Denning, (2002) noted that much of KM existed before

the actual term came into popular use. There exists no man on earth that has not in one way or another managed information or knowledge available with them no matter how meager. The first man on earth Adam managed the information he had about the universe and shared it with

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his wife Eve and they were able to live on earth resourcefully. In fact, all scriptures of the world would not have been documented till date if knowledge management never existed; it would have passed away with those that memorized it if it was not shared, documented on leaves, printed on papers and eventually digitized.

The invention of printed materials especially papers and subsequently transition from one type of computers to another would not have come to pass if the notion of managing knowledge has never existed; the difference however, is in the practice not the concept. An African adage goes thus; *“when an old man dies; a resourceful library is burnt.”* Ageing and dearth of information with the demise of resourceful people are some of the problems the new knowledge management seeks to address; this makes the concept universal and pertinent to all organizations that thrive on information (Adedokun-Shittu & Shittu, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge management is defined by O’Dell and Grayson (1997) as a conscious strategy for moving the right knowledge to the right people at the right time to assist sharing and enabling the information to be translated into action to improve the organizational performance. This explains the fact that knowledge management is a deliberate effort to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice and between people and people to promote efficiency within and outside the organization. Jennex (2007) adduced that the need for KM is to help organizations make sense of what they know, to know what they know and to effectively use what they know. It is thus imperative for organizations to effectively manage their knowledge resources, accrue more knowledge resources through sharing, translating tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge and facilitating knowledge use. In line with this, Seemann et al (2002) gives three crucial elements to managing knowledge when he defines knowledge management as the deliberate design of processes, tools, structures,

etc. with the intent to increase, renew, share, or improve the use of knowledge represented in any of the three elements [Structural, Human and Social] of intellectual capital. The structure is the organization, the human is the personnel involved in the running of the organization and the social refers to the network and interaction that exist within the organization that enables sharing and managing information.

The definition given by the US Army report (1999) is tailored towards understanding that information has to be carefully selected for the knowledge repository. It is not meant to be a junk box where both resourceful and unresourceful materials can be disposed. The report defines knowledge management as an integrated, systematic approach to identify, manage, and share all of an enterprise’s information assets, including databases, documents, policies, and procedures, as well as previously unarticulated expertise and experience held by individual workers. It is also imperative from this definition that organizations should ensure that tacit knowledge and expertise be made explicit and sharable.

Having understood the concept of knowledge management, it is equally important to understand why most organizations crave to develop it. Rosenberg (2001) describes the benefits of knowledge management as including; integrating organizational skills, knowledge, people and process, creating new insight and ideas, offering access to performance and support tools among others. Some other opportunities guaranteed by knowledge management are; improving access to information, translating knowledge into policy and action, sharing and reapplying experiential knowledge, integrating new employees, avoiding redundant work, reducing training cost, optimizing communication and collaboration, leveraging world-wide competence and fostering enabling environment (DeLone & McLean, 2003; Jennex & Olfman, 2006; Haggie & Kingston, 2003).

However one stop area in the issue of knowledge management is that there is no converging point as to what knowledge manage-

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