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Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Sustainability in the Hospitality Sector: A Case Study of Nagpur District

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Abstract

Hospitality industry is highly dynamic and competitive business whereby constant learning, service innovation and use of knowledge on provision of efficient services is in high demand to guarantee that the success of the organisation is long term. The research question that this paper dwells on is how KM practices could influence the sustainability of the organisation in the hotel and restaurant industry of the Nagpur District. The paper takes into account the contribution of the two primary dimensions of KM, viz., knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, knowledge storage, knowledge application to the achievement of sustainable growth (in its economy, environmental responsibility and social well-being). The research has adopted descriptive and analytical research design. The collection of primary data (employees and managerial staff of selected hotels and restaurants in Nagpur) was carried out using a set of questionnaires (structured) which used a Likert scale, whereas secondary data was collected using the journal, reports as well as industry publications. The statistical tests applied to test the relationship between knowledge management practices and sustainability outcomes were mean analysis, correlation and regressions. The findings indicate that an effective knowledge management has a significant positive relationship with sustainability of the organization. As companies are proactive in the sharing of knowledge, continuous education and online knowledge repositories, their overall scores about efficient functioning, client loyalty, reduced resource wastage, and ability to respond to market changes are improved. It is also discovered that organizational culture and employee involvement must be crucial to boosting KM practices and achievement of sustainability goals. The paper concludes that in hospitality industry, knowledge management as a strategic tool can be adopted to enhance sustainable development. It suggests that hospitality organizations in Nagpur District should invest in formal Knowledge Management, foster learning communities, and adopt the notion of sustainability in their knowledge programs to ensure long-term growth and competitiveness.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Organizational Sustainability, Hospitality Industry, Sustainable Growth, Employee Performance, Nagpur District.

Introduction

Hotels and restaurants are examples of the hospitality industry, which covers the niche of one of the largest service industries, and leads to the economic growth, job creation, and tourist promotion. During the recent years, the industry has been characterized by stiff competition, high rate of technology development and fluctuating customer expectations that have challenged most organizations to embrace innovative management practices in order to maintain their growth. In this case, knowledge has now turned into an important organizational resource and its prudent management has turned out as the most crucial component towards achieving long term sustainability. Knowledge Management (KM) could be described as the process of acquiring, organizing, sharing and utilizing knowledge in order to enhance organizational performance and decision-making. The role of knowledge management is even more important in service oriented industries such as hospitality, as the services and interactions between employees directly affect the level of customer satisfaction.

Sustainability has now stopped being an environmental problem in the hospitality sector but it covers the economic viability, social responsibility and efficiency in hospitality industry operations. Firms are expanding to make environmentally-friendly practices such as

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resourcing, waste minimization, welfare of employees and social services to communities. In order to achieve these objectives, one is not only required to invest money, but also put the knowledge of the organization into practice. The employees are the key knowledge possessors of a hospitality organization and their expertise, experiences as well as knowledge are used to develop improved services as well as promote service delivery. Competent employee knowledge management may therefore translate to best decision making, service delivery and sustainability of organizations.

Knowledge management practices have become part of company strategies and with them hospitality companies can generate, store and distribute useful information across the company across all levels. Using employees as an example, knowledge sharing helps them to standardise processes in service provision and reduce errors and also, enhance customer experiences. Similarly, through the training and development programs, the new skills and best practices in the industry are trained in employees through acquisition. Digitization of knowledge storage ensures that organizational knowledge important to the organization is stored and easily accessible and application of knowledge will aid in solving of problems and high efficiency in operations. Therefore, KM practices that will be successfully adopted can greatly help to realize sustainable growth within the hospitality industry.

Given the growth rate of Nagpur District as an urban centre and being strategically placed at the centre of the Indian territory, there have been growths in regards to hospitality industry in Nagpur District. Such expansion of the number of hotels, restaurants and other tourism associated activities has turned the business environment into a very competitive industry and consequently organizations have been struggling to match in terms of their services and be more innovative in services in order to survive. However, the challenges that have bedeviled most hospitality businesses and particularly small and medium sized enterprises are lack of knowledge systems that are organized, high rate of employee turnover and lack of awareness on poor sustainability practices. These are the problems that negatively affect their capability to use the existing knowledge as the driver of long-term growth and competitiveness.

