Knowledge Sharing Implementation and Job Searching in Malaysia

Abstract:
The aim of this research is to integrate analysis through case studies on how knowledge sharing could be implemented successfully.   Furthermore, this study also will clarify a conceptualisation that provides a new understanding of the relationship between unemployed graduates and the human capital concept.

This paper used web documentation for the research technique, and an interpretive approach was used as the research paradigm.   Two online recruitment agency sites were analysed thoroughly, and a qualitative analysis was made on them.   The connections show how knowledge sharing can be used as a medium to help unemployed graduates to get jobs through online recruitment agencies.   An online recruitment agency can help fresh graduates to find good jobs because most of the agencies have thousands of corporate clients.   High quality candidates must have good soft skills, problem-solving skills and employable value-added skills to get the best jobs.   This study will look at how far online recruitment agencies can better assist new graduates to get the best job for them.   The findings will be expressed as qualitative results from the two online recruitment agencies researched as the case studies for the paper.   From these case studies, the findings will contribute to the ongoing study on how to implement knowledge sharing among undergraduates after they finished their studies.

Types of paper: Case Analysis paper

1.0 Introduction

In the new global economy, knowledge has become a central issue of primary resource for individuals (Drucker, 1992). Davenport and Prusak (2000) found that knowledge had been recognised where it has become the most significant outline of capital needed. Knowledge is needed to ensure and sustain a competitive advantage for an organisation (Davenport and Prusak, 2000). Davenport and Prusak (2000) also claimed that organisations can no longer expect that the practices which helped them attain success in the past will definitely ensure future success. Otherwise, organisations need to make a difference themselves on the basis of what they recognise. Knowledge should become as value, and then organisations will embark on a mission to use knowledge to their advantage. Storey and Barnett (2000) point out that various studies have highlighted a shift of focus from technical factors to human factors. At its early stage, knowledge management (KM) was largely in the domain of information technology. According to Storey and Barnett's (2000) report, about 70 percent of the articles on knowledge management in 1998 appeared in information technology or information systems publications. These articles focused on how to create the best technology to help companies manage their core knowledge. This turned out to be an ineffective approach to knowledge management. The failure was mostly due to an overemphasis on information technology and a lack of attention to human factors such as motivation, attention, creativity and organisational culture (Martensson, 2000; Malhotra, 2002; Storey and Barnett, 2002). To address this lack of attention to human factors, there emerged another approach to knowledge management that focused on social and cultural factors (Davenport et al., 1998). Politis (2003) claimed that the new model of knowledge management is about people. It looks at actions and has nothing to do with technology. In addition the KM practitioners should also fill the important main role especially in the company and also in society (Zheng, 2005). Although society may not recognise the existence of knowledge management practitioners in a professional career, it has happened indirectly. The important thing here is to emphasise the career in knowledge management whatever subject areas graduates come from. However, when the value of human capital cannot be generated from the fresh graduates who are potential knowledge-based assets in organisations, this becomes a problem for any country in the world. This happened in Malaysia, where about 70% of graduates from public higher learning institutions were unemployed in 2006 (Ram, 2006). Jobstreet.com's vice president was also concerned about the number of jobless graduates since 2001 (Kaur, 2001). Although the government and private sector have made many efforts (Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Official Portal (2008) and The Malaysian Government Official Portal (2008), the high number of jobless graduates still exists (Ram, 2006). This opined to show how a fresh graduate group can assess the knowledge necessary to get a job. This means human capital is meaningless if it is not being utilised by employers to improve organisational efficiency. With that, knowledge sharing should be practised, where unemployed graduates need to be motivated in realising the importance of skills in searching for jobs or a career.

Human capital is one of the primary components for intellectual capital. Graduates are one of the most important aspects of human capital for every country. When unemployment exists, it means that the country's human capital resource is not used wisely (Department of Statistics Malaysia website, 2007). The government of Malaysia also realised the importance of human capital to the country. Malaysia's science and technology policy for the 21st century stated that Malaysia should change to become knowledge based, and driven by human capital. The quality of human capital would become one factor in making our nation independent and wealthy (Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Official Web, 2007). Moreover, to ensure Malaysia achieves the targeted aspirations, extensive endeavours must be implemented, to build up human capital to increase the nation's competitiveness, efficiency and capability for modernisation (Official Website of the Prime

Minister's Office, 2007).

