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Knowledge Management Practice And Organization Performance Evidence Of Nepalese Pharamactical Industry

Dr Tara Parsad GAUTAM¹ ¹Nepal Philosophical Research Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal**ABSTRACT**

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to report the results of an exploratory investigation of the organizational impact of knowledge management (KM).

Design/methodology/approach – For the study purpose, descriptive research design is used. Factor analysis and some of the inferential statistics such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), are used to analyses the data. Purposive sampling techniques are followed to gather the perceptions of the respondents. This study covers 47 pharamacticals companies. A total of 840 copies of questionnaires are distributed. In total, 765 questionnaires have been returned.

Findings – It was found that most of the companies have included knowledge management as a key element in their strategic planning exercise. They are in use of their strategic knowledge against that of their competitors. It was also found that they have valued their employees for what they know. They have given more focus to experiment and learn more about products and services. They also given focus to take opportunities from experiment and learn more about customers. The results show that there was significant relationship within the various activities of the knowledge management and organizational performance because the p-values of all variables are less than 0.01 significant levels.

Research limitations/implications – The majority of the research constructs were formative, thus improving the measurement of KM practices will prove vital for validating and extending these findings. The findings were based organizations from pharmacy industry

Practical implications – This study encourages practitioners to focus their KM initiatives on specific intermediate performance outcomes.

Originality/value – The paper examines the relationship between KM practices and organization performance. It was expected that a direct relationship between KM practices and organizational performance would be observed.

Keywords: Knowledge management, Organizational performance, Surveys

1. INTRODUCTION

The most interesting thing is that a people want to know about another people which creates network and assures existence. If value can be created the people will be associated with you. In the VUCA world, nothing is constant which makes everything as project creating demand of Knowledge. Knowledge management is best way to create value. It can be evidence from construction industry of Nepal also as Human Resources are sufficient but due to lack of value based operation the performance is always under question (Mishra,2018; Mishra,2019; Mishra,2020). Over the past 15 years, knowledge management (KM) has progressed from an emergent concept to an increasingly common function in business organizations. As evidence of its maturity as an area of academic study, an increasing number of journals devoted to KM and intellectual capital management have been created [1]. As might be expected for a still emerging discipline, little quantitative empirical research has been published (Foss and Mahnke, 2003). The bulk of the published work in the KM area comprises conceptual frameworks and theoretical models. Extant empirical research relies primarily on a small number of descriptive exploratory qualitative case studies (e.g. Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Kalling, 2003; Massey *et al.*, 2002; Nonaka, 1994). Although this body of work contains valuable and insightful concepts and frameworks that have helped to define and shape the KM discipline, it is time to begin testing and advancing this work using more precise methods.

Perhaps the most significant gap in the literature is the lack of large-scale empirical evidence that KM makes a difference to organizational performance. While survey research is beginning to appear in KM journals (e.g. Kalling, 2003; McCann and Buckner, 2004; Tanriverdi, 2005), the bulk is descriptive (Chauvel and Dupres, 2002). Of the few survey studies that examine relationships between KM and other factors (e.g. Moffett *et al.*, 2003) only a few articles (discussed below) empirically investigate the relationship between KM and organizational performance.



The objective for the research reported here was to conduct a broader set of evidence regarding the relationship between KM and organizational performance. While performance itself is a useful metric, the ultimate measure of value is the ability to support an organization's competitive strategy. This especially applies to KM, as knowledge has been considered an organization's most strategic resource (Zack, 1999). A survey was administered asking respondents to describe their organization's involvement in KM practices, the strategic focus of their KM initiatives, several intermediate performance measures aligned with strategic value disciplines (Treacy and Wiersema, 1995), financial performance measures, and several contextual factors addressing characteristics about its competitive environment. Rather than merely describe the state of practice in the respondents' organizations, the study investigated the relationships among KM practices, intermediate and financial outcomes, and the organization's competitive environment.

