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Towards the Creation of Information and Knowledge Culture

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Abstract

Information and knowledge in knowledge management creates polarity and subservience in their utilization, storage, and distribution biased against information because it is always believed that the creation and management of knowledge determines organizational success far beyond information processing.

This paper argues that the confluence of information and knowledge uptake in a highly globalized society should be the new paradigm where parallel functions of the two ensure systems approach management recognizing both as inseparable and interdependent elements and the creation of an information and knowledge culture in an organization is recognized as the dictum of optimal organizational management.

Keywords: information and management; information and management culture; knowledge economics.

Information and Knowledge

Information is any tagged data which can be discrete, definite, and complete enough to be treated as an attribute. Attributes, on the other hand, may be tagged data within the digital object, or tagged data that is associated with the digital object (Flor, 2002). In another definition, information constitutes facts organized to describe a situation or condition (Wiig, 1993). From the definitions, it can be deduced that information is data that makes sense, but who makes sense? Human beings as capturers of information make sense of all information around. On the other hand, information processing is also a machine based operation where data “interact” freely without human intervention. Due to artificial intelligence’s ubiquity in the modern world, information processing is a commonplace practice with pejorative connotation in human dimension. This leads to the idea that information exists outside of the human mind implying that data can be transformed to information which forms the basis for knowledge creation.

If there is to be a linear relationship between data, information and knowledge, how is it possible that in arriving knowledge we need information and data? Perhaps, in resolving the

intricate relationship between the three, the question of which comes first or where it comes from should not be a matter of urgency in order to understand their value. Rather, the resulting functionality of data, information or knowledge should be the focus. Thus, information whether from data or knowledge represents facts, messages, tagged data rendering value as independent entity.

Further on, refined and processed as organized elements, data can be discerned and analyzed by its user. That is why in many pronouncements we make, the need for more information to back up claims should be made available. Meanwhile, information not in use also qualifies as information. In a flourishing information society that generates a lot of information, its functionality can pose issues like being undervalued because of its non-usability turning into waste, therefore, valueless information.

Conversely, when information becomes valued upon discernment, that information becomes knowledge. For example, information from a computer that is used by a student transforms such information into useful knowledge. Knowledge then is what resides in the human mind – perspectives, beliefs and contextualized information regardless of its origin. However, it also makes sense to claim that knowledge needs information in order to capacitate intellectual power in human undertaking. If so, will there be no knowledge creation in a non-human processing? With technological affordance sweeping in today's digital world, are computers unable to process knowledge?

The discussion of knowledge brings into mind the concept of schemata. As embedded knowledge forms, does it follow that knowledge schemata becomes part of tacit knowledge following the idea that the latter occurs in the mind of a person? Although there are differences in terms of the fact that mental schemas are activated when a person recalls an experience of an object while tacit knowledge tends to be active in a person's unarticulated experiences, traditions and personal knowledge, it seems quite interesting to note the inter-relationship between schemas and knowledge. Another argument on its relationship can be gleaned from the fact that knowledge as justified true beliefs (Choo et al, 1998) constitutes those messages residing in the mind that form part of mental structures and codes which schemas signify.

To further explore the concept of tacit knowledge, it makes sense to say that a person's set of unarticulated thoughts and experiences can make their way into an organization through socialization. The insistence upon "unarticulated thoughts" in tacit knowledge as uncodified knowledge as opposed to explicit knowledge which is generally codified cannot be undermined. Now, when members of an organization go about their daily practice thru interactive communication, knowledge creation and transfer can happen when upper management understands and agrees tacit ideas, hence, the concept of knowledge conversion from tacit to explicit knowledge emanates. Thus, the importance of sharing different views can be gleaned from the fact that it signals conversion of tacit to explicit knowledge.

However, in some instances, organizational procedures and protocols are not always understood by some members. When this happens, those messages constitute information, not knowledge. Information, therefore, requires knowledge both to be created and to be understood. Information *per se* contains no knowledge (Stenmark, 2002). When information is understood, it becomes knowledge which ultimately becomes information to be used

sometime. The attachment of information to its user (person) is an insistence for it to be qualified as knowledge.

While it is true that knowledge is attached with meaning, information is also needed to make that meaning understood. For example, facts organized to describe a situated condition (Wiig, 1993) as information are requirements to make useful knowledge come into light. Thus, interpretation is a requisite in knowledge formation as previously argued.

Based on the narratives highlighted, one cannot help but insist on the power of information as not a mere subservient element to knowledge processing. Anachronism in information processing as value free infuriates digital revolution as an accumulation of lifeless information because it is still bound to human intervention after all. In another dimension, knowledge process as a dictum of intellectual power remains cumbersome to think due to a multitude of knowledge based errors in human civilization.

Information Economics and Knowledge Economics

Two interesting concepts derived from information and knowledge are worth pondering: information economics and knowledge economics. Information economics is the study of how different degrees of information affect economic analysis (policonomics.com). When it was conceived as a neoclassical theory, it was under the assumptions of perfect information and uncertainty. In market analysis, it was understood before that market always clear or had the ability to clear itself, called equilibrium, without any intervention. This idea has been contested by many economists arguing that market will have imperfections, failures that are not factored out like externalities such as pollution, disease as social costs transferred to the society for production processes.

