Knowledge Management in a Global Context: A Case Study

Paul Bookhamer, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, USA
Zuopeng (Justin) Zhang, State University of New York at Plattsburgh, Plattsburgh, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

This paper establishes a formal framework of managing knowledge assets in global enterprises. The suggested framework holistically integrates the following eight components: global information infrastructure, IT capabilities, global outsourcing, global information system design, development, and implementation, trans-border data flow, IT cultures, global virtual teams, and information resource management strategies, which serve as the crucial enablers of the success of knowledge management initiatives in a global context. Validated by a case study, the proposed framework provides meaningful insights for future research and valuable guidance for practicing managers of global knowledge management.

KEYWORDS

Framework, Global, IT, Knowledge Management, Management Strategies

INTRODUCTION

In a globalized economy, knowledge assets are becoming increasingly important for multinational companies to remain competitive (Jasimuddin & Zhang, 2014; Zhang & Jasimuddin, 2008). Organizations capable of constantly enhancing their innovative abilities to systematically create, acquire, synthesize, share, and use information, insights, and experiences can achieve business goals and obtain competitive advantage. Therefore, managing knowledge assets is assuming greater importance for organizations that rely on smart people and extensive flow of information and ideas (Hansen, Nohria, & Tierney, 1999; Jasimuddin, Connell, & Klein, 2012).

The digitized environment enables data, information, and knowledge to be captured and shared instantly for decision making purposes within organizations. Advances in information technology (e.g., web and internet systems, collaborative computing, virtual interaction, and immersion environments) have revolutionized the format and content of knowledge transfer and eliminated the constraints of time and space, greatly improving knowledge capture and sharing for multi-national corporations (Alavi & Leidner, 2001).

Global companies need to develop and implement appropriate knowledge management strategies to take advantage of the knowledge assets distributed within the companies in a global scale (Jasimuddin & Zhang, 2011). With a good knowledge management strategy, companies can specify the best ways to manage its knowledge assets so as to exploit their benefits (Jasimuddin & Zhang, 2009; Jasimuddin, 2008). By implementing effective knowledge management strategies, companies...
can increase the awareness and understanding of the importance of knowledge management, develop a knowledge-embracing culture, and achieve the overall objectives of the companies (Skyme, 2002).

Despite the growing importance of knowledge management in the global economy, few studies have been conducted in the context of global organizations with distributed knowledge assets, or with respect to investigating issues of managing knowledge assets in a global context (Desouza & Evaristo, 2003; Jasimuddin, Connell, & Klein, 2006). While a growing literature has started to emerge in this field, further research is greatly demanded to understand the major elements of knowledge management in a global context.

In this paper, we address the gap by making the following notable contributions to the literature. First, to advance existing theories of global knowledge management, we establish a formal framework of knowledge management in a global context. Specifically, our proposed formal framework of global knowledge management consists of eight major components: global information infrastructure, core IT capabilities, information resource management strategies, IT cultures, global outsourcing, trans-border data flows, global virtual teams, and global system design, development, and implementation. These inter-related components work collaboratively to help a company achieve its objectives of knowledge management which is aligned with its mission, vision, and strategic goals. Second, we present a case study to illustrate our theoretical framework. This case study summarizes the business practices of global knowledge management in a real multinational corporation, confirms the values of the components proposed in our framework, and serves as a useful guidance for knowledge managers in a global setting.

The paper proceeds as follows. Next section reviews related literature by focusing on the challenges, models, and strategies of knowledge management in a global context. The third section presents our theoretical framework of global knowledge management. The fourth section details a case study of XYZ Company based on our proposed framework. The last section concludes the paper with managerial insights and future research.

PRIOR LITERATURE

This section reviews prior research on managing knowledge assets in organizations while maintaining a global perspective. Beginning with the prior research on the challenges of knowledge management in a global scale, we then summarize related studies on the models and strategies of global knowledge management, and highlight the contributions of our research.

Some research (e.g., Inkpen and Ramaswamy, 2005; Jasimuddin, 2007) has investigated the knowledge management challenges in global contexts and the ways to mitigate them. For instance, Inkpen and Ramaswamy (2005) study the attributes of knowledge in organizations and analyze the transactional issues resulted from knowledge embedded in various global environments. In addition, they regard knowledge as the source of innovation in global companies and discuss how companies can develop organizational cultures so as to take advantage of the knowledge to foster innovation from all the markets where companies are dispersed. From the process perspective of knowledge management, Klahr (1997) identifies and explores the important issues in managing knowledge assets derived from customer knowledge bases in order to effectively create and transfer valuable knowledge in a global scale. Wang (2007) study how three extrinsic factors, namely social influence, alternative knowledge sources, and national culture, affect the use of global knowledge management systems through individuals’ beliefs. Comparing two organizations’ cultures and knowledge management approaches, Leidner, Alavi, and Kayworth (2006) study how organizational culture influences knowledge management and how knowledge management evolves in organizations.

Recent studies have proposed some models of global knowledge management in specific settings. For instance, Pawlowski and Bick (2012) develop the Global Knowledge Management Framework (GKMF) that integrates elements and influential factors of managing knowledge assets distributed in a global scale. The framework services not only as the guidelines for making decisions and
What Builds System Troubleshooter Trust the Best: Experiential or Non-Experiential Factors?
www.igi-global.com/article/builds-system-troubleshooter-trust-best/1275?camid=4v1a

A Study of User Continuance Behavioral Intentions Toward Privacy-Protection Practices
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