

“Comparative analysis of knowledge management in different parts of the world”

Lubna Riz V

Lecturer, Management Department, College of Business Administration, KSU
ljaved@ksu.edu.sa

Abstract: People are beginning to realize the importance of knowledge and its great usefulness as a tool for competitive advantage. “*Knowledge Management*” envisages the creation of value from the indefinable assets of an organization. It demonstrates the best way to weigh knowledge within the organization with its employees and to all external and internal stakeholders. This paper envisages the investigation of “*Knowledge Management Strategies Balanced System*” for the development of an organization’s overall policy approach and management (Serenko, et al., 2008). The paper explores “Strategic Knowledge Management (SKM) using a composite tactical approach while concentrating on Knowledge Management comparisons between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and China. Because of the different economic situations and dynamics in these five countries it becomes quite difficult to properly analyse knowledge sharing and therefore the main focus of the paper is to do comparative analysis of knowledge management practices in these countries. The paper is not aimed to produce a theory or to develop any model.

[Lubna Riz V. **Comparative analysis of knowledge management in different parts of the world.** *Life Sci J* 2014;11(9):562-567]. (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 93

Keywords: Knowledge management, strategic management

1.0 Introduction

Knowledge Management (KM) is currently one of the most discussed topics in the industrial and information research fields. The vast amount of information that has to be dealt with in our everyday lives does not become knowledge until the value that is extracted from it. Knowledge Management does not have a universal definition or common agreement, but in a broader sense it refers to a multi-disciplined approach by making the best use of available data. Knowledge Management concentrates on business methods or related activities that produce specific services or products. Knowledge Management envisages the process of increasing individual abilities within organizations to win over their colleagues with their knowledge. However this varies from organization to organization without any limitations on the number of activities involved. The technology to be used should only be applied after all requirements of a knowledge management imitative have been established (Wiig, 2007).

2.0 Review Of The Literature

Although defined in several ways, Knowledge Management simply means a wide range of events, actions or measures implemented to derive the maximum benefit from an organization’s implicit and organized knowledge (Teece, 2007). Knowledge Management commonly means how organizations generate, maintain and contribute to or distribute knowledge (Argote & Ingram, 2000). Knowledge Management is now considered a major research area

which organizations use to obtain access to its own and the know-how of other organizations which envisages technology transfer, innovation and strategic management. Now knowledge management is widely used for organizational learning. Research and experience have conclusively proved that knowledge sharing includes comprehensive learning processes and it is not just a simple communications strategy because innovative ideas should be applied locally with the firm adapting the ideas in a manner that the implemented ideas are successfully applied. (Nelson & Rosenberg, 1993).

2.1 Knowledge Management in Saudi Arabia

The economy of Saudi Arabia is based on its oil exports because it is the leading producer and exporter of crude oil and other petroleum products. Oil exports constitute 90% of the country’s exports and around 75% of public sector revenues. Knowledge management and sharing is obviously concerned with the improvement and dissemination of expertise in the oil production and export sector. The Saudi Public Sector recognizes the fact that for its continued growth, expansion and progression the implementation of “Knowledge Management” is essential. Employees working in the private sector are better paid than those working in the public sector. This means that public sector employees will either resign to work for private organizations or take early retirement. This means that the public sector will lose experienced and educated employees to the private sector and that the research can be concentrated on the public sector because of the plethora of information available (Ministry of

Planning, 2005-2010).

A strategy to endorse such changes is to build up the idea of Knowledge Management Strategies which can help to cope with challenges and help the public sector in dealing with problems that they are facing or could face in the future. In the last decade, Knowledge Management Strategies have been adopted quite successfully by several large companies which the Saudi Arabian Oil Company, Saudi Basic Industrial Corporation (SABIC) Al Zamil and Saudi Telecom. Although there have been many successful uses of knowledge management and sharing, there are several instances where knowledge management and sharing has failed. Studies carried out by the Hackett group (2004) found that nearly two-thirds of all companies had some sort of knowledge management program that worked with a combination of financial and operational measurements that quantify results. Knowledge management creates tools that make it possible for organizations to realize their objectives and measure their performance parameters. Saudi Arabian companies are currently utilizing knowledge management for establishing structures, processes and procedure to encourage communication and transferring of knowledge between individuals and organization for further development of existing knowledge and skills. The entire concept of knowledge management is founded on the principle that these are passive processors which have important links in the value information chain because they play an active part of transforming data into useful information. (Alavi & Leidner, 1999).

