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Using Km Ecology Lens, Advantages of Sharing Knowledge Among Individuals, Organizations and Learning Communities

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ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic and interconnected world, the exchange of knowledge has become a pivotal factor for individual growth, organizational success, and the flourishing of learning communities. This term paper explores the advantages of sharing knowledge through the lens of Knowledge Management (KM) Ecology. Grounded in the principles of ecological systems, this paper delves into the symbiotic relationships that emerge when knowledge is shared among individuals, organizations, and learning communities. By examining the interconnection and interdependence of these entities, researcher aims to uncover the manifold benefits that arise from fostering a culture of knowledge sharing. Knowledge Management (KM) is a critical aspect of organizational success in the contemporary business landscape. Viewing KM through an ecological lens allows us to understand the interconnected relationships between individuals, organizations, and learning communities. This term paper explores the advantages of sharing knowledge within this KM ecology and examines how it fosters innovation, enhances organizational performance, and promotes continuous learning.

Keywords: Knowledge Management (KM), KM Ecology, Individuals, organizations, Learning Communities

INTRODUCTION

In knowledge management, the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) ecology is a proposition meant to describe the systems' dynamics between and among individuals, organizations, and learning communities (Serenko & Bontis, 2022; Andreeva & Kianto, 2021). This perspective acknowledges that human, structural, or situational knowledge is not exclusively vested in a person, group, or company but is a form of social capital that can be created and developed through people working alongside each other (Li, Fan, & Wu, 2021). The use of the KM

ecology lens reduces KM to knowledge sharing and examines the general surroundings that shape the practice (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Furthermore, the context of a Knowledge Management System (KMS) is not only evaluated with reference to its implementation success but also the commitment of organizations to learning activities within KMS. The KM ecology lens shows that knowledge is not only located within individual knowledge or organizational repositories but is also situated between organizations.

In this regard, it bears the following benefits from the point of view of the knowledge management ecology (Serenko & Bontis, 2022; Andreeva & Kianto, 2021). First of all, knowledge sharing and innovative capacity (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022), but also problem-solving and venture creation. According to Crossan et al. (2022), when people contribute the details that they know and the incidences they have encountered, it becomes a combination of experts who can come up with new ideas and improve organizational learning. This kind of partnership fosters creativity since people can draw from the work of others and take it to another level. Furthermore, people can contribute to the solution of all studied and discussed difficulties through the provision of tips and recommendations. This way of exchanging information and techniques in searching for solutions to problems can result in the formation of new ideas and solutions.

However, the communication that takes place within learning communities is also useful in encouraging entrepreneurship. Thus, people are able to motivate others and help them decide to think in a different way and to take a risk in order to succeed. Secondly, the flow of knowledge between organizations for the purpose of learning is the foundation of sustainable competitive advantage (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Organizations can benefit from sharing knowledge and effective practices with partners operating outside of the company. Such exchange of knowledge can enhance processes, productivity, and overall decision-making. In addition, knowledge sharing across an organization and with other organizations also helps to create collaboration and cooperation. It evolves into a partnership whereby everyone becomes involved in the manner in which certain projects are developed and completed, and through resource sharing and the exchange of support, positive results are achieved for all.

Third, the sharing of tacit knowledge between different projects in an organization increases the efficiency of project implementation and knowledge acquisition. With the kinds of knowledge and lessons obtained from previous projects, the project teams will be in a position not to repeat the same mistakes that were made and, similarly, to benefit from the positive attributes and actions that were performed. Such knowledge sharing results in better project performance, higher probabilities of success, and helps in enhancing project management as a part of organizational learning. Furthermore, productivity and performance within teams can also be improved. When knowledge is shared within a team, all the members can draw from the available knowledge and address their problems more efficiently.

