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Role of Knowledge Management Practices in the Economic Performance of Nepalese IT Companies

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Abstract

Organizations are spending substantial resources on information technology (IT) to support the capture, storage, sharing, and retrieval of knowledge as knowledge management (KM) emerges as a fundamental management responsibility. Information systems (IS) development and maintenance inside businesses rely heavily on knowledge management (KM). The major goal of this research is to evaluate how knowledge management strategies affect the organizational performance of Nepalese IT enterprises. A total of 316 respondents' information has been collected from the Ten IT companies in Nepal. A convenience sampling technique is used to select the sample. A descriptive survey is used as the research design for this investigation. Surveys questionnaires were distributed to gather primary information from the respondents. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze and interpret the results. It was found that all independent factors have a positive correlation with perceived organizational performance in IT companies in Nepal, demonstrating their influence on both. Independent variables have also affected how Nepalese IT businesses are considered to be satisfying the employees.

Keywords: Information, information technology, knowledge management, Performance, technology

Introduction

To enhance an enterprise's knowledge-related productivity and produce values, knowledge management (KM) specifies the systematic, clear, and purposeful building process necessary to manage knowledge (Bixler & Stankosky, 2005). Dalkir (2005) argued that maturity, dynamism, and self-growth constitute key attributes of a successful Knowledge Management (KM) system. The maturity aspect emphasizes the resilience and robustness required for tolerating performance volatility. Alavi and Leidner (2001), added that the KM should align with corporate policies, strategies, culture, and structure, fostering an environment where disciplined and valuable knowledge can be created and disseminated effectively. The dynamic characteristic of KM underscores the need for knowledge and information to circulate freely within the organization, allowing anyone to access and contribute to the knowledge assets. To enhance organizational knowledge assets, KM must identify potentially valuable information, capture and store it, and generate new knowledge based on existing organizational knowledge (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Various successful organizations exemplify the benefits of effective KM. For instance, General Electric (GE), Microsoft, and Intel have experienced significant increases in net worth due to their strategic application of KM. According to Frappaolo (2002), organizations like GE, Microsoft, and Intel attribute 8%, 97%, and 85% of their respective net worth to the effective implementation of KM practices.

Knowledge is a crucial concern for businesses in the commercial world. Researchers and practitioners have tackled the management of knowledge from several different viewpoints. Although the gathering, sharing, and application of knowledge have always been crucial to human affairs (hence the well-established field of epistemology), Penrose (1959), Bell (1973), and Drucker (1993a) give us a solid foundation for connecting knowledge to business organizations in the twenty-first century. As we enter the "knowledge society," according to Drucker (Drucker, 1993b), knowledge is the primary resource for individual businesses and the primary source of competitive advantage for developed countries that are engaged in knowledge-based industries and inhabit societies and communities that value knowledge.

Tan and Wong (2015) studied how knowledge management affected manufacturing performance, which was described as both production and operational performance evaluated based on quality, time, cost, flexibility, and customer satisfaction. The outcome demonstrated that the methods and components of knowledge management have a significant and immediate influence on industrial performance. Kumar and Ganesh (2011) found a substantial impact of the knowledge transfer process on the effectiveness of product development in their study on the link between knowledge transfer and product development inside a company.

Abu Bakar et al. (2016) examined the connection between knowledge management techniques and performance in terms of growth in the construction sector. Company turnover and employee growth are used to gauge growth performance. The findings demonstrate a considerable association between knowledge production, storage, transmission, application, and effective participation. Knowledge transfer has the greatest influence on growth performance among the four processes.

Chibuzor et al. (2019) investigated the impact of corporate innovation and knowledge management. The research results showed that information exchange, application, and acquisition all have a big impact on technological and administrative innovation. Thus, it was determined that investing in knowledge management and technological advancement by businesses is essential for establishing long-term competitive advantage given the dynamism of today's business environment, which is defined by quick and continual changes.

Knowledge management (KM) and organizational performance are essential to success in business. The different results in works of literature that declare KM affects organizational performance positively. In Darroch’s (2005) research, the results that support some KM processes positively affect performance. She claims that knowledge acquisition doesn’t positively affect performance directly, and knowledge dissemination doesn’t positively affect performance, either.

