Knowledge Management Practices at Moi University, Kenya *Nancy*

M. Kimile[1] & Prof. Henry N. Kemoni

'Department of Information sciences, Maasai Mara University, P. O. *Box 861 - 20500 Narok. Kenya'*
E-Mail: kimilenancy@wail.com

'Department of Information and Knowledge Management, Technical University of Kenya, P. O. *Box* 52428 - 00200 *Nairobi, Kenya*
E-Mail: hkemoni@vahoo.com

Abstract

Most organizations including universities don't adequately leverage on their knowledge as they lack a systematic and well coordinated approach Knowledge Management. The aim of the study was to investigate Knowledge Management Practices at Moi University, and recommend a Knowledge Management framework integrate Knowledge Management at the university. The objectives of the study were to: analyze Knowledge Management processes within Moi University; determine the role of Moi University top management//eadership in Knowledge Management; establish the existence of a knowledge sharing culture; determine whether appropriate technology is available to facilitate Knowledge Management; identify challenges to Knowledge Management and suggest possible solutions and provide recommendations. The study was guided by Knowledge Management Assessment Tool. The research was a case study which utilized qualitative research methodology. The study sample size constituted of sixty three respondents drawnfrom Moi University, Main Campus and Chepkoilel campus (Presently University ofEldoret). Purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. Data was collected with the aid of semi-structured interview schedules. Data presentation was mainly descriptive while analysis adopted thematic analysis approach. Key findings of the study were that: The development of an Institutional Repository (IR) was at its initial stage and the existing organizational culture does not encourage knowledge sharing. The study recommends growth of a knowledge sharing culture in MOl University.

Keywords: Knowledge Management; Knowledge sharing; Knowledge Management Assessment Tool(KMAT); Benchmarking Knowledge Management; Moi University; Institutions of Higher learning.

1. Introduction

The world economy has shifted from an industrial manufacturing/product oriented economy to one based on knowledge and services, where the principal commodity is information or knowledge (Walczak, 2005).A knowledge-Based Economy (KBE) is an economy in which the production, distribution and use of knowledge are the main drivers of growth, wealth creation, and employment across all industries. The distinguishing feature of modern knowledge-based societies is the extent and pace of growth and disruption in the accumulation and transmission of knowledge, much of which is new or *is* creation, dissemination and use of existing those of its knowledge; Two, an 'educated' population creation (Steinmueller, 2002). The knowledge economy is an economy that creates, disseminates and uses knowledge to enhance its growth and competitiveness. It is not necessarily about high-tech systems or Information Technology (IT). Ward (2007) posits that, the knowledge assets of any company - rather than plant, capital or other traditional assets - are what, today, ensure its competitive success.

The Knowledge Based Economy (KBE) comprises off our pillars that include: One, an 'economic and institutional regime' which provides incentives for the efficient knowledge, much of which is deployed in contexts distant from

which can create and use knowledge; Three, an efficient 'innovation' system of firms, research centers, universities, consultants and other organizations that can tap into the growing stock of global knowledge and assimilate and adapt it to local needs, as well as create relevant new knowledge; And finally the fourth pillar refers to an 'information and communication technology' infrastructure that is dynamic to facilitate effective communication, dissemination and processing of information (World Bank, 2008).

1.1 The concept of knowledge

Knowledge builds on data and information. Knowledge has numerous definitions provided by various scholars (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Nonaka. 1994; Wiig, 1993, Mutula and Wamukoya, 2007) among others. When referring to knowledge it is important to distinguish between two types of knowledge as tacit and explicit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). Explicit knowledge is systematic and easy to communicate in the form of hard data or codified procedures re<u>an and Scarborough, 1999)</u>. While, tacit knowledge is embedded within individual experience, judgment, skills and intuition (Wen, 2005; Manville, 1999).

1.2 KM defined

There is not yet a common consensus on the concept of KM (E<u>arl. 1999</u>). This study adopted two definitions of KM. According to Snowdon (2009), which emphasizes that, the purpose of KM is to provide support for decision making and innovation throughout the organization. The Gartner Group (2000) definition QfKM, looks at the discipline as one that promotes an integrated and collaborative approach to the process of information asset creation capture

,   ,   '

organization, access and use.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Moi University is a large and geographically distributed organization where teaching and learning takes place in several different locations and times hence

,

University has witnessed staff turnover in the last ten years due to better enumeration packages offered by other local, regional and foreign universities and institutions. In addition, some staff who go for further studies outside the country don't return upon completion of their studies. Staff turnover also occurs as a result of retirement and natural attrition. Even with this background MU has no employee expertize database. The University also lacks knowledge maps and an Institutional Repository (IR) that can help locate valuable knowledge in the organization.

The University, as a major player in the knowledge business stands to benefit if *it* adopts Knowledge Management Practices (KMP) and solutions. Despite the fact that, MU- has been in existence for over two decades, there are no studies that have been undertaken to investigate KM in the University. It is on the basis of this background that the current study is conducted to investigate KM practices at MU.

1.4 Objectives ofthe study

The objectives of the study were to:

i. Analyze the KM processes within MU.
ii. Determine the role of MU top management/leadership in KM.
iii. Establish the existence of a knowledge sharing culture in the University.
iv. Determine whether appropriate technology is available to facilitate KM
v. Identify challenges to KM at MU.
vi. Provide recommendations to successful implementation ofKM

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The Knowledge Management Assessment Tool (KMAT) model was used to inform or guide the study. According to Dalkir (2005), KMATwas developed jointly by the American Productivity and Quality Centre and Arthur Anderson in 1995 to help organizations to self- assess where they stand in terms of strengths and weaknesses in managing knowledge. The study considered three issues as guided by the