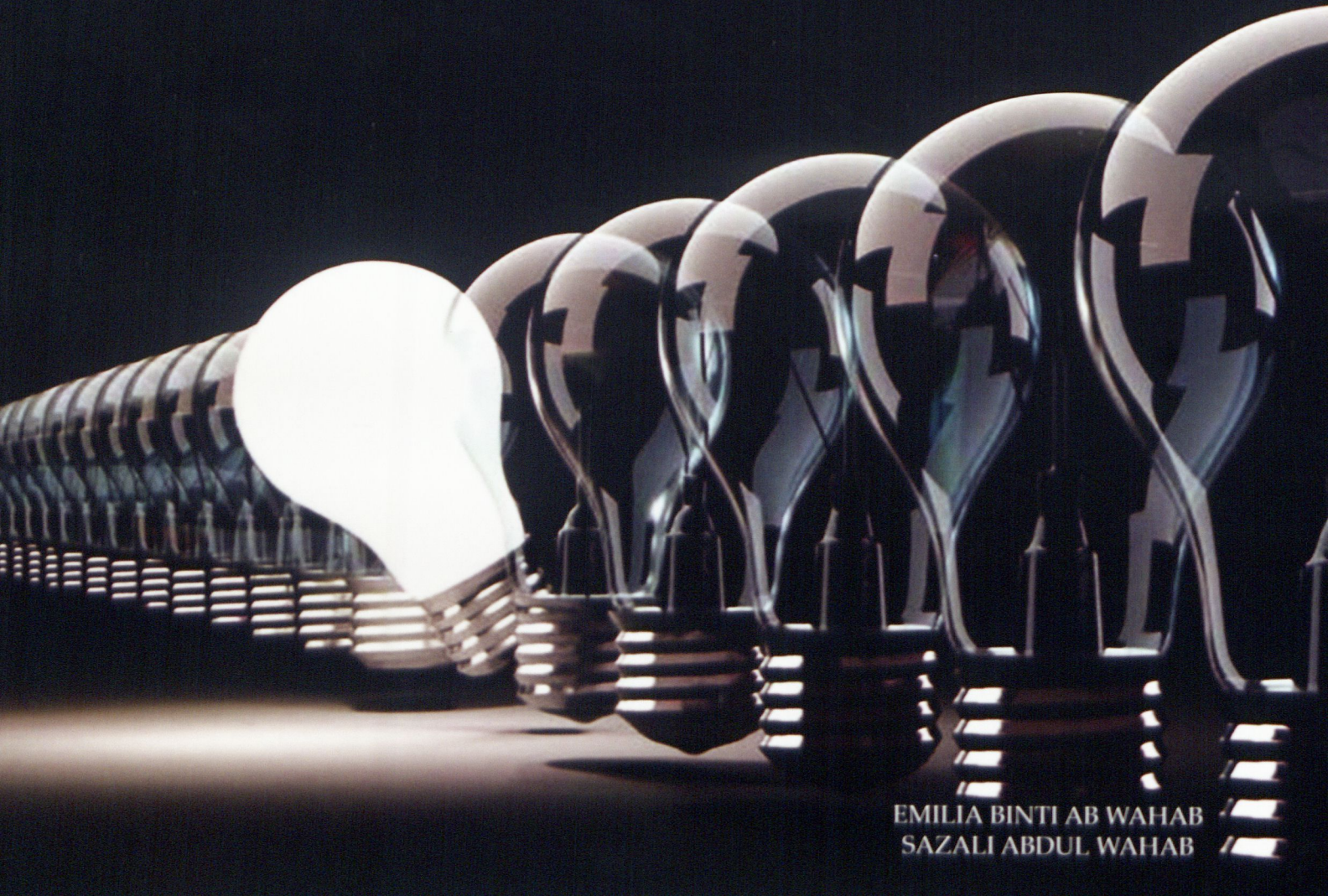
Knowledge Management Enablers And Knowledge Management Processes:

The Case Of Information Technology Organizations In Malaysia



EMILIA BINTI AB WAHAB
SAZALI ABDUL WAHAB

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ENABLES AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS : THE CASE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ORGANIZATIONS IN MALAYSIA

Editors
EMILIA BINTI AB WAHAB
SAZALI ABDUL WAHAB

ISBN no. : **978-967-578297-8**

Published by
UMK PRESS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN,
Office of Library and Knowledge Management
Locked Bag 36, Pengkalan Chepa,
16100 Kota Bharu, Kelantan

Type setting and printing by
PERCETAKAN HAJI JANTAN SDN. BHD
No.12, Jalan 4/118C, Desa Tun Razak,
56000 Cheras, Kuala Lumpur

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This research investigates knowledge management practices among IT organization in Cyberjaya, Malaysia in particularly from the perspective of knowledge management enablers and their relationship with knowledge creation processes. This research was conducted based upon previous research on knowledge management enablers and knowledge creation processes conducted in other countries as a baseline to study the knowledge management practices within the context of IT organization in Cyberjaya. Based on the findings in this research, the key KM enablers were identified and the result shall presents the research model that develop the relationship between knowledge management enablers and knowledge creation processes as guidelines for knowledge management implementation.