Davenport (1999) relates KM activities with some intermediate activities that affect financial results. Progress in KM activities affects intermediate variables such as project performance measurements, indicators of the capacity of employees to carry out tasks related to knowledge, and finally the generation of ideas and innovations.

Gold, Malhotra, and Segars (2001) investigated the topic of efficient knowledge management from the viewpoint of organizational capacities. According to this viewpoint, key organizational competencies or "preconditions" for successful knowledge management include a knowledge infrastructure made up of technology, structure, and culture, as well as a knowledge process architecture comprising acquisition, conversion, application, and preservation. The findings give a foundation for understanding a firm's competitive propensity when it begins a knowledge management program.

Knowledge acquisition, knowledge translation, and knowledge application are three interconnected activities that make up knowledge management skills (Gold et al., 2001). Most businesses assert that having an effective and efficient KM process would improve organizational performance. As a result, it is assumed that KM is a crucial antecedent of organizational success or creativity (Darroch, 2005).

Nepal's IT industry is soaring, marked by a rapid increase in the number of service providers (estimated at around 500) and a focus on diverse areas like computer science, information management systems (MIS), contact centers, medical transcription, modeling, and data processing (FNCCI, 2023). Although most of these companies currently employ less than 300 people (IIDS, 2023), their collective impact is significant. This dynamic growth can be attributed to several key factors as Skilled Workforce: Nepal boasts a growing pool of talented IT professionals, evident in the presence of 66,509 IT freelancers actively exporting services (FNCCI, 2023). Technological Advancements: The availability of advanced technologies fuels innovation and competitiveness within the industry (The Kathmandu Post, 2023). Improved Infrastructure: Continuous development of internet infrastructure paves the way for seamless connectivity and wider reach, further propelling industry growth (The Kathmandu Post, 2023).

Information technology (IT) firms are expanding faster than ever before all over the world, and Nepal is not an exception given the significant rise in the usage of IT for both personal and professional purposes. Over the past ten years, Nepal's software industry has experienced rapid growth. In comparison to other sectors, there is a fairly low amount of study on the IT industry in Nepal. To research, on the other side, how knowledge management strategies affect Nepalese IT firms' performance This study's major goal is to determine how knowledge management techniques relate to and affect the organizational performance of Nepalese IT enterprises. This study also concentrated on the current state of knowledge management techniques in Nepalese IT firms.

Research Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to investigate the relationship between knowledge management practices and perceived organizational performance within the IT industry in Nepal. The population targeted encompassed all IT companies operating in Nepal. According to the 2019 Nepal Investment Board's ICT profile report, there were over 500 such companies. Due to the large population size, a convenience sampling approach was adopted. The survey was conducted with 400 employees from 10 selected IT companies and gathered data on their socioeconomic traits, the knowledge management techniques employed by their companies, and the companies' perceived economic performance. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 316 valid responses were collected for analysis.

The selected ten IT business firms are found active in the IT sector for more than five years. Data for the study were collected through questionnaire. Surveys on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 were used with 5 denoting ‘strongly agree’ and 1 ‘strongly disagree.’ Information acquisition, knowledge distribution, knowledge usage, and perceived organizational economic performance were the variables of this study. Simple statistical tools like correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. In the present study, knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination and knowledge utilization were used as independent variables and Perceived Organizational Economic Performance was taken as dependent variable to examine the impact of knowledge management on perceived organizational economic performance through the responses given by the sampled employees

Respondents were carefully picked so that they understood the topic in-depth to prevent random outcomes. Regression, correlation, and descriptive analysis techniques are used in the study. Internal reliability for the variable is 0.895, 0.628, 0.788, and 0.812 on knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution, knowledge usage, and performance. The values are all within a reasonable range. All 37 variables' internal consistency is 0.940, which is likewise very good.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of the Respondent

Demographic features of the respondents to this survey include gender, age, and position in the business. The demographic data for responders are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Respondents Demographic Profile

Variables	Number	Percent
Gender		
Male	250	79.1
Female	66	20.9
Age Group		
20-25	56	17.7
26-30	106	35.5
31-40	104	32.9
40 Above	50	15.8
Position of Respondent		
Manager	24	7.6
Assistant	292	92.4

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 reveals that of all the 316 respondents, there are 250 men (79.1%) and 66 women (20.9 percent). In the table, respondents between the ages of 26 and 30 made up the majority, while those over 40 made up the smallest proportion. Managers and assistants are the two categories into which the respondents' organizational positions have been separated. All positions-aside from managers-are categorized as assistants. Of the 316 respondents, 24 (7.6%) were managers and 292 (92.4%) were assistants, according to Table 1.

