

PRACTICING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is the understanding, experience, thoughts, every individual possess. Knowledge Management (KM) refers to a system of acquiring, creating, applying, storing and disseminating knowledge to every individual to achieve institutional objectives. Knowledge management is essential for ensuring quality in higher education. Educational institution has ample opportunity to manage the intellectual resources available to achieve the set goal. It is important for educational institution to manage knowledge for sustainable higher education. Higher education system being the knowledge economy deals with infinite knowledge, but most of it is not stored or disseminated to all the departments of the institution. This paper throws light on how knowledge management can ensure sustainable higher education system. A good management of knowledge can foster the growth of an institution and give competitive edge in higher education. Every institute should make conscious effort to manage the internal and external knowledge resources. Institution which has sound system to acquire, store, disseminate, and apply knowledge has a good progress when compared to institution which do not have such system. Thus knowledge management is essential for sustainable higher education.

KEY WORDS – *Knowledge Incubation, Knowledge deposition, Knowledge dissemination, Knowledge evaluation and Knowledge application.*

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Introduction

Knowledge is the insights, understandings and the experience that we all possess. Knowledge Management (KM) refers to a system of acquiring, creating, applying, storing and disseminating knowledge to achieve institutional objectives. Knowledge management is the use and application of all the documented and undocumented methods and process which can be acquired, stored and disseminated in an organization (Rowley, 2000; Sallis and Jones, 2002 and Tajuddin, 2008). Higher educational institution should organize its knowledge capital for efficient management, and sound decision making (Holsapple and Joshi, 2000; Edmonds and Pusch, 2002 and Ranjan and Khalil, 2007). Sustainability has become an integral part of the mission, which higher educational system wishes to achieve. Higher educational institutions can sustain only if they consciously make an effort to manage knowledge efficiently. Knowledge management is essential for ensuring quality in education system.

Need for the study

Sustainability in higher education system has become a matter of concern for all educational institutions whether private or public. Higher educational institutions should prioritize sustainable education system than any other Aims it wishes to achieve. Sustainability in Higher Education (SHE) is gained importance after the creation of United Nations Decade of education for sustainable development. Therefore higher educational Institutions being the knowledge economy should create, store, disseminate and apply knowledge to achieve sustainability. This study attempts how knowledge management practice can provide a platform for sustainable higher education.

Objectives of the study

1. To find the need of knowledge management practice in higher education.
2. To find how knowledge management practices can be a tool for sustainable higher education.
3. To examine the benefits of applying knowledge management practices in higher education.

Research Methodology

The study was carried out using secondary data i.e. previous researches in similar field. The key areas identified in knowledge management practice are knowledge incubation, knowledge deposition, knowledge dissemination, knowledge evaluation and knowledge application. For conceptual clarity other published sources like magazines and books are also used.

Meaning of knowledge management

“Knowledge Management is a correct mix of people, processes and technology in an organization.”

“It is the systematic leveraging of information and expertise to improve organizational and operational innovation, responsiveness, productivity and competency.”

“Knowledge Management refers to an enterprise that consciously and comprehensively gathers, organizes, shares and analyzes its knowledge to achieve its goals.”

Types of knowledge

Explicit Knowledge: Expressed in words and numbers and shared in the form of data, scientific formulae, product specifications, articles and manuals, universal principles, reports, patents, pictures, video images, software, and so forth. Deeply rooted in an individual's action and experience, subjective and personal insights, intuitions, etc.

Tacit Knowledge:

- a) Technical Dimension- Informal and hard-to-pin-down skills or crafts
- b) Cognitive Dimension-Beliefs, perceptions, ideals, values, emotions and mental models

Relevance of knowledge management in higher education

Knowledge has become increasingly relevant for organizations because of the shift from an industrial economy to knowledge-based economy. Knowledge management has gained importance because institutions have discovered that people, their skills and knowledge are essential to gain competitive advantage. Knowledge management provides the enterprise-wide discipline and a sustainable process for growth at all times (Butler and Murphy, 2007). An institution can possibly gain the most out of practicing knowledge management in education, by imparting knowledge. The educational system can be aligned to produce results that will immensely benefit the knowledge economy. Educational institution should consciously engage in the process of acquiring storing and disseminating knowledge through all the process from administration to curriculum development to class room interaction. Many higher educational institutions have not achieved the desired outcome mainly because the knowledge management system is not proactive.

Thus the higher educational institution can sustain to a great extent when knowledge management is practiced thoroughly.

