

The Influence of Knowledge Management Factors on Knowledge Management Practices: Special Reference to the Licensed Commercial Banks in Trincomalee District

R. Kishokumar^{1*}

¹Department of Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Today, organizations are reaping huge benefits by aligning Knowledge Management with business strategy and utilizing it as the mean to improve core business processes. A growing number of studies have been done regarding the factors affecting the knowledge management process from the employee's perspectives, while very few studies have been conducted to explore the impact of knowledge management factors on knowledge management practices. In order to fill the empirical knowledge gap, this particular study was initiated with three objectives in the context of licensed commercial banks in Trincomalee District. The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of knowledge management factors on knowledge management practices. Furthermore, conceptual model has been developed to link knowledge management factors and knowledge management practices. Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture and Information Technology are considered as the measurement variables of knowledge management factors. Meanwhile knowledge management practices are measured by Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Sharing, and Knowledge capturing and acquisition. In this study, a survey research design was used and data were collected through questionnaire from 150 employees of licensed commercial

*Corresponding author: E-mail: kisho767@gmail.com;

banks in Trincomalee District. These data were analysed by using multiple regression analysis. The findings of this study indicate that knowledge management factors and knowledge management practices are of high importance in licensed commercial banks and this study confirms that the knowledge management factors significantly influence knowledge management practices. Therefore, Favorable Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture and Information Technology factors could lead to better knowledge management practices and contribute to organization's success and achieve win-win situation. Hence organizations should strength their knowledge management factors to improve knowledge management practices.

Keywords: Knowledge management factors; knowledge management practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Today, banking environment is more dynamic and competitive due to continuous and rapidly changing environment and rapid innovation in information technology. Managing Knowledge gained incredible importance in research and industry over the past several years and also it was promoted as essential factor for organizational survival and sustaining competitive edge. This research study effectively underlines the impact of knowledge management factors on knowledge management practices within the Commercial Banks operating in Trincomalee District.

Knowledge is something which has intrinsic value and its extrinsic value in properly managing and utilizing the information in various situations. Human being was first living in an agricultural economy. After the breakthrough of technology, human eventually enter into industrial economy, where the factors namely land and labor were the prime importance in that economy. However as time passed it was found that only the land and labor were not enough for the economy. Hence the need for another factor was emphasized and the factor was found namely knowledge which resides in the mind of human being.

1.2 Research Problem

In today's world people are widely admitting this fact that in order to have best utilization of any other resources of an organization, the essential role of knowledge resource cannot be overlooked. And in the era of extensive competition, such competitive edge is required which could be rarely copied and distinguish the organization from rest of the organizations. This

edge is surely being achieved by managing the knowledge of its valuable people.

As prime resource of any organization is not its financial resource or technical resources but it is the knowledge which is enclosed in the mind of its human. Knowledge base resources are the path or way that we have to follow in order to have a sustainable competitive edge otherwise we will be out of the game.

The most valuable "intangible" assets are related to relationships with customers, employees and their skills, knowledge and organizational culture aimed at innovation, problem solving and general business improvement. By the process of constant knowledge renewal, it is possible to create and add value thus increased the commercial transfer of skills and knowledge in applied experience [1].

Beckman [2] found that the knowledge is a way for understanding all about information and data to actively enable performance, problem solving, decision making, teaching and learning of others. Nowadays, one successful company has the ability to learn faster than others, to change, and gained experience quickly turned into action. By this, the organization provides an advantage over competitors, and indeed, survival in the market [3].

Knowledge management is important as a managerial tool, which promotes the creation of new knowledge and it's sharing through the corporate values. Managers need to have a greater sense of invisible and intangible assets of people, featured in the minds and experiences of employees. Without these assets, companies are unequipped with vision and ability to predict the future. The using of knowledge management process increases the effectiveness of decision-making processes, as well as the level of operational efficiency, flexibility, commitment and involvement of employees.

Ultimately, the knowledge management process increases the value of the company and its competitiveness as a whole, because it increases the efficiency and effectiveness, the relationship of all resources and innovation [4].

Knowledge management factors at work place are yet at its initial stage, and have become an area for dearth of research. So; there is a dearth of empirical studies in factor influence of knowledge management practices in Commercial Bank of Trincomalee District. Thus there exists a clear empirical knowledge gap. Researcher examines this problem in this study and attempts to fill this empirical knowledge gap.