Thus, Sulaiman and Alias (2005) point out that it is important for the universities to place more emphasis on knowledge management systems or portals for their students to assess the knowledge and skills required. However, while systems development for other types of information systems are usually initiated with identification of the systems requirement, the development of knowledge management systems has to begin with a knowledge audit. Furthermore, from the study by Sulaiman (2003), we cannot deny that knowledge management is also is a tacit knowledge because of the knowledge contained in human memory. Implementation of a knowledge audit is not short term planning. It needs full commitment from stakeholders. In addition, the knowledge becomes measurable only when it can give implications and effects to the individuals.

This study will assume the unemployed graduates have good information seeking skills, plus social and communication skills and information technology skills. This assumption was based on the study by Hawamdeh (2007), where these skills and competencies were among the highest percentages (73%, 70% and 67%) that were highlighted in the job description. Besides that, the unemployed graduates also needed to be proactive, responsive, friendly, creative, have studied diverse subjects, and also have analytical, and managerial skills

With the above study, Eppler (2007) has suggested that knowledge communication has become a deliberate activity: interactively assigning insights, either verbal or non-verbal. Furthermore, communication skills have also become one of the most important elements needed in job searching. Currently, communication tools which affected by the technology also have become extremely important. That is why it makes people come out as competitive society due to rapid changes trends now. (Burke, 2007)

The proposed theory in this study could synthesise previous research (Serenko and Bontis, 2004) on the relationship between intellectual capital and knowledge management, through examining the explicit or implicit assumptions of the existing research and through pushing them to a deeper level. This synthesis could increase our comprehension of the linkage between human capital and knowledge management

2.0 The Cases: ORAS A and ORAS B

This approach can be considered as an interpretive approach. The interpretive approach gives way to most of study for seeking information(Burke, 2007). . It also assist researchers to decide in information for needs, satisfaction and fulfillment (Burke, 2007). For this study, two top online recruitment agency sites (ORAS) in Malaysia were selected and named online recruitment agency site A (ORAS A) and online recruitment agency site B (ORAS B). ORAS A advertises wide-ranging career vacancies for all levels through online applications in Malaysia. This website was updated recently. The jobseekers have the choice to register for automatic email notifications for jobs which corresponded to their search criteria. Usually, electronic mail updates are sent periodically. Furthermore, the electronic mail notice will cover future events which are useful, for example, careers exhibitions. ORAS B is another well-recognised website for all jobseekers including fresh graduates. New post vacancies are advertised on a daily basis. For this agency, the jobseekers also have to register for the automatic email notification. They should receive daily updates of job advertisements. The email notice includes upcoming careers fairs too. ORAS B advertises the highest numbers of technical vacancies, which are commonly for engineering, computer science and information technology.

2.1 Qualitative Analysis on Online Recruitment Agency Site A (ORAS A)

The findings from the official website on ORAS A, revealed that this agency has their network in Malaysia plus Singapore, the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Japan and Vietnam. This agency also has about 100 top private sector employers based in Malaysia. With the trademark of being the 'most trusted recruitment site', this site can search for job applications by specialisation or location or low applications. The agency also will update the walk-in-interview. It contains a list of recommendations which are: find salary information, calendar of events, jobs for disabled, career tips for jobseekers, blogs and business portal. In the find salary information page, users can select any position titles to determine the average current salary, based on qualifications and experience. In the calendar of events, users can view the events related to career knowledge and careers fairs, whether past or upcoming events. The jobs for the disabled page were sponsored by the Penang State Government, purposely to enable persons with disabilities to get a job. Career tips for jobseekers are also provided, opined from a previous contest named 'tell and win'. A number of tips from job seekers include: terms of job searches, resume preparation, interview, salary negotiations and personal grooming. The new blogs page seems to be able to help new graduates to prepare to get a job. In addition, it had a joint-venture with the campuses and top companies. However, there was not so much contact with the public universities. Fifteen private universities and only five public universities were included in this partner program. Meanwhile it classified jobs for corporate partners involving worldwide corporate companies such as Dell, Motorola, Shell, Citibank and Hewlett Packard. For example, on 18 September 2008, there were more than thousand vacancies for new graduates, and one hundred vacancies for internships, for part-time jobs. It showed that more jobs were offered to new graduates. At the same time, graduates normally qualified for jobs such executive and management jobs for which there are more than nine thousand vacancies. All these figures are taken from the Campus page, and keep changing day by day. Furthermore this agency site also had organised Malaysia's largest career and training fair in 2008. It was located in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Johor Bharu.

