Chapter 3

University's Role in Exploring New Knowledge in the Global Knowledge Society:
Knowledge Ecology Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses ways to explore knowledge in higher education, especially in universities, from a knowledge ecology perspective. Managing knowledge is a challenge, and it is a drastically changing concept. The author contends that knowledge ecology is a good concept to explore knowledge in higher education while working in the knowledge society towards building a secure and stable knowledge environment. Knowledge ecology focuses on identifying valuable knowledge but not managing knowledge. This is very important in the present setting. Hence, the chapter presents how universities meet the knowledge society's demands without any obstacles of knowledge exploration focusing on the elite knowledge of its knowledge ecology.

INTRODUCTION

The present society, based on knowledge and modern information and communication technologies, is shaping the global economy. Now knowledge becomes the most value commodity to the economy and also to the society. Thus, knowledge society that we are experiencing has shown that having capacity to manipulate, transmit, and store large quantities of knowledge is an

advantage. Therefore, knowledge has increased at a staggering rate over recent years. At the same time, digitization process of services and resources as a result of advanced information and communication technologies assist in making available that knowledge freely and instantly.

Therefore, in the increasing global economy knowledge becomes the main attribute to competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability. Fundamentally, innovations base on knowledge commodities that make a stronger society towards a sustainable social and economic development

process. If society is based on knowledge then there is no argument that society comes up with new ideas in better and faster ways. This idea shwos that knowledge society is serving us mainly on knowledge-based products and services that no one had thought of before. Further, it is about putting new ideas to workforces to engage with new insights. However, though experiencing a very successive knowledge society right now, the way of engaging with it by educational institutes such as universities to grab and enhance knowledge is questionable. A proactive engagement in knowledge exploring is very low. But as someone said, we are quite late as academicians to fully engage with this buzz knowledge society. We believe that even this stage is not too late to langue a new journey to engage with by identifying main components of the society as a whole. On that journey, we believe that universities can be a good starting point to work with because one of the main roles of universities is to explore new knowledge. However, to deal with knowledge society within the conventional frame of universities may pose problems. Therefore, re-framing our way of thinking of its roles will create more opportunities and might assist in enhancing knowledge of its communities. It is necessary to introduce and use appropriate mechanisms to explore knowledge because only introducing sophisticated technologies may not mean that will meet requirements of communities of universities and society as a whole. It is better to introduce knowledge sharing and knowledge communication culture. For that, we have to think of universities as an eco-system because different species of the eco-system live coherently for success and sustain their inhabitants. That is what universities have to do.

Therefore, in this chapter we are aiming to introduce a concept of knowledge ecology, a field of theory and practice that focuses on discovering better social, organizational, behavioral, and technical conditions for knowledge creation and utilization, using knowledge exploration in universities, how universities can identify and work with knowledge ecology and adjust existing roles and functions assigned either by policies or norms. We believe universities can enhance knowledge to compete with knowledge competitors, and to take advantage of knowledge component to betterment of universities. As we said, because knowledge ecology is an inter-disciplinary subject including business innovation, skill development, communication and information systems, learning relationships, professional practice, education policy development, knowledge management, and communities of practice, etc., it assists new knowledge creation and utilization. Therefore, keeping in mind that universities are social institutions, we discuss roles that have to be played to explore new knowledge on knowledge ecology perspectives by universities.

KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The terms of knowledge and knowledge society indicate what attributes and values are involved. Knowledge is being conceptualized and categorized variously because the term knowledge is drastically changing and therefore difficult to explain. Therefore, instead of discussing the definitions on knowledge, we try to explain what main attributes belong to knowledge. Therefore, we urge knowledge is a value commodity of working with wisdom either in implicit form or explicit form. Knowledge is the most advanced sphere of data and information so having intelligent use of it with wisdom knowledge is becoming powerful and stronger. As a result, knowledge holder can act as a knowledge keeper or a knowledge protector. Further, he may act strongly to introduce information (knowledge) politics into the knowledge commodities because everything depends on the way of handing the knowledge. The knowledge society

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