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A STUDY ON A ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING ORGANIZATION IN SHAPING RESPECTIVE PRACTICES AND PROCESS TO ACHIEVE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG SELECTED SME IT COMPANIES IN BENGALURU

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Abstract
Companies who adopt and respond to change are the ones who survive in the long run. Same is the point with Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Information Technology (IT) companies who compete with MNC's. It becomes critical for any company in general and SME IT Companies in particular to travel the path of transcending to something better, and promising, finally which can assist in creation of competitive advantage to companies. It is imperative for SME IT Companies to design practices that puts companies on an evolution bandwagon. The introduction of senge's Learning Organization Process (LOP) associated with Kimiz Dalkir's Knowledge Management Practices (KMP) is seen as a prospective choice for SME IT Companies to be responsive to changing business scenarios and evolve towards achieving Micheal Porter 's Competitive Advantage (CA).

Present work contributes its might in assisting SME's IT companies to be competent enough to face the global market characterized with chaotic business in to a smooth sailing experience, to meet challenges of SME companies in particular is based on a conceptual model which involves contribution of LOP based on Peter M Senge's LO dimensions.

Keywords: Learning & Development; Competitive Advantage; Competency Mapping; SME IT Companies; Bengaluru.

1. Introduction

Knowledge Management Practices and Learning Organisation Process

The location of the new economy is not in the technology, be it the microchip or the global telecommunications network. It is in the human mind. **(Alan Webber, Davenport and Prusak, 1998)**

Knowledge can be defined as the facts, skills and understanding that one has gained, especially through learning or experience, which enhance ones ability of evaluating context, making decisions and taking actions **(Awad & Ghaziri, 2004; Tserng & Lin, 2004).**

According to Davenport *et al*. (1998), Probst *et al*. (2000), and Awad and Ghaziri (2004), data, information and knowledge have different attributes.

Data: According to **KLICON (1999)** Data is un-interpreted material on which a decision is to be based and depends on facts which may include anything known to be true or exist.

Information: Information comprises facts that are organized in a structured way, whereas knowledge incorporates values, beliefs, perspectives, judgments, and know-how **(Blumentritt & Johnston, 1999).**

KM is a process that through creating, accumulating, organising, sharing and utilising knowledge helps achieve objectives and enhance organisational performance (**Jelena Rašula, 2012 et.al)**

Knowledge Management Practices (KMP) are conceptualized as organizational routines **(Nelson and Winter, 1982)** oriented towards knowledge. KMP enables to have different resources though it can afford other resources and to be used for the growth and development of routines and capabilities (**Cristina Villar, 2011).** knowledge being one of the most important it needs to develop effective KMP to get the best from these resources.

Learning Organization

An Organization that resorts to continuous learning of all its members together on a never ending basis which acts as a promising factor that takes an organization upfront in motivating it to become ever learning, ever adopting and putting itself on growth bandwagon. **Senge,**

Senge defines Learning Organization as places where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together.

The concept LO is better understood in the contribution of Senge's work. Senge attempts make it more clear to form the dimensions of LO as base for LOP.

Systems Thinking: Organizations are interconnected, interlinked and interactive parts which keep the purpose of organizations prospering in the form of objectives achieved and success accomplished and competitiveness attained (senge).

Personal Mastery: Is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision (senge).

Mental Models: In the words of senge mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.

Shared Vision: To "bind people together around a common identity and sense of destiny the practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that foster genuine commitment and enrolment, rather than compliance (senge).

Team Learning: "The discipline of team learning starts with "dialogue," the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine "thinking together." (senge).

Learning Organization Process and Knowledge Management Practices
Knowledge based view of the firm group's organizations with uniqueness and orientation to learning as strategic entities live with compounded benefit who better respond to unpredictable and disruptive changes characterizing the business.

As per **Senge (1994)** the only construct within grasp of an organization, which will produce lasting, sustainable advantage, is the usable knowledge produced from purposeful, well-orchestrated learning by all employees within the firm.

Competitive Advantage
In relation to organizational growth and sustenance it is considered strategically important to achieve strategic advantage to companies as a proof why they are still in the race of business. Competitive advantage of an organization is based on available opportunities and core competency and establishing a match between.

Michael Porter defined the two ways in which an organization can achieve competitive advantage over its rivals: cost advantage and differentiation advantage.

Through LOP and KMP it hoped to have these two or related advantages.

Small and Medium Enterprises
Small and medium-sized enterprises, SMEs, also small and medium enterprises or small and medium-sized businesses SMBs are businesses whose employment condition limits them in scope of having limited number of employees below a certain level.

