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INVESTIGATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND ANALYSIS: STATUS OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN INDIAN ARMY

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Abstract:

Knowledge sharing is the backbone with which knowledge management architecture is built. The paper analyses the responses to the knowledge management activities carried out by the organisation and its analysis to the see the effect on demographic variables of Age and experience on knowledge sharing. The inputs are critical to the top management to understand the reality and design a Km system accordingly.

Key Words: Knowledge Management, Army Knowledge Management, Sharing & Questionnaire

1. Introduction:

Technology has brought groups, individuals and organisations closer than never before (Skyrme & Amidon 1998, Zack 1999). The knowledge economy is dominating over the industrial economy (Drucker,1993) and developing intellectual capital through knowledge creation and sharing on a global scale have emerged as the parameters of success for organisations in the 21st century (Ichyo and Nonaka, 2007). Economics, business and management are the key influencers and knowledge-based organisations have made inroads in Indian organisations also. Most important of all resources is the knowledge and intellectual resource in the world economies of today and the future (Hinds and Patterson, 2001). The significance of Knowledge Management as an independent field altogether is increasing in the research field as well as the corporate sector. Knowledge Management is emerging as the next big field and expanding its influence into all boundaries. Knowledge is providing the much-needed edge in the extremely competitive environment. Therefore, to remain relevant, organisations have to spread their knowledge base and include all employees in its umbrella not just the experts.

2. Knowledge Management:

Just speaking about the term "Knowledge Management", it can be misleading as knowledge is an intangible entity mostly residing in the head of the people. Therefore, it is important to understand the essence of knowledge management that is basically referred to what people can do and what does it take for an organisation to provide a learning environment to its employees. An environment where people get the encouragement to learn, share, innovate, create and use collective knowledge for the benefit of their stakeholders, own benefit and that of the organisation. This means that if we really look at the process of knowledge management, then it is not as simple as setting up a new branch in the office or applying a technology. It is a change that is brought about gradually and deliberately to ensure a paradigm shift in the thought process of the organisation and its employees. The core values of the organisation need to ingrain this concept and imbibe it with the culture. This will eventually lead to change in behaviour and work pattern of the employees and make the organisation an open and accessible one. Management of this competitive edge becomes extremely important in modern organisations and so it has to be managed effectively. Managing knowledge includes both tacit and explicit knowledge in the context of knowledge sharing and creation and the objective of this management must ultimately lead to learning and innovation. The members of the organisation must be able to build their own knowledge base and capitalise on the learning environment that the organisation provides. Collaborative teamwork with collective sharing is the key to using and promoting knowledge effectively (Milam, 2001). Creation of new knowledge is only possible when different pieces of knowledge come together in the same context, it is organised, linked together and compared to the past experiences' of different individuals (Gauvin and Lecocq, 2004).

3. Review of Literature:

Holsapple and Joshi are of the view that knowledge workers in an organisation use the sources of knowledge, be it the knowledge handling skills and the other knowledge sources available to them, in order to carry out the knowledge related activities. These activities can be analysed and classified in a number of ways. Holsapple and Joshi have classified them into generic knowledge activities, namely, "Acquiring Knowledge(this knowledge is acquired from sources which are available outside of the organization), Generating Knowledge(this knowledge is available within the organisation and needs to be discovered), Internalizing Knowledge (this knowledge is shared within the organization), Externalizing Knowledge(this knowledge is shared outside the organization and reflected as an organizational output).The sharing of the knowledge can be carried out in a variety of ways. The sharing of the Knowledge Activity may be through the employees, namely, human based. It may be carried out by the use of technology, through computers. The

sharing of knowledge is depicted by use of Knowledge flow. It needs to be ensured that relevant knowledge reaches the relevant processor, in a relevant measure and at the relevant time. This flow of knowledge activity is defined as Knowledge Management Episode (KME). Holsapple and Joshi further define KME as a particular instance of a knowledge activity in an organization can be carried out by a human-based processor (e.g., an individual knowledge worker, a group), a computer-based processor (e.g., an intelligent agent) or a hybrid. Occurrences of specific processors performing specific activities are connected by knowledge flows. An operational objective of KM is to ensure that the right knowledge is available to the right processors, in the right representations and at the right times, for performing their knowledge activities. The pursuit of this objective yields a panorama, unfolding over time, of specific instances of knowledge activities with their connecting knowledge flows. The specific instances of knowledge activities and their associated knowledge flows are termed knowledge management episodes (KMEs).Furthermore, they explain the conduct of KM, organizational knowledge resources are operated on by human and/or computer processors in performing knowledge manipulation activities to create value for the organization in the form of learning and projections. The conduct of KM is constrained and facilitated by a variety of influences factors, and it unfolds in an organization as a pattern of interrelated KM episodes.

