

Knowledge Sharing Culture in Libyan Organizations

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Abstract—knowledge sharing culture is a critical success factor in order to implement a knowledge management strategy in any organization. A culture of sharing is one of the most issues facing any organizations to change and encourage their people to share the knowledge they have. This study was conducted to investigate the current status of the knowledge sharing culture in a public Libyan construction company as a target company to implement a knowledge management system. A closed-ended questionnaire survey was used as a technique for conducting this study. The study shows that the current status of the knowledge sharing culture in the target company is very low. Also, the target company should create a better knowledge sharing environment and technology.

Keywords— Knowledge technology, knowledge management, knowledge sharing and organizational culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE investigation of the current knowledge sharing culture is an important process on the way to better implementing the knowledge management strategy in any organizations [1]. The organizational culture is important factor to specially address if currently there is no a good concentration on organizational culture in the target company [2]. Knowledge sharing can be achieved only if the culture of company encourages it [3]. Many studies show that the traditional knowledge management strategies are weak because were mostly relay on the technologies only to support and foster the knowledge management and ignored the organizational culture [2], [4], [5]. The new knowledge management model involves an individual or a group to cooperate with others and creates a good environment and culture for better knowledge sharing and successful knowledge management strategies [2],[5]. Creating a good knowledge sharing culture should encourage people to work together more effectively, to collaborate and to make organizational knowledge more productive. Based on many researchers, the achievement of good knowledge sharing and communication is extremely influenced by culture of

individual employees [6]-[9]. A good knowledge management solution is 80% to 90% culture and 10% to 20% technology [10], [11]. Therefore, organizational culture plays important roles in encouraging people to share Knowledge [1], [12]. The qualified and more successful approach is based on the accommodation of knowledge management system to the existing corporate culture [13]. This study is conducted to identify the current knowledge sharing culture of the target organization in order to implement the knowledge technology system.

II. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is the investigation of the current knowledge sharing culture of the target company, to identify the weaknesses and problems concerning knowledge sharing culture as one of the basic knowledge management processes. The study will look at the people of the targeted organization and the existent motivation from the organization to their people to share their knowledge.

III. METHODOLOGY

A closed-ended questionnaire survey has been used in this study to gain information about the real situation of the current knowledge sharing culture of the target organization.

The questionnaire is divided into 5 parts:

- 1- Personal details
- 2- Knowledge sharing
- 3- Organizational barriers
- 4- Change management issues
- 5- Privacy issues

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A total set of 200 questionnaires were distributed to respondents. Only 160 questionnaires were returned to researcher and only 140 questionnaires were valid for the data analysis (see Table I).

TABLE I
RESPONSES RATE

Items	Total	Percentage
Questionnaires distributed	200	100%
Collected questionnaires	160	80%
Usable questionnaires	140	70%
Uncollected questionnaires	40	20%

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TABLE II
RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Demographic	Categories	Frequency	percentage
Age Group	20-29 years old	28	20 %
	30-39 years old	67	47.9 %
	40-49 years old	32	22.9 %
	50-59 years old	13	9.3 %
	>= 60 years old	0	0 %
Level of Education	Diploma	34	24.3 %
	Degree	48	34.3 %
	Master/PhD	26	18.6 %
	Others	18	12.9%
Experience	1-5 yrs	21	15 %
	5-10 yrs	37	26.4 %
	10-15 yrs	52	37.1 %
	15-20 yrs	30	21.4 %
	>= 20 yrs	0	0 %

A. Respondents' Profiles

The survey demonstrated the details concerning demographic characteristics or respondents' profiles as shown in Table II. The study indicates that half of the respondents were within the age of 30 – 39 with a percentage of about 47.9%, while approximately one fifth of the respondents were within the age of 40 – 49. About one fifth of the respondents were degree holders followed by 24.3% with diploma and 18.6% as Master/PhD holders. About 21.4% of the respondents have 15-20 years of experience and a few with low experiences such that only 15% of the employees have 1-5 years of experience, while the majority of the questionnaire respondents were with 5-15 years of experience.

B. Descriptive Statistics (Sharing of Knowledge)

Descriptive analysis which includes the mean and standard deviation for the variables of sharing knowledge are attained and recorded in Tables III and IV below.

The results show that, the sharing of information and knowledge among employees in this organization is occasionally, which means that there is no significant culture of knowledge sharing and also not too low. Moreover, the process of exchanging experiences and knowledge, it is often through meetings, phones or via emails. Moreover, in view point of the respondents there are not too many barriers within organizations that restrict, district, limit and bound the effective knowledge sharing, where respondents were neutral regarding the barriers existence in their organization even though the majority of the employees were consensus that officials did not encourage them to exchange information and experiences among employees in their organization.

TABLE III
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE
VARIABLES

Variables	Levels	Freq.	Mean	S.D
How do you share ideas and knowledge	Meetings	62	3.44	2.47
	Conference	6		
	Training Sessions	6		
	At the Coffee machine	8		
	Internet	9		
	Phone	30		
	Email	19		
Level of Interdepartmental barriers	Non existent	8	2.88	0.84
	Weak	29		
	Moderate	80		
	Strong	18		
	Very strong	5		
How well you share knowledge	Do not	0	3.26	0.88
	Poorly	29		
	Occasionally	56		
	Often	44		
	Always	11		
	Importance of Knowing what available in the heads of employees			
Non	13			
Fairly	16			
Important	36			
Very Important	40			
Employer motivation to share knowledge with employees	Vital	35	1.90	0.30
	Yes	14		
	No	126		

C. Descriptive Statistics (Organizational barriers)

All variables are evaluated based on a 3-point scale where the value 1 is considered as high rank, 2 as medium rank and 3 as low rank.

