

Project Success and Knowledge Management (KM) Practices in Malaysian Institution of Higher Learning (IHL)

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Abstract: The purpose of this research to identify the relationship of project success and knowledge management practices in Malaysian Institutions of Higher education. As it's known the fact that the Institutions of higher learning are dedicated in knowledge management business due to their nature of jobs like knowledge creation, deployment and learning. The findings suggest that there is a strong relationship between project success and the knowledge management practices implementation process, which is based on, procure proper knowledge and practices, willing and dedicated leadership, strong ICT infrastructure and value based organizational culture where successful knowledge transfer play as the mediator role. This research provides a clear view for researchers and enthusiasts regarding success factors that may influence project success in implementing KM practices in higher learning Institutions and other homogenous organizations. This research is a pouring key ingredient for researchers to re-think about implementing KM Strategies for the Institutions of Higher learning.

Keywords: *Project Success, Knowledge Management Practices, Malaysian institutions of higher education*

1. Introduction

In the modernization era, Knowledge Management and Project Management are recognized to be the most significant agent of change and play as a competitive role in organizations. Historically, Projects that meet its objectives under time and budget considered as successful projects (Prabhakar, 2008). Today, many organizations pay attention on management and success projects, as they focus on achieving project objectives. There is no doubt that organizations adopt managerial processes, which have their own tools that give managers a good opportunity to succeed in order to achieve their goals. Even though continuous research and discussion in many years ago, there is no satisfied solution for the issue of comprehensive and an adequate evaluation rather than measurement of project success. Many researches have proposed definitions and measurement approaches for project success within organizations. Knowledge has become the most important capital in the present age and hence succeeds in any organizations, including universities lie in using it. As a result, researches showed that the systems of knowledge management in organizations are given full attention in order to boost up learning and performance by capturing, sharing and using productive knowledge. Nowadays, the change of Knowledge Management (KM) is evolutionary. Today, an evolving of Knowledge Management practices in organizations has grown tremendously in research and publication. A lot of researches and specialized people are trying to focus on solving the issues and problems that have been existed in organizations. Recently, theories, backgrounds and frameworks of Knowledge Management (KM) have been widely studied and reported by researchers. Evolving information and knowledge has affected all Malaysians' organizations and universities. Knowledge management has become a priority for Malaysian higher education as well including universities.

According to Sandhu *et al.* (2011), in order to spur innovation, improve customer service, or achieve operational excellence, most of the staff are knowledge workers due to the fact that sharing of knowledge is very essential in knowledge-based organizations such as IHEs. Instead of creating new patterns of knowledge management, it is better to acknowledge the existing KM in Institutions of Higher Learning for further progress. IHEs and their staff are also required to recognize and respond to their changing role in a knowledge based society Al-Alaw *et al.* (2007). Ramachandran *et al.* (2007) argued that there is a growing acknowledgement that an institution-wide approach to KM can enable higher education institutions (HEIs) to evolve more effortlessly towards a highly effective and a dynamic educational environment which promises considerable improvements in institutional-wide knowledge-sharing activities and subsequent improvement

in overall performance. This paper discusses briefly the important key concepts of project success and knowledge management (KM) practices in Malaysian institutions of higher education including public and private ones and the main factors that may help to improve the knowledge transfers within the universities. It also discusses about the challenges facing in higher education in Malaysia and the concept of Knowledge management in education and the new trends in education.

Purpose of Research: The goal of this research is to examine the effects of knowledge management implementation success in the Malaysian Institute of higher learning. The nature of the topic dictates the use of exploratory research for knowledge management (KM) implementation in the Malaysian Institute of higher learning. The proposed framework provides the outline of research and ways of knowledge management to be implemented in higher learning institution by successful sharing of knowledge.