The study recognized and acknowledged several issues that must be taken into consideration for the successful implementation of KM. These issues realized the importance the organization's strategy and provide some equilibrium between external and internal knowhow including unequivocal and unstated knowledge. (Capar & M, 2003)

2.2 Knowledge Management in Pakistan

Pakistan is a developing country which has realized the value of Knowledge Management but its practice has not been widespread because of the lack of attention for it. Pakistan is primarily an agricultural country, and its development depends to a large extent on the export of its cotton products to many countries of the world. Knowledge Management and sharing is imperative for the in the export and agricultural sector. This is primarily due to the lack of understand about knowledge management technologies. Another pertinent factor is the difficulties involved in the implementation of such complex technology. A majority of projects, around 84% could not succeed because of the complications involved, such as the reluctance of senior managers to implement technology based KM in their organizations. Studies

have recommended a down-to-earth approach would be best for handling existing theories of knowledge management within the limits of human knowledge within the country. This is a less liberal approach with multiple advantages which will help the country towards technology driven KM. Besides this, there is need to encourage obtainable technologies at all levels. Therefore the objective of the study is to encourage and promote awareness of the major concepts of KM and the link between accessible technologies and Knowledge Processes (KPs) to make it easier for organizations in Pakistan to adopt knowledge management strategies instead of creating made to order KM systems which would be a better and more practically for the implementation of technology driven KM systems in Pakistan (García-Murillo & Annabi, 2002).

2.2.1 Organization Structure & Management

To determine the type of organizational structure prevalent in Pakistan, a survey was carried to ascertain whether the organizational supported the spread of knowledge without taking into consideration the role of employees, their job functions or other conventional limitations that is more conducive for knowledge management than a KM strategy. Organizations that have an adequate knowledge basis are regarded as the main stay of contemporary economies (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) because these organizations possess the capability to handle the changes brought about by changing conditions and environment by the creation of new knowledge and its successful assimilation it into their routine business. Campbell, et al. contends that companies that persistently generate new knowledge are successful because they distribute it throughout the organization and rapidly personify new technologies and products. Organizations in Pakistan are run on three hierarchal levels, which are:

The leaders who are senior managers who plan strategies for the organization, Middle level managers who run their respective departments independently, Employees working in different department.

For the effective implementation of Knowledge Management Strategies, the organizations objectives must be clearly explained in the different departments so that everyone can have an equal share of the intellectual assets for maintaining the competitive edge of their department. Studies have proved that adaptable organizations if they have the appropriate technological assets will make knowledge management more practical and much easier to disseminate among all level of the workforce from the senior managers right down to the workers (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000).

The most important aspect for effective Knowledge Management would be the acceptance of

the position of their leaders who generate organizational vision, goals and objectives with the implementation of KM strategies. This takes on more importance in under developed like Pakistan and the reason for the failure of KM strategies is because people are reluctant to take ownership and do not have adequate motivation. They fear accountability because most public organizations have too much favoritism and internal politics. For effective KM implementation, managers must act as counselors and teachers and demonstrate by their conduct and activities the benefits of KM and how it can be advantageous for the organization. It would also help greatly if top management could encourage workers to discuss their ideas and show respect for the discussed ideas. Being receptive to new and innovative promotes imagination and inspiration among the organization's employees (Claver & E, 2007).

