

Reconnoitering the Association among Ethics and Knowledge Management Strategies: A Conceptual Framework for Organizational Effectiveness

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose- This study attempts to identify the ethical concerns inherent in an organization which impacts Knowledge Management Strategies (KMS). The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the effect of constructs on ethics over KMS constructs deliberating on various Knowledge Management (KM) levels, knowledge ownership, KM model and KM practices.

Design/methodology/approach- Relevant literature has been reviewed by online database search including ProQuest Central, Emerald, Sage, Business source complete (EBSCO).

Findings- According to the study, ethics gives a business a set of guiding principles for knowledge management strategies (KMS) and makes it easier to execute KM activities effectively for the benefit of workers, organizations, and society as a whole. The successful organizations are those which create and manage new knowledge where ethics plays a key role. The study suggests a conceptual framework linking ethics and KMS.

Research limitations/ implications – This study offers various dimensions for potential research on numerous constructs of ethics and KMS discussed in study. The study also provide platform for future researchers to carry empirical researches and also for developing conceptual model or framework on ethics and KMS.

The study suggests a conceptual framework subject to empirical validation. Also, there is a dearth of literature studying the linkage between ethics and KMS.

Originality/value-The study offers a conceptual approach deliberating the ethical perspective highlighting various ethical constructs impacting KMS.



1. INTRODUCTION

In this era, the intellectual capital is the key to success for any organization. The success is conquered by those organizations that create, manage and apply knowledge in their organizational processes, products and services. The competition is severe in this dynamic environment where competitors keep changing their products, services and strategies rapidly. Thus organizations will win when they improve their existing knowledge and create new knowledge. Today, the success of an organization is dependent on its ability to create or acquire new knowledge and application of that knowledge for continuous development of organizational activities.

According to Michael et al. (2009), organizations employ new, inventive, and creative approaches to improve their performance and structure. These organizations neglect the ethical considerations in their quest for prosperity. In light of the changes brought about by globalization, technology, lifestyles, and work styles, ethical concerns must also be addressed. Along with technological advancements, world is also encountering compromise on the ethical practices like knowledge hoarding, manipulation and misappropriation. Many social, technological, and legal concerns go against the moral standards that ought to be upheld. The ethics help the organization use and carry out knowledge management strategies (KMS) in a way that benefits all parties involved by giving it guiding principles. The aim of this study is to develop a conceptual framework linking ethics and KMS.

The study is structured as: introduction section followed with the review of literature on ethics and KMS. The next section discusses research methodology and proposed conceptual framework. Then the study concludes with research limitations and avenues for future investigation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ethics

Ethics can be referred as behavioral codes which are considered as morally right by individual employee at micro level and organization and society at large. Proximal and distal roots of ethics lie in teleology (Hume, 1750; Smith, 1759) and deontology (Kant, 1785). While deontology argues that an action should be an ethical indicator in and of itself, teleological approach reflects that the consequence of deed is a measure of good or bad. The other approach to ethics is Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (350BC), according to which it is an individual's behavior which should be ethical and not a result of an action or action itself which reflect ethics. Ethical understanding of a community is dependent on value system embedded in that particular community (MacIntyre, 1985). According to Tseng and Fan (2011), ethics is not just an abstract philosophical theory; it also offers guidelines for both private and public behavior in communities. People are guided to observe ethical standards established by organizations and society as members of those groups and communities (Tseng and Fan, 2011). Ethics are not created directly by humankind rather ethics are resulted from human nature. The ethics stands for values that are ingrained in a society or group of people (Peyman Akhavan, 2013). Good and negative characteristics, behaviors, intents, or moral obligations and responsibilities toward an organization or community are referred to as ethics (Holden, 2000). Business ethics is referred to as a branch that emphasizes on improvement in moral quality of decision making (Martz and Morgan, 2007).

Victor and Cullen (1964) proposed the model for organizational ethics better known as organizational ethical climate which focused on particular element of work climate. Organizational ethical climate focuses on shared values and beliefs of organizational members which is reflected in their behavior (Smirich, 1983; Schneider, 2006). Organizational ethical climate reflects people's ethical judgments, intentions and their behavior in determination of right or wrong action at work (Teresi M et al., 2019). Victor and Cullen's model of organizational ethical climate comprises of nine different types of ethical climate including self-interest, company profit, efficiency, friendship, team interest, social responsibility, personal morality, company rules and professional codes. These nine ethical climates recognize organizational ethical norms which in turn supports ethical behavior in organization (Peterson, 2002).

