The awareness of knowledge management management essay

Business, Management

\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

\n \t

\n[/toc]\n \nAn important part of the research activity is to develop an effective research design. This will satisfy the most suitable methods of investigation, the nature of the research instruments, the sampling plan and the types of data, i. e. quantitative or qualitative (De Wet, 1997: 10). This section will provide a discussion on the research methodology and design strategy to be used in the study and will focus on the research design, research method, research format, research technique, the population, sampling procedure, sampling type, sampling technique and data analysis which are applicable to the study at hand. This research was conducted in order to determine the adoption and practices of knowledge management in small and midsized software consulting companies. To identify the benefits and hurdles to adopt knowledge management were also part of the objectives. In order to answer these research goals, we opted to obtain the views of software companies' employees in line with this topic. Specifically, a total of 152 respondents from different companies within Gujarat were

randomly selected to make up the sample. Selected participants answered a structured survey questionnaire. Data gathered from this research instrument were then computed for interpretation. Along with primary data, the researcher also made use of secondary resources in the form of published articles and literatures to support the survey results.

4. 2 Research Design

The descriptive method of research was used for this study. To define the descriptive type of research, Creswell (1994) stated that the descriptive method of research is to gather information about the present existing condition. The emphasis is on describing rather than on judging or interpreting. The aim of descriptive research is to verify formulated hypotheses that refer to the present situation in order to elucidate it. The descriptive approach is quick and practical in terms of the financial aspect. Moreover, this method allows a flexible approach, thus, when important new issues and questions arise during the duration of the study, further investigation may be conducted. Descriptive research on the other hand is a type of research that is mainly concerned with describing the nature or condition and the degree in detail of the present situation. This method is used to describe the nature of a situation, as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of particular a phenomenon. The aim of descriptive research is to obtain an accurate profile of the people, events or situations. With this research type, it is essential that we already have a clear view or picture of the phenomena being investigated before the data collection procedure is carried out. We used this kind of research to obtain first hand data from the respondents so as to formulate rational and sound

conclusions and recommendations for the study. The descriptive approach is quick and practical in terms of the financial aspect. In this study, the descriptive research method was employed so as to identify the adoption and practices of knowledge management in small and mid sized software consulting companies during the time of research. We opted to use this research method considering the objective to obtain first hand data from the respondents. The descriptive method is advantageous for the researcher due to its flexibility; this method can use either qualitative or quantitative data or both, giving the researcher greater options in selecting the instrument for data-gathering. The aim of the research is to determine the adoption level and various practices of knowledge management performed by SMEs software companies as well as the benefits and difficulties to implement knowledge management; the descriptive method is then appropriate for this research since this method is used for gathering prevailing conditions. The research is using SMEs software companies' employees as respondents from 152 companies in Gujarat in order to gather relevant data; the descriptive method is then appropriate as this can allow the identification of the similarities and differences of the respondents' answers. For this research, two types of data were gathered. These included the primary and secondary data types. The primary data were derived from the answers the participants gave during the survey process. The secondary data on the other hand, were obtained from published documents and literatures that were relevant to subject questionnaire. With the use of the survey questionnaire and published literatures, this study took on the combined quantitative and qualitative approach of research. By means of employing this combined

approach, we were able to obtain the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and overcome their limitations. Quantitative data collection methods are centered on the quantification of relationships between variables. Quantitative data-gathering instruments establish relationship between measured variables. When these methods are used, the researcher is usually detached from the study and the final output is context free. Measurement, numerical data and statistics are the main substance of quantitative instruments. With these instruments, an explicit description of data collection and analysis of procedures are necessary. An approach that is primarily deductive reasoning, it prefers the least complicated explanation and gives a statement of statistical probability. The quantitative approach is more on the detailed description of a phenomenon. It basically gives a generalization of the gathered data with tentative synthesized interpretations. Quantitative approach is useful as it helps the researcher to prevent bias in gathering and presenting research data. Quantitative data collection procedures create epistemological postulations that reality is objective and unitary, which can only be realized by means of transcending individual perspective. This phenomenon in turn should be discussed or explained by means of data analysis gathered through objective forms of measurement. The quantitative data gathering methods are useful especially when a study needs to measure the cause and effect relationships evident between pre-selected and discrete variables. The purpose of the quantitative approach is to avoid subjectivity by means of collecting and exploring information which describes the experience being studied. Quantitative methods establish very specific research problem and terms.