The limit for investment in plant and machinery/ equipment for manufacturing service enterprises, as notified, vide S.O. 1642(E) dtd.29-09-2006 are as under

Classification	Investment Ceiling for Plant, Machinery or Equipment's	
	Manufacturing Enterprises	Service Enterprises
Micro	Upto Rs.25 lakh ($50 thousand)	Upto Rs.10 lakh ($20 thousand)
Small	Above Rs.25 lakh ($50 thousand) upto Rs.5 crore ($1 million)	Above Rs.10 lakh ($20 thousand) & upto Rs.2 crore ($0.40 million)
Medium	Above Rs.5 crore ($1 million) & upto Rs.10 crore ($2 million)	Above Rs.2 crore ($0.40 million) & upto Rs.5 crore ($1 million)

Source: Development Commissioner (MSME) Government of India -2006.

2. Literature Review
Learning Organization Concept and Process
David A. Garvin (2013) cites that organizations have to realize to improve on a continuous basis one has to realize the long term commitment to learning is the key. Learning promises new practices and make long term improvements. **David A.**

Garvin (2013) says 1.Solving problems systematically 2.Experimenting with new approaches to work 3.Learning from past experiences 4.Learning from other companies and customers 5. Transferring knowledge throughout your organization are the activities one has to follow to get transformed into a learning organization. **David A. Garvin (2013**) defines A Learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights .measuring learning is considered to be one of an important step to become a learning organization. **John M. Wetherington et.al(2013)** highlights organizations suffering from correct streamlining scarce resources, inefficiencies, and the inability to measure performance outcomes and to provide stakeholders with qualitative data. Approach to address this problem is application of Learning Organization features linked to improved organizational performance.

Knowledge Management Concept and Practices

Present generation companies are practical, sensible and have realized knowledge which is an intangible resource and it combines with other firm resources (e.g. financial and physical) to create capabilities **(Grant, 2013).** Knowledge resources are often classified as either tacit (implicit) or codified (explicit). Tacit knowledge is the knowledge in an individual's head **(Polanyi, 1967).**

Robert M Grant (2014) assumes that the firm integrates as an institution to conceptualize the knowledge. Grant work explores how organization specialize themselves to integrate knowledge of their specialized skillsets of members through a coordination mechanism. Knowledge considered to be residing in the mind of an individual in different forms. The foremost role of an organization is considered to be knowledge application rather than knowledge creation.

Integration of organization knowledge base provides platform through innovation capability and achieving competitive advantage. One can achieve competitive advantage through concentrating on team-building, capturing and utilizing tacit knowledge and through communicating specialized knowledge in compact form.

Leanring Organization and Knowledge Management

Anders Örtenblad et.al (2014) International relevance for LO and KM has magnified at individuals, firms, and organizations to increase competitive edge in the global market. Companies with entrepreneurial advent and ever innovating and being ahead in the race embrace LO.KM is an interdisciplinary business topic important for firms operating at global economy of professional service level.ktgp2000.

Marie-Pierre Gagnon et.al (2015) Developing new strategies and design new work practices and manage knowledge. LO is seen as a best choice to manage knowledge and to develop continual professionals. LO affects working practices in a positive manner. Most of the results are seen in relation to knowledge transfer, support for knowledge practices, but not much in relation to retention of employees. There is always an impact of organizational learning culture on knowledge practices of employees in service organization of knowledge management through knowledge transfer in the work environment and collective learning. The task LO wanted to accomplish since its inception has effectively implemented through KM practices.

Km, Lo & Competitive Advantage

Atul Gupta et.al. (2002) The management of information as a key to grasping and retaining competitive advantage has recently evolved into the more strategically focused management of knowledge. The concept of knowledge management concerns the creation of structures that combine the most advanced elements of technological resources and the indispensable input of human response and decision-making **(Raisinghani, 2000)**.

3. Potential Research Gaps

The research gap reveals following understanding on thoughts like, the journey towards a learning organisation is one without a final destination **(Paul A. Fuller, 2007).** It's quite impossible to conclude whether an organization has truly achieved the status of LO.

Growing importance to tap on issue of LO and KM contributing for CA is seen as a challenge is through strategic leadership, employee empowerment, organizational culture, Information systems and these are also few components of CA. There is an inconsistency in regard to above write up as well as limited research regard to assuming above elements enlarges organizational scope to achieve CA in SME IT companies. **Chang & Lee (2007)** have stated that companies with a learning capability can gain a competitive advantage.

