

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: A SYSTEMIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Knowledge has become the key economic resource and the dominant source of competitive advantage. The consequent implication of this notion for the way in which a business is run are far reaching and dramatic, influencing everything from a company's strategy to its products, from its processes to the very way the firm is organised. The term that has been applied to this perspective shift is 'Knowledge Management'.

Knowledge Management (KM) has to do with the management of all stages in the generation, codification, refinement, and transmission of knowledge. The real power of knowledge management, however, is in allowing the organisations to explicitly enable and enhance the effectiveness of these activities and to leverage their value for the group as well as for the individual. Any KM initiative would hardly yield results unless it is implemented effectively. The present study examines the KM Implementation process from the Systems Approach.

In this study, KM is operationalised to include within its purview all activities concerned with creating, sharing or disseminating knowledge whether it is called by that name or not. During the system construction stage a descriptive framework has been evolved, emphasising four critical contexts namely the strategic context, the Knowledge context, the Organizational context and the Technological context. The study is qualitative in nature and the research design incorporated 'the most different systems design' to include two organisations which differed from each other in the product / service complexity, organisational complexity (size and number of locations) for explanation building in the problem under study.

Both within case and cross case analyses are carried out with the cases with respect to the strategic, knowledge, organisational and the technological contexts. An attempt is made to position both organisations on a Regions of practice (RoP) matrix and draw inferences on the existing KM system on the basis of the context and the level for employee involvement. An attempt was also made to put forth certain valid finality relations on the basis of the analysis of the data collected during the theory building stage of the select systems. The analyses reveal that all the four contexts are equally important for the successful implementation of the KM system. Further, it has been found that both the size and the business of the organisation have definitive influences on KM implementation. The study also asserts that prevalence of a knowledge culture and top management commitment can enhance the effectiveness of KM implementation initiatives.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Systems Approach, Regions of Practice
