



The Methods for the Practices of Knowledge Management in University Libraries of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The developments of the internet and related information communication technology have not only enhanced storage and flow of information, but also changed the nature of library and information services. In the midst of these changes, knowledge management (KM) has emerged as a further significant influence on practices of library and information science. This study has explored the practices of the professionals working in the university libraries of Pakistan about knowledge management. The study was conducted through a survey using a semi structured questionnaire. The sample and population of the study were library incharge working and supervising all libraries activities in the university libraries of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, University libraries, Practices, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Knowledge management in organization is not just to organize information and its users, it also links the users with the available information (Yang & Liu, 2009) The management of information was in advance regarded as the area of concern for librarians and libraries. Libraries information gateways and knowledge distribution tools were determined. Though, to the certain extent a quantity of the knowledge management enterprises acknowledged refer petite elsewhere the usual use of management of information activities in library and information centers (Marouf 2004). With these practices and development in technology, information science professionals were qualified to become experts in the field of information searching techniques, selecting, acquiring, preserving, organizing, repackaging and disseminating of the required information. Therefore librarian and information professionals had to learn the use of technological methods for the management of information. A broad body of literature argues that librarians became chief information officer/Director Information Services. (Suurla, 'Markkula and Mustajarvi 2002, P.35)

2. Problem Statement

On one hand the developed countries have the practices and application of knowledge management worldwide. On the other hand many recourse persons in library services in developing world particularly in Pakistan are still using conventional methods of knowledge management and are practicing manual systems in library activities like acquisition, technical processing, information retrieval, circulation control. This situation provides a genuine reason to the analyses level of knowledge management practices in the university libraries of Pakistan. Hence, present study attempts to fill this gap.

3. Literature Review

Though, a certain number of KM practices recognized went little beyond the conventional activities of information management (Marouf 2004). Similarly KM is seen as distinctive from both librarianship and information management, including knowledge capturing, organising, knowledge sharing, and the transaction of tacit and explicit, individual and mutual knowledge (Davenport, 2004). In the mid of 1990s, KM has been concerned with much concentration (Ponzi and Koenig, 2002; Chowdhury, 2004) by other research scholars and professionals of various fields related to management science, computer science, business, library and information science, etc. Several experts explored Library and Information Science (LIS) as one of major part of KM. Knowledge management is now an emerging interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary field (Ponzi and Koenig, 2002, Davenport and Cronin, 2000; Reardon 1998; Koenig, 1999). In simple words KM is concerned with both explicit and tacit knowledge (Chowdhury, 2004). On the other hand library and information science (LIS) is generally apprehensive of recorded knowledge. Koenig (1999) described that there is no ideal place for KM, because education for KM is Likely to appear in various places.

3.1. Knowledge Sharing/Knowledge Acquisition/Knowledge Capturing

For the use of knowledge management, the help of enterprises, cultural atmosphere for knowledge sharing, exchange, and learning has to be created. This would be an important foundation for the promotional activities and effective practices of knowledge management (Yang & Liu, 2009). Marouf (2004) studied the role of corporate setup in the United State American library and information centers in knowledge management. The results of the study reported that librarian are having KM practices and participation in knowledge capturing, sharing and organising, in addition, their taking part in the use of intranets, knowledge sharing techniques and use of web portal was formed persistent.

3.2. Practices of Knowledge Management in Libraries

Knowledge management (KM) is comparatively a new concept of analysis which integrates an extensive range of areas, with the practices and theories of different discipline. The appearance of knowledge has a direct impact on the conversion of postindustrial information society into the society of knowledge base. The goal of knowledge management in libraries is a practical one. Organization's individual and collective knowledge resources can improve the services of library and information centers services. These resources are the combination of the skills, experiences, abilities, leadership, norms and routines of LIS professionals, with the help and use of technologies. Surprisingly, despite the strong consent on the consequence of knowledge or "intellectual capital" to every company's success, most companies are practicing knowledge management in a poor way. Some of them have defined the role of management clearly, such as the role of Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO). For efficient communication, a small number of even have a shared knowledge language. However, the attention to knowledge management is growing. Knowledge management is increasingly becoming a more significant discipline for companies who wish to contest the market. They are forced to rethink to achieve something and even to survive, for the management of their organizational knowledge. With this following questions raised, the use of knowledge management practice in companies and the opportunities for information science professional will increase (Abell & Wingar, 2005, p.7).

3.3. Challenges in the Implementation of Knowledge Management Practices

The literature of library and information science is characterized by thought about the prospect of LIS professional and libraries. The developments in technology, and for the most part the use of internet growth, transformed the feature of Library and information science and have raised serious questions in lieu of LIS professionals with libraries. The development of telecommunication system and IT infrastructure that change social and economic values as well, freedom of information and expression changed the information seeking behavior of people. The expectation of people depended on the www that they can find anything on web. This is known: there is threat for LIS professionals. Although the infrastructure of world is being depended on knowledge and information, conducted practically rapidly from any location and any place, what will be the role of print? Maybe this can be the part of Museum (Brophy 2001, p. xii).