Descriptive Analysis

A fundamental description of central tendency, in particular the mean scores of the variable constructions, is included in the descriptive analysis of study variables. There are 4 variables and combined they have 37 questions.

Knowledge Acquisition

Statements on knowledge acquisition show how the company gathers knowledge from many sources. Customers, suppliers, rivals, and workers can all provide knowledge. Seminars, reports, publications, inter-organizational cooperation, fusing current information to produce new knowledge, benchmarking, and finding best practices may all help to further improve it. Twelve constructs illustrate the knowledge acquisition process. The current state of knowledge acquisition in Nepalese IT firms is presented in this section.

Table 2

Details of Knowledge Acquisition

Description	N	Mean	S. D.
A significant portion of the new information that our company acquires comes from outside sources	316	4.33	.558
Business partners provide a significant amount of fresh information to our firm (e.g., suppliers, and clients).	316	3.54	.787
Our company has procedures for working with other organizations	316	3.35	.868
Employees in our company share expertise	316	3.96	.726
Employees in our company share expertise in a structured manner (e.g., project reports, organizational procedures, instructions, reports, and company publications)	316	4.18	.756
Employee participation in informal education systems is encouraged by the general management and leadership (e.g., seminars, and courses)	316	4.35	.713
Our company makes improvements to forthcoming projects based on input from prior ones	316	4.17	.468
Our company offers procedures for creating fresh knowledge from old information	316	3.57	.522
Our company has procedures in place for learning about fresh goods and services in our sector	316	4.03	.765
Our company has procedures for gathering information on rivals in our sector	316	4.08	.794
Performance benchmarking procedures are in place at our company	316	3.87	.626
Teams within our company are responsible for finding the best practices	316	3.72	.860
Average		3.93	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The position of knowledge acquisition in Nepalese IT companies is depicted in Table 2. The mean value of knowledge acquisition constructs, as shown in the table, ranges from 3.35 to 4.45. On the Likert scale, the composite mean of the conceptions is 3.93, which indicates a tendency toward agreement. In Nepalese IT organizations, knowledge acquisition is therefore in excellent standing.

Knowledge Dissemination

Disseminating information involves doing so across the whole organization. This variable connects the practices and organizational culture of knowledge sharing. According to Table 3, seven constructions describe it.

The mean of the constructions, as shown in Table 3, ranged from 3.23 to 4.27. The composite mean of the components is 3.92, indicating that Nepal's IT enterprises have a good reputation for knowledge distribution.

Table 3

Details of Knowledge Dissemination

Description	N	Mean	S. D.
In my group, there is a willingness to impart knowledge learned	316	4.13	.526
Lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful initiatives are valued in my organization	316	3.23	.911
Lessons learned from successful and unsuccessful initiatives are valued in my organization	316	4.01	.798
Successful cases of sharing lessons gained are frequently highlighted in the media.	316	3.58	1.005
In our Company, lessons learned are collected regularly with associated colleagues and staff	316	4.00	.628
It is a common practice for collaboration and knowledge sharing among personnel in our company	316	4.23	.577
Our association's overall management/leadership encourages employee collaboration and knowledge sharing	316	4.27	.537
Average		3.92	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Knowledge Utilization

Utilizing knowledge is applying gathered information to solve problems, create new things, and manage challenging circumstances. According to Table 4, 8 constructs describe it.

