

Perception and Attitude of Library Professionals towards Knowledge Management System in Engineering Colleges: A Study

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Abstract

This paper discusses the perception of library professionals towards Knowledge Management System in Engineering College libraries. The data were collected using questionnaire method from the Librarians and Assistant Librarians working in Engineering Colleges. The data were collected from 212 respondents out of 280 respondents. The study found that majority of the library professionals have good perception about the Knowledge Management System. 88.7% of the respondents are found that Knowledge Management System is useful to update with the latest technologies. Also, the study revealed that 97.2% of the library professionals are providing new services to their user. This shows that the library professionals are having a positive attitude towards Knowledge Management System. However, they need to update their knowledge to produce scholarly content and to improve their knowledge sharing and remote access skills through Knowledge Management System. It is further revealed that the Knowledge Management System motivates the library professionals towards knowledge sharing practices especially through Workshops, Conferences and Seminars. However, they could organize Expert Talks and Discussion Forums for effective knowledge sharing. It is recommended that the Library professionals should adopt Knowledge Management System(KMS) for the development of the Library services and also to update their professional skills.

Key words: *Perception, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Management System, Library, Library Professionals*

1. Introduction

Knowledge is an important asset both for an individual and organization. Libraries are considered to be the most important source of knowledge in an academic institution. The libraries grow in terms of collection, especially explicit knowledge. This dynamic growth of knowledge needs a powerful managing system to identify, create, validate, store, access, share and transfer. In order to manage this huge knowledge the library professionals need an effective Knowledge Management System (KMS). Initially, the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) was introduced in the business environment for leveraging the knowledge of its

employees and to enhance the organizational performance. Later the libraries which are considered to be Knowledge Resource Centre's adopted the strategies, policies, techniques etc. of KM for the benefit of its users and stakeholders. This led to the implementation of KMS slowly and steadily into libraries. Knowledge Management focusses more on people and their intellectual ability, knowledge sharing and knowledge creation. The knowledge of the Library personnel's in managing libraries is the only thing which makes the difference in the management of libraries. It is essential for the library professionals to understand KMS for effective management of libraries. This study focusses to identify the perception of Library Professionals, their attitude towards knowledge management and the knowledge management practices implement through KMS

2. Review of Literature

Nazim and Mukherjee (2014) identified that the librarians working in academic institutions are having positive attitude towards KM practices and Knowledge sharing culture. Kolaniari and Fassoulis(2017) explored that the library professionals are aware that the KM practices increases the library performance and also useful for their future career. Though the academic librarians possess experience in handling explicit knowledge they need to improve tacit knowledge practices such as communities of practice and expertise sharing. Ali and Khan (2015) indicated that it is essential for library professionals to acquire KM skills and to improve their approach towards KMS in library practices, as "KM provides enormous opportunities for LIS professionals". Sudarshan Rao (2016) identified that the high level understanding of KM among the university librarians enhances the performance of the libraries. So, it is essential to undergo KM training to improve their Information Technology skills to implement new technologies and services in their library. Ugwu(2016) reported that the success of KM implementation in university libraries depends on the following organizational dimensions such as "leadership support from top management, human resources policy and collaboration and compensation schemes". Oyedokunand et al.(2018) explored that the library professionals are having a very good perception about opportunities in KM. Further, they need to educate themselves through KM "seminars, conferences, reports, symposium etc,"in order to expand their horizons of KM in the field of library and information science. Verma and Nirmali(2018) surveyed that the leading Indian Institute of Management libraries have adopted KM for "identification, Acquisition, Creation, Sharing, Storage and Organization" of knowledge are still in the initial stage of KM practices and they still need to improve a lot.

3. Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To find out the perception of Library Professionals in Engineering Colleges towards Knowledge Management System (KMS).
- ✓ To know the attitude of Library Professionals towards Knowledge Management System and
- ✓ To identify the Knowledge Sharing Practices(KSP) in libraries

4. Knowledge Management System

According to Sudhir (2018), “Knowledge Management System refers to a system for managing knowledge in libraries, supporting creation, capture, storage and dissemination of information”. The Knowledge Management System provide ready access for the library resources by application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). “Knowledge Management was defined as the process of applying a systematic approach to the capture, structuring, management and dissemination of knowledge throughout an organization to work faster, reuse best practices and reduce costly rework from project to project”(Nonaka Takeuchi, 1995).The KM framework for libraries has three components: they are People (Knowledge Workers, Library Users & Stake holders), Content (Information Resources) and Technology (Internet/Intranet/Software). The knowledge in the People, appropriate Content (cater to the needs of its users) and suitable Technology to store and retrieve information is necessary for the implementation of KMS within an academic library.

5. Methodology

The data for the study were collected from Librarians and Assistant Librarians working in Engineering Colleges in and around Coimbatore district. 280 questionnaires were distributed, out of which, 212 questionnaires were received back. The collected data were analysed using SPSS 11.5.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

6.1.Perception of Library Professionals on Knowledge Management System

Knowledge Management System (KMS) helps to apply the Tacit and Explicit Knowledge of the library professionals effectively in libraries. In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the perception of Library Professionals about Knowledge Management System and analysed on three point scale such as “Don’t Agree”, “Neutral “and “Agree”. The mean and standard deviation are calculated, and ranks are assigned based on the above.

Table 1

Perception of Library Professionals on Knowledge Management System

S. No.	Description	DA	N	A	M	SD	R
1	It promotes Innovation and Creativity	17 8.0%	21 9.9%	174 82.1%	2.74	.59	4
2	It helps to acquire new knowledge	20 9.4%	13 6.1%	179 84.4%	2.75	.61	2
3	It is useful to update with the latest technologies	24 11.3%	0 .0%	188 88.7%	2.77	.63	1
4	It motivates to learn new skills	20 9.4%	13 6.1%	179 84.4%	2.75	.61	2
5	It encourages LIS professionals to work collaboratively	18 8.5%	24 11.3%	170 80.2%	2.71	.61	5
6	It guides to retrieve information	20 9.4%	23 10.8%	169 79.7%	2.70	.63	6
7	It helps to improve the library resources	31 14.6%	16 7.5%	165 77.8%	2.63	.72	7
8	It enables us to introduce new library services.	28 13.2%	26 12.3%	158 74.5%	2.61	.70	8
9	It saves the time of library staff	34 16.0%	11 5.2%	167 78.8%	2.62	.74	9
10	It provides high level of security for the library resources	46 21.7%	24 11.3%	142 67%	2.45	.82	10
11	It helps to produce scholarly content.	56 26.4%	28 13.2%	128 60.4%	2.33	.86	11

It is found from the above Table 1 that majority of Library Professionals (88.7%) opined that Knowledge Management System helps to update with the latest technologies , acquire new knowledge and skills” (84.7%) and promotes Innovation and Creativity(82.1%). KMS also encourages to work collaboratively, opined by 80.2% of the Library Professionals. The other benefits of KMS are, “a guide to retrieve information”(79.2%), “saves the time of library staff”(78.8%), “to introduce new services”(74.5%) and “provides high level of security for the library resources” (67%) respectively. A very few respondents (60.4%) opined that KMS helps “to produce scholarly content”.

6.2. Attitude of Library Professionals towards Knowledge Management System

The attitude of the Library Professionals towards Knowledge Management System has been studied using three point scale and the same is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Attitude of LIS Professionals towards Knowledge Management System

S. No.	Description	DA	N	A	M	SD	R
1	KMS helps to work easily in the Library	12 5.7%	6 2.8%	194 91.5%	2.85	.48	4
2	It is easy to communicate with the users	6 2.8%	23 10.8%	183 86.3%	2.83	.44	5
3	Management has positive attitude about KMS	12 5.7%	64 30.2%	136 64.2%	2.58	.59	7
4	KMS is time consuming	18 8.5%	5 2.4%	189 89.2%	2.80	.57	6
5	Application of KMS helps to introduce new services	6 2.8%	0 .0%	206 97.2%	2.94	.33	1
6	It requires appropriate skills for an effective use of KMS	18 8.5%	0 .0%	194 91.5%	2.93	.55	3
7	It motivates the library staff to learn more about new technology.	6 2.8%	0 .0%	206 97.2%	2.94	.34	1
8	It helps the users to have remote access	18 8.5%	96 45.3%	98 46.2%	2.37	.63	9
9	Knowledge Sharing becomes easy	6 2.8%	100 47.2%	106 50.0%	2.47	.55	8

