ASSESSMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICE: THE CASE OF WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, ETHIOPIA

BY
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Assessment of the Knowledge Sharing Practice: The Case of World Food Programme, Ethiopia

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Objective of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Significance of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Scope /Delimitations of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Definition of Key Terms</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Limitation of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Organization of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Basic Concepts of Knowledge and Knowledge Management</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Types of knowledge</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Principles of knowledge</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Knowledge Management Basics</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Knowledge Management Perspectives and Approaches</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Three Perspectives in Knowledge Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Knowledge Management Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Knowledge Management Principles and System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Knowledge Management Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>The Knowledge Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3</td>
<td>Principles of Knowledge Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Knowledge Management Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>Knowledge Sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2</td>
<td>Knowledge Capture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3</td>
<td>Knowledge Codification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Enablers of Knowledge Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Knowledge Sharing Barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>History of Knowledge Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Knowledge Management in the UN System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.1</td>
<td>Knowledge Management in WFP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.2</td>
<td>Knowledge Management in World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8.3</td>
<td>Knowledge Management in United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER THREE ................................................. 33

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ............................. 33

3.1 Research Design ............................................. 33
3.2 Sources of Data .............................................. 33
3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size ..................... 33
  3.3.1 Sampling Technique .................................... 33
3.3.2 Sample Size ............................................................................................................. 34

3.4 Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection ................................................... 35
3.4.1 Instruments of Data Collection ......................................................................... 35
3.4.2 Procedures of Data Collection ........................................................................ 35

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis .................................................................................... 35

3.6 Validity of Instrument ............................................................................................ 36

3.7 Study Variables ..................................................................................................... 36

CHAPTER FOUR ............................................................................................................. 37

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA .......... 37
4.1 Characteristic of the Respondents ......................................................................... 37

4.2 Understanding and Awareness Level on Knowledge Management .................. 40

4.3 Knowledge Management Practice within WFP Ethiopia .................................... 42

4.4 Sources of Knowledge for Employees of WFP Ethiopia ..................................... 44

4.5 Barriers to Knowledge Sharing and Utilization within WFP Ethiopia ............... 46

4.7 Suggestion from Staff and International Managers to Improve IKM System ...... 51

CHAPTER FIVE .............................................................................................................. 56

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 56
5.1 Summary of Major Findings ................................................................................. 56

5.2 Conclusions .............................................................................................................. 58

5.3 Recommendations .................................................................................................. 59

REFERENCES ............................................................................................................... 61

ANNEXES ..................................................................................................................... 67
# LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Key Features of System and Human Strategy</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Distribution of Respondents’ by Gender</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Distribution of Respondents’ by Geographic Location</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Distribution of Respondents’ by Educational Level</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Distribution of Respondents by Years of services in WFP Ethiopia</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Awareness Level of Staff on Knowledge Management</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Knowledge Sharing and Utilization</td>
<td>Error! Bookmark not defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sources of knowledge</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Barriers to Knowledge Sharing and Utilization</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Relations between Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Three Perspectives of Knowledge Management Strategies</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge Management Processes</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SEIC Model</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Model of a Concept Map</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACRONYMS

CO  Country Office
HR  Human Resource
ICT Information and Communication Technology
IKM Information and Knowledge Management
IT  Information Technology
KM  Knowledge Management
KMS Knowledge Management System
KS  Knowledge Sharing
SEIC Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization
UN  United Nations
UNDP United nation Development Programpmes
WFP World Food Program
ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the primary objective of assessing the current knowledge sharing practice of the United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP), Ethiopia. Descriptive approach and a mixed design were adopted to undertake this research. Targeting employees of this organization, sample size was determined through Kumar’s formula. Questionnaire and interview were employed to collect the primary data from study participant. The quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 16.0 and the qualitative data was also analyzed using text analysis and direct quotation.

WFP, Ethiopia is appreciated as being a pioneer in knowledge sharing among the other WFP Global Offices. Hence, the study revealed the strengths and shortcomings of the current knowledge sharing practices in the organization. The medium level of awareness and acceptance of the concept and practice of knowledge management by the employees of the organization are identified as prospect by this research. On the other hand, evident gaps are sought in utilization of internal knowledge sources of the organization. In addition, owing to the lack of an overall knowledge management policy or strategy, different units pursue the practice of knowledge sharing in their own way, with some of them barely making use of the knowledge management portal.

This situation calls for organizational efforts to reinforce the practice of knowledge sharing by formulating comprehensive knowledge sharing policy/strategy compatible with organizational strategy, enhance the level of employee awareness regarding the concepts and benefits of knowledge sharing, implement formal knowledge sharing means and relive employees from work burden by reallocating organizational resources so as to enable them to actively take part in knowledge sharing activities. Besides, rewarding effective knowledge sharing activities and providing with adequate information technology infrastructure and skills to exploit it have also vital contribution.

Key words: knowledge, knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing practice, strategy, WFP, Ethiopia.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Brelade and Harman (2003) Knowledge Management (KM) is not a new concept. Managing knowledge, using it to do things better, more effectively, more aesthetically, or just differently has been a continuing feature of human societies and human culture. Organisations, in both the public and private sector, have always managed knowledge in one shape or another. What is new is the development of a separate discipline called ‘knowledge management’; the development of recognised techniques and approaches for effectively managing the knowledge resources of an organisation.

Wiig (1997) also agreed with the fact that KM has long standing practice. As mentioned by Wigg the study of knowledge dates back to ancient Greece. Even before that, knowledge was at least implicitly managed as people performed work. Early hunters, for example learned the best skills and practices for a successful hunt. These skills and techniques transferred from one generation to the next. Uriarte (2008) pointed out KM is a relatively new discipline and therefore has a short history. As a conscious discipline, it developed from the various published work of academics and pioneers such as Peter Drucker in the 1970s, Karl-Erik Sveiby in the late 1980s, and Nonaka and Takeuchi in the 1990s. It began when the concept of a “knowledge company” was introduced in published literature.

It was only in 1995 when knowledge management in its current form first received significant attention among corporations and organizations. This came about as a result of the publication of the seminal book of Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi titled The Knowledge Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation. As acknowledged by the available literatures, in today’s revolving economy the knowledge organizations have been able to grow at a higher pace and to be competitive in the corporate world (Kalra, 1997; Baines, 1997; Bueno and Salmador, 2004). Increasing competition, innovation and focus on information
related issues indicate that organizations should take steps to establish themselves as knowledge creating and utilizing organization. Nonaka (1998) argues that KM can ensure competitive advantage of an organization in ever-changing business world. Most organizations in the developed countries are turning up KM adopted organizations in order to gain advantage from competitors. The movement of KM adoption has reached developing and least developed countries too (Wang, 2006).

There are quite a large number of international humanitarian organizations which operate to save lives and support the Government of Ethiopia’s developmental projects. Ethiopia also has a large number of organizations directly dealing with overseas organizations for operating business, humanitarian and development activities. These organizations including those who work on humanitarian emergency activities with a mission of life saving and support the government in its development endeavors, attempt to adopt Knowledge Sharing (KS) practices as a new dimension to the organizational development process.

The organization under study, namely the WFP is the UN frontline agency in the fight against global hunger and is the world's largest humanitarian organization. WFP uses food assistance to promote food security, which implies access of all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. WFP works in 73 countries worldwide to achieve its strategic objectives of saving lives and protecting livelihoods in emergencies, preventing acute hunger and investing in disaster preparedness and mitigation measures, restoring and rebuilding livelihoods after emergencies, reducing chronic hunger and under nutrition as well as strengthening the capacity of countries to reduce hunger. WFP, Ethiopia oversees one of the biggest WFP operations worldwide currently targeting about 6.5 million people through its protracted relief and recovery operations and country programme. It has 700 staff at its Country Office (CO) in Addis Ababa and in 12 Sub/Field Offices.

In line with the importance the WFP, Ethiopia attaches to KM and KS initiative the organization established a KM and KS Programme within the office. To lead this initiative the KM section was established in March 2010. The Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) section of WFP Ethiopia has its mission to make WFP, Ethiopia a learning and knowledge-based organization.
Working for a number of years with international humanitarian organizations including UN agency, the researcher has the opportunity to participate in some of the initiatives and get some insights on the practical applications apart from the theoretical knowledge gained from the through university courses and readings on the subject area. The researcher felt gaps in the practicality of KS initiatives by humanitarian organizations and accordingly undertook this study on the current KS practices within WFP, Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In an organization where there is lack of proper knowledge management two main problems will be highlighted: organizational memory loss and brain drain. Organizational memory loss occurs when one part of the organizational brain is oblivious to the knowledge that other parts possess. Memory loss is also noted when the same department or division forgets the knowledge it gained from previous experiences or projects. As a result, organizations tend to reinvent the wheel every time a new, yet in many respects similar, project is undertaken. This also means the organization will repeat the same mistakes, given that it has not learned from previous experiences. The brain drain, happens wherein valuable knowledge resources are lost with employees leaving the organization (Al-Ali, 2003).

The primary goal of KM initiative is to create and share knowledge more efficiently inside an organization. Bartholomew (2008, P.7) point out that “In practice, ‘knowledge management systems’ often turn out to be little more than old information management systems rebranded with a fashionable name, or a collection of procedures and Information and Technology tools that hardly anyone uses. It is hardly surprising that many initiatives fall short of high aspirations such as ‘making the best use of the knowledge the organisation has got’.”

As Cabrera and Cabrera (2002) assert, organizational members may be reluctant to share knowledge with each other, due to an insufficient understanding of the benefits of doing so. The individual may fail to see a personal benefit from sharing knowledge, or he or she may perceive insufficient support from the management of the organization to apply new ideas to their work (Lytras, 2009). “…employees today would rather hoard their knowledge than share it with their peers” (Desouza and Awazu, 2005, P.4). Knowledge creation calls for a fluid space – one that can
promote creativity, rich exchange of insights, debates and dialogue, and also nurtures new ideas (Ibid) for IKM initiative to be successful contributor for knowledge/skills sharing.

In addition, absence of KS policy/strategy to guide KS challenges the success of KS initiatives. Al-Ali (2003) pinpointed that strategy is the mind of an organization; without it, the organization’s actions will lack direction, consistency, and hence impact. It is highly probable that leadership’s failure to adopt knowledge strategies suited to their business needs is the cause of the setback of many KM initiatives. Knowledge strategies define how KM will be used to sustain the organization’s competitive performance by creating new knowledge.

The practice of KS is a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia. So far, only limited local researches were conducted in KS area in hospitals, banking and airline industries. However, as per the knowledge of the researcher, there is no research conducted on the area of KS locally when it comes to the humanitarian emergency organizations. In addition, their focus was on service giving private or governmental organizations and hence the researcher identified a gap in revealing the practice with the humanitarian sector. Hence, this study aimed to look into the practice of KS in a specific humanitarian UN organization.

In order to provide insights on how humanitarian organizations should manage their knowledge base in the best possible way, a number of questions can be addressed. Hence, the study intended to look into the KM Practices within WFP, Ethiopia. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following basic questions:

1. To what extent do employees of WFP, Ethiopia are aware on the general concepts and benefits of KS?
2. How adequately employees of WFP Ethiopia, use the available sources of knowledge for practical day to day activities?
3. To what degree of success does the IKM initiative of WFP, Ethiopia contribute towards knowledge/skills sharing?
4. What are the possible barriers/obstacles to implement a proper KS practice in the organization?
5. To what extent does the WFP, Ethiopia has a well-articulated KS policy and strategy?
1.3 Objective of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to assess the KS practices within WFP, Ethiopia. In an attempt to research the aforementioned main objective, the researcher put the following sub objectives.