2.3 Knowledge Management in India

India is the world's second most populated country after China. Besides having agriculture base, India is now concentrating on consolidating its industrial base and is a major exporter of several products to the Middle East and other Asian countries. However, due to its large geographical spread, the country faces many natural disasters which create havoc with the lives of those in the disaster area. This envisages the appropriate knowledge management and sharing for minimizing the affects of such disaster through effective knowledge management and sharing. There is a general assumption is that knowledge management is only about implementing best practices and that people will store data for later use. This is not true because knowledge management is about applying the right knowledge in the appropriate place at the correct time. Taking a wider view about knowledge management in disaster preparedness, there are various occasions when a disaster is mishandled because resources are not handled in the proper manner because of the lack of knowledge management principles. This envisages that information lying in one place was not transferred to where it was desperately needed. It is a recorded fact that India is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012).

Due to its large geographical area, disaster management information is not codified and is restricted to individuals as implicit knowhow. This means the relationship must be strengthened between all government and private agencies that handle disaster management. Therefore it is imperative to forge strong links between the organization and people so that they can create a platform for sharing their experiences and expertise with each other. This will make the sharing of knowledge management easier and will also make it accessible in areas where

the information has to be instantly used. This network will connect all government institutions and people experienced in knowledge management. The approach of the Indian Government is to implement knowledge management applications in a way that the information is freely available wherever it is needed, whenever it is needed to reduce the risk of disasters. This will be made possible through seminars and workshop on KM, and creating and storing documents of experiences which can be shared on the World Wide Web Portal. This will strengthen the network disseminating knowledge management in the following ways:

- Quicker and more positive responses
- Authorized Government sponsored Disaster

Management Departments

- Better utility of available resources
- Assimilation into main-stream development
- Adequate monitoring of progress
- Promotion of good work ethics in the disaster management population (Kaul, 2007)

2.4 Knowledge Management in Bangladesh

Knowledge Management in Bangladesh is essential for arriving at a consensus for the effective management of its wetlands and fisheries with a methodical approach for the development of these vital resources. Knowledge management is about improvement in the fishing sector of Bangladesh. The knowledge management method used is the creation of variety in livelihood planning and implementing a structured learning and planning progression that concentrates on the overall interest of the community. This will work at different levels with stakeholders for prioritizing the natural resources problems that entire communities are dependent upon. This expertise and knowledge is then shared by each and every member of the community. This process is important for sharing of resources and ideas for the effective implementation of knowledge management (Sultana & Thompson, 2004).

Millions of people in Bangladesh earn their livelihood through fishing from Bangladesh's vast national waters. The quantity and quality are deteriorating due territorial dilapidation, accumulation of silt and converting the marshland into agricultural property, increased fishing, devastating fishing methods and great shortage of dry season wetland territory. This situation has been further made worse by granting leases for short term revenue generation by fishing areas owned by the government. This had hurt small fishers because the leaseholders overexploit their leased wetland at the cost of the smaller fishermen. For better sharing of resources, the community based fisheries management (CBFM) authority is working on better knowledge management

and sharing for an equitable distribution of available resources. The knowledge management and resource sharing initiative has benefitted over 9000 people due to the establishment of fish sanctuaries. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in fish productivity and availability (Jasimuddin, 2008)

2.5 Knowledge Management in China

China is currently is the world's fastest developing economy and the implementation of Knowledge Management has made a significant contribution to the dynamic progression of the Chinese economy. China is making intense efforts to develop its industry and effective means of knowledge management and sharing for faster development in the industrial sector. China realized that progress depended mainly on becoming a knowledge based economy. Despite its rapid progress, knowledge management is not as extensively implemented as in Western countries. However, since the extensive implementation of Knowledge Management, China had taken giant steps in economic development and progression. Knowledge Management is essential for all organizations, and entrepreneurs in China are according it the highest priority. To keep up with the rest of the world, the Chinese government initiated economic reforms for a free market economy by encouraging enterprise independence and self-sufficiency, reduced government controls over large businesses which attracted direct foreign

investment. This changed the business environment and heavily influenced the development of Chinese organizations. Western companies rushed in to avail access to the enormous domestic markets, abundant resources and low capital costs. The western companies realized that without effective management at all levels; this huge potential could not be exploited to its fullest capacity. Unlike their western counterparts, Chinese companies did not possess the management expertise and experience that is absolutely essential large modern organizations. Chinese companies began adopting western style management techniques including the concept of knowledge management. The benefits that they derived from KM gained it wider acceptance which resulted in almost all Chinese organizations making it a standard part of their company's operating procedures (Burrows, et al., 2005).

