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Author(s)	Islam, Md. Anwarul
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Description	Supervisor:池田 満, 知識科学研究科, 博士

Knowledge Management for Innovation in Academic Library Services

Abstract

The advent of managing knowledge has positive impact on library services. Creating knowledge, using that knowledge from inside and outside sources, transferring and sharing that knowledge for applying are the core areas of offering innovative services in academic libraries. In 21st century, the nature of libraries & library services are changing in line with the changing of library user behavior, demand, need and want. For change to be effective, libraries as well as library personnel must change. The key to change and growth is awareness, managing knowledge, sharing ideas, coming up with new and innovative ways of offering services with the user involvement. Many studies identified that managing knowledge for both employees and users; inviting users in the service process and applying modern technologies convert the challenges into opportunities. For the present study, we have examined academic libraries readiness to adopt KM, KM tools, user involvement in the service process and KM activities in their libraries. We have focused how KM (and value co-creation) facilitates service innovation activities in academic libraries. For theoretical reasoning, we have come up with comprehensive lists of KM tools in line with KM cycle that academic libraries can apply for their own settings. We have also conceptualized the value co-creation for service innovation in academic libraries. For examining and exploring the effect, we have conducted two Web-based survey as well as one e-mail interview. The methodology employed was a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The survey of perceived usefulness of adopting KM using social media, most of the respondents thought that KM-using-social media would be useful for libraries and but they were not entirely sure if their libraries were ready to adopt KM. For managing user knowledge, most of the librarians manage their user knowledge through face to face meeting, social media, survey, tailoring user needs through inviting feedback. After managing knowledge, we identified that libraries work with their users to co-create value in areas such as project management, makerspaces, information literacy, design of library websites, etc. Despite some concerns, most of the librarians saw value co-creation as critical to the innovation of new services and the continuing success of their library. For investigating the effect of KM (and each phase of the KM cycle) on service innovation, librarians

replied that knowledge capture/creation and knowledge application/use both significantly impact on service innovation in academic libraries. The effect of knowledge sharing and transfer on innovation was found to be insignificant. The results show that academic libraries with more capability of knowledge creation are likely to offer more innovative services to their user communities. Similarly, once the knowledge is created, academic libraries with better-developed knowledge application/use practices are likely to be offering more new services. Finally in the theoretical model, we propose that KM enablers determine the degree to which KM can be implemented in an academic library setting. Knowledge management (different phases of the KM cycle) positively affect to offering innovative services in academic libraries. The positive effect of KM on service innovation is enhanced/expedited when the library employees involve the user in value co-creation. Value co-creation also has a direct effect on service innovation in academic libraries. Lastly, innovation in academic library services refer to new service concept, new/improved user interface, new/improving existing ways of providing services and using technologies to facilitate all of those activities. The study suggests that academic libraries should redefine it's working role by promoting KM activities in their libraries and they should actively think of involving users in the academic library services. Lastly, we put some directions for the extended work for this study.

Keywords: knowledge management, value co-creation, service innovation, library services, academic libraries.