4. Need for the Study

Organizations ponder consistently to find itself in a right thought process adaptation that leads to its success for a long period of time reaching apex with aplomb. A business entity survives for 100 plus years if it could nurture itself with careful treatment given to important resources of the organization the priority to be given to which is decided by dynamism surrounding the business.

5. Importance of the Study

As IT and ITeS companies become more global, the knowledge creation and transfer such as face-to-face contact, job rotation, and staff training program may prove to be too slow and less effective (Alavi and Leidner, 1999). LOP has been used in most product-based companies and it has also extended its use in SME IT and ITeS sector.

6. Statement of Research Problem

Some of the practical issues and intellectual interests concerning the study is in relation to LOP is that there is no final resort to depend fully on propagating that there is an empirical evidence to the fact that interrelationship between LOP and associated KMP result in CA of SME IT companies. There is an apparent lack of research that individual concepts are potential enough to base their identity in achieving CA.

7. Objectives of the Study

- To study LOP and KMP.
- To understand SME IT companies.
- To provide for LOP and KMP contribution to CA.

8. Hypothesis(es), if any

Hypothesis

H_o: There is no significant (statistically) difference in preferences between six classifications of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to PERSONAL MASTERY.

H_1: There is a significant (statistically) difference in preferences between six classifications of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to PERSONAL MASTERY.

H_o: There is no significant (statistically) difference in preferences between six classifications of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to SHARED VISION.

H_1: There is a significant (statistically) difference in preferences between six classifications of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to SHARED VISION.

9. Scope of the Study

Study on LOP and KMP did limit on few points like it doesn't consider technical execution of KM system within the organization. Dimensions of Knowledge Management in reference to selected IT Companies. However, this study is limit to select few SME IT Companies in Bangalore. This is due mainly to proximity, time and financial constraints in carrying out this research.

10. Limitations of the Study

1. Data collection is the most time consuming process.
2. Sharing information was a problematic act of employees
3. Sample size may not be broad enough
4. The study was confined only to select SME IT companies in Bengaluru
5. Further research is required to better understand the applicability of LOP and KMP concept.

11. Collection and Analysis Data / Results & Discussions

The main objective of the present study is to find out the LOP and KMP contribution in achieving organizational competitive advantage in selected SME IT sector in Bengaluru. As may be recalled, the present research has four objectives and number of hypotheses to ascertain the LOP and KMP contribution for CA.

12. Original Contributions from the Study / Summary of Findings

Study based on research objectives and hypotheses are presented in this section. The study was set to regulate the LOP and KMP contribution in achieving CA. A study on LOP and KMP and its contribution to achieve CA. To present a model on LOP and KPM contribution to achieve CA. Study of SME IT companies in Bengaluru.

Kruskal-Wallis Test

Table 1.1. Considers Mean, Standard Deviation and Test Statistics of PERSONAL MASTERY

H_o: There is no significant (statistically) difference in preferences between set of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to PERSONAL MASTERY.

H_1: There is a significant (statistically) difference in preferences between set of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to PERSONAL MASTERY.

$H_o = \mu_{\text{IT Development}} = \mu_{\text{IT Testing}} = \mu_{\text{IT Support}} = \mu_{\text{ITeS Development}} = \mu_{\text{ITeS Testing}} = \mu_{\text{ITeS Support}}$

$H_1 \neq$ at least one of them not equal to another.

No.	Descriptive Statistics			Test Statistics[a,b]	
	Factor	Mean	SD	Asymp. Sig.	Decision
PM1	Employees who master in required skills promote organizational competitiveness	4.314	0.0035	0.1011	No Sig. Diff
PM2	Employees need to find means to master their skills to be competitive	4.122	0.7963	0.0104	Sig. Diff
PM3	Employees are always ahead of learning path	4.415	0.9111	0.0152	Sig. Diff
PM4	Employees to take assistance from Training and Development centers to create dynamic learning teams	4.586	0.4013	0.0265	Sig. Diff
PM5	Employees can think beyond personal development, ahead of meeting with organizational growth	4.182	0.9656	0.1224	No Sig. Diff
Df=5	a. Kruskal Wallis Test	b. Grouping Variable: Sectorial Belonging			

Source: Primary data.

Interpretation

From the above Table, the mean of PM1, PM2, PM3, PM4 & PM5 are 4.314, 4.122, 4.415, 4.586 & 4.182 respectively, which indicate that the respondents are in agreeableness with the PERSONAL MASTERY factors,

From the matrix 1.1.2 indicated below more than 0.05 shows, there is no statistical evidence to say there is a significant difference in rank orders by the set of respondents in SME IT companies with regard to factor PM1 & PM5. Hence, there is no need to go check whether they have significant difference among themselves in rank orders/preference with regard to factor PM1 & PM5.

