Assessing the Perceptions of Academic Librarians Towards the Practices of Knowledge Management in University libraries of Punjab

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Abstract

The new trend knowledge economy emerged from the last decade in academia and business industry. Whilst knowledge management the subfield of knowledge economy, knowledge management is an entirely new conception and way of management. The research main purpose is to postulate the process of. knowledge possession, formation, sharing, categorization and retaining amongst the university librarians of the Punjab, Pakistan. For data collection for this study, Survey method was used. The research tool was developed for data collection on the basis of published literature. The analyzed results showed that aspects of KM; knowledge possession, systematization, acquisition, knowledge retention and knowledge creation practices become an assist of organization to progress and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization. These are basic factors for the accomplishment of an organization and play main job to attain the organizational goals. It is the role of Km is very essential for the availability of services, effectiveness, efficiency, performance and productivity of the professionals. The findings of this study can be used by the academic libraries and other organizations to develop their practices.

Keywords: Librarians, universities, knowledge sharing, knowledge management, practices

Introduction

In the field of LIS, the utilization of KM, provides access to library professionals, resources, services, and improved organizational cultural. Knowledge-sharing environment has an abundance of expertise in the changing work behaviors of information professionals. Lack of skilled labor, lack of knowledge management awareness, poor communication, lack of infrastructure technology, and communication gaps are the main problems in the use and application of knowledge management. In the library environment, knowledge management applications are widely believed to improve the operational efficiency of libraries, including successful access to information resources. (Siddike & Islam, 2011). Nazim & Mukherge (2011) examined a study on "knowledge management competencies required among library and information science professionals". Their research shows that over time, the education sector has spawned a large number of new knowledge producers. Therefore, universities are considering applying a corporate knowledge management system. To support their mission, there are many opportunities for the practices of knowledge sharing in the universities.

Martin, Hazeri & Sarrafzadeh (2006) conducted a study on "Knowledge management and the LIS professions investigating the implications for practice and for educational provision". Their findings show that his fields of library science and informatics have changed significantly over the last three years. Some of these are determined by technological development, others by social and economic change. The beginning of Internet-related technology development not only increased the stock and flow of information, but also changed the types of work in library science and informatics. These changes have had a significant impact on the library environment, including

the production of new services and products to handle difficult situations. Anasi, Akpan& Adedokun (2014) conducted a study on "Information and communication technologies and knowledge sharing among academic librarians in south-west Nigeria". Their research study showed that for the professional development of librarians, knowledge sharing is a key factor. The conclusions openly showed that ICT platforms are preferred by librarians of Nigerian academic libraries for knowledge-sharing in a great proportion. According to the situation, librarians will have to improve their position so that they may adopt themselves according to advance and developed tools in order to accomplish their needs of knowledge and requirements.

Therefore, they must reduce the existing obstacles faced by ICT utilization foe knowledge sharing. This will enhance the professional development to compete the academic community. Creation of knowledge is a crucial feature in supporting sustained performance in disordered situations. (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Organizations that try to acquire organizational knowledge officially (based on artificial intelligence methods) have relatively few available alternatives (Wagner, 2006). "Incidental information acquisition" as a key concept and investigated the information-seeking behavior" (Williamson, 1998). Filius, Jong & Roelofs (2000) conducted a study on "knowledge management in the HRD office". They found from their research study that for the reuse of existing knowledge, it is essential that knowledge should be codified and stored.

Objective of the study

The present study was conducted with an aim to evaluate the perception of university librarians about knowledge management and its key factors.

- To determine the current status of KM practices

- To evaluate the KM practices system in libraires
- To find out the perceptions of librarians for Km practices in their working environment

Literature Review

Knowledge management generates, captures, shares and implements both form of knowledge tacit and explicit for the advantages of universities communities, and to advance the practices of information providing on the right time. Do. achieve parental goals (Jain, 2013). Koloniari & Fassoulis (2016) conducted study on the perception of university librarians for the knowledge management process. They found from their research study that KM is essential for the optimistic impending carrier of the LIS professionals. They suggested that it is not enough that they are just well informed about the benefits and advantages of knowledge management. They stated that knowledge management is not justified and clear in many cases. Finally, the academic libraries try to extract knowledge from their users and also try to explore their hidden abilities. Conversely, social practices such as tacit knowledge and community of practice that promote the exchange of experiences are not adopted.

