

Editorial for EJKM Volume 17, Issue 2

It is with great pleasure to present the Second Issue of the Seventeenth Volume of The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management.

Over a period spanning about 30 years, there has been an increasing consensus amongst the research community in respect of the value of knowledge as a critical resource for organisational success. The research and ongoing debates have become more mature as we moved beyond the industrial age into what was commonly known as the “Knowledge Economy and Information Society” – spurred on in the main by the advent of the global internet. In the era of the Knowledge economy, it is common cause that knowledge management is central to organisations given the premium value of organisational assets which is vested in the knowledge of its employees. In light of the foregoing the research reported in this issue take us a step forward in understanding several vexing issues in relation to various organisational knowledge management problems.

In the first paper of this issue, Kanwal et al. (2019) argue that individuals within organisations do not hold every type of knowledge relevant to their organisation and as such they collaborate with actors within and across organisations to share, exchange, integrate and create new knowledge using artefacts known as boundary objects. Based on a systematic literature review of thirty-three previous studies the research investigated the role of boundary objects use in knowledge management practices and the factors which affect such objects. The findings confirm the important role of boundary objects in knowledge management. Importantly the research transcends the notion of boundary objects from the theoretical and makes sense of its application to knowledge management practice. Concrete recommendations are provided to support organisations to identify, create and facilitate the use of boundary objects in knowledge management.

The next paper in this issue brings to the fore the importance of Information Systems in the digital age to the practice of knowledge management. The fourth industrial revolution – which has been buttressed by rapid advances in micro-chip processing, digital storage capabilities, and rapid progress in networking technologies – presents new opportunities and approaches to traditional knowledge management practice. In his paper, Schmitt (2019), focuses on the use of design science research (DSR) for the conceptualizing and prototyping of a Personal Knowledge Management Systems (PKMS). The findings support the relevance of the theory effectiveness, as derived in Design Science Research, to that of system’s utility and communication. He concludes that “the PKMS concept supports creativity and human capital formation throughout individuals’ academic and professional careers independent of space, time, discipline or role” (Schmitt, 2019: 127).

Voolaid and Ehrlich (2019) investigate an interesting organisational problem in a Higher Education setting. They assess the effect of a change in the management system in which a system of democratically electing leadership to one of nomination. It is asserted that this change diluted the democratic ethos that prevailed and as such impacted on organisational learning. A learning organization questionnaire (Watkins and Marsick, 1996) is applied to make the assessment. The findings indicate that there has been a negative impact on organisational learning especially in respect of the shifting of the administrative power farther away from employees together with the diminishing decision-making power from below and increasing control from above. These findings are important for higher education governance structures to take note of, especially since more and more universities are tending to move away from democratically elected leadership regimes.

The rapid advances of technology, and the current digital era, call for new approaches to the way we train human capital to become knowledge creators. As such the research of Van Den Berg (2019) examines knowledge creation in the digital world. It is argued that the digital future demands a new type of employee who is able to work in unstructured and unpredictable circumstances that are often complex and involve constant change. The paper makes a contribution in terms of a teaching and learning framework to teach digital innovation skills. The design principles for a teaching and learning environment that are posited by Van Den Berg will be useful to education practitioners at all levels.

In keeping with the theme of education, in the final article of this issue Diriye (2019) examines the role of social capital in knowledge sharing within higher education contexts. Like any other organisation the university environment is also prone to churn in staff, and therefore the manner in which knowledge is managed in higher

education is as important as in any other environment. The concept of social capital has largely been central to social development debates, and as such it is novel to investigate its role in this particular context. An important contribution of this paper is the development of measurable constructs to evaluate social capital in an organisation. The qualitative evidence supports the argument that knowledge sharing in higher education institutions could be enhanced by building social capital bonds among staff. In particular trust, participation, socialization and rewards have been found to influence staff attitudes towards knowledge sharing in higher education (Diriye, 2019: 167). Given the increasing competitiveness in higher education, University executives may want to pay attention to these findings.

In closing I want to extend a heartfelt appreciations to the reviewers of the papers in this issue. Your valuable insights and review recommendations have ensured that we have published an issue of high quality research which does indeed make a vital contribution to the broad knowledge management landscape.

Shaun Pather, Editor

References

- Diriye, A., 2019. The Role of Social Capital in Knowledge Sharing in Higher Education Institutes. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(2), pp. 158-170, available online at www.ejkm.com
- Kanwal, S., Baptista Nunes, M., Arif, M., Hui, C., and Andrew, D. Madden A. D., 2019. Application of Boundary Objects in Knowledge Management Research: A Review. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(2), pp. 100-113, available online at www.ejkm.com
- Schmitt, U., 2019 Decentralizing Knowledge Management: Affordances and Impacts. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(2), pp. 114-130, available online at www.ejkm.com
- van den Berg, C., 2019. Teaching Innovation to Strengthen Knowledge Creation in a Digital World. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(2), pp. 144-157, available online at www.ejkm.com
- Voolaid, K., and Ehrlich, Ü., 2019. Management Change Impact on Organizational Learning in a Business School. *The Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management*, 17(2), pp. 131-143, available online at www.ejkm.com
- Watkins, K. and Marsick, V.J., 1996. Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire, available at: <http://www.partnersforlearning.com/questions2.asp>.