Now, it would be interesting to know, between these respondents set of classification in SME IT companies, which of them have significant difference among themselves in rank orders/preference with regard to PM2, PM3 & PM4 that will have impact on competitive advantage.

From the Table number 1.1 with respect to PM2, PM3 & PM4, p values which is less than 0.05 are statistically significant differences in their response among respondents and others are not statistically significant differences in their opinion to each other.

For example, the 'p'-value obtained between IT D and ITeS D is 0.0064, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in ranking orders/preference of respondents of IT D and ITeS D with respect to the statements in the factor 'PERSONAL MASTERY **PM2**.

Again, since the p-value obtained between IT D and IT T is 0.145, which is more than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in ranking orders/preference of respondents of IT D and IT T. This interpretation has been done with respect to the statement in the factor 'PERSONAL MASTERY **PM2'**.

Using Mann-Whitney U-test, we have the following results: The p-values are summarized in the matrix below;

Table 1.1.2 Consolidated "p" values of PERSONAL MASTERY **Factors**

		IT D		**IT T**		**IT S**		**ITeS D**		**ITeS T**		**ITeS S**	
		PM2	**PM3**	**PM2**	**PM3**	**PM2**	**PM3**	**PM2**	**PM3**	**PM2**	**PM3**	**PM2**	**PM3**
IT D	PM2	…	…										
	PM3	…	…										
IT T	PM2	0.0609	0.0533	…	…								
	PM3	0.0747	0.0222	…	…								
IT S	PM2	0.0007	0.0702	0.0551	0.0524	…	…						
	PM3	0.0393	0.0741	0.0978	0.0333	…	…						
ITeS D	PM2	0. 0064	0.0918	0.0207	0.0736	0.0899	0.0842	…	…				

	PM3	0.0835	0.0795	0.0102	0.0140	0.0501	0.0969	…	…				
ITeS T	PM2	0.1450	0.0120	0.0021	0.0075	0.0088	0.0362	0.0180	0.0288	…	…		
	PM3	0.0871	0.0120	0.0512	0.0810	0.0413	0.0780	0.0085	0.0617	…	…		
ITeS S	PM2	0.0738	0.0870	0.0692	0.0444	0.0070	0.0427	0.0868	0.0259	0.0649	0.0235	…	…
	PM3	0.0154	0.0488	0.0265	0.0530	0.0928	0.0126	0.0296	0.0597	0.0201	0.0706	…	…

		IT D	**IT T**	**IT S**	**ITeS D**	**ITeS T**	**ITeS S**
		PM4	**PM4**	**PM4**	**PM4**	**PM4**	**PM4**
IT D	PM4	…					
IT T	PM4	0.0693	…				
IT S	PM4	0.0095	0.0791	…			
ITeS D	PM4	0.0216	0.0368	0.0547	…		
ITeS T	PM4	0.0960	0.0005	0.0766	0.0822	…	
ITeS S	PM4	0.0315	0.0467	0.0673	0.0244	0.0849	…

Source: Primary data

Table 1.2 Mean Standard Deviation and Test Statistics of Shared Vision

H_o: There is no significant (statistically) difference in preferences between set of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to Shared Vision.

H_1: There is a significant (statistically) difference in preferences between set of respondents in SME IT companies with respect to Shared Vision.

$H_o = \mu_{\text{IT Development}} = \mu_{\text{IT Testing}} = \mu_{\text{IT Support}} = \mu_{\text{ITeS Development}} = \mu_{\text{ITeS Testing}} = \mu_{\text{ITeS Support}}$

$H_1 \neq$ at least one of them not equal to another.

No.	**Descriptive Statistics**			**Test Statistics[a,b]**	
	Factor	**Mean**	**SD**	**Asym p. Sig.**	**Decision**
SV1	Mutual trust and support to learn can influence distant capabilities of employees learning in an organization	4.414	0.715	0.1021	No Sig. Diff
SV2	Organizations appreciate and promote employees who have entrepreneurial sparkle can promote employee capabilities in an organization	4.112	0.002	0.0154	Sig. Diff
SV3	Employees derives satisfaction by sharing vision influences organizational productivity	4.411	0.264	0.0192	Sig. Diff
SV4	Employees see connectivity of task they do to organizational vision	4.581	0.157	0.0224	Sig. Diff
SV5	Employee connect to vision to the goals more in a participative manner than as a compliance	4.081	0.242	0.1214	No Sig. Diff
Df=5	a. Kruskal Wallis Test	b. Grouping Variable: Sectorial Belonging			

Source: Primary data.