In this case, the current research is aimed at examining the role of knowledge management on the sustainability of organizations in the hospitality industry of Nagpur District. The study aims at learning how different elements of knowledge management affect sustainable business processes and performance of the organization in general. It also targets the identification of the barriers along the path to the successful KM systems utilisation by the hospitality organisations and the suggestion of the enhancement schemes. By researching on the relationship between knowledge management and sustainability, the research will provide valuable information that can be utilized by managers, policymakers, and interested parties in the hospitality industry.

Overall, the paper highlights that knowledge management is not a support operation anymore but a strategic business instrument that has the potential to bring a sustainable growth and competitive edge to the hospitality business. As the industry continues to change, the organisations that can most effectively extract and leverage their knowledge resources to maximum effect will be in a better position to conform to the new market environment, customer demand and consequently survive in the long run. As such there should be need to train and enhance knowledge management implementation by the employees to foster sustainability of a company, particularly in emerging economies like Nagpur District.

Literature Review

Knowledge management (KM) has emerged as a major factor in organizational performance, innovation and sustainability particularly in dynamic and knowledge intensive sectors. A number of researchers have also studied the linkage of KM practices to business performance in various sectors highlighting its importance in realizing long-term growth. In the context of

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the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Sadiku-Dushi, Dana, and Ramadani (2019) have highlighted the relevance that the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions play concerning the firm performance in the framework of the utilization of knowledge as a central force to achieve greater market responsiveness and innovation. The results of their study suggest that the combination of knowledge and marketing strategies can promote competitiveness which can be widely used in the context of hospitality industry which depends on the differentiation of services and customer experience as the main areas of success.

Awan et al. (2020) researched the activities of buyer-driven knowledge transfer and came to the conclusion that the beneficial transfer of knowledge between the organization and knowledge stakeholders can enhance the outcome in terms of sustainability. They discovered that sharing of knowledge not only positively influences the performance of the organization but also positively influences environmental and social performance. This view will be particularly helpful in perceiving how hospitality organizations can correlate with suppliers and customers to enhance sustainable activities via shared understanding systems.

Dalmarco et al. (2017) and Centobelli, Cerchione, and Esposito (2017) were worried about the application of knowledge management practice at the start-up level and emphasized the importance of the formal knowledge processes i.e., the knowledge creation, knowledge storage and sharing. These results imply that companies that embrace KM passionately have better fortunes towards novelty and change in response to the changing market contexts. Similarly, the absence of the organizational culture, the inadequacy of technological infrastructure, and the opposition to change were also the obstacles to KM implementation that Oliva and Kotabe (2019) identified but are also widespread in the hospitality industry, especially the small and medium operations.

In a systematic review of KM in SMEs and startups, Ahmed, Salloum, and Shaalan (2021) found that a successful KM system leads to improved decision-making, innovation, and organizational performance. They point out the importance of digital tools and technologies in the process of sharing knowledge and knowledge storage that potentially can be of great benefit to hospitality organizations that are likely to enhance the quality of services and enhance operational efficiency. Equally, the factors that determine the application of artificial intelligence were also discussed in the report by Alhashmi et al. (2021), technological preparedness and integration of knowledge was discussed as strategies to make organizations more successful as their factors. This finding suggests that the adoption of new technologies in hospitality can underpin the practice of KM and sustainability even further.

Development and knowledge ecosystems are also regarded as the role, which has been evaluated quite often. In order to increase innovation and knowledge transfer, as Bischoff, Volkmann, and Audretsch (2018) mentioned, the collaboration between stakeholders can be particularly relevant in the environment of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Tayauova and Biktas (2018) stated that barriers to emergent entrepreneurial institutions, including the lack of knowledge-sharing and support systems were established. These results show that knowledge collaborative settings are fundamental in the development of organizational capacities, as well as sustainability.

Nowi keeping and Haddoud (2019) remarked the contribution of role models in the formation of the entrepreneurial intentions and knowledge transfer through the sense of social learning can be significant in the progress of individual and organization. The source of knowledge can be experienced employees and managers working in hospitality industry and allow the staff to learn and acquire new skills.

Social media, especially digital media has also transformed the knowledge management practices further. In understanding social network sites, Boyd and Ellison (2007) offered a fundamental conception to the idea, and the importance of this site in communication and

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sharing of information. In Martin, Parry, and Flowers (2015) study, the voice of employees is influenced by social media, and, specifically, the authors found out that online interaction and sharing of knowledge could be greater at workplace. Similarly, Hu et al. (2017) and Schmidt et al. (2016) also carried out a study on how the use of social media affects creativity, cultural intelligence, and attitude to work and found that the promotion of innovation and cooperation is possible.

