The Role of Knowledge Management to Enhancing Public Services in Dubai

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Abstract

This study aims to highlight the importance of knowledge management and the factors influencing its implementation within the public sector organizations in Dubai. This study provides a clear understanding of the concept of knowledge management in the public sector and the ability of these sectors to collect and preserve knowledge, knowledge management. This requires the development of knowledge to review and strengthen their strategies to collect document and disseminate their workforce knowledge in order to achieve better institutional performance and to ensure that the knowledge of outstanding expertise and competencies remains within the institution even after leaving their sources for the organizations. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to 215 systematic randomly sampled respondents from seven public departments. Data collected were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. It was found that all the independent variables were significantly related to organizational performances. The multiple regressions analysis showed that all the predictor variables contributed 55.5% towards the organizational performances of the public departments in Dubai. The research implication and suggestion were discussed at the end of the paper.

Keywords: knowledge management, knowledge management processes, organization performance, governmental sector

Introduction

Dubai is a rapidly changing city due to the government's implementation of various social and economic policies. Dubai is the most competitive city in the Arab world, and its diversity is responsible for the success because it enhances economic resilience.

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The interventions resulted in widespread adjustments in the city, thus prompting departments to respond accordingly due to the presence of new information. Consequently, Knowledge Management would be pertinent to assist Dubai government and its residents to determine the appropriate ways to utilize such data because the economy has become agonistic. Dubai Governments as part of UAE governments have realized that knowledge is one of the most valuable assets in supporting the productivity of the employees Knowledge Management Advantage is a commitment to building a sustainable learning culture for the development of departments in Dubai (Federal Competitiveness & Statistics Authority, 2018; Radwan & Milhem, 2015).

Problem Statement

The success of economic diversification in the UAE led to various changes in the country. For example, it became attractive to foreign investors, which led to an influx of non-UAE citizens into the nation. Increased tourism also means that visitors from all over the globe frequently visit the place for leisure purposes. The presence of foreigners in the country creates the need to understand citizens since such individuals' exhibit practices and sometimes beliefs that vary from local ones.

Furthermore, the Dubai government intends to increase productivity, which would further help to diversify the economy. The problem arises from relying on low-skilled labor, sponsorship program and social contractors that rewards Emiratis with economic benefits for political loyalty. Accomplishing the objective of improving market output would result in an influx of expatriates into the country; the individuals would provide exposure to different beliefs and traditions.

Additionally, the UAE's status as a business hub has attracted many firms. Its seventeenth position implies that it provides corporations with a supportive environment for commercial activities. The presence of numerous enterprises implies the emergence of extensive loads of data as entities engage in similar or unique transactions. Furthermore, the economy has been expanding rapidly and the business medium has become more complex; thus, firms need pertinent information to perform in such a competitive environment. Moreover, the state had initiated changes in the federal government that would minimize the number of ministries but increase officials who would handle dynamic, strategic and national files, hence increasing flexibility. The presence of numerous enterprises, coupled with administrative adjustments, imply the presence of different kinds of information. To benefit from such data, corporations need to utilize KM, whose adoption is currently low; consequently, the government has formulated initiatives intended at motivating both private and public enterprises to embrace it. Therefore, the absence of sufficient adoption of KM poses an obstacle to economic progress in Dubai government. Managers of business organizations have caressed knowledge, put it into replicable models and made other people acquire it for applications towards the business

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successful operations. However many challenges have always persisted in the development of the organizational framework.

Literature review

The definition of Knowledge Management is the range of techniques, tools and human resources used to collect, manage, disseminate and use knowledge to serve all the enterprise's information assets of a particular institution, and the skills possessed by individual workers. Knowledge Management is usually associated with decision-making in institutions (Grover & Davenport, 2001). The Knowledge management programs reveal the existence of many interrelated processes that plays a role shaping and building knowledge management. These processes include human, technological and operational interactions that lead to the production, collection, organization, accessibility and use of knowledge (Serban and Luan 2002, Bhatt 2001).

Table 1: The reasons for the application of knowledge management in government bodies in Dubai and the desired results

Dubai Courts	Roads and Transport Authority	Dubai Water and Electricity Authority
Knowledge management has been applied in the Dubai courts for a long time, after a member of the court put it on them	Senior management introduced Knowledge Management to:	Meet the requirements of the Dubai Excellence Program (DGEP
`Promoting knowledge transfer and creation	Collect knowledge through study, training and best practices	Recommended by an external consulting firm to improve performance
Achieve corporate quality	Exchange and share knowledge among RTA staff	Improved internal performance, productivity and efficiency in service delivery
Increase productivity, quality and quality of services provided	Classification, indexing, preservation and retrieval of knowledge	

Source: (MBRSG, 2018)

The current state of Knowledge Management in Dubai's Public sector organizations: Assessment and Recommendations, is a report done by Al-Yahra (2011). A study presented by the Dubai School of Government, Mhamed Biygautane and Khalid Al-

Yahya. This report examines also the consequences of recruitment methods on how knowledge is developed and documented to serve corporate goals and objectives. The main difference between this report and a similar report is that it focuses on the link between the source of knowledge, how it is managed and the impact on the age of organizations and institutions. The diversity of the sources of knowledge and the point to where it will affect the performance of the government firms is the main link in the report (Biygautane & Al-Yahya, 2011).