Interpretation

From the above Table-1.2, the mean of SV1, SV2, SV3, SV4 & SV5 are 4.414, 4.112, 4.411, 4.581 & 4.081 respectively, which indicate that the respondents are in agreeableness with the SHARED VISION factors,

The above matrix 1. 2. 1, indicated more than 0.05 shows, there is no statistical evidence to say there is a significant difference in rank orders by the set of respondents in SME IT companies with regard to factor SV1 & SV5. Hence, there is no need to go check whether they have significant difference among themselves in rank orders/preference with regard to factor SV1 & SV5.

Now, it would be interesting to know, between these set of respondents in SME IT companies, which of them have significant difference among themselves in rank orders/preference with regard to SV2, SV3 & SV4 that will have impact on competitive advantage.

From the Table number 1.2 with respect to SV2, SV3 & SV4, p values which is less than 0.05 are statistically significant differences in their response among set of respondents and others are not statistically significant differences in their opinion to each other.

For example, the 'p'-value obtained between IT D and ITeS T is 0. 0078, which is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in ranking orders/preference of set of respondents of IT P and ITeS D with respect to the statement in the factor 'SHARED VISION SV2.

Again, since the p-value obtained between IT D and IT T is 0. 2120, which is more than 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in ranking orders/preference of set of respondents of IT D and IT T. This interpretation has been done with respect to the statement in the factor 'SHARED VISION SV2'.

All other statements under this factor 'SHARED VISION' have been subjected to similar testing, and analysis by the researcher and interpretations on exactly similar lines have been drawn, and considered in the Findings section.

Using Mann-Whitney U-test, we have the following results: The p-values are summarized in the matrix below;

Table 1.2.1 Consolidated "p" values of Shared Vision Factors

		IT D		IT T		IT S		ITeS D		ITeS T		ITeS S	
		SV2	SV3	SV2	SV3	SV2	SV3	SV2	SV3	SV2	SV3	SV2	SV3
IT D	SV2	…	…										
	SV3	…	…										
IT T	SV2	0.2120	0.0957	…	…								
	SV3	0.0021	0.0177	…	…								
IT S	SV2	0.0828	0.0188	0.0247	0.0165	…	…						
	SV3	0.0491	0.0539	0.0264	0.0464	…	…						
ITeS D	SV2	0.0670	0.0752	0.0300	0.0009	0.0693	0.0340	…	…				
	SV3	0.0158	0.0170	0.0999	0.0166	0.0055	0.0821	…	…				
ITeS T	SV2	0.0078	0.0714	0.0133	0.0613	0.0680	0.0733	0.0063	0.0139	…	…		
	SV3	0.0444	0.0621	0.0439	0.0541	0.0048	0.0148	0.0010	0.0577	…	…		
ITeS S	SV2	0.0461	0.0422	0.0584	0.0583	0.0854	0.0579	0.0326	0.0864	0.0557	0.0298	…	…
	SV3	0.0869	0.0545	0.0416	0.0218	0.0021	0.0397	0.0233	0.0383	0.0096	0.0149	…	…

		IT D	IT T	IT S	ITeS D	ITeS T	ITeS S
		SV4	SV4	SV4	SV4	SV4	SV4
IT D	SV4	…					
IT T	SV4	0.0913	…				
IT S	SV4	0.0922	0.0037	…			
ITeS D	SV4	0.0787	0.0388	0.0921	…		
ITeS T	SV4	0.0488	0.0091	0.0128	0.0917	…	
ITeS S	SV4	0.0984	0.0964	0.0717	0.0213	0.0796	…

Source: Primary data

Researcher suggest a possible relationship between these three organizational capabilities LOP, KMP on their contributions to create competitive Advantage. It is significantly opined that synergy will create CA in SME IT companies in Bengaluru.

The researcher does find that their hypothetical justification is sufficient, and they discuss the possible influence of LOP and KMP on creating the sustainable competitive advantage on business performance. Dealing with new challenges related to knowledge management and strategy in SME IT sector in Bengaluru.

Our findings contribute to the literature on the representation of learning organisation process and knowledge management practices to illustrate the diversity of 'LOP and KMP about CA in IT companies in Bengaluru.

14. Conclusion

As per the revelations by the researcher thorough out the journey the work it comes to light that concepts of LOP and KMP and its contribution to achieve CA is a task quite possible with the illustrated theoretical knowledge and implementation process of the same. Model has all the distinctive capabilities that suit to the need of transformation process. SME IT companies have all the advantage in their possession through the implementation of Model to achieve LO.

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