Peyman Akhavan (2013) established four categories of ethical principles that comprise organizational values: justice and commitment, accountability and dedication, intellectual property and trusteeship, and team spirit. The most important component of the ethical standards that make up organizational and collective trust is fairness inside the organization; other essential components include personnel acting in a fair, honest, and modest manner; accepting criticism; and persevering through tasks (Baykal et al. 2024). Additional ethical dimensions encompass accountability, dedication, and allegiance to the organization (Rai, A. and Agarwal, U.A. 2021). It also entails being proactive at work and having a conscience (Ahsan, M.J. and Khalid, M.H. 2024). Intellectual property rights observance, confidentiality, and trusteeship are all considered aspects of intellectual ownership and trusteeship. Working as a team requires ethical behavior, which includes cooperation, empathy, self-awareness, self-control, affability, and consultation with others. This is referred to as team working morale.

There exist alternative ethical models. Chuck Huff's (2010) PRIMES model, which takes into account skills, moral ecology, personality, and the integration of morality, is a noteworthy model. People's work and methods are influenced by their personalities (John and Srivastava, 1999). Personality is dynamic in nature as it keeps on changing with life experiences. Integration of morality depicts moral commitment which guides action over time (Meier, C. 2024). Moral actions are strongly



influenced and dominated by surrounding environment which is referred to as moral ecology (Raciti, M. et al. 2022). Moral skills and knowledge is knowing how about moral actions.

Table 1: Dimensions of ethics and corresponding indicators

S.No .	Dimensions	Indicators/Areas	Sources
1.	Organizational ethical climate	A. Self interest	Victor and Cullen's (1964), Omery et al.(1995), Shrar et al. (2003), Cooper et al.(2004), Shiery MR (2005), Hart SE(2005), Fan-chuan et al. (2008), Schulter J et al. (2008), Filipova (2009),Ritta Suhonen et al. (2015) , Gaur and Gupta (2018), Teresi M et al. (2019), Baykal et al. (2024)
		B. Company profit	
		C. Efficiency	
		D. Friendship	
		E. Team interest	
		F. Social responsibility	
		G. Personal morality	
		H. Company rules and procedures	
		I. Law professional codes	
2.	Organizational values and justice	A. Collective trust	Galford and Drapeau(2003), Lang (2004), Hutchings and Michailova (2004), Raps(2005), Inkpen and Tsang (2005), Gibson JL (2007), Al-Aali(2008), Mirzaeei (2009), Khenifer and Moghimi(2009), Azmi(2010), Peyman Akhavan et al. (2013), Ritta Suhonen et al. (2015),Rai, A. and Agarwal, U.A. (2021)
		B. Organizational trust	
		C. Honesty	
		Fair behavior	
		D. Humility	
		E. Criticism taking	
		F. Perseverance in works	
3.	Commitment and responsibility	A. Responsibility	Nahapiet and Ghosal (1998), Chua(2002), Huysmans and Wit (2004), Arnold et al. (2006), Azmi (2010), Jordan and Troth (2011), Bove and Jhonson (2012), Calof and Smith(2012), Johnston(2012), Peyman Akhavan et al. (2013), Ritta Suhonen et al. (2015) Ahsan, M.J. and Khalid, M.H. (2024)
		B. Working conscience	
		C. Commitment	
		D. Loyalty	
		E. Foresight	
4.	Intellectual ownership and trusteeship	A. Secrecy	Lang(2004), Khenifer and Moghimi (2009), Azmi(2010), Sayce(2012), Peyman Akhavan et al. (2013)
		B. Intellectual property right	
		C. Trusteeship	
		D. Care in authenticity	



5.	Team working morale	A. Council with others	Harpel et al.(1998), Chua(2002), Huysmans and wit (2004), Ferris et al.(2008), Hsiang and Yang Kuo(2009), Azmi (2010), Peyman Akhavan et al.(2013), Gaur and Gupta (2018)
		B. Helping and empathy with others	
		C. Affability	
		D. Self-control	
6.	PRIMES (ethical action model)	A. Personality	Chuck Huff (2010), Gaur and Gupta (2018), Raciti, M. et al. (2022) Meier, C. (2024)
		B. Integration of morality	
		C. Moral ecology	
		D. Skills and knowledge	
7.	Ethical issues	A. Socio economic issue	Henson et al. (2005), Bryant (2006), Frank Land et al. (2006), Ritta Suhonen et al. (2015), Marmat, G., Jain, P. and Mishra, P.N. (2020)
		B. Technical issue	
		C. Legalistic issue	
8.	Obstacles to ethical behavior	A. Knowledge hoarding	Suzanne Zyngier et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2018), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Nielsen, R.P. (2019)
		B. Manipulation	
		C. Misappropriation	
		D. Plagiarism	
		E. Property and privacy right conflict	
		F. Autonomy in knowledge sharing	

