Chapter 1
Motivations of Knowledge Management Practitioners:
Positive Psychology and Psychological Contracts

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management as a set of activities has been around for as long as humans have been able to communicate. In the modern world, knowledge management has become a multiple billion-dollar industry. Organizations know that their existence and growth rely on effective knowledge management programs and systems. But knowledge management efforts continue to experience high failure rates. Contributing to those failures is a lack of understanding the most important element of the system: the human. It is humans that have and create the knowledge. It is humans that build on the knowledge. And it is humans that are asked to share their knowledge. But there has been limited studies on understanding the motivations and behaviors of users in the context of knowledge management systems. This chapter explores the use of psychological contracts and positive psychology theories to explain and predict users' behaviors in knowledge management systems.

INTRODUCTION

One of the things that sets humans apart from the rest of the animal kingdom is codified knowledge. The insatiable appetite to learn the very fabric of nature. Even in the most primitive periods, humans conducted some of the activities of knowledge management (KM). Sitting around the fire after a hard day's work, humans would use the primitive language and means of communication to share their journey. Eating those berries will make you sick. These two rocks, when stuck together, creates sparks that can be used to start a fire. This plant's leaves are edible. Each of these useful facts are shared with one's

tribe. Sharing this knowledge could mean the difference between life and death of the tribe. Arguably, humans sharing stories marked the earliest forms of knowledge management.

Modern times have transformed knowledge management. Instead of stories around the campfire, it is now sophisticated information technology (IT) systems. The tribe is now huge companies that span the globe. But for all the progress that has been made, knowledge management has yet to realize the value that practitioners have promoted for years. The general problem that this chapter will explore is KM programs have failed to produce the expected benefits (Vanini & Bochert, 2014). Part of the challenge is understanding the human element of these knowledge management systems (KMS). Many organizations begin their journeys in KM by implementing knowledge repositories, attempting to capitalize on users' intellectual assets and distribution. But ultimately these solutions are considered failures because few people use it. These failures are treated as an IT problem (Tounkara, 2013) focusing on the technology issues. Few KM efforts demonstrate value after two years, and most are abandoned (Vanini & Bochert, 2014). Research of KM concentrates on the failures of the technical system rather than exploring the psychological barriers for users that prevent them for gaining the intended benefits of the KMS (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). A thorough review of literature did not yield any research in applying psychology-based theories to KM efforts to understand and potentially predict users' behaviors in a KMS until a study investigated using two psychological theories to understand human behaviors in KMS (Holmquest, 2018). Holmquest conducted a quantitative, correlational study to determine if these two psychological theories could be used to explain and predict users' behaviors in KMS (2018). The research questions listed in (Holmquest, 2018) derive from the PERMA model in positive psychology theory. PERMA is an acronym made up from the elements that comprise the construct of well-being. The PERMA model enables researchers to objectively and quantifiably measure an individual's subjective well-being. The elements that make up the PERMA model are:

Table 1. Elements of well-being from PERMA model

P	Positive emotion	Positive emotion is the subjective emotional interpretation of the past, present and future.
E	Engagement	Engagement is the psychological state of flow.
R	Relationship	Relationships are the positive relationships that the individual has that are healthy and lead to positivity in one's life.
M	Meaning	Meaning is very subjective. The individual assesses that his/her contribution is having an impact in reaching goals beyond ones' own life.
A	Accomplishment	Accomplishment is completing something that results in a connection to meaning for the individual.

The PERMA instrument and documentation can be found on the University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences website at https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/. This instrument asks 23 questions with Likert answers ranging from 0 to 10. The questions assess the elements of an individual's well-being. Holmquest examined if the scores of an individual's PERMA assessment could correlate with their exhibited behaviors demonstrated in a KMS.

The specific problem that this chapter will explore is that KM efforts fail to address the human aspects of using a KMS (Paulin & Suneson, 2012). Having the most perfect technology solution for KM means little to nothing if the human users do not use and contribute to the KMS. But what are the motivations

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