Research Analysis – Qualitative

Factors affecting establishment of an institutional knowledge management culture

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Research Problem
Accurately and completely identify all research questions or hypotheses addressed within the chosen article.
The researchers seek to identify ways in which knowledge management systems and techniques can be better implemented. They are also clearly interested in the implications of a country's culture on knowledge management and what sort of problems these cultural idiosyncrasies create as well as how best to mitigate them. They also address the current state of knowledge management in Romanian companies and which approaches have been most successful.
What are the research questions or what is the hypothesis being tested?
What is the current state of KM implementation in Romanian organizations?
What are the most frequent approaches to KM in place - or most likely to be embraced - in Romanian organizations?
What are the specific cultural impediments to KM success?
How do organizations confront and manage these and what lessons can be learned from their endeavors?

Literature Review
Accurately characterize the field of knowledge under study and list three key points from the lit review with citations of the appropriate studies used to make the points. How would you characterize the general field of knowledge in which this research study is situated; e.g., Research on Teacher Effectiveness, Research on Self-Reflective Learning, Research on Gender Differences in Mathematics Performance, etc.?
Research on best practices in Knowledge Management

List three key points from the literature review that help the reader develop understanding of what is already known, and determine the purpose of this study in

light of other studies. Cite at least one study used by the author to make each of the three points.

The researchers are concerned with the impact of cultural differences on the transferability of successful KM initiatives. They spend a great deal of time discussing the difference in eastern and western or collectivist and individualist cultures. Traditional eastern and western views of knowledge continue to influence the knowledge management practices in today's global workplace (Jelavic & Ogilvie, 2010).

They identify the majority of the organizations studying are not yet successfully making the transition from tacit to explicit knowledge only after admitting that they had begun their research with that assumption. Researchers are no more detached from their objects of article than are their informants, they have their own understandings and convictions as well as conceptual orientations, and they are part of a particular culture at a specific historical moment. Miles and Hubermann (1994)

The metamorphosis of an effective organization with regards to KM is a three stage process. The first stage is technical in nature with systems being put in place to capture and store knowledge. During the second stage sharing and transferring knowledge is the goal. The third stage is transformative. The organization now seeks to generate new knowledge from the store of captured and shared knowledge. Therefore, groups move the focus from machine to human. Kumar and Thondikulam (2006)

Research Design and Data Analysis

Describe the design and the methods of data collection and data analysis used within the study conducted.

Subjects were asked to complete a reflection guide of open questions. The questions were designed to elicit the subjects perspectives on knowledge, knowledge management and knowledge management processes.

Describe the research design (case study, phenomenological, narrative, etc).

Interview (although their is a touch of observation and ethnography in the work due to the researchers claims towards culture and knowledge management practice.)

Describe the method(s) of data collection.
Respondents filled in their reflection guides which were submitted through the internet. Participants were all MBA students which meant they would all have some contact with Knowledge Management practice.

Describe the method(s) of data analysis.
It was interesting that that the researchers had initially sought a broader scope which included managers without direct experience with Knowledge Management systems. However, these responses could not be included as they did not demonstrate a clear enough understanding of the concept to be useful.

Findings
Briefly and accurately list all of the notable and significant outcomes of the study. Summarize and describe the outcomes of the research. Discuss any relevant themes identified.
All responses included links between knowledge, learning and competitive advantage. They also cited knowledge as the most valuable asset as well as the foundation of a modern organization. There was also a clear preference for storing knowledge in something dynamic like a database as opposed to something static like a company manual. All respondents linked KM to the achievement of company goals. I found it very interesting that the researchers found confusion about the relationship between IT and KM. This mirrors my experience in that many organizations spend mightily on IT thinking they investing in KM only to experience disappointment when that money does not net them any KM. This is surprising as this distinction is made early in most MBA programs. I suppose it shows how tempting it is to sell many IT products as KM.

The researchers also found significant problems for organizations which failed to honor the culture of the people and the organization. The multi-national firms that failed to take the local culture into account fared no better than the local businesses which had no formal KM strategy.

Limitations
Accurately describe the limitations of the study either specifically stated within the article or those inferred by you through the lens of effective research practice. What are the limitations of this research?
The primary limitations include the small sample (24) respondents and, more importantly, the fact that all of the respondents had recently completed an

MBA-level course in KM.

What are the researcher's biases or subjectivities (if discussed)?
It is clear that the researchers feel that foreign companies do not understand Romanian culture. They could well be right. However, having such a clear bias must call into question the ability to dispassionately evaluate subject responses.

Trustworthiness
In what ways does the researcher address the tenets of trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.
The researchers do a good job of disclosing the limits of their research. They acknowledge that the focus is Romanian organizations and that all participants share a similar background. I would say the onus is firmly placed upon the reader decide how applicable the findings are for external situations.

Implications for Practice
Thoroughly describe implications of the study on your personal practice, pedagogical, or instructional choices. Discuss ways in which you can incorporate findings from this study into your own professional practice.
I had been planning this year to begin fashioning a map upon which I might find an avenue for overcoming the silo-think that far too many teachers engage in when it comes to pedagogy and practice. I had initially settled on constructing some form of Knowledge Management system. And I still feel this is the way forward, but, as in all systems, the process must be made so transparent that the users do not realize they are interacting with a system. In other words, our current technical build a model of what successful KM should look like in a school like ours. I now believe that honoring the culture of the school will be important to the success of my efforts. I also hope, as this study suggests, to leverage some of the findings to find ways to build trust and interest in others and their ideas so that knowledge sharing might become a more accepted cultural norm. I have to fight the, often unrealistic, perception that everything requires more time than my staff has and that there is little to be gained from getting the perspective of other educators. I hope to also find ways to create greater feelings of control among staff so that the hoarding of intellectual property - which I believe to be a classic reaction to the perception of increasingly limited self-determination - may be reduced.

What impact might this research have on educational reform?
The successful capture of tacit knowledge and its transformation into explicit

knowledge is going to become ever more important in the very near future if public education is to survive. For this reason, there is going to be much to accomplish in a short time starting with the cultivation of a culture that values knowledge sharing. (And, yes, I am painfully aware of how ironic it is that knowledge sharing is so poorly implemented in schools.)

Interact (2005) “Studiu despre valorile si comportamentul romanesc din perspectiva dimensiunilor culturale dupa metoda lui Geert Hofstede”, available online at http://customer.kinecto.ro/2005/Interact/Overview%20Cross%20Cultural.pdf
Jelavic, M. & Oglivie K. (2010) “Cultural Perspectives on Knowledge Management in Central and Eastern Europe: The SECI model of Knowledge conversion and “Ba””, Journal of Information and Knowledge Management, vol. 9, no. 2: 161-169
Jelavic, M. & Oglivie K. (2010) “Knowledge Management views in Eastern and Western Cultures: an Integrative Analysis”, Journal of Knowledge Globalization, vol. 3, no 2: 51-69 Jennex, M.E. & Zakharova, I. (2006) “Culture, Context and Knowledge Management”, International Journal of Knowledge Management, no. 22: i-v
Kumar, S. & Thondikulam G. (2006) “Knowledge management in a collaborative business framework”, Information Knowledge Systems Management, vol. 5, no. 3: 171-187
Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. (1994) Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source-book (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

There is no question that technology has driven change in every field of human endeavour where it is embraced. We can question whether that’s a good or bad thing, although it’s a moot point, since there is no way to stop our steady march of innovation. The more important question is whether the change we see is substantive or largely cosmetic. I often allude to the SAMR model when discussing the levels of positive change a particular technology integration achieves. SAMR, for those not steeped in the instructional technology lexicon, stands for Substitution - Augmentation - Modification - Redefinition. For example, if a teacher just has students use a word processor to write an essay, nothing about the assignment has really changed. The teacher has simply substituted one medium or process for another. This is not a criticism of word

processors. In fact, one of the common misunderstandings of the SAMR model is that it is some sort of law that informs instructional design. It is not required that you know anything about SAMR to produce good instructional design. It is much more like the stages of grief. It is only a model that describes a readily observable phenomenon in most technological evolution.

This is not to say that we don't expect the evolution of technological use to almost always end up at the reinvention level. In fact, the reason that the SAMR model is even a thing is that we humans are far more comfortable with change when it allows us to keep and use our old techniques as long as possible. This initial comfort level with new devices usually allows us to move to the next SAMR level more quickly since the more we use a well-designed technology the more it shapes our use of said device as we discover "shortcuts" and new methods. Change is rarely easy for us and if we find comfort first trying the old steps on a new floor, who can blame us. In fact, it may be helpful to evaluate new technology by first using existing skills. We may get up to speed quickly, learn the quirks of the new system faster and, as long as don't get stuck there, we reach acceptable levels of productivity in less time.

Look at the move from vinyl records to compact discs to digital files. There was a good reason that compact discs looked like tiny records rather than cassette or reel to reel tapes. The majority of people were already comfortable with purchasing their music on plastic discs and record companies did not want to sell their products on a medium that would appear to invite copying. Add to this the fact that the president of Sony told his engineering team that wanted to be able to fit Beethoven's fifth symphony in his suit pocket. Therefore, compact discs were simply substituted for records. Very little else actually changed in the record industry. Well, that's not entirely true. Profits went way, way up since the cost to manufacture a CD was less than half that of a vinyl record and yet the new discs sold for twice as much as records. Later, this delivery format would allow multi-media content to be bundled with music and sold as CD-ROMs

(augmentation) and still later digital file formats such as .mp3 would allow a service like Napster to rise (modification) until iTunes, Amazon and others would completely reinvent the selling of recorded music.

So the next time you start leveraging a new technology to do an old task, ask yourself what level of SAMR you are currently at and then allow yourself to dream of what your “R” might look like.