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Porter's Five Forces in Achieving Competitive Advantage by Improving the Organizational Knowledge and Innovative Services in Sri Lanka's Tourism Industry

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Abstract: *In the present context of a challenging business environment, knowledge plays an important role in identifying and analysing the issues in implementing creative solutions leading to the development of tourism industry development at present and for the future. The KM framework Porter's five forces processes of handling intellectual human capital with the promotion of creating, transferring and applying knowledge to increase the capability in achieving competitive advantage over the other firms in the tourism industry with the development of innovativeness. The competitive advantage is about reaching to the highest position in the tourism industry against the competitors in terms of increased financial performance and innovativeness. KM is the key factor accelerating the tourism industrial capability in achieving a competitive advantage. This paper focuses on Porter's five forces in achieving a competitive advantage to improve the organization's knowledge and Innovative services in Sri Lanka's tourism industry.*

Keywords: *Knowledge Management, Competitive Advantage, Tourism Industry, and Porter's Five Force.*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the world has been started to grow at an increasing and unexpected rate due to the array of technological innovations that have been emerged and implemented during the last decades. To move forward with the continuously growing world, so the tourism industry is not exceptional. The tourism industry should divert their conventional business procedures and mechanisms into modern technology-based tourism industry procedures and mechanisms to meet the dynamic global demand (Omotayo, 2015).

The tourism industry with the capability of adapting to the updated knowledge would get the advantage of remaining in the competitive business environment in a

sustainable manner while the tourism industry firms incapable of moving with the growing world would

reduce their business performance which makes it isolated from the rest of the business communities (Asrar-ul-haq and Anwar, 2016). The document is focusing on the tourism industry and the systematic research study applied to find out the impact of organizational knowledge to achieve a competitive advantage in the tourism industry.

1.1 Tourism industry

The researcher is focusing on the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Tourism, tea export, apparel, textile, rice production, and other agricultural products are considered as the main economic sectors in Sri Lanka. The tourism industry which is a fast-growing industry in Sri Lanka and the hotel industry is a key driver of economic growth in Sri Lanka (Suresh and Senthilnathan, 2014).

The development of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka started to grow dramatically up to the current development after several decades of civil war end and Tsunami (Munasinghe, Gunawardhana, and Ariyawansa, 2018). But in the past decades' tourism industry faced a lot of challenges due to the industrial revolution, business firms have caught the effects of information and communication technology revolution. The recent time terrorist attack in Sri Lanka hit the tourism industry with a big impact (Fernando, 2016).

The direct contribution of tourism industry services in Sri Lankan such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 5.3% of GDP in 2017. The total contribution of the travel and tourism industry to GDP in 2017 was 11.7% of GDP. The tourism industry created 404,000 jobs directly in Sri Lanka and as a percentage of 5.1% of total employment (Welgamage, 2015). To apply the gathered information

into knowledge management, the understanding of KM is crucial.

1.2 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management (KM) has categorized as a strategic asset that could be owned by a person implying the pool of skills, attitudes, and resources that the person has. It is difficult to imitate or commercialize the knowledge of a person since it is native to the individual. Business firms have an array of knowledge types due to the presence of employee diversity. The KM as a process of pooling the knowledge of individual employees to create the knowledge native to the organization which could be used to improve the performance of the organization (Arun Kumar and Uday, 2015).

The KM is a process of using the exiting intellectual capital and recruiting appropriate intellectual capital from outside into the organization to increase the organizational capacity to meet with the possible challenges concerning the era in which it operates. The KM process has defined as a strategic and technique that could be used to derive the benefits from the knowledge of the organizational human capital while removing the human capital with inappropriate knowledge levels detrimental to the organizational success (Gonzalez and Martins, 2014).

The KM encourages the creation of new products, services, methods, processes and concepts with the utilization of existing employee knowledge in an optimal way to attain the organizational goals and objectives and accelerates the value accumulation to the organizational outcome with the reduction in cost, time and occurrence of error associated with the outcome generation (Saqib, Udin and Baluch, 2017). The research study going to map with Porter's Five Force.

1.3 Achieving Competitive Advantage in Porter's Five Force

The porter's five force framework has identified as one of the best strategies which could be utilized to measure and analyses the competition in a tourism industrial business firm. The porter's framework facilitates successful five implementations of key functions such as understanding the completion in the tourism industry, new entrants into the industry, power of suppliers, power of customers and threat of substitute products (Göral, 2015).

The porter's five force allows the tourism industrial firms to identify the competitors and information about

the new entrants could analyze the competitors' size with services or performance. The five forces could give suggestions for the management to make the business decision like the decision of prices and providing suitable services for the customers according to the current trend (Nurlansa, 2016).