The results indicate that KM practices are positively associated with organizational performance as generally suggested by the KM literature, both qualitative (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Massey *et al.*, 2002; Nonaka, 1994) and quantitative (Choi and Lee, 2003; Darroch and McNaughton, 2003; Lee and Choi, 2003; Schulz and Jobe, 2001; Simonin, 1997; Tanriverdi, 2005). More specifically it was found that KM practices are directly related to various intermediate measures of strategic organizational performance (namely, customer intimacy, product leadership, and operational excellence), and that those intermediate measures are, in turn, associated with financial performance. Based on this evidence, it was concluded that as long as KM practices enhance intermediate organizational performance, positive financial performance will result (Lee and Choi, 2003). The relationship between intermediate organizational performance and financial performance, while interesting, is an issue that extends significantly beyond the boundaries of KM. Thus the remainder of the discussion focuses on the relationship between KM practices and intermediate organizational performance.

Research Model

The assumption underlying the practice of KM is that by locating and sharing useful knowledge, organizational performance will improve (Davenport and Prusak, 1998). In reality, one might expect KM to influence many different aspects of organizational performance. For example, KM has been linked positively to financial performance measures (Tanriverdi, 2005) and non-financial performance measures such as quality (Mukherjee *et al.*, 1998), innovation (Francisco and Guadamillas, 2002), and productivity (Lapre and Wassenhove, 2001).

Tanriverdi (2005) found a moderately weak ($r \frac{1}{4}$ 0.15 to 0.17) relationship between a firm's financial performance (ROA and Tobin's Q) and its ability to create, share, integrate, and use knowledge. Most of the recent surveys examining the performance impacts of KM have aggregated several different measures of impact or performance. Gold *et al.* (2001) examined the contribution of "knowledge infrastructure" (information technology, organization culture, and organization structure) and knowledge processing capability (i.e. the ability to acquire, convert, apply and protect knowledge) on several dimensions of organizational effectiveness. They found a strong and significant relationship between both knowledge infrastructure and knowledge processing with organizational effectiveness, measured using a broad set of non-financial outcomes (e.g. innovation, coordination, responsiveness, ability to identify market opportunities, speed to market, and process efficiency). They did not examine the relationship to financial performance. Mohrman *et al.* (2003) extended the notion of organizational effectiveness to include financial measures. They surveyed ten companies and established a weak positive relationship between the extent to which the organizations created and exploited knowledge and overall organizational performance, including financial metrics. However, by aggregating a broad set of financial and non-financial metrics, the strength of the relationship may have been reduced. Most of the remaining surveys identified by the authors used a similar approach of aggregating financial and non-financial metrics to measure performance (e.g. Choi and Lee, 2003; Darroch and McNaughton, 2003; Lee and Choi, 2003; Marque's and Simo'n, 2006; Sher and Lee, 2004) (refer to Table I for a summary of articles that examine the relationship between KM and organizational performance)

With regard to the impact of KM, financial and non-financial outcomes are distinct constructs (Simonin, 1997). Changes to organization practices in general, and KM in particular, do not necessarily result in changes to financial performance (Kalling, 2003). KM, rather, affects a set of intermediate capabilities that, in turn, should affect financial performance (Lee and Choi, 2003) This may account for the weak relationships found in the research described above that use only financial performance measures or aggregate financial and non-financial performance measures. In contrast, the research model framing this study (Figure 1) proposes that KM practices will be positively associated with a set of intermediate performance outcomes termed

“organizational performance”, and organizational performance will be positively associated with financial performance. The primary research question is:

RQ. Is the extent to which Nepalese pharmaceutical industry engages in particular KM practices positively related to organizational performance,

Should these relationships prove to hold, this study would identify those specific KM practices having the greatest relationship with organizational performance. The authors were also interested in determining if there was a direct relationship between KM practices and financial performance, contrary to our expectations.

In identifying KM practices as antecedents to organizational performance, the authors attempted to include factors that are similar to those identified by Gold *et al.* (2001), Mohrman *et al.* (2003) and others (e.g. knowledge processing behaviors, management practices, and organization culture), yet maintain clarity regarding the research question. The objective was to address the KM-performance link directly. The research was less interested in the detailed technological, socio-cultural, or structural mechanisms by which KM is supported or enhanced, and focused instead on the perceived quality and extent of KM practices and how they related to outcomes. In doing so, it was hoped to more clearly show the existence (or lack thereof) of a relationship between KM practices and performance outcomes.