Last but not least, knowledge sharing also supports the development and

spread of organizational values. In this way, organizations are able to develop a pool of knowledge as a reference point regarding their intellectual and cultural standards. According to Schein (2010), these can be used to guide behaviors towards more effective outcomes that can positively impact the firm's organizational culture and ultimately translate to increased employee commitment. Another component that can also help in increasing the quality of services and decreasing production cycles is knowledge sharing. Conveying information to customers, suppliers, and foreign partners helps organizations receive feedback concerning their performance, which is vital in enhancing the quality of products or services. They can also look for opportunities to innovate and collaborate on common solutions.

When information is shared, work relations between various departments within the same business entity can improve. Hence, through exchanging knowledge and ideas, departments can cooperate toward achieving their targets. Such cooperation can enhance working relationships and ensure there is easy and effective communication, which improves outcomes. It can also promote a culture of learning and creation in an organization as well as support the sharing of knowledge among people. This indicates that learning and knowledge management are important values that should be promoted in organizations. Organizations encourage workers to ask for information, disseminate information, and try out innovations (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2023; Gupta, 2020). This active and developing culture of studying and creation can result in better ways of solving challenges, greater receptiveness to change, and a stronger market position.

Finally, sharing knowledge between organizations is beneficial in developing a sustainable competitive advantage (Rogers, 2003). Knowledge sharing between organizations provides details about trends in the industry, market, and technologies. The ability to share knowledge facilitates an organization's adaptability to the markets they serve and can lead to new products, services, or business strategies. Therefore, it can be concluded that knowledge sharing is of significance for people, organizations, and learning communities, as it has many advantages and can bring substantial benefits.

Based on the findings of the paper, it is generalizable that there are myriad advantages and benefits of knowledge sharing within persons, organizations, and learning communities (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996; Wenger, 1998). This outlines different manners in which knowledge sharing supports the development of innovation (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2023; Gupta, 2020; Rogers, 2003; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996) and creativity (Amabile, 1996), learning and growth, cooperation and collaboration (Gray, 1989), networking and the creation of social capital (Li, Fan, & Wu, 2021; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), learning organization development and change (Garvin, 1993; Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991), as well as performance and efficiency improvement. The paper also devotes significant attention to the process of knowledge sharing as a critical element in enhancing organizational culture (Schein, 2010) based on the principles of constant development and learning. It highlights the

importance of knowledge sharing in eliminating repeated work, especially where time and effort are major components. Additionally, the paper discusses how knowledge sharing promotes creativity, novelty, originality, and innovation (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2023; Gupta, 2020; Rogers, 2003; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996). It also suggests how knowledge sharing increases organizational responsiveness and preparedness to change quickly as a result of shifts in the external environment. Hence, by presenting a concrete discussion of the various benefits and effects of knowledge sharing, the paper can be beneficial for any person or company looking for strategies to foster knowledge sharing in a way that supports the achievement of business ideals on learning and innovation.

Defining Knowledge Sharing

Although much has been said about the benefits of knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022), it is important to clarify what the term actually means. Knowledge sharing refers to the act of distributing or transferring knowledge, information, and experience between individuals, learning organizations, and knowledge communities (Cheng, Wang, & Chen, 2024). This process can occur in both formal settings; such as training sessions, workshops, and seminars, and informal settings like discussions, team collaborations, and peer interactions (Bloomfire, 2025). In practice, knowledge sharing allows people and organizations to learn from one another and build collective understanding.

Explicit knowledge refers to information that can be easily documented, transmitted, and stored; such as manuals, reports, and databases (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). In contrast, **tacit knowledge** is more personal, experience-based, and often harder to articulate. It includes insights, intuitions, and skills acquired through practice and is typically shared through close interactions, mentoring, or apprenticeships (Lam, 2000; HBR, 2024). Tacit knowledge plays a crucial role in fostering creativity and innovation within individuals and teams (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2023).

Benefits of Knowledge Sharing among Individuals

The following are some of the advantages likely to be achieved through knowledge sharing among people (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996). Firstly, knowledge sharing involves acquiring new and useful information from others, which helps individuals learn from the experiences of others. It makes it possible to gain new insights or perspectives, thereby increasing one's general knowledge on a subject matter and even acquiring new skills and information. This, in turn, results in both personal and professional growth, as well as improved performance efficiency.

