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Analysis of Attitudes and Barriers to Knowledge Management among Undergraduate Learners in Higher Learning Institutions

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Abstract: Knowledge management (KM) increases institutional innovation as one of the sources of new ideas. KM has gained extensive growth and attention in the knowledge society. KM and higher learning institutions (HLIs) are two terms that are synchronized where HLIs are the hub of the knowledge process. Human development activities through quality education, research, and the generation of new ideas in the field of interest are the primary source of knowledge creation. This study aimed to analyze attitudes and barriers to KM among undergraduate learners in higher learning institutions using a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey. The study is descriptive. Primary and secondary data were used in the investigation. The sample size was 255, which comes from different HLIs in the UAE. The results show that most learners were ready to know and share knowledge. Besides, the author also recognized that knowledge sharing (KS) could positively contribute to HLIs. Learners were mostly positive about KM and were aware of its importance in HLIs. Most of the learners shared positive attitudes toward KM operation. Some of the challenges, such as lack of time for KS and lack of depth in learner relationships have been discussed.

Keywords: Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, higher learning institutions.

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1 Introduction

Knowledge Management has been clearly defined as a free set of beliefs, methods, techniques, and observations that focus on the capture, storage, sharing, use and development of organizational knowledge (Wu et al., 2016; Razi et al., 2019). Nassuora (2010) pointed out that it is difficult to characterize the KM because of the various extent of significance. KM is called delivery procedures to provide accurate information to the right individuals at the right time and in the right way (Zahrawi & Yahya, 2009). KM's goal is to try to highlight the best knowledge at the right time and to enable the most suitable individual to choose the best of available options. KM began in the mid-1990s and developed very rapidly in the commercial division. Unlike KM's achievements in the business division, leaners have become a hot topic for these days (Wang et al., 2015). At this point, KM in higher learning institutions has become a hot topic and powerful work has been documented (Jing et al., 2006; Sandhu, 2008; Valerie et al., 2010).

To better recognize KM, one must first examine what knowledge means and how it differs from data and information. Data, information, and knowledge do not have the same meaning (Fahey & Prusak, 1998). The data are described as non-significant discrete facts, while the information is significant facts. While knowledge is described as information combined with experience and judgment (see figure 1). Knowledge is an important part of (HLIs) (Osama et al., 2018). Learners are an important part of HLIs. The care of learners should, therefore, be the key point for learners in HLIs. At present, with the rapid improvement of the UAE economy, HLIs have improved at the same pace. As a result, knowledge creation usually starts with a different mix of tacit knowledge (TK) and explicit knowledge (EK) but also includes collaborations between TK an EK (Wu et al., 2016). The ability of such a connection is based on the original abilities of the individual, as in the unique settings.

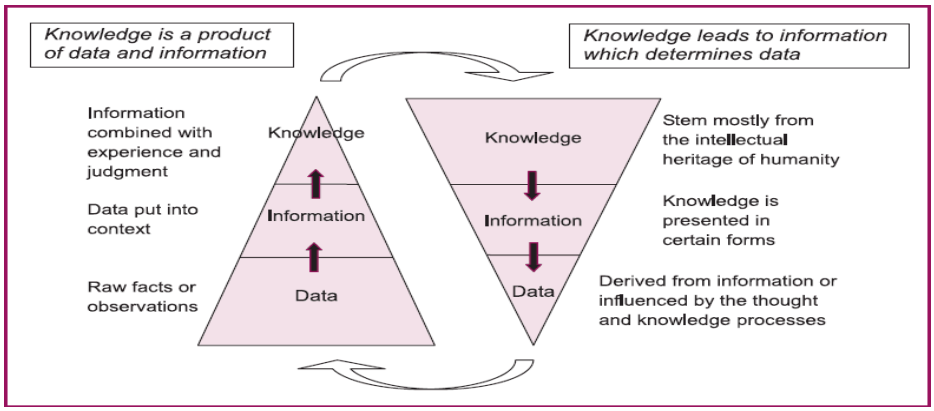

Figure 1: Data-Information-Knowledge Hierarchy

Subsequently, knowledge creation begins with another mix of different data, information, and knowledge includes the relationships between TK an EK (AlMulhim, 2017). The capacity of such a connection rests on the inventive capacities of the individual, just as in the unique situation. Knowledge can be isolated by TK and EK (AlMulhim, 2017; Mohajan, 2016). The KM procedure changes between TK and EK (AlMulhim, 2017). Knowledge is produced by the link between TK and EK, as opposed to implicit or expressed knowledge. Nonaka (1995) have shown the link between the implicit and EK offered by SECI (socialization, outsourcing, combination, internalization) of the spiral model for gathering organizational knowledge (Nonaka, 1995).

