THE PARADIGM OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING KM READINESS

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Abstract - In today’s knowledge society, universities are the main mechanisms of society for the constant pursuit of knowledge. As knowledge creators, higher education institutions need to implement knowledge management systems within the organization under convenient conditions. This study aimed to explore and to qualify organizational factors affecting knowledge management readiness in higher education. The research design of this study was specified as qualitative data collection compromising of the interviews using semi-structured question forms in order to explore and qualify organizational factors affecting knowledge management readiness in higher education through the remarks of academics at university. The study group of this research was 20 academics including lecturers and instructors selected from a state university in Istanbul, Turkey in the 2016-2017 Academic Year. In this study, the semi-structured question forms developed by Agarwal and Marouf (2016) were used in order to measure organizational factors of knowledge management readiness in higher education. In order to analyze the data obtained from the academics, content analysis was used taking specified survey constructs into consideration in the light of the literature of knowledge management (KM). All the data gathered from the study group were analyzed in this qualitative research. The themes were specified as knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing culture, organizational structure, organizational support, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, individual readiness to KM, organizational readiness to KM, and the barriers against KM implementation.

Index Terms - Knowledge Management (KM), Higher Education, Qualitative Research, KM Readiness.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the impact of globalization, universities have always been changing (Altman & Ebersberger, 2013). These changes in universities are accompanied by the requirements for higher education that are growing very quickly (Sedzivuiene & Vveinhardt, 2009). Dhamdhere (2015, p. 179) states, “higher education can be regarded as a center of knowledge creating, delivering, and learning for society”. That is to say, universities have always been the most active knowledge creators, appliance and spreading process member (Sedzivuiene & Vveinhardt, 2009). Knowledge management is the discipline that enables individuals, teams and entire organizations to collectively and systematically create, share and apply knowledge to achieve their objectives better (Bhusry & Ranjan, 2011). Therefore, knowledge management based on “a set of organizational and operational design principles” (Kinyata, 2014, p. 47) is inevitable for higher education institutions on account of being driven by the flow of information. Hereby, knowledge management ensures that the organization shows best performance and stand in globally competitive position (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014).

In today’s knowledge society, universities are the main mechanisms of society for the constant pursuit of knowledge (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014). Every academic institution explicitly appears to contribute to knowledge. The information and knowledge generated at universities are to be compiled at central place and disseminated among the society for further growth (Dhamdhere, 2015). As knowledge creators for the growth of a society, the organizational structures of higher education institutions come into prominence in that knowledge management can be implemented effectively in order to carry out their inner and outer functions best. Gibb, Haskins, and Robertson (2013, p. 25) state that “universities can be characterized as pluralistic organizations with different departments having very different external orientations and indeed academic values”, which reveals that higher education institutions as organizations are structurally more complex and complicated in terms of knowledge management. Therefore, universities, due to their organizational structures, have always been slow to develop knowledge management systems (Agarwal & Marouf, 2016). Organizations such as universities may not be equally predisposed for successful launch and maintenance of knowledge management initiatives. Thus, the identification and assessment of preconditions are essential to adopt knowledge management. Knowledge management capabilities in an organization can be classified into two components: Infrastructure and processes (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001). Technical (Nonaka &
Takeuchi, 1995; O’Dell & Grayson, 1998), structural (Brown & Duguid, 1998; Davenport & Klahr, 1998), and cultural (Appleyard, 1996; DeLong, 1997) infrastructure capabilities of an organization are to be developed as well as knowledge management processes (Nonaka & Konno, 1998) must be present so as to create and share knowledge efficiently throughout the organization (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001).