Table 4

Details of Knowledge Utilization

Description	N	Mean	Std. D.
Our company has procedures for putting information gained from mistakes and experiences to use.	316	4.38	.771
Our company has processes in place for utilizing knowledge while creating new services.	316	3.96	.844
Our company has procedures for applying expertise to brand-new issues.	316	4.26	.543
There are procedures in place at our company for making knowledge available to individuals who require it.	316	4.47	.594
Knowledge is used within our company to improve productivity.	316	3.66	.755
Organizations may find information and use it to adapt to shifting competitive situations.	316	3.69	.516
Knowledge is used by our company to change its strategic course.	316	3.62	.512
Processes for finding lessons learned are continually updated and enhanced.	316	4,25	.461
Average		4.04	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The mean of the constructions, as shown in Table 4, ranged from 3.62 to 4.38. The components' combined mean is 4.04, demonstrating the high level of knowledge usage in Nepalese IT firms.

Perceived Performance

The perceived performance of the organization has improved. Performance as a result of firms' adoption of knowledge management strategies.

Table 5

Details of Perceived Organizational Performance

Statements	Mean	S. D.
The company is expanding more quickly.	4.30	.538
The organization is more profitable.	4.35	.757
The organization is providing higher-quality services.	4.53	.537
An organization is efficient in using resources.	4.10	.792
Employee relationships are enhanced.	3.57	.534
The organization is delivering orders quickly.	3.97	.328
The organization is delivering higher customer satisfaction.	4.36	.707
The redundancy of information and knowledge is reduced.	3.53	.561
Reduced response time to new market demands.	4.13	.915
Able to innovate new products/services.	4.15	.742
Average	4.10	

Note: Survey report 2023.

The mean of the constructions, as shown in Table 5, ranged from 3.57 to 4.53. Due to the knowledge management techniques used by Nepalese IT organizations, the composite mean of the constructs is 4.10, demonstrating good organizational performance. According to the aforementioned table, the majority of respondents concurred that the use of knowledge management techniques had improved the perceived performance of the sample firms.

Correlation Analysis

To determine the interdependencies between them, a correlation analysis between perceived organizational performance and other factors has been calculated. It has also been determined how closely knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution, and perceived organizational performance are related. The outcomes are shown in Table 5.

Table 6

Correlation Between the Variables

Variables		Knowledge Acquisition	Knowledge Dissemination	Knowledge Utilization	Perceived Performance
Knowledge Acquisition	Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Knowledge Dissemination	Correlation	0.565**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
Knowledge Utilization	Correlation	0.833**	0.420**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
Perceived Performance	Correlation	0.899**	0.516**	0.905**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	

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

Table 6 shows a favorable correlation between knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution, knowledge usage, and perceived organizational performance. Knowledge use has the strongest connection to the organizational performance of all the independent variables (0.905), whereas knowledge dissemination has the lowest correlation to organizational success (0.516). It demonstrates how knowledge usage affects organizational performance significantly.

Knowledge acquisition and knowledge use have the most significant association between independent variables (0.833), whereas knowledge dissemination and knowledge utilization have the weakest significant relationships (0.420).

Regression Analysis

A collection of statistical techniques known as regression analysis is used to estimate the connection between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. Perceived organizational performance is the dependent variable in this study, whereas knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution, and knowledge usage are the independent factors. Table 7 illustrates regression analysis.

Table 7

Regression Coefficient of the Variables

Variables	Unstandardized		Std. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	β		
(Constant)	0.399	0.131		3.051	0.003
Knowledge Acquisition	0.363	0.044	0.439	8.180	0.000
Knowledge Dissemination	0.049	0.032	0.050	1.536	0.127
Knowledge Utilization	0.515	0.049	0.518	10.602	0.000

Dependent Variable: Perceived Organizational Economic Performance

The beta coefficient for each of the three variables-knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination, and knowledge utilization is positive, as shown in Table 7. With their p values (0.000–0.05), knowledge usage and acquisition show a substantial correlation with perceived organizational performance. With a p-value of 0.127 0.05, knowledge diffusion exhibits a negligible association with perceived organizational performance. The beta coefficient of knowledge acquisition is 0.399, which indicates that knowledge acquisition accounts for 39.9% of the change in organizational performance, with the remaining portion being influenced by external variables. Applying the beta coefficient of knowledge diffusion, it can be seen that 4.9% of the change in organizational performance is due to information dissemination, with the remaining 81% coming from external variables. Similar to this, the 0.515 beta coefficient of knowledge utilization demonstrates that knowledge utilization accounts for 51.5% of the change in performance, with external factors accounting for the remainder. According to the findings of this study, information acquisition and knowledge usage have strong relationships with organizational performance, however, knowledge dissemination has a negligible link.