The specific objectives were to:

- Define the current state of KS practice in WFP, Ethiopia and identify awareness level of staff.
- Identify knowledge sources for staff and extent of their usage
- Identify the barriers/challenges to knowledge flows in the organization and the gaps in effectively managing the information/resources generated by the organization.
- To provide recommendations for further research directions.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study tried to assess the KS practice with WFP, Ethiopia. By looking into the practices of KS in WFP, Ethiopia, this thesis anticipated three contributions.

This research examined the emerging field of KS, which is yet limited to abstract concepts, ideas, frameworks and models in the context of humanitarian organizations. So this research contributes to the need for research to discover how KS can support the efficient and effective management of humanitarian organizations. Because of the practical relevance of finding efficient solution of sharing knowledge in humanitarian organizations, it was anticipated that results of this study could enhance understanding of the power of KS and hence, could encourage managers of humanitarian emergency organizations to consider better ways of implementing KM strategies in order to exploit the benefits further. Findings of this research work can be used for instigating further review and study of the subject by the organization.
1.5 Scope /Delimitations of the Study

KM is managing the corporation's knowledge through a systematically and organizationally specified process for acquiring, organizing, sustaining, applying, sharing and renewing both the tacit and explicit knowledge of employees to enhance organizational performance and create value (Davenport and Prusak, 1998). However, the scope of the study is limited to KS and utilizations behaviors of employees of WFP Ethiopia not considering the other aspects of KM. besides, the result of the research would be more comprehensive if it is conducted widely by including few other UN agencies operating in Ethiopia. However, the study is limited to few areas of KS of one specific UN agency.

The study focused only on the use of the existing IKM section of WFP, Ethiopia and the services it provides to internal staff hence omitting its interaction with other partners, regional bureau and headquarters. How knowledge and experiences are exchanged and shared among stakeholders and other country offices and other interactions and KS between the WFP Ethiopia and other external entities were not covered by the study.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The following are operational definition of terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exit Interview</td>
<td>A survey that is conducted with an employee when he or she leaves an organization. The information from each exit interview is used to provide feedback on why employees are leaving, what they liked about their employment and what areas of the organization need improvement. Exit interviews can also be used as part of knowledge harvesting to extract knowledge from the departing employee so that it is kept in-house.</td>
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<td>Knowledge Management</td>
<td>A detailed plan outlining how an organization intends to implement KM principles and practices in order to achieve organizational objectives.</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Knowledge Repository</strong></td>
<td>A place where knowledge is gathered and stored and can be accessed and used by other people.</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge Worker</strong></td>
<td>An employee whose role relies on his or her ability to find and use knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Portal</strong></td>
<td>A special web page that organizes access to all of the online resources about a topic, providing a one-stop shop of sorts.</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge Sharing</strong></td>
<td>An activity through which knowledge (i.e., information, skills, or expertise) is exchanged among people, friends, families, communities or organizations.</td>
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<td><strong>Knowledge Utilization</strong></td>
<td>Concerned with using and applying knowledge to organizational functions or business processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Flow</strong></td>
<td>The way that knowledge moves through an organization or between organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Management Practice</strong></td>
<td>The practice of creating, sharing and leveraging knowledge within an organization to achieve increased efficiency and/or profitability. It involves the management both of external links and of knowledge flows within the organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>A fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information,</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>The degree to which an employee believes that sharing knowledge will benefit them, the degree to which they trust the knowledge of their coworkers, and the believe that they will not be exploited by any party in the organization.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1.7 Limitation of the Study

The major problem in conducting this research is limited research materials in the area of KS especially in Ethiopian context. The fact that the questionnaires are self-administered and structured may also affect the quality of the data. Time constraints were also encountered while conducting interview with the international professional managers, as most of them did not have time for a lengthy interview. Besides, since this research is a case study, the findings of the study cannot be generalized somewhere else.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This research is organized into five main chapters. Chapter one deals with the problem addressed in the research and the way it is approached. The second chapter is entirely dedicated to review of the related literature where pertinent texts are put on view. The third chapter dwells on the research methodology adopted where the characteristics of the research, preparations done and the method of sampling design are made clear. Chapter four is about presentation of the data collected, analysis made and interpretation of data analyzed. The fifth Chapter dedicated to the major findings of the research, conclusions made and recommendations to the organization. Finally, the appendixes part contains the questionnaire and interview questions, the random sampling procedures used and the references.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Basic Concepts of Knowledge and Knowledge Management

2.1.1 Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom

The concept of knowledge has been discussed for centuries in the works of the ancient Greek philosophers, knowledge originates with people. Plato, for instance, put forward the idea that correct belief can be turned into knowledge by fixing it through the means of reason or a cause. Aristotle thought that knowledge of a thing involved understanding it in terms of the reasons for it. In Western philosophy, knowledge is seen as abstract, universal, impartial and rational. It is considered as a stand-alone artifact (a physical record) that could be captured in technology and which will be truthful in its essence. This understanding of knowledge affected, to a great extent, the nature of the first KM tools developed during the 90s. Most tools and KM models during this period tried to manage knowledge as an artifact rather than as an element deeply rooted in human understanding, human behavior and social interactions at work (Liebowitz, 2003).

According to researches, the majority of the first generation of KM tools failed, or at least did not fulfill their initial aims, due to the lack of focus on human factors. Knowledge has a far more complex nature and requires the active contribution of people to manage knowledge systems.

The relationship between data, information, knowledge and wisdom form a pyramid. The pyramid has data as its base, followed in the hierarchy by information, then knowledge, with wisdom at the top (Liebowitz, 2003). Stewart (2000) mentioned that knowledge is a conclusion drawn from data and information.
Adapted from (Liebowitz, 2003) Figure 1 Relations between Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom

As stated by Davenport and Prusak (1998) data is a set of discrete objective facts about an event or a process which have little use by themselves unless converted into information. Data provides the raw materials as a set of discrete, objective facts about events. Davenport and Prusak (1998) also defined information as data endowed with relevance and purpose. It has meaning and it is organized for some purpose. Information for example, is a collection of data and associated explanations, interpretations, and other textual material concerning a particular object, event, or process. Unlike data, information informs receivers and impacts on their judgment and behavior. Davenport and Prusak (1998) mentioned that knowledge is information combined with experience, context, interpretation, reflection and perspective. Davenport and Prusak stated that knowledge is “a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert
insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates in and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms” According to James (2005) wisdom is the judicious application of accumulated knowledge and experience and is the ability to see through complexity and discover the fundamental nature of issues or problems, Ackoff (1989) argued that wisdom adds value which requires the mental function of judgment.

From the pyramid and above description of the basic knowledge concepts, one can grasp that the higher we go from bottom to up (from data to wisdom), we move into a complex and broader concept having a bigger scope. Moreover, the involvement of the human element is the key for the significant difference among them as the relationship is attached to understanding of a given situation and giving clear picture/ analysis of the real situations.

2.1.2 Types of knowledge

Knowledge is distinguished in different types. In this context, it is very important to realize that there are various types of knowledge, which needs different methods for creation and sharing in organizations. The division of knowledge depends on the purpose of an investigation and / or a description. Knowledge can exist in different ways, which can be divided into tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka and Knonno, 1998) as well as into individual, group and organizational knowledge (Nonaka, 1994; Nezafati, Afrazeh and Jalali, 2009).

Tacit versus explicit knowledge

Tacit knowledge is a know-how and learning embedded within the minds of the people in an organization (Kidwell, Jillinda, Karen, Linde, and Johnson, 2000). It involves perceptions, insights, experiences, and craftsmanship. The authors also described its characteristics as being: personal, context-specific, difficult to formalize, difficult to communicate and more difficult to transfer. Tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize that makes it difficult to communicate and share with others. It is deeply rooted in individuals’ action and experience as well as in the principles, values or emotions he/she embraces, subjective insights and intuitions.
On the other hand, explicit knowledge is codified/organized knowledge that can be transmitted into formal and systematic language. It is discrete or digital. It is captured in records of past such as libraries, archives and databases. It can be expressed in words or numbers and shared in the form of data, scientific formulas, specifications and manuals. This is the kind of knowledge readily transmitted between individuals formally and systematically in the organizations (Polanyi, 1966; Nonaka, 1999; Serrat, 2008; Mcinerney, 2002 and Bhatt, 2000). According to (Kidwell et al., 2000), explicit knowledge is packaged, easily codified, communicable and transferable.

In general, Nonaka (1991) argues that most of the knowledge applied by individuals in the organizations is tacit knowledge and new knowledge starts from individuals in tacit form. Then it transforms into organizational explicit knowledge valuable to the company as a whole which in turn changed into tacit knowledge in a spiral way. Tacit and explicit knowledge are dependent on each other to be complete sources of knowledge.

**Individual, group and organizational knowledge**

Depending on the type of knowledge that exists in an organization, knowledge can also be individual, group and organizational knowledge. Knowledge is a critical factor affecting an organization's ability to remain competitive in the new global marketplace (Bollinger and Smith, 2001). Therefore, organizations need to formulate appropriate approaches for organizing the collective intelligence and skills of employees for creating greater organizational knowledge. Knowledge is not merely considered as know how that exists with individuals mind instead it also exists at group and organizational levels (Nonaka and Knonno, 1998; Nezafati et al., 2009). Individual knowledge is a knowledge embedded in the mind of individual and an explicit knowledge private to individuals themselves. The knowledge of individual members needs to be shared and legitimized through integrating interactions and IT before it becomes group knowledge (Bontis, 2001).

According to Nonaka (1994), organizational knowledge is created through continuous dialogue (on spiral form) between tacit and explicit knowledge. Organizational knowledge is a knowledge that scattered throughout the organization members. Knowledge creation process enables firms to amplify knowledge embedded internally and transfer knowledge into operational activities to
improve efficiency and create value of the organization (Omur et al., 2009). Thus, organizational knowledge is an accumulated and collected knowledge from individuals, subunits or groups.

Organizational knowledge enables firms to attain deeper levels of understanding and perception that lead to business intelligence and insight. Instead of the constant initiatives to extract knowledge from the employees to create new explicit knowledge and artifacts, it might be more productive for organizations to invest on the effort for creating a KS culture in the organization. KS culture means an organization that offers opportunities to create knowledge and one that encourages learning and KS in the organization.

Creating a KS culture ensures the continual creation and sharing of knowledge through an environment of trust and dialogue in organizations (Mcinerney, 2002). Thus, learning in organizations takes place at individual, group and organizational levels, so that they all stores stocks of knowledge which are moved and developed through dynamic knowledge flows between the different levels of the organization (Nonaka, 1994).

2.1.3 Principles of knowledge

According to Allee (1997), it is better to understand knowledge before managing it. The author stated that the new knowledge equation is: Knowledge = power, so share it and it will multiply. Widespread non-competitive benchmarking and best-practice sharing show how eagerly individuals are embracing the concept of KS. He also mentioned twelve guiding principles of knowledge as follows:

The first principle ‘Knowledge is messy’, emphasizes that as knowledge is connected to everything else, one can’t isolate the knowledge aspect of anything neatly. The second one ‘Knowledge is self-organizing’ tells that the self that knowledge organizes around is organizational or group identity and purpose. The third one ‘Knowledge seeks community’ explains that knowledge wants to happen, just as life wants to happen. Both want to happen as community. This concept is better illustrated by the Internet. The fourth principle ‘Knowledge travels via language’ states that without a language to describe one’s experience, everyone can’t communicate what they know. This shows how important language is for the use and transfer of knowledge. The fifth principle ‘The more you try to pin knowledge down, the more it slips
away’ tells that too much rigidity and formality regarding knowledge lead to the slowness of creativity. The sixth principle ‘Looser is probably better’ tells that there will be wastage of resources and energy in trying to control knowledge too tightly. The seventh principle ‘There is no one solution’ states that knowledge is always changing. For the moment, the best approach to managing it is one that keeps things moving along while keeping options open. The eighth one ‘Knowledge does not grow forever’ tells that eventually, some knowledge is lost or dies. Unlearning and letting go of old ways of thinking, contribute to the vitality and evolution of knowledge. The ninth principle, ‘No one is in charge’ states that knowledge is a social process. No one person can take responsibility for collective knowledge. The tenth principle, ‘You cannot impose rules and systems’, stresses that if knowledge is truly self-organizing, the most important way to advance it is to remove the barriers to self-organization. The last and eleventh principle ‘There is no silver bullet’ states that there is no single leverage point or best practice to advance knowledge. It must be supported at multiple levels and in a variety of ways and finally the twelfth and the last principle ‘How you define knowledge determines how you manage it’ states that the knowledge question can present itself in many ways. For example, concern about the ownership of knowledge leads to acquiring codified knowledge that is protected by copyrights and patents.