Where knowledge sharing is concerned, there are studies that look into the effect of demographic variables, but the number is still small. The effect of demographic variable on job related behaviors has undergone rigorous examination, but the results are still inconclusive (ig. Ehigie & Otukoya, 2005; Kidder, 2002). One of them is a study by (miller and Karakowsky, 2005) who looked into knowledge sharing behavior within mixed gender teams doing gender biased task. In essence, they found that there are differences between men and women in their effort to seek for knowledge. In a different study, (Lin, 2006) found that women are more willing to share knowledge because they are more sensitive to instrumental ties and due to the need to overcome traditional occupational hurdles. Nonetheless, there are also studies reported that gender did not have a significant impact on knowlwge sharing (Chowdhury, 2005 ; Ojha, 2003; Watson & Hewett, 2006).

Besides gender, age is another variable that has been studied. Unfortunately, according to (Ojha, 2003) indicated that it did not affect knowledge sharing, However, (Collin, 2004) reported that among the design engineers, the more experienced employees often act as a mentor to the less experienced employees. However, where job position is concerned, (Ardichvili, Maurer, wentling, and Stuedemann, 2006) found that not only the top manager, but the middle- level managers were also not participating in knowledge sharing efforts. This means job position also did not have an impact on knowledge sharing behavior.

Other than that, marital status and level of education were also reported not to influence knowledge sharing among the software development engineers (Ojha, 2003). In short, not many studies on knowledge sharing behavior focus on demographic differences. Therefore, the effects of demographic factors on knowledge sharing behavior are still not definitive.

4. Research Methodology:

Extending the framework of Holsapple and Joshi, focus group inputs and secondary data, a questionnaire with 64 dimensions were finalized. The questionnaire was divided in three parts i.e. Managerial dimensions, Resource dimensions and Environment dimensions. Managerial dimension had 29 questions, Resource 26 questions and Environment 10 questions. The questions were coded with prefix for easy identification of the dimensions. The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample of 320 random personnel from all location. Responses were gathered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 for ‘strongly agree’ to 1 for ‘strongly disagree’.

According to the CVI index, content with a rating of three or four indicates that is valid and consistent with the conceptual framework (Lynn, 1996). As per the result CVIs had a value ranging from 0.87 (7/8) to 0.100 (8/8) and were retained. All respondents evaluated each parameter at three or four on a Likert scale of 1-4. Ninety five percent specified that they the questions were comprehensible and were easy to answer, and 95% indicated that the appearance and layout would be acceptable to the target audience. Cronbach’s alpha was computed was computed as 0.878 for the revised questionnaire after construct validation. This indicates that the questionnaire is consistently reliable. The Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test measure of sampling adequacy was used to examine the appropriateness of Factor Analysis. Normally, $0 < KMO < 1$, If $KMO > 0.5$, the sample is adequate. Here, $KMO = 0.865$, indicating that the sample is adequate and we may proceed with the Factor Analysis.

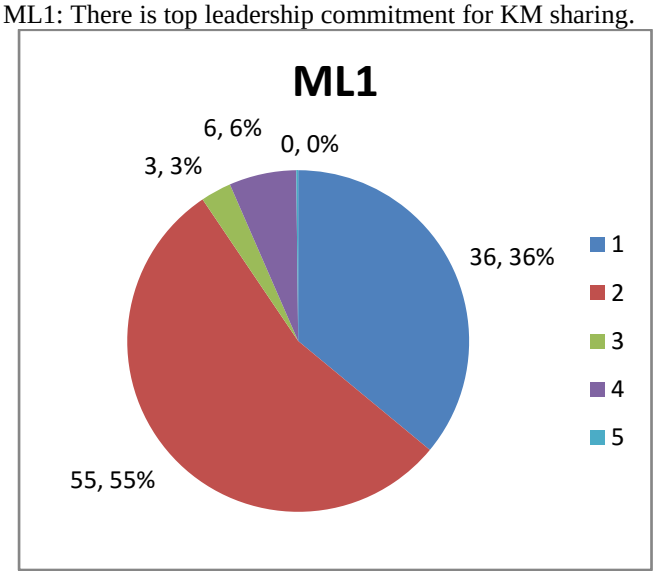
After factor analysis the following dimensions which were found to be not part of any factors and considered as important dimensions to find the interrelation between the demographic variables were selected for further studies.

