The Pexus between Knowledge Sharing and Institutional Performance in the Public Sector

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Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to conduct a comprehensive literature research on the impact of knowledge sharing on institutional performance in the public sector, and to explore the impact of knowledge sharing on institutional performance.

Study design/methodology/approach: This paper was prepared using the comprehensive literature research (CLR) process. The articles and relevant literature were identified by searching the international scientific databases using the key words.

Findings: The literature review revealed that, knowledge sharing in governmental institutions is directly linked to innovation and re-engineering of public services, sound policy decision-making, evidence-based planning and budgeting, accelerated learning across governmental units, overall efficiency and effectiveness in public sector processes and procedures, sustainable development and growth, cost effectiveness and driving up public value to the citizenry.

Originality/value: This research is an original piece of work aimed at making a special contribution to the existing body of knowledge on KM and KS practice. It is envisioned to encourage management and leadership in the public sector to embrace KM and KS in order to achieve overall and sustainable improvements in public service delivery

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Institutional Performance, Public Sector, Governmental Institution.

Introduction

Knowledge management concepts, theories, paradigms, models and systems have organically evolved in the past four decades. This development has especially improved the interaction between individuals, departments/business units and institutions and the process of sharing both tacit and explicit knowledge to facilitate the achievement of overall sustainability in performance and growth. Knowledge sharing practices continue to engineer relational networks and fostering institutional learning in both the public and private sectors. Knowledge sharing has become an element of interest for all kinds of organizations that try to build on knowledge to achieve a competitive advantage (Ballesteros-Rodríguez et al, 2020). Moreover, there is an indication that taking a knowledge focus can improve the internal processes of local government and deliver a more efficient and 'joined up' service to citizens (Bardzki and Reid, 2004). The foregoing notwithstanding, there isn't enough research documented to demonstrate the viability of KS investments and application in the public sector compared to the extensive literature available for private sector. The purpose of this paper is to conduct a comprehensive literature research on the impact of knowledge sharing on institutional performance in the public sector and to explore any nexus between Knowledge sharing and institutional performance in the public sector. The structure of the paper begins with the methodology adopted for identifying and reviewing the literature, the literature review, the discussion of findings, the conclusions and implications and finally the list of references.

Methodology

This paper was prepared using comprehensive literature research (CLR) process and the reviewed literatures are limited to articles published in the English language in the Elsevier, JSTOR, ProQuest and SpringerLink international scientific databases. It is also limited to

articles and books published between 1998 and 2021, with 2019 and 2020 being the mode years while 2015 being the median year. The relevant articles were found using the key words 'Knowledge Management', 'Knowledge Sharing', "Institutional Performance", 'Public Sector' and 'Performance Measurement' in the Elsevier, JSTOR, ProQuest and SpringerLink databases. An advanced search criterion in the JSTOR database was also used to arrive at the relevant search results. The results were 300 journal articles and book chapters relevant to the research topic. The following is the distribution of the research literature against the key words; Knowledge Management (71), Knowledge Sharing (100), Institutional Performance (70), Public Sector (30) and Performance Measurement (29). To analyse the major themes of the selected documents and to better address the purpose of the comprehensive literature research in this paper, a further reading of the 300 titles and abstracts was conducted. The analysis of the abstracts process excluded 190 pieces of literatures for inconsistency and irrelevancy. A deeper reading of the remaining 110 articles and book chapters revealed seven major themes around which KS impacts on institutional performance in the public sector. The results of the analysed researches are as follows; Innovation and re-engineering of public processes and procedures (16), sound policy and decision-making (16), evidence-based planning and budgeting (17), accelerated learning across governmental units and their external stakeholders (14), overall efficiency and effectiveness of governmental programming (15), sustainable development and growth (15) and cost effectiveness and driving up public value (17). The four international scientific databases were chosen due to their academic appropriateness and the attendant reliability and accuracy.

Literature Review

Knowledge management

Knowledge Management involves the building and nurturing of a knowledge sharing culture among the institutional human resources, the process of systematically capturing and sharing critical knowledge, and the technology of creating a unified knowledge network to achieve organizational competitive advantage. Benefits of knowledge investments can be best achieved when they support key business objectives and processes (Jami, P et al, 2019). First of all the vision of an organization being knowledge oriented must be decomposed into some strategic objectives that can be addressed very specifically (Kucharski and Szczerbicki, 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence from many anecdotes and scholarly studies that knowledge management can be performed in ways that predict superior organization competitiveness or performance (Liebowitz, J, 2020).