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The best way to instill a good KM culture is through Knowledge Sharing (KS). Jessica et al (2008) and Fullwood (2013). Jessica et al (2008) also noted that "although the majority of the KM literature discusses KS activities within profit-oriented enterprises, it is becoming a trend that more universities and HLIs have started to adopt KM practices as well, thus KS emerges as an important topic for discussion in academic institutions".

KS is a significant unit of the KM framework in an association (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anwar, 2016; Holsapple & Joshi, 2002; Kuraś & Kuraś, 2015; Raudeliūnienė et al., 2018). Sharma et al. (2012) displayed KM's operational target to "guarantee that the correct information is accessible to the correct processors, in the correct portrayals and on the correct occasions, for playing out their insight exercises (and to achieve this for the correct expense)". It is critical to be featured here that KS is a piece of information for the executives. KS guarantees that the information is accessible and conveyed at the last possible moment. Besides, by giving powerful answers for clients, KS may save time and improve quality. Despite the positive attitude of learners towards KS, some reviews also highlighted some barriers to learners' KS. Several previous studies have identified a wide range of barriers to KS (Yes¸il & Hırlak, 2013; World Bank, 2018).

The motivation for this study was to analyze attitudes and barriers to KM among undergraduate learners in higher learning institutions using a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey. The information gathered from this survey was used to obtain appropriate estimates that will help undergraduate learners to supervise and exploit the knowledge of the field productively.

2. Knowledge management in higher learning institutions

HLIs today need to focus on ways to improve the quality and skills of learners to help them cope with the demands of the labor market. The changing nature of work increases the need to prepare skills for the 21st century (Ngoc-Tan & Gregar, 2018). KM increases institutional innovation because knowledge is the source of new ideas (Chen et al., 2010; Inkinen et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2012). This knowledge must be collected, stored and made accessible to all members of the organization. KM encourages HLIs to improve their ability to gather and share information and knowledge, to apply them to critical thinking and to help research and consistently improve their work (Chen et al., 2010; Denti & Hemlin, 2012; Sangeeta, 2015). KM in the education system must reflect and realize information at all levels, from management level to learner level, to improve the expert knowledge of employees and improve the quality of teachers and learners (Fahey & Prusak, 1998). HLIs are seen as responsible for the achievements of learners in a self-governing, modern and flexible education system (Akareem & Hossain, 2016). In return, they get compensation for their efforts and their responsibility. The knowledge, skills, and talents of the learners must be kept in the knowledge base. This encourages them to make new knowledge and gives a platform to new learners. KM provides strategies for capturing TK in the learner's brain and practices and records them for some time later. Moreover, an effective technique to KM by HLIs will support a transition to a knowledge-based economy, increase KS, improve academic programs, and enhance the overall effectiveness of HLIs. HLIs are visible as a platform for learners to share ideas and perceptions (Tan, 2016). Based on previous literature, the benefits of being involved in KS for organizations especially for HLIs are as follows:

- Reduce search duration
- Reducing asset progress for regulatory missions
- Audit of previous research efforts and recommendations
- Expansion of valuable external and internal administration
- Improve learning and educate progress
- Improve basic leadership processes and problem-solving

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- Increase control over the divisive efforts currently being put in place concerning staff, special care staff, dubbing administrative staff, and line personnel
- Increased capacity to support a decentralized organizational model and decentralized core management
- Better data shows better choices in reality

3 Methods and procedures

3. 1 Participants and data collection

Primary and secondary data were used in the investigation. The primary information was gathered by allocating questionnaires to undergraduate learners from different HLIs in the UAE. The sample in this study consisted of undergraduate learners. The sample relied on 255 undergraduate learners with a response rate of 82.85%.