The key organizational characteristics should be identified so that successful implementation of knowledge management in higher education settings can be the outcome of this process (Lee, 2007). At this point, organizational factors such as technology, organizational infrastructure, organizational culture, organizational structure, knowledge sharing have a role in the implementation of knowledge management in educational settings (Davenport, Long, & Beers, 1998). For a successful implementation of knowledge management in higher education, factors affecting knowledge management readiness need to be analyzed. Agarwal & Marouf (2014) propose that organizational readiness can be assessed through an interview to determine the knowledge management capabilities relating to people, culture, processes and technology within the university. This study aimed to explore and to qualify organizational factors affecting knowledge management readiness in higher education. The questions of interest in this research are indicated below:

• How is knowledge sharing implemented at university?
• How can the organizational structure be described at university?
• What kind of organizational support occurs in terms of knowledge management at university?
• What are the organizational factors affecting knowledge management in higher education?
• In what level is the university ready to implement knowledge management?
• In what level are the academics ready for the adoption of knowledge management?

II. METHODOLOGY

In this part, research design, study group, data collection tool, data collection, and data analysis of this study are explained in detail.

A. Research Design

The research design of this study was specified as qualitative data collection compromising of the interviews using semi-structured question forms in order to explore and qualify organizational factors affecting knowledge management readiness in higher education through the remarks of academics at university.

B. Study Group

The study group of this research was the academics including lecturers and instructors selected from a state university in Istanbul, Turkey in the 2016-2017 Academic Year. Probability sampling was used to specify the participants.

C. Data Collection Tool

In this study, the semi-structured question forms developed by Agarwal and Marouf (2016) were used in order to measure organizational factors of knowledge management readiness in higher education. There are 9 questions based on different constructs; namely, knowledge-sharing culture (Questions 1&2), decentralized structure (Question 3), organizational support (Question 4), top management support (Question 5), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure (Question 6), individual readiness to participate in a knowledge management initiative (Question 7), and perceived organizational readiness to adopt knowledge management (Questions 8&9). In addition to the semi-structured interview questions, the demographic variables such as gender, age, and tenure at university were also measured after prepended to this qualitative survey.

D. Data Collection

After the demographic variables added to the semi-structured question forms, this qualitative study was conducted to 20 academics at the proper place and time specified before.

E. Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data obtained from the academics, content analysis was used taking specified survey constructs into consideration in the light of the literature of knowledge management. Each participant was given a representative code (A1, A2, A3, ..., A20). During the implementation of content analysis, themes specified by Agarwal and Marouf (2016) as constructs were analyzed within the codes inferred in an interpretive way through the interviews.

III. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The demographic variables of the study were investigated at first in order to analyze the independent variables including gender, age, and tenure at university (See Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
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<th>N</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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As seen in Table 1, in the study group of 20 participants, the number of female academics taking part in this research was 17 (85%) while the male participants were worth of 15% with the number of 3. The number of the participants aged 26-30 was 5; 7 of the participants interviewed were at the age of 31-35; 5 were at the age of 36-40; and the number of the participants aged 41 or older was 3. As for tenure at university, only one academician has been working at university for 1-5 years; 11 participants of the study group for 6-10 years; 4 people of the study group for 11-15 years; 2 participants of the study group for 16-20 years; and 2 people of the group for 21 or more years.

All the data gathered from the study group were analyzed in this qualitative research. The themes were specified as knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing culture, organizational structure, organizational support, ICT infrastructure, individual readiness to KM, organizational readiness to KM, and the barriers against KM implementation. The codes obtained from content analysis are demonstrated in Table 2 with the themes, number of participants (N), and frequency (f).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Online platforms</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Academic sharing</td>
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<td>Informal sharing</td>
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<td>Knowledge sharing culture</td>
<td>Well-established culture</td>
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<td>Participative approach</td>
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<td>Improving culture</td>
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<td>Absence of culture</td>
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<td>Organizational structure</td>
<td>More central administration</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>Semi-autonomous structure</td>
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<td>Autonomous structure</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>Highly motivating support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Financial &amp; academic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

The Paradigm of Knowledge Management in Higher Education: A Qualitative Exploration of Organizational Factors Affecting KM Readiness

A. Knowledge sharing

Under the theme “knowledge sharing”, four different codes that are online platforms, academic sharing, administrative sharing, and informal sharing were extracted from the answers of the academics through content analysis.