In many ways, imperfect information or the incapacity to hold valuable information has led economists to make gross errors inherent in economic activities. An example that illustrates imperfect information is articulated in Game Theory where an individual trying to win against his or her opponent will be met with challenges as available information on opponent's strategies, moves, characteristics may not be available, hence, such imperfect information leads to error judgements and miscalculations. This concept is explained in *asymmetric information* implying that some will have more information while others will not have as much. This information asymmetry is well-pronounced in a highly digitized world where companies try to extract information from consumers as they surf the internet. For example, online ticket pricing might present different prices for different consumers depending on time of booking, company's extraction of consumer's profile and such. In another instance, a faculty member publishes an article in a peer-reviewed journal will have his or her intellectual capital rights surrendered to the institution who owns the intellectual product –research, journal article among others. Even more staggering can occur when such valued information is sold by the journal company to others eventually enriching themselves at the expense of the author. Fame and job tenure seem to be the argument for such continued affliction. This is a monopolistic power enjoyed by many information industries simply because they have advantage of owning information, the power of *asymmetric information* that works on their behalf for the most part. But this not to say that information economics will always lure profits away from achieving

society's balance. Profusion of information nowadays as a consequence of Information Society that has put many production levels geared towards information tools, economic analysis is more robust in information search. Google search engines are good examples of how massive information library in the internet has eased economic activities giving rise to *e-commerce, online learning, internet banking and such.* The level of economics awareness is far greater with information tools and processes available.

Finally, knowledge economics puts emphasis on knowledge being a "non-rival good" meaning it can be shared infinitely, and thus, it is the only thing that could grow in per-capita terms (Hidalgo, 2018). One implication for such phrase is that knowledge has no price as one product would normally have. Knowledge is not sold in the market with a price but truthfully economic analysis suggests that countries with greater knowledge stock are far richer than those with little knowledge. Economic growth theories emphasize high utilization of factor endowments most especially with capital and technological progress that increase investment opportunities. There is a question that can be raised in such assumption – is knowledge explicitly stated as a factor in economic growth? If technological progress assumes increase in technology, it must assume knowledge accumulation that has led such technological evolution. This is where investment in education becomes so important.

Both information economics and knowledge economics have important roles in achieving economic growth and development. One affects the other as both require inputs of information and knowledge in battling imperfect information that hounds societies. Such imperfect information is being studied with a sense of precision and certainty that characterize economic forecasts, models, theorems and other economic phenomena. Economics as a social science follows rigorous mathematics and scientific method to equip individuals with robust information and knowledge for various use.

Towards the Creation of Information and Knowledge Culture

While it is true that knowledge resides within humans, the concept of its ownership becomes an issue in countless ways. First, knowledge ownership in an organizational setting is generally biased towards the management instigating power, use, and ownership of individual knowledge as an organizational product. Such managerial power over individual knowledge inhibits personal recognition in disguise of achieving organizational goals. Addressing this problem of knowledge ownership requires openness and trust between members and management such that the use of knowledge becomes a gratifying experience. In information ownership, the same notion of its usability accrues to whoever owns or secures information for its rightful application.

It will be noticed that both information and knowledge ownership will make for a functional and recognizing knowledge management practice whereby one is not subservient but co-existent with each other. Even in a knowledge-centered power there is, information-centered processing within an organization should rightfully acknowledge its effort with equanimity. A knowledge based economy, for instance, will claim its optimal power upon the inclusion of information products and processes as part of knowledge production. As factors of production

beside labor and capital, information and knowledge uptake leads to a technology based economy that recognizes both as confluencing elements.

What, then, is the appropriate culture organizations should uphold? First, an information based, knowledge centered culture should be treated with equal footing – one that recognizes deep contributions of both as a confluence of interrelationship rather than as independent elements. Second, both information and knowledge should form part in systems approach management that highlights integrated functioning of both as a whole unit rather than as fragments. Such holistic culture instigates stability of an organizational function where higher forms of systems outcome can be realized. Third, pejorative connotation attributed to information processing as a secondary practice should not persist in an organization which recognizes its potential strengths. Fourth, knowledge management process of recognizing, utilizing, storing and distributing knowledge should have the same accolade to information processing if equanimity is to be achieved.

With globalization affecting not only nations but as well as organizations, information and communication technology (ICT) uptake ensures that proper utilization of digital tools contribute to information and knowledge management designed for organizational success and development in the larger society. Where knowledge management for development (KM4D) envelopes an organization's campaign in alleviating social conditions through developmental strategies, information management creates a parallel idea of uplifting the process so that information utilization does not lead to information wastage. With proliferation of information in the digital space, information garbage haunts a digital world with devastating impact to knowledge utilization as well. Thus, however information value or its diminution is defined, knowledge bears the same impact.

Conclusion

Towards this end, the confluence of information and knowledge management process creates a robust organizational culture recognizing each other's roles within systems approach that are capable of adapting to changes within and outside of the organization under the principle of sustainability.

In a highly competitive digital civilization, parallel functions between information and knowledge ascertain that organizational management is optimized when both concepts are treated as interdependent units.

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