

Chapter 6

Establishing Knowledge Management Model of Quality Management Systems for Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is a valuable antecedent in enhancing the competitive advantage and sustainability of an organization. Various quality management standards acknowledge the necessities and importance of knowledge management within quality management since both areas complement each other. Therefore, this state drives the need to conduct more knowledge management research related to quality management. However, research on knowledge management within quality management systems specifically in higher education institutions is still underexplored. This chapter attempts to explore the establishment of a knowledge management model in supporting the implementation of quality management standards. Several knowledge management enabler factors are suggested, namely strategic focus and leadership, culture, organization, structure, technology, processes, top management, measurement, knowledge, and people. An empirical study is suggested in the future to further support the conceptual knowledge management model established in this chapter.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions (HEI) adopt quality management systems (QMS) standards to provide fundamental requirements in optimizing products and services as value-added to their stakeholders such as students, parents, industry partners, and staff. Though the concept of knowledge management (KM) is not new, past studies that focused on KM within QMS standards such as ISO 9001:2015 are still lacking. Hence, there is a vast opportunity and gaps for future KM research within the implementation of QMS to be conducted.

HEI refers to an institution that provides education at the tertiary level. Primary activities are knowledge-intensive, such as delivering lectures, providing consultation, and conducting research and development. While conducting the knowledge-intensive activities, there are interactive processes involved between delivering the knowledge, managing it, document it, and simultaneously ensuring that services delivered are conformed to the quality standards adopted by the institution. The knowledge conversion model developed by Ikujiro Nonaka and Noboru Konno (1998), Nonaka (1994), and Nonaka et al. (2000) indicates what they derived as the knowledge conversion process that involves interaction processes and activities between two types of knowledge (explicit and tacit). Therefore, the implementation of KM as part of the quality strategy assists in solving the quality problems, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Quality problems supported by KM solutions (Bencsik & Horváth-Csikos, 2018)

Quality problems	Impact	Solved by	KM Solutions Activities
Repetition of similar mistakes	Costs		Preservation, recording, sharing of knowledge
Duplication of tasks	Known results from the past projects		Preservation, recording of knowledge
Lack of information	Customer service		Knowledge sharing, trust building
Lack of idea sharing	Best practices		Knowledge gaining, sharing and development
Only one or two persons own specific information / knowledge	Weakest link		Knowledge sharing, trust building
Delay and no integration in knowledge gained.	Slow products improvement resulting to competitor overtaking the opportunity		Knowledge utilization
Information or sources of knowledge are not readily available	Frustrated employees		Creation of knowledge database and corporate memory.

THE KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QMS

One of the requirements of QMS spelled out in the standards is that any organization adopting the standard shall ensure that all relevant internal and external personnel related to their organization must be aware of the implementation of QMS and related quality documented information within the organization. For example, while introducing a new policy or process, the organization's responsibility is to ensure compliance whereby related information is well distributed and communicated among employees. Hence, from time to time, and as part of continual improvement efforts, employees shall provide and update related information to measure whether the organization conforms to the requirements spelled out by

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