1.3 Research Questions

- ✓ What is the level of knowledge management factors of Commercial banks in Trincomalee District?
- ✓ What is the level of knowledge management practices of Commercial banks in Trincomalee?
- ✓ Whether knowledge management factors have an influence on Knowledge management practices of Commercial Banks in Trincomalee District?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To identify the level of knowledge management factors of Commercial banks in Trincomalee District.
- ✓ To measure the level of knowledge management practices of Commercial banks in Trincomalee District.
- ✓ To evaluate the influence of knowledge management factors on Knowledge management practices of Commercial Banks in Trincomalee District.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Knowledge Management Factors

2.1.1 Transformational leadership

Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. [5] suggest that transformational leadership motivates followers to work for transcendental goals and higher level self-actualizing needs rather than simple exchange relationships. These definitions suggest that transformational leaders create a

dynamic organizational vision that often necessitates a metamorphosis in cultural values to reflect greater innovation. Four dimensions present the basic components of transformational leadership.

Bailey and Clarke [6] highlighted the disconnect in how leadership has not kept pace with the need to understand the role of knowledge, for some reason many managers have yet to grasp the clear personal relevance, utility, and organizational significance of knowledge management. (p. 235). They further reported that many leaders felt that knowledge management was more fad than reality, or struggled to both conceptualize and practice knowledge management. Finally, Barth [7] argued that there is a clear relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge management in organizations.

2.1.1.1 Idealized influence

Leaders behave as strong role models for the followers; they are deeply respected, admired, and trusted by followers [8]. Such leaders are self-confident, persistent, highly competent, and willing to take risks. These leaders usually demonstrate high standards of ethical and moral conduct and avoid using power for personal gain [9].

2.1.1.2 Individualized consideration

Leaders with individualized consideration provide a supportive climate in which they offer personal attention and treat each employee individually. Such leaders listen and share an individual's concerns while simultaneously helping to build the individual's confidence [9] Such leaders link an employee's current needs to the organization's mission, and raise those needs when it is appropriate to do so [5,9].

2.1.1.3 Intellectual stimulation

An intellectually stimulating leader inspires followers to be creative and innovative, and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and organization [8,9]. This type of leadership promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving [9]. As a result, followers are encouraged to try new approaches and develop innovative ways of dealing with organizational issues.

2.1.1.4 Inspirational motivation

Transformational leaders inspire and motivate by providing meaning and challenges for their followers using simple language, symbols, and images [5]. Leaders are able to have followers involved in envisioning attractive futures with the company; they create clear expectations that the follower wants to meet and also demonstrate their commitment to the goals and shared vision. [9].

2.1.2 Organizational culture

Organizational culture has a great contribution to knowledge management due to the fact that culture determines the basic beliefs, values, and norms regarding the why and how the knowledge is generating, sharing, and utilizing in an organization. An organization can achieve a competitive edge by creating and using knowledge about its' processes and by integrating its knowledge into business processes.

Malhotra [10] concluded that organizations which show more supportive and open value tendencies has more potential to show behaviors which would result in knowledge creation. The other researchers also studies university's personnel. They found that shared organizational values would affect personnel's perception of knowledge possession [11]. The third way by which organizational culture affects knowledge management is related to the role of culture in creating a basis for social interaction. Reflection of such a role can be observed in issues such as standard methods about goal, abundance and time duration of meetings, appropriateness of using electronic mail for contacting managers, bosses and supervisors. Culture also shapes some processes for knowledge production and selection.

2.1.2.1 Involvement

Effective knowledge management practices require a culture that fosters and rewards the creation and use of knowledge, as well as its sharing among individual members and groups . However, in reality, companies may foster an environment where individual expertise is highly rewarded, but mentoring and assisting are not [12]. Involvement refers to the level of participation that organization members have in decision making [13,14].

2.1.2.2 Consistency

Knowledge management is widely understood as the one that includes the knowledge community, where people can interact in the discovery, use and manipulation of knowledge. Thus effective knowledge management initiatives require behaviours that run counter to firm's values. Consistency refers to the extent to which beliefs, values, and expectations are held consistently by members [14]. The concept of cultural consistency corresponds with the concept of strong culture that is characterized by how consistently an organization's values are shared.

2.1.2.3 Adaptability

Maintaining a competitive advantage implies that an organization is not only quite open to the new idea but also actively seeks out sources of competitive advantage, and quickly and successfully incorporate them into its own repertoire. Adaptability refers to the degree to which an organization has the ability to alter behaviour, structures, and systems in order to survive in the wake of environmental changes [14].

