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Awareness of Knowledge Management among Librarians of Engineering Colleges Affiliated to Anna University of Technology, Coimbatore:

A Study

V.Krishnamurthy,

Asst. Librarian, Kumaraguru College of Technology,
Coimbatore

R.Balasubramani,

Asst. Professor, Department of Library and
Information Science,
Bharathidasan University, Trichy

Abstract

As the development of recent year's data in libraries is digitized, huge volume of data is produced in libraries, where Knowledge Management [KM] has become the key concern for librarians and libraries. The emerging field of Knowledge Management offers academic libraries the opportunity to improve effectiveness, both for the libraries and the institutions. The aim of this study is to identify the awareness of knowledge management concepts among Librarians of Engineering Colleges Affiliated to Anna University of Technology, Coimbatore, Questionnaire were sent to 147 colleges librarians and 109 (74.15%) were responded. "Gender, Education and Experience" has been considered as the main attributes for the study of awareness of KM concepts.

Keywords

Knowledge Preservation, Knowledge Management,
Academic libraries, Services

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1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management (KM) is about building organisational intelligence by enabling people to improve the way they work in capturing, sharing, and using knowledge. It involves using the ideas and experience of people and process to improve the organisation's performance. KM is not a technology issue, effort must still be spent in providing a suitable environment to facilitate knowledge capture and sharing. Skyrme, defines knowledge management as a "process or practice of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing, and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organizations."

White, provides a similar definition for knowledge management as " a process of creating, storing, sharing and reusing organizational knowledge (know how) to enable an organization to achieve its goals and objectives. Many organisations today acknowledge the role of knowledge as a key source for competitive advantage. In order to gain this advantage, it is important that knowledge and the sharing thereof be managed effectively in organisations. Generally, knowledge management is about creating, capturing, organizing, retrieving, disseminating, sharing/transferring and re-using of knowledge for the benefit of organisations.

2. NEED FOR THE STUDY

The aim of the survey is to investigate Awareness of Knowledge Management concept among Librarians of Engineering Colleges Affiliated to Anna University of Technology, Coimbatore. Every institution has to spend large costs to build library collections and librarian should know the value of the knowledge to act as an association between source and the user community. Librarians had to know the interrelationship between characteristics of knowledge and process of knowledge management in academic library.

The purpose of this study is to establish the KM role of the library in the new information environment and also to highlight that it could be useful, if knowledge is considered as an asset which can be captured, codified, shared, and distributed depending on the requirements of the user community and in response to change in order to compete with competitors.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has three specific objectives:

- To find out the awareness of knowledge management among librarians.
- To explore their understanding of knowledge management process.
- To establish the benefits of knowledge management in academic library

The awareness of KM process among librarians has an added value to the library and its parental institution. KM helps to determine the direction for the library to improve the quality of its service, with the support of the KM concepts.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

To study the awareness of KM among librarians 147 questionnaires were sent to librarian of engineering colleges, affiliated to Anna university of Coimbatore. The analysis of interview data from the respondents signifies the fact that 98.2% of them are aware of KM concepts through the following, source personal reading, research, writing, and attending conferences, workshops, and seminars. The remaining respondents are aware of KM concepts from their practical field work either in corporate libraries or in human resources organisations. The part of KM process i.e.,

awareness of Knowledge Preservation is analysed in this study.

4.1 KNOWLEDGE PRESERVATION

All responses were analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Most of the levels of measurement in the questionnaire were ordinal. Sullivan, Rassel and Berner (2008) explain that “ordinal scales measure characteristics by determining that one case has more or less of the characteristic than does another case”. The measurements in this study included a Likert type rating scale to indicate the strength of responses to the questions. The scale was created in such a way that 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. Rating averages (or the weighted average) were calculated in SPSS to indicate tendencies towards “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neutral”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree”. The results were presented descriptively in figures when indicates the categories, with details of values based on the rating averages. The percentages were rounded to two decimal places wherever needed.

