

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE AWARD (KMPA) FOR
UNIVERSITIES & INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Mostafa Nejati*, Amirul Shah Bin Md Shahbudin,
Azlan Bin Amran, and Mehran Nejati**

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

* mostafa.nejati@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

As one of the main sources of competitive advantage, knowledge has become an increasingly important resource in enabling organizations to survive the complexities of the market and business world. It has also acted as a means to create extra opportunities for the organizations. Effective use of knowledge has contributed to the development of organizational capabilities and brought about sustainable competitive advantages to the firms. Therefore, nowadays and with the emergence of knowledge era, organizations tend more to find ways to effectively manage their knowledge assets and knowledge management (KM) processes. Universities and institutes of higher education are especially important in this regard, because they can be considered as heralds of knowledge creation and bases of knowledge dissemination.

The purpose of this research is to further study the knowledge management performance topic in the universities and investigate the development of Knowledge Management Performance Award (KMPA) among universities worldwide as an effective means to compare universities' performances and rankings mainly based on KM perspective. The KMPA and its applications are believed to be of considerable importance, because knowledge is not only disseminated and shared to professionals and academicians in universities, but new sources of knowledge is created through research works and is utilized within different projects and development efforts. This results in a complete knowledge management process (knowledge creation/development, sharing & dissemination, and utilization) to be available within the universities' setting. KMPA can also enhance universities in comparing their knowledge and research performance against their peers and strengthen their KM processes. This will make universities more prepared to act effectively in the complex business and academic world regionally and globally.

Keywords: Knowledge Management Performance, Knowledge Management Performance Award, Universities, KMPA

1. Introduction

Unlike the past which financial issues were the major criteria to evaluate the performance of an organization, nowadays, other factors and perspectives play an important role in judging truly about the real performance of a firm. Today, the world has entered a phase where the competitiveness of organizations is highly dependent on the effective use and application of knowledge (Nejati and Nejati, 2009). Organizations are more knowledge-intensive and managers now, more than ever, are aware of the significance of managing knowledge assets and its notable role in organizational success. Managers are increasingly aware of the knowledge resources significance in developing organizations. They know that technological enhancements and knowledge assets can add to the competitive advantage of the organization (Nejati and Nejati, 2008) so they should pay more attention to protecting,

3. Knowledge Management Performance Evaluation

Although there are several clues for the roles that knowledge management play in improving organization's performance, it is necessary that the process of implementing and applying knowledge management practices in the organization is controlled and evaluated in order to ensure that it is aligned with the organization's strategy. Therefore, it is imperative that some indicators and measures are defined to assist managers in making decisions about knowledge assets and KM activities and ensure effective knowledge management (Ahn and Chang, 2004; Carrillo and Gaimon, 2004; Ribiere and Sitar, 2003).

Recently, many scholars have attempted to measure the contribution of knowledge management and its performance by different methods (Malhotra and Segars, 2001; Maltz et al., 2003; Ngai and Chan, 2005).

Some authors have studied the performance of KM and knowledge application in terms of its contribution to the business processes, strategies and decision makings. For instance, Ahn and Chang (2004) developed the KP3 methodology to assess the contribution of knowledge to business performances by employing product and process as intermediates between the two. Yim et al. (2004) also developed a method of knowledge-based decision making (KBDM) to understand which decision factor has a higher impact on performance and to identify different decision alternatives. On the other hand, Hsieh, Lin and Lin (2009) introduced a knowledge navigator model (KNMTM) to navigate knowledge management (KM) implementation. The model defined five KM maturity levels of Knowledge chaotic stage, Knowledge conscientious stage, KM stage, KM advanced stage, and KM integration stage. Then, overall progress was based on life cycle theories, adopting organic growth as a heuristic device to explain the changes in organizational behaviours and its progress as a process. In another example, Ray-Charmorro et al. (2003) came up with a framework to assess the contribution of KM solutions within a business against its corporate objectives. The framework used a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) as lead indicators.

Some other studies on knowledge management performance have looked into the effectiveness and impacts of KM projects and initiatives. As an example, Laitamaki and Kordupleski (1997) used an ROI index to evaluate KM projects and performance in customer value added (CVA) products. In 2005, Lee, Lee, and Kang suggested knowledge management performance index (KMPI), for assessing the performance of a firm in its knowledge management perspective.

Above all, different methods have been used by different researchers to study the knowledge management performance, including Balanced scorecard (Kaplan and Norton, 1992; Lee, Lee and Kang, 2005), Performance-based evaluation (Cavusgil, Calantone and Zhao, 2003), Activity-based evaluation (Kim, Chaudhury, and Rao, 2002), KM project management model (Kasvi, Vartiainen and Hailikari, 2003) and etc.

4. KM Performance Evaluation in the Universities

Performance assessment of institutions delivering educational services has become particularly important and of high interest to governments around the world in order to increase the effectiveness of educational provision (Belcher, 1997). Of course, evaluating the performance of non-profit organizations like universities is not simple, because criteria and indicators other than financial ones are raised for universities; even if a non-profit organization's goals are quite clear, mere quantitative financial indicator cannot be used assess the performance of these organizations (Merchant and Stede, 2007).

The Performance evaluation in both the private and the public sectors have become an inevitable part of work life. Similarly, in universities and educational institutes there is

6. Conclusion

This paper has introduced Knowledge Management Performance Award (KMPA) as a novel initiative that can be used as a way in recognizing successful universities worldwide in terms of their knowledge management performance and enable them to identify their position in comparison with their peers. Moreover, it will result in development of a single structure for evaluation of the KM performance of the universities worldwide according to four levels of: 1) individual, 2) cross-individual, 3) organizational and 4) cross-organizational. Authors believe that the notion of knowledge management performance evaluation should be addressed by all universities to help them retain and effectively utilize their knowledge assets and manage complexities regionally and globally. Knowledge Management Performance Award (KMPA) can act as a guide and momentum for universities to that end.

It is suggested that in future research, more effort is put in developing a general framework for evaluating knowledge management performance in the university setting which can be applied in different universities as an initial and preliminary tool capable of further customization and development.

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