- ✓ ML1 - Leadership
- ✓ ML8 - KM activity
- ✓ MM24 - KM has value
- ✓ RH37 - KM trust
- ✓ RH38 - KM reward

- ✓ RH39 - KM training
- ✓ RH50 - KM infrastructure

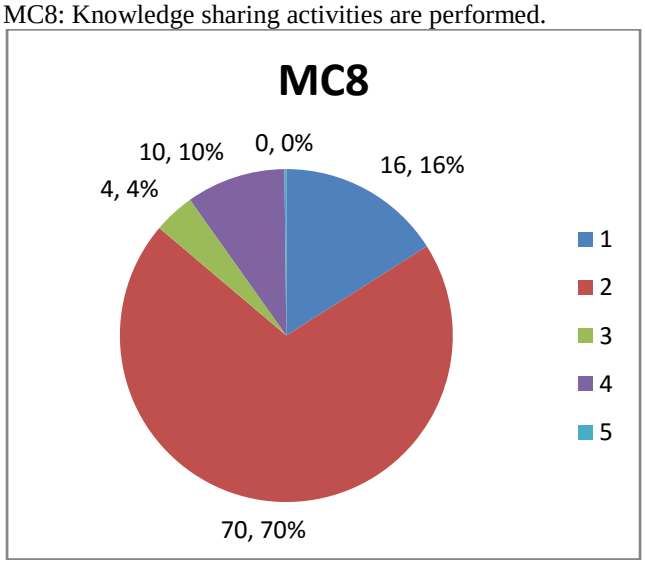
5. Analysis:

ML1: There is top leadership commitment for KM sharing.



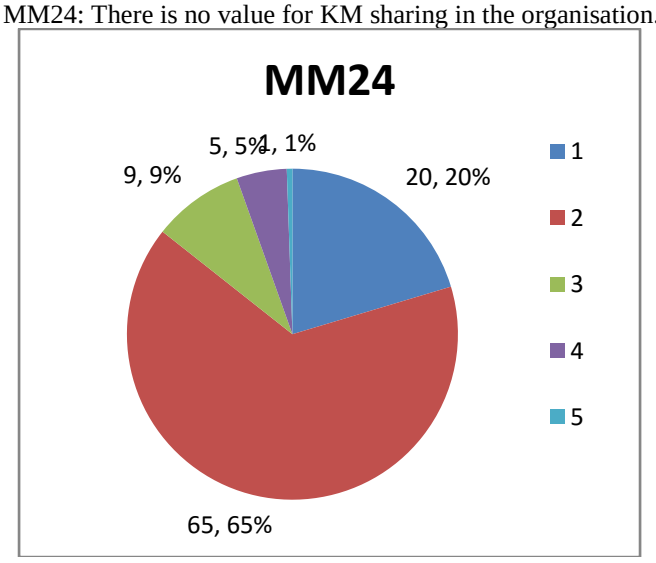
55.55% of respondents disagreed that there is commitment by top management on knowledge sharing. 33.36% of respondents strongly disagreed that there is commitment by top management on knowledge sharing. It is conclusive that there is no top leadership commitment for KM activities in particular knowledge sharing.

MC8: Knowledge sharing activities are performed.



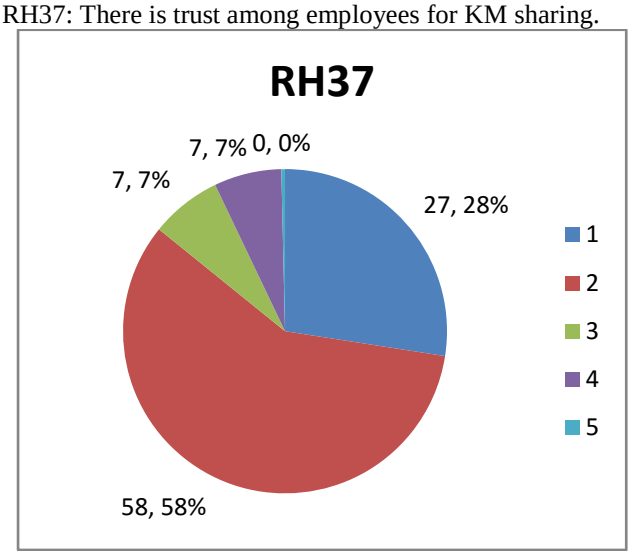
70.7% of respondents disagreed that knowledge sharing activities are performed. 16.16% of respondents strongly disagreed that knowledge sharing activities are performed. It is concluded that knowledge sharing activities are not being performed.

MM24: There is no value for KM sharing in the organisation.