2.2 Qualitative Analysis on Online Recruitment Agency Site B (ORAS B)

The findings from the official website on ORAS B revealed that this agency has a network which besides Malaysia includes Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Singapore, Philihines, India, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States. This agency site has their own tag which is 'The No.1 Jobsite in Asia Pacific'. It has been subscribed by fifty top private sector employers and sixteen work agencies based in Malaysia. Job searches can be done using keywords or categories, or locations. It can be done specifically by clicking on the Job search page itself. On this page, job seekers can search by keywords, job category, state, career level, qualification, years of experience, monthly salary, employment term, reference number, then select jobs posted either within one month, or two weeks or one week or one day. The number of jobs per page is either twenty, fifty or one hundred per page. Job categories have been classified into accounting, tax, audit, administration, advertising, architectural services, finance, construction, business development, customer service, design, education, engineering, food beverage, health, beauty, hotel tourism, human resources, information technology, insurance, legal, logistics, management, manufacturing, marketing, media, pharmaceutical, merchandising, operation, property management, public relations, purchasing, quality control, sales, telecommunications and others. It contains a list of recommendations which are: a job hunting guide, job interview tips, how to juggle work, career development, jobseeker handbook and polling. In the job hunting guide page there a list of guides for jobseekers such as, the top ten tips for attending careers and job fairs, and seven networking tips for shy jobseekers. For job interviews, the tips page gives

guidance about preparation for the interview.   Meanwhile, in the how to juggle work pages, there is guidance in how to manage the job, such as building self-confidence in the workplace.   For the career development page, there is guidance for career promotions and career planning such as learning how to be a good listener, and how to respect the speaker. These agency sites have their own initiatives to provide all the information to start a career in Malaysia legally.   This includes Malaysian labour law, regulation of employment, and the statutory holiday and salary act.   Lastly, these agency sites have statistics to show how many participants are using the survey related with which career.

3.0 Learning outcomes and discussions

From these findings, the combination of knowledge management, human capital, knowledge sharing can be manipulated. Meanwhile ORAS A and ORAS B are applied to as online recruitment agencies, as a medium for unemployed graduates to get a job. Sutton (2007) had showed that KM is still lacking a widespread explanation, verified theory, and a global theoretical framework.   The other previous study by Malone (2002) report that knowledge has also come out as a precious asset. Meanwhile, KM has become hugely practiced by organisations.   According to Mohayidin *et al.*, (2007), the realisation that knowledge is an intellectual asset is important.   This study reported that the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has identified KM as one of the requisites to ensure Malaysia will become a quality hub for higher education, so that Malaysia can compete with other countries.   A study of efficient and effective knowledge management was reported by Marwick (2001). This study found that KM typically requires a suitable grouping of managerial, community, and administrative efforts with suitable technology.   In the field of business information technology, various definitions of knowledge management are found (Brooking,1996; Rowley,1999; Liebowitz, 2000; Zheng, 2005; Hult, 2003; Khandewalwal and Gottschalk, 2003; Eric and Noel and Hawamdeh, 2007).   Generally speaking, knowledge management can be described as process, approach or method on how to manage the knowledge in organisations; so that ORAS A and ORAS B can be considered as knowledge management systems, since knowledge inside the portal contains the job searching process itself.

In this study, the unemployed graduates themselves can be considered to be potential human capital for the organisation. Human capital refers to the individual level, and as being a combination of these four factors: genetic heritage, learning, familiarity and life and business's style, (Hudson, 1993).   It was a slightly different perspective for Bontis (2004). For him, human capital is used for an individual target.   The term human capital has come to be used refer to the knowledge, education and competencies of the individual's awareness of national responsibilities and aims (Bontis, 2004).   It starts with the intellectual wealth of the citizens.   These perspectives reveal that education is the main point for developing knowledge skills to perform the labour ability (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001). It means that a good qualification such as a diploma or degree is one of the important elements in getting a job.   Meanwhile, human capital existed in the understanding, capacity and practice of employees (Bontis, 2002).   Knowledge-based economies are important for Malaysia to become a leading technology based country (Bontis *et al.*, 2000).

