ijmRole of Knowledge Management Practices in Organisational Relationship

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Abstract :

Knowledge Management is the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge. Knowledge management (KM) has been the primary focus of attention from organizations, which perceive it as a strategic means for innovation and the maintenance of competitive advantage (Chua, 2009). Many firms have implemented KM initiatives with a focus on information technology and have invested significant resources in deploying their KM systems. This paper focuses on the effect of intra-organisational relationship through knowledge management.

Keywords : Knowledge, intra-organisation, KM

Introduction :

The concept and the terminology of KM sprouted within the management consulting community. When the Internet arose, those organizations quickly realized that an intranet, an in-house subset of the Internet, was a wonderful tool with which to make information accessible and to share it among the geographically dispersed units of their organizations. "Knowledge" has been all the rage for over a decade in a very range of fields of management studies (Grandori and Kogut ; Eisenhardt and Santos   3   . There's no agreement in   the literature on what knowledge is, and the way it ought to be defined (Singh, Dilnutt, &Lakomski, 2008). Some researchers distinguish between knowledge and information (Nonaka, 1994) whereas others most frequently contemplate the term knowledge and

information to be interchangeable (Wang &Noe, 2010). Alavi&Leidner (2001) posit that information is regenerated to knowledge once it's processed within the mind of people and knowledge becomes information once it is articulated and presented within the variety of text, graphics, words, or alternative symbolic forms. We adapt this perspective by considering knowledge as information processed by individuals including expertise, facts and ideas relevant for individual, team, and organizational performance (Bartol&Srivastava, 2002). Some authors (Alavi&Leidner, 2001; Earl, 2001) use the terms information and knowledge interchangeably, since they argue for little practicality in making a distinction. Knowledge involves all the experiences, intuition, values and even conviction that people possess (Lin, 2007). According to Little and Ray (2005) knowledge is not just limited to what we know, but also includes our values, perceptions and instincts. Knowledge is defined in a variety of ways. According to Santoro, Borges and Rezende (2006) one of the most common ways of defining knowledge involve dividing knowledge into two parts and then providing separate definitions of the two parts, explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Despite the fact that both tacit and explicit knowledge provides different types of knowledge that exist, both the forms of knowledge are believed to be complementary in the sense that both are equal in importance. For instance, it is impossible   for   anyone   to   learn   the   art   of   writing   unless   and untilthenecessaryskillsofverballanguagehavebeenacquired.Thus,itcanbesaidthat   explicit knowledge has little value without the use of tacit knowledge. Knowledge is primarily formed when explicit knowledge interacts with the tacit knowledge (Little and Ray, 2005). (Source: The Challenges of Knowledge Sharing in Intercultural Organizations' with specific to Multinational Companies in India, Desina Poojita,2013)

Impact of inter-organizational relationship on organizational learning

Inter-organizational learning

According to Huber (1991)**,** organizational learning involves four stages: knowledge acquisition, information   distribution,   information   interpretation   and   organizational   memory.

Knowledge acquisition is a process by which knowledge is obtained. While, information distribution is a process by which information from different sources is shared and thereby leads to new understanding. Information interpretation is a process by which distributed information is given one or more commonly understood interpretations. Organizational memory is means by which knowledge is stored for future use. Knowledge is information given meaning (Kochen, 1983).
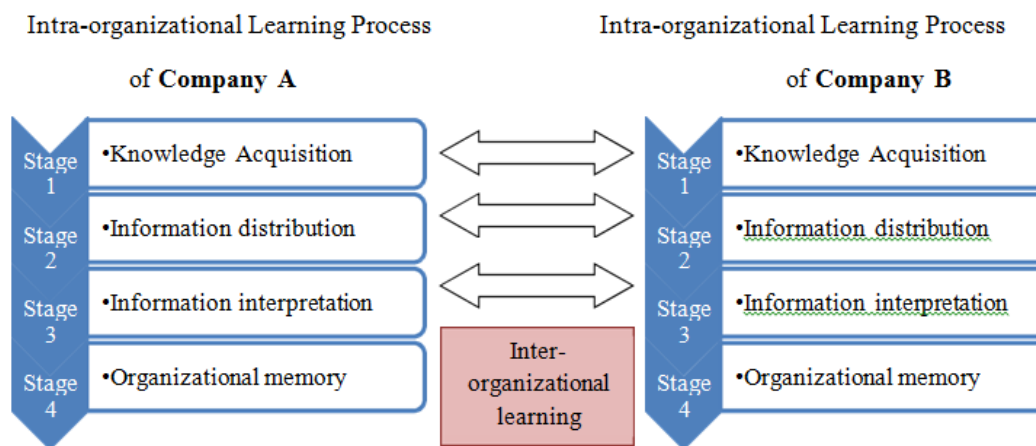
Adapted from Huber (1991)