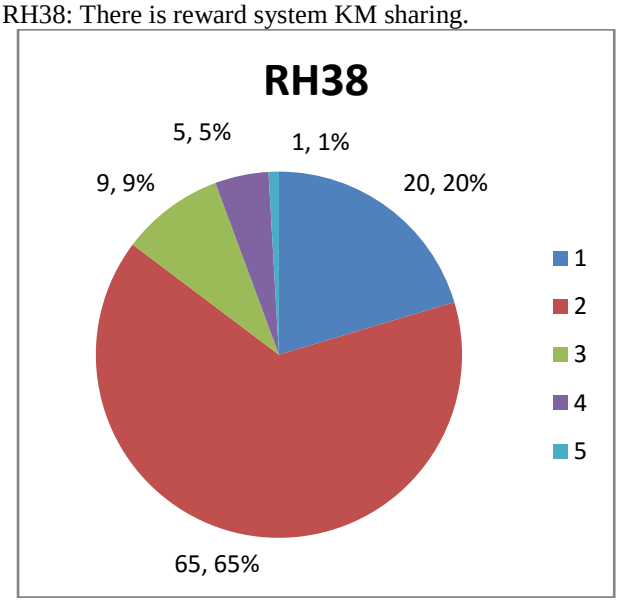
65.65% of respondents disagreed that knowledge sharing has no value. 20.2 % of respondents strongly disagreed that knowledge sharing has no value. It is clear that knowledge sharing has value within the organisation.

RH37: There is trust among employees for KM sharing.



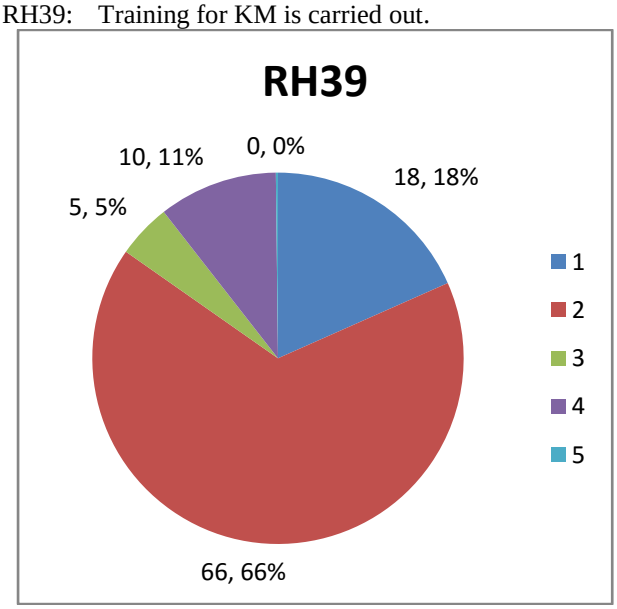
58.58% of respondents disagreed that there is trust among employees on knowledge sharing. 27.28% of respondents strongly disagreed that there is trust among employees on knowledge sharing. It is conclusive that there is no trust among employees in knowledge sharing.

RH38: There is reward system KM sharing.



65.65% of respondents disagreed that there is reward system for knowledge sharing. 33.36% of respondents strongly disagreed that there is reward system for knowledge sharing. It is clear that there exist no reward system for KM sharing in the organisation.

RH39: Training for KM is carried out.



66.66% of respondents disagreed that training for knowledge sharing activities are performed. 18.18% of respondents strongly disagreed that training for knowledge sharing activities are performed. It is concluded that training for knowledge sharing activities are not being performed.

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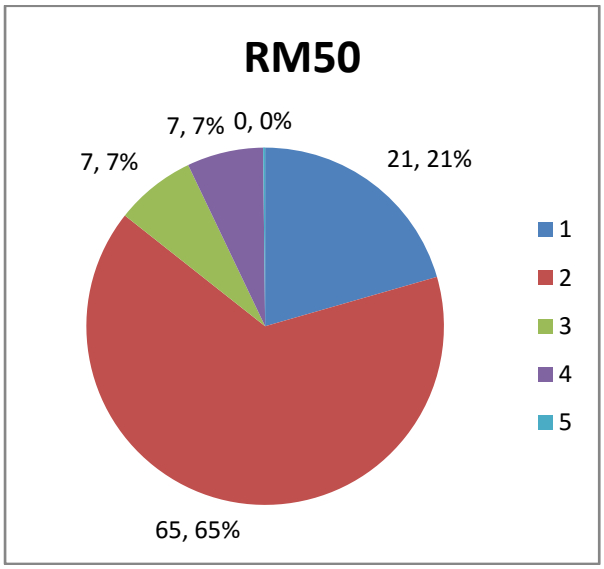
RM50: Infrastructure for KM exists.



65.65% of respondents disagreed that infrastructure for knowledge sharing activities exists. 21.21% of respondents strongly disagreed that infrastructure for knowledge sharing activities exists. It is concluded that infrastructure for knowledge sharing activities don't exist.

6. Summary and Conclusion:

The above analysis clearly brings out the KM activities concerning knowledge sharing is not being carried out in Indian Army. With the importance associated with the requirement of a knowledge based Army, it is prudent that the organisation take notice of these points and bring upon a concrete plan for carrying out knowledge activities. The finding will be different for other organisations and study on similar lines can be carried out. The results can be used by Chief Knowledge Officer to take measures to improve knowledge sharing activities, so that organizational performance can be improved.

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