2.1.2.4 Mission

Mission refers to the existence of a shared definition of the organization's purpose [14]. A mission provides purpose and meaning by defining a social role and external goal for an institution, and by defining an individual's role with respect to the institutional role. Through this process, behavior is given intrinsic, or even spiritual, meaning that transcends functionally defined bureaucratic roles. This process of internalization and identification contributes to short- and long-term commitment and leads to effective performance [13,14].

2.1.3 Information technology

Information technology is the way to achieve a well administered approach towards the knowledge management. As compare to past, in the present days IT advances are making it easier to acquire, store and spread knowledge. Success of Knowledge management process is based on the proper utilization of information technology [15]. A very significant role in knowledge management is played by knowledge management system as without it it's very hard to have a value added Knowledge Management.

Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) are used in the creation as well as its storage and sharing among the people.

Socialization requires interaction between two or more persons with similar and/or overlapping interests. Communication, coordination, and group process support functions offered by IT are useful in facilitating the socialization process [16]. Managing explicit knowledge requires significant investment in IT [17]. Knowledge extracted from experts, organizational policies and procedures, problem solving episodes, etc. are captured in the organizational knowledge base. Browsing, presentation, location, and filtering functions are deployed to provide knowledge workers access to this knowledge. An expert system may also be used as a vehicle for knowledge reuse [12]. IT, thus, plays a key role in facilitating knowledge creation and management.

The value that knowledge management adds lies in increasing individual, team and organizational efficiency through the use of knowledge management tools (Information Technology).

- Capturing knowledge: the higher the level of capturing knowledge (explicit or tacit) with information technology tools, the better the KM result
- Usage of IT tools: The quality of information, user satisfaction, rate of usage, efficiency and accessibility, are also very important for knowledge management.

2.2 Knowledge Management Practices

In 1990 the concept of knowledge management was given proper attention and the “knowledge Management Foundations: Thinking about Thinking – How People and Organizations Create, Represent and use Knowledge” was introduced and published by Karl Wiig [18]. Knowledge management can be defined as adopting such approach which is systematic so that knowledge assets of an organization can be best managed [19]. Then this definition was made more simple and concise by Novins [20]. He said that knowledge management is that process in which right information is stored, and then right people received this and used rightly by those people.

2.2.1 Knowledge creation

Knowledge creation is perceived as one of the major assets of innovative organizations, and innovative organizations are defined by knowledge creation [21]. An organization creates knowledge through the interactions between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge.

2.2.2 Knowledge sharing

Expertise exists in people, and much of this kind of knowledge is tacit rather than explicit [22], which makes it difficult to be shared. At its most basic, knowledge sharing is simply about transferring the dispersed know-how of organizational members more effectively. Knowledge sharing is based on the experiences gained internally and externally in the organization. Making this know-how available to other organizational members will eliminate or reduce duplication of efforts and form the basis for problem solving and decision-making.

2.2.3 Knowledge capturing and acquisition

Capturing and acquiring knowledge is crucial to the success and development of a knowledge-based organization. Organizations often suffer permanent loss of valuable experts through dismissals, redundancies, retirement and death [23]. The reason for this is that much knowledge is stored in the heads of the people and it is often lost if not captured elsewhere. The surest way to avoid collective loss of organizational memory is to identify the expertise and the skills of staff and capture it.

3. CONCEPTUALIZATION AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Hypothesis for Research

Empirical evidence indicated the Transformational leaders have a significant impact on the knowledge management practices. The leader's behaviors will strongly influence behaviors and thinking of their subordinates. As regard to the relationship between transformational leadership and Knowledge management, most of the researchers agree that Transformational leaders play an important role in establishing some of the key conditions required to facilitate Knowledge management [24].