Inter-organizational relationships help in learning process of an organization at 'knowledge acquisition', 'information distribution' and 'information interpretation' stage (Figure1). Reciprocity in the form of knowledge acquisition and information distribution, promotes collective good in inter-organizational relationships. It facilitates exchange of clients, personnel, share knowledge and information. This reciprocity emphasizes cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among organizations, rather than domination, power, and control (Oliver, 1990). Two intermediary learning processes that tie together intra and inter-organizational learning are extension and internalization. Internalization is a process of intra- organizational learning that

generates from inter-organizational relationships (Larsson et al., 1998). Extension is a process whereby one organization extends its experience to other organizations with which it has somerelation.
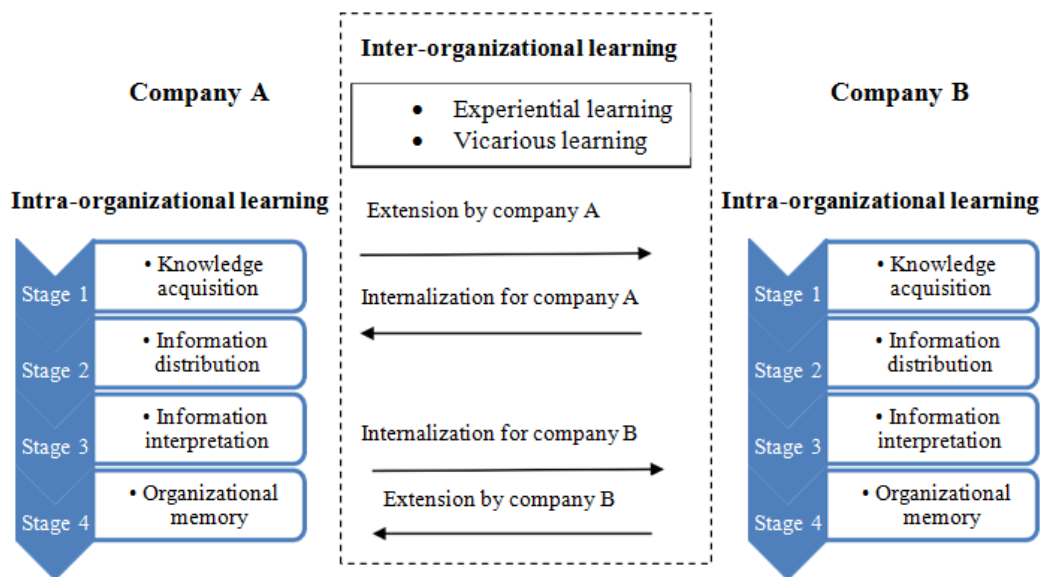

Knowledge exchange processes among organizations (*Adapted from Larsson et al, 1998)*

Extension is often seen as a reason for existence of formal collaborations between organizations where much knowledge may be shared. The purpose is to exploit each others' experiences which require process of translating intra-organizational experiences into inter-organizational experiences (Holmqvist, 2004). Inter-organizational learning can take place via experiential learning or through vicarious learning (Figure2). Experiential learning as the name suggests, requires active involvement of organizations. Vicarious learning may takes place in inter- organizational relationships resulting into imitation among the partners.

Inter-organizational learning through experiential learning

Kolb (1984) coined the term experiential learning. However, Prange (1999) noted the process of 'learning from experience' in organizations. This experiential learning in organizations takes place either through exploitation or exploration (Figure3). There is a need to extend growing inter-organizational learning literature by linking inter-organizational learning processes to exploitation and exploration (Holmqvist, 2009).

Exploitation is a process by which organizations create reliability in experience through refinement, production and focused attention while exploration is about creating variety in experiences through experimentation, trailing and free association (Holmqvist, 2004). These processes are inter-laced by means of opening-up and focusing. Opening up involves an organization entering explorative processes such as experimenting and trailing from an exploitative process of routinizing and repetition. Focusing is the process of generation of routinizing and precision from processes of experimenting and free association.
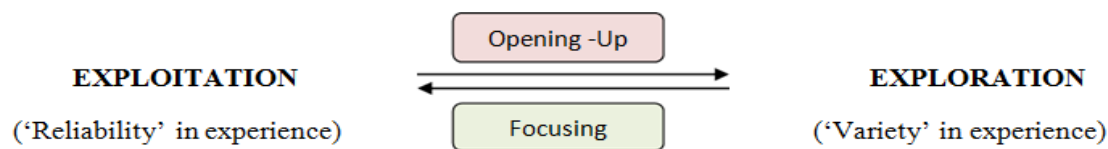
Organisational Learning:

Organizational learning is not limited to inter-organizational learning. Inter-organizational learning takes place through inter-organizational networks. It has been agreed that collectivism is more useful for learning or acquiring knowledge than individuality at organizational level.

Organizational learning is not restricted to intra-organizational learning. Inter-organizational learning takes place through inter-organizational networks. It has been approved that socialism is more useful for learning or obtaining knowledge than individualism at organizational level. Inter-organizational relationships are an ample basis of knowledge and spread the knowledge pool of organizations intricate.

Conclusion :

The conveying of knowledge from one member to another member of organization involves knowledge transfer.Inter-organizational relationships also grades in formation of new knowledge through teamwork of different organizations. Organizations notice and copy the adaptive responses of their contacts ensuing into inter-organizational learning. Inter-organizational relationships need not always effect in organizational learning. The degree of learning and successofrelationshipdependsonanumberoffactorsdiscussedaboveinthepaper.Inter- organizational learning can be improved across organizations with the help of information technology and border spanners.

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