4. Method of the Study

The study intended to explore the practices of KM in university libraries of Pakistan. This questionnaire was distributed among the LIS professionals of public and private sector universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, to know the practices of knowledge management.

In the questionnaire, the practices will be measured through Likert-type scale, which include knowledge sharing, knowledge acquisition, knowledge organization and retrieval of knowledge. A pilot study was conducted before the distribution of questionnaires.

4.1. Presentation and Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics for demographic, data were collected by a total of 26 public and private universities, year of establishment of universities are from 1967 to 2013 and years of professional experience is from 2 years to 35 years. Four name of the respondents were females (14%) and 22 are males (86%).

The section of age group showed that were between four respondents from 21-30 is (15%), seven between 31-40 respondents were (27%), 41-50 respondents group percentage was (39%) and 50 years above respondents having (19%). Qualification of the librarians showed that 23 professionals were having MLIS degree (88%), one M.Phil (4%), two PhD (8%).

The designation section revealed that 65% respondents were librarian, 12 % were Library Officer , 8% were Information Services Department while 15% were designated as Chief Librarian.

4.2. Knowledge Management Practices in University Libraries.

When we talk about the practices of KM in university libraries there are lots of questions raised: 1) what type of method involved in practices of KM in the libraries? 2) How much effective is the use of communication system? 3) Is there any proper system of the oranisation and retrieval of knowledge in the practices of KM? On the bases of these questions this section asked the questions from respondents about the practices of knowledge management in their libraries and information resource centers.

4.3. The Level of Knowledge Management Methodologies used in University Libraries

Table-1. Knowledge Management Methodologies Used in University Libraries

Rank	KM Methodologies used in University Libraries	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The method of attending conferences and workshops	26	4.27	.533
2	The use of training as a method	26	4.19	.801
3	The cooperation with other organizations	26	4.19	.801
4	The method of documentation	26	3.96	.699
5	Rotational assignments method	26	3.81	.895
6	Exit interviews of library staff	26	3.54	.948

Scale: 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3=Not Sure, 2= Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

There are different methodologies used for the practices of knowledge management in the libraries. These methodologies have different levels for the practice of KM. The level of methodology varies from one practice to the other.

Therefore, these methods build the professional development of LIS community. On the bases of it library, services can be improved for the implementation of these methodologies. Respondents were asked to indicate the method of knowledge management used in your library.

Respondents rated conference and workshop as a useful method used in their libraries with a mean score 4.27, followed by the use of training, cooperation with other organizations, documentation, rotational assignments and exit interviews of library management in their libraries with a mean score 4.19, 4.19, 3.96, 3.81 and 3.54 respectively.

4.4. Training and Monitoring

Table-2. Training and Monitoring used in the University Libraries of Pakistan

Rank	Training and Monitoring Used in University Libraries	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Motivation by Senior LIS Professionals to Help and Guide to Juniors	26	4.27	.533
2	Provisions of Tuition Fees for LIS Professionals to Increase Their Education and Skills	26	4.00	.748
3	Provisions of Off-Site Training to LIS Professionals To Increase Their Skills	26	4.00	.748
4	Provisions of Formal Training The Field of KM Practices	26	3.85	1.008
5	Provisions of Informal Training The Field of KM Practices	26	3.81	.849
6	Usage of Apprenticeships and other Monitoring Practices	26	3.62	.898

Scale: 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3=Not Sure, 2= Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

To the development of any LIS profession, training and monitoring are very important aspects. The LIS professionals' skills and knowledge can be developed and enhanced by proper training and regular monitoring. LIS professionals were asked to indicate the training and monitoring used in their library. Majority of the respondents rated motivation by senior LIS Professionals to help and guide juniors as a useful method and ranked it at no. 1. Similarly, provision of tuition fees for LIS Professionals to increase their education and skills was ranked at no. 2 with a mean score 4, followed by provisions of formal training in the field of Knowledge management practices at No 3 with a mean score 4. Respondents rated provision of off-site training to LIS professionals, provision of formal training, the provision of in-formal training in the field of knowledge management , usage of Apprenticeships and other Monitoring of can increase their skills with a mean score 4, 3.85, 3.81 and 3.62 respectively.

4.5. Communication

Table-3. In University Libraries Sharing of Knowledge or Information by LIS Professionals

Rank	Workers Share Knowledge in The Library	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Provisions Of Collaborations To Projects That are Separated Physically	26	4.12	.585
2	Workers Share Knowledge Or Information By Using Updating Databases Regularly Related To Learned Lessons, Listening Experts And Good Work Practices	26	4.04	1.113
3	Provisions To Formal Documentation Such as Training Manuals, Articles, Learned Lessons and Work Practices	26	3.85	.925

Scale: 5= Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3=Not Sure, 2= Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Sharing of knowledge is very important factor of knowledge management practices in library and information resource centers. There are different ways and methods that can be used for the sharing of knowledge. Majority of the respondents were agree for provision of collaborations to projects that are separated physically with a mean score 4.12. They were agree that workers share knowledge or information by using updating databases regularly related to learned lessons, listening experts and good work practices with a mean score 4.94 and they were also agree that provision of formal documentation such as training manuals, articles, learned lessons and good work practices should be encouraged for communication among workers with a mean sore 3.85.

