KNOWLEDGE SHARING FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: SINGLE MOTHERS

SHARIFAH RABEAH SYED TAHA

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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SHARIFAH RABEAH SYED TAHA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Science (IT – Management)

Faculty of Computer Science and Information Systems
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

MARCH 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

There are many people who have directly and indirectly helped me in successfully to conduct this study. I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Azizah Abdul Rahman. Also to Assoc. Prof. Wardah Zainal Abidin, whose encouragement, guidance and support from the initial to the final level enabled me to develop an understanding of the project.

Special thank also goes to my parents, Mr. Syed Taha bin Abu Bakar and Mrs. Sharifah Alwiah Syed Mohammad for their love and support endlessly in all ways. I would like to thank my fiancé, Mohd Azwar Shahriman bin Shahrin and my sisters. Without their encouragement, I could not afford in this level.

Last but not least, I also like to give my gratitude to the officer at the Department and Women Development for your, cooperation to help me complete my research and also to my friend and my classmate in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Alhamdulillah and Thank you very much…

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify knowledge needs by single mothers in Malaysia through the knowledge sharing concept. In addition, it also seeks to identify specific knowledge needs based on three main components such as content, services and knowledge sharing tools for single mothers community. The study also focused on how knowledge sharing is carried out among single mother, government, NGOs, children/family members, counselor and researcher. Knowledge management is a process of organizing, identifying, and sharing knowledge either tacit or explicit experience, and expertise that typically resides within individuals in an organization. Sharing of knowledge plays an important role in the development of the community. With that, it helps to improve the overall level of competency in developing a better social environment in parallel with the new generation of knowledge sharing culture for single parent's by using the new technology. Knowledge sharing framework proposed by Aida Suzana (2009) was used to test its applicability with single mothers community in Malaysia. As a proof of knowledge sharing concept, a prototype portal was build for single mother to share their knowledge and communicate each other. Portal is one of knowledge sharing tools used to present information from diverse sources in a unified way and in the same. The study will also help to form the members towards making them become more aware on the importance of knowledge sharing culture.

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengenalpasti keperluan pengetahuan dikalangan ibu tunggal di Malaysia melalui konsep perkongsian pengetahuan/maklumat. Selain itu, kajian ini juga dijalankan adalah untuk mengenalpasti keperluan pengetahuan ibu tunggal secara spesifik berdasarkan tiga komponen utama yang telah seperti kandungan, perkhidmatan dan peralatan untuk berkongsi pengetahuan dikalangan komuniti ibu tunggal. Penyelidikan ini juga tertumpu kepada bagaimana perkongsian pengetahuan itu dilakukan di antara ibu tunggal, kerajaan, NGO, anak-anak/ahli keluarga si ibu tunggal, kaunselor dan juga penyelidik. Pengurusan maklumat adalah merupakan satu proses untuk mengurus, mengenal pasti, dan berkongsi pengetahuan sama ada pengalaman dan kepakaran yang tersurat mahupun yang tersirat yang kebiasaannya wujud dalam diri setiap individu mahupun sebuah organisasi. Perkongsian maklumat adalah memainkan peranan yang sangat penting dalam pembangunan sesebuah komuniti. Ini adalah kerana melaluinya dapat membantu meningkatkan tahap kompetensi dalam perkembangan persekitaran sosial yang lebih baik dan selari dengan pembentukan generasi baru untuk membudayakan perkongsian maklumat dengan menggunakan teknologi. Kajian ini juga menggunakan rangka kerja perkongsian pengetahuan yang dicadangkan oleh Aida Suzana (2009), untuk menguji kesesuaiannya dengan komuniti ibu tunggal di Malaysia. Sebagai bukti kepada konsep perkongsian pengetahuan tersebut, sebuah prototaip portal telah dibangunkan untuk ibu tunggal supaya dapat berkongsi pengetahuan dan berkomunikasi satu sama lain. Portal adalah merupakan salah satu alat perkongsin pengetahuan yang digunakan untuk menyediakan maklumat daripada pelbagai sumber dalam cara yang seragam. Kajian ini juga dapat membantu memberikan kesedaran kepada masyarakat akan kepentingan budaya perkongsian maklumat.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CoP	-	Community of Practice
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
MSC	-	Multimedia Super Corridor
NITA	-	National IT Agenda
K-Community	-	Knowledge Community
IT	-	Information Technology
SWD	-	Social Welfare Department
DFHD	-	The Division of Family Health Development
SED	-	Special Education Department
KM	-	Knowledge Management
KS	-	Knowledge Sharing
JPW	-	Department of Women Development
KPWKM	-	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization

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CHAPTER 1

PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has grown substantially in Malaysia contributing a gross revenue of RM19 billion to the economy. Malaysia has embarked upon various measures to ensure the ICTs play an important role in the society. For ICT development the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) which is for global competitiveness has been developed. According to the media report regarding the “The Future of ICT in Malaysia 2004”, MSC project will be continue to lead the development of ICT industries in Malaysia (Utusan Malaysia, 2004).

To enable Malaysia's growth into a knowledge society, various plans such as National IT Agenda in 1996 (NITA '96) and Vision 2020 have been initiated. NITA were launched by the Dato’ Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohammad which set the theme of *"Turning Ripples Into Tidal Waves"* as a national framework for all sectors in the economy to work together in order to realizing the Vision 2020 aspiration of creating an information rich and civil society.

ICT has been recommended as being strategic for development. The Vision 2020 plan envisions Malaysia as a developed country by 2020 with the establishment of a Knowledge Community (K-Community). Special emphasis has been given to development of infrastructure and potential human capital by involving state, local governments as well as the private and also public community. ICT plans for universal access, content development, affordability and lifelong learning have been started. About RM1098 million was allocated for ICT related activities for bridging the Digital Divide with RM10 million for local content development in the 8th Malaysia Plan.

The use and application of ICT is an engine for organizational growth. Currently organizations are exploring new technologies and implementing them within their organization in order to raise their operational advantage and competitiveness. ICT will continuously be a good way to developed country to enhance the development process for all sectors of society to find ways to optimize the opportunities which information and communication technology presents. Information Technology (IT) has provided various ICT tools to assist in knowledge encapsulation such as Knowledge Management.

Basically, knowledge management helps an organization to gain insight and understanding from its own experience. Specific knowledge management activities help focus the organization on acquiring, storing and utilizing knowledge for problem solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning and also decision making. Knowledge and information produced should be shared and delivered fast and information technology must offer the solutions that able to fulfill the requirements of the organization.

Actually, knowledge and information is two distinct concepts. Information refers to general data expressed by numbers, words, images, sounds and so on. The issue is either the data can be elaborated or not. The observed outcome of a scientific experiment, for example, is data that has not being elaborated. A report explaining

the findings of such experiment, on the other hand is elaborated data. Meanwhile knowledge is refers to the practical use of information. While information can be transported, stored or shared without many difficulties the same cannot be said about knowledge. Knowledge necessarily involves a personal experience. Referring back to the scientific experiment, a third person reading the results will have information about it, while the person who conducted the experiment personally will have knowledge about it.

In this research, it will look into details on the concept of knowledge sharing as one of the components of knowledge management by focusing on the several aspects such as the knowledge sharing framework, the processes involved and the use of knowledge sharing technology to help the single mothers as the community of practices (CoPs).

A community of practice is a group of people who regularly interact with one another to share and learn based on their common interests (Lesser, E. L. & Fontaine, M.A., 2004). Some knowledge sharing professionals believe that these communities are necessary for both the creation and transfer of knowledge, where people learn by doing and interacting with others (Estabrooks et al, 2006). In this project, selected community of practice is single mothers.

The project conduct will test the knowledge sharing framework to identify the suitable framework or model for the community of practice which is single mothers in Malaysia. According to the Siti Fatimah Abdul Rahman (2006), in her article title "Single Mothers: Everybody Responsibilities", definition of single mother is mother that responsible to raise their children without any support from their father. The definitions to labeling any individual as single mothers depend on each country definition.

Single mothers face double difficulties and responsibilities. They handle twice the strain with half the resources found in two parent families. According to V. S.