Similarly, the exchange of information increases communication and cooperation between individuals in their tasks. Sharing knowledge enables people to work more closely as a team through coordinated problem-solving based on shared understanding. It can also lead to greater team or organizational output, increased creativity, and more effective ways of dealing with challenges.

In addition, knowledge sharing between individuals promotes the development of a learning organization (Garvin, 1993; Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991) by enhancing organizational competence. Furthermore, it fosters a culture of learning and continuous improvement. By sharing knowledge, individuals contribute to a collective intelligence and help create a learning community in which everyone benefits from the expertise and experiences of others.

At the individual level, knowledge sharing builds trust. When people share what they know, it reflects a culture of mutual support and cooperation, which can strengthen relationships and coordination among members, leading to effective working relationships and a healthy organizational climate.

Additionally, sharing knowledge can spark new ideas and insights. Learning something from an outsider's perspective can ignite creativity, leading to the generation of new concepts, enhanced problem-solving skills, and the development of more efficient ways to address challenges.

Finally, the sharing of knowledge positively impacts self-confidence and empowers individuals. Those who pass knowledge to others improve the lives of the recipients, while also enhancing their own self-esteem. Feeling valued and appreciated within an organization can boost motivation, encourage proactive behavior, and increase overall job satisfaction.

Impacts of Knowledge Sharing in Learning Communities

Learning communities are working networks of people who meet with the common purpose of sharing information, ideas, and materials with the aim of helping each other to learn. These can be presented in various shapes, and can include professional affiliations, common interest groups, or specific communities within an organization.

From the perspective of knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996), learning communities (Wenger, 1998) are effective tools for exchanging knowledge among individuals and organizations. Participation in learning communities is beneficial because one can enrich personal knowledge, hear others' experiences, and be introduced to diverse ideas and practices. This, in turn, improves problem-solving, idea organization, and innovation (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2023; Gupta, 2020; Rogers, 2003; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996).

Furthermore, learning communities foster an environment in which members feel comfortable sharing experiences. This sense of trust and credibility strengthens the community and encourages ongoing knowledge exchange. They also facilitate knowledge sharing across organizational boundaries, bringing together people from different affiliations and sectors, which promotes cross-pollination of knowledge and leads to new perspectives, innovative solutions, and broader understanding.

Learning communities are also valuable as sources of social capital (Li, Fan, & Wu, 2021; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 2000). Through interactions and collaboration (Gray, 1989), members develop relationships, trust, and a sense of

belonging. On a personal level, this social capital provides access to products and services through enhanced networks, mentorship opportunities, and career development partnerships.

At an organizational level, social capital derived from learning communities can improve team performance, productivity, and decision-making efficiency. Additionally, learning communities contribute to the creation of a shared body of knowledge within an organization or industry, serving as a form of corporate memory that supports continuous improvement.

Detailed Analysis of Knowledge Sharing Advantages

The flow of knowledge in-between people, organizations, and learning networks is beneficial in several ways when considered from a KM ecology standpoint.

Innovation & Creativity

As people exchange knowledge and ideas with others, including within organizations and learning communities (Wenger, 1998), innovation (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2023; Gupta, 2020; Rogers, 2003; Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996) and creativity (Amabile, 1996) increase. Informal knowledge exchange allows people to learn and hear how others solve problems and generate new solutions. This sharing process may lead to innovation and the creation of new products, services, or even processes. Within knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996), ideas can be transferred from one domain or discipline to another, contributing to a culture of creativity and innovation. For instance, in a learning community comprising persons from different fields and experience levels, the sharing of ideas from the host organization ensures that new approaches to challenges are developed.

Accelerated Learning and Development

Learning and development are facilitated and accelerated through knowledge sharing. People and institutions gain access to a ready pool of know-how, professional experiences, and examples of best practice. They can learn from what others have done right or wrong and avoid starting the cycle over again. For example, in a learning community, one student may benefit from the experiences of others who have already navigated complex issues or tasks, reducing learning difficulties.

Enhanced Relationship Building

Relationship development and enhancement is another benefit of knowledge sharing, as it improves interactions between people, groups, organizations, and learning communities. As a result of sharing knowledge, trust is built, and cooperation increases. This fosters a spirit of teamwork, encouraging cooperation, idea exchange, and collective contribution toward organizational goals and objectives.

Improved Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

The sharing of knowledge creates a repository of ideas and know-how from many individuals, organizations, and learning communities. Diverse knowledge and perspectives allow for better analysis of issues and challenges. Knowledge sharing

also promotes collective intelligence within a group, leading to improved decisions, solutions, and other valuable outcomes.

Operational Efficiency

The use of knowledge management (Serenko & Bontis, 2022; Andreeva & Kianto, 2021) enables organizations to work more efficiently by simplifying the identification and transfer of knowledge. This prevents the need to reinvent the wheel, saving time and resources. Organizations can share best practices and use prior knowledge to improve operations. Knowledge sharing also supports a culture of continuous learning, encouraging employees to update their knowledge and share insights with the team.

Fostering Innovation and Creativity

Knowledge sharing is closely tied to the creation of innovation and creativity among individuals, organizations, and learning communities. It exposes individuals to new ideas, problem-solving approaches, and methods, sparking fresh thinking and idea generation.

Personal and Professional Development

Knowledge exchange is a key factor in personal growth and professional enhancement. When people and organizations learn from each other, they help to build a learning culture. Exposure to new ideas and practices can improve professional performance. Promoting a knowledge-sharing culture also involves influencing attitudes and behaviors so that individuals are willing and able to share knowledge successfully as part of a firm's business strategy.

Strengthened Social and Organizational Relations

Knowledge sharing fosters stronger relationships between individuals, organizations, and learning communities. It creates togetherness and fellowship, enabling members to draw from a pool of diverse expertise, which improves solutions and decision quality.

Creation of Social Capital and Networks

It helps create social capital (Li, Fan, & Wu, 2021; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) and networks. When knowledge is exchanged, relationships and connections are formed with people who share similar interests or fields, providing valuable access to resources, assistance, and opportunities.

Organizational Learning and Adaptation

Knowledge sharing facilitates organizational learning and adaptation. Best practices, lessons from previous experiences, and new information can circulate quickly, making it easier for organizations to adjust strategies in response to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Cultivation of Creativity through Diverse Perspectives

Encouraging knowledge sharing promotes creativity and innovation. Interaction with different people provides fresh sources of inspiration and alternative viewpoints, leading to unique solutions. Consolidating knowledge from many employees builds a common experience base that can produce ideas no single individual might conceive.

Increased Performance and Productivity

Knowledge sharing boosts performance and productivity by widening access to expertise and resources.

Informed and Inclusive Decision-Making

When knowledge is widely distributed, it is exposed to multiple perspectives and expertise, improving decision-making and problem-solving quality.

Development of a Learning Organization Culture

Knowledge sharing leads to the development of a learning organization culture (Garvin, 1993; Pedler, Burgoyne, & Boydell, 1991), fostering continuous improvement. It ensures that individuals and organizations update their information base regularly, supporting personal and organizational growth.

Expansion of Networks and Collaborative Opportunities

By sharing knowledge, networks are created and collaboration is achieved (Gray, 1989). This enables individuals, organizations, and learning communities to connect with like-minded and knowledgeable peers, creating opportunities for business, skills exchange, and information sharing.

Reduction in Redundant Work

Knowledge sharing minimizes the repetition of tasks, saving time and resources. Lessons learned by others prevent the repetition of past mistakes, conserving effort and avoiding reinvention.

Promotion of Market-Relevant Innovation

Disseminating knowledge allows others to develop new alternatives, leading to innovative solutions, strategies, and market-unique products.

Enhanced Organizational Agility and Adaptability

Knowledge transfer increases organizational agility and adaptability, preparing organizations to respond effectively in rapidly changing environments. Shared knowledge can help identify emerging technologies, new markets, and evolving customer needs.