Source: Compiled by authors

2.2 Knowledge Management

KM according to Wig (2002) is referred to as process of identifying the knowledge from internal as well as external environment and utilizing them for decision making in the organization. According to Haines (2001), KM constitutes four components: content, skill, culture and organization (Sun, H. et al. 2020). Content refers to explicit or implicit knowledge, skills are abilities to extract that knowledge, culture is environmental framework which encourages knowledge sharing and organization refers to organizing available knowledge. KM is referred as process as well as an objective (Crawford, 2005). KM is also referred to as knowledge interaction leading to knowledge conversion, as knowledge is transformed from one form to other. Knowledge conversion takes place through interaction among knowledge where tacit and explicit knowledge are transformed into each other. Knowledge that is present in form of experience, idea, know-how of doing a thing in unique manner and has intangible identity as it can't be codified is referred as tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is a form of knowledge which is easy to acquire and transfer, also easy to express both verbally and non-verbally (Yang, 2007). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996) gave a model on knowledge transformation which is conversion process involving converting tacit into explicit knowledge and vice versa. Nonaka and Takeuchi model is a four-dimensional model known as SECI model includes socialization, externalization, combination and internalization.

The four dimensions of SECI model can be defined as:

1. Socialization: transformation of existing tacit knowledge into novel tacit knowledge.
2. Externalization: transformation of existing tacit knowledge into novel explicit knowledge.
3. Combination: transformation of existing explicit knowledge into novel explicit knowledge.
4. Internalization: transformation of existing explicit knowledge into novel tacit knowledge.

The originator of knowledge is an individual employee and knowledge resides in minds of individuals (Polanyi, 1998) Employee reluctance to share knowledge stems from their individual knowledge, which determines their economic mean (Michalova and Husted, 2003). Knowledge processing behavior of any individual is affirmed by their orientation which totally depends of the identification, appreciation and reward an employee receives (Li, X. et al., 2017) . On the other hand, organization provides a platform to its employees for knowledge creation, acquisition, also resources, infrastructure and a reward system for knowledge creation.



An organization's capacity to obtain, produce, and use knowledge is essential to its success. KM is the process which helps an organization to be successful (Su, E. and Daspit, J. 2021) . The application of KM is influenced by several different aspects. KM practices are what these elements are known as (Sinha et al., 2015). One of the most important KM practice is culture which represents company values and a necessary ecosystem for other KM activities (Sinha et.al, 2015). KM objectives can be initiated and accomplished if there is a support system from top management (Zeinalnezhad et al., 2014, Muhammed, S. and Zaim, H. 2020). KM initiative can be a success only when supported by processes and activities (Boyle, 2010). Strategy provides roadmap to pursue KM objectives Shujahat, M. et al. (2017). Technology, knowledge repositories, and expert databases are needed by the organization to execute KM (Leon, 2009, Rafi, M. et al. 2020). When KM is implemented, organizational infrastructure is crucial since it involves forming teams to handle knowledge-related tasks. The availability and distribution of resources determine how well knowledge management objectives are accomplished (Zheng et al., 2013, Chi3n, S.J. et al. 2020). Employee development and training is essential to the effective application of knowledge management. To ascertain the effectiveness of KM, there should be assessment through financial and non-financial measurement (Sensuse et al. 2023, Asiaei, K et al. 2021). The various other KM practices are human resource management, motivational aids, benchmarking, networking and alliance and employee involvement and empowerment (Sinha et al., 2015, Liu, H. and Li, G., 2017, Garavan, T., 2022)).