As presented by Allee (1997) above the principles of knowledge helps knowledge users/managers to understand the nature of knowledge and its special characteristics. Understanding of knowledge thus put managers in a better position to implement the appropriate approach and make a sound and rational decision pertaining to knowledge and KM initiatives. Some of these principles such as: knowledge seeks community to happen, the need to be flexible and informal regarding knowledge, the need not to control knowledge too tightly, the concept that knowledge is a social process and it will be lost or die are of much interest and applicable to the work of the researcher.

2.1.4 Knowledge Management Basics

KM is about making the right knowledge available to the right people. It is about making sure that an organization can learn, and that it will be able to retrieve and use its knowledge assets in current applications as they are needed. In other words, it is "the coordination and exploitation of
organizational knowledge resources, in order to create benefit and competitive advantage” (Barclay and Murray, 2004).

According to Brown (1998), KM has been defined as “the discipline of creating a thriving work and learning environment that fosters the continuous creation, aggregation, use and re-use of both organizational and personal knowledge in the pursuit of new organizational values”. The emphasis in this definition is on use of knowledge and continuous learning.

According to Davenport and Prusak (1998), KM is managing the corporation's knowledge through a systematically and organizationally specified process for acquiring, organizing, sustaining, applying, sharing and renewing both the tacit and explicit knowledge of employees to enhance organizational performance and create value.

Though there is no universally agreed definition of KM, most agreed that it is the coming together of organizational processes, information processing technologies, organizational strategies and culture for the enhanced management and leverage of human knowledge and learning to the benefit of the company. Drucker (1993) argued that knowledge is not just another resource alongside the traditional factors of production – labour, capital, and land – but the only meaningful resource in the new economy.

2.2 Knowledge Management Perspectives and Approaches

2.2.1 Three Perspectives in Knowledge Management

A study related to KM was conducted by Alavi and Leidner (1999) to ascertain the meaning that managers ascribe to the concept of KM and three perspectives emerged: an information-based perspective, a technology-based perspective, and a culture-based perspective.

**Information-based perspective**: managers describe KM as it is about characteristics of information, such as readily-accessible information, real-time information, and actionable information. Its focus is concerned with reducing the overload of information by filtering the gems from the rocks.
Technology-based perspective: managers associate KM with various other systems such as data warehousing, enterprise wide systems, executive information systems, expert systems, and the intranet, as well as various tools (e.g., search engines, multi-media, and decision making tools).

Culture-based perspective: managers associate KM with learning (primarily from an organizational perspective), communication, and intellectual property cultivation. And they suggested that the IT component of KM was only 20% of the concept whereas the cultural and managerial aspects accounted for the bulk of the issue. The effectiveness of KM is determined by the knowledge infrastructure such as technology, structure and culture along with knowledge process architecture that are acquisition, conversion, application and protection (Gold et al., 2001).

2.2.2 Knowledge Management Approaches
One of the most common and indeed, important considerations in establishing an organizational KM strategy is the type of focus or orientation which it will have. These strategies can, in turn, be described along two different dimensions, which help to reflect and explain their orientation.

The first strategy is referred to as system strategy and reflects a systems orientation or focus in terms of KM. This strategy emphasizes the capability to help create, store, share and use an organization’s explicitly documented knowledge. The strategy as per this dimension emphasizes codifying and storing knowledge. Typically, knowledge can be codified via information technology. Codified knowledge is more likely to be reused. The emphasis is on completely specified sets of rules about what to do under every possible set of circumstances.

The other strategy can be referred to as human strategy and obviously reflects a human orientation or focus in terms of KM. This strategy emphasizes KS via interpersonal interaction. The strategy utilizes dialogue through social networks including occupational groups and teams. It helps share knowledge through person-to-person contacts. This strategy attempts to acquire internal and opportunistic knowledge and to share it informally. Knowledge can be obtained in a number of ways from experienced and skilled people. The following table summarizes the key features of system and human strategies.
### Table 1: Key Features of System and Human Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Features</th>
</tr>
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| **System** | - Emphasize coded knowledge in KM processes.  
- Focus on codifying and storing knowledge via information technology.  
- Attempts made to share knowledge formally. |
| **Human** | - Emphasize dialogue through social networks and person-to-person contacts.  
- Focus on acquiring knowledge via experienced and skilled people.  
- Attempts made to share knowledge informally. |

*Source: (Choi and Lee, 2000)*

Many studies have shed light on guidelines for employing systems oriented or human oriented strategy. These studies can be categorized into three views: focused, balanced, and dynamic. Figure 2 below compares these three views. The system oriented axis corresponds to the degree of codifying and storing organizational knowledge, its level of access and use. The human-oriented axis corresponds to the degree of acquiring and sharing tacit knowledge through interpersonal interaction.

*Source: KM Strategy and its link to Knowledge Creation Process (Choi and Lee, 2002)*

**Figure 2** Three Perspectives of Knowledge Management Strategies
Studies propose that companies should pursue one strategy predominantly. Hansen suggests that companies pursue one strategy while using another to support it, while Swan argues that a human-oriented strategy is superior to system-oriented strategy.

The balanced view suggests that companies should strike a right balance between the two strategies. Bierly and Chakrabarti found that firms, which acquire and share knowledge by combining system and human oriented strategies, tend to be more profitable. Jordan and Jones emphasize the balance between explicit and tacit knowledge based strategies for encouraging the development of more innovative knowledge. Zack states that firms with an aggressive strategy, which integrates system-oriented strategy with human oriented strategy, tend to outperform those of less aggressive strategy.

The dynamic view suggests that firms align their strategies with the characteristics of knowledge. For example, Bohn states that managers should align KM strategies along with the spectrum from pure expertise to pure procedure. Singh and Zollo argue that firms should align knowledge strategies along with task characteristics.

The focused view proposes that a company should focus on one strategy. In contrast, balanced and dynamic views insist that a company should utilize both strategies. Focused and balanced views fail to consider the dynamic nature of knowledge. Although knowledge should be analyzed as an active process that is inherently indeterminate and continually changing, these two views are static. The dynamic view proposes that the choice can vary depending upon knowledge characteristics.

2.3 Knowledge Management Principles and System

Many companies already know that the knowledge of their employees is their most valuable asset. Davenport (2001) the opinion that KM has thus far been addressed at either a philosophical or a technological level, with little discussion of how knowledge can be managed and used more effectively on a daily basis. According to Davenport, the most appropriate form of dialogue is not detailed tactics, but high-level principles.

When an organization decides what principles it agrees upon with respect to KM it can then create detailed approaches and plans based upon those principles. There are ten principles that
summarize many of the challenges that are faced by knowledge-based organizations, managers and employees. They are discussed below.

2.3.1 Knowledge Management Principles

KM is expensive

Knowledge is an asset, but its effective management requires investment of money and labor, including the following: knowledge capture, e.g. creation and moving of documents onto computer systems, adding value to knowledge through repackaging and editing, developing IT infrastructures for the distribution of knowledge and educating people on the creation, sharing and use of knowledge.

Effective KM requires hybrid solutions of people and technology

While computers and communications technology help with the capture and flow of knowledge, humans come into their own in interpreting it within a broader context for problem solving and decision-making.

KM is highly political

“Knowledge is power” thus, a highly political undertaking. Davenport (2001) argues that if knowledge is associated with power, money and success, then it is also associated with lobbying, intrigue and backroom deals.

KM requires leadership

Knowledge will not be well managed unless some senior person or group is given responsibility for it (as with other resources like finance and human resources). Managing knowledge and learning necessitates a type of leadership that differs fundamentally from the customary view of leader as central actor. The new types of leaders are seen as facilitators that promote KS and learning by their own personal action and behaviors (Davenport, 2001).
KM benefits more from maps than models, more from markets than hierarchies

Sharing and using knowledge are often unnatural acts. If knowledge is a valuable resource, why should people share it? If an employee’s job is to create knowledge, why should he/she put the job at risk by using someone else’s knowledge instead of his/her own (Nonaka, 1998). To enter knowledge into a system and to seek out knowledge from others is threatening and employees have to be highly motivated to undertake such work. Davenport (2001) suggested that encouragement for individuals to share knowledge can solve the problem.

KM means improving knowledge work processes

According to Davenport (2001) if real improvements are to be made in KM, improvements must be made in the key business processes.

Knowledge access is just the beginning

Knowledge access is important, but successful KM also requires attention and engagement. More active involvement with knowledge can be achieved through reporting it to others, through activities based on usage of the knowledge, and receiving the knowledge through close interaction with other providers of knowledge. This is particularly important when the knowledge to be received is tacit (Nonaka, 1998).

KM never ends

The tasks of KM are never-ending. Like human resource management or financial management, there is never a time when knowledge has been fully managed. It is not a once-off initiative: it is an ongoing management task. One reason that KM never ends is that the required knowledge is always changing. New managers and new professionals have new needs for knowledge (Wiig, 1995).

KM requires a knowledge contract

With much knowledge in employees’ heads, and increasing mobility, companies must clarify who owns and who has rights to employee knowledge. Many organizations have held employee knowledge (at least that developed between nine and five) to be the property of the corporation.
Many environmental changes make such an approach difficult. As knowledge becomes a more highly valued resource, organizations can expect to see more attention to the legalities of KM (Davenport, 2001).

### 2.3.2 The Knowledge Management System

The term ‘system’ is more than a simple collection of components; it could be defined as a set of objects forming a whole, together with the links between them and the links to their environment. The system must also have a goal or objective and characteristics. Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) are often viewed from a technological point of view; however, they emerged fundamentally as systems of human activity. KMS are based on human activities in relation to KM. However, they contain subsystems that are technological or organizational. The purpose of these technological and structural elements is simply to better enable the human activity system to function. From socio-technical perspectives the following three layers of KMS are considered:

Infrastructure provides the physical components for communication between the network members. An info structure provides the formal rules that govern the communicational exchanges within the actor-network. It provides the cognitive resources such as metaphors and common language that are used to make sense of the communicational exchanges and the third Info culture provides the background knowledge that is taken for granted and embedded in the social relations and work processes. This info culture provides constraints on knowledge and information sharing.

### 2.3.3 Principles of Knowledge Management System

In designing a KMS, some eight principles of KM should be taken into account. The first one is about the need for having hybrid solutions involving both people and technology for the effective management of knowledge. The second one is about the need to have committed knowledge managers and emphasis is on leadership. The third one emphasizes on the need to improve knowledge work processes. The fourth aspect is that stresses that KM is an endless process and never ends as long as an organization exists. The fifth one is states that KM requires a knowledge contract. The six one emphasizes on the need to have training on KM. The seventh point stress that KM is technology dependent and the last one emphasized that KM is a process and not a product.
The above principles of KMS go with the researchers understanding and assumption of a KM system. The researcher believes that for an effective KM implementation the role of people/employees and the technology being employed is of paramount importance. Leaders however, have the ultimate power and vital role as they can play a make or break decision on the fate of every organizational-wide initiatives such as KM. As a process KM never ends and is a continuous process that occurs as long as the organization exists as an entity. The other aspect that should not be neglected is the need to have properly trained personnel to manage knowledge at an organizational level. Because it is relatively a new and emerging concept, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia, proper understanding of the concept and processes to be followed have a significant impact on the success of the initiative. Appropriate training and adequate attention also contributes to the sustainability of the KM endeavor.

