Abstract

Knowledge management is an important new business paradigm, and it is no surprise that it has received so much attention from researchers. They have investigated knowledge management strategies and important knowledge management variables such as enablers, processes, and performance. However, most current empirical research has explored their relationships in isolation. In addition, it is still unclear how these strategies are affected by knowledge management processes. To fill this gap, this dissertation focuses on two research objectives; (i) to propose an integrative empirical research model and (ii) to find relationships between knowledge management strategies and knowledge creating processes.

For the first objective, this dissertation proposes a research model that interconnects knowledge management variables. To establish credibility between knowledge creation and performance, organizational creativity is incorporated into the model. In addition, the emphasis of this study is on knowledge creation because it is a critical source for fostering competitive advantage. Sampling data from 58 firms is used to test the model. The model includes seven enablers; centralization, formalization, collaboration, trust, learning, skill, and information technology support. The results confirm the impact of trust on knowledge creating processes such as
socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization. In contrast, it is noted that the primary impact of information technology support is on knowledge combination. Simply investing in IT infrastructure does not supplement a competitive advantage; managers should pay more attention than ever to cultural factors in order to sustain capabilities of knowledge creation. It is found that formalization is not only an inhibiting but also an encouraging enabler for innovation. Lastly, organizational creativity is found to be critical for improving performance; neglecting ideas can undermine a business.

For the second objective, this dissertation proposes a model to illustrate the relationship between knowledge management strategies and their creating processes. The model shows that the strategies vary depending on different knowledge creating processes. Result of this study is that, in order to manage knowledge effectively, human strategy is more likely to be adopted in the case of the socialization process while system strategy is more likely to be adopted in the case of the combination process. A real-life case is explored to demonstrate the usefulness of the model.

This study may be used as a stepping stone for further empirical research on knowledge management and knowledge management strategies. This study can also help develop robust strategies that involve trade-offs between knowledge management enablers.