

Knowledge Management and its Application in Academic Libraries

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Abstract

The emerging field of knowledge libraries the opportunity to improve effectiveness, both for themselves and their parent institutions. Information and knowledge has led to significant changes in the management of various types of organization in our society. This paper approaches the process of knowledge management which can help libraries to better adapt to new requirements of the digital age. The success of academic libraries depends on their ability to utilize information and knowledge of its staff to better serve the needs of the academic community. Knowledge management is a viable means in which academic libraries could improve their services in the present knowledge era. KM is a part and parcel activity of all kind of libraries; Libraries could add value to their services by engaging with knowledge management.

KAYWORDS: knowledge management, academic, libraries, innovation

INTRODUCTION:

The past twenty years, academic libraries have generated increasing amount of information about their operations. The boundaries and scope of library profession has always been changing, but change has accelerated recently, partly due to the rise in interest surrounding knowledge management.

Academic libraries are information centers established in support of the mission of their parent institutions to generate knowledge, and people equipped with knowledge in order to serve the society and advance the well-being of mankind. In recent years, under continuous change and competition between organizations in each field, knowledge management has proven to be a process that supports organizations to achieve their goals and also success and performance.

In academic libraries, knowledge management proves its usefulness not only in the context of the growing volumes of information available, but also in the context of the changes in the higher education. The processes of knowledge generation and harnessing are enhanced by knowledge management. It is a viable means in which academic libraries could improve their services in the knowledge economy. This can be achieved through creating an organizational culture of sharing knowledge and expertise with the library.

Lee (2000) pointed out that the knowledge and experiences of library staff are the intellectual assets of any library and should be valued and shared.

WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT?

Knowledge management is a new emerging field, since late 1990s, It is first essential to define knowledge management (KM), It is important to define Knowledge management.

“Knowledge management may be defined as the set of processes that create and share knowledge across an organization to optimize the use of judgment in attainment of mission and goals”.

“Knowledge management is a strategy that turns an organization’s intellectual assets – both recorded information and the talents of its members – in to greater productivity, new value, and increased competitiveness. It teaches corporations, from managers to employees, how to produce and optimize skills as a collective entity”.

P. Murray

“The art of transforming information and intellectual assets in to enduring value for an organization’s clients and its people”.

E. Knapp

“A discipline that promotes an integrated and collaborative approach to the process of information asset creation, capture, organization assets include databases, documents, and most importantly, the uncaptured expertise and experience resident in individual workers”.

The Gartner Group

Y. Malhotra puts knowledge management in the context of environment changes that bring organizations to the need to find ways to survive and increase competence.

In this definition, he considers that knowledge management refers to the organizational processes which are based on the combination of information technology and human creativity. “Knowledge management caters to the critical issues of organizational adaptation, survival and competence in the face of increasingly discontinuous environmental change...Essentially, it embodies organizational process that seek synergistic combination of data and information processing capacity of information technology, and the creative and innovative capacity of human being”.

CLASSIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:

Most literature on KM classifies knowledge into two main categories: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge.

Explicit knowledge:

Explicit knowledge is documented information that can facilitate action. It can be expressed in formal, shared language. Examples include formulas, equations, rules, and best practices.

Main Features of Explicit knowledge is:

- Packaged
- Communicable
- Transferable
- Easily codified

Tacit knowledge:

Tacit knowledge is know-how and learning embedded within the minds of the people in an organization. It involves perceptions, insights, experiences, and craftsmanship.

Main Features of Tacit knowledge is:

- Personal
- Difficult to formalize
- More difficult to transfer
- Context-specific
- Difficult to communicate

OBJECTIVE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES:

The main objective of knowledge management is to ensure that the right information is delivered to the right person just in time, in order to take the most appropriate decision. The objectives are as follows: -

- To promote collection, processing, storage and distribution of knowledge.
- Faster and easier recovery of data and disseminate the information.
- Reducing risks and errors.

BENEFITS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:

- Save the time of users as well as staffs.
- Reduced service costs.
- Quality and quantity improvement.
- Improved user satisfaction through a more professional approach to service delivery.
- Improved productivity.

Academic libraries are under pressure from two side: reduces budget and increased demand faculty and students. The implementation of knowledge management in academic libraries is mainly driven by its mission rather than by the competition from internet-based reference service or electronic books.