Lastly, the subject of the quality of knowledge and service quality was highlighted by Hosseini (2022) as an aspect that needs to be improved to maximize the level of satisfaction, especially at educational institutions. This observation can be extended into the hospitality industry whereby an effective knowledge management is directly correlated with service delivery on service provision and customer satisfaction.

Holistically, the reviewed literature has connoted that knowledge management is a vital element that contributes immensely to enhancing performance, creativity, and sustainability of organizations. The majority of the efforts fell upon SMEs, start ups and technology oriented industries however the need of taking into consideration KM practices in the hospitality industry, as well as in the regional context is growing. The absence of knowledge on this gap is the focus of the present study since it aims to investigate the impact of knowledge management on sustainability of organizations within hotel and restaurant sector in Nagpur District and therefore create both its contribution to literature and its application in practice.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the knowledge management practices among employees in the hotel and restaurant industry of Nagpur District.
2. To examine the impact of knowledge management on organizational sustainability in the hospitality sector.
3. To identify the relationship between knowledge management practices and sustainable growth of hotels and restaurants in Nagpur District.

Hypothesis

- **H₀ (Null Hypothesis):** Knowledge management has no significant impact on organizational sustainability in the hospitality sector.
- **H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):** Knowledge management has a significant positive impact on organizational sustainability in the hospitality sector.

Research Methodology

The current research proposes a descriptive and analytical research design to investigate the effect of knowledge management on the sustainability of an organization within hospitality industry with a special consideration to Nagpur District. The study has been based on primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected using the developed structured questionnaire in the form of the Likert scale, which focused on employees and managerial employees of the chosen hotels and restaurants in Nagpur. The sampling approach utilized in the study is the convenience sampling which considers the respondents that are readily accessible and reachable to everyone and adequate sample size to provide reliability of the findings. The secondary information was gathered through research journals, books, industry reports and other relevant online sources that were used to support theoretical and conceptual knowledge. The questionnaire was pre-tested to assure in validity and reliability of the instrument. Some statistical procedures like percent analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis and regression analysis have been employed to analyse the data using a program like SPSS. The tools were utilized to find out that there were links between knowledge management practices and the sustainability of the organizations. The study uses best aspects of knowledge management e.g. acquisition, sharing, storage and use of knowledge and evaluates their effect on sustainable organizational performance within hospitality industry.

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Descriptive Statistics Table

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Knowledge Acquisition	120	3.92	0.68	2.10	5.00
Knowledge Sharing	120	4.05	0.72	2.00	5.00
Knowledge Storage	120	3.78	0.64	2.20	4.90
Knowledge Application	120	4.12	0.70	2.30	5.00
Organizational Sustainability	120	4.08	0.66	2.40	5.00

The overall level of agreement between the respondents based on the descriptive statistics of the table indicates high level of agreement that the knowledge management practices have in ensuring the sustenance of the organization in the hospitality industry. The mean of all dimensions of KM that comprise: knowledge acquisition (3.92), knowledge sharing (4.05), knowledge storage (3.78) and knowledge application (4.12) has a higher value than the mid point value (3) meaning that employees believe there is such practice in their organization. Among them, the average of the application of knowledge gains the greatest prominence (4.12) that reflects that the practical application of knowledge in daily operations are emphasized to a high level in hotels and restaurants. The mean of knowledge sharing is also quite high (4.05), which shows that the company has a collaborative working environment in which the information flow is promoted. Even though the knowledge storage has a relatively lower mean (3.78), it still indicates an acceptable amount of implementation, which implies that there is a potential of improvement in the knowledge system maintenance. The sustainability of the organization in question, on average, also can be described as high (4.08), which implies that the sustainability practices have already been established and implemented in the sector. The values of the standard deviation are all medium indicating that there was uniformity of the responses and that the views of the respondents did not vary much. The general findings of the descriptive research are that there is a positive disposition towards knowledge management practice and their impact on sustainability thus confirming at least the initial assertion that knowledge management has a massive positive implication on the sustainability of the organization in the hospitality sector.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.812	0.659	0.647	0.412

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	38.524	4	9.631	56.782	0.000
Residual	19.874	115	0.173		
Total	58.398	119			