Online platforms

There are 16 participants from the study group expressing their opinions 25 times under this code. Some outstanding views are presented below:

“We use an online platform in order to share knowledge.” (A4)

“Academic and administrative information is shared through an online platform designed for our university.” (A18)

Academic sharing

There are 13 people expressing their opinions 13 times under this code. Some of the participants’ views of “academic sharing” are given below:

“Knowledge sharing within my university is quite effective, for there are various mechanisms with which both academic and administrative staff are familiar.” (A6) “There are workshops, training sessions and conferences to share what are
commonly used or taught within the educational atmosphere.” (A8)

**Administrative sharing**
There are 10 lecturers sharing their ideas 10 times under this code. Two of the participants explaining their view of “administrative sharing” are as follows: “In our university there are many channels to share knowledge both formally and informally. There can be formal announcements directed by the managers via e-mail and also there are many bulletin boards which announces the upcoming events and responsibilities.” (A9)

“Administrative information is shared through emails.” (A18)

**Informal sharing**
There are 7 participants expressing their opinions 7 times under this code. Some prominent views are given below:

“There are also informal ways to share knowledge such as having a social chats in the teachers’ lounge and lunch halls. This way teachers can ask solutions for their specific in class problems and generate ideas for each other. They also have small chats about the school and their interests.” (A9)

“Verbal sharing is more common than the written one.” (A14)

**B. Knowledge sharing culture**
Under the theme “knowledge sharing culture”, five different codes that are well-established culture, participative approach, improving culture, limited culture, and absence of culture were specified from the answers of the study group.

**Well-established culture**
There are 5 academics in the group explaining their opinions 9 times under this code. Some expressed his/her view below as follows:

“I think our university is good at sharing knowledge on time and uses an appropriate language.” (A4)

“Knowledge sharing culture within my university is well-established. Even newly-recruited members seem to have no difficulty figuring out how to share knowledge and how to access shared knowledge.” (A6)

“I think we have a fairly good knowledge sharing culture in that our university has a professional attitude towards knowledge sharing.” (A9)

**Participative approach**
There are 4 people sharing their ideas 4 times under this code. Some participants explained their views of “participative approach” like that:

“As knowledge sharing is a must for teachers, in my university people share their knowledge frequently. They share ideas about class management, activities and technological tools/websites they use.” (A5)

“Knowledge sharing culture is not well organized, it is limited at our university. It can be demanding sometimes to acquire the accurate information.” (A14)

“I feel knowledge sharing culture is somehow limited as I observe that some instructors (and sometimes I) refrain from sharing their (my) knowledge. In other words, knowledge sharing is limited in some aspects in our school.” (A18)

**Improving culture**
There are 4 lecturers sharing their ideas 4 times under this code. One of them expressed his/her ideas below: “I don’t think knowledge sharing culture is at the desired level, but I believe it is improving in time.” (A3)

“Our knowledge sharing culture has improved since I started work. We can learn about the changes made in any unit of our school more easily now.” (A7)

**Limited culture**
There are 5 people expressing their ideas 7 times under this code. Some views are presented below:

“Knowledge sharing culture is not well-organized, it is limited at our university. It can be demanding sometimes to acquire the accurate information.” (A14)

“I feel knowledge sharing culture is somehow limited as I observe that some instructors (and sometimes I) refrain from sharing their (my) knowledge. In other words, knowledge sharing is limited in some aspects in our school.” (A18)

**Absence of culture**
There are 2 lecturers stating their opinions 2 times under this code. One of them expressed his/her view below:

“It is difficult to say that there is a well-established process or culture. Instructors rely on the members of their friend or colleague circles.” (A2)

**C. Organizational structure**
Under the theme “organizational structure”, three different codes, which are more central administration, semi-autonomous structure, and autonomous structure, were analyzed from the answers of the study group.

