An Analysis of the Development Management Organization: Case Study of the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific

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Abstract

This study which focuses on the International Labour Organization (ILO), specifically the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, has the following objectives: 1) To understand the knowledge management approach of ILO ROAP; 2) To explore and identify the salient contextual elements that influence the knowledge processes of ILO ROAP; and, 3) To study the relationships between the context, knowledge processes, and outcomes of knowledge management of ILO ROAP. The research methodology used here was qualitative. The research employs documentary research, multiple case studies, in-depth interview, and field visits to assess the organizational knowledge management and to identify the factors related to organizational knowledge management processes. The assessment of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) of International Labour Organization (ILO), shows that knowledge management takes place in ILO although OLO does not officially announce its knowledge vision, knowledge management strategy and it does not establish its organizations for any direct responsibilities of knowledge management. The study found that knowledge management strategy involves both the personalization and codification knowledge management strategies. The Knowledge processes include sharing tacit and explicit knowledge, creating concepts, justifying concepts, building and archetype, and cross-leveling knowledge within organization and across inter –organization. There are relationships between contextual elements and knowledge management processes. The contextual elements consist of organizational strategy, organizational structure, information and communication technology is a crucial factor enabling the cross-leveling knowledge process. Without adequate information technology, explicit knowledge effectively be transmitted to others.

Keywords: Management, organization, Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

Introduction

The impact of effective knowledge management on organizational performance is well recognized and accepted. Knowledge becomes the richest resource/asset of an organization, and knowledge management is the foundation for sustainable competitive advantage IBM stated at the first annual U.C. Berkeley forum on Knowledge and the Firm that, "There is an emerging new theory of the firm, one that recognizes the rowing complexity of work, products, and organizations" He concluded. "The only sustainable competitive advantage comes from what you know and low fast you can put it to use" (DiPaola, 2004; Flynn & Solomon, 1985; Brook, Russel & Price, 1988; Davis & Newstrom, 1989).

The foregoing suggests knowledge management is a key for organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage in many types of organizations. That knowledge management enhances organizational in business and government organizations, even in no-profit organizations as well as military organizations, has been shown in many studies (Huse & Cumming, 1985; LePine et al., 2002; Shore & Wayne, 2003).

The Consultative Committee on Program and Operational Questions, United Nations, conducted a survey about Knowledge Management and Information Technology to help understand the nature and extent of knowledge management activities in United Nations Agencies in 200. This study was intended as input into a discussion about how to enhance the United Nations systems understanding of the concept of knowledge management and the potential use of the internet by the United Nations to become an active player in promoting knowledge management. The key findings showed that knowledge management is at an early stage. Only a few agencies report tangible results (Swap, 2006; Wagner, 1989; Organ, 2002; Hannam & Jimmieson, 2002). In affirmation of the importance of knowledge and information, the administrative Committee on coordination on Universal Access to basic Communication and Information Services stated that they recognize that knowledge and information represents the lifeblood of the emerging global information society and its attendant infrastructure. Knowledge and information are at the heart of the intensifying globalization trends, and drive the emergence of a tele -economy with new global and social organizational models. Knowledge, more than ever, is power. Information about what is occurring becomes a central commodity of international relations, and determines the efficiency and effeteness of any intervention, which is a particular challenge for multilateral actors. (United Nations, 2000: 28)

Where rapid progress of information and knowledge management promotes the competitive advantage for the developed countries, unfortunately most developing countries, especially the least developed countries, are not sharing this revolution since they lack affordable access to core information and knowledge resources, the capacity to build, operate, manage and service the technologies involved, and policies that promote equitable public participation in the information society, as both producers and consumers of information and knowledge. Therefore, the united Nation has given recognition to the need to assist these developing countries. (United Nations, 2000: 28)

Objective

1. To understand the knowledge management approach of ILO ROAP.
2. To explore and identify the salient contextual elements that may influence the knowledge processes of ILO ROAP.
3. To study the relationships between the context, knowledge processes, and outcomes of knowledge management of ILO ROAP.

Materials and Method

Unit of Analysis

This study will focus on the knowledge development organization; therefore the unit of analysis in this study is a development organization, specifically the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific of the International Labour Organization (ILO ROAP).

Research Approach

Qualitative Investigation

This phase intends to investigate and to identify the important areas of Knowledge management processes as well as knowledge management context that are currently being used in organizations. For this purpose, the case study method was used through documentation, Interviewing, and observation techniques. The interviews covered the aspects of sources of knowledge, tools currently used in knowledge management processes, and related knowledge management contexts in development organization.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study is conducted in The Regional Office for Asia and Pacific of the International Labour Organization (ILO ROAP). In this study, key organizational informants are professionals who contribute to the generation of knowledge are able to access to and use the organization's knowledge and are also able to describe the structural elements of the organization. As well, the use of the triangular technique to collect data from different sources of information is an effective approach. Therefore the respondent profile considered ideal for this study is a senior executive, middle managers and specialists of ILO ROAP who use knowledge for accomplishment of their tasks and con also provide commentary of the organization's knowledge activity, as well as relevant actors, members of tripartite agreements, such as government officers who use knowledge from the database of ILO and participate in creating new knowledge for ILO

The sample was selected by purposive sampling in accordance with responsibilities related to knowledge management and level of position in organization as well as a snowball technique. However, within the limited budget for research, the interviews were conducted with the informants who worked or visited the Regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific during the period of interviewing.