Ajiferuke (2003) research proposed on "role of Information Professionals in Knowledge Management Programs". Their research findings showed that it is essential for librarians to understand the value of their expertise and skills in terms of organizational aims and goals, transfer these to the organization instead of protecting and hiding them. The study stated that they should be able to change their traditional and typical behavior of work and adapt the new and current styles in order to move from the background to the center of the organization. Furthermore, they must become navigators and guides to explore the information masses available i.e., develop latest

and new products and services to develop and improve information services and to accomplish the objectives of an organization. He found that it is necessary for the librarians that they should be cleared about all the skills of their field like those of organizational aims and objectives. These aims and goals should be transferred rather than protecting or hiding them. He demonstrated that the traditional behavior of the experts should be changed and advance and current attitudes should be adopted instead. The librarians face various challenges like thinking more broadly and they have to make their role more advance in terms of image and status. They are required to attempt various skills such as managerial skills. Such perception will change the role of librarians as they will be more equipped with their services in professional competencies.

Yaacob, Jamaluddin & Jusoff (2010) Knowledge management and the challenging role of academic librarians are being studied. Knowledge management in discovery allows organizations to retain knowledge documents, acquire knowledge, transfer knowledge, apply knowledge, and create knowledge even when experienced employees leave the organization. You can compete in it. You need to implement and design a knowledge management system. This created new skills and roles for librarians and revolutionized library services. Knowledge management plays an important role in increasing the productivity efficiency of any organization. Branin (2003) suggested a study on "Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries". He found from his research study that library employees can represent their qualities and abilities to differentiate themselves as a master and having extraordinary capability in the field of information technology. Various qualities like their knowledge, training skills and cataloguing their experiences make them the most skilled persons. All these factors are helpful in designing the online information like intra as well as internet sites in designing different databases.

Andreeva & Kianato (2012) examined a study on "Linking knowledge management practices, competitiveness and economic performance". She used survey method for the collection of data. The results of his research study showed that knowledge creation is capability of organization, to create developed and advance concepts as well as having the solutions of different phases of organizational practices, from technological processes to administrative practices. Shanhong, (2000) proposed a study on "Knowledge Management in Libraries in the 21st Century" findings suggest that knowledge management practices help transform libraries into more effective knowledge-sharing organizations that foster relationships between libraries and between libraries and users, thereby strengthening knowledge networks and accelerating knowledge flows. She found that due to the production of a treasure house of human knowledge, the library organization will have to face advance and challenging phases of knowledge in the coming time. Rooi & Snyman (2006) examined "A content analysis of literature regarding knowledge management opportunities for librarians". They argued that on the basis of training and developed experience, librarians have opportunity to play an important role in knowledge management. However, renewing of these skills and abilities is needed to implement successful knowledge management practices in the library organization.

Parirokh, Daneshgar & Fattahi (2008) investigated a study on "Identifying knowledge-sharing requirements in academic libraries". Their research study found that in case of managing knowledge in university libraries, situation is leading to a dramatic change from a typical and strictly informational role to collaborative and resource-based role. Therefore, it is required that most of the librarians need to performs their tasks collaboratively. In this way, the knowledge sharing competences of academic libraries will finally become a critical factor of success. Results

disclosed that most of the investigated libraries are relatively responsive towards knowledge sharing, as well as the majority of librarians pay value to the significance of knowledge sharing. The results also approved that the knowledge used by them is generally intangible knowledge.

Ziaei (2014) conducted a study on "A survey of Knowledge Sharing among the Faculty Members of Iranian Library and Information Science (LIS) Departments". According to the researchers, most organizational theories mention the importance of knowledge management, and among the key factors in knowledge management, one of the key factors is the ability of any given organization to share and transfer knowledge. Clearly, knowledge management is recognized as an important element in the current and present changing and complex environment, and it provides a valuable resource for organizations to begin to restructure their policies. Therefore, knowledge management is considered an essential tool that individuals can use. By exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge and using the results of development feedback received, teachers can improve and enhance their ability to undertake research, education and projects, thereby playing an important role in innovative ideas. The researchers describe the state of knowledge sharing between library and information science faculty, including their behaviors, attitudes, and awareness levels, and identify aspects that motivate and prohibit faculty willingness to share knowledge. He additionally discussed the grounds and tools, through which the faculty members share and transfer their knowledge. Organizations that try to acquire organizational knowledge officially (based on artificial intelligence methods) have relatively few available alternatives (Wagner, 2006). "Incidental information acquisition" as a key concept and investigated the information-seeking behavior. (Williamson, 1998). Knowledge creation is a key factor in achieving sustainable performance in a turbulent environment (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

Andreeva & Kianato (2012) examined a study on "Linking knowledge management practices, competitiveness and economic performance". She used survey method for the collection of data. The results of his research study showed that knowledge creation is capability of organization, to create developed and advance concepts as well as having the solutions of different phases of organizational practices, from technological processes to administrative practices. Filius, Jong & Roelofs(2000) conducted a study on "knowledge management in the HRD office". They found from their research study that for the reuse of existing knowledge, it is essential that knowledge should be codified and stored. In knowledge codification, the codification of tacit and explicit knowledge is done in order to store this and provide to the users at the time of their need. It is possible only in that situation when appropriate advanced technology and motivated skills are available. Generally, there should be such information technology tools and platform that must facilitate the faculty members to codify the tacit and explicit knowledge so that the information seeker can trace their required information in easy way and also save their time.

