Chapter 3
Knowledge Management and Blended Learning:
Towards a Compatibility and Complementarity Model

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion about the compatibility and complementarity of blended learning and knowledge management (KM) and their relationship. Blended learning combines classroom instruction with e-learning while KM is the process of creating, capturing, disseminating, applying, and managing organizational knowledge. This chapter illustrates how attention to two main perspectives exists in KM field; namely, objectivist perspective and practice-based perspective can inform the learning and teaching approach, the deep and surface learning. Yet they are two complementary processes if they are properly integrated. From here, a shift to the need to rethink and restructure the learning and teaching experience occurs, and its transformative potential is analysed. This chapter proposes a Two-C (compatible and complementarity) model which accommodates the blended learning and KM simultaneously. This suggests an integrated approach to provide for a balanced strategy in terms of both blended learning with KM approach can be applied in higher education institution (HEI).

INTRODUCTION

Innovation and technology have incessantly propelled the conditions for which knowledge (KM) management stirs up a new frontier of sophistication in the global arena. In the academic world, the diverse pockets of knowledge do leverage the 21st century innovative outlook of higher educational institutions (Dhamdhere, 2015; Serban and Luan, 2002). Hyped as a method of institutional innovation (Lyman, 2000),

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KM has been acclaimed to boost institutional credibility in research, curriculum development, student and administrative services, strategic planning, among others (Kidwell et al., 2001). With a positive approach to KM, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can transit to a knowledge-based economy, enhance knowledge sharing, improve educational programs, and consequently improve the overall performance of universities (Alhammad et al., 2009; Amayah, 2013; Cheng et al., 2009). The basic challenge, then is to convert the knowledge pool that currently resides in each human talent/unit, and make it widely and easily available to all stakeholders.

KM in HEIs are manifested into two dimensions: academic knowledge and organisational knowledge (Yeh, 2005; Kok, 2007), both of which are enhanced by a set of KM practices and tools that facilitate the development of an environment of knowledge creation, collaboration and sharing and a space of knowledge transformation and application of novelties (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Bushry and Ranjan, 2011). It simply alludes that knowledge is HEIs' input as well as output, making each institution maintains some distinctive features compared to other institutions and organizations (Omerzel et al., 2011). For instance, Management Information System (MIS) and Business Information System initiatives with web-based portals linking academic units to shared databases and business sites are common platforms used in higher education. Likewise, World Wide Web hosts education courses via Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), blended learning, E-learning, and M-Learning, and other virtual or remote instructional deliveries. These initiatives affirm the development of techno-centric institutional infrastructures and wired classrooms in colleges and universities (Metcalfe, 2006). In the end, whatever initiatives HEIs pursue, improvement and promotion of student learning and learning outcomes remain their priority goals (Creemers et al., 2013).

The explosive growth of globalization and to date, the intricacies brought about Covid-19 have driven KM in HEIs into multi-level complexities. To date, education has to be delivered in its varied forms with the basic support of media and technology. Online-blended learning which carries the features of face-to-face classroom in a virtual environment has taken toll to date as the most-sought stop-gap for instruction. Blended learning reaped scrutiny with regard to how it must be designed and transmitted not to be unfairly dismissive of the conventional routine and how it must be efficient and effective in relation to performance (Kim, et al., 2006). But the theoretical and methodological evolution of KM in HEIs carries complicated and challenging transitions as digital technologies become inevitable operational requisites. Its adaption has mounted organizational tensions as HEIs increase their responsive to the needs of global audiences (Kenechukwu et al.,2009). It is thus an overwhelming transition for HEIs to align local initiative with global thrust. Moreover, the implementation of new technologies in an effort to become more efficient, more competitive and most importantly more profitable in this modern world is still on the rise (Skoumpopoulou, et al. 2018). Besides this, the readiness and attitude of the end users (educators and students) and technical staff who are expected to use the new technologies often hinder technology adoption in the workplace (Gedik et al., 2013). Nevertheless, the main issue with the implementation of such Education Management Systems traces back to people's attitudes towards the system as most of them seem reluctant to change (Ibrahim et al. 2020).

Moreover, the fact that HEIs' well of knowledge is emerging from a layer of interactions and network of global connectedness, KM plays a central role in the integration and internal transfer of advancement and development interventions among HEIs. The phenomenal rise of alternative delivery modalities such as blended learning and teaching emerged from a layered interaction involving interactive learning activities (e.g. discussion, simulation, role-playing, experimental, mentoring, interactivity, case studies, games, and support groups) where connectivity and coexistence must thrive (Mahesh et al. (2007).