Knowledge sharing could be practiced if the theory can be understood by organisational knowledge and the individual knowledge.   Based on the knowledge sharing cycle adapted from Huysmann and de Wit (2002) below, it is clear that the three basic types of knowledge sharing can be applied to the conceptualisation of knowledge management and human capital.   In their major study, they identified three basic types of knowledge sharing from the knowledge sharing cycle which are:

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- Knowledge acquisition; resulting from the internalisation from the organisation (online recruitment agencies and the employers) where this practice has a correlation to individual learning (new graduates).
- Knowledge exchange; a result of externalisation from the individuals (new graduates) for the reuse of the knowledge where this practice also has a correlation to individual learning (new graduates).
- Knowledge development; a result of externalisation with the individuals (new graduates) for developing knowledge where this practice also has a correlation to group learning (society).

In terms of this study, knowledge acquisition can refer to knowledge-sharing for job vacancies from employers through online recruitment agencies to new graduates. Then knowledge exchange can refer to the job application process through online recruitment agencies. Meanwhile, knowledge development can possibly be referred to the contribution of newly graduates to society. Figure 1 visualised how knowledge sharing can be applied to this study. In this study, individual knowledge applied to new graduates and organisational knowledge is applied to online recruitment agencies and the employers.
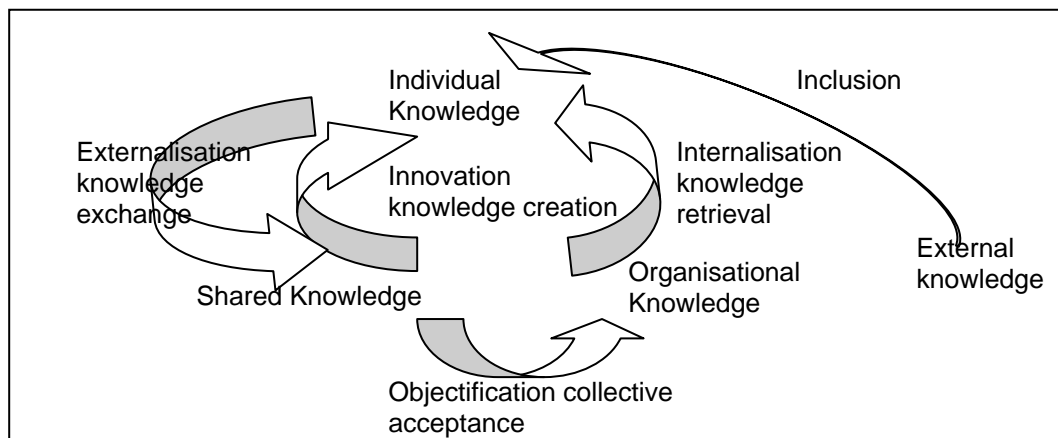

Figure 1: The Knowledge Sharing Cycle (adapted from Huysmann and de Wit (2002) and Ackerman et al. (2003))

Currently, there are varieties of tools that can be used by all organisations with the goal of hiring a new worker. Some of the organisations use traditional tools, for example advertising in the press. Other tools may be appropriate for specific situations only. Galanaki (2002) lists eight traditional recruitment methods which are: job fairs, selection consultants-management selection, temporary agencies, advertising in the mass media, advertisement by television and radio, existing employee contacts, school-colleges or universities and union or professional referrals. Job fairs also had been applied in ORAS A in big cities where advertisements were done in the mass media and in ORAS A itself.

However, online recruitment has made an impact on the human resource field in any countries recently (Bussler and Davis, 2002). Good implementation of the online recruitment agencies strategy could support the knowledge sharing and the recruitment processes to become successful, although this cannot totally replace the traditional practices (Borck, 2000 and Caggiano, 1999). Crails (2007) identified that the majority of employers prefer to use online recruitment. His other findings showed that online recruitment has good

potential for finding the right candidates.   His study was based on public and private sector organisations employing huge numbers of staff.   Personnel Today (2008) conclude that online recruitment grew extremely fast in the United Kingdom.   This reveals that in a developed country, online recruitment was mainly accepted by the job-seeking community. It also seems to be the main medium for making job applications. That is why developing countries such as Malaysia also had started to use online recruitment as one of the main medium for getting jobs.