Research Method

In this research a quantitative research method for used to conduct the research. A research tool, questionnaire was developed from the perspective and evaluation of published literature in the respective field of study. For data collection, survey method was used for this study. A questionnaire was developed for data collection. The population of the study was Punjab province universities librarians. The questionnaire was distributed amongst the library professionals of the universities. To analyze the collected data, SPSS statistical software was used.

Results

The analysis and results of the study are as follows, the analysis of the demographic information of respondents showed that 79.5% (147 out of 185 respondents) were from public universities of Punjab and 20.5% (38 out of 185) were from private universities. 63.2% (117) were male respondents while 36.8% (68) were female respondents. A large number of respondents 71.4% (132) possessed MLIS degree, 26.5% (49) were M. Phil degree holder and only 2.2% (4) had PhD degree. Age of the most of respondents 39.5 %(73) were between 36-45 years while 38.9% (72) were between 26-35 years of age, 15.7% (29) were between 46-55 years of age and only 4.3% (8) respondents were above the age of 55 years. Results regarding the experience of the respondents exhibited that 51.4% (51) respondents have 11 to 20 years, 37.8% (70) have less than 10 years, 9.2% (17) have 21 to 30 years and 1.6% (3) have the experience of above 30 years.

Table-1: Knowledge Acquisition

"Knowledge Acquisition	Mean	Std. Dev.
I easily find information needed in my work from print, electronic and human sources outside my organization	4.1676	.498
I get much important information from collaboration partners outside my organization	4.1297	.575"

Response of the study participants were assessed on a five point" likert scale" ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (5-1respectively). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data and draw results. Analysis of data regarding knowledge acquisition showed that respondents were agreed that "they easily find information needed in their work from print, electronic and human sources outside my organization (M = 4.1676) and they get much important information from collaboration partners outside my organization (*M* = 4.1297)".

Table-2: Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge Sharing	Mean	Std. Devi.
I feel connected with my colleagues.	4.1297	.575
Communication with my colleagues is efficient and beneficial	3.919	.624
My colleagues are open and honest with each other.	3.7351	.667
Our staff is interactive and exchanges ideas widely across the organization.	3.4595	.914
I find it easy to communicate and co-operate with employees from other departments and their functions.	3.4270	.894
There is a mutual understanding between the various departments 'functions.	3.4108	.980
When a colleague is good at something, I ask him/her to teach me.	3.3297	1.039
When I tell someone what I know, I can count on it that he or she will tell me what he or she knows.	3.3027	.997
Our staff shares information and learns from each other.	3.3192	1.072
Different opinions are respected and listened to in this organization.	3.1514	1.031
I ask my colleagues about their skills when I want to learn particular skills.	3.2811	.970
When a customer client has a question, I know who will be able to help.	3.0703	1.108

Table 2 shows the mean score of respondent's views as they reported that they were agree from the following statements with the mean scores of: "I feel connected with my colleague (M = 4.1297), Communication with my colleagues is efficient and beneficial (M = 3.919), My colleagues are open and honest with each other (M = 3.7351). Whereas, the respondents showed no opinion on the following statements with the mean scores of: Our staff is interactive and

exchanges ideas widely across the organization (M = 3.4595), I find it easy to communicate and co-operate with employees from other departments and their functions (M = 3.4270), There is a mutual understanding between the various departments and their functions (M = 3.4108), Our staff shares information and learns from each other (M=3.2000), Different opinions are respected and listened to in this organization (M = 3.1514), I ask my colleagues about their skills when I want to learn particular skills (M = 3.2811), When a colleague is good at something, I ask him/her to teach me (M = 3.3297), When I tell someone what I know, I can count on it that he or she will tell me what he or she knows (M = 3.3027), When a customer client has a question, I know which colleague or department will be able to help (M = 3.0703)."

Table-3: Knowledge Creation

Knowledge Creation	Mean	Std. Devi.
Information availability about the status, results and problems of projects.	2.9189	1.117
Employees are encouraged to seek information outside the organization.	3.4216	1.045
My organization gathers information about external operating environment.	3.2703	.945
Our organization actively collects development ideas.	3.3622	.880
Our organization develops new methods for sharing knowledge (e.g., blogs, discussion forums) and encourages using them.	3.2270	.886
Middle management facilitates sharing knowledge between staff and top management.	3.0486	1.054
Library users often participate in our innovation processes (i.e., in developing a new product or service or other solution).	2.9946	.997

We have learning groups, can discuss their work experiences and problems.	3.0703	1.042”

Table 3 expressed that no opinion were showed by the participants on the following statements with the mean scores of: “Information about the status, results and problems of different projects is easily available (M = 2.9189), Employees are encouraged to seek information actively outside the organization (M = 3.4216), My organization constantly gathers information about the external operating environment (M = 3.2703), Our organization actively collects development ideas (M = 3.3622),Our organization develops new methods for sharing knowledge (e.g. blogs, discussion forums) and encourages using them (M = 3.2270), Middle management facilitates sharing knowledge between staff and top management (M = 3.0486), Library users often participate in our innovation processes i.e., in developing a new product or service or other solution (M=2.9946), We have learning groups, where members can discuss their work experiences and problems (M=3.0703)”.