**More central administration**
There are 11 academics expressing their opinions 34 times under this code. Some of the participants’ views of “more central administration” are given below: “Although it seems that the school gives more autonomy in some units, I think in our school we have a more powerful central administration. It is not only the director of the school, but some other colleagues as well.” (A1)

“The organizational structure is more central. It would be better if it was more autonomous than it is now, which will be more liberating for both administration and faculty.” (A3)

“I think we have a more powerful central administration.” (A4)
“The administration plays a vital role in the organization, and most of the time we, the lecturers, are to act accordingly. In fact, there should be an independent office to arrange knowledge sharing sessions; nevertheless, we do not have such a unit.” (A8)

Semi-autonomous structure
There are 6 people explaining their ideas 8 times under this code. Some participants expressed their views below as follows: “I would describe the organizational structure in my university as a combination of both central administration and autonomy. In other words, academic offices are granted autonomy as to decision-making; however, the central administration has the final say, which is understandable considering that it is the central administration that will be held accountable for the decisions.” (A6) “The administration draws the guidelines. The units and the individual instructors act accordingly.” (A11) “My institution has a semi-autonomous organizational structure. Units themselves can decide on their own procedural functions and how they operate. Yet, they need to cooperate with other units as well in dealing with major issues. Finally, the administrative body, the director and vice-directors, usually have the final or recommended say in the issues.” (A16)

Autonomous structure
There are 3 lecturers expressing their opinions 3 times under this code. Some outstanding views are below:
“As far as I observe, units have autonomy in decision making. Central administration is open to new ideas and projects.” (A5) “We have more autonomy in individual units since we have many administrative offices which work in collaboration with each other.” (A12)

D. Organizational support
Under the theme “organizational support”, six different codes that are highly motivating support, financial & academic support, resources & facilities, budget-limited support, administratively limited support, and absence of support were found out from the content analysis.

Highly motivating support
There are 5 participants from the study group expressing their opinions 11 times under this code. Some outstanding views are presented below:
“I believe that we have a group of staff with high motivation who are responsible for knowledge management in our university.” (A4) “As for faculty support mechanisms, members of technical staff are ready to help whenever we need.” (A6)

Financial & academic support
There are 3 people stating their opinions 7 times under this code. One of the participants’ views of “financial & academic support” is given below: “I think knowledge management initiatives are supported financially and academically.” (A2)

Resources & facilities
There are 4 participants in the study group expressing their ideas 4 times under this code. Some views are presented below: “I think knowledge management initiatives in our university are supported more by facilities.” (A7) “In terms of resources and facilities, the university is open to the new offers.” (A14)

Budget-limited support
There are 7 lecturers explaining their opinions 16 times under this code. Some of them expressed his/her view below: “As a result of budget cuts, my university doesn’t have enough money and resources for knowledge management initiatives.” (A5) “I believe money could be the biggest deterrent got knowledge management initiatives.” (A18)

Administratively limited support
There are 3 people stating their opinions 3 times under this code. One of the participants’ views of “administratively limited support” is indicated below: “Even though I have not had a first-hand experience of trying to implement a knowledge management initiative in my university, I can say that I would get a great deal of organizational support for such an initiative as long as the central administration or the particular office is convinced that this initiative will be useful and effective” (A6)

Absence of support
There are 2 people in the study group expressing their ideas 2 times under this code. One of them expressed his/her view below as follows: “As far as I am concerned, no knowledge management initiatives are implemented in my institute.” (A1)

E. ICT infrastructure
Under the theme “ICT infrastructure”, five different codes, which are e-mails, web-based platforms, difficulties in implementing new technology, and limited infrastructural conditions, were identified from the content analysis.