The results show that, the LIS professionals have got a positive attitude on KMS, because KMS helps "to introduce new services" and "motivates the library staff to learn more about new technology, occupies first rank, which is followed by "requires appropriate skills for an effective use of KMS" and "KMS helps to work easily in the Library", which ranked third and fourth positions respectively. The result shows that 86.3% to 97.2% of the library professionals have a very positive attitude about KMS, however, only 46.2% to 64.2% of the respondents have positive attitude to improve knowledge sharing and remote access skills through KMS.

The overall results show that the library professional are having a positive attitude about KMS and they agree that it motivates them to learn more about new technology, whereas they need to improve their communication skills which facilitates knowledge sharing.

6.3. Knowledge Sharing Practices

The Library professionals organize a variety of innovative programmes to encourage knowledge sharing among the users. In this study, an attempt has been made to find out various programmes organized by the Library professionals to share knowledge and the same is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Knowledge Sharing Practices

S. No.	Description	Responses	M	Std.	R
1	Guest Lectures/Expert's Talk	148 69.8%	1.69	.46	7
2	Mentorship Programmes	170 80.2%	1.80	.39	5
3	Interviews with Experts	182 85.8%	1.85	.34	3
4	Conferences	188 88.7%	1.88	.31	2
5	Seminars	176 83%	1.83	.37	4
6	Workshops	200 94.3%	1.94	.23	1
7	Discussion Forums	160 75.5%	1.75	.43	6

It is found from Table 3 that majority (94.3%) of the Library professionals have opined that "Workshops" are the most preferred method to share knowledge. It was followed by "Conferences" (88.7%), "Interview with Experts" (85.3%) and Seminars (83%). It was found that a good number of Library professionals prefer "Mentorship Programmes", for knowledge sharing. However, the results indicated that only very few library professionals prefer "Guest Lectures/Expert's Talk" and "Discussion Forms" for knowledge sharing.

Overall, the study observed that "Workshops" are highly preferred knowledge sharing practice by the library professionals, followed by Conferences, Interviews with Experts and Seminars respectively. It is essential that the library professionals need to improve their skill on Mentorship programmes, Discussion Forums and Guest Lecture/Expert talks for knowledge sharing.

7. Recommendations and Conclusion

The role of Knowledge Management System in the libraries is well realized by the library and information science professionals. The KMS benefits the library professionals to update their knowledge on latest developments, technical and communication skills. The impact of KMS necessitates the library professionals to implement KM in all the areas of library. This study revealed that the majority of the library professionals possess high level of understanding about the KMS and its implications in the field of library and information science. The KMS enables the library professionals to update with latest technology and also, to introduce innovative services to the users. Further the study recommends the following based on the findings:

- i. Knowledge creation is one of the most important aspects of KMS. The library professionals have to improve their skills through discussion with experts/guides/authors in order to write research articles based on their KM practices, innovations and services provided in the library.
- ii. The success of KMS is impossible without the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Hence, the library professionals need to develop and apply the ICT skills especially to manage and preserve the library resources.
- iii. KMS facilitates knowledge sharing through internet and digital devices. The library services can also be accessed remotely using ICTs. It provides easy access to library resources, increase its usage and save the time of the users. Hence, the management should provide adequate infrastructure facilities to implement new services/technologies.
- iv. The success of any KMS lies in its sharing of knowledge. The library professionals are having wide scope in sharing both tacit and explicit knowledge. The online platforms, social networking sites, video conferencing facilities etc. can be effectively utilized to share knowledge of the experts in various fields. The library professionals have to equip themselves to conduct such programmes at regular and intervals.

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