2.4 Knowledge Management Processes

KM is focused on capturing the expertise of organizations and individuals and on the disposal and application of this expertise in order to maximize the benefits and the returns from knowledge assets. KM helps to bring the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, thus enabling them to make the best decision. It involves the identification and analysis of available and required knowledge and the subsequent planning and control of actions to develop knowledge assets so as to fulfill organization objectives.

In order to transform knowledge into a valuable organizational asset, knowledge, experience, and expertise must be formalized, distributed, shared, and applied. KM is considered a key part of any strategy using expertise to create a sustainable competitive advantage in today’s business environment. Many authors have proposed different models for KM ranging from two to more than eight different processes. According to Bergeron (2003) KM contains the following eight processes:

The process starts with creation or acquisition where knowledge is created or gathered by knowledge workers. The second one, modification: is about modifying knowledge in order to suit immediate or future needs. The third part is use: is usage of the knowledge for some specific, useful purpose. The fourth one is archiving: is about storing knowledge in a form and format that will survive in time and will still be accessible and usable for knowledge workers. The fifth one,
transfer: is about transfer or communication of knowledge. The six stage, translation/repurposing is a stage whereby knowledge is translated from its original form into a new form more suitable for some new purpose. The seven which is user access: deals with the provision of limited access to knowledge workers according to their position in the company and their needs. The last and eighth stage of the process is disposal: is about identifying which information/knowledge to keep and which to destroy.

From the above brief explanation of the KM process one can grasp that KM is not a one-off activity rather a process that has to be carried out throughout the life of the organization and each of the steps in the life cycle requires special attention.

Source: (Bergeron, 2003)

Figure 3 Knowledge Management Processes

Bergeron (2003) provides a detailed and useful description of KM processes. He used the concept of Knowledge Management Life Cycle (KMLC) including eight processes (creation and acquisition, modification, use, transfer, archiving, translating/repurposing, access, and disposal).

The eight elements of the KM process as described by Bergeron are interrelated to each other. As in life cycle of plants and animals the eight processes which can be considered as life cycle are related and one follows the other. As old and existing knowledge are disposed new once emerge and the life cycle continues and the management of KM is a continuous process occurring throughout the life time of the organization.

Source: (Bergeron, 2003)
2.4.1 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge exists in the minds of employees, which cannot be clearly observed, then how to manage this knowledge has become a particularly difficult problem in KM. Knowledge in the mind of individuals or tacit knowledge is essentially an unconscious cognitive ability, and it is highly personalized knowledge that is acquired by individual experience. Therefore, it is through sharing that enterprises manage this knowledge well, and promote its sharing among staff to enhance competitive advantages.

The old paradigm, which is, knowledge is power is changed, and it needs to be explicitly understood that sharing knowledge is power (Green, 1999). Performing activities in an organization requires a collaborative effort. If you try to work alone you are likely to fail, you need not only the input from other people but also their support. Therefore, being open with them, and sharing with them helps you achieve your objectives.

According to Al-Hawarden (2003), KS is the communication of all types of knowledge including explicit knowledge (information, know-how) and tacit knowledge (skills and competency). KS can be defined as a social interaction culture, involving the exchange of employee knowledge, experiences, and skills through the whole department or organization (Hegel et al., 2003). The authors also explained that KS occurs at the individual and organizational levels. For individual employees, KS is talking to colleagues to help them get something done better, more quickly, or more efficiently. For an organization, KS is capturing, organizing, reusing, and transferring experience-based knowledge that resides within the organization and making that knowledge available to others in the business.

KS is, the process that, intended to exploit existing knowledge. To enhance the reusability of knowledge, first the KS process identify existing and accessible knowledge, in order to transfer and apply this knowledge to solve specific tasks better, faster and cheaper than they would. It is also about bridging situations of organizational interdependencies and thereby supporting ongoing organizational activities. The goal of KS can either be to create new knowledge by differently combining existing knowledge or to become better at exploiting existing knowledge (Christensen, 2007). According to Riesenberger (1998), KS is very important in organizations success since it...
enables: to learn about customers, to seek best practices, to recognize internal competencies and products, to discover emerging market trends, and to find competitive intelligence.

As per Nonaka et al., (1995), the organizational knowledge creation / conversion process is based on a simple framework that contains two dimensions. The first dimension shows that only individuals create knowledge while the other dimension relates to the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge. These two dimensions constitute the base for defining the four knowledge creation / conversion processes – Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization (SEIC).

**Socialization:** tacit knowledge is converted into tacit knowledge during discussions, communications, meetings, etc.

**Externalization:** tacit knowledge is converted into explicit knowledge, and embodied in documents, manuals, etc.

**Combination:** explicit knowledge is converted into another form of explicit knowledge.

**Internalization:** explicit knowledge is converted by individuals into tacit knowledge.

![SEIC Model](source: (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995))

**Figure 4 SEIC Model**
The four different modes of knowledge conversion build a knowledge spiral without a start or an end. This continuous and dynamic process has its roots in the behavior of the main knowledge creation agent – the human being.

### 2.4.2 Knowledge Capture

Knowledge capture could span the whole set of activities performed by an organization, starting with the organization of customers and market information, to the collection of examples of best practice or lessons learned or the development of a mentoring programme. It is important to capture both explicit and tacit knowledge even though the latter creates more difficulties.

The capture of explicit knowledge is the systematic approach of capturing, organizing, and refining information in a way that makes information easy to find, while also facilitating learning and problem solving. Tacit KM is the process of capturing the experience and expertise of the individual in an organization and making it available to anyone who needs it. Knowledge acquisition from individuals or groups can be characterized as the transfer and transformation of valuable expertise from a knowledge source.

### 2.4.3 Knowledge Codification

Knowledge codification serves the pivotal role of allowing what is known in the organization to be shared and used collectively. By converting knowledge into a tangible, explicit form such as a document, knowledge can be communicated much more widely and with less cost. Knowledge must be codified/organized in order to be understood, maintained and improved upon as part of corporate memory. People always use some type of knowledge codification during their everyday activities to make communication and discussions more effective. The codification of explicit knowledge can be achieved through a variety of techniques such as cognitive mapping, decision trees and knowledge taxonomies.

**Cognitive Maps** – Once expertise, experience, and know-how have been rendered (made) explicit, the resulting content can be represented as a cognitive map. A cognitive map is a representation of the "mental model" of a person's knowledge and provides a good form of codified knowledge. In the map, the nodes represent the key concepts, while the links between them show the interrelations between concepts.
Decision Trees typically is the form of a flowchart, with alternate paths indicating the impact of different decisions being made at that juncture point. A decision tree can represent many "rules," and when you execute the logic by following a certain path, you are effectively by passing rules that are not relevant to the case in hand.

Knowledge Taxonomies concepts can be viewed as the building blocks of knowledge and expertise. Taxonomies are basic classification systems that enable us to describe concepts and their dependencies – typically in a hierarchical fashion. The higher up the concept is placed, the more general or generic the concept is. The lower the concept is placed, the more specific an instance it is of the higher-level categories. This approach allows lower or more specific concepts in the taxonomy to directly incorporate the attributes of the higher level or the parent concepts.

2.5 Enablers of Knowledge Management

The success of KM implementation will not take place without the collective work of various enablers in the organizations. According to Yang et al., (2006), KM enabler refers to the key factors that determine the effectiveness of executing KM within the organization. KM enablers among others include the extent that the management believes in KM effects, IT used, HR
management and the culture of the organization (Al-Mabrouk, 2006). In fact, any KM system will include these variables to make knowledge related organizational functions practical. In order to ensure the success of KM implementation, it is crucial to acquire the key enablers. In order to make it possible for effectively utilizing an organization’s limited resources, reduce the use of work force, material, time and still be able to achieve the expected results.

For effective KM to take place, organizations should create conducive KM environment. In addition, organizations are required to improve the organizational culture that enhance collaborative teamwork culture; network and virtual organization; learning, research and discovery culture. Moreover, organizations should give encouragement and promotion for creativity rather than mere adaptation and emphasis on leadership roles rather than administrative position (Alavi and Leidner, 1999).

**Organizational enablers**

The first phase of implementing KM is working to gain the support of the senior managers and to reach a common understanding about the concept of KM. An organizational structure reflects the organization’s policy in discussing with its employees and in absorbing new ideas and experience within and outside its capacity (Alrawi and Elkhatib, 2009). Organizations have to maintain a balance between intrinsic and explicit rewards in order to encourage employees ‘behavior of KS. The most effective use of explicit rewards has been to encourage sharing at the onset of a KM initiative (Hasanali, 2002). Adequate training in KM implementation enabled by adequate technology and people who knows how to use it.

Financial support, human resources and time are significant resources for successful KM adoption. Financial support is undoubtedly required if an investment in technological capabilities is made. Human resources are required to coordinate and manage the adoption of KM process, as well as to take up knowledge related roles (Al-Mabrouk, 2006).

**Corporate culture**

In the process of carrying out KM, enterprises have to face the varying conditions of corporate culture, workflow processes and the integration of group members’ knowledge (Yeh, 2006). According to Yeh, corporate culture is the combination of value, core belief, behavioral model
and symbol. It represents the value system of the company and will become the employees’ behavior and norm. Corporate culture is the important part in forming a culture of KS. It might need to be supplement by IT. Thus, management should promote the corporate attitude that focuses on co-operation and KS across the organization.

**Process enablers**

Many authors have suggested a number of activities or processes associated with KM implementation in the organization (Alavi and Leidner, 1999). Thus, it is important that organizations to adopt a process-based view to KM based on the structure and infrastructure of the organization context.

**Technology enablers**

Technology is a basis for effective KM progress and implementation in organizations (Hasanali, 2002). IT is a vital factor to support the process of storing and distributing knowledge for sharing among employees. Technology provides tools and techniques to capture, create structure, communicate and effectively exploit knowledge. The main role of technology is seen as an enabling and facilitating interaction among people for the purpose of KS (Handzic et al., 2004). When we say technology, it includes e-mail, bulletin boards, chat rooms and whiteboards, audio and video-conferencing. It also covers various specialized groupware applications: Customer Relationship Management (CRM), data mining, integrated portals, e-learning, intranets and extranets (Handzic et al., 2004 and Malhotra, 2005).

**2.6 Knowledge Sharing Barriers**

In any organizations, in the implementation of KMS emphasis is given for knowledge-sharing behavior of the employees. Since the success of KM initiatives largely depends on the willingness of organizational members to share their tacit knowledge (Chatzoglou and Vraimaki, 2009). Organization to be a knowledge creation organization it should focuses on KS activities. As a result, understanding the factors that influence individuals’ behavior toward KS in the organizational context is essential.

On this regard, World Bank (WB) is an outstanding bank that creates a KS culture throughout the organization, launched a KS initiative in 1996 (Guanyu and Guocan, 2010). The breadth and
depth of a KM system KMS depends on the magnitude of knowledge contributed to the system and shared with colleagues. Thus, knowledge contribution (sharing) is a critical KM process. Therefore, examining the factors that affect the individual KS behavior is essential to the success in the deployment of organizational KM system (Al-Busaidi et al., 2010).