The KMS dimensions identified from the literature are listed in below:

Table 2: Dimensions of KMS and corresponding indicators

S. No.	Dimensions	Indicators/Areas	Sources
1.	SECI model of KM	A. Socialization	Nonaka and Takeuchi (1996), Peyman Akhavan et al. (2013) Li, X., et al. (2017), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022).
		B. Externalization	
		C. Combination	
		D. Internalization	
2.	Levels of KM	A. Personal KM	Goncalo Jorge Morais da Costa et al. (2010), Su, E. and Daspit, J. (2021) Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022).
3.		B. Organizational KM	
	Knowledge ownership	A. Organizational ownership	Isabel Rechberg and Jawad Syed (2013), Sun, H. et al. (2020), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022).
		B. Individual ownership	
4.	Management leadership and support	A. Top management as role model	Skyrme and Amidon (1997),Davenport et al. (1998), Liebowitz (1999), Holsapple and Joshi(2000), Hassanali (2002), Ribiere and Sitar (2003), Wong andAspinwall (2005),Al-Busaidi and Olfman (2005),Chong (2006), Akhavan and Jafari(2006), Akhavan et al. (2006), Jafari et al. (2007), du Plessis(2007), Foot and Hook (2008), Foss and Minbaeva (2009), Zacket al. (2009), Prieto-Pastor et al. (2010), Foss et al. (2010), Kianto(2011), Andreeva and Kianto (2012), Frost (2014) and Zeinalnezhad et al. (2014), Sinha et al. (2015), Muhammed, S. and Zaim, H. (2020), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022).
		B. Top management encouragement	
		C. Leadership style	
		D. Levels of hierarchy	
		E. Top management commitment	



5.	Culture	A. Vision	Skyme and Amidon(1997), Davenport et al. (1998), Liebowitz (1999), APQC (1999), McDermott and O'Dell(2001), Stankosky(2001), Hassanali (2002), Wieneke and Phylpo-Price (2003), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Al-Busaidi and Olfman (2005), Hung et al.(2005), Akhaavan et al. (2006), Chong(2006), Bozbura(2007), Du Plessis (2007), Foot and Hook (2008), Foss and Minbaeva (2009), Zack et al. (2009), Prieto- Pastor et al. (2010), Foss et al. (2010), Xu et al.(2010), Kianto (2011), Andreeva and Kianto (2012), Appelbaum et al.(2014) and Frost (2014), Sinha et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2018), Gaur and Gupta (2021). Gaur and Gupta (2022), Gaur and Gupta (2023).
		B. Level of trust	
		C. Knowledge sharing culture	
		D. Experienced employees sharing knowledge	
		E. Teamwork	
		F. Open communication	
		G. Flexibility and adaptability	
		A. Openness	
		B. Values	
		C. Knowledge sharing culture	
6.	Information technology	D. User satisfaction and retention	Skyme and Amidon(1997), Davenport et al.(1998), APQC(1999), Alavi and Leidner(2001), Al-Busaidi and Olfman(2005), Wong and Aspinwall(2005), Hung et al. (2005), Akhavan et al (2006), Akhavan and Jafari (2006), Chong (2006), du Plessis(2007), Zaim et al.(2007), Leon (2009), Xu et al(2010), Kianto (2011), Andreeva and Kianto (2012), Filstad(2014) and Sinha et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2018), Rafi, M. et al. (2020) Gaur and Gupta (2021). Gaur and Gupta (2022), Gaur and Gupta (2023)
		A. KM systems	
		B. Technological tools	
		C. Collaborative tools	
		D. Repositories	
		E. Capturing explicit knowledge	
		F. Managing information overload	
		G. Simplification of knowledge infrastructure	
		H. Knowledge bases	
		I. Platform independence	

7.	Strategy and purpose	A. Objectives and goals for KM	Skyme and Amidon (1997),Davenport et al. (1998),Liebowitz(1999), APQC (1999),Zack (1999), OECD (2003),Wongand Aspinwall (2005), Akhavanet al. (2006), Bozbura (2007),du Plessis (2007), Zack et al.(2009), Xu et al. (2010) andAndreeva and Kianto (2011),Sinha et al. (2015), Shujahat, M. et al. (2017)
		B. Explicit documentation of KM rules	
		C. Written KM policy	
		D. Alignment of KM strategy with business strategy	
		E. Supporting business goals	
8.	Measurement	A. Financial measures	Davenport et al. (1998), APQC (1999), Holsapple and Joshi (2000), Hassanali (2002), Wienekeand Phylpo-Price (2003), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Hung et al. (2005), Chong (2006), du Plessis (2007), Zaim et al. (2007), Zacket al. (2009), Mitchell and Boyle (2010) and Andreeva and Kianto(2012),Sinha et al. (2015), Sensuse et al. (2023), Asiaei, K et al. (2021)
		B. Non-financial measures	
		C. Value of intellectual capital	
		D. Assessment of return on investment	
		E. Performance indicators	
		F. Knowledge related success criteria	