## Knowledge Management Challenges and opportunity

A study was conducted to measure the challenges and opportunities by the Dubai School of Government in 2010, under the title of Knowledge Management in Dubai Public sector. The study focuses on the factors affecting the implementation of the Knowledge Management on the public sector along with its own importance. The concepts measure the ability of the articles to fully understand and store the knowledge, motives, benefits, barriers and chances to implement the Knowledge Management program in the public sector. The feedback followed this study was recommending the idea of focusing on the management of knowledge and its development (Biygautane & Al-Yahya, 2010).

The economy of the United Arab Emirates fits in with a description of the economy that causes rapid expansion and basic complexity. This fact requires the use of KM to create, capture, distribute and utilize knowledge. As a result, the Government of Dubai has started to encourage KM adoption to increase success. For example, Dubai has established many free zones, the Internet City, Knowledge Village and the Media City, which seeks to attract media companies, training institutions, ICT companies, software development and foreign universities to meet the information needs of the business community. Investments are aligned with the country's strategic priority of a competitive knowledge economy. The government's actions and policies show that knowledge management is important to the economic development in Dubai.

In the public sector, the government also intends to incorporate KM extensively. It explain that developments in information needs of its business community and globalization influenced national administrations to adopt KM, which would enable them to overcome underlying challenges. The need emanated from the pressure involved in its role of providing the private sector with pertinent infrastructure. The Dubai government encountered such challenges due to the presence of numerous firms in its economy, which prompted the use of KM. It is recommended to reinforce the decision by noting the governments to use KM to run their performance. Therefore, the tool is essential in the Dubai as it enables its administration to perform its role effectively. Therefore, KM is important because it would promote both social and economic progress in Dubai governments.

Research Methodology

The research took the forms of quantitative research adopting the questionnaire as data collection tool. The researchers adopted the descriptive method, which is a method that gives a clear picture of the phenomenon of a study by collecting facts, data and their classification (Carrie Williams, 2007). Quantitative method focuses on gathering numerical or statistical data and generalizing it across a group of people to explain a phenomenon. It is a data analysis that statistically uses computational techniques. The reason of choosing quantitative in the study is because it is often consider reliable for and most appropriate for this type of studies. In addition, a large sample will be taken because it helps in providing a comprehensive picture of a particular phenomenon. (Muijs, 2011).
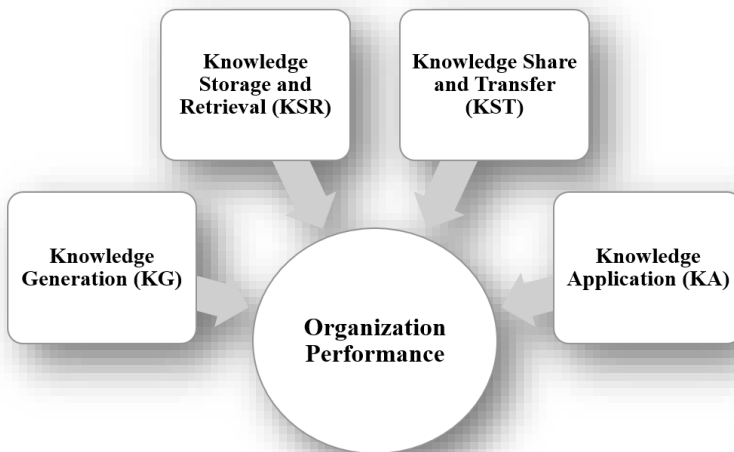
Figure 1: Overview of conceptual framework

The research population for this study includes the government institutions (seven public Departments). This research had used a systematic random sample that consisted of the managers of the knowledge department, heads of departments or those responsible for human resources and information technology working in government institutions in the emirate of Dubai, as well as different level of employees in seven departments. Data collection method from the sample was by distributing the questionnaire through e-mails.

Scholars have used different sample sizes in order to collect their data; Table 1 shows the sample sizes for several studies conducted on the subject of Knowledge Management. The average sample size of all studies found to be around 215 participants.

