



Employees' Knowledge sharing behaviour in Education sector, Chennai- India.

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ABSTRACT

In present days' scenario, there is an inevitable requirement for knowledge sharing among employees irrespective of sectors across industries. The major reason for this is due to the intensive competition existing among the employees. The employees are forced to be updated to meet the competitive scenario. The researchers has made an attempt among the employees of education sector as it is an evergreen sector which needs to stand updated in order to produce innovative young minds. The researchers have studied the knowledge sharing behaviour using with a six item scale. The findings from this study will be a valuable addition to the literature of knowledge management.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, education sector, faculty, Chennai, India.

I. Introduction

Knowledge is defined as a combination of experience; values, contextual information and expert insight that help evaluate and incorporate new experience and information (Gammelgaard and Ritter, 2000). Knowledge Management is fundamentally about sharing knowledge and putting that knowledge to use. The studies done by [Bock & Kim, 2002; Markus, 2001; Wasko & Faraj, 2005, Davenport & Prusak (1998), Huysman & Wulf (2006)] agree with the significance of knowledge sharing as a major part of knowledge management. Knowledge sharing can be created in many forms such as: "a story describing a similar experience whereby a method or technique was developed or used to solve a problem. If unable to provide a solution directly, knowledge may be shared in relation to contacting someone who might know and be willing and able to help" (Sharratt & Usoro, 2003). Knowledge sharing culture is about making knowledge sharing the norm. To create a knowledge sharing culture we need to encourage people to work together more effectively, to collaborate and to share - ultimately to make organisational knowledge more productive. Most of the studies have attempted to study about the knowledge sharing behaviour across sectors but with restriction to the type and number of variables tested. Similarly this study is an attempt to study about knowledge sharing behaviour with co-workers in the workplace thereby enabling a better knowledge management process in the education sector.

Need for the study

The use of knowledge is regarded as an important way to accomplish better organizational performance and effectiveness in modern society. As knowledge as an intangible asset is a potential source of competitive advantage, sharing knowledge among people in organizations is important. Knowledge sharing, which is a component of knowledge management, can help improve performance. Teaching profession is one of the primary sector contributes tremendously to the growth of our society.

Choice of the Sector

Education has become one of the most significant fields which impart knowledge, skills and attitude among the students. Teachers have to update their knowledge throughout their life. Also a teacher need to posses knowledge of task, knowledge of students' prior knowledge and knowledge of instructional methods. All these are possible by sharing knowledge with coworkers in the working environment.

II. Review of Literature

Knowledge sharing culture and the need for knowledge management has been a topic of importance from 1960s. However its significance has increased now due to the growing competition among the various employees in their respective fields.

Hollander and Willis (1967) in their study have emphasised the need to belong to a team as an effective team member.

Lee and Choi (2003) based on their study have developed an integrative research model that interconnects knowledge management enablers and processes with organizational performance.

Wasko and Faraj (2005) I their study have emphasised the need for computers in exchange of ideas and sharing knowledge.

Hall and Goody (2007) in their study have suggested that organizational culture has an effect on people's attitude towards sharing information. The work environment, the possibility of sharing information, the resources available for sharing information also influences the knowledge sharing behaviour of the employees.

Ma and Agarwal (2007) presented empirical evidence that identification with the cyber community unit increases knowledge sharing within the group.

The previous researchers (Bock et al., 2005; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Davenport et al., 1998; Jones et al., 2006) have suggested that the culture of sharing supports the notion that knowledge sharing can lead to a more effective use of knowledge management tools, and can ultimately visualize the benefits that are attributed to knowledge sharing behaviour.

III. Methodology

The researcher adopted multistage random sampling in choosing the sector and its respondents. The respondents were the teaching faculty members of engineering colleges in Chennai, India. The respondents were from three different levels namely assistant professors, associate professors and professors from all departments. The top management or the non - teaching members were not considered for the study. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire from five top most engineering colleges with well advanced technological updates in their institutions. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 teaching faculty members. 72 valid responses were exploited for the present study. A six item scale was constructed to assess knowledge sharing behavior. Items used to measure knowledge sharing behavior were developed based upon Lee (2001), Teigland and Wasko (2003) and Bock et al (2005). The same has been used by Anitha Chennamaneni in their study "Determinants Of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors: Developing And Testing An Integrated Theoretical Model".

IV. Analysis and Discussion

One sample t-test was exploited to test the differences between the means of the items of the scale. Its findings are interpreted as below:

Table 4.1. Knowledge sharing behaviour among employees of educational sector

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t
coworkers	72	4.3793	.56149	.10427	42.001
pedagogy	72	4.2759	.59140	.10982	38.935
assessment	72	3.7241	.84077	.15613	23.853
work experience	72	4.0690	.65088	.12087	33.665
training	72	3.6552	.89745	.16665	21.933
strategy	72	4.1034	.48879	.09077	45.209

From table 4.1 it is visible that most of the employees were involved in knowledge sharing behavior and same is highlighted by four items that has a mean value more than 4.000. The item "I share knowledge related to work with my co- workers" was the highly contributing factor enabling effective knowledge sharing with a mean value of 4.3793. The employees agree that they share "knowledge about the students, curriculum, and pedagogy with my co-workers" which is visible from the mean value of 4.2759. The employees of education sector do agree to share their teaching strategies with their co-workers and the same is highlighted by the mean value of 4.1034. The next factor measuring the knowledge sharing behavior was highlighted by the employees sharing their work experiences with their coworkers : mean value – 4.0690. The remaining two items possessed mean values less than 4 but more than 3.000. This means that the employees were neutrally involved in these activities contributing to knowledge sharing in terms of "I share internal assessment and report with my co-workers; mean value - 3.7241" and "I share expertise from education or training with my co-workers: mean value -3.6552".

V. Conclusion

The knowledge sharing behavior among the teaching professionals of the education institutions appears to be very good from the discussion

in this study. The employees do not seem to hesitate in sharing information with their coworkers in terms of training, work experiences, Pedagogy, teaching strategy etc. Coworkers are the first source of possibility available for knowledge sharing for employees of any industry. It is not an exception in education sector too. There are several reasons for which the employees may think of sharing knowledge but it may not be possible due to the work environment and the other organizational factors. The educational institutions hence has to provide a platform for knowledge sharing, by providing necessary training, and other facilities for enabling people to meet and share knowledge. This is in tune with the opinion of Alavi and Leidner (2001), that a sharing culture is manifested in the deep beliefs/values/attitudes within an organization. The employees' attitude towards knowledge sharing is very important although the organization provides a knowledge sharing environment. Because if the employee is not interested in sharing knowledge then the purpose of knowledge sharing may not happen to the fullest potential.

The employees of education sector are the teaching faculty members who have been considered as respondents for this study. However, the limitation of this study is that this is only a preliminary one. There are much more variables to be tested, that might give a clear idea about the knowledge sharing significance, scope and its need in future. The education institutions must give importance to this new emerging concept of knowledge sharing to reach greater heights by enabling it to happen practically among the employees. This is possible only by providing necessary infrastructure, IT support, communication techniques etc in an advanced format. Above all training for the employees to use these facilities to the fullest potential is a must. Otherwise it becomes a one side offering that will fail in its purpose of being initiated buy the organizations. Knowledge sharing enables knowledge growing and Knowledge squaring and enables the organizations to flourish than perish.

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