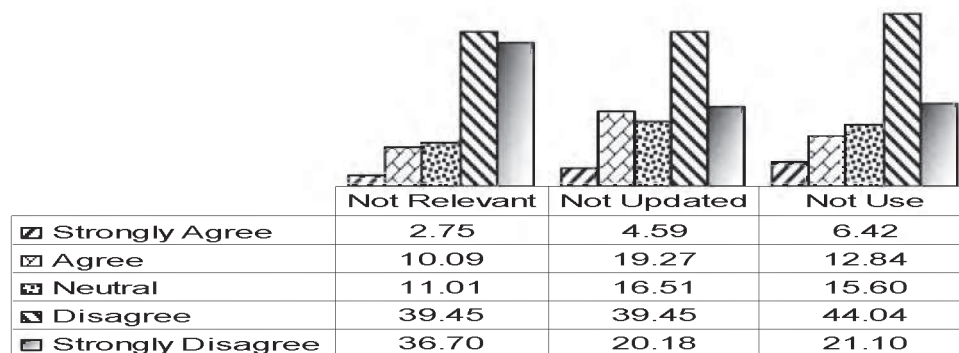


Figure 1: Overall view of Knowledge Preservation

Data presented in figure 1 indicate the overview of respondents perception about knowledge preservation of KM process. It could be noted that out of 109 respondents 76% of respondents disagree the statement i.e., preserving knowledge is not needed. 59.53% of respondent disagree the statement that

preserved knowledge is not updated. A large majority of respondents (75.14%) disagree that statement of knowledge preservation is not in use. Figure 1 reflects the respondents views of awareness in knowledge management process

4.2 PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

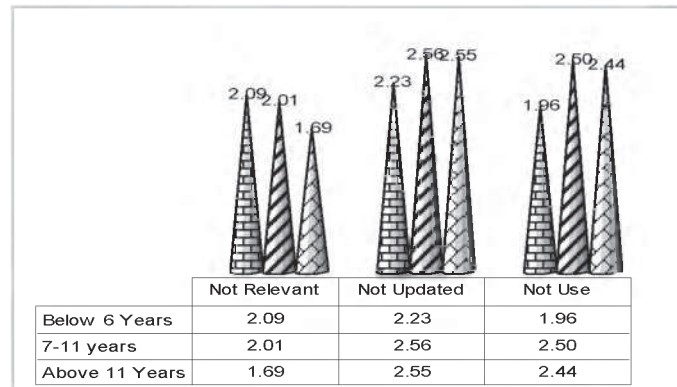


Figure 2: Overview of Knowledge Preservation Vs Professional Experience

The data in Figure 2 indicate the respondent overview based on their professional experience for knowledge preservation. A rating average with highest mean of 2.09 indicates that below 6 years of professional experience respondent were suggestive of disagreeing that KM preservation is not needed. The respondents with than 6 years of professional

experience with average mean of 2.56 were suggestive of disagree that KM preservation is not updated. Highest rating average mean with 2.50 indicates that 7-11 years of professional experience respondent were suggestive of disagreeing that KM preservation is not in use

4.3 KNOWLEDGE PRESERVATION VS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

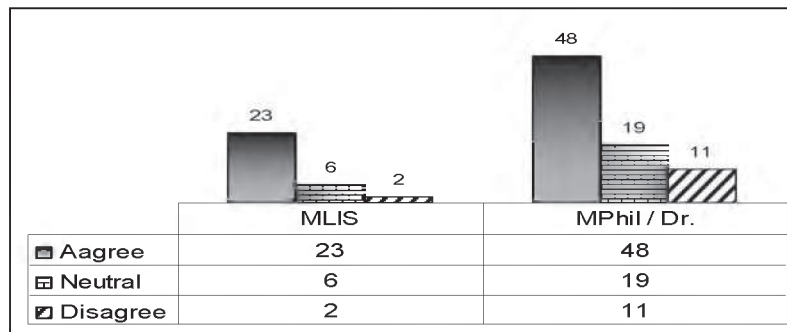


Figure 3: Overview of Knowledge Preservation Vs Professional Education

The data in Figure 3 presents the overview of respondents in knowledge preservation based on the professional education, 48 respondents with professional education completed Ph.D/M.Phil agree the statement that knowledge management process. The same view was agreed by 23 respondents who have completed their MLIS.

5. FINDINGS

The ways of knowing and degrees of understanding of KM process among the librarians are varied. Most of the librarians have focused on a deep perception of

KM process. This study also finds some of the reasons for responding to KM, e.g. increasing value of knowledge in the knowledge economy, role of information technologies, opportunities for improved library practices.

The findings presented from the research in this study originated from both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The descriptive part reflects the qualitative element, while the statistical part reflects the quantitative one. The presentation of findings was guided by themes from the research questions that were specified as:

- What do librarians understand KM process?
- What do the perception about KM process?

From questionnaire responses and interviews, the managerial levels clearly understood KM process; and some librarians were not sure about the differences in the process of knowledge management.

6. CONCLUSION

To determine the awareness of KM process among librarian, one has to know about knowledge management process. It is clearly understood that the ways of knowing and degrees of understanding of KM process among the librarians are varied. Understanding and perception of knowledge management concepts are varying based on their professional education and professional experience. This study also highlights the fact the librarian are well aware of knowledge management concepts, but they need to gain additional skills to work in KM environment.

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