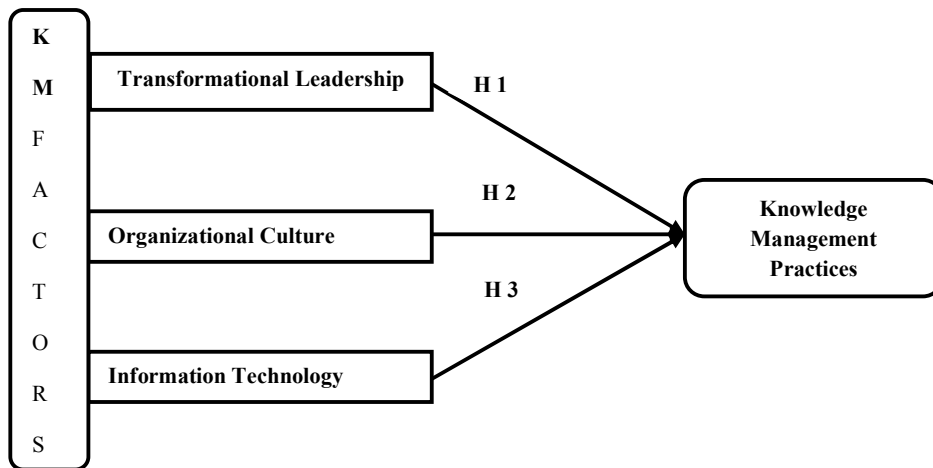


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework
(Source: Literatures)

H1: Transformational Leadership significantly influences Knowledge Management Practices

Empirical evidence indicated Organizational Culture has close relationship and possessing high level of absorptive capacity, the process of knowledge management may not be effective if the organization does not encourage individuals to share their knowledge and have a mechanism to integrate the knowledge in a way that can benefit for an organization as a whole. Hence, it is necessary to have a strong culture which values trust, openness, collaboration (high sociability) that stimulates people interactions and Knowledge management (Park et al., 2004).

H2: Organizational Culture significantly influences Knowledge Management Practices

The empirical evidence revealed the strong relationship between information technology and knowledge management in organizations particularly in the banking sector. Information technology has direct influence on knowledge management to increase the business value in the banks as a result of shared use of information across the organization.

H3: Information Technology is significantly influences on Knowledge Management Practices

4. METHODOLOGY

This study was based on self-report questionnaires; all the data were gathered from

the respondents' self-reports. Questionnaire was used to collect data necessary to meet the purpose and objectives of the study.

The sample for the study comprises of all employees to represent the population of employees that total to 237 from selected 5 Commercial Banks in Trincomalee District. Simple random sampling which falls under random sampling was used as the sampling strategy. Finally, 150 questionnaires were distributed and collected as properly filled.

Data has been presented using tables. Meanwhile descriptive analysis was used for data analysis. Hence under the descriptive analysis, mean and standard deviation were derived. Statistical package of SPSS 22.0 has been used for this purpose. This was established to determine the degree of both knowledge management factors and knowledge management Practices.

Decision Rule for Univariate Analysis

Range	Decision attributes
$1 \leq X_i \leq 2.5$	Low level
$2.5 < X_i \leq 3.5$	Moderate level
$3.5 < X_i \leq 5.0$	High level

Source- Formed for this research

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Reliability Analysis

The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.919 with respect to 43 statements. Therefore,

all items considered in this study are to be reliable, which suggest that the internal reliability of the instrument was satisfactory.

Table 1. Reliability analysis

Variables	Cronbach's alpha
Transformational Leadership	0.852
Organizational Culture	0.877
Information technology	0.727
Knowledge Management Practices	0.812

(Source: Survey data)

5.2 Research Information

5.2.1 Overall view of independent variable - knowledge management factors

Transformational leadership, Organizational Culture and Information technology mean values are 3.83, 3.92 and 4.08 respectively and overall Factors mean value is 3.94 (Table 2). In addition, most of the respondents have expressed the common opinion toward the independent variables (Standard Deviation is 0.468, 0.511, 0.406 and 0.320).

Table 2. Descriptive profile-overall independent variables

Independent variables	Mean	Std. deviation
Transformational Leadership	3.83	.468
Organizational Culture	3.92	.511
Information Technology	4.08	.406
Knowledge Management Factors	3.94	.320

(Source: Survey data)

5.2.2 Overall view of independent variable - knowledge management practices

The Knowledge Management Practices includes three dimensions which are Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Capturing and Acquisition. Mean values of these dimensions are 4.20, 4.19 and 4.40 respectively (See Table 3). Knowledge Management Practices show high level in the Commercial banks in Trincomalee District.