This chapter introduces the study by providing related information on the importance of knowledge management practices from global perspective and to the local context in IT organization in Cyberjaya i.e. by highlighting the needs to investigate the current knowledge management practices for better understanding of the current enablers which are related to knowledge management practices for successful KM implementation. Next, this chapter presents the significance of study, problem statement, research objectives and corresponding research questions, followed by the operational definitions of key terms. The organization of the research is then presented at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Background

Knowledge has become an important asset in the 21st century organization. In the global and knowledge economy era, knowledge are more valuable than physical asset (Dalkir K, 2005); of which knowledge resources such as skill and expertise are as crucial as other economic resources. Knowledge is not new, but recognizing knowledge as corporate asset is new, and to develop extensive value out of knowledge is in greater pressure now than before (Davenport and Prusak, 2000). The dynamics atmosphere of the new economic era can be seen in the fast moving change towards globalization, and knowledge-intensive products and services that causes knowledge management essentials to organizations (Donate and Guadamillas, 2011) causing great demands on an improved organizational knowledge management and knowledge management system (Yang et. al, 2009). Past researchers have recognized the importance of managing knowledge as a critical source of competitive advantage (Zhenzhong and Kuo-Hsun, 2010; Anantatmula and Kanungo, 2010; Chin, 2009; Nonaka I., 2007; Leidner D. E. and Schultze U., 2002; Drucker P., 1998) and positively influence business performance (Martina et. al, 2007), improve company's operational processes (Chin, 2009), enhance innovation and increase corporate performance (López-Nicolás and Meroño-Cerdán, 2011).

Firms particularly in Information Technology (IT) organizations need to be innovative by offering unique value by creating, capturing, and capitalizing on their knowledge assets in order to sustain in the current competitive advantage situation (Ichijo et al, 1998). Knowledge assets such as, the know-how, know-why, experience, and expertise that reside in knowledge workers, need to be synchronized between organization's people, technology, processes, and organizational structure in order to add value through reuse and innovation of knowledge; which can be accomplished through knowledge management (Dalkir K, 2005; Chin, 2009). IT organizations that are knowledge driven require knowledge workers for their knowledge, expertise and skills to deliver related IT job such as programmer, system analysts, technical designer, researcher and so forth. Knowledge workers contributed to the IT organization as they use thinking to deliver 'their ideas, their analyses, their

Past researchers have found that the cultural factor is more essentials than other enabler such as information technology (Rahmatollah et. al, 2010; Lee and Choi, 2003). Understanding the role of organizational culture is crucial for knowledge management. Each organization's culture is unique, and it is important to assess culture at the start of any knowledge management planning (Plessis, 2007) in order to address the complexity associated with KM initiatives by identifying barriers and enablers that are unique to every organization (Anantatmula and Kanungo, 2010). Therefore, it is important to understand the knowledge management enablers or the influencing factors from the actual environment (Okunoye and Karsten, 2002) as the success of KM initiatives is considerably dependent on the basic conditions under which it has to be implemented (Heisig, 2009). Proper KM assessment related to knowledge management enablers should be carried out at the start of any KM initiative as successful implementation generally requires adequate measures within each of the knowledge management enablers (Heisig, 2009) and it has been established that identification of appropriate KM enablers can lead to organization effectiveness (Nejatian et. al, 2013).

The understanding of KM within Malaysia is difficult due to limited published work on this domain with Malaysia data (Goh et. al, 2006). Most of journals in KM research have been conducted mainly in Europe as compared to Asia (Chauvel and Despres, 2002) and studies in KM conducted among Malaysian organizations are limited, especially in the ICT industry (Chong and Lin, 2008; Chong, 2006); even though IT companies are long recognised as knowledge intensive organisations (Mohammad Nazir et al., 2005). For some of the published works in Malaysia in this domain, they use the prescribed measures that have been found successful in other countries without fully understanding the local context (Goh et. al, 2006) and very few attempts have been undertaken to research on organizational readiness towards KM (Chong et. al, 2009).

judgement, their syntheses, and their design'; which makes knowledge workers as key organizational assets (Reinhardt W. et. al, 2011; Drucker P., 1998).

In Malaysia, it is important for IT organization to be able to understand KM practices in particularly the enablers that will influence the knowledge creation as previous research has proven that KM contributes to the organization's competitive advantage and sustainability. Knowledge management enablers are the mechanism for the organizations to create and motivate the creation of knowledge and for sharing and protection of knowledge within the organization. They are also the crucial building blocks in the improvement of the effectiveness of activities for knowledge management (Ichijo et al., 1998). The presence of key KM strategic enablers to encourage the KM practices is greatly important (Chong et al., 2000). To ensure the success of KM implementation, it is imperative that the key enablers that potentially can support for the effective utilization of organization's limited resources such as the use of manpower, material and time, are recognized and at the same time still able to achieve the expected results (Migdadi M., 2009; Yeh et al., 2006). If organization can be assured of the key enablers for implementing knowledge management especially at the initial planning stage (Chin, 2009), they will be able to speed up the process and implementation will be much easier (Yeh et al., 2006).

IT organisations in Malaysia have not been very effective in managing their knowledge due to the failure in understanding and recognising knowledge as their core competencies (Chong and Lin, 2008). Although there is high percentage of IT organization in Malaysia, that are interested in committing organizational resources for KM implementation, they are still unsure what constitute KM and the enabler that would facilitate KM initiatives. This matter need to be addressed since the speed in developing KM programme is important to their survival as they cannot afford to spend long hours in evaluating KM programme before implementing one (Chong and Lin, 2008). IT organizations must be aware of the enablers that facilitate the successful management of the primary knowledge activities in order for them to manage their KM efforts systematically (Chong and Lin, 2008).