Knowledge management systems and practices

A Knowledge Management System (KMS) is a combination of people, culture, process and technology components for deploying and utilizing Knowledge Management principles and knowledge assets to empower employees and clients to create, share and access critical knowledge resources conveniently for strategic and operational decision making. There are three major types of KMSs namely; enterprise wide KMS, knowledge work systems and intelligent techniques. Implementation of a successful KMS depends entirely on certain critical success factors. (Butler and Murphy, 2007) describe these Critical Success Factors (CSFs) as Strategy based CSFs, Organizational CSFs and Institutional CSFs. These factors directly influence the application of the following Knowledge Management Practices; Knowledge identification, capturing, codification, storage, sharing and reuse. Additionally, methods of coding, organising and disseminating local collections can be revitalised through proper planning and the execution of a Knowledge Management Practice (KMP) learning interface (Enakrire and Onyancha, 2020). Additionally, Online and IT based KMSs have become part

and parcel of modern-day research and knowledge development. Information technology has been able to establish itself as an important element and is so involved in our daily life that we depend on it increasingly every day (Jimenez and Barradas, 2010).

Knowledge sharing (KS)

The process

The aim of KS is to make available new knowledge and augment employees' current knowledge and skill sets to become more effective in their work. To cultivate social collaboration, teamwork, cooperative rather than competitive culture in the workplace. The institutional characteristics that are fundamentally essential for KS to thrive are social, cultural and technical characteristics. The deployment of appropriate technology has tremendously revolutionised KS in the private and public sector domains. This is an age where knowledge has assumed greater value than other factors of production. Due to its importance, there is a need for sharing, exchange and creation of knowledge (Khan I, A, 2010). According to Islamic principles, one who shows the right path to other people, shares knowledge with others, and demonstrates citizenship behaviors is considered a virtuous person (Murtaza et al, 2016). KS is depicted as a set of behaviours regarding knowledge exchange which involve the actors, knowledge content, organisational context, appropriate media and a societal environment (Meese and McMahon, 2012). Engaging in the knowledge sharing process can enhance teachers' professional development and teaching quality (Hsiu-Ling, C et al, 2014). In order to have successful knowledge management programmes, some knowledge sharing tenets for success are very essential. Enhance reward and recognition system to include learning and knowledge sharing competencies; Acquaint people with knowledge sharing and its benefits and Integrate knowledge sharing into everyone's job ((Liebowitz, J, 2021). KS empowers employees to make meaningful contributions to governmental policy. While the political knowledge boundary was rarely crossed, the use of Electronic Social Media (ESM) bestowed the employees with an increased sense of power as they received the ability to comment on top management blogs and contradict their viewpoints (Filstad et al, 2018). Information sharing is a challenge for public and private organizations. For example, collaborative e-Government initiatives require multiple organizations, including government agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations, to share important information and, in some cases, to integrate some of their business processes (Gil-Garcia et al, 2007).

Knowledge sharing tools and practices

These refer to the media, techniques, systems and processes through which institutional stakeholders share new and strategic knowledge assets for improving business performance. KS tools include; collaborative networks, social media, web 2.0 technologies, Big data and analytics, communities of practice etc. Online communities have become popular knowledge sources for both individuals and organizations. So, many organizations have launched online knowledge-exchanging communities to promote knowledge sharing among their employees (Charband and Navimipour, 2016). It is apparent that for the health/public health sector online knowledge-sharing offers huge advantages, especially when conducted in the open (Coughlan and Perryman, 2015).Therefore, for government agencies to establish knowledge sharing platforms, it is supposed to integrate the ideas and organizational culture of internal members helpful for creating the knowledge sharing space and enhancing the employees' willing for knowledge sharing (Chen and Huang, 2012). KS practices accelerating KS among employees include but not limited to; social networking, mentoring and reverse mentoring, education and training, observation and apprenticeship. As organizations continue their digital transformation, Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals will have to be aware and utilize Artificial

Intelligence (AI), data analytics, Internet of Things (IoT), and other skill sets, which will add value to KM in the coming years (Liebowitz and Paliszkiewicz, 2019).