Table-4: Knowledge Codification

Knowledge Codification	Mean	Std. Dev.
I easily find the documents and files needed in my work.	3.3351	1.200
Previously made solutions and documents are easily available.	3.1730	1.216
Electronic communication (e.g., e-mail) is smooth in my work.	3.1730	1.212
Our organization has efficient and appropriate information systems.	3.0054	1.134
Information systems are exploited efficiently.	2.9081	1.210”

In the table 4, no opinions were showed by the study participants on the following statements with the mean scores of: “I easily find the documents and files needed in my work (M = 3.3351), Previously made solutions and documents are easily available (M = 3.1730), Electronic

communication (e.g., e-mail) is smooth in my work (M = 3.1730), Our organization has efficient and appropriate information systems (M = 3.0054), Information systems are exploited efficiently (M = 2.9081)".

Table-5: Knowledge Retention

Knowledge Retention:	Mean	Std. Dev.
On the retirement of experience employed, they are encouraged to transfer and distribute their knowledge to others.	3.2919	1.175
Mentoring and coaching are used for familiarizing new employees' tasks.	3.2649	1.118
This organization encourages sharing information with colleagues.	3.2486	1.239"

Table 5 expressed that no opinions were showed by study participants on the following statements with the mean scores of "When an experienced employee leaves, they are encouraged to transfer and distribute their knowledge to others (M = 3.2919), Mentoring and coaching are used for familiarizing new employees to their tasks (M = 3.2649), this organization encourages sharing information with colleagues (M = 3.2486)".

Conclusions

Results about knowledge acquisition indicated that respondents were agree with "I easily find information needed in my work from print, electronic and human sources outside my organization and I get much important information from collaboration partners outside my organization". Knowledge sharing results showed that respondents were agree from the following statements with "I feel connected with my colleagues", "Communication with my colleagues is efficient and beneficial", and "My colleagues are open and honest with each other". Whereas, the respondents showed no opinion on for "Our staff is interactive and exchanges ideas widely across

the organization", "I find it easy to communicate and co-operate with employees from other departments and their functions", "There is a mutual understanding between the various departments and their functions", "Our staff shares information and learns from each other", "Different opinions are respected and listened to in this organization", "I ask my colleagues about their skills when I want to learn particular skills", "When a colleague is good at something, I ask him/her to teach me", "When I tell someone what I know, I can count on it that he or she will tell me what he or she knows", and "When a customer client has a question, I know which colleague or department will be able to help".

Knowledge creation results indicated that no opinion were showed by the study participants on the following statements with the mean scores of: "Information about the status, results and problems of different projects is easily available", "Employees are encouraged to seek information actively outside the organization", My "organization constantly gathers information about the external operating environment", "Our organization actively collects development ideas", "Our organization develops new methods for sharing knowledge (e.g. blogs, discussion forums) and encourages using them", "Middle management facilitates sharing knowledge between staff and top management", "Library users often participate in our innovation processes i.e., in developing a new product or service or other solution" and "We have learning groups, where members can discuss their work experiences and problems".Results of knowledge codification indicated that respondents showed no opinions on the following statements with the mean scores of: "I easily find the documents and files needed in my work", "Previously made solutions and documents are easily available", "Electronic communication (e.g., e-mail) is smooth in my work", "Our organization has efficient and appropriate information systems" and

"Information systems are exploited efficiently". Knowledge retention results showed that the study participants indicated no any opinion on the following statements with the mean scores of: "When an experienced employee leaves, they are encouraged to transfer and distribute their knowledge to others", "Mentoring and coaching are used for familiarizing new employees to their tasks" and "This organization encourages sharing information with colleagues".

Recommendations

The study recommended that to introduce and start knowledge management in the library organization, first of all it is important to design a knowledge management strategy plan which should show the strong visualization, predictable results, necessary and important assets and an evaluation strategy. Library professionals must precede a lead in knowledge management plans and projects. Knowledge sharing environment should be created by the library organization to fulfill the library objectives. The systems of library should be updated continuously and also be revised and upgraded to answer new challenges that occur within and outside the organization.

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