9.	Organizational infrastructure	A. Infrastructure for KM	Davenport et al. (1998), Liebowitz (1999), Hassanali (2002), Al-Busaidi and Olfman (2005), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Akhavan and Jafari (2006), Akhavan et al. (2006), Jafari et al. (2007), du Plessis (2007), Xu et al. (2010) and Andreeva and Kianto (2011), Sinha et al. (2015), Chi6n, S.J. et al. (2020)
		B. KM leader	
		C. Knowledge officer	
		D. KM team and group	
		E. Role of knowledge managers	
		F. Organizational structure for KM	
10.	Process and activities	A. Process for knowledge capture	Skyrme and Amidon (1997), Davenport et al. (1998), Holsapple and Joshi (2000), Bhatt (2000), Stankosky (2001), McElroy (2003), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Akhavan and Jafari (2006), Foot and Hook (2008), Foss and Michailova (2009), Foss et al. (2010), Xu et al. (2010) and Mitchell and Boyle (2010), Sinha et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022),
		B. Classification and sharing	
		C. Knowledge sharing policies and activities	
		D. Methods and standards for knowledge creation	
11.	Motivational aids	A. Incentives for KM	Davenport et al. (1998), Liebowitz (1999), Yahya and Goh (2002), Al-Busaidi and Olfman (2005), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Akhavan and Jafari (2006), du Plessis (2007) and Prieto-Pastor et al. (2010), Sinha et al. (2015), Liu, H. and Li, G. (2017), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022), Gaur and Gupta (2023)
		B. Reward systems	
		C. Recognition for contributions to KM	
		D. Assessing KM initiatives for performance appraisal	
		E. Motivational aids for KM	
12.	Resources	A. Financial resources for KM	Mentzas (2001), Yahya and Goh (2002), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Hung et al. (2005), Akhavan et al. (2006), Chong (2006), Akhavan and Jafari (2006), Bozbura (2007), Jafari et al. (2007), du Plessis (2007), Zacket et al. (2009), Xu et al. (2010), Andreeva and Kianto (2012) and Zheng et al. (2013), Sinha et al. (2015)
		B. Non-financial resources for KM	
		C. Providing sufficient time for KM	
13.	Training and Education	A. Awareness programs	Davenport et al. (1998); Holsapple and Joshi (2000), McDermott and O'Dell (2001), OECD (2003), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Chong (2006), Bozbura (2007), Kianto (2011) and Palethorpe (2014), Sinha et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2021), Gaur and Gupta (2022), Gaur and Gupta (2023)
		B. Formal training	
		C. Informal training practices	
		D. Mentoring programs	
		E. Teaching and coaching	
		F. Encouraging worker to continue education	
		G. Skills development	



14.	Human resource management	A. Human resource practices for KM	Yahya and Goh (2002), Wienekeand Phlypo-Price (2003), Wong and Aspinwall (2005), Foot and Hook (2008), Foss and Minbaeva (2009), Prieto-Pastor et al. (2010), Zheng et al. (2013) and Palethorpe (2014),Sinha et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2021). Gaur and Gupta (2022), Gaur and Gupta (2023) Garavan, T.(2022)
		B. Human development practices	
		C. Recruitment for KM initiatives	
		D. Selection methods	
		E. Staffing	
		F. Remuneration	
15.	Benchmarking	A. Benchmarking within same industry	Drew (1997), O'Dell and Grayson (1998), Moffet et al. (2003), Hung et al. (2005), Chong (2006), Akhavan and Jafari (2006), Xu et al. (2010), Andreeva and Kianto (2011) and Zeinalnezhadet al. (2014), Sinha et al. (2015)
		B. Benchmarking outside the industry	
		C. Adoption of best practices	
16.	Networking and alliance	A. Knowledge acquisition outside the organization	OECD (2003), Community Innovation Survey IV (2005), Bozbura (2007), Xu et al (2010), Andreeva and Kianto (2012), Zheng et al. (2013), Palethorpe(2014), Filstad(2014) and Sinha et al. (2015), