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Empirical Study on the Culture of Successful Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Sharing In Institute Of Higher Learning (IHL)

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Abstract: **The culture of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing play very important role in the successful implementation of Knowledge Management in any Public or Private Institution of Higher Learning. The purpose of this study is to see how the culture of Knowledge Creation (KC) and Knowledge Sharing (KS) is applied in Public or Private Universities in Malaysia. A survey was designed and conducted with students Academician in the universities in Malaysia. Survey questions designed to examine perceptions of all variables were identified. Data from 17 respondents were used to validate the hypotheses. The results of the study show that the individual culture and top management's support are important which it will be influencing the knowledge sharing behavior in the institutions.**

Keywords: **Culture, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Sharing, Institute of Higher Learning, Malaysia.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is defined as the source in human mind and it is based on the information which is obtained through experience, beliefs and personal values where ideas, realities, concepts, data and techniques saved in human memory (Allameha et al., 2011). Gupta et al. (2000) define Knowledge management as a process by which organizations are able to detect, select, organize, distribute and transmit vital information and experiences which would be used in activities like problem resolution, dynamic learning, strategic programming and decision making. Today, knowledge management is considered as the main source of competitiveness and skills could be used for entering inventiveness in organizations. In addition, Allameha et al. (2011) said that culture also can affect knowledge management in several ways as it happens to live within organization and change accordingly.

This study aims to see how of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing practice in the university environment. Plus, identify and understand the culture of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing activities among Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) stakeholders in selected public institution in Malaysia. In addition, this research aims to examine in depth on issues in knowledge creation and knowledge sharing among the IHL stakeholders. Therefore, by providing potential suggestion to IHL may improve the institution quality in knowledge creation and knowledge sharing (Lotfi, Aziz, & Dahlan, 2015).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Model And Hypotheses:

Knowledge sharing and knowledge creation practice are the dependent variables in this research. The dependent variables are analyzed in this research in order to find out the answers to the problem i.e., what are the factors that influence knowledge sharing and knowledge creation behavior of institutions' stakeholders in Malaysia? In this situation, the study will be testing eight independent variables Industry Experience, Knowledge Management Exposure, Cultural Barrier, Top Management Participation, Individual Knowledge Sharing Practice, Reward and Recognition (Lotfi, Aziz, & Dahlan,

2015) as possible variables that are believed to have influence towards the dependent variable (knowledge sharing and knowledge creation) which will be discussed next.

***Industry experience*:** Experience in industry influence the culture of knowledge sharing among stakeholders in the educational institutions. If many educators come from the industry or experienced with working will give tacit knowledge (valuable to share), students will gain an idea of what they will face when they step in the working world. Therefore, this variable will be questioned to determine whether they are willing to share their tacit knowledge with students and other staffs (academic and non-academic). Therefore, the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: People with industry experience have higher tendency to share their knowledge.

***Knowledge Management exposure*:** People who are exposed or have any knowledge about the knowledge management is likely to practice and likely to be ready to participate in all efforts related to it. Thus the following hypothesis needs to be substantiated:

Hypothesis 2: Knowledge Management become common in education field.

***Cultural barrier*:** Culture can affect organizational knowledge in various ways. Each institution has different environment which will affect or become the barrier for knowledge sharing and knowledge creation. Moreover, culture can be one element that will encourage knowledge sharing and knowledge creation in Institution of Higher Learning. Thus, the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3: Environment is the major barrier for knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.

***Top management participation*:** The more people participate and contribute in knowledge management implementation, and the more benefits will be received by the university community. Participation will strengthen the knowledge management process and the chances for a change for improving management services and learning process. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Top management has bigger influence to the success of knowledge management.

***Individual knowledge sharing practice*:** The human factor is crucial that are connected to individual behavior. Knowledge sharing can be hindered by a lack of motivation among community institution as they might not receive or might not understand the benefits that comes along with cooperating on knowledge management. Furthermore, less in knowledge sharing can lead to less in knowledge creation. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 5: Individual practices give effect to the organization.

***Reward and recognition**:* Reward and recognition motivates people to participate in activities having in the institution. There can be many recognitions or rewards that can easily achieved and top management can contribute in motivating people to share and create new knowledge. This leads to the sixth hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: Recognition and promotion are the strong driver for knowledge creation

B. Research Method:

The empirical study could aim to get the response from the stakeholder of the university to share about their perception and their practice in knowledge creation and knowledge sharing practice in their institution. This study also could identify the knowledge creation and knowledge sharing culture in IIUM with other universities. The selected universities could be from the Research University and Non-research University. The aim is to benchmark IIUM with other top public universities in Malaysia. After the data collection process, the data will be analyzed and gather the outcome.

C. Questionnaire Development:

Nonaka Ba-Concept which discuss about physical and virtual space for innovation. One of the focus is on the interaction among the university's stakeholders in order to practices knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. Plus, focus on the university environment to support the practice (North & Gueldenberg, 2011).

The following empirical study will be held by distributing questionnaire which will be designed and adopted from the previous study to collect the data from the university communities which are the students, administrative staff and academic staff randomly (Fullwood, 2013). Few articles and related books will be referred in collecting data especially in

preparing questionnaire. For these study two kinds of questionnaires has been used. The questions will be divided into four parts that consist of Knowledge Management, Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Sharing and Demographic questions.

In demographic section ask about gender and the position of the respondent. Plus, they were ask about industry experience and the numbers of years in the current institution.

In order to measure the element that has the most priority, we ask the respondents answer the question by rank the biggest influence in knowledge management success according to their preference from 1st until 6th. Value 1st for the most important factor while, the 6th is the less important.

In addition, some of the questions are design to know the respondent opinion and preference by using Likert Scales. All the items will be measure by five point scale. Either it is "never", "seldom", "sometimes", "often" and "always". Some of the questions use "effective", "very effective", "less effective" and "not at all effective" as the measurement scale.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic:

After distributed the questionnaire online, there were 17 responses received. 67.4 percent of respondents are female while 35.3 percent are male. Majority of them are from postgraduate students and lecturers in the public IHL Their ages are between 19 to 25 years old. The respondents are from UKM, UMS, USM, UTM, IIUM, UiTM and UMK. From all the responses, about 68.8 percent of the respondents have 1 to 4 years of experience in their institutions. There are 18.8 percent of the respondents had been 5 to 10 years in their institutions. Only 12.5 percent have more than 10 years in their institutions. Thus, majority of them had joined the current institutions for 1 to 4 years.

For the industry experience factor, 43.8 percent of the respondents have industry experience while the remaining number of them did not have any industry experience before. The percentage of the respondents who do not have experience working in the industry is about 56.2 percent.

B. Knowledge Management:

The questions asked are about the respondents' perception on knowledge management. More than half, 51.9 percent of the respondents said knowledge management is something that the institutions can get benefit with. Some said knowledge management is part of strategic plan in education and academic field. While the other 17.6 percent said they never heard about it and 17.6 percent said that they have heard about it, but with different term and same meaning. Furthermore, the next question asked is whether their institutions value the knowledge as an institution asset. Majority 76.5 percent answer yes, while some of the respondents said they do not know how the organization values the knowledge in their institutions.

In addition, most likely 52.9 percent of the respondents agreed that senior management acknowledged the importance of knowledge management in the education institutions, but it requires strong support to from senior management to implement it. Some of the senior managements are reluctant and not interested to knowledge management.

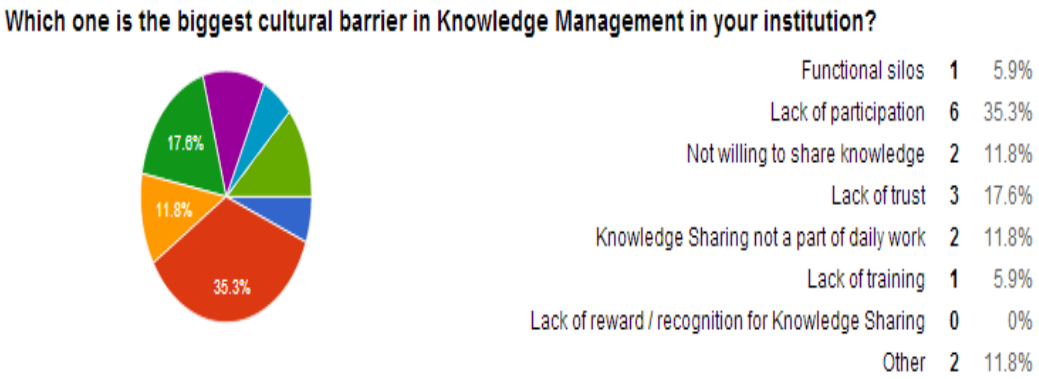

Figure 1: The biggest cultural barrier in implementing Knowledge Management

Furthermore, 35.5 percent of the respondents agreed that the lack of participation is the biggest cultural barrier in Knowledge Management in their institution. It has been discussed by another research (Burgess, 2005) where people and their participation is an important factor to execute an effective knowledge transfer in organization compare to tool or method.

In addition, 50 percent of the respondents agreed to choose the best method for implementing knowledge management is by training. The second choice is exit interview method, then followed by the documentation method. Training could be more dynamic, it has two way of communication and have enough period of time to expose the students and lecturers to the institution plan compared to other methods. From survey result, some people do not acknowledge the importance of knowledge management practices. Thus, the training method would be more focus and educate the people about knowledge management.

C. Knowledge Creation:

The number of papers that has been published and presented in conferences could become the indicator for the number of knowledge creation by an individual in IHL. 75 percent of the respondents agree that they commonly published one to two papers in a year. 18.8 percent of them could produce three to five papers a year. One of the respondents said he could publish more than 10 papers a year. It shows that, to produce more than ten papers, more effort and focus is needed.