E-mails
13 participants in the study group stated their ideas 13 times under the code “e-mails”. Some views are presented below:
“Knowledge is shared in the written form through e-mails and announcements most of the time.” (A4)
“We have an e-mail system, and through this e-mail system, work-related announcements are made.” (A7)

Web-based platforms
There are 12 lecturers in the study group stating their opinions 25 times under this code. Some prominent views are given below: “We use an online management platform that is for both lecturers and students.” (A9) “There is an online platform special for our institution, where materials are shared with instructors by the academic and administrative offices.” (A16)

Difficulties in implementing new technology
7 participants in the study group expressed their opinions 7 times under the code “difficulties in implementing new technology”. Some outstanding views are given below: “Because of some budget constraints, it is always hard to obtain new tools and make the most of technological opportunities.” (A1) “It is not easy to implement new technology due to lack of logistics.” (A2) “Actually, it is not very easy to implement a new technology to our school because teachers can be resistant.” (A9)

Limited infrastructural conditions
There are 6 people stating their opinions 6 times under this code. Some of the participants’ views of “limited infrastructural conditions” are given below: “The new tool or technology takes time to implement because of the infrastructural conditions.” (A3) “Lecturers mostly use their own devices in school. I use my mobile phone instead of the personal computers in our school as they all have some problems and it is really difficult to get use of them. The school should provide each instructor a pc and the Internet connection should be better to get benefit as needed.” (A15)

F. Individual readiness to KM
Surprisingly, under the theme “individual readiness to KM”, only one code was identified as “definitely ready for KM” through the consensus of the whole group.

Definitely ready for KM
All the academics involved in this qualitative study stated their opinions positively 20 times under this code. Some views are presented below: “I already share my knowledge with my friends and colleagues. It is what we do as lecturers when we talk or complain about an educational issue.” (A5) “As a person, I like sharing knowledge with my colleagues. I follow the new trends in education and try to be updated with the recent technology used in our area. I believe that everybody has something to share and worth listening. I would share any knowledge which I think would be beneficial to my co-workers and university.” (A9) “As much as I can, I share all my knowledge with every one and the administration. I believe that knowledge is the key to have an effective organization. I try to help every one around me about the work issues.” (A14)

G. Organizational readiness to KM
Under the theme “organizational readiness to KM”, three different codes, which are absence of readiness for KM, readiness for KM, and inevitability in KM readiness, were detected from the content analysis.

Absence of readiness for KM
There are 5 people sharing their ideas 5 times under this code. Some participants explained their views of “not really ready for KM” like that: “I don’t think that our university is ready to implement knowledge management.” (A10) “I don’t quite think that my institution is ready to deal with knowledge management aspects like improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation and the sharing of lessons learned.” (A16)

Readiness for KM
There are 13 lecturers in the study group stating their opinions 15 times under the code “ready for KM”. Some explained his/her view below as follows: “Since our university has its own financial resources, it is ready to implement anything to help knowledge management, which I would like to see in the near future.” (A3) “I believe that our university is ready to implement knowledge management since the top management makes an effort to build projects, which indicates that KM may be one of them in the near future.” (A4) “I believe my university is ready to implement KM. Because our university is highly prestigious and all the systems are improving systematically, it will not be that painful and problematic to apply KM.” (A7)

Inevitability in KM readiness
Only two participants in the study group stated their opinions 2 times under this code. One of the remarks is presented below: “Our university would be willing to implement it as they are fond of implementing new things to enhance the image of the institution, in the name of doing something new and as part of their PR strategies, albeit not in the name of common good. Also, as the number of teaching staff is high, the management
seems to be aware that it is unavoidable to tap into KM.” (A20)

H. The barriers against KM implementation
Under the theme “the barriers against KM implementation”, five different codes, which are organizational structure, organizational culture, financial issues, lack of qualified/trained staff, and current infrastructure were revealed from the content analysis.