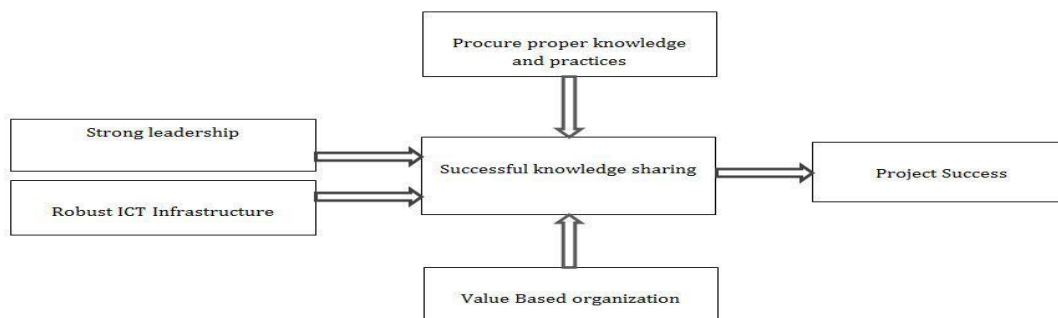
Research Questions & Description

- What is proper knowledge? How can proper knowledge be procured and influenced in knowledge sharing as well project success?
- What does a dedicated leader do in knowledge sharing and project success?
- How does the Robust ICT infrastructure influence in knowledge sharing and project success?
- What is the contribution of a value based organization in project success?

In this research, proper knowledge refers to the term of appropriate or required knowledge. In this paper, it is believed that the project success in a KM project implication depends on other independent variables in which they play a vital role to strong ground. When independent variables are successfully implemented and shared then, they considered as a project's success. It is believed that any organization's success cannot be achieved until it gets a dedicated leader who is concerned about the organization's well-being and own sole duty. The emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is more important in the World Wide Web in which it has accelerated the knowledge management movement. ICT tools are user friendly and directly contributing by creating efficient technological tools. These tools are helpful on sharing the knowledge effectively and playing a main role in project success. A value-based organization is the organization that holds a specific motto as a guideline. An existing guideline for the organization controls its activity from the core to the surface. As for the Institute of higher education, which is the place for knowledge creation, follows the strict guideline for implementing and sharing knowledge. The success of implementing knowledge through a guided path often tends to be more successful.

Research scope: The research emphasizes the fact that the system in implementing the knowledge management practices through a successful knowledge-sharing model, which provides the solution for successful knowledge transfer into the higher learning, institutes of Malaysia. This study indicates on the relationship between knowledge management implication and project success. The research also identifies the different phases to apply qualitative knowledge strategies among the institute of higher education in many developed and developing countries.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



2. Methodology

We analyzed 45 selected articles in 2000–2013 as well as another amount of articles about the related era before 2000. Those articles explain and show the real factors for project success and knowledge management

practices in higher learning institutions. Besides, we tested how knowledge management has been engaged in the projects and how its factors help in project success. In addition, we highlighted the main approaches to the knowledge management process. Finally, we examine the relationship between knowledge sharing and other independent factors identified from the literature.

3. Literature Review

It is essential to define the term of knowledge before going through the meaning of knowledge management and the key factors of KM in any project success. Knowledge knows what, how and why. It includes evidences, descriptions, facts, information, or skills acquired through experience or education. It has been well-known to be the most significant resource that contributes to the competitive advantage of an organization. According to (Santo, 2005) there are two types of knowledge, namely explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is formal and quantifiable. It can be captured, stored and distributed. It is the most widely known in the conventional form of knowledge that can be found in books, reports, journals, and mass media such as newspapers, television, the Internet, and etc. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, hard to formalize, it refers to the individuals' insights, feelings and perception. Tacit knowledge based on personal experience, it is more difficult to communicate, difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or expressing it. However, explicit knowledge quickly loses its meaning without tacit insight. Knowledge is created through interactions between explicit and tacit knowledge and not from either explicit or tacit knowledge alone.

Knowledge management (KM) has been defined differently by various authors and practitioners as an area for wider debate and research among academics and professionals in recent years. It involves knowledge acquisition, documentation, transfer, creation, and knowledge application (Yahya & Goh, 2002). Organizations including universities believed that project success knowledge management one of the highest important to the competitive advantage. It considers also as a major mechanism of change in the new era of the knowledge economy Al-Zayyat *et al.* (2009). The success of a Knowledge management initiative depends on many factors, some within our control, some not. Typically, critical success factors can be categorized into four primary categories, namely Procure proper knowledge and practices, Strong leadership, Robust ICT infrastructure, and Value Based Organization Hasanali *et al.* (2003). According to many studies about project management and the key factors for any project success we have found that time, cost, scope and quality are the main constraints or goals of any project. Knowledge management plays a big role in any successful projects. Any project had objectives in which all clearly expressed focused on knowledge such as create knowledge, improve knowledge access, enhance the knowledge environment, and manage knowledge as an asset.