Coefficients Table

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig.
(Constant)	0.842	0.312	—	2.698	0.008
Knowledge Acquisition	0.215	0.074	0.231	2.905	0.004
Knowledge Sharing	0.268	0.081	0.279	3.309	0.001



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Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	Sig.
Knowledge Storage	0.176	0.069	0.198	2.551	0.012
Knowledge Application	0.301	0.078	0.315	3.859	0.000

The findings of the multiple regression analysis indicate that the knowledge management practices contributes significantly to sustainability in hotel with a significant value. There is a high order of correlation of the model and R value is 0.812 implying that the independent variables (knowledge acquisition, sharing, storage and application) are highly correlated with the dependent variable (organizational sustainability). The fact that the R² value is 0.659 also indicates that the change in organizational sustainability that was explicated by dimensions of knowledge management applied is approximately 65.9 which is a substantial level of explanation power of the model. Besides, the ANOVA results demonstrate that the overall regression model is statistically significant with the F-value being 56.782 and the p-value being less than 0.05, which is an indication of an adequate, good fit of the model to the data.

Considering the value of the individual coefficients, all the variables of knowledge management have a significant and positive beta, that is, all of them impact the sustainability of the organization positively. Among those, knowledge application (B = 0.315, p < 0.001) makes the biggest contribution and it is only natural to emphasize the significance of the effective application of the knowledge, during the working process. The next one is knowledge sharing (B = 0.279, p = 0.001), the significance of communication and collaboration among the employees in this case are emphasized. Typically, the acquisition of knowledge (B = 0.231, p = 0.004) and the storage of knowledge (B = 0.198, p = 0.012) also exert largely positive impacts, albeit, moderate ones indicating that the acquisition and maintenance of knowledge resources are necessary but have to be coupled with the appropriate application and sharing mechanisms.

However, it is, on the whole, obvious that the results show that knowledge management practices positively influence organizational sustainability, with a great impact, in the hospitality industry. Rejection of the null hypothesis (H₀) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H₁) is due to the satisfactory decision of all the variables at the 5 level. It implies that growth in the number of systems of knowledge management can lead to higher sustainability rates like efficiency in operations, service quality, and general organizational development of hotels and restaurants.

Overall Conclusion

In the conclusion, the present study paper concludes that knowledge management (KM) is a strategic crucial element in the organizational sustainability of an organization within the hospitality industry more precisely in Nagpur District hotels and restaurants. The findings of the study give an clear indication that the successful strategy of the knowledge management practices involving the knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, knowledge storage and application of knowledge can have a great role to play in the sustainable performances of any organization.

Descriptive analysis showed that employees noticed in the hospitality industry have a positive attitude towards adopting KM practices, which means that organizations are becoming more aware of the importance of managing knowledge as an intangible resource. The fact that mean scores in all KM dimensions and organizational sustainability are relatively high indicates the presence of the practices but they are also actively involved in operational and strategic results. Moreover, the inferential statistical results, particularly correlation and multidimensional regression analysis confirmed the existence of a significant and a positive correlation between the phenomenon of knowledge management and organizational sustainability. The regression

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modeling showed that the KM practices do possess a very large explanatory power that implies that a large portion of the sustainability outcome can be attributed to the KM practices. Knowledge application and knowledge sharing were among the aspects that proved to have the most impact on the situation and this shows that the ability to use and share knowledge in the organization is a vital aspect.

The involvement of the employees, organizational culture and technological support systems are another point that the study makes and thus play a key role in reinforcing KM practices. Organizations that foster active learning, collaboration and open communication are in a better position to harness the knowledge towards innovation, better service delivery as well as effective use of resource. It is these that will result in achievement of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

However, the following barriers to the effective implementation of knowledge management practices in the hospitality organizations in the study also exist: lack of well organized KM systems, lack of technology and higher rate of employee turnover in the hospitality organization. These challenges have to be tackled to facilitate the maximum benefits of KM and guarantee sustainability of it in the long run.

Lastly, knowledge management is not just an operational resource, but a significant contributor of sustainable development and competition in hospitality industry. The two hypotheses being similar enables the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis based on which KM has a considerable positive contribution to organizational sustainability. In this way, it is recommended to the hospitality organizations in the Nagpur District to make investments in the strong knowledge management system and embrace the knowledge sharing culture, besides integrating the sustainability issues into the organizational strategies. In this way, they are able to improve on their resilience, adaptability as well as overall performance in a business environment that is more competitive and dynamic.

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