Findings of the research

Knowledge management practice				
Knowledge Incubation	Knowledge Deposition	Knowledge Dissemination	Knowledge Evaluation	Knowledge Application
1. External professional network. 2. Information from stake holders. 3. Institutions buys important journal and magazine. 4.undertakes research for future possibilities 5. Staffs attend training and conference to remain update. 6. New methods and training are developed based on competitors.	1. Brainstorm problem to find solution. 2. Lessons learnt thru failures and success is set down. 3. Uptodate hand book and work guidelines. 4. Documented specific knowledge and skills of individuals. 5. Experts description.	1. New members are assigned to mentors. 2. Knowledge shared in informal ways e.g. tea-rooms. 3. Regular meetings are conducted to discuss matters. 4. Colleuges inform successful and positive projects undertaken. 5. Peer review system. 6. Job rotation to ensure	1. Individuals performances assessed thru performance appraisal. 2. Problems and failures discussed openly. 3. Redesigning work process if required. 4. Members are assigned new project based on knowhow. 5. Members are rewarded to developing new project. 6.Learning group	1. Members promote new knowledge thru research findings. 2. Experience of students and stakeholders are used to improve programmes. 3. Members promote new knowledge internally. 4. Specialization in multi-disciplinary areas. 5. Carry out market research before starting new courses.

		knowledge distribution.	discussion	
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Knowledge Incubation	Relevance to Sustainable higher education
1. External professional network.	Empowers the institution to enhance its knowledge base.
2. Information from stake holders.	Enables institution to identify potential opportunity for growth.
3. Institutions buy important journal and magazine.	Help the institution to know the change in current trends.
4. Undertakes research for future possibilities	Unable institution to address social issues.
5. Staffs attend training and conference to remain update.	Equips the faculty to be updated with recent trends.
6. New methods and training are developed based on competitors.	Increases the potential of the institution for growth

Knowledge Deposition	Relevance to Sustainable higher education
1. Brainstorm problem to find solution.	Enables the institutions to indentify weakness and find optimum solution.
2. Lessons learnt thru failures and success is set down.	Helps the members of the institutions to understand dos and don'ts of a task undertaken.
3. Up-to-date hand book and work guidelines.	Keeps the members of the institution informed about the changes in the policy.
4. Documented specific knowledge and skills of individuals.	Enables staff understand the specific skill and knowledge required to undertake a task.
5. Experts description.	Experts in certain areas make explicit step by step description how to proceed with new task.
Knowledge Dissemination	Relevance to sustainable higher education
1. New members are assigned to mentors.	Provides constant support and help to new staff to enable them to adjust to the work culture easily.
2. Knowledge shared in informal ways e.g. tea-rooms.	Informal flow of information among members. Scope for Free and fruitful discussions.
3. Regular meetings are conducted to discuss matters.	Discussion and deliberations on matters concerned to improve the performance.
4. Colleagues inform successful and positive projects undertaken.	Strong academic community creates a healthy campus.
5. Peer review system.	A good peer review system can provide constructive feedback to staff to improve in areas concerned.
6. Job rotation to ensure knowledge distribution.	Ensures job allocation based on knowhow and knowledge.

Knowledge Evaluation	Relevance to sustainable higher education
1. Individuals performances assessed thru performance appraisal.	A platform to identify individual's strength and competencies.
2. Problems and failures discussed openly.	Ensures good control system and remove deficiency in services provided.
3. Redesigning work process if required.	Enables changes required to support new ideas and plans.
4. Members are assigned new project based on knowhow.	Helps banking on staff core competencies than general competencies.
5. Members are rewarded to developing new project.	Motivates and encourages staff to undertake new project and test ideas.
6. Learning group discussion	Work experience and strategies of members with rich experience are discussed.

Knowledge Application	Relevance to sustainable higher education
1. Members promote new knowledge thru research findings.	Integrates the research findings with social issues prevalent.
2. Experience of students and stakeholders are used to improve programmes.	Strengthen the programmes offered to industry requirement.
3. Members promote new knowledge internally.	Build a good knowledge sharing forum thru Faculty development programmes.
4. Specialization in multi-disciplinary areas.	Develop competencies in multi-disciplinary areas.
5. Carry out market research before starting new courses.	Potential clients are consulted to introduce new programmes and courses.

Benefits of applying knowledge management for Sustainable Higher Education

Domain	Benefits
Curriculum planning and policy framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Setting standards for measurement of task. ➤ Increased consistency in curriculum development and review. ➤ Formulate specific policy. ➤ Quick decision making
Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learner centric approach. ➤ Increased use of ICT. ➤ Building good industry academia interface. ➤ Improved learning process among students and faculty.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Helps undertake only relevant research. ➤ Optimum utilization of internal resources. ➤ Quick financial assistance can be obtained for funded project.
Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Less attrition rate. Its ensures staff retention. ➤ Scope for career advancement for faculty members. ➤ Improved performance ➤ Performance based reward and recognition system.
Student services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It ensures better students services. ➤ Quick transfer of required information. ➤ Better networking with all departments concerned. ➤ Fair and timely evaluation system.

Conclusion

Knowledge management benefits can peculate to all the departments of an institution and to all the members. But applying knowledge management may not be an easy one but complex task. Educational institution can make a concrete effort to implement knowledge management practices efficiently to reap the numerous benefits it offers. Thus higher educational institution should slowly but steadily move towards the goal of sustainable higher education through effective knowledge management.

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