The process of the porter's five force of the knowledge possessed by the employees in business activities to attain a competitive advantage over the competitors operates in the tourism industry. The porter's five force permits the business firms to understand the correct way of creating, sharing and using the available knowledge following the organizational strategy and functions (Jamil, 2017).

The main strategic issue in the porter's five force process of the tourism industry is the creation and maintenance of competitive advantage over the other competitors in the industry. The competitive business environment, rather than facing the challenges simply, they make efforts to develop a knowledge-based strategy associated with the competitive advantage to compete with the other competitors in the market which could reflect in the importance of knowledge creation in the competitive advantage according to the porter's five force (Dälken, 2014).

The porter's five force could be capable of developing a strategy to achieve competitive advantage for the business firms in the tourism industry and inadequate to provide empirical and theoretical insights for the future development of the industry and many of the business firms do not have a well-planned and sound mechanism to share knowledge among the staff members which has been obtained by the job training, mentoring programs, workshops and seminars (Indiatsy *et al.*, 2014).

2. Literature Review

The research study focusing the applying KM effectively into the business process to achieve competitive advantages in the tourism industry. Identified many journal articles for the study and narrow down selected articles that have taken place in the study. The literature review focused on identifying the gap from the past research studies and the problems of industry in recent times.

2.1. Knowledge Management and Industrial Relationship

The KM strategies are important to the survival of the tourism industry firms to cope with the challenges in the industry environment where the business firms should

invest on KM strategies to enhance the level of update knowledge among the employees as well as to increase the number of intellectual employees in the tourism industry leading to the expansion of industrial human assets (Mohajan, 2017).

The factors of services in the tourism industry such as travel agent, hospitality, investment, and knowledge has been noted as a different asset. the value of travel agent, hospitality, the investment could diminish without innovation and time. Innovation and knowledge could improve and enhance the tourism industry into a long-term profitable industry. The knowledge is the foundation to overcome the competition and creates intangible benefits to the tourism industry together with innovation value (Rahimi *et al.*, 2017).

The importance of systematic KM and take the necessary steps in the tourism industry to ensure the active implementation of KM and systems within the industrial firms. The innovative knowledge is an effective tool that could be used by the tourism industry firm to become different from the other business firms operating in the same industry and the knowledge of an employee cannot be stolen and lasts for a long time (Gloet and Samson, 2016).

The KM is an interdisciplinary approach facilitating the developing and utilizing the knowledge possessed by the employees in the organization to improve the learning and innovative capabilities of the business firm with relevance to the industry where it operates. The KM allows the industry business firms to identify the relevant mechanisms for implementation and distribution of the knowledge across organizational activities to gain the optimal competitive advantage (Raudeliūnienė, Davidavičienė, and Jakubavičius, 2018).

2.2. Innovation and Competitive Advantages

The tourism industry to become competitive and the firm should implement the strategy of innovative knowledge creation which could be implemented by the industry. The present context of tourism industry competitive role played by the organizations and changed due to the impact of challenges associated with the continuous economic growth. Therefore, tourism organizations required to search for better mechanisms to allocate the organizational knowledge assets to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage in a sustainable manner (Iqbal, Sehgal and Sharma, 2017).

The competitive advantage of the tourism industry has defined as the ability to gain a superior position in the market and its rivals operating in the same industry. Achieving a competitive advantage is a long-term process with changing the business processes and knowledge creation when it required and innovating the services to align the constraints of the rapidly changing world (Lee, 2016).

Innovating the business processes could make the organization to compete with the competitive advantage and reaching to the highest position in the industry where the business organization operates the largest financial and economic status when compared to the competitors operate in the same industry (Nawab *et al.*, 2015).

The competitive advantage of the tourism industry has identified as the capability of the tourism businesses to earn more returns for the investments made by the shareholders and innovation could be defined as the process of creating a unique feature for the development of innovative products or services which could be different from the competitors or which have never been produced by any of other firms in the tourism industry (Rao, Yang, and Yang, 2018).

2.3. Knowledge Creation and Competitive Advantage in Tourism

The technical KM capability could be predicted by the technical systems available in the business firm and the social KM capability could be predicted by culture, people and structure. The findings of the study revealed that technical KM capability had a significant impact on organizational competitive advantage. Among the dimensions of social KM capability, culture has a significant impact on sustaining competitive advantage while structure and people did not have an impact on sustaining competitive advantage (Kumar and Babu, 2015).

Improving the organizational knowledge could have a significant impact on increasing employee empowerment which ultimately leads to the enhancement of organizational competitive advantage and the cultural KM capability had a higher impact on organizational competitive advantage than the technical KM capability. The innovative knowledge leads to the business firms for innervational services with value addition to the customers which could increase the organizational capability in sustaining competitive advantage (Zain, Salleh and Rhouse, 2018).