Big Data tools are a very powerful way to clean and process large amounts of data to generate knowledge, since there is a lot of hidden knowledge in the Big Data that could be considered tacit knowledge (Orenga-Rogla & Chalmeta, 2019). Information systems development requires knowledge sharing. When that knowledge sharing must occur across the boundaries of organizations, across levels of government, and across communities of practice, particular attention must be paid to incentives, trust, risks and barriers (Pardo A et al, 2006). Initial key lessons are that knowledge exchange should not be an add on, it should not be supplementing activity once research has been undertaken but needs to be integral to the research process (Sharrif, R, 2010). An important first step towards improving public health innovation and effective knowledge exchange, thereby contributing to bridging the know-gap, is to assign a more central role to users, acquire a better understanding of the user context, provide better support structures for integration and collaboration, and create contextual conditions for knowledge to become more effective (van den Driessen, M, F et al, 2015).

The factors influencing institutional Knowledge sharing culture in the public sector

Many variables exist both in the internal and external environment that affect the KS intentions and culture of the organization. There are many factors which are theoretically and empirically proven to have a positive and significant influence on KS. These factors can be classified into three categories: individual factors, organisational factors, and technological factors (Sawan, F et al, 2020). The organizational factors influencing KS include; the organizational culture, transformational leadership, ethical leadership, management support, knowledge-oriented leadership, and social interaction. The individual factors include; trust, motivation, self-efficacy, enjoyment in helping others, affective commitment and reward. The technological factors include; Web 2.0, use of Information and Communication Technology, Social media use and the level of ICT. Barriers to KS by individuals include; cooperative motives in a competitive environment, trust among individuals, attitude towards knowledge as public or private good, cross cultural differences, individual perceptions etc. Given that possessing information is viewed as a competitive advantage and provides a source of power, sharing information, particularly with others that may be viewed as competitors, requires a considerable amount of trust (Keller, K., et al, 2013). If you want to take only one thing from this book, then let it be the fact that successful knowledge flow management needs a holistic approach and that working on the hard stuff (the people issues) will be your most important task (Leistner, F , 2010).

To be able to develop an organizational culture, there is a need for interaction between the individual and the collective levels. Each individual is a part of the collective, but collective consciousness depends on input from different sources of individual knowledge and experience (Granrusten, P, 2019). In many organizations, a major cultural shift would be required to change their employees' attitudes and behavior so that they willingly and consistently share their knowledge and insights (Alavi and Leidner, 1999). Attitude and subjective norm were found to have a positive significant influence on individuals' intention to share knowledge with people from other tribes (Kwakye-Okyere and Nor Md K, 2020). In this respect, it should be said that the current organizational culture is defining the existence of a favorable environment for questioning and, consequently, tacit knowledge sharing. It is also in the organizational culture that the most prevalent forms of communication are found (Oliveira and Pinheiro, 2020). The personal dimension of creative thinking allows the authentication, the interpretation, the setting in context, and the evaluation with respect to the norms, cultures, and values of the community (Wognin et al, 2012).

Knowledge sharing and institutional performance in the public sector

Innovation and re-engineering of business processes and procedures is the direct result of KS, helping both public and private sector institutions to remain competitive and relevant in the modern information and knowledge-based society. The change from a linear to an interactive view of innovation and knowledge production has also been a way to connect innovation and the further development of competence (Lundvall, B, 2016). Moreover, government seldom improves outcomes through its own actions. It usually needs to collaborate with others for that purpose, whether through formal or informal collaborations (Metzenbaum, S, 2015). The optimal use of knowledge that can be produced from information maintained by the public sector is proving particularly crucial. This is because it is linked to 1) the efficiency of the public sector, 2) saving resources and 3) the adoption of innovative services (Stamatios and Tsihrintzis, 2016). KS contributes to overall efficiency and effectiveness of governmental programming, taking advantage of both the soft/human and technical dimensions of KS tools and practices. Performance measurement has become an issue in the public sector as a result of public concern for greater governmental efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability (Marquis, J., et al, 2006). The most significant impacts of big data analytics in Mauritius are namely transparency, innovation, participatory governance, better service delivery, and predictive analysis in health care, streamlining business activities and accountability (Mohabeer et all, 2019).

KS culture between governments, local communities and research institutions across the world, leads to sound governmental policy and decision making for the public sector. The interaction with local communities presents an opportunity for governmental organizations to learn and gain deeper insights into the real development concerns to inform appropriate policy interventions. When local knowledge is treated as an asset, we see benefits both to the local knowledge itself and to society as a whole through its contributions to the policy process (Nugroho, K.,et al, 2018). Even if knowledge application occurs with respect to something other than a medical treatment, as in policy making, prospects of success will also be dependent on the adoption and adequate execution by the other system actors (Natera et al, 2020). Additionally, Personal, face-to-face communication with intended policy makers proved useful and effective in building up a mutual understanding and in finding common ground to develop a policy and programmes supporting science field shops (Nugroho, K., et al, 2018).