3.2 Questionnaire item generation

A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey was arranged, isolated into four sections: Section 1 covers statistics and relevant factors including gender, age, and faculty. Section 2 covers questions about preferred KM channels. Section 3 contains questions on the general attitude towards KM. Learners got a blend of positive and negative statements that enabled them to increase a larger understanding of the current situation and the exceptional preconditions of KM for undergraduate learners and to discover existing practices and barriers to learning and research in HLIs. Section 4 contains questions on the factors that impede KS. All queries in this survey used the five Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

4 Results and discussion

Based on statistics and other demographic data, 66.2% of the 255 respondents were male. 33.8% of respondents were under 20 years of age and 44.1% were between the range of 21 and 25 years of age. As far as learner’s faculty, 29.3% of learners from IT faculty trailed by Business Administration faculty with 15.5%, Arts Humanities & Social Sciences faculty 8.6%. Figure 2 below presents the statistic profile of respondents.

As shown in figure 3, “Online Chat communication” was found to be the most favored KM type with 92%, followed by “face-to-face” 91%, “Email” 85%, “Online Learning System” 82%, “Short Messaging Service (SMS)” 70%. Figure 3 demonstrates the KM channels chosen for the learners.

Learners obtained a mixture of positive and negative statements that allowed them to recognize their preferred attitude to KS. 84% of Learners said they "strongly agree" or "agree" that "sharing knowledge with peers could benefit all students" (Figure 4). Although a larger part of the learners (92%) appreciated "strongly agree" or "agree" to explain that “learners should voluntarily share information with their peers”. Also, the majority part of the learners (67%) evaluated "strongly agree" or "agree” for the recommendation “that information and KS is a type of plagiarism”. 87% of learners evaluated "strongly disagree" or "disagree" for the recommendation that “It is better to avoid sharing information with peers”. This result could be understood by the fact that learners were mostly positive about KM and were aware of its importance in HLIs. Most of the learners shared some positive attitudes about KM operation (Sriratanaviriyakul & El-Den, 2017). Besides, the learners commonly influenced a positive attitude to KS and were aware of its importance in HLIs (Sriratanaviriyakul & El-Den, 2017). Also, many studies have shown that students

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have more opportunities to share their knowledge and positive attitudes towards SK (Chang & Chuang , 2011; Choi et al., 2008; Hung, 2011; Lin, 2007; Quigley, 2007; Wang & Noe, 2010).