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Instruments (Questionnaire)

After reviewing the literature on the topic, the questionnaire developed for this study is a closed-ended type. The questionnaire was finalized in two parts as follows: Section I: Included the demographic data of the study sample using five main categories; (age, gender, education level, position and years of experiences). Section II: included one sub-section where it consists of the four Knowledge Management processes (knowledge generation (KG), knowledge storage and retrieval (KSR), knowledge share and transfer (KST) and knowledge application (KA) as well as the dependent variable Organization Performance (OP) where each variable was measured using a set of five questions. The questionnaire scale that measure each variable was designed after examining a number of previous studies in order to come up with a suitable indicators for each variable. These studies helped formulating the final questionnaire (Ahmed, Fiaz & Shoaib, 2015; Downes, 2014; Edwards, Handzic, Carlsson & Nissen, 2003; Lee & Choi, 2003).

According to the literature review, researchers conducted the subject of Knowledge Management framework have used a six-point Likert scale where (six ="Strongly agree".) and (one ="Strongly disagree".).

Table 2: Variable dimensions and number of items

Variable dimensions	No. of Items
Knowledge generation	5
Knowledge storage and retrieval	5
Knowledge transfer and share	5
Knowledge application	5
Organization performance	5
Total	25

1. Data Analysis and Result

Table 3: Demographic Information Analysis

Respondents Profile Summary

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males	355	60.50%
	Females	232	39.50%
Education	Less than HS	5	1%
	High school	58	10%
	High Diploma	82	14%
	Bachelors	281	48%
	Masters	129	22%
	PhD	32	5%

Experience	1 to 5 years	117	20%	
	6 to 10 years	151	26%	
	11 to 15 years	195	33%	
	Above 15 years	124	21%	
Organizations	Dubai Court	59	10%	
	Dubai Electricity and water Authority	58	10%	
	Dubai Health Authority	69	12%	
	Dubai Land Department	78	13%	
	Dubai Municipality	75	13%	
	Financial Audit Department	77	13%	
	Road and Transportation Authority	57	10%	
	Others	114	19%	

The demographic analysis of the research sample consists of around 40% of females and 60% of male workers. Most of the sample holds either a Bachelor or a Master degree. Around 60% of the participants have an experience range between 6 and 15 years. The distribution of the participant among the governmental organizations is almost even.

Independent Variables Inter-Correlations

To test the Multicollinearity issue, we have looked at the Tolerance and VIF scores that can be found in the Coefficients table. If the Tolerance value is less than (0.10) or 10%, this indicates that there is a big chance of multicollinearity. The VIF should be not exceed the value (10) to state that the Multicollinearity does not exist.

Table 4: Coefficients

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	-	-
Knowledge generation (KG)	0.355	2.820
Knowledge storage and retrieval (KSR)	0.356	2.808
knowledge transfer and Share (KTS)	0.149	6.693
Knowledge Application (KA)	0.150	6.676

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a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance (OP)

According to Table 4, The VIF for the four predictors is at an acceptable value. However, we can notice that the VIF score of both indicators Knowledge generation (KG) and Knowledge storage and retrieval (KSR) are relatively lower than knowledge transfer and Share (KTS) and Knowledge Application (KA).

Looking at the Tolerance values of all independent variable (Knowledge generation (KG), Knowledge storage and retrieval (KSR), knowledge transfer and Share (KTS) and Knowledge Application (KA)), it can be notice that all four indicators are at the acceptable level of (0.10) or 10%. We can though conclude that the Multicollinearity issue does not exist in our model.

Knowledge Management Processes Contribution to the prediction of Organization performance

Table 5: KM Indicators Contribution to the prediction of OP

Model Summary Table			ANOVA Table
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig.
0.745	0.555	0.552	0.000
Dependent Variable: OP Independent variables: KG,KSR,KTS, and KA			

After applying the Multiple Regression analysis on the model, the R score (0.745) shows that the four-knowledge management process have a significant influence on Organization performance. The R-Square value (0.555) also provides the same indications. The significant value of the model is below 5%, which indicates that the four predictors influence the outcome significantly.

Conclusion

To sum up, the empirical results of the study shows that there is a strong relationship between adopting the four knowledge management process and the overall organization performance in Dubai governmental sector. The multiple regression analysis indicated that (KG,KRS,KST, and KA) all influences the organization performance significantly. Therefore, it recommended for the public sector organizations in Dubai to keep on implementing the knowledge management in their system as well as following up with it and its outcome. It is proven that adopting the four Knowledge management processes helps in providing a positive influence on the firms towards achieving their goals. As well as, it helps providing a suitable base to collect and preserve knowledge despite the diversity of the nationalities in Dubai, towards achieving better institutional performance and to guarantee the knowledge of outstanding expertise.

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