Generally, implementing KS practice in the work environment is limited by a number of factors such as culture, policies, strategies, technologies and even the personality of workers (Al-Busaidi, 2010; Chatzoglou and Vraimaki, 2009).

2.7 History of Knowledge Management

The study of knowledge dates back to ancient Greece. Even before that, knowledge was at least implicitly managed as people performed work. Early hunters, for example learned the best skills and practices for a successful hunt. These skills and techniques transferred from one generation to the next. This illustrates the transfer of knowledge, a KM activity (Wiig, 1997). The actual study of KM as a separate discipline is much more recent. Like the study of communication, it has roots in many other areas of study - business, management, sociology, and economics to name just a few. Drucker (1999) argues that KM is based largely on the work of Frederick Winslow Taylor, who studied manual workers.

During the 19th century, economists argued about differences in the skill level of workers. When considering productivity, they categorized workers as either hard workers or lazy workers. Taylor did not agree with this line of thought and examined the inefficiencies in how workers performed their jobs. He did this by recording motions necessary to accomplish the task and then eliminating unnecessary steps and then designing or redesigning tools, if necessary, to assist the worker in accomplishing his task.

Taylor pointed out that very little skill is involved in production. He claimed that what makes workers productive is knowledge (Drucker, 1999). While the names for this emerging discipline have changed and the concepts and theories have evolved over the years from Taylor-Task Analysis to Task Management to Scientific Management to Industrial Engineering, Drucker argues that Taylor’s work is the foundation of KM.
2.8 Knowledge Management in the UN System

Over the past eight years, increased attention has been given to KM in the context of the UN reforms and organizational change. The establishment and approval by the General Assembly of the Office of Information and Communications Technology, with its dedicated KM Service, as well as the Secretariat Information and Communications Technology strategy, which incorporates KM components, mark important milestones towards enhancing KM in the Secretariat (Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2009).

According to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (2006), there is no common understanding of KM or KS in the Secretariat. “KM” is typically associated with disseminating information, which is only part of KS. That emphasis overlooks the critical role cross-organizational collaboration and peer interaction plays in effective KS. Below is summary of KM practices with selected UN agencies.

2.8.1 Knowledge Management in WFP

WFP has a wide range of data and information management tools, aiming to provide decision makers in different locations to provide guidance on procedures, and to communicate. However, there is no comprehensive KM strategy in place, and issues related to KM are divided between a range of units in the organization (including IT, internal communication, HR and individual technical units).

Most systems are focused largely on collecting, storing and disseminating explicit knowledge and data, with little attention paid to the management of tacit knowledge. Currently tacit knowledge is communicated in various ways, both through formal events (e.g. workshops, seminars, meetings, and e-consultations) and informally between individuals by meeting ad-hoc to discuss a particular issue, or using the phone, e-mail and skype. The latter system largely relies on existing contacts between staff members.

2.8.2 Knowledge Management in World Bank

Following a clear and distinct senior leadership vision, the WB has taken steps to transform itself into a knowledge leader. Building on the premise that fighting poverty requires a global
knowledge-sharing strategy, sharing at the Bank is about “making this knowledge readily accessible to a wide audience internally and externally, and creating linkages between groups and communities working on similar topics”.

The Bank intentionally focused first on its internal KS before turning to external KS, and has also shifted from an early emphasis on capturing and organizing knowledge to adopting, adapting and applying knowledge to help staff and partners work more effectively to reduce poverty. Current knowledge-sharing programmes with the Bank include: knowledge networks, helpdesk and advisory services, knowledge collections on the web, “tacit” knowledge debriefings and a platform to share knowledge with the development community through the Development Gateway Website.

According to a WB evaluation, three main challenges are: linking KS more directly with the Bank’s core operational work; capturing lessons learned and good practices more systematically; and strengthening content management to ensure quality and operational relevance.

### 2.8.3 Knowledge Management in United Nations Development Programme

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has focused its KS around five development practice areas. They bring together staff from different offices into voluntary, flexible communities that inform members about new activities, share experiences and good practices and facilitate discussion of substantive issues. Linked primarily by an electronic network, they are also supported by face-to-face meetings and other activities. UNDP acknowledged a need to better mainstream its KM into its business processes and developed a formal KM strategy in 2004.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The researcher followed descriptive research techniques that identified KS practices of the selected UN organization. By demonstrating the existence of certain practices, the approach provided an opportunity to look into the practical application of KS vis-à-vis principles and accepted assumptions and could provoke action.

Through this method employees were asked on what they feel about specific KS practices, and some managers also provided their general views on the subject of the study. For purposes of best tackling the research questions and exploiting the possible advantages of the available approaches with utmost minimal drawback, the research utilized a mixed research approach which utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.2 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources were used for generating quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Major sources of primary data used were managers and employees of WFP, Ethiopia. Secondary data were gathered from available documents, books, journals and websites.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

3.3.1 Sampling Technique

Proportionate Stratified Simple Random Sampling was used to select the ultimate sampling units for the semi structured questionnaire. Before the actual selection of the ultimate sampling units for the structured questionnaire, all WFP, Ethiopia staff were stratified into two major groups or strata (Staff working in the capital Addis Ababa and those who work in the different Sub Offices). The main criterion for stratifying the staff into the two groups was due to the fact that Staff in the capital Addis Ababa are mainly engaged in advisory and provision of technical assistance to staff.
in the Sub Offices; while the Sub Office staff are predominantly engaged in the direct implementation of WFP Ethiopia’s CO operations and programmatic activities at field level.

The Proportionate Stratified Simple Random Sampling technique was selected as the population of WFP Ethiopia staff in this case is heterogeneous. In such cases, use of simple random sampling may not provide a representative sample of the population. Therefore the researcher opted to divide the population into relatively homogenous groups and then samples were selected using simple random sampling from each group. This approach was selected as it guarantees that every unit in the population has a chance of being selected.

For the semi-structured interview, purposive sampling technique was employed to select international managers and the IKM Officer. This technique was used with the assumption that the researcher knows enough about the population and their characteristics to handpick the sample, as an internal staff working in the HR Unit. Besides, the researcher believed that this group has a decisive role in implementation of any organizational wide initiatives as the group more or less represents the middle management of the organization that serves as a bridge between the top level management which is engaged itself in major policy and strategy issues and the larger workforce who perform the actual operational activities.

### 3.3.2 Sample Size

Statistical formula derived by Kumar (2000) was employed to determine the sample size for the quantitative data to be obtained through a structured questionnaire. A total of 215 employees are selected to be part of the study by filling the questionnaires distributed. 9 managers and 1 IKM officers are interviewed to get deeper insight of the current knowledge sharing practice of the organization under study.
3.4 Instruments and Procedures of Data Collection

3.4.1 Instruments of Data Collection

In this research, quantitative and qualitative data were needed. So, data collection instruments used for the research were semi-structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The likert-scale was applied in which respondents are asked to express their attitude on a set of statements using a five-point scale. This method seemed the most viable option to capture the responses and to measure the perception they have on specific aspects of KM process.

3.4.2 Procedures of Data Collection

The data collecting procedure is the concurrent procedure which is converging quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, both forms of data are collected at the same time and then are integrated in the interpretation of the overall results. The primary data collection was conducted through self-administered semi-structured questionnaires, key informant semi-structured interview. Questionnaire and interview questions were designed and pre-tested before the actual conduct of the study. The confidentiality and anonymity of the data was explained to the participants and distributed in person and via e-mail to selected staff of WFP, Ethiopia to solicit the data.

3.5 Methods of Data Analysis

Once raw data were collected, descriptive data analysis methods were employed to analyze data. For the quantitative data, Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 16 software was used during data entry, cleaning, processing and analysis. Among the descriptive statistical tools percentages were used to describe the current state of knowledge sharing practices. Text analysis and direct quotation is used as a means of analyzing qualitative data obtained responses from interview, open-ended questions on the questionnaire and data obtained from review of documents. Then based on the information obtained from data analysis, generalizations about the population were made.
3.6 Validity of Instrument

Validity means that we are measuring what we want to measure. There are different types of validity measurements including, face validity - whether at face value, the questions appear to be measuring the objective of the study. The researcher undertook a pre-test on selected employees to check the validity of the questionnaire and corrections were made based on the feedbacks collected. Those respondents who were part of the pilot test were not included in the actual conduct of the study. The content validity also assured when the questionnaire was prepared based on extensive reading of literature review.

While preparing the questionnaire ambiguous or vague wordings were avoided to ensure that respondents would read and answer the question consistently on different occasions in the same context. The data from different sources can help for crosschecking the information obtained.

3.7 Study Variables

The variables for the study included internal staff who are knowledge users, the awareness level of staff on KM, the KS practice, sources of knowledge and barriers to KS within WFP Ethiopia.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

This chapter of the thesis deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. It has eight parts. The first part presents the characteristics of the respondents while the second part describes about the awareness level of the respondents on KS. The third part deals with current KS practices and the fourth one on sources of knowledge and their contribution towards learning within the organization while the fifth one deals on barriers to KS practice within WFP Ethiopia. The sixth part talks on major benefits of the IKM system since its launch in 2010 and the seventh one contains suggestions made by staff to improve the current information and KM systems with particular emphasis to KS.

Both quantitative data gathered using semi-structured questionnaires and qualitative ones collected through semi-structured interviews with selected international managers and open-ended questions on the questionnaire made are incorporated here. Finally the qualitative data obtained from the oral interview made with the IKM officer presented separately.

Data collected from the respondents using structured questionnaire were organized into tables and figures and presented below.

4.1 Characteristic of the Respondents

A total of 201 usable KS practice assessment questionnaires were collected out of the expected 215, representing a return rate of 93.4 percent. The distribution of the respondents by gender, geographical location (CO Addis Ababa and Sub/Field Office out of Addis Ababa), educational level, and work experience within WFP Ethiopia are presented in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.
Table 2 Distribution of Respondents’ by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>No. of Respondents’ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Survey data*

As we can see from table 2 above, out of the total 201 respondents to the questionnaire, 145 or 72.1 percent were males while the remaining 56 or 27.9 percent were females. Corresponding to the male/female ratio of the entire workforce in WFP Ethiopia both at the CO and Sub Offices, the study sample was also proportionately dominated by male respondents.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents’ by Geographic Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>No. of respondents’ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country Office</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Offices</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Survey data*

From table 3 above, 98 or 48.8 percent were from the CO located in Addis Ababa main office and the remaining 103 or 51.2 percent were located in the 12 Sub and two Field Offices found outside of Addis Ababa. Hence, more or less an equal representation of respondents was there from the Sub/Field Offices as well as CO.
Table 4 Distribution of Respondents’ by Educational Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>No. of respondents’ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>M.Sc./MA</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Post Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>B.Sc./BA</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>University Diploma</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Regarding academic qualification, as shown on table 4 above, most of the respondents’ hold M.A/MSc (about 44.8 percent) with 38.3 percent BA/BSc holders. 84.5 percent of respondents are graduates and above. This shows that the majorities of employees have the requisite qualification to perform their job and are ready to contribute towards the KM initiative/practice.

Table 5 Distribution of Respondents by Years of Services in WFP Ethiopia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>No of respondents’ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;= 4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 10</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Pertaining to work experience, 38.3 percent of respondents work for less than 4 years, 40.8 percent between 5 to 10 years and the remaining 20.9 percent work for more than 10 years. 61.7 percent of the respondents (those have been in services in WFP Ethiopia for 5 years and above) have both pre and post-IKM experience in WFP Ethiopia (as IKM started and made functional since 2010 in WFP Ethiopia).
4.2 Understanding and Awareness Level on Knowledge Management

The response rate regarding the understanding and awareness level on KM is summarized in the table below.

