

Overcoming
Knowledge Management Barriers
and
Implementation problems
through
Human Resources Management Practices



Knowledge Economy

- Knowledge is the main asset as compared to other traditional ones. (Stewart, 2001)
- Knowledge provides an inimitable and unique competitive advantage. (Haskel, 2007) (Spender, 1996)



Knowledge Economy

Characteristics:

globalization, internalization, speed, technology, networking, scientific advancement, obsolescence, services dominated (intangible products), competition, innovation, markets liberalization, deregulation, continuous change .

(Leadbeater, 2000) (Newell et al, 2002) (Stewart, 2001)

(Cardoza, 2007)



Knowledge Economy

- Knowledge has always been the essence of competitive edge: this fact is not new and it has always existed.
- These characteristics have enforced knowledge exchange and creation to gain a recognizable momentum.
- Knowledge Economy is an indication of the increasing knowledge intensity in national economies. (Neef, 1999)



Knowledge Concept

Objectivist

Vs

“Epistemology of practice”

perspectives

(Hislop, 2002) (Schultze and Stabell, 2004)



Knowledge Concept

Objectivist:

Knowledge is classified into various types and managed accordingly.

- Dualism Philosophy: classifications, taxonomies and contingencies.
- Examples: tacit Vs explicit / personal Vs organizational / physical Vs mental.



Knowledge Concept

“Epistemology of practice”: 1

- Knowledge is mostly tacit and it is highly unlikely to be transformed into explicit.
- Knowledge is best understood in action - within a context.
- Employees know more than what they distinctively classify as their knowledge.



Knowledge Concept

“**Epistemology of practice**”: 2

- Duality Philosophy: structurational models, theories of practice, and pragmatism.



Knowledge Concept

- Information Vs Knowledge.

Information: Abstract conceptualization of Data.

(Shukla and Srinivasan, 2000)

Knowledge: Active experimentation of information (Shukla and Srinivasan, 2000), involves context and the knower (understandings and experiences). (Tsoukas, 2000)

Past records (history of previous actions) Vs

Actions, Know-how Vs Know-what. (Zeleny, 2002)



Knowledge Workers

- Knowledge workers are employees whose tasks are dominated by knowledge work.
- Knowledge work is characterized by information manipulation to produce new knowledge. (Depres and Hiltrop, 1995)
- Outcomes: new products and services, knowledge products, organizational learning, growth, employee satisfaction, better company's image, higher market value and customer satisfaction. (Botha, 2000)



Knowledge Workers

Characteristics: Cognitive work, Tacit knowledge, embrained and encultured knowledge (Blackler,1995), technical know-how, creativity, interaction, mobilization, networking, innovation, creating solutions. (Winslow and Bramer,1994)

Professionals Vs Knowledge workers.



Knowledge Workers

- Are knowledge workers a unique working class, or simply a re-categorization of existing occupations? (Collins, 1997)
- Is it representing the wish of certain job holders to escalate their status as compared to traditionally defined professions? (Alvesson, 1993)



Knowledge Workers

- Is knowledge a necessity only for knowledge workers? Does all workers not need knowledge to perform their jobs? Collins (1997)
- If all occupations contains knowledge and routine work tasks, then what are the criteria to distinguish knowledge workers from others? (Ackroyd et al, 2005)



Knowledge Management

- KM is the system which organizations adopt to make the utmost of their knowledge.
- KM could be defined as a set of processes (Shaw and Edwards, 2005), activities or practices (Hedlund, 1994) that translate the organizational strategy concerning knowledge.
- KM is the product of each and every organizations' unique situation and knowledge perception. (Alavi and Leinder, 2001)



Knowledge Management

KM perspectives:

Intellectual capital Vs Knowledge category Vs
Socially constructed. (McAdam and McCreedy, 1999)

Information Technology Vs Human Resources.
(Venters, 2002)

Holistic Frameworks. (Shukla and Srinivasan, 2002)
(Botha, 2000) (Holsapple and Joshi, 2002)



Knowledge Management

KM strategies:

Codification Vs Personalization (Hansen et al, 1999)

Vs Mix of both. (Edwards et al, 2003)

Codification: Codifying and storing knowledge with high dependence on IT for further reuse.