Data Analysis

As this study is a qualitative study that ultimately air to describe and explain a pattern of relationships, therefore data analysis can be done through conceptually specified analytic categories.

Following the documentation study, interviews and field visiting, researcher analyzed the results by using exploratory content analysis. The results related to knowledge processes were classified and developed (Based on the research conceptual framework of knowledge processes). The results related to knowledge management context were classified and developed to be indicators for specifics and identifying the context (also based on the research conceptual framework of knowledge management context). The result related to knowledge outcomes were classified and developed for specifying and identifying knowledge outcomes, including trend analysis from documents of ILO to analysis the context and knowledge processes of knowledge management.

The documents include Governing Body report, the Strategic objectives, organization chart, ILO worldwide knowledge management related documents, OLO Database, OLO Bureau of Publications, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific related documents, ILO programs and projects such as ILO Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) related documents, ILO Ability Asia related documents etc., and the related documents of development organizations such as United Nations research about knowledge management and Interviews with Key Informants: shown in Table 1

Positions	Date of Interview
ILO ROAP	
Advisor to Regional Director (Structure and Management)	April, 15 ,2015
Chief, Budget Section, Financial Services Department	April, 7 ,2015
Senior Labour Market and Human Resources Policies Specialist, East Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team (EASTMAT)	April, 20,2015
Project Manager/CTA,ILO-Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) project	May, 15, 2015
Direct, Area Office for China	April, 9, 2015
Director, Area Office for Pakistan and Liaison Office for Afghanistan	April, 20, 2015
Senior Human Resources Officer (Former is responsible for Regional Information Technology)	April, 25, 2015
Regional Libra	April, 23, 2015
Administrative Assistant (Meeting)	April, 24, 2015
Fellowship Officer	April, 22, 2015
Constituents of ILO ROAP: Ministry of Labour, Thailand	
Ministry Counselor (Labour), Ministry of Labour, Thailand (Former: Permanent Mission of Thailand to United Nations, Geneva)	Jun, 2015
Author of KM Book and KM Related Director	
Director Marketing & Communication, Siemens AG Corporate Information and Operations, Munich, Germany (Author of Communities of Practice, Knowledge Management Case Book: Siemens Best Practices	January, 9, 2015

Table 1: Informants

Results and Conclusion

The assessment of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) of International Labour Organization (ILO), shows that knowledge management takes place in ILO although OLO does not officially announce its knowledge vision, knowledge management strategy and it does not establish its organizations for any direct responsibilities of knowledge management. The study found that knowledge management strategy involves both the personalization and codification knowledge management strategies. The Knowledge processes include sharing tacit and explicit knowledge, creating concepts, justifying concepts, building and archetype, and cross-leveling knowledge within organization and across inter – organization.

There are relationships between contextual elements and knowledge management processes. The contextual elements consist of organizational strategy, organizational structure, information and communication technology is a crucial factor enabling the cross-leveling knowledge process. Without adequate information technology, explicit knowledge effectively be transmitted to others.

Discussion

Holistically, it was found that ILO emphasized a personalization knowledge management strategy. This personalization knowledge management strategy consumed the time and cost of specialists for travelling from country to country. The specialists had an overload of work to do.

The limitation of this knowledge management strategy is the experiential knowledge asset, which is tacit knowledge within Multidisciplinary Teams specialists. Multidisciplinary Teams specialists had to personally travel from one country to another to share experiential and conceptual knowledge assets with the constituents (Delamotte & Takezawa, 2005; Buchanan, 2004; Zack, Michael, 2007).

The problems of this knowledge management strategy are the shortage of specialists, and the time consumed in the development of experiential assets. At present, the experienced specialists had no time to share knowledge with non-experienced specialists (Greenberg & Baron, 2000; Gautam, Dick, Wagner, Upadhyay, & Davis, 2005).

The experiential knowledge is an individual level of knowledge, not organizational knowledge. Therefore, when specialists leave the organization, they take with them the experiential knowledge because it is tacit knowledge (Gautam, et.al., 2005; DiPaola & Hoy, 2004, Adams, Eric & Freeman, 2000; Zack, Michael, 2007).

As ILO knowledge from the codification knowledge management strategy is at organizational and inter-organizational knowledge level, the knowledge is explicit and is riposted organization-wide. It is not individual experiential knowledge that is tacit and it is not lost with the experts. If the experts are not available or if there are no experts at times, people can still access knowledge and can study it by themselves without the socialization knowledge management process. Furthermore, when the experts leave the organization, the knowledge assets still are with the organization. Members of organization, constituents, stakeholders, and public still can access knowledge from the knowledge base.

Personalization knowledge management strategy leads to an organic form of organization with informality, low complexity, and decentralization. The informality, low complexity, and decentralization in project management support the members for more interaction and sharing their knowledge in the field.

The formality of a mechanistic form of organization enhances the codification processes of knowledge management. The members of the organization record, research, and produce well-written reports in qualitative and/or quantitative form to keep as a database of the organization. Thus it explains why the ILO has the combination of historical experience, political legitimacy and universal coverage to be the knowledge centre of excellence of the world for employment and work. And this knowledge function highlights the identity of the ILO within the international community.

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