The new knowledge appropriately innovated and implementation among the organizational functions is a key factor in assuring the sustainable competitive advantage and it is important for tourism industrial top management in the organization to have the clear understanding about the type of knowledge which is required to accelerate the organizational procedures in order drive the organization into smart tourism to sustain competitive advantage and desire to grow the economical scale of tourism business firms (Tüzünkan, 2017).

The innovative KM is the most critical and only available source to attain and sustain competitive advantage for the tourism industry and it could be reflected in the organizational competitiveness and survival in the industry for a long time. the tourism firms must utilize the updated knowledge to create knowledge for innovative services to the customers in the current generation (Carvalho and Sarkar, 2014).

According to the comparative study with a critical analysis of porter’s five forces framework in achieving and sustaining competitive advantages by improving the effectiveness of organizational knowledge. The literature review of the past research study shows the lack of evidence of innovating knowledge creation in achieving competitive advantages. The document focus on finding the evidence by applying a systematic research study in innovating knowledge creation to achieve the industrial competitive advantages in the tourism industry and improving the effective use of organization knowledge.

3. Research Approach

The research was conducted with the use of Science Direct Database considering the keywords of knowledge management, creating innovating knowledge and the impact of KM on achieving competitive advantage in the tourism industry. The research study limited peer-reviewed academic journal articles with the research papers' full text of the journal articles.

The extensive research has performed to obtaining information about practices and knowledge in the tourism industry performing porter’s five frameworks in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage by improving the effectiveness of organizational knowledge in Sri Lanka. The information collected from journal articles with the time frame applied to the selected articles within the periods of 2014-2019. The

information about the industry and organizational information has collected from the company website. The information about the industrial contribution to country and community has collected from the official journals and authority websites.

3.1 Systematic Approach of the Study

The research study pursued the systematic review of the academic research related to the purpose of utilizing the KM in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage in the tourism industry and analyze the findings of the studies to scope the conclusion of the above-mentioned purpose of the study.

The suitable research studies were chosen with the pre-scheduled criteria based on the objective of the review. The following systematic approach framework shows the variables identified which could process through the innovation to create smart tourism and make an impact on achieving the competitive advantages in the tourism industry.

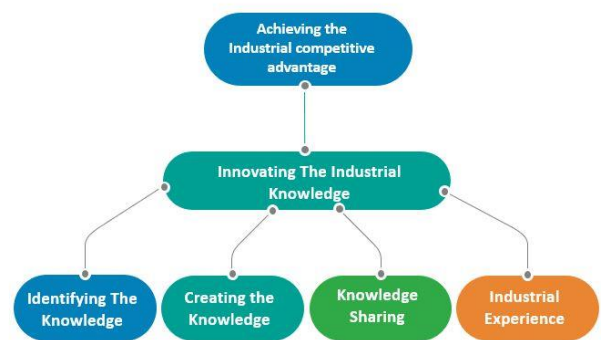


Figure 1 Systematic Approach Framework

4. Discussion

The past research papers define the term KM in different ways, but it is identified the importance to evaluate the validity of the definitions. Pooling employee knowledge could be defined as part of knowledge management. the knowledge possessed by the employees might be very poor knowledge levels could add any value to the organizational performance. The tourism industry is a service-oriented business so it is crucial to identify the potential knowledge which could add value to the organization (Chiun Lo *et al.*, 2017).

4.1 Impact of Knowledge Management in Achieving Competitive Advantages

The definition provided by (Orga, Nnadi and Chioma, 2018) seemed to be better compared to (Indiatsy *et al.*, 2014) because both have stated about increasing the relevant intellectual capital within the business firm, but

it did not focus about the way of dealing with the irrelevant intellectual capital present in the organization. The tourism industry sharing the knowledge and new trainings could be the boost for the effective performance for the ongoing business activities (Perman, 2014).

The three articles explained that creating, exchanging and utilizing the knowledge of the employees. In the tourism industry, it is important to utilize the industrial experience in accordance to the organizational goals and objectives and innovative business strategies and facilitating the promotion of innovativeness within the organization via the creation of new products, services and processes could lead to gain the competitive advantage over the other firms (Sandybayev, 2016).

Applying and distributing the organizational knowledge to gain a competitive advantage for the business firm could be worth highlighting in the business performance analysis. The approaches could be adopted to distribute and apply in the tourism industry for organizational knowledge creation to achieve a competitive advantage. In that aspect, the definitions created by (Rahimi *et al.*, 2017) and (Saqib, Udin and Baluch, 2017) clearly outlined the appropriate ways of distributing and applying the organizational knowledge and innovating the knowledge in the process of gaining competitive advantage for the business firm.

The performance analysis process must measure and analyze the performance, quality of services and customer satisfaction individually (Nisco, Riviezzo, and Napolitano, 2015).