Table 6 Awareness Level of Staff on Knowledge Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Variable on Awareness Level on KM</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do not have clear understanding but have been hearing about KM</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Just a one-time fad in WFP Ethiopia that fades as time passes</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Merely a platform for repository of electronic resources</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A management tool that help staff acquire &amp; share knowledge</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KM contributes to day-to-day business/operation</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>KM has no relevance for my job and do not get any added value</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>KM is about gaining, sharing, retaining and using knowledge</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>1008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>There is no relationship between KM and organizational efficiency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey data

Note: SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A =Agree SA=Strongly Agree
As shown on table 6 above, 61.7 percent of the respondents have a general understanding/awareness regarding KM. whereas, 27.9 percent respondents confirmed that they don’t have adequate knowledge management awareness. For 49.8 percent of the respondents, KM is a management tool that helps staff acquire and share knowledge. 55.8 percent respondents acknowledge knowledge as gaining, sharing, retaining and using knowledge. On the other hand, 49.8 percent respondents see knowledge management as merely a platform for repository of electronic resources, only 26.4 percent respond in contrary.

52.5 percent of the respondents agreed on the contribution of KM to their day-to-day business/operation, only 15.9 percent of the respondent disagreed. In line with this response only 9.5 percent of the respondent said KM has no relevance for their job and do not get any added value whereas, 73.1 percent of the respondent answered in contrary.

57.7 percent of the respondent disagreed on knowledge management as just a one-time fad in WFP, Ethiopia that feds as time passes. Apart from this, about 18.4 percent of the respondents agreed on the contrary and put knowledge management of WFP Ethiopia as a one-time fad.

Although the above responses shows the existence of awareness on the concepts and benefits of KM among staff of WFP Ethiopia, from contrasting responses the researcher realized that there are difference in awareness level of staff of WFP Ethiopia on concepts and benefits of KM.
4.3 Knowledge Management Practice within WFP Ethiopia

The responses of the study participants on the current status of KM practice within WFP Ethiopia are tabulated in the table shown below.

Table 7: Knowledge Sharing and Utilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable on KS and utilization</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of visit/usage of IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia</td>
<td>% 19.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage of knowledge networks such as e-mail, internet/intranet</td>
<td>% 2.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documenting and sharing work to others</td>
<td>% 4.5</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge/skills sharing on regular basis and in a formal way</td>
<td>% 7.5</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and Promotion of KS culture</td>
<td>% 7.5</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of staff access to KM services</td>
<td>% 4.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance and importance of documents on IKM portal</td>
<td>% 2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Survey data*

As indicated in table 7 above 22.4 percent of respondents visit IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia frequently whereas 36.3 percent of the respondent use the IKM portal less frequently. For the questions asked on relevance and importance of documents on IKM portal, 69.6 percent of the respondents indicated the high relevance and importance of documents on IKM portal. On the other hand, 63.2 percent respondent set that they frequently use knowledge networks such as e-
mail, internet/intranet. From these we can conclude that e-mail, internet and intranet are used more frequently than IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia, even though they put importance of documents on IKM portal on high level.

49.7 percent of the respondents put documenting and sharing work to others as high, while 18.9 percent of them respond the opposite. Besides, 32.3 percent of the respondents share knowledge/skills on regular basis and in a formal way on high rate. Regarding the rate of sharing knowledge regularly and formally 31.9 percent of respondent indicated that the level of sharing knowledge on regular basis and in formal way is low.

According to the response rate obtained 52.8 percent of the respondents have high accesses to KM services, whereas, 20.8 percent of them have low accesses to KM services.

The above responses signified that staff have the general awareness and basic knowledge on KM and related initiatives and everyone has started contributing his own share towards the success of the initiative. Moreover, the access to KM services and relevance and importance of materials on IKM was good though the percentage response to the access part signaled a special attention as it is only slightly above 50 percent.

A broader interview was conducted with selected international managers to comment on the existing KM practices within their respective units. Accordingly most of the managers replied that they practice KM within their respective units by way of documenting and sharing reports on shared drives, meetings, workshops, and formal and informal discussions, induction and orientation to new comers, job rotation among colleagues who are at equal level, experience / KS forums, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), on the job trainings and briefing before and after TDYs (Temporary Duty Assignments), field missions etc. and referring/sharing of handover notes, briefing between incoming and outgoing staff and the like. However, it is a bit of an isolated initiative peculiar to the specific unit and could not be considered as an organizational wide initiative/practice.

In replying to the question on how frequently managers visit IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia, Response from one manager in the sub office: “I use the IKM very rarely because in the sub office we always face difficulties in accessing the IKM due to poor network/accessibility problems.” Two managers from the sub office repeated this similar feedback.
While one manager from the CO replied negatively as: “I have never visited IKM portal at all but I strongly believe that my unit, (logistics), has the best KS system/practice in the organization irrespective of the use of the portal.”

While another professional with strong IT background replied affirmatively as: “I use IKM on day to day basis. Whenever I need information of any type pertaining to my work, I refer to the IKM portal and as I get new information in my unit, I upload it immediately on the IKM portal for the benefit of others. I have been also encouraging my staff to do same.”

From the feedback of the international professionals, we can learn that there is no uniform utilization of the IKM portal among the international professionals. The case is worsened as even colleagues in the main office have wide-ranging usage of the IKM. This is a clear indication that the IKM officer should conduct a massive awareness creation campaign and try to find a means to address the connectivity problem in the sub offices.

4.4 Sources of Knowledge for Employees of WFP Ethiopia

In this part staff were asked to indicate major sources of knowledge with degree of contribution towards their learning in the organization and performance on day to day operations.

Table 8 Sources of knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable on sources of knowledge</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induction and orientation sessions</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and skills acquired from prior experience</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the job trainings</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No 15</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal education during</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in table 8 above, 65.1 percent of the respondents put learning by doing the actual work including trial and errors as a major source of knowledge. Knowledge and skills acquired from prior experience take second position by getting 63.2 percent response rate. On a third position stands formal education during college/university study by obtaining 53.7 percent of the response rate.

On the other hand, knowledge/skills shared from colleagues who attended trainings/WS put as lower rated source of knowledge by 52.2 percent of the respondent. In addition, Induction and
orientation sessions and membership of a project team, task force or committees are among the lower rated sources of knowledge by 51.3 percent and 44.3 percent respondents respectively.

Review of the well exploited sources of knowledge and their contribution towards current performance (those 50 percent and above), were found to be those that are gained as a result of individual efforts and knowledge/skills gained prior to joining WFP Ethiopia. This supports the widely held observation that staff in UN generally tend to join with adequate skills and experience elsewhere and join the organization due to some attractions.

On the other hand, those factors that are rated as low and very low are knowledge and skills to be gained from internal sources after gaining WFP Ethiopia. If responses to induction and orientation programmes are reviewed, 51.3 percent of the respondents respond that the contribution for their learning of performance of current job is either low or very low. This indicates the need/importance to make potentially useful internal sources of knowledge more accessible to staff and facilitate the required induction/orientation programs on regular and timely basis.

4.5 Barriers to Knowledge Sharing and Utilization within WFP Ethiopia

The response rate on the potential barriers of KS and its utilization is summarized in the table below.

Table 9 Barriers to Knowledge Sharing and Utilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable on Barriers to KS</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited interaction between experts and knowledge users</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of KM Strategy</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts not willing and motivated to share</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working environment and work</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most widely cited (identified as “agree” and “strongly agree” barriers hindering KS with colleagues within WFP Ethiopia are “Limited interaction between experts and knowledge users” 51.7 percent, “Absence of reward/recognition mechanism for KS initiatives”, 59.7 percent and “lack of information on whom to consult on specific knowledge needs”, 47 percent.

The fact that three of the areas that have been identified as barriers of KM by majority of respondents are crucial and of paramount importance for the success of any KM initiative, confirmed that the factors are widespread and need to be addressed. These factors are among the
factors that require prime attention by any KM initiative, and thus, the IKM unit shall put special attention on it.

Moreover, 42.7 percent of respondents’ accept absence of proper KM policy and strategy as a barrier to KM initiatives. The absence of a clear guide for action and low level of staff knowhow on the whereabouts of specific knowledge repositories also impacts the overall KM endeavor.

Respondents have also identified the following factors as not major barriers KS practices: “the working environment and the nature of work being performed”, “Fear of job security”, “Cultural factors”, “Lack of trust among knowledge workers and dominance of “knowledge is power” thinking”, and “Lack of commitment and support by the top management.” The absence of these factors affecting KS at WFP Ethiopia could be taken as the strongest aspects of WFP Ethiopia in terms of its readiness for KS.

When asked if workplace settings and type of job being performed encourage KS, one manager from the sub-office replied: “In fact the answer is a big no. This is because the routine day to-day work demand is high and is not giving staff time to engage in such knowledge exchanges. Moreover, with the subject matter experts concentrated in the capital Addis and staff doing the operational works in the sub-offices, setting is not conducive at all for KS”

One manager from the programme unit replied: “Work place settings are among the worst for KS in my unit, unlike in finance and logistics where staff sit in open space and closer to each other. The sitting arrangement is not suitable for peer-to-peer learning as staff in the unit performing similar functions sit in different floors and apart within the same floor.”

The above two managers responded negatively while two managers from logistics and finance, the units which are known for better sitting arrangements for KS replied respectively as follows:

Feedback the logistics manager: “Yes of course! The open space sitting is best for transfer of knowledge/information among colleagues. Without moving from own desk one can learn a lot through peer-to-peer discussion and KS. The regular rotation from one sector to the other is also part of the KS and transfer programme for colleagues within the logistics unit and this practice has been highly effective and beneficial to the staff as well as the organization.” The manager
added “In logistics there is no one who is master of one specific area and problem of skill/knowledge gap is covered through the rotational modality.”

Feedback from the finance manager: “Yes it encourages KS. The sitting arrangement here (two staff sitting opposite to each other) motivates KS and provides avenue for discussion and communication. Also finance colleagues work in rotation and that is useful for the staff as it promotes KS and one can have good understanding in all aspects of the finance work.”

From the above feedback we can deduce that the setting arrangement is not uniform across WFP work units and as confirmed by respondents some have good sitting arrangement for KS while others do not. The IKM unit shall work with the respective unit heads in making the arrangement more suitable and supportive to the KS initiative.

When asked to list what they consider as potential barriers to KS system, one manager from the sub office replied: “One is the time factor/time management; staff need to spend some time to enhance their knowledge. The other challenge is poor in the sub offices due to constant connection/communication break-downs; it becomes difficult to access important knowledge systems.”

While the manager from the logistics unit replied: “The logistics unit is not dependent on IKM for KS and utilization and hence there is no barrier as long as staff are willing and capable of learning new things. But resistance is there with few colleagues. The mentality/mind set of some colleagues to stick on what they have instead of benefitting from the job rotation and shadowing practice in logistics, due to their inflexible behavior can be mentioned but in general there is no barrier from system point of view.”

While one manager from the program unit replied: “I consider human behaviour issue as the greatest challenge as most staff prefer keeping his/her resources for him/herself. This is because KS practice is not embedded as a mandatory and not recognized as an official and integral part of our work; reluctance to go one step further and upload useful information for the benefit of others.”
The finance manager on his part replied as follows: “The major barriers I consider include: lack of initiative to update materials uploaded on IKM and remove obsolete ones, and searching on IKM is not user friendly.”

While colleagues in the CO provided detailed responses, one manager from the program unit responded as follows: “I consider absence of focal person within units, lack of updated and current materials on IKM, as one may run the risk of using obsolete information. There is no policy and clear guidance on what sort of information shall be uploaded on IKM and by whom. These create too much information which are often times confusing and difficult to identify and lack of adequate time to use IKM.”