The controlled observations, mass surveys, laboratory experiments and other means of research manipulation in qualitative method makes gathered data more reliable. In other words, subjectivity of judgment, which is not needed in a thesis discussion, can be avoided through quantitative methods. Thus, conclusions, discussion and experimentation involved in the process are more objective. Variables, both dependent and independent, that are needed in the study are clearly and precisely specified in a quantitative study. In addition, quantitative method enables longitudinal measures of subsequent performance of the respondents. Fryer (1991) noted that qualitative researchers aim to decode, describe, analyze and interpret accurately the meaning of a certain phenomena happening in their customary social contexts. The focus of the researchers utilizing the framework of the interpretative paradigm is on the investigation of authenticity, complexity, contextualization, mutual subjectivity of the researcher and the respondent as well as the reduction of illusion. Contrary to the quantitative method, qualitative approach generates verbal information rather than numerical values (Polgar & Thomas, 1995). Instead of using statistical analysis, the qualitative approach utilizes content or holistic analysis; to explain and comprehend the research findings, inductive and not deductive reasoning is used. The main point of the quantitative research method is that measurement is valid, reliable and can be generalized with its clear anticipation of cause and effect (Cassell & Symon, 1994). Being particularistic and deductive in nature, quantitative method is dependent on the formulation of a research hypothesis and confirming them empirically using a specific data set (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992).

The scientific hypothesis of a quantitative method holds no value. This means that the researcher's personal thoughts, subjective preferences and biases are not applicable to this type of research method. We opted to integrate the qualitative approach in this study due to its significant advantages. The use of qualitative data gathering method is advantageous as they are more open to changes and refinement of research ideas as the study progresses; this implies that qualitative data gathering tools are highly flexible. Moreover, no manipulation of the research setting is necessary with this method; rather than employ various research controls such as in experimental approaches, the qualitative data gathering methods are only centered on understanding the occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states. Aside from these advantages, researchers use qualitative data-gathering tools as some previous researchers believe that qualitative data are particularly attractive as they provide rich and well-grounded descriptions and explanations as well as unforeseen findings for new theory construction. One of the notable strengths of the qualitative instruments is that they evoke a more realistic feeling of the research setting which cannot be obtained from statistical analysis and numerical data utilized through quantitative means. These data collection methods allow flexibility in conducting data gathering, research analysis and interpretation of gathered information. In addition, qualitative method allows the presentation of the phenomenon being investigated in a more holistic view.

4. 3 Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the awareness of Knowledge Management and different practices of Knowledge Management in SMEs software consulting companies. The specific objectives are as under: Explore through analysis and discussion of the adoption level of Knowledge Management in selected SMEs software consulting firms. Explore through analysis and discussion companies' perceived needs for adopting Knowledge Management. Explore through analysis and discussion the benefits for the selected companies by implementing KM Practices. Explore and analyses the relationship between the size of the companies and its effect to adopt the Knowledge Management. Explore and analyses the results for not adopting the KM in Organization. Explore and analyses the different practices of Knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer. To know about the thinking and perceived values of employees about knowledge management. Explore and analyses motivational factors of the firms for adopting the knowledge management practices. To know about the companies' strategies towards the use of knowledge management in the firm. To identify the knowledge domains in the firm responsible for knowledge management practices in use. To identify various technologies used to implement knowledge management practices in the firm. To identify various practices for knowledge conversion within the firm. To identify the role of IT to support knowledge management process in the firm. To identify the problems faced by the firm in using IT for the knowledge management. To identify the role of knowledge management in increasing the profitability of the firm. To identify the resistible entities in implementing the knowledge management in the firm. To understand the

difficulties in implementing knowledge management in firm. To identify the effectiveness of the knowledge management in the companies those have already implemented it. To identify the companies' policy towards the provisions of financial resources in the budget. To understand the reasons for not implementing knowledge management practices. The study explores different SMEs software consulting companies in the region of Gujarat. These companies have evaluated their business activities and determined KM practices needs in order to remain competitive and giving determination to adopt the KM to become global player. They, thus provide a unique opportunity for the study.

4. 4 Participants

In order to determine whether survey questionnaire does play an important role in this study, a total of 152 respondents were asked to participate. To achieve pertinent information, certain inclusion criteria were imposed. The participants qualified for sample selection must be employees of their respective companies. This qualification ensured that the participants understand the nature of knowledge management and its use for companies, making the survey items easy for them to accomplish. The respondents were selected from 152 companies in Gujarat, thus, a total of 1 employee was selected for every company; as the study also aimed to determine whether questionnaire play an important role in identifying KM practices. Simple random sampling was done for the sample selection. This sampling method is conducted where each member of a population has an equal opportunity to become part of the sample. As all members of the population have an

equal chance of becoming a research participant, this is said to be the most efficient sampling procedure. In order to conduct this sampling strategy, the researcher defined the population first, listed down all the members of the population and then selected members to make the sample. For this procedure, the lottery sampling or the fish bowl technique was employed. This method involves the selection of the sample at random from the sampling frame through the use of random number tables (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2003). Numbers were assigned for each employee in the master list. These numbers were written on pieces of paper and drawn from a box; the process was repeated until the sample size was reached.

4. 5 Instruments

The survey questionnaire was used as the main data-gathering instrument for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections: a profile and the survey proper. The profile contains socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender, contact and their assigned job position. The survey proper explored the perceptions of employee towards KM, particularly on its awareness and usability of KM within the firm. The questionnaire proper section also contains questions that identify the advantages of KM within the firm. In this survey type, enough choices are provided for every question or statement. The choices represent the degree of agreement each respondent has on the given question.

In addition, this research instrument allowed the research to carry out the quantitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation. In order to test the validity of the questionnaire used for the

study, the researcher tested the questionnaire to five respondents. These respondents as well as their answers were not part of the actual study process and were only used for testing purposes. After the questions have been answered, the researcher asked the respondents for any suggestions or any necessary corrections to ensure further improvement and validity of the instrument. The researcher revised the survey questionnaire based on the suggestion of the respondents. The researcher then excluded irrelevant questions and changed vague or difficult terminologies into simpler ones in order to ensure comprehension.

4. 6 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is an assumption about the relationship between variables or the level of influence of independent variables on the dependent variable or the value of population parameter. In other words of George A. Lunberg, hypothesis is a tentative generalization, the validity of which remains to be tested. In its most elementary stage the hypothesis may be a hunch or a guess, which becomes the basis for action or investigation. It is a proposition which can be put to test to determine its validity (Goode and Hatt). Propositions are combinations of concepts designated by statements that may be judged true or false if they refer to observable phenomena. Concepts are abstractions from reality and are designated by words or phrases. Hypotheses are of different types like abstract, measurable, descriptive, relational, null, alternative etc. The following are the hypotheses considered under this study. 1HoThere is significance effect of the size of the firm on KM adoption. HaThere is no significance effect of the size of the firm on KM adoption. 2HoKM practices are not well adopted in software SMEs. HaKM

practices are well adopted in software SMEs. 3HoRespondents are uniformly believed that the size of firm is affected to adopt KM practices. HaRespondents are not uniformly believed that the size of firm is affected to adopt KM practices. 4HoThinking about KM practices is independent from experience of employee in organization. HaThinking about KM practices is not independent from experience of employee in organization. 5HoEfficiency level of KM practices is independent from its size of organization. HaEfficiency level of KM practices is not independent from its size of organization. 6HoThere is no change in profitability of the firm after implementing KM practices. HaThere is a change in profitability of the firm after implementing KM practices. 7HoThere is no significance difference in internal and external triggering sources responsible for KM practices. HaThere is significance difference in internal and external triggering sources responsible for KM practices. 8HoThere is no significance variability in the reasons of KM practices. HaThere is significance variability in the reasons of KM practices. 9HoThere is no significance difference in the reasons of not implementing KM practices. HaThere is significance difference in the reasons of not implementing KM practices.

4. 7 Ethical Considerations

As this study required the participation of employees of companies, certain ethical issues were addressed. The consideration of these ethical issues was necessary for the purpose of ensuring the privacy as well as the safety of the participants. Among the significant ethical issues that were considered in the research process include consent and confidentiality. In order to secure the

consent of the selected participants, the researcher relayed all important details of the study, including its aim and purpose. By explaining these important details, the respondents were able to understand the importance of their role in the completion of the research. The respondents were also advised that they could withdraw from the study even during the process. With this, the participants were not forced to participate in the research. The confidentiality of the participants was also ensured by not disclosing their names or personal information in the research. Only relevant details that helped in answering the research questions were included.