Management of Knowledge is the most important driver of development in today's knowledge driven economy. Any organization gains a competitive edge from its competitors by its intellectual capital. The progress of the organization is tied with employees' teamwork and also individual efforts. The management must know how to get employee cooperation and collaboration. Knowledge Management strategies are very important for the development of intellectual capital.

Saudi Arabia	Pakistan	India	China	Bangladesh
In Saudi Arabia, knowledge management is still not at par with organizational thinking. Despite the massive investments made to reduce dependency on oil and promote business the situation is quite unsatisfactory because attendance in their workplaces for many Saudi nationals who work with public sector organizations like ARAMCO is not considered necessary. Most work is done by foreigners who outnumber Saudi nationals in the ratio of 2 foreigners for every Saudi national. This makes Saudi Arabia the country with the lowest implementation of knowledge management	Pakistan is a very conservative country and public sector companies still operate as they did 30 years ago. The major reason for the impediment of any substantive progress in the public sector is the rampant corruption which is taken as a way of life here. Any progress in knowledge management comes solely from the private sector who have to compete with companies from other countries like India and Bangladesh for export orders. Still, because of the large population as compared with Saudi Arabia knowledge management and sharing is more than in Saudi Arabia.	India is progressing fast and ranks second after China in the use of knowledge management. The literacy rate in India is quite high compared to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Knowledge management and sharing for disaster management and its primary export industry, information technology.	The progress by China in every sector, public and private is mainly possible because of comprehensive knowledge management and sharing. It is the number one country for knowledge management and sharing in the countries mentioned in this paper.	Bangladesh is the largest exporter of cotton garments in the world. However, it depends mainly upon fishing for its subsistence. It faces the same problem as Pakistan, that is corruption in the public sector, and knowledge management is usually not shared with other departments of even among employees working for the fisheries departments. It would rank about the same as Pakistan where management sharing is concerned.

3.0 Conclusion And Results

Based on the questions that have been incorporated in the questionnaire, results were obtained as per the data obtained in the form of the feedback and response provided by different stakeholders, who were provided with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was dispatched to some 20 organizations in each country but some had no knowledge management process in their organizations

It is also important to state here that regarding the different questions that were included in the questionnaire many of them remained unanswered. This showed that the level of awareness among senior manager and other employees who were handling the responsibilities of information handling and management in these organizations were not competent enough to answer the questions in a cohesive manner. Some of the results related to some major aspects of knowledge management have been presented below in the form of a questionnaire which will make overall assessment understandable

3.1 Comparative Analysis of knowledge Management between countries-TABLE 1

4.0. Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the Deanship of humanities Scientific Research at King Saud University. Represented by the Research Center in the College of Business Administration for financially supporting this research.

5.0 Recommendations

One of the key recommendations that need to be made regarding the use of knowledge management is that they need to solicit staff opinions, ideas and concerns regarding the use of knowledge management. Since all of them hold important positions in their respective positions in management areas that influence the course of progress is important that the perspectives and opinions that they have regarding knowledge management and ways through which the current mechanism can be changed or innovated in one way or the other is done through unanimous opinion input from all important people.