Another manager from the Programme unit replied almost the same, though different language. From the above feedback we can understand that there is a considerable degree of barriers that blocks the smooth sharing of knowledge among employees. This should be one of the areas that the IKM officer shall work with the CO senior management and try to seek a solution.

As per information gathered from review of relevant documentation and personal observation, the researcher agreed with the recommendations made by the international professional managers and staff.

4.6 Benefits of Information and Knowledge Management System of WFP, Ethiopia

Some of the benefits of the IKM system since its launch according to information gathered from the open ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews include: initiative to have IKM as one of the pioneer country offices within WFP Global Offices, IKM facilitates routine day-to-day business such as bookings for airport pickup and drop off services, facilitates easy access to corporate links and timely sharing of organizational information, minimizes paper work and, therefore, saves a tremendous amount of time and physical resources, helped staff in getting greater awareness on the roles/functions of other work units, contributes to staff skills/knowledge through electronic learning, initiates information/KS culture within WFP Ethiopia, exit interviews and the regular KS forums by IKM staff used to be one of the important knowledge/experience sharing forums.
While asked to list benefits of IKM, some international professionals provided the below response.

Two professionals from the Sub Office replied: “We mainly use IKM to book or request for airport pick up /drop-off services while travelling to CO for official businesses.” The other respondent replied: “For the sub office IKM serves as electronic resource centre for easy access of various documents, policies and procedures, guidance notes and HR, Admin and Finance formats.”

While one manager with strong IT background stated its benefits as: “Availability of electronic resources with less effort as IKM serves as repository of official documents produced by WFP.”

The finance officer explained the benefits of using IKM portal as: “Reduced cost, time and eventually brings efficiency.”

From the feedback of the international professionals we can deduce that though not uniformly applied, IKM portal is providing the intended purpose to a certain extent.

When asked about the importance of KS culture towards improving efficiency, Managers from Finance replied as: “As more people are inclined to share, less time to search for information and that contributes towards efficiency.’ Moreover, new entrants can hit the ground so quickly through the KS mechanism as we would not have to constantly re-invent the wheel.”

The international manager with strong Information and Communication Technology (ICT) background provided similar feedback while the other managers also provided positive remarks, predominantly on the minimization of time which eventually leads to efficiency.

4.7 Suggestion from Staff and International Managers to Improve IKM System

From the analysis of the responses for open ended questions on the questionnaire few recommendations were collected as areas for future improvement. The main ones include: need for greater and regular awareness creation sessions on IKM to new and existing staff, IKM needs to be proactive with inter-active system and network with external parties, IKM shall conduct periodic surveys to know staff preferences and effective ways of managing the system, IKM shall work with the management and encourage staff participation and awareness to boost the KS
culture, re-instate the discontinued but one time successful initiatives such as exit interviews and regular KS forums, IKM to be innovative and consider staff interest pertaining to resources to be shared through the portal, update resources on the portal and its design on a regular basis, each work unit or sub/field office to assign IKM focal person for greater usage and exploitation of the system, IKM should organize regular knowledge/skill sharing sessions, IKM should work with ICT for improved access at the sub/field office level, benchmark and implement better systems and approaches on IKM and advocate for IKM so as to encourage staff to use and contribute towards IKM and organize regular IKM talks.

During the oral interviews, international professionals were also asked to provide their recommended actions for future so as to improve the KS practice of the organization. Major feedbacks of respondents are summarized below.

One manager from the Sub Office replied: “First and foremost, to find solutions for the poor and intermittent connectivity in the sub offices and then make the system more user-friendly.” The issue of poor internet connectivity is also emphasized by two other managers from the sub office.

One international professional with strong IT background replied as follows: “IKM unit need to be much more proactive, aggressively dig out and organize information in the way it attracts end users. Once document is posted on IKM, regular follow-up and updating mechanism should be in-placed.”

While the finance officer replied as follows: “Colleagues in the unit shall work to make IKM a bit more user friendly, colorful, palatable. Benchmark better practices. Look for accuracy and completeness of data. Encourage staff to use and contribute towards IKM.”

Another manager in the CO replied: “KM colleagues should work on the maintenance of the system. IKM should be aggressive and demanding. It should continue exit interviews and bring into new things outside of WFP's domain.”

From the feedback of the international professionals we can learn that there is a lot to do by the IKM professionals. Based on the analysis of the feedback of the professional managers, the study suggests that IKM officer shall have a discussion meeting with them to learn more on the drawback of the current system and the way forward.
Summary of the interview conducted with the IKM officer

An interview with the IKM officer showed that the IKM unit of WFP Ethiopia came into existence in 2010 with the objective of enhancing organizational maturity in managing information and KS within WFP Ethiopia.

When asked to explain the purpose of IKM section, the officer replied: “IKM is expected to act as an internal communication tool for enhancing and ensuring easy access to resources from services units. It would act like a newspaper or newsletter for timely access to KM application. IKM is envisaged to be like a knowledge store house, i.e. a dynamic e-library for the benefit of employees.”

From the feedback of the officer we can learn that the IKM practice has been with WFP Ethiopia for about four years with the purpose of serving employees as knowledge repository platform.

On another dimension when asked if everyone in the organization has free access to IKM portal and its services/facilities the officer responded affirmatively as: “Yes, almost all content are accessible by everyone from his/her office both from CO and sub-offices. However, the system has been set not to be accessed outside of any office of WFP or from external servers.”

However, when compared and contrast with the findings from the other feedback, as has been observed from the qualitative analysis of the responses of international professionals and analysis of the questionnaires feedback, this is a bit contradictory. Especially respondents’ from the sub offices highly commented that there is accessibility problem due to poor and intermittent connectivity.

The IKM officer appeared to be quite amenable to the idea of creating awareness amongst staff as confirmed by his sayings: “Staff of IKM section have done a lot to create appropriate awareness on benefits of KM and the benefits of KS.”

However, analysis of staff responses suggests that a lot more needs to be done to enhance the awareness and practice of KS within WFP Ethiopia. Inconsistency in the statements of the IKM officer was also observed in regards to the support from top management.

While on the one hand it has been pointed out by the officer statements such as: “Senior management has provided excellent support for IKM”
But, on another hand this same person made statements’ such that: “A significant decline in prioritization of IKM since early 2014 has been observed. Additionally, it is recommended that senior management focus on drawing a policy framework or strategic guidelines for enhancing efficiency of the IKM section.”

When asked to state the existing challenges, the officer reported that the IKM section is given the least priority by the IT unit under which the IKM is currently positioned. According to the officer, it is perceived that the current positioning of IKM in the organizational structure in WFP Ethiopia does not appear to be recognized as beneficial. The above two statements which were made by the officer are a bit contradictory as the first one highly appreciates the top management while the latter indicates that there is problem due to lack of policy.

When asked to elaborate further the officer replied as follows: “The IKM section seems to have enjoyed preferential treatment in the initial period of its existence. However, that is no longer in evidence as of the beginning of 2014. While attention is being given to the infrastructural development of the IKM section, the section seems to have little concern for content development. Needless to say, content development is one of the mandates and priority areas of the section.”

The IKM officer was also asked to state some challenges, if any and replied as follows: “Absence of KM policy/strategy with WFP Global as well as WFP Ethiopia to guide our action and low priority given presently are among the major challenges for smooth operation of the IKM function.”

When asked to comment on the knowledge/skills sharing culture within WFP Ethiopia, the officer replied as follows: “Knowledge/skills sharing culture within WFP Ethiopia has improved a lot within the last few years. The IKM portal was a major source of information and KS platform. If any staff needs to share information, he/she prefers IKM as an organizational platform.”

Finally the IKM officer was asked to provide his general remark and pinpointed his overall opinions as follows: “The functions of Information/KM are continuous processes and not a temporary or one time activity. Therefore, the senior management of WFP Ethiopia should rethink about the use and benefits IKM gives to the organization. Rehabilitation of IKM is a crucial issue and the need to formulate KM policy is of paramount importance.”
When compared with IKM units of other sister UN agencies in Ethiopia, the IKM section of WFP seemed to have been considered as the front line runner in the initial years of its existence. However, the current decline in its operational modalities with less attention from senior management has pulled its position proportionately down.

The qualitative analysis of the responses indicates that the IKM section seems to be suffering from a sense of depression. It may be due to a lack of attention from the senior management as stated by the IKM officer. Some of the feedback from the officer is a bit contrary to what has been gathered from other respondents. However, the IKM officer reported to be optimistic in aspiring for a better tomorrow with a recommendation for “Rehabilitation of IKM”.

KM being a continuous process, it is suggested that senior management give more attention to it and prioritize its smooth and sustained functioning by drawing an effective policy document which serve as a guide for future action.
Knowledge is considered as one of the main sources of competitive advantage and essential element for survival of almost all organizations. KS is a fundamental part in knowledge management that helps to spread and make knowledge accessible and usable within organization. Hence, the aim of this research was to assess the current knowledge sharing practice of WFP, Ethiopia by identifying level of employees’ awareness on KM concepts and benefits, the knowledge sharing behavior of employees, the sources used to share knowledge within the organization and potential barriers of successful KS.

Both primary and secondary data source were used to answer the research questions of this study. The primary data were collected using questionnaires from employees of WFP, Ethiopia, selected based on simple random sampling technique. In addition to this, interviews were conducted with purposively selected managers of the organization.

This chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion, and forwards recommendations derived from the previous data presentation and analysis.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

Based on the investigation conducted throughout the research process and the results of the analyzed data, the researcher has come up with the following major findings relating to the practices of the KS in the organization.

- The employees of WFP, Ethiopia have medium understanding of knowledge management. Despite the responses of majority of the respondents that said they have clear understanding of KM 49.8 percent respondents see knowledge management as merely a
platform for repository of electronic resources. From this the researcher realized that the awareness level of staff of WFP, Ethiopia on the concepts and benefits of knowledge management is medium.

• The respondents agreed on the high relevance and importance of documents on IKM portal. But only 22.4 percent of respondents visit IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia frequently, while majority of the respondents frequently use knowledge networks such as e-mail, internet/intranet.

• The utilization level of IKM portal is low despite having high accesses to KM services by majority of the respondent.

• The employees don’t have sufficient time to acquire new knowledge

• Poor network connection at the Sub Offices put an obstruction to fully utilize the IKM service.

• WFP, Ethiopia do not have proper KM policy and strategy that will facilitate knowledge sharing practice in the organization

• Most of the respondent document and share their work with others. However, using formal way of sharing knowledge is low and the practice is used widely only in some unit and could not be considered as an organizational wide practice.

• The major source of knowledge used is learning by doing the actual work, Knowledge and skills acquired from prior experience and formal education during college/university study while. This indicates that employees gain knowledge through their individual efforts and bringing knowledge/skills gained prior to joining WFP Ethiopia. From these responses we can draw that knowledge sharing practice is at lower level in the origination.

• Limited interaction between experts and knowledge users, absence of reward/recognition mechanism for KS initiatives, and lack of information on who to consult on specific knowledge needs which may be related to the absence of proper KM policy and strategy is the prevailing barriers of KS in the organization.
5.2 Conclusions

As it has been stated, the study focused on knowledge sharing practice of WFP, Ethiopia considering managers and employees of the organization. For this reason, it reviewed relevant literatures and documents, and collected data from managers and employees taken as a sample.

The researcher concluded the following points based on the analysis.