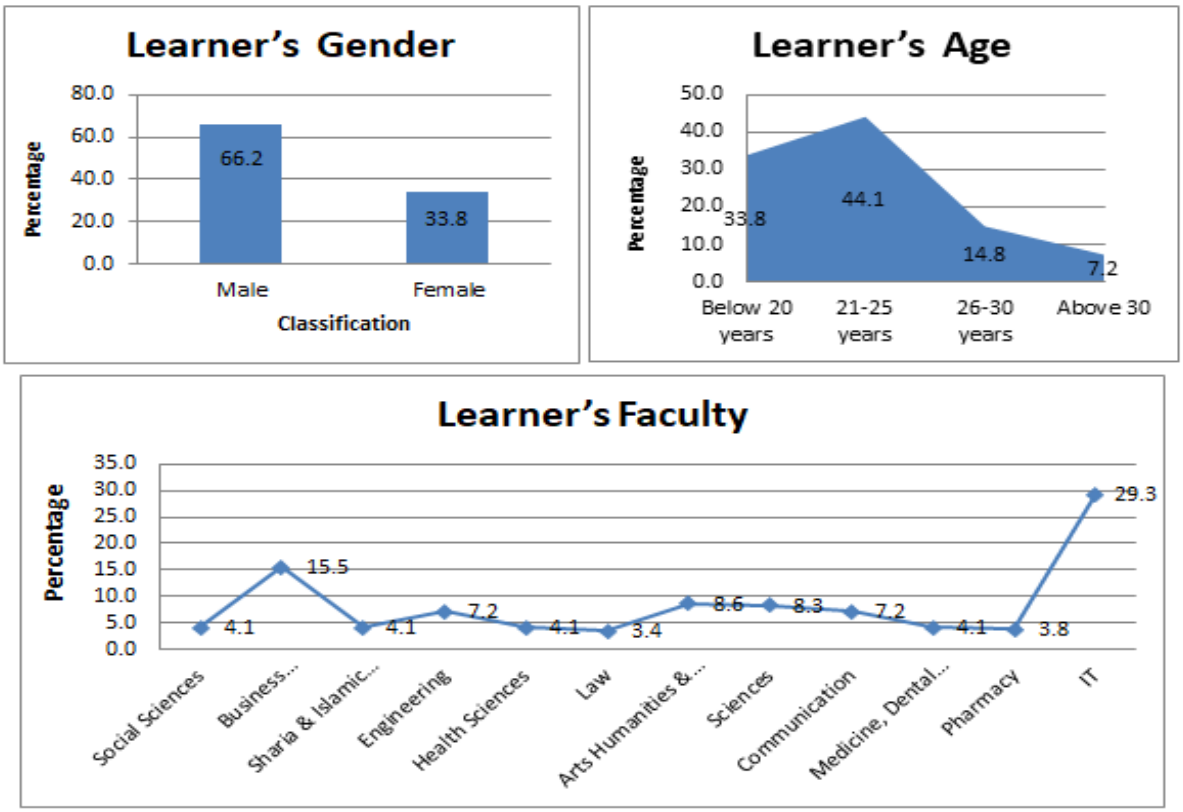

Figure 2: Learner's demographic profile

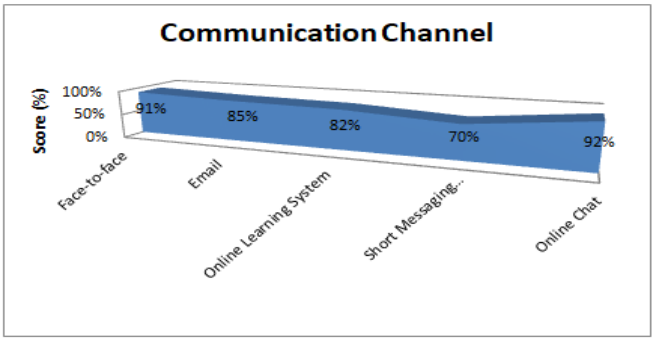

Figure 3: Preferred KM Channels for Learners

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Figure 5 illustrates learners' views of barriers to KS. The barriers have been listed in ascending order of mean value. One could be realized that the "lack of depth in relationships" (M = 4.21), the fear that others work better (M = 4.11), the lack of general time for KS (M = 3.87) and the lack of trust among learners (M = 3.78) are the most fundamental barrier. In addition, the fear of providing misinformation, preventing personal opinions, not knowing what to share, and the lack of a KS culture were considered weak in terms of barriers to KS. These results are compatible with many studies (Arntzen & Worasinchai, 2012; Kukko, 2013; Tsai et al., 2013). Besides, many studies have also shown that a lack of depth in relationships was considered as one of the major barriers to KS among learners (Hussein & Nassuora, 2011; Majid & Wey, 2009).

