

Chapter 11

Integrating Strategic Human Resource Management Practices for Effective Knowledge Risk Management in Public Enterprises: A Systematic Review and Future Research Directions

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge loss risk is a serious and complex issue facing public enterprises around the world. The purpose of the chapter was to explore and present a global picture integrating strategic human resource management (SHRM) practices into knowledge management (KM) for the effective management of knowledge loss risk in public enterprises. In order to explore strategic human resource management practices and knowledge risk management in the extant literature, the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) method was selected as a methodology to guide the data collection and analysis of the study. The research findings infer and point to very limited research in the global literature linking SHRM practices to KM for effective knowledge risk management. Such a relationship in research and practice remains blurry, despite the fact that the role of HRM in tacit knowledge risk management is inevitable. The findings of this chapter provide a valuable framework indicating distinct areas of interest that require further exploration in the current literature.

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INTRODUCTION

The Resource-based view theory (RBVT) of the firm positions organisational strategic human resource management as a source of sustainable competitive advantage and organisational productivity (Barney, 2001). Similarly, the knowledge-based view theory (KBVT) of the firm positions intangible organisational assets such as knowledge, skills and competencies as drivers of organisational competitiveness and sustainability (Takeuchi 2013; Grant 1996). Public enterprises, commonly known as state-owned enterprises (SOEs), are considered resource-intensive, knowledge-creating and knowledge explorer systems in their own right. This chapter theorises employees and knowledge in public enterprises as strategic resources that need to be properly managed in order to avoid the risks associated with human resource mobility and the resultant knowledge loss. Through integrating strategic human resource management (SHRM) and knowledge management (KM) practices into knowledge risk management (KRM), the chapter, through a systematic review of the literature, attempts to present a novel approach for mitigating knowledge risks in SOEs. It is common wisdom that human resource turnover inevitably leads to a loss of intangible organisational assets (Phaladi, 2022a), which in turn threatens the sustainability of these public enterprises (Kumar, 2020; Phaladi & Ngulube, 2022). From the RBVT and KBVT of the firm, intangibles such as knowledge assets are key drivers of production in the knowledge economy (Grant, 1996). A KBVT treats knowledge as a basis for sustained competitive advantage (Argote & Ingram, 2000). In an ideal business sense, a knowledge-based strategy of SOEs must integrate SHRM and KM practices into their KRM posture.

Globally, public enterprises are essential in shaping the economies of developing and developed countries. Ideally, public enterprises are recognized as service-driven and drivers of socio-economic developments that provide seamless access to resourceful personnel who can efficiently resolve the daily queries or challenges affecting the citizens of a country. This in turn sustains the economic, social and cultural well-being and growth of a country. However, for personnel to be effective within the departmental structures of public enterprises and support the needs of citizens, it is important that they be regularly orientated on the latest knowledge-based activities (Mızrak, 2023a). Therefore, the economic viability and sustainability of resourceful personnel in public enterprises are dependent on key knowledge management (KM) practices. Knowledge management can be defined as a systematic process to develop, store, retrieve and disseminate information within an organization (Martin et al., 2019). A decade ago, the primary goal of KM was to create an enabling environment to facilitate productivity in an organization through these systematic processes (Durst & Zieba, 2019). In recent times, KM has been re-shaped and re-evaluated to include KM practices, processes and activities to mitigate knowledge risks. Hence, central to all KM processes has been two key components in the form of relevant HRM practices associated with knowledge (loss) risk management.

Historically, KM (especially KRM) and HRM practices have been associated with privatized enterprises in literature (Erederdi et al., 2022). Recently, private enterprises have also been at the forefront in introducing the latest HRM practices to combat knowledge loss in the physical and digital realms (Aust et al., 2020). Juxtaposed, there is a dearth of literature addressing HRM practices and KRM in public enterprises globally. The few studies that research tacit knowledge risks do so purely from a KM standpoint, with little attention being given to the integration of HRM practices for effective KRM (Kumar, 2020; Phaladi, 2021). Whilst private enterprises are continuously addressing new knowledge risks through HRM practices, public enterprises worldwide are lagging, to the detriment of their organizational KM structures aligned to knowledge sustainability and retention. Additionally, public enterprises are largely

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