According to my point of view, the presence of an adequate level of knowledge within the business firm would not be enough to achieve the expected level of organizational performance. Therefore, it is important to identify the suitable methods of managing and utilizing the existing level of knowledge among organizational employees.

According to the above statement of defining the process of the tourism industrial KM utilization for achieving competitive advantage could be visualized through the systematic conceptual framework. The most suitable definition for the tourism industry to utilize the KM to achieve sustainable competitive advantage is improving the existing intellectual human capital in the organization via recruiting appropriate intellectual capital and removing inappropriate capital with the assurance of developing, coding, exchanging, utilizing

the employee knowledge in a way to promote organizational innovativeness to attain the sustainable competitive advantage over the competitors in the tourism industry.

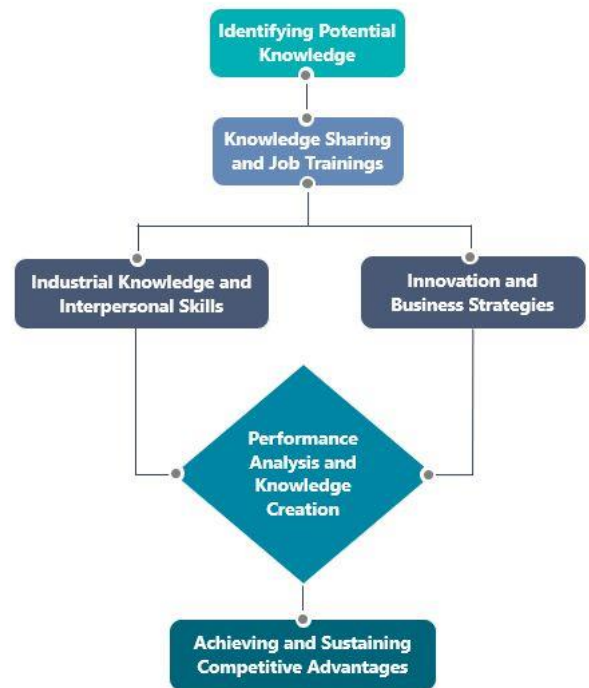


Figure 2 Knowledge Process Conceptual Framework

4.2. Improve the Effective Use of Organizational Knowledge

The tourism industry experienced various challenges nowadays based on the operational season of the business functions. All those changes have made an impact on the attitudes of the organizations and employees where the business firms need to have a KM strategy within the organization that makes it convenient to adapt the external changes with the execution of less effort (Ardito *et al.*, 2019).

According to the literature review, it is reflected that the sustainable competitiveness of a business firm is significantly and positively affected by the KM of the business firm. Hence, it is important to ensure the utilization of organizational knowledge effectively to sustain the competitive advantage of the organization.

Referring to the findings of the study conducted by (Gloet and Samson, 2016), it has been revealed that technology and culture had a significant impact on sustaining organizational competitive advantage in the tourism industry while people and organizational

structure did not have any significant impact on competitive advantage. But I disagree with the findings of the study because the human capital and structure of the organization are the utmost important factors in gaining competitive advantage for the business firms.

Employees must be motivated towards continuous learning and creating new knowledge and the employee rewarding can be conducted based on the criteria of knowledge learning, knowledge-creating, and knowledge transferring among the colleagues. The position of KM should be well determined and standardized with increasing employee awareness about the advantages of KM and reforms and innovation taken placed in the existing KM process.

The culture of inclusive and effective participation and communication of the employees should be promoted within the organizational environment in the tourism industry as it would directly impact on the knowledge sharing process. The business firms should initiate new technological mechanisms into the organizational processes and procedures and conduct training programs to get the employees used to the new technological adaptations.

The improvement of people, culture, structure and technical systems of the business firms following the approaches would increase the organizational capability ineffective knowledge utilization, the tourism industry would attain a sustainable competitive advantage over the competitors operating in the tourism industry.

5. Conclusion and Future Direction

KM has considered the foundation of an organization in the process of reaching a sustainable competitive advantage. KM is the process of managing organizational human capital in a way to facilitate developing, sharing and utilizing the new knowledge to increase the creation of innovative products and services to gain the competitive advantage over the other firms in the same industry. Competitive advantage plays an important role in organizational processes since it ensures the organizational capability in reaching the highest position in the tourism industry over the other rivals with the attainment of higher profits, rate of investments and innovativeness.

Since KM has a significant impact on the competitive advantage of a tourism business firm, it is important to enhance the effective utilization of organizational knowledge in business processes. It could be fulfilled through the improvement of four organizational pillars

including people, culture, structure and technical systems. Following the mechanisms to improve those four pillars would facilitate the business firms to gain a competitive advantage in the future.

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