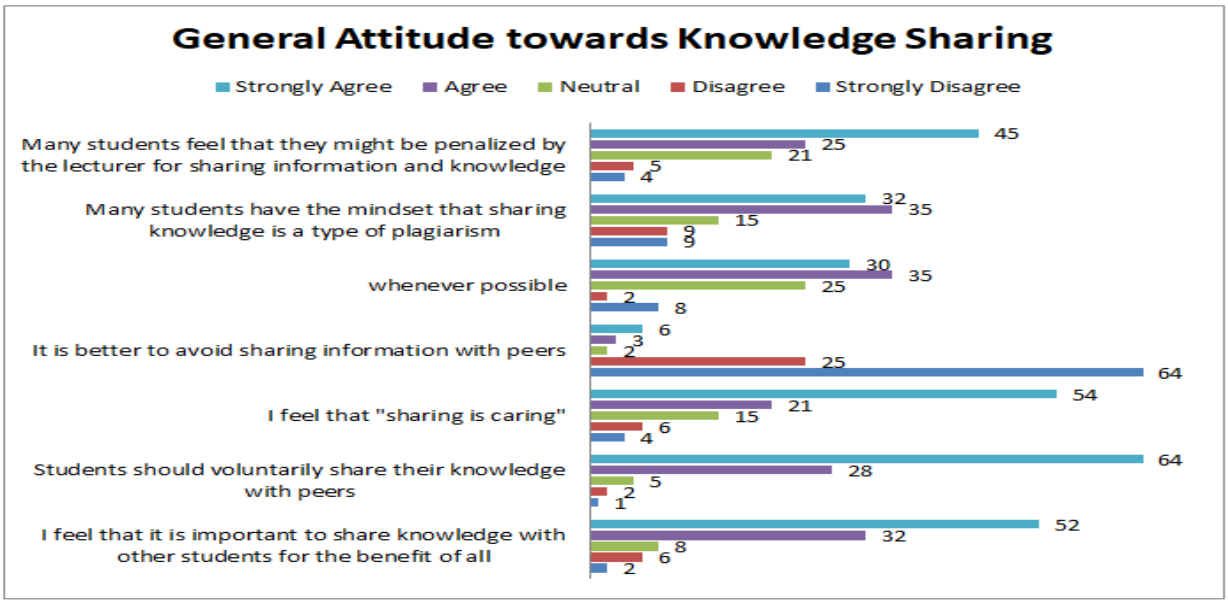

Figure 4: General Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing

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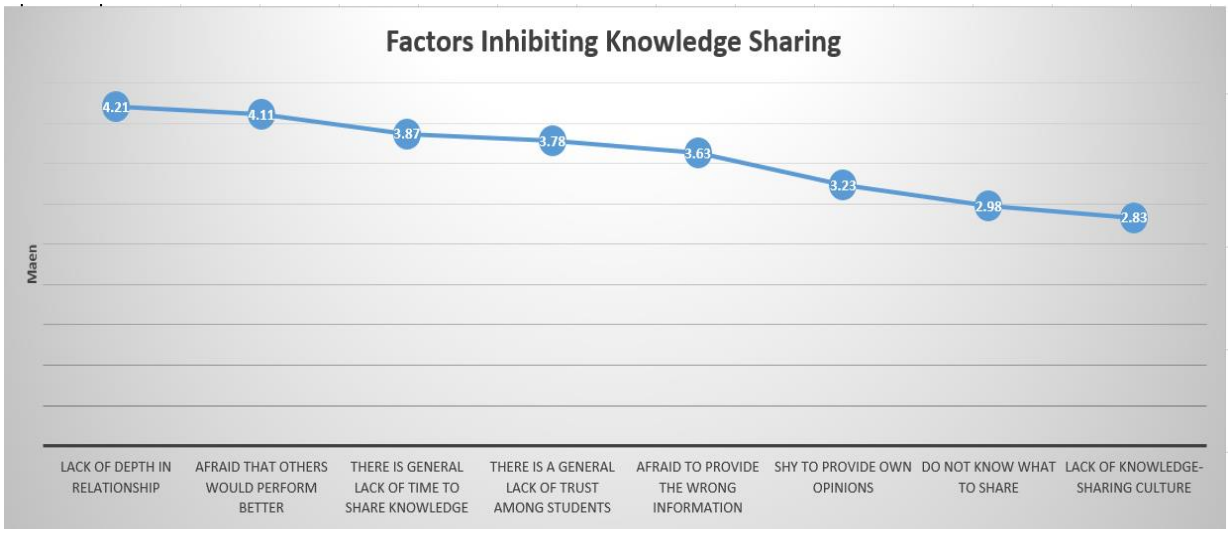

Figure 5: Factors limiting knowledge sharing

5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyze attitudes and barriers to KM among undergraduate learners in higher learning institutions using a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey. Effective KS among learners is critical for HLIs. This descriptive examination revealed that learners were very convinced of KS involvement in HLIs. More effort needs to be made and awareness created to confirm that learners realize the benefits of KS. Overall, learners demonstrated a positive attitude toward KS through KS. In addition, the results also showed that a lack of time for KS was considered a major barrier to KS among learners. Since the review was limited to HLIs, the results are unlikely to be suitable for all HLIs.

From this review, it is evident that HLIs have culture-supporting knowledge, and KS is practiced in various ways on many fronts. KS is important for all organizations, especially HLIs. HLIs leaders should facilitate KS activities by developing suitable KS and KM rules and actions to encourage and support the KS community. This review revealed that learners' attitudes are strong predictors of deliberate behavior and true KS. HLIs should promote positive attitudes of KS by dispelling the fear of some learners of losing control of information. In the same way, a larger sample size for different HLIs should be considered in future research. Finally, other research strategies such as interviews should be done using another method.

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