CONTENT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMY LIBRARIES:

As a completely new method of management, knowledge management in libraries leaves much to be desired in its theoretical system. It includes as follows:

- Theoretical innovation management of knowledge: Theoretical innovation management of knowledge is to enrich and enlarge the theoretical and practical research fields of library and information science through pursuing the latest development trends in library science the world over.
- Technical innovation management: Technical management is to manage the network system constructed by institutions and organizations that relate to the full course of technical facility to support knowledge management.
- Organizational innovation management: it is to create a set of effective organizational management systems adaptation to the requirements in the electronic library era, to support and strengthen the knowledge management activities, by optimizing the functional department and cooperation procedures of libraries.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN LIBRARIES:

The need of knowledge management in libraries can be analyzed on the basis of Factors:

- Limitations of existing initiatives.
 - Value of knowledge.
 - Minimize duplication efforts.
 - Sharing of best practices.
 - Enhanced innovation.
1. Limitations of existing initiatives: TQM performance appraisal of employee and other such as initiatives have helps libraries to become more accountable their job and responsibilities.
 2. Value of knowledge: Applied know-how can enhance the quality of products and services. It may be helpful in achieving cost effectiveness in the various library operations and services.
 3. Minimize duplication efforts: By retaining knowledge as organizations downsize or reshuffle, libraries can save costly mistakes or reinventing the wheel.
 4. Sharing of best practices: Libraries can save millions a year by taking the knowledge from their best performers and applying it similar situations elsewhere. The applied know-how of the best performing libraries may be adopted as a model.
 5. Enhanced innovation: The development like internet revolutionized the concept of global village; this may be helpful to libraries as to cater the library services globally by applying knowledge management methods in improving their information products and services. A success of such small initiatives will motivate them for the future innovation in its operations and services.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:

Why is KM important today:-

1. Globalization of business:- organizations today are more global- multisite, multi lingual and multicultural in nature
2. Learner organization: - we are doing more and we also need to work smarter as knowledge workers-increased pace and work load.
3. Technology advances: - We are more connected –information technology advances have made connectivity not only ubiquitous but has radically charged expectation: we are expected to be on at all times and the turnaround time in responding is now measured in minutes, not week.

An organization has it look into following four dimensions:

- a. Mission: what are we trying to accomplish?
- b. Competition: How do we achieve a competitive edge?
- c. Performance: How do we deliver the result?
- d. Change: How do deal change?

Knowledge management provides innovative and cost effective solution to the library users. Knowledge management is important only to extent that it enhances an organization's ability and capacity to deal with various situations that emerges during various operations. Knowledge management seeks to make the best use of the knowledge that is available to the library, while creating new technology in the process. Knowledge management should be about exploiting and realizing knowledge of the employees and building a culture where knowledge sharing a can thrive. The library will generate value from their intellectual and knowledge based assets.

APPLICATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN ACADEMY LIBRARIES:

Knowledge management has been tooled and hyped since late 1990's (Dimattia, 1997) first in business sector, and then in higher education and now in library management. Knowledge management in academic libraries is mainly expectations.

An effective knowledge management programme is a long term project and requires significant commitment from the organization. How to management knowledge will become an important subject facing libraries in new future. Knowledge management in libraries should be focused an effective research and development of knowledge, creation of knowledge based exchange and sharing of knowledge between library staff (including its users), training of library staff, speeding up explicit processing of the implicit knowledge and sharing up explicit knowledge and realizing of its sharing.

With the help of the knowledge management processes, libraries convert data information to stored in various sources in to knowledge and deliver only relevant knowledge to users. Knowledge management within libraries involves organizing and providing access to intangible resources that help librarians and administration carry out their tasks more effectively and efficiently.

Knowledge management in libraries is the combination of different sources (print, electronic, and human) and classification, storing, indexing and dissemination of that knowledge using people, process and technical in such a way by which library could fulfill the mission of the parent organization in term of users' satisfaction. It is to promote relationship in and between libraries, between library and user, to strengthen knowledge internetworking and to quicken knowledge flow. The libraries are moving from collection management and knowledge management and digital technologies offering new information services and products. The application of information technology enlarges the scope of knowledge acquisition, raises knowledge acquisition speed and reduces knowledge acquisition cost.

CHALLENGES FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT:

The knowledge management process normally faces six challenges these are:

- a. Knowledge acquisition.
- b. Knowledge modeling.
- c. Knowledge Retrieval.
- d. Knowledge reuse.
- e. Knowledge publishing.
- f. Maintenance.

CONCLUSION:

Knowledge management is a new field drawing on several disciplines, including library and information science. Academic libraries can use knowledge management to achieve organization goals. Knowledge management will helps to increase libraries operational efficiency. An efficient Knowledge Management system is one that will enable libraries to store information sources manually or electronically and facilitate the process of retrieving, sharing, tracking and distributing these information sources efficiently with their users. Knowledge management can help libraries with the improvement of the quality of their services as well as the creation and maintenance of learning culture.

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