Procure proper knowledge and practices: Universities and industries seem to have formed strong partnerships in the life sciences, although the relationships may pose greater threats to the openness of scientific communication than universities generally acknowledge. However, the amount of industrial support smaller than federal support for university research Blumenthal *et al.* (1996). Teachers play an important role in determining the successful implementation of environmental education among the young. It was proved that the students' attitudes towards the environment have been affected by the teacher's attitude, knowledge and behavior (Summers, 2000). Knowledge transfer is the learning process of an organizational unit (individual, group, department, or division) based on the experience of other organizational units. Gina *et al.* (2009) Found that the task-relevant knowledge and skills have solved the relationship between individual experience and performance on consequent tasks. Furthermore, the organizational experience weakened the positive relationship between individual experience, knowledge and skills. Researchers have also examined the transfer at the group and organizational levels of analysis. Theorists have argued that not only do organizations learn from their own direct experience, they also learn from the experiences of other organizations.

Strong leadership: It has been proven that, leadership often exhibits high performance together with job satisfaction, organizational commitment and trust. Leadership and knowledge management system focus on identifying and addressing agency leadership competencies so that continuity of leadership is ensured an environment of continuous learning is present and knowledge is shared across the organization. This triggered intense interest from both academia and practitioners in studying knowledge management and

leadership effectiveness (Politis, 2001). According to Menkhoff *et al.* (2011) a key objective of knowledge management is to maximize return on the organization's tangible and intangible knowledge assets and resources such as tacit knowledge, competencies and experiences resident in the mind of employees. In the implementation of knowledge management, leadership is needed to steer people in achieving its intended purpose (Hamdani, 2013). Moreover, Hasanali *et al.* (2003) Argue that, nothing makes the greatest control on an organization rather than when leaders model the behavior they are trying to promote among staff. They play a key role in ensuring success in almost any initiative within an organization. Successful knowledge managers recognize that knowledge is transferred through multiple ways that reinforce one another. Successful knowledge projects generally deliver knowledge transfer through various channels. Davenport *et al.* (1998) Argued that, successful knowledge managers take advantages from senior management support. A senior management team will support changes in performance assessments, which are the key to altering motivation. Furthermore, in order to create an organizational infrastructure for knowledge management, supportive executives will most likely assign the resources needed. Strong support from the executive can be included many methods such as: sending rules that KM and organization learning are critical to the university's success, providing enough funding and resources for infrastructure, clarifying what types of knowledge are most essential to the university.

Robust ICT infrastructure: Nowadays, the most fundamental role of purpose in ICT infrastructure is to reinforce/ sustain the management of knowledge and the widespread sharing of information. These factors portray a good sample of effective knowledge management tools. Next, further discussion will be on the intranet and expert system technologies as well as through which effective tools manage the knowledge. The development of ICT is increasing rapidly in line with the use and utilization of information technology at the university. The development of information technology has influenced on the services and academic advising for students (Hamdani, 2013). (Civi, 2000) Claimed that, the recent advancement in IT has considerably decreased the data management and inspired the concept of knowledge management. (Yahya & Goh, 2002) Mention that, the interaction of human through certain media or instruments including ICT that created new knowledge, and adds to the pool of organizational knowledge that acts as the engine of an organization's growth and learning capability. Mostly, technological infrastructures considered as a high role in projects success when they used tools and skills to use them in place. An example of ICT infrastructure in Malaysian universities is setting of technologies for desktop computing and communications. This means a capable, network PC on every desk, with standard software such as word processing and presentation software, so staff can exchange documents in a flexible and easy environments or a common operation. This plays an important factor in sharing knowledge. In brief, ICT infrastructure is an important role in project success. It can help for sharing information and documents and share knowledge between the organization's staff.