Support for Strategic Decision-Making

Knowledge sharing provides critical information for decision-making at both strategic and operational levels.

Enriched Issue-Resolution Capabilities

Sharing knowledge exposes individuals and organizations to multiple viewpoints and experiences, strengthening their problem-solving abilities.

Role of KM Ecology Lens in Enhancing Knowledge Sharing

The KM Ecology is a valuable tool for viewing knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996) as a process encompassing people at the individual and organizational levels as well as learning organizations. It focuses on relations and dependency between these entities; this is because successful knowledge sharing cannot be achieved by any given entity working alone. KM Ecology lens helps in sharing and creating knowledge under the working of knitting the entities together by understanding the features that come with knowledge exchange at the different entities. Thus, by relating knowledge

sharing to the communities' ecology, one notices that it is easier to determine the resources, relations, and practices that support the flow of knowledge in an organizational setting.

The KM Ecology also helps by underlining the notion that involves creating an environment that will encourage the sharing of the knowledge. These involve promoting transparency and employee confidence to contribute to the current understanding of the organization's dynamics. Further, the KM Ecology lens exposes knowledge as a resource that can be located both in the meeting of an individual need and in the relationships among people. This means that knowledge sharing should not be viewed as a game in which a winner takes all and in which any number of losers are left behind, but a scenario that brings benefits to all parties concerned.

Additionally, the application of the KM Ecology lens stresses the need to deal with the issue of connecting the two poles of knowledge, explicit and tacit knowledge (Smith, 2001; Lam, 2000; Polanyi, 1966). This means that for capturing and synchronizing both types of knowledge it is necessary to introduce the structure for their sharing and transferring, implying that they are opposite but essential for the organization learning and innovating.

Limitations of this paper for future research

However, the research using the KM Ecology lens involves some of the following limitations that must be taken into consideration for future research. On the same note, this paper specifically dwells on the benefits of knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996) among individuals, organizations, and learning communities (Wenger, 1998). This declines to discuss the difficulty and possible impediments of sharing knowledge, for example, culture in an organization, leaders, or enhanced technology.

Secondly, this paper fails to discuss the measures that can be applied in order to increase organizational knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996). Additionally, this paper fails to discuss the RI of knowledge sharing (Dhir, 2023; Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2022; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996) on another knowledge classification, namely the tacit and the explicit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Finally, the paper lacks a thorough discussion on the functions of relations and cooperation in knowledge transfer activities. Thus, in essence, it focuses much on the positive effects of born global firms' knowledge sharing while almost omitting how social capital (Li, Fan, & Wu, 2021; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 2000) and human capital act as the net of knowledge sharing. Therefore, future research could focus on employing case studies or survey research designs to establish the hurdles and difficulties that organizations experience in the sharing of knowledge. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for future research to explore in detail what concrete actions or processes an organization should undertake in order to support the sharing of knowledge. These limitations offer directions for further research on

the specifics of flow and limitations of knowledge sharing in an organizational setting.

CONCLUSION

Knowledge sharing is a valuable theme that has every potential of ensuring the prosperity and continuity of people, firms, enterprises, and learning networks. Knowledge sharing does not only promote solving the problem and improving the ability of innovation, but it also builds social relations within the organization. From the perspective of KM Ecology it is possible to identify several benefits of knowledge sharing between individuals, organizations, and learning communities. It encourages people to work together and fosters the spirit of teamwork and partnership, helps in the identification and utilization of resources and fosters a culture of knowledge sharing. In addition, knowledge sharing assists to overcome the gap between the codified and the in-codified knowledge since it supports good decisions and organization learning. Also, the process of sharing knowledge goes not only to the gain of an individual but for all the participants. It positively influences the stock of information within and among the members of a given community hence subsequent development. In conclusion, the KM Ecology helps to draw attention to the interconnection and interdependence of the people, organizations and learning communities in the process of knowledge sharing.

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