Personalization: Facilitating knowledge sharing through direct interaction and utilizing communication technologies when face-to-face meetings is not achievable.



Knowledge Management

- Could knowledge be managed? (Sutton, 2001)
- Management Vs Facilitation. (Alvesson and Karreman, 2001)
- Is KM new? (Hansen et al, 1999)
- Is KM a fad? (Wilson, 2002)
- If knowledge is not understood then how it can be managed?
- What about management in KM, is it compatible with knowledge? (Alvesson and Karreman, 2001)



KM Barriers

- Cultural barriers. (De Long and Fahey, 2000) (McCann and Buckner, 2004)
- Cognitive barriers. (McCann and Buckner, 2004)
- Complexity. (McCann and Jamrog, 2005)
- Others.

Cultural Barriers

- Knowledge concept perception.
- Existing knowledge identification.
- Which knowledge should be managed?
- Knowledge ownership.
- Miscommunication.
- Conflicts.
- Power and status.
- Nature of relationships & interactions.
- Knowledge control & sharing and hoarding authorization.
- Job security.
- Ethical and legal dimensions.
- Trust.



Cultural Barriers

- Natural change Vs Management. (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998)
- KMS Perspectives: KMS should fit the culture (McDermott et al, 2001) Vs The culture should fit the KMS. (De Long and Fahey, 2000)



Cultural Barriers

Natural change:

- KM activities should utilize the existing culture.
- KM as part of the organization's strategy.
- Embedded in existing business processes, tools, structures and reward & recognition systems.
- Organizations should utilize existing core values, networks and managers' & leaders' influences.



Cultural Barriers

Management:

- Managers could influence norms and practices to optimally alter core values on the long-run.
- Change should be introduced through new processes, tools, structure, rules, procedures, reward & punishment...etc



Cognitive Barriers

- Abundance of KM approaches, options, applications and technologies. (Binny, 2001)
- Abundance leads to different vocabularies, assumptions, models and solutions. (McCan and Buckner, 2004)
- Various organizational agents participating in implementing, developing, sponsoring, providing knowledge and using KMS.



Complexity

- Various and loads of information & knowledge are available within firms which may exist in different physical and electronic locations, functions, teams, groups, and individuals.
- Resources need to integrate and align the body of knowledge.



HRM in KM

Strategically:

- Concentrating on knowledge gaps, after defining knowledge needs and knowledge availability.
- Participating in KM initiatives as developers and implementers. Especially when it comes to people issues such as: networking, social capital, knowledge sharing cultures, interaction, motivation, fairness, legal issues, dealing with change...etc



HRM in KM

Functionally:

- Recruitment and Selection.
- Compensation & rewards management.
- Training & development.
- Performance management.
- Career management.
- Retention management.
- Others.



Research Questions

- What are KM barriers and implementation problems?
- What are the HR practices/solutions to overcome those carefully identified barriers and implementation problems?



HRM Current Challenges

- HRD's are suffering from a declining influence at the strategic level.
- “Less than two-thirds of all HR directors report directly to the CEO”. (Gurthridge et al, 2008)
- HRD's lack business knowledge and emphasize short-term administrative roles rather than long-term strategic ones.



HRM Current Challenges

- Only 44% of HR executives participate as KMS implementers/developers.
- 52% of organizations do not offer any knowledge management techniques and/or skill training.
- 72% of organizations do not reward employees for sharing knowledge.

(Mccuiston and Jamrog, 2004)



Research Aim

Repositioning HRM strategically and functionally through highlighting its potential contribution in overcoming KM barriers and implementation problems.

Questions & Answers

Email: hadi.elfarr@gmail.com

Please feel free to contact me.