The results of this study support the idea that knowledge sharing implementation can be done through online recruitment portals.   This means that the online recruitment agencies can share the knowledge of how to get a job with all job seekers.   It means that online recruitment also able to fill the gaps between the employee and employers (Ismail, 2008). Ismail (2008) concluded that online recruitment made job seekers feel easier to search the jobs and cost less than traditional style of job application, without eliminating the traditional style of job application. The online recruitment should be presented to complement the existing style (Ismail, 2008).

4.0 Conclusion

From the two case studies which are discussed above, we can see these two agencies have the same aim, to help people get a job. The aim to provide the online agencies' recruitment act as one medium of organisational knowledge was achieved. This study also had shown and identified contribution of knowledge sharing in job searching purposes.

However, ORAS A seems more advanced in terms of how to assist new graduates in getting the jobs.   ORAS A has a page for new graduates and cooperated with the government and private sector to organise careers fairs to help new graduates as well as the other candidates.   However, both of these sites use English language as the main language. This means the candidates need good skills in English.   A statement in *'Pelan Tindakan Pengajian Tinggi Negara'*, Ministry of Higher Education Official Site (2007) stated that the first approach was that all new graduates should acquire skills in communication and master English to enhance their employment opportunities.   The same statement from Ministry of Higher Education Official Site (2007) contained more; that the improvement in all institutions of higher learning will be implemented to ensure that graduates will have good chances for their career. Figure 2 below conceptualises the understanding of the relationships between unemployed graduates and human capital.
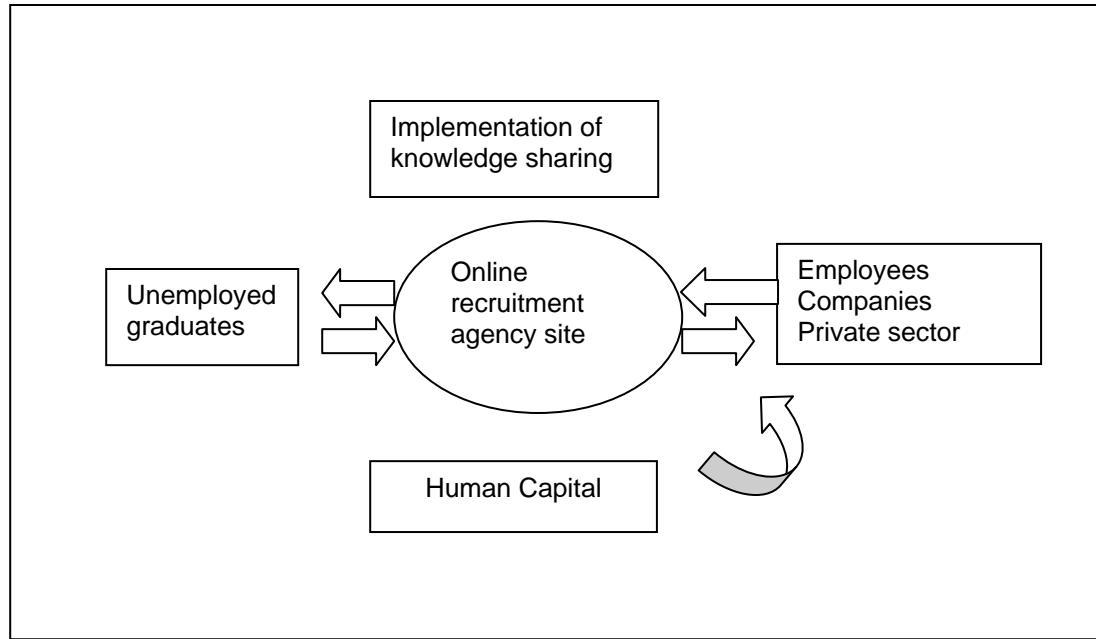
Figure 2: The conceptualisation of the relationship between unemployed graduates and human capital

However, the Minister of Higher Education was concerned about significant numbers of jobless graduates, where the Higher Education Ministry may limit the number of students enrolled in courses that do not fit market requirements at higher education institutions, as reported by Kaur, (2008). Furthermore, Kaur (2008) reported that the Higher Education Minister will also not support non-relevant courses where the unemployment rate is high.

In both of these agencies, the job category or job specification does not list categories like human science, social science, literature or history.   All in all, it can be concluded that both of these agencies prove that knowledge sharing is an important element in seeking a job.   In addition it shows that the knowledge and successful functionality of the organisation should achieve an optimum of information processing (Burke, 2004).

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