Maass and M.A. Neely (2000), in the traditional families, both parents help manage children's health, education, behavior development and emotional problems. Worries over job-related difficulties, finance, disappointments in friendship and other setback can be shared. In single mothers families, all responsibilities fall upon who is already stressed by emotional adjustment to the loss or absence of other spouse. Based on the analysis of the research done by Nancy W. Gladow and Margaret P. Ray (1984) there are several problem faced by the single mother family such as handling family finances, medical dental care, transportation, meeting the children's emotional needs, handling or controlling the children and household task such as repairs and moving.

1.2 Background of Problem

Single mothers are a parent who cares for one or more children without the assistance of another parent in the home. As we know, single mothers have to face with many challenges in their daily life. Among the problems that often interfere with their problems are economic, social and psychological either it will affect the mother, father or their own children. They need physically and mentally support from government, non-government organization and also individual effort to help them solve their problems. Collaboration between these responsible parties in sharing their knowledge might be quite effective to reduce the burden faced by them.

By using the knowledge sharing which is one of the knowledge management components in the single mothers community can helps them to survive in their life. Knowledge sharing concept allows knowledge of one party to be shared with another party and in the same time indirectly led to the creation of new knowledge to be shared together.

Single mothers, counselor, organization and children have their own experience regarding single mothers families. It is mean that, if one of the single mothers face

problem and seek for solution or even advice, the other parties can help even though cannot totally solve the problem but they will refer the problem to one whom can solve the problem. Single mothers don't know where they can refer their problem and rather undemonstrative because they don't know suitable platform to share their problem and knowledge.

In a nutshell, if the intellectual assets of the individual can be shared among each other in the community, it will proof that practicing knowledge sharing among single mothers can reduce the impact of being single mothers and help to improve their quality life.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There are some main issues identified in this research as below:-

i. What types of knowledge and problem that can be shared among the single mothers?

ii. How to can knowledge sharing help single mothers to improve their daily life?

iii. How to motivate single mothers to contribute in the knowledge sharing activities?

iv. What is the suitable knowledge sharing tool to be use by single mothers community in order to share their knowledge and experience?

v. How the tested knowledge sharing framework can be implemented to the single mothers community?

1.4 Project Objective

There are several objectives to do the research such as:-

i. To identify the elements/ requirements of Knowledge Sharing Framework for the single mothers community in Malaysia.
ii. To build a prototype platform for the single mothers to share their knowledge and communicate each other.
iii. To test the applicability of Knowledge Sharing Framework elements for single mothers.
iv. To propose the organizational strategy to implement the new portal.

1.5 Scope of Project

In order to be able to achieve the objective of the research, the scopes of the project are as below:-

i. The study involved Malaysian single mothers community.
ii. The single mothers consist of single mothers as defined by Department of Women's Development which is a department under Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.
iii. The research focus on sharing knowledge among the community.
iv. The research study and test the existing knowledge sharing framework to the CoPs.

1.6 Importance of Project

The research determines the importance of knowledge sharing among the single mothers in Malaysia. Sharing of knowledge plays an important role in the development of the community. With that, it helps to improve the overall level of competency in developing a better social environment in parallel with the new generation of knowledge sharing culture for Malaysian single mothers by using the new technology.

Findings from the study will be use as proof to the tested knowledge sharing framework and determine the suitable platform for the selected community of practices. The study will also help to form the members towards making them become more aware on the importance of knowledge sharing culture.

1.7 Chapter Summary

As a conclusion, chapter one provides a brief overview of the project including the problems of background, problem of statement, objectives, scope and also the importance of the study. Focus group in this research is single mothers community.

ICT plays an important role nowadays as well as knowledge sharing. In many ways, technology has made knowledge sharing a reality in the past it was impossible to share knowledge or work collaboratively with co-workers around the globe. But today, in the 21st century, it's not impossible anymore. People can share knowledge and information anytime and anywhere without hesitate.

A single mothers is a one person to earn a living and care for the children. They have to face problem and challenges in order to survive in this world. There is no such specific medium or platform for them to express and share their feeling, problems or even to get information such as tips, activities and many more. So that, the findings hopefully will solve the problem and useful to help the community.