KS enriches governmental evidence-based planning and budgeting and ensures resources are applied to practical needs to better address priority development programmes. Social media tools allow local governments, as institutional actors or political actors (including the mayor or council members), to more frequently and comprehensively interact with citizens (Zobaci, Z,M, 2016). The world is changing around us at an incredible pace due to remarkable technological change. Government, as the regulator of market, has to respond to keep up with the hopes and aspirations of citizens and business, to remain efficient and trustworthy (Urso, G et al, 2009). KS accelerates learning across the public sector institutions and their external stakeholders. This improves efficiency and effectiveness of government programmes and reduces the cost of public service delivery. Digital technologies are able to bring together people and collectives separated by physical and temporal distances to generate and share new knowledge (Virkar, S et al, 2019). As argued by (Blackman, D., et al, 2015), focusing on high performance requires the development of a shared understanding of what is meant by good performance at different levels of the model throughout the organisation.

Sharing of critical knowledge across governments globally contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and growth as envisioned in the global sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030. The value of the human intellectual capital that resides on the public sectors can

be national wealth and valuable fuel for the growth and the development of a country (Markopoulous and Vanharanta, 2020). Practically all of the identified studies emphasise that organisations cannot dismiss the importance of face-to-face interaction when sharing sustainable development (SD) knowledge. This interaction allows participants to develop relationships and build trust; a widely understood requirement for successful KS (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Abrams et al, 2003). Education allows learners to acquire the skills, capacities, values and knowledge required to ensure sustainable development. Education at different levels and in different social contexts is crucial for safeguarding the fragile environments (Schultz and Parasad, 2008). KM and KS investments in governmental institutions offer longer-term returns translating to cost effectiveness and driving up public value. The contested concept of public value is an apt setting for practitioners and students alike to appreciate the challenges of striving to become a learning organization in practice (Glennon et al, 2019). Joining the domains of public health policy, practice and research is considered an important ingredient of current policy making. It calls for collaborative governance, with an emphasis on solving public problems or creating public value through collaboration across traditional boundaries (Jansen et al, 2012).

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this paper was to conduct a comprehensive literature research on the impact of KS on institutional performance in the public sector, and to explore the impact of KS on institutional performance. After reviewing Elsevier, JSTOR, ProQuest and SpringerLink international scientific online databases using the key words, the search results returned 300 journal articles and book chapters relevant to the research topic. The distribution of the identified research literatures against the key words was as follows; Knowledge Management (71), Knowledge Sharing (100), Institutional Performance (70), Public Sector (30) and Performance Measurement (29). To analyse the major themes of the selected documents and to better address the purpose of the comprehensive literature research in this paper, a further reading of the 300 titles and abstracts was undertaken. The analysis of the abstracts process excluded 190 pieces of literatures for inconsistency and irrelevancy. A deeper reading of the remaining 110 articles and book chapters revealed seven major themes for which compelling evidence asserts that KS impacts positively on institutional performance in the public sector. The seven areas emphasized by the review of the relevant material are provided against the number of literatures in support. These are namely; Innovation and re-engineering of public processes and procedures (16), sound policy and decision-making (16), evidence-based planning and budgeting (17), accelerated learning across governmental units and their external stakeholders (14), overall efficiency and effectiveness of governmental programming (15), sustainable development and growth (15) and cost effectiveness and driving up public value (17). These empirical findings reinforce the positive relationship between KS and institutional performance in the public sector.

Conclusions and Implications

The comprehensive literature research (CLR) process for preparing this paper has effectively established a strong nexus between KS and institutional performance in the public sector. The argument advanced by evidence from the literature suggests that, just like the private sector, the public sector institutions can greatly transform the way they conduct business. That KS improves public trust in governments, entrench open and democratic governance and encourage public participation. Public sector institutions must make deliberate strategic decisions to invest in KM and KS, build trust between management and employees and among employees. Leadership must lead in the implementation of KS interventions, incorporate KS programmes as part of the institutional vision, mission, policy and strategy. Public sector institutions should

support, encourage and incentivise KS culture across governmental units and build KS outcomes into individual employee's performance targets to better guarantee sustainable results for KS investments. The institutionalization of the most supportive KS culture in the public sector is the golden key to success.

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