4.6. Organization and Retrieval of Knowledge in University Libraries of Pakistan

Table-4. Different Type of Knowledge can Be Accessed and Shared in Libraries

Rank	Type of Knowledge Can Be Accessed & Shared	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Information About the Use of Technology	26	4.58	.504
2	Information About Process	26	4.35	.562
3	Information About Training and Development Opportunities	26	4.31	.471
				<i>Continue</i>

4	Information About User Satisfaction	26	4.23	.652
5	Information of Library Competitors	26	4.23	.652
6	Information About Future Plans	26	4.23	.652
7	Information About New Initiatives	26	4.23	.652
8	Information About Key Library Users	26	4.15	.925
9	Information About Team and Individual Success	26	4.15	.925
10	Information About Senior Management Decisions	26	3.96	.958
11	Information About Other Business Functions	26	3.96	.958

Scale:5=Very Great Extend4=Great Extend3=Some Extend2=Little Extend,1=Very Little extend

In libraries the organization and retrieval of the knowledge is very important and basic function. The role of library is of a knowledge repository from the primitive societies of the world. Librarians were known as the custodian of the books. The primary functions of the libraries were the storage and organization of the knowledge. With the development of civilizations and need of humanity the retrieval of knowledge became a main factor of the librarians’ responsibilities. With the storage and organization of knowledge they have to perform a better role for the retrieval of the knowledge in library and information resource centers. Head Librarians were asked about what type of knowledge can be accessed and shared in your library. Majority of the respondents reported that knowledge of information about the use of technology should be shared to a very great extent with a mean score 4.58, On the other hand, respondents reported that information about process should be shared at great extent with a mean score 4.35 followed by information about training and development opportunities, information about user satisfaction, information of library competitors, information about future plans, information about new initiatives, information about key library users, information about team and individual success, information about seniors management decisions and information about other business functions with mean score 4.35, 4.31, 4.23, 4.23, 4.23, 4.23, 4.15, 4.15 and 3.96 respectively.

5. Findings and Discussions

With these facts and figures of the study we can easily assess that the practices of KM are performed with the different methodologies. These methodologies are interrelated with each others. Respondents rated conference and workshop as a useful method used in their libraries with a mean score 4.27, they revealed that cooperation with other organization is also used in the libraries for KM. Moreover, respondents agreed that “exit interview of library staff” is used sparingly.

These results built valid arguments that knowledge management practices can be implemented in the regular formal and informal training of LIS professionals. Professionals for the help and guidance to juniors were ranked as no.1 by the respondents. Similarly, provision of tuition fees for LIS Professionals to increase their education and skills was ranked at no. 2 with a mean score 4. With this the involvement of seniors’ professionals in the field of library and information science is also important. The proper guidance, help and training by seniors can improve the skills and knowledge of new LIS professional. There should be a provision of continuing education in the field of library and information science to improve the qualification of LIS professionals.

The system of communication can be improved by the process of knowledge sharing. The knowledge can be shared in the organization by proper organising good practices and use of database. Majority of the respondents were agreed for the provision of collaborations to projects that are separated physically with a mean score 4.12. They were agreed that workers share knowledge or information by using updating databases regularly related to learned lessons, listening experts and good work practices with a mean score 4.94 These data bases can be updated by the expertise of individuals. A lesson can be learned by the practices and good work of individuals to solve the problem in the organization. On the basis of good work and practices the collaboration with other organization can be shared.

The results of study and figures show that the organization and retrieval of the knowledge in libraries is for the improvement of library services and the satisfaction of library users. Majority of the respondents reported that knowledge of information about the use of technology should be shared to a very great extent with a mean score 4.58. On the other hand, respondents reported that information about process should be shared to a great extent with a mean score 4.35. The development of technology and use of databases increased the level of competition. The organization of knowledge is by systematic process of library system. The system can be improved by the use of technology and management and staff. The training of staff is also very important with the development of technology and library

database. Such types of training can develop the skills of LIS professionals for the improvement of library services.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion we can easily assess that the practices of KM are performed with different methodologies. These methodologies are interrelated with each others. But most common methodologies are trainings, conferences and seminars and also cooperation with other organization. These results construct valid arguments that knowledge management practices can be implemented by the regularly formal and informal training of LIS professionals. With this the involvement of seniors' professionals in the field of library and information sciences is also important. Proper guidance, help and training by seniors can improve the skills and knowledge of new LIS professionals. There should be a provision of continuing education for LIS professionals.

The knowledge can be shared in the organization by proper organized good practices and use of database. These data bases can be updated by the expertise of individual. A lesson can be learned by the practices and good work of individuals to solve problem in organizations. On the bases of good work and practices the collaboration with other organizations can be made.

These results and figures show that the organization and retrieval of the knowledge in libraries is for the improvement of library services and the satisfaction of library users. The development of technology and use of databases increased the level of competition. The organization of knowledge is by systematic process of library system. The system can be improved by the use of technology, management and staff. The training of staff is also very important with the development of technology and library database. Such types of training can develop the skills of LIS professionals for the improvement of library services.

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