The majority of respondents from the chosen IT enterprises strongly concurred that these businesses had implemented knowledge management strategies. In Nepalese IT firms, the status of knowledge acquisition (mean 3.93), knowledge distribution (mean 3.92), and knowledge usage (mean 4.04) are good. Similar to this, the majority of respondents concurred that using knowledge management techniques had improved perceived performance (mean 4.10) in the sample firms. The fact that each independent variable has a positive correlation with perceived organizational performance indicates that each one affects it. For KA, KD, and KU, the correlation coefficients are 0.889, 0.516, and 0.905, respectively. The significance threshold is 1%. Knowledge acquisition, with a p-value of (0.000–0.05), is the first significant variable among the three variables. According to its 0.363 beta coefficient, KA is responsible for a 36.3% change in performance. Utilization of knowledge, with a p-value of (0.000–0.05), is the second significant variable. Its beta coefficient of 0.515, which indicates that KU is responsible for a change in performance of 51.5%, indicates that it has the greatest influence on perceived

organizational performance. With a p-value of 0.127 0.05, knowledge diffusion is a non-significant variable. With a beta value of 0.049, it has a minimal (4.9%) influence on how organizations are judged to be performing. To determine how dependent and independent variables are related, multiple regression analysis is used. The value of the coefficient of determination (R2) is 0.889 (appendix iii), meaning that 88.9 percent of the change in the dependent variable (perceived organizational performance) can be attributed to the independent variables (knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination, and knowledge utilization), with the remaining 15.4 percent being the result of outside influences. Therefore, this model accurately captures the relationship. The findings are in line with research done in 2015 by Shakeel Ahmed, Mohammad Fiaz, and Mohammad Shoaib titled "Impact of Knowledge Management Practices on Organizational Performance: An Empirical Study of the Banking Sector in Pakistan." Both of our investigations concluded that KM techniques have a beneficial effect on organizational performance. Similarly, findings are analogous to those of Gholami (2013), who examined how knowledge management techniques affect organizational performance in small and medium-sized firms and discovered that these practices had a direct impact on SMEs. There is one important difference: although information sharing had a high association with OP in their study, knowledge dissemination has a negligible link with perceived organizational performance in my study. Chibuzor (2019) looked at the impact of organizational innovation and knowledge management. It was determined that investing in knowledge management and innovation by businesses is essential for establishing long-term competitive advantage because of the dynamism of today's business environment, which is marked by quick and constant changes. Similar findings are shown in both of our studies. Each of the other research presented demonstrates the beneficial effects of KM techniques on organizational performance. Knowledge application, acquisition, and sharing all have a substantial impact on technical and administrative innovation, according to Chibuzor et al. (2019), and the outcomes are the same here.

Conclusions

This study concluded that Nepal's IT enterprises engage in a significant amount of knowledge management methods. The major ways that people learn are through seminars, conferences, industry-related goods and services, and benchmarking. Knowledge sharing is mostly accomplished through the discussion of new information, and knowledge application is quite successful. Management offers strong encouragement and motivation for enhancing KM procedures. Better knowledge management might be considered the cause of discernible performance differences. Due to the absence of a KM culture in Nepalese organizations, several parts of KM practices are observed to be weaker. Performance may be increased even further by creating a solid KM culture. The study also concluded that knowledge management practices generally have a positive impact on organizational performance in several ways, including knowledgeable employees, better internal decision-making, improved client service, lower operational costs, and increased organizational competitiveness. The study found a correlation between knowledge consumption and organizational performance that is favorable. Utilizing gained information is, therefore, necessary to improve performance.

Implications for Future Research

The analysis is based on Nepali IT businesses. Future studies may thus cover more industries like the financial industry, the service sector, the manufacturing sector, etc. The sample is tiny and is only comprised of Kathmandu-based IT firms. As a result, bigger samples from those locations can be used in future research to increase the generalizability of the findings. There was

no mediating variable in this investigation. Future research may incorporate mediating variables such as demographic characteristics, mediating variables, and organization variables.

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