


Chapter 25

Knowledge Transfer Among Academics in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

In this fourth industrial revolution, knowledge transfer is essential among experienced academics for cross-fertilisation of ideas. Academics or colleagues in higher education institutions (HEIs) should harness and share their intuitive knowledge, skills, and experience for better service delivery. The rationale attributes to the decrease in skilled professionals in academia, technophobia, age, and language barriers. The issues of physical and mental ability, communication barrier, lack of trust, policies affirmation and organisational culture not supportive of knowledge transfer in HEIs were identified. A flair for things such as the consideration of who must capture new knowledge for organisational sustainability; suitable infrastructural facilities that can be used to gather, store and distribute information and knowledge; uncertainty of diverse economic and political influences; and limited budgetary allocation was believed to also affect knowledge transfer among academics. The qualitative research approach makes use of interpretive content/document analysis harvested from different databases to support the arguments regarding what, why and how knowledge transfer is central to every human endeavour. Findings indicate that inter-and intra-organisational knowledge transfer and organisational culture are the oil that lubricates organisational growth of academia. The study found that tacit to tacit type of knowledge, skills, and experiences were mostly transferred through communication through face-to-face discussions, online platforms, emails, and LinkedIn. Formal and informal processes of knowledge creation, application, peer-to-peer, and teamwork training approaches (coaching, mentorship, networking, and work shadows) and the use of certain tools (social and collaborative tools, video, chat, intranet, blog, posting, forum and mobile devices) were significant in this era of digital technologies. The study recommends succession planning for knowledge transfer, an attitude of trust, cooperation and teamwork, training, communication, and lifelong learning to enhance knowledge transfer among academics.

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are recognised establishments of either public or private enterprises. Universities are also viewed as HEIs. Therefore, HEIs are an environment where information and knowledge are taught in a creative way that could transform the individual receiving the knowledge impartation (Barnett, 1990; Jansen, 2019). The processes of such impartation occur from end to end, based on certain principles of diverse possibilities. The development of students' mental power and creativity depends on their determinations, their adoption of certain strategies of appropriate decision-making skills, their challenging disentangling skills, and their capability to interconnect and see beyond their immediate environment based on the knowledge they have acquired. These form the inspiring and analytical method applied in the process of education and knowledge acquisition in HEIs. They are also regarded as agents of socioeconomic transformation (Giuria, Munarib, Scandurac & Toschi, 2019). HEIs have also considered interaction with manufacturing enterprises apart from the traditional goals of teaching, learning and research (Kapetanidou & Lee, 2017), which has had an influence on political and religious activities in every economy of the world (Giuria et al., 2019). Jansen (2019) refers to HEIs as an environment where fresh thoughts are fused together to brighten access in learning through different approaches such that knowledge is distilled. The different phases in HEIs are categorised into colleges of education, technical institutes, schools of health technologies and nursing, polytechnics and university, depending on the context and how it was addressed.

Studies by Bozeman et al. (2015); D'Este and Perkmann (2011); Giuria et al., (2019); and De Wit-de Vries, Dolfma, Van der Windt and Gerkema (2019) emphasised that knowledge transfer (KT) involves the movement of experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of academics from one individual to another through oral and written forms. The oral form could be when they deliver a speech, interact, share knowledge and engage in face-to-face debates, while the written form could be when they write and publish research articles, and develop teaching and learning module/course notes. It is believed that when academics read or study what their colleagues have written in print or in oral form, their knowledge has been transferred within and outside their space. Therefore, through this medium, KT has taken place in the organisation. What is essential in the course of KT is the acquisition of both tacit and explicit knowledge. This is the knowledge that transforms the organisations on a daily basis. For this to happen, academics must be willing and fully involved. Academics being one of the variables for this study implies that those individuals are passionate, have flair, and are ever willing and ready to sacrifice in service delivery through impacting of knowledge (Gladwell, 2009; Bentley-Davies, 2010; Boonshaft, 2010). Academics can also be seen as individuals who have been taught and trained in acquiring different qualifications such as bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, Doctor of Philosophy degrees, and others, in diverse identified fields of expertise (Finkel, 2000; Harl, 2010; Lawler, Chen & Venso, 2007; Moore & Kuol, 2007). The individual should have distinct personality traits such as professional engagement, approachable, highly skilled and knowledgeable in his/her area of specialisation (Finkel, 2000; Harl, 2010; Lawler, Chen & Venso, 2007; Moore & Kuol, 2007). The author of this paper believes that the individual should be always ready to sacrifice his/her knowledge in imparting knowledge to students, researchers, and other anticipated learners, irrespective of the geographical location and time.

HEIs focus on educating and training diverse individuals with scientific and pedagogical approaches in order to function better in the society in the areas of sciences, engineering, medicine, economics, information science, knowledge engineering, psychology and nursing, among many more (Barnett, 1990). HEIs are established to achieve certain roles of educating the populace of every nation/society

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