The results in table IV show that expert knowledge in the heads of individual and Lack of communications was considered in view point of the respondents as the most common barrier to share the knowledge and experience among the organization employees. On the other hand, the factors "knowledge hoarding" knowledge is power, Culture of working alone in closed offices and scared from ideas hijacking have the lowest rank among the other detrimental factors. Furthermore, most respondents were neutral regarding the Strong departmental barriers factor.

TABLE IV
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE RANK OF BARRIERS
FACING KNOWLEDGE SHARING VARIABLES

Detrimental Factors	Degree of influence	Freq.	Mean	S.D
Strong departmental barriers	High	26	1.97	0.59
	Medium	92		
	Low	22		
Expert knowledge in the heads of individuals	High	114	1.26	0.58
	Medium	16		
	Low	10		
Lack of communication	High	122	1.19	0.52
	Medium	10		
	Low	8		
"knowledge hoarding" knowledge is power	High	40	2.31	0.89
	Medium	16		
	Low	284		
Culture of working alone in closed offices	High	32	2.24	0.80
	Medium	43		
	Low	65		
People scared that their ideas will get hijacked	High	9	2.71	0.58
	Medium	22		
	Low	109		

D. Descriptive Statistics (Change Management Issues)

In this part, the descriptive statistics which include the mean and standard deviation for the variables of changing management issues (see Table V).

Based on the results shown in the table V, it is observed that the majority of the respondents thought that their organization does not have any knowledge management procedures and it does not dedicate the knowledge workers to support the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, in view point of the respondents that their company does not have specific strategies to transfer and share skills and knowledge among its staff since they believe that there is a lack of commitment about knowledge management issues from top management, and there is no any resistance from the staff toward this company for sharing the knowledge and experience. The respondents also disagree about the statement existence of sufficient change management to aid the understanding of knowledge.

TABLE V
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE CHANGING MANAGEMENT
ISSUES VARIABLES

Variables	Levels	Freq.	Mean	S.D
Does the company have knowledge management strategy in place?	Yes	12	1.91	0.28
	No	128		
Does the company have dedicated knowledge workers to support the creation of knowledge?	Yes	6	1.96	0.20
	No	134		
There is no specific strategy to transfer/share knowledge	Strongly agree	63	1.66	0.67
	Agree	61		
	Neutral	16		
	Disagree	0		
	Strongly disagree	0		
Lack of commitment about knowledge management	Strongly agree	30	2.44	1.21
	Agree	69		
	Neutral	9		
	Disagree	13		
	Strongly disagree	19		
The company experiences resistance from staff in sharing skills	Strongly agree	0	4.19	0.97
	Agree	16		
	Neutral	6		
	Disagree	53		
	Strongly disagree	65		
Existence of sufficient change management to aid the understanding of a knowledge management culture	Strongly agree	8	3.44	1.05
	Agree	18		
	Neutral	35		
	Disagree	62		
	Strongly disagree	17		

E. Descriptive Statistics (Privacy Issues)

The following table shows the descriptive statistics which includes the mean and standard deviation for the variables of Privacy issues variables (see Table VI).

TABLE VI

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE PRIVACY ISSUES VARIABLES

Question	Opinion	Freq.	Mean	S.D
Do you feel that privacy of employees is an issue concerning the sharing of knowledge?			1.70	0.46
	Yes	42		
	No	98		
Does the sharing of knowledge decreases the competitiveness with colleagues?			1.74	0.44
	Yes	36		
	No	104		
Do you feel that you should have propriety of the knowledge that you hold in your job situation?			1.67	0.47
	Yes	46		
	No	94		
Do you feel that the knowledge gathering process may require reviewing your personal work or emails invades your privacy?			1.51	0.50
	Yes	69		
	No	71		
Do you feel compelled to share your ideas with colleagues because of the KM culture at your firm?			1.81	0.39
	Yes	26		
	No	114		

The results show that the majority of respondents believe that their privacy are not considered as a barrier for sharing knowledge with other colleagues and reviewing their personal work documents and emails which is may be considered as an increment to the knowledge repository do not invades their privacy. Furthermore, they didn't agree with the claim that sharing of knowledge in the job situation may decrease their competitiveness with other colleagues and the promotions chances. Besides that, they also do not believe that the knowledge management culture at the firm may compelled them to share the ideas and experiences with other colleagues. Finally, most of the respondents agree about the issue that the employee must have his propriety of the knowledge that belongs to his job situation.

V.CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes the current knowledge sharing culture

in order to implement a knowledge management system in Libyan organizations. A closed-ended questionnaire survey was used as a technique for conducting this study. The study examined the organization's knowledge sharing and its barrier, the change management issues and the privacy of the employees. The study shows that the current knowledge sharing culture of the target organization is very low. The study recommended that the target organization should motivate their people and implement a good technology and change management processes in order to build a good knowledge sharing culture.

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