Secondly, as manifested from the questionnaire, in many of the areas especially those related to operational capacity and areas related to service and support there is less or in some cases no information or awareness to the staff working in organizations regarding the different operations that they need to carry out in order to ensure greater productivity and enhancement through the implementation of knowledge management. Hence, it is important that that these organizations organize one or more educational platforms and forums through the help of

which the staff can be trained in an effective manner regarding the different operations that they need to keep in mind when considering and assessing all the necessary aspects and dimensions which are pivotal for effective knowledge management

At the same time it is important for large private and public corporations to investigate and examine the different ways in which they can extract feasible ROIs from the usage of knowledge management in different settings. . Even though the system has proved to be beneficial when it comes to cost optimization and management, there are more ways that can be materialized in order to enhance the revenues and margins that are currently being capitalized by the spread and implementation of knowledge management.

References

1. Alavi, M. & Leidner, D. E., 1999. Knowledge management systems: issues, challenges, and benefits. *Journal Communications of the AIS*, 1(2), pp. 18-40.
2. Alhamoudi, S., 2010. *Strategic knowledge management system in public sector in Saudi Arabia*, Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth.
3. APO Survey, 2008. *Knowledge Management in Asia: Experience and Lesson*, Tokyo: Asian Productivity Organization
4. Argote, L. & Ingram, 2000. Knowledge transfer: A basis for competitive advantage in firms. *Organizational Behavior and Human Organization Process*, 82(1), pp. 150-169.
5. Burrows, G. R., Drummond, D. L. & Martinsons, M. G., 2005. Knowledge Management in China. *Communications of the ACM*, 48(4), pp. 73-76 .
6. Capar, N. & M, K., 2003. The relationship between international diversification and performance in service firms. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 34(4), p. 345-355.
7. Choi, Y. S. & Wie, S., 2010. Comparative Study of Knowledge Management Success in Public Administration. *International Journal of Business Strategy*, 10(1), pp. 1-127.
8. Claver, C. S. & E, Z., 2007. Organizational structure features supporting knowledge processes. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 11(4), pp. 45-57.
9. García-Murillo, M. & Annabi, H., 2002. Customer knowledge management. *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 8(1), pp. 875-884.
10. Gupta, A. & Govindarajan, V., 2000. Knowledge Management's social dimensions: Lessons from Nucor Steel. *Sloan Management Review*, 42(1), pp. 71 - 81.

11. Jasimuddin, S. M., 2008. A holistic view of knowledge management strategy. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(2), pp. 57 - 66.
12. Kaul, S., 2007. Integrating Scientific with Indigenous Knowledge. *MIS Quarterly*, 31(2), pp. 365-2010.
13. Lee, H. & Choi, B., 2003. Knowledge enablers, processes and organizational performances. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 20(1), pp. 179 - 228.
14. Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012. *Knowledge Management in Disaster Risk Reduction: The Indian Approach*, New Delhi: Governemnt of India.
15. Ministry of Planning, 2005-2010. *The Eighth National Development Plan*, Riyadh: Government of Saudi Arabia.
16. Nelson, R. & Rosenberg, N., 1993. *Technical Innovation and National Systems: A comparative analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.
17. Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H., 1995. *The Knowledge Creating Company*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
18. Pan, S. L. & Scarbrough, H., 1999. Knowledge Management in Practice: An Exploratory Case Study. *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 11(3), pp. 359-374.
19. Pasha, M. A. U. R. & Pasha, S., 2012. A Pragmatic Approach for Implementing Knowledge Management in Pakistani Organizations Using Open Source Technologies. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 49(7), pp. 10-18.
20. Serenko, A. et al., 2008. A scientometric analysis of knowledge management and intellectual capital academic literature. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 14(1), pp. 3 - 23.
21. Sultanaa, P. & Thompson, P., 2004. Methods of consensus building for community-based fisheries management in Bangladesh and the Mekong Delta. *Agricultural Systems*, 82(3), p. 327–353.
22. Teece, D., 2007. Technology Transfer by multinational firms: The resource cost of transferring technological know-how. *The Economic Journal*, 18(4), pp. 242-261.
23. Wiig, K. M., 2007. *Knowledge management foundations: Thinking about thinking: how people and organizations create, represent, and use knowledge*. Arlington: Schema Press.

8/8/2014