Value Based Organization: Positive impact on organizational performance one of the key benefits of introducing KM practices in organizations and it is also affecting organizational outcomes of organizations innovation, product and employee improvement. Organizations must not shy away from attempting to share and leverage tacit, explicit, and specific knowledge. (Hamdani, 2013) argued that the transfer of knowledge and knowledge creation can be encouraged by organizational. One of the examples in knowledge infrastructures is culture; it must be geared towards rewarding innovation, learning, experimentation, reflection and inspection. In order to reach a high level of effective knowledge transfer, share, create, and use organizations should establish a culture conducive. They are making efforts to make their personnel understand the importance of this valuable asset. Effective knowledge management requires a good fit between the organization's culture and its knowledge management initiatives. Changes that do not fit the culture probably will not thrive, so management needs to align its approach with its existing culture or be prepared for a long-term culture change effort. In general, if the cultural soil is not fertile for knowledge management initiatives, no amount of technology, knowledge content, or good knowledge management practices will make the effort successful Hussain *et al.* (2004). Therefore, building an organizational infrastructure for knowledge management indicates establishing a set of roles and organizational groups whose members have the skills to serve as a resource for individual projects. Knowledge friendly culture considered as the most important factors for project success, and the truth it is hard to create if it does not exist within the organization. Organizational culture should have various components with regard to knowledge. People have a positive orientation and willing to acquire knowledge. Staff of the organizations are

bright, intellectually curious, willing and most free to discover, and executives encourage their knowledge creation and use. However, they are not inhibited in sharing knowledge because they do not worry that transfer and share knowledge will take a risk to their profession. Besides, universities should work hard to hire people who reinforce the positive orientation to pursue knowledge in the expense of work-related objectives.

Project a success: A theoretical framework is proposed to suggest that both knowledge management factors and project management factors can have significant influence on project success. Successful projects are the building blocks to implement the changes in an organization in order to realize the strategic objectives set by the organization (Cleland 1994). Nowadays, both academics (Cleland 1994, Rozman 1998) and professionals agree that projects are the means of achieving organizational strategic objectives. Projects and project management refer to the achieving strategic objectives of the organization to ensure long run success. It is believed that project success is based on the primary project components, cost, time, performance and/or quality of the completed project result with predefined values. Project implementation is inflected to be successfully determined variables of the primary targets have been achieved. On the other hand, when completed values or the variables output found poorer than expected then, the project can be seen as a failure. According to the point of view of the strategy-oriented project management, however, the above-mentioned approach to project success looks narrow in outlook. It is known as the fact that, any project should consider as a failure project in case that its results have different outcomes rather than the predefined or expected results. In addition, if it suffers from the known triple constraints for any project such as time, and cost overrun (Turner, 2009). Project success in nature needs to balance those constraints as well as balances the whole organizations' staff. In addition, project management can be achieved by balancing between areas of technology and culture such as people, system and organization. Besides, the project success criteria focus on success as a whole. According to (Levin, 2010) knowledge management KM should be engaged throughout the project management lifecycle. He also emphasizes that knowledge assets should be always established in an organization and each project should build on these and shares the knowledge. (Gido & Clements, 1999) Referred to research have done, that showed the importance and significance of certain factors have been tested and it shows that there were believed and evidence to be critical to project success.

4. Findings from Literature Review

The project success by implementing knowledge management is more likely the descriptive research, which is introducing a new framework based on current requirements. A key challenge of the developing nation like Malaysia is needed to develop a knowledge-based society. Through the literature, the relation between implementation of knowledge sharing and successful knowledge dissemination focused as the key ingredients for project success. In the literature part, the variables have proven that the requirement and necessity, which are undeniably integrating, part of the whole process. On top of that, procure proper knowledge for project success is important because it determines the project success where strong leadership works like a strong radar and likely to be the facilitator of the whole project in a systematic, Robust ICT infrastructure accelerates the whole process of procure and disseminate knowledge and these organizational codes of conduct sees over the knowledge management process compatibility. All these variables successful implementations make successful knowledge dissemination and project success.

5. Conclusion

The motivation of this study is to provide an insight view of project success that depends on knowledge management sharing. This study used successful knowledge sharing as the mediating role in between procures proper knowledge and practices, Strong leadership, Robust ICT Infrastructure and value based organization. The new contributions of this paper help to understand about the relationship of four independent variables. Based on research, we have found that when all those four independent variable implemented successfully, and therefore it leads to successful knowledge sharing in the projects. The results of this study have important contributions for future researchers. This research has compiled the guidelines for knowledge management professionals to help them implement knowledge management and achieve project success. Researchers have suggested in implementing all factors to achieve a desired project success outcome.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research: This study has a few limitations. The most identifiable of which is that research is based on the secondary data source. The use of such data may have clues to the overestimation of relationships. The study is mainly focused in the higher learning institute of Malaysia. As an outcome, the findings of this study may not be generalized used in other countries. For future research, other countries should analyze the perception.

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