Table 3. Descriptive profile-knowledge management practices dimensions

Dimensions	Mean	Std. deviation
Knowledge Creation	4.20	.510
Knowledge Sharing	4.19	.542
Knowledge Capturing and Acquisition	4.40	.607
Knowledge Management Practices	4.27	.439

(Source: Survey data)

5.3 Correlation between Knowledge Management Factors and Knowledge Management Practices

Table 5 shows that the Pearson correlation between Knowledge Management Factors and Knowledge Management Practices is 0.556. It is found as a strong positive correlation between Knowledge Management Factors and Knowledge Management Practices. The significant value of 0.000 indicates that the relationship is statistically significant.

Table 4. Correlation between knowledge management factors and practices

Pearson Correlation	.556
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey Data)

Table 5. Coefficient of determination

R Square	.309
Adjusted R Square	.305

(Source: Survey data)

The R Square statistic indicates that 30.9% of the variation in the Knowledge Management Practices is explained by Knowledge Management Factors. The Adjusted R Square 30.5% indicated that it is an adjustment of the R Squared that penalizes the addition of extraneous predictors to the model.

Table 6 could be applied to simple straight line equation in order to quantify the effect of Knowledge Management Factors in Knowledge Management Practices.

$$Y=1.265+0.762 X$$

Where

$$Y= \text{Knowledge Management Practices}$$

$$X = \text{Knowledge Management Factors}$$

Table 6. Results of regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. error	
(Constant)	1.265	.370	.001
Knowledge Management Factors	.762	.094	.000

a. *Dependent Variable: Knowledge Management Practices*
(Source: Survey data)

Table 7. Results summary of hypothesis testing

Dependent variable	Independent variables	P Value	Hypothesis results
Knowledge Management Practices	Transformational Leadership	.001	H1 Accept
	Organizational Culture	.000	H2 Accept
	Information Technology	.000	H3 Accept

(Source: Survey data)

The unstandardized constant statistics 1.265 units show that the model would predict if the Knowledge Management Factors was zero. The B coefficient for Knowledge Management Factors is 0.762. This means that on average, if Knowledge Management Factors goes up to 1 point then Knowledge Management Practices will improve by 0.762.

The decision rule is, if P value is greater than 0.05 we accept the null hypothesis and if P value is less than 0.05 null hypothesis is rejected. Transformational Leadership, Organizational Culture and Information Technology positively and significantly influences Knowledge Management Practices (p values <0.05).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Knowledge management factors are at high level in selected commercial banks in Trincomalee District. Human resource is essential for any organization and no organization can achieve its objective without a certain level of commitment and effort from its employees. All employees have to direct towards organization goals.

This research focuses on knowledge management factors. According to the analysis, the mean value of knowledge management factors are at high level in commercial banks in Trincomalee District. Therefore, commercial banks have realized that knowledge management factors are the way of improving the quality of services, along with improving productivity and lowering costs and good customer service. Meanwhile knowledge management practice in commercial banks in Trincomalee District is at high level.

According to finding among the three knowledge management factors of different commercial banks employees, Information Technology has the high influence. Information Technology is needed to easy to access the information and use appropriate IT tools. Information Technologies can be increase in information storage capacity and transmission capacity, transfer speed, better convenience, accessibility as well as an elimination of time and space constraints (Omari, 2004).

That information, in turn, can then become the knowledge that leads to wisdom (Alberthal,L 1995). Therefore, the organizations should put many efforts to select the critical and important information that implement the good knowledge management practices. Knowledge is of crucial importance, because incorrect or deficient knowledge may lead to unsatisfactory solutions (Haux at el 1996). Hence the knowledge plays a crucial role in the processes and operations of banks.

In the current scenario the commercial banks in Trincomalee District have to comprehend that high levels of knowledge management practices will lead to improve employee knowledge skills and involvement towards job thus creating a motivated workforce that will work together to achieve the common goals of the organization.

Highly engaged employees will definitely make an organization more successful in terms of financial and non-financial parameters. Furthermore, it has been found that knowledge management factors influence knowledge management practices of the employees in commercial banks in Trincomalee District.

Therefore, knowledge management factors influence knowledge management practices. Furthermore, components/ dimensions of knowledge management factors identified by Nonaka, I & Toyama, R., [24] have an impact on knowledge management practices. Hence developing these components will establish knowledge management practices of employees in the organization.

Thus, in addition to possible enhancement of knowledge management practices from improved job training, the typical knowledge management levels can be increased through encouragement of knowledge identification, creation, sharing and capturing.

In addition, information about these factors can be valuable in the development of knowledge management practices through concerns with new ideas, thought and suggestions proposed by employees.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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