- The gap shown in awareness level regarding knowledge management and its benefits may make employees to be hesitant to share knowledge with each others, which may hinder the organization from getting the best out of its intangible asset i.e. knowledge.
- The absence of clear knowledge management strategy that define how KM will work for the organization contributed to lack of direction, consistency which appears to be a setback of the KM initiatives of the organization.
- The low level of formal knowledge sharing practice in the organization may hinder the need for enabling individuals to acquire new knowledge more quickly.
- As Knowledge management systems are often driven by technology, and IT is one of knowledge sharing enabler, lack of adequate IT infrastructure hamper the smooth and favorable functioning of knowledge sharing between CO and sub fields of the organization.
- External sources of knowledge obtained from prior education and work experience are the most widely mentioned source of knowledge by the employee of WFP, Ethiopia. Whereas, the practice of using internally produced source for knowledge and sharing knowledge among employees is minimal. This leads the organization to lose its internally produced knowledge when the knowledge of employees walks out of the door with them at the time they leave the organization. Employees may also lose the chance to amplify and expand their knowledge through the knowledge sharing process.
- The limited interaction between experts and knowledge users may obstruct the facilitation of knowledge flow that enhance the overall organizational effectiveness.
- Absence of the practice of encouraging effective knowledge sharing by implementing reward system caused lack of cooperation, ownership, and commitment among employees which lead to low level of knowledge sharing practice among employees.
• Lack of sufficient time among employees to engage in knowledge sharing activities can impede acceptance to actively engage in knowledge sharing activities in the organization.

5.3 Recommendations

After detail analysis of knowledge sharing practice of WFP, Ethiopia, the following recommendations are forwarded based on the observed gaps and problems.

Areas requiring top level managements’ attention

• Different interventions like training and awareness creation workshops on knowledge management should be used to bring employee to similar level of understanding regarding the concepts and benefits of knowledge management and knowledge sharing.
• Preparing well articulated Knowledge Management Strategy is needed, for WFP, Ethiopia, to clarify the requirements, the path and set of activities to be incorporated in the process of knowledge management so as to flourish in exploitation of its knowledge assets.
• System should be established to bring formal and accessible by all knowledge sharing mechanisms in the organization, in addition to the informal knowledge sharing practices.
• The management should use different mechanisms like regular knowledge sharing forums to instigate regular and formal knowledge sharing activities within the organization.
• The researcher suggests that effective knowledge sharing be rewarded to motivate employees for their contribution.
• The organization should reallocate its resource to respond to the lack of time among employees to engage in knowledge sharing activities.
• The IKM Unit shall be re-structured with proper staffing having the right mix of qualifications and experience.
• Each work unit in WFP, Ethiopia shall assign an IKM focal person from its existing staff on shift basis without recruiting additional personnel.
Recommendations for IKM unit and other work units

- IKM unit should lead the formulation of the KM strategy/policy for WFP Ethiopia by taking experiences of sister UN agencies
- Conduct regular awareness creation sessions by organizing IKM talk forum
- The IKM unit should be proactive with interactive system and network with external parties
- Re-instate the discontinued but successful initiatives such as exit interviews and regular KS forums
- Work with the ICT unit for better IKM accesses to the sub/field offices
- Be innovative and come up with progressive methods to inspire staff and instill KS culture
- IKM unit should regularly follow with work units to ensure resources are updated on the portal on a timely basis.
- By coordinating with HRM unit provide information on employees’ interest to draw individual attention and involve them in IKM practice initially till it gets the momentum. Example arranging birth days, marriage anniversaries, festivals, achievement greetings etc.
- An internal e-magazine may be initiated for staff to contribute stories on human interest based on field experiences. Best stories selected through predefined audience hits and comments may be awarded and posted in the official website to reach higher domain and to get greater publicity. A column on using heroes may speak about some of the staff contributing their best in their limited space for the organization. Stories with pictures can also bring interest.
- To facilitate interaction among employees and to ease knowledge sharing through IT, the IKM unit should provide high speed internet, user friendly programs as well as other technological supports for CO and the Sub Offices as well. Besides, there are works to be done, so that employees knew how to exploit the technologies
REFERENCES


ANNEXES
Annex I: Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Assessing the Knowledge Sharing practices of United Nations Organizations with particular reference to World Food Programme (WFP), Ethiopia.

Dear colleague,

This questionnaire is prepared and distributed for the attainment of a Master’s Degree in Human Resource and Organizational Development from Addis Ababa University. The questionnaire is prepared to be filled by selected staff of WFP, Ethiopia drawn for the study from the capital Addis and the Sub/Field Offices located out of Addis Ababa.

The focus on the questionnaire is to examine the practice of knowledge/skills management within the organization and all participants of the study are highly encouraged to fill the entire questionnaire.

The information in this questionnaire is used for academic purpose and will be strictly kept confidential. No responses will be used against the organization, managers and employees. Your genuine, frank and timely responses are therefore much appreciated as they lay the foundation for realistic and sound research work and thus contribute to the quality and success of the study.

To keep confidentiality, names of respondents are not required. The dully filled questionnaires shall be returned on or before cob 28 May 2014. Thank you for meeting the deadline. If you have any question or comment related to the questionnaire, please contact me @ 0911 505256 or via e-mail: tesberhanu@gmail.com or tesfaye.berhanu@wfp.org.

Thank you for sacrificing your valuable time and the sympathetic response for this questionnaire.

Instructions to fill the questionnaire:

Tick only one box for each question.

For any additional explanation, you are kindly requested to write briefly on the space provided next to the questions that demand you to put your written feedback.
### PART I BASIC INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Job/Position Title</strong></th>
<th>Please put your job/position title on the underlined space below. Specific unit or section is not required. If you are Head of Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) section, section head would be appropriate response.</th>
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<tbody>
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<th>□ Sub/Field Office</th>
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<th><strong>Service in Years</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Total within WFP:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In WFP Ethiopia:</strong></td>
<td>□ ≤ 4</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APPLICABLE only FOR NATIONAL STAFF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In WFP Ethiopia:</strong></td>
<td>□ ≤ 4</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Part - II: Knowledge and Awareness of Knowledge Management within WFP Ethiopia.


2. What added advantage did you get from the IKM initiatives/services since its launch in 2010? Please state below.
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

3. What is your understanding on the term ‘Knowledge Management’ (KM) and its contribution to an organization/your specific work unit or section? Provide your response by putting a tick mark on the appropriate rating that best matches your choice.

   Identify as: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and  5= Strongly Agree.

   Put a tick “✓” mark against the relevant column to the right.

<table>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It is merely a platform for repository/database for electronic resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is a management tool to help staff acquire and share knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>KM contributes significantly to my day-to-day operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>KM has no relevance for my job and I do not get any added value</td>
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<tr>
<td>KM is about gaining, sharing, retaining and using knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is no relationship between KM and organizational efficiency</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Part III. Rate statements below as 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = Medium, 4 = High and 5 = Very High by putting a tick “✓” on the relevant column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>Knowledge management practices within the organization/ unit</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Frequency of your visit/usage of WFP Ethiopia’s IKM portal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Usage of knowledge networks such as e-mail, internet/intranet for knowledge/skills sharing within your work unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Practice of documenting and sharing your own work to colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Practice of knowledge/skills sharing on regular basis and in a formal way</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Level of development &amp; promotion of knowledge sharing culture</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>Extent to which employees have access to KM services</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Relevance and importance of documents available on KM portal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II</th>
<th>Rate the contribution of each for your learning within WFP Eth.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Induction and orientation sessions facilitated during my initial hire</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>Knowledge and skills acquired from previous work experience</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>On the job training provided by colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Formal education during college/university studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Guidance/coaching from immediate supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Colleagues in other UN Agencies and WFP Country offices</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>IKM portal, WFP go and LMS (Learning Management System)</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>Learning by doing the actual work including through trial and errors</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>Referring of files and relevant electronic and paper documentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Knowledge/skills gained through attendance of trainings/workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>Knowledge shared from colleague/s who attended trainings/workshop</td>
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<td>2.12</td>
<td>Through membership of a project team, task force or committee/s</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Part VI. Put a tick “✓” mark on the corresponding box that you feel goes with your judgment/position regarding barriers to the KM services within WFP Ethiopia.**

**Identify statements as 1=Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5= Strongly Agree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>How do you see the following as barriers to KM services in WFP Ethiopia</strong></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 There is limited interaction between experts and knowledge users</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 There is no knowledge management strategy/policy for transfer of knowledge among existing and employees leaving WFP Ethiopia.</td>
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<td>3.3 Staff with expert knowledge are not willing and motivated to share</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 The working environment and the nature of work being performed is not conducive for knowledge transfer/sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5 Internal systems/processes are vague and lengthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6 Time is not sufficient to acquire or learn new knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.7 There exist a culture of initiating everything from scratch/reinventing the wheel</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.8 There is lack of trust among knowledge workers and dominance of “knowledge is power” attitude.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

72
### Part V: Open Ended Questions

1. **What factors do you consider as major strengths of the existing knowledge management practice and the available materials on the IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia?**

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

2. **What factors do you consider as major drawbacks of the existing knowledge management practice and the available materials on the IKM portal of WFP Ethiopia?**

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

3. **Do you believe that knowledge management has direct relationship with organizational/unit efficiency? Yes □ No □**

   Please provide your reason in the space provided

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

4. **What do you suggest to improve the role/services of Information and Knowledge Management/ Information and Communication Technology section/unit to meet the specific need in your unit/section pertaining to the Knowledge Management practice?**

   ____________________________________________________

    

   ----END----
Annex II: Interview Questions with Heads/Deputies of Units/Sub Offices

WFP Ethiopia

1. Kindly discuss the Knowledge Management (KM) practices in your work unit?
2. How do you see the fitness of workplace settings and type of jobs being performed in relation to knowledge management practices?
3. How do you evaluate the relevance/importance of information and documents on Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) to you and your subordinates?
4. What do you consider as major benefits of the existing IKM system to you/your unit?
5. What factors do you consider as potential barriers to KM practice within the organization or specific to work unit?
6. What actions do you recommend to improve the current KM practice within WFP Ethiopia?
Annex III: Interview Questions with the IKM Officer WFP Ethiopia

1. What are the major goals/objectives of the IKM section of WFP Ethiopia?
2. What are the major services provided by KM section or professionals?
3. Is there a knowledge management strategy/policy in WFP Ethiopia to guide your action?
4. How do you see the commitment of the top management to the practice of KM?
5. What do you consider as potential barriers/challenges of KM practices in your organization? What measures do you propose?
Annex IV: Sample Size Determination

Sample Size Determination:
The sample size for the quantitative study was administered through a structured questionnaire of 215 employees arrived based on the estimate from sample size determination employed using below formula derived by Kumar (2000). Statistical formula is annexed.

\[ n = \frac{(Z^2 \times p \times (1-p))}{d^2} \]

Description:
\( n \) = required sample size
\( Z^2 \) = confidence level at 80% CI (standard value of 1.28)
\( p \) = prevalence of key population parameter. In the absence of estimate for prevalence of key population parameter, value for \( p \) was considered as 0.5 for getting optimum sample size.
\( d \) = acceptable difference/margin of error at 5% (standard value of 0.05).

Important note: There was no design effect as simple random sampling technique was employed for selecting the ultimate sampling units (individual staff).

Using the formula, the sample size for undertaking sample study among WFP’s staff was estimated as:
\[ n = \frac{(1.28)^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5))}{(0.05)^2} \]
\[ = \frac{(1.6384 \times 0.25)}{0.0025} = 0.4096 \approx 164 \]

Assuming a high non-response rate as the individual interview was conducted using mail questionnaire, the non-response rate of 30% was considered. Therefore, the total sample size for the quantitative study on the structured questionnaire was estimated to be \( 165 + 164 \times 0.3 = 164 + 50 = 215 \).
Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

____________________________________
Signature & Date

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as university advisor.

Dr. Yekunoamlak Alemu (Advisor)
Signature _____________

Date _______________