The following sections describe the constructs of the research model and the survey items used to operationalize them.

KM practices

KM practices are defined here as “observable organizational activities that are related to knowledge management”.

Four key dimensions of KM practice were identified from the literature that appear to relate to performance:

- ✓ the ability to locate and share existing knowledge;
- ✓ the ability to experiment and create new knowledge;
- ✓ a culture that encourages knowledge creation and sharing; and
- ✓ a regard for the strategic value of knowledge and learning

According to Davenport and Prusak (1998), KM is focused on processes and mechanisms for locating and sharing what is known by an organization or its external stakeholders. The ability to share internal best practices is important to overall organizational performance (Szulanski, 1996), and exploiting external knowledge is crucial in driving new product innovation (von Hippel, 1994) and to organization performance in general (Sher and Lee, 2004). To this end, items were included to measure the extent to which the organization is able to identify internal sources of expertise, transfer best practice throughout the organization, and exploit external knowledge of stakeholders such as customers.

Culture is perhaps the most influential factor in promoting or inhibiting the practice of KM (Davenport *et al.*, 1998; Lee and Choi, 2003). Specifically, organizations that value their employees for what they know, and reward employees for sharing that knowledge create a climate that is more conducive to KM. Items were therefore included to measure these aspects of organizational culture.

Organizational learning may be the most strategically valuable dynamic capability (Teece *et al.*, 1997). Learning is the process by which knowledge comes into being and is enhanced over time, and is therefore intimately associated with KM. Organizational performance requires not only exploiting what is known, but also exploring new domains of knowledge to create opportunities for future exploitation (March, 1991). Organizations that enjoy knowledge superiority today may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage in the future if their competitors are more capable of learning within similar domains (Zack, 2005). Therefore items were included to measure the extent to which the organization experimented and learned about customers, markets, products and services.

Following Barney (1986), a strategic resource should result in strategies that produce greater value than those of competitors. Taking the knowledge based view, the knowledge resource should similarly be linked to value-creating strategies (Bierly and Chakrabarti, 1996; Zack, 1999). To that end, knowledge should be considered as a central strategic resource within the strategic planning process and its creation and use explicitly mapped to some notion of value (Clare and Detore, 2000). Taking a strategic view also requires benchmarking knowledge resources against those of competitors (Zack, 1999). To capture explicitly this link between KM

practices and strategic value, items were included to measure the extent to which knowledge was included in the strategic planning process, knowledge was benchmarked against competitors, and knowledge was explicitly mapped to value creation. We also measured the extent to which the organizational unit responsible for KM was perceived to be creating value for the organization.

In total, 12 KM practices were identified, each having been suggested elsewhere as being important for effective KM. These are listed in the Appendix. A five-point Likert-type scale was used to ascertain the extent to which an organization was actively engaged in each of these KM practices. Ghimere and Mishra, 2019 argues the performance is a challenge which can be covered with help of knowledge based on experience of construction of Nepal.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The potential for KM to create competitive advantage is positively linked to organizational performance (Schulz and Jobe, 2001). Treacy and Wiersema (1995) proposed three “value disciplines” or strategic performance capabilities, each offering a path towards competitive advantage. Product leadership represents competition based primarily on product or service innovation. Customer intimacy represents competition based on understanding, satisfying and retaining customers. Operational excellence represents competition based on efficient internal operations. Organizations often implement KM practices to improve one or more of these three value disciplines (O’Dell *et al.*, 2003). We chose to link KM practices to these three indicators of strategic organizational performance. Items were included that measured the extent of product and service innovation, quality, customer satisfaction and retention, and operating efficiency, relative to other organizations in the respondent’s industry (the Appendix). In addition to creating a performance construct for each value discipline, the organizational performance items were combined to create a measure of overall organizational performance.

Research Method

In order to achieve the research objectives, a set of research questions are developed for collecting opinions and the research hypotheses are made to explore the opinions of employees of the pharmaceutical companies. The self-administered questionnaires have been distributed to employees working in different pharmaceutical companies. English version questionnaires are translated into Nepalese version questionnaire set for greater participation and responses from Nepalese employees. All the items are measured on a five-point Likert-type scale from "Strongly agree (5)" to "Strongly disagree (1)". For the study purpose, descriptive research design is used. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, mean, standard deviation to assess the perception of organizational justice and employee work outcomes. Similarly, correlation coefficient and regression are used as statistical tools. To prove the assumptions of regression model, Kolmogorov Smirnov test is used for normality test and multicollinearity is tested using collinearity statistics (VIF). Factor analysis and some of the inferential statistics such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), are used to analyse the data. Purposive sampling techniques are followed to gather the perceptions of the respondents. This study covers 47 pharmaceutical companies. A total of 840 copies of questionnaires are distributed. In total, 765 questionnaires have been returned, comprising a response rate of 91.10 percent. To investigate the research questions, an empirical study is conducted and based on the research model; the research hypotheses of this study are tested

Discussion of results

3. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Knowledge is power to handle the companies. Knowledge comes from the education, experiences, interaction, exposures etc so management of company should be careful about the knowledge and capacity of their employees which should be used for the better performance of their organization. There were 11 indicators of knowledge management used to measure the knowledge management practice of companies.

In this study Knowledge management is measured with a 11-item scale developed by McKeen, Zack, and Singh, (2006). Employees have responded to each item using a 5-points Likert scale. The variables used for measuring Knowledge management are: Recognition, Benchmark, Value creation, Value of employees, Opportunities to experiment and learn about customers, Opportunities to experiment and learn about product and services, Opportunities to experiment and learn about technologies and internal operations, Sharing of knowledge, Transfer, External sources of knowledge and Value creation.

Table 1: Employees' Perception towards of - Knowledge Management

S.N.	Scale	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	We explicitly recognize knowledge as a key element in our strategic planning exercise	3.69	0.856	103.430	.000
2	We benchmark our strategic knowledge against that of our competitors	3.55	0.761	111.903	.000
3	We have developed a knowledge strategy that maps knowledge to value creation	3.4	0.837	97.630	.000
4	Our employees are valued for what they know	3.53	0.789	107.429	.000
5	We look for opportunities to experiment and learn more about customers	3.46	0.829	100.262	.000
6	We look for opportunities to experiment and learn more about products and services	3.5	0.815	102.957	.000
7	We look for opportunities to experiment and learn more about technologies and internal operations	3.46	0.812	102.356	.000
8	Our organization encourages and rewards the sharing of knowledge	3.33	0.907	88.083	.000
9	We have effective internal procedures for transferring best practices throughout the organization	3.26	0.828	94.433	.000
10	We exploit external sources of knowledge effectively including customer knowledge	3.13	0.791	95.000	.000
11	Our knowledge management group is a recognized source of value creation within the organization	3.3	0.773	102.544	.000
	Average	3.4	0.818		

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The data shows that the average response was high in each 11 questions than the response in disagree and agree side. The mean value of each question was very closer to the average and agrees point. No any mean value was equal or greater than 4 so it indicates that the knowledge management practice was in average level in all surveyed companies because the average mean was 3.4 with 0.818 standard deviation

This study was to explore the relationship between KM and Organization performance. KM practice is the main activity of organization to determine the motivation, retaining and performance of employees. If organization has good KM then there is high chance of retain the employees for long time and can do the effective performance which ultimately benefits the organizational performance.

Table 2: Correlation between KM and Organization performance

		Correlations	
		knowledge management	Organization performance
knowledge management	Pearson Correlation	1	.608**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	576	576
Organization performance	Pearson Correlation	.608**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	576	576

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The statistical analysis of correlation test between the knowledge management and organizational performance is presented in the Table 2. The results show that there was significant relationship within the various activities of the knowledge management and organizational performance because the p-values of all variables are less than 0.01 significant levels. It means there is positive association between the knowledge management and organizational performance in Nepalese pharmaceutical companies

Effect of Knowledge Management on Organizational Performance

The study had measured the effect of knowledge management on Organizational Performance of surveyed pharmaceutical companies. The regression model was run to find the effect. The statistical value presented in the Table 3 shows that R Square is 0.369 which indicates that the independent variables explains 36.9% of the variation in the dependent variable. The adjusted R Square value is 0.368 which means that the knowledge management contributed by 36.8% in Organizational Performance of surveyed pharmaceutical companies.

Table 3: Effect of KM on Organizational Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	F		
(Constant)	30.407	1.812			16.778	0
Knowledge Management	0.872	0.048	0.608		18.325	0
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F			
.608a	0.369	0.368	335.82			

a Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The regression model is observed to be significant ($F= 335.817$, Sig. <0.01) and could thus be used for analysis. Based on the beta coefficient from the above table, the regression weight of knowledge management ($\beta = 0.0.872$ $p<0.01$). These results indicate that there is significant and positive effect of knowledge management on organizational performance.

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance of Pharmaceutical Companies in Nepal – rejected by the result of correlation test performed in Table 3 because the $p = .000$ which is less than .05 significant levels

4. SUMMARY

Regarding the analysis, the results of this study show that knowledge management practice was in average level. It was found that most of the companies have included knowledge management as a key element in their strategic planning exercise. They are in use of their strategic knowledge against that of their competitors. It was also found that they have valued their employees for what they know. They have given more focus to experiment and learn more about products and services. They also given focus to take opportunities from experiment and learn more about customers. They also are giving more emphasis on technologies and internal operations

The purpose in conducting this research was to study the perceived quality and extent of KM practices in order to more clearly examine the relationship between KM practices and performance outcomes. The expected to find a direct relationship between KM practices and organizational performance, and for organizational performance to mediate the relationship between KM practices Each of these expectations was supported. Not only did KM practices have a direct relationship with intermediate measures of organizational performance but organizational performance These findings are important for both practitioners and academics. Practitioners can use our results to identify and implement KM practices with a reasonable expectation based on empirical evidence that these initiatives will be in alignment with their organizational strategy. This study also encourages practitioners to focus their KM initiatives on specific intermediate performance outcomes. Practitioners should also be cognizant of the range and variety of KM practices and the extent to which so many of these are significantly related to performance. Adopting an overly focused or limited set of KM practices might not result in the desired outcome

In order to increase and improve services, process and ultimately organizational performance, knowledge management can be taken as one of the key variables in today's organization. Knowledge management represents a major source of competitive advantage for organizations (De Long & Fahey, 2000). In this study the practice of knowledge management has been measured in term of recognition, benchmark, value creation, value of employees, opportunities to experiment & learn about customers, opportunities to experiment & learn about product and services, opportunities to experiment & learn about technologies and internal operations, sharing of knowledge, transfer, external sources of knowledge and value creation.

Knowledge management in terms of acquisition, sharing, and application provides a positive contribution to the firm's innovation performance. Through effective knowledge management, firms will be able to transform knowledge into innovative products, services, and processes, and thus lead to better organizational outcomes. In this study, the results indicate that there is significant and positive effect of knowledge management on organizational performance. This finding is consistent with the results of Chen and Huang (2009). In their study, Chen and Huang (2009) argued that effective use of knowledge management has a positive effect on organizational performance. In the same way, the results of this are also consistent with the findings of Young (2016). Young (2016) concluded that increasing knowledge sharing and innovation practices provides for positive social change for the personnel of these organizations that can be supportive to enhance organizational performance. Therefore, KM practices are an important factor in achieving overall organizational effectiveness and that KM is an important driver of performance and essential to maintain competitive advantage.

Finally, the relationship between knowledge management and organizational performance of pharmaceutical company in Nepal have been examined. Base: The management of company should be alert about the knowledge and capacity of their employees because the knowledge is power to handle which should be used for the better performance of their organization

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