Organizational structure
4 participants in the study group expressed their opinions 4 times under the code “organizational structure”. Some outstanding views are given below: “Organizational structure needs change.” (A2)
“One possible barrier is its being a state-run institution, which means that there are lots of bureaucratic procedures to follow before anything new can be implemented.” (A6)
“Bureaucracy is a problem in the adoption such a system at this university.” (A14)

Organizational culture
There are 6 lecturers in the study group stating their opinions 6 times under the code “organizational culture”. Some explained his/her view below as follows: “There can be a couple of problems in implementation of knowledge management like lecturers’ resistance as they do not always want to leave their comfort zone and they are very loyal to the old habits.” (A9)
“I believe the faculty body need to be made aware of the necessity of KM first.” (A16)

Financial issues
There are 3 people stating their opinions 7 times under this code. One of the participants’ views of “financial issues” is given below: “It is not very easy to implement a new tool or technology in a state university with a limited budget. The barrier can only be financial.” (A7)

Lack of qualified/trained staff
There are 4 participants explaining their opinions 4 times under this code. Some prominent views are given below: “In our school, we suffer from lack of well-qualified personnel.” (A10) “My institution needs adequately trained staff to realize an effective knowledge management system.” (A16)

Current infrastructure
There are only 2 participants stating their opinions 2 times under this code. One of them explained his/her views of “current infrastructure” like that: “I think our university is ready to implement knowledge management in terms of the mentality of the importance, but it is not infrastructurally ready. It will not be ready in the very future because of the current infrastructural conditions.” (A14)

DISCUSSION
Knowledge management delivers outstanding collaboration to maximize the value of organizational information and knowledge assets leading to improved effectiveness and greater innovation (Bhusry & Ranjan, 2011). In other words, the implementation of knowledge management in higher education is expected to raise the value of the organization with the application of the existing knowledge and intellectual capital within the organization (Farkas & Kiraly, 2009). Therefore, questioning whether a higher education institution is ready or not to adopt a knowledge management system is timely and pointed in today’s knowledge society.

The results of this qualitative study revealed that knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing culture, organizational structure, organizational support, ICT infrastructure, individual readiness to KM, organizational readiness to KM, and the barriers against KM implementation were the organizational factors affecting knowledge management implementation. Three components related to successful KM implementation are classified as people, policy/processes, and technology (Aswath & Gupta, 2009; Chen & Burstein, 2006). In the current study, the themes organizational structure, organizational culture, and ICT infrastructure are consistent with these factors.

The process of knowledge sharing plays a significant role in determining the outcomes of knowledge management in higher education institutions (Dhamdhere, 2015) as the aim of knowledge sharing (or knowledge distribution) is to multiply knowledge (Farkas & Kiraly, 2009). In this research, under the theme “knowledge sharing”, the codes that are online platforms (16/20), academic sharing (13/20), administrative sharing (10/20), and informal sharing (7/20) were found out through the content analysis.

As understood from the results of this study, knowledge sharing is carried out through a variety of mechanisms formally and informally. Therefore, knowledge sharing requires more interaction and cooperation within the institute (Kushwaha & Pandey, 2016), which is consistent with the results of this study.

Culture is an essential component in implementing knowledge management in an organization. Such an organizational culture is to include culture of openness, sharing information, working in teamwork, motivation for contribution to knowledge (Hai King-Chung, 2001). Creating a knowledge sharing culture to experiment and learn is a must for an effective knowledge management (Dhamdhere,
In this research, well-established culture (5/20), participative approach (4/20), improving culture (4/20), limited culture (5/20), and absence of culture (2/20) were revealed from the content analysis under the theme “knowledge sharing culture”, which indicates the vital role of organizational culture consistently with the existing literature. Cranfield and Taylor (2008) suggest that the management structure of a university affects its ability to respond quickly to external influences and pressures. Universities have become more and more decentralized due to their complex structure. As the center becomes weak, implementing a systemic change becomes difficult (Cranfield & Taylor, 2008). However, Cristea and Capatina (2009, p. 359) defined autonomy as “the situation when individuals are acting autonomously, according to some minimum specifications, being implied in teams with self-organizing capabilities”. Universities with decentralized structures are likely to be more open to knowledge management processes including knowledge creation/capture, sharing and use (Agarwal & Marouf, 2016). In this study, under the theme “organizational structure”, the codes more central administration (11/20), semi-autonomous structure (6/20), and autonomous structure (3/20) were analyzed from the answers of the study group. Inconsistently with Cranfield & Taylor (2008), but consistently with Agarwal & Marouf (2016), the participants in this study generally claimed that more autonomous organizational structure affects knowledge management positively. Organizational structure is to balance its management style according to the knowledge processes because knowledge creating requires a more autonomous atmosphere while knowledge distribution is carried out more accurately in a more central context.