Plus, 43.8 percent and 25 percent of them are often and always motivated to new creation and they have given the opportunity to create new knowledge. The total percentage is more than half. It shows that the individuals have been motivated and getting support from the others which could enhance the number of knowledge creation in IHL. In addition, the individual itself are used to be open to join other fields of knowledge to practice innovation. 93.8 percent of them are flexible to various field of knowledge.

These two points are asked the respondent about their practices as an individual component in the institution. It is a common for one to two papers a year is the average number they published in a year. If the lecturers and the students could increase the average number of papers they publish in a year, this could enhance their IHL performance.

D. Knowledge Sharing:

From the responses, 75 percent believe they have knowledge that can be shared with other colleague, while there are 25 percent of them are not sure about it. Thus, most of the respondents believe they had knowledge that can be benefit to others. Only a small number of them are not sure about it. Perhaps they do not know the knowledge that they know.

Knowledge sharing gives more opportunity for knowledge creation and knowledge reuse. But there are some barriers to implement knowledge sharing. The respondents asked to rate on–competition between IHL will create barrier for knowledge sharing. 50 percent of the respondents said it is true. Inter institute competition will create the selfishness attitude and unwillingness to share. Which will decrease the level of trust and knowledge sharing practices.

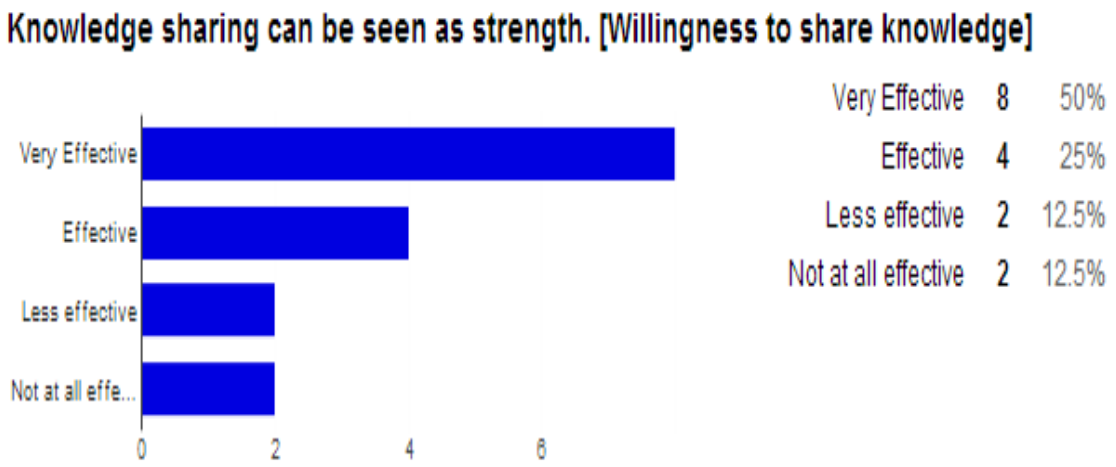

Figure 2: The response of by viewing knowledge sharing as strength.

In addition, 50 percent of the respondents said knowledge sharing is very effective if an individual could see it as strength. If an individual see knowledge sharing will increase his or her rival competitiveness, the knowledge sharing practices could not be the culture.

Figure 3: The respondent practice on knowledge sharing.

Majority of the respondents often reviewed and share knowledge in their organizations. Only 6.3 percent do not practice knowledge sharing with the other stakeholders in the organization. In addition, 43.3 percent respondents said that they are flexible, open to new ideas, and promote creativity and innovativeness.

The participations are not by students and lecturers, but also by the management. From the response, majority of the respondents state that recognition and reward is an effective method for knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. The institution should recognize the stakeholders who support and work towards knowledge sharing. Only 18.8 percent said recognition and reward method is less effective.

IV. FUTURE WORK

This paper can be improved by increasing the number of respondents by expanding the study area. The method had been used for collecting data could be revised in order to increase the number of respondents participation in the survey. This research is very useful because it can provide insights to institutions of higher learning in Malaysia for improving the quality of learning especially to boost the ranking of the university in Malaysia. To focus better on the issues faced by the institution, research needs to be done separately for each university due to the problems encountered may be different for every institution.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Knowledge creation and knowledge sharing can be practiced by all people. It is not subject to a certain group of people for example people who have experience working in the industry. It will be relying on the individual behavior to practice the knowledge management principles. If every individual in the university acknowledged the importance of knowledge management and would participate in each knowledge process, barriers in the implementation of knowledge management can be reduced. Moreover, the individual practice in the institution will create culture of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing to the institution. Plus, the environment of the higher education institution could be one of the major factor for knowledge creation and knowledge sharing culture. Support from the top management is also important to enrich the culture of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. Recognition as additional incentive to motivate people in knowledge management.

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