In addition to organizational structure, organizational support is another factor affecting knowledge management readiness. In order to rationalize individual functions and/or units within an organization, collaboration and sharing of knowledge existing in an organization project directly the organizational support (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001). In this study, under the theme “organizational support”, the codes, highly motivating support (5/20), financial & academic support (3/20), resources & facilities (4/20), budget-limited support (7/20), administratively limited support (3/20), and absence of support (2/20) were found out from the content analysis. As revealed consistent with the current study, knowledge management requires full organizational support in terms of resources, finance, budget, ICT infrastructure (Borchers, 2006). Knowledge management in educational institutions should provide a set of matters for linking people; namely, students, teachers, researchers, business and industry external entities, to processes of technologies (Nawaz & Gomes, 2014) as technology plays a significant role in promoting knowledge sharing (Kushwaha & Pandey, 2016; Pinto, 2012). Therefore, organizational conditions in terms of ICT infrastructure have an impact on the effective knowledge management (Chu, 2016; Lee, 2007). In the current study, under the theme “ICT infrastructure”, the codes, e-mails (13/20), web-based platforms (12/20), difficulties in implementing new technology (7/20), and limited infrastructural conditions (6/20), were identified from the content analysis, which is consistent with knowledge management tools in the literature.

Individual and organizational readiness should be respected as the preconditions for the implementation of knowledge management in higher education. In this qualitative research, under the theme “organizational readiness to KM”, the codes, absence of readiness for KM (5/20), readiness for KM (13/20), and inevitability in KM readiness (2/20), were detected from the content analysis. Surprisingly, under the theme “individual readiness to KM”, only one code was identified as “definitely ready for KM” (20/20) through the consensus of the whole group. In other words, the level of individual readiness is higher than the level of organizational readiness. In order to qualify organizational factors affecting knowledge management readiness, both individuals and the organization should be ready to implement of knowledge management in higher education, which is consistent with the literature. Kushwaha & Pandey (2016) discussed the barriers of knowledge sharing in an educational context. Some outstanding barriers are mentioned as lack of rewards and recognition systems that would motivate people to share their knowledge at university, existing organizational culture not supporting knowledge sharing sufficiently, technology, insufficient knowledge repositories in organization, and “staff in universities/colleges who does not share knowledge because they think knowledge is power” (Kushwaha & Pandey, 2016). These barriers are mostly consistent with the current qualitative study indicating the barriers against KM implementation such as organizational structure (4/20), organizational culture (6/20), financial issues (3/20), lack of qualified/trained staff (4/20), and current infrastructure (2/20). These barriers revealed in the study should be removed through a more dynamic administrative style promoting knowledge sharing at universities.

CONCLUSION

Embracing a paradigm of knowledge in today’s knowledge society, higher education institutions have contributed to the generation of new knowledge

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and technologies that are demanded by society while simultaneously being pressured by society to change (Lee, 2007). Knowledge management in higher education combines the parts of organization into one unity: processes, people, and technologies (Sedziuviene & Vveinhardt, 2009) and transform the organization using advanced technology, data and information that are made available to users for effective productivity (Dhamdhere, 2015). Therefore, organizational factors affecting knowledge management readiness revealed in this study such as knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing culture, organizational structure, organizational support, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, individual readiness to KM, organizational readiness to KM, and the barriers against KM implementation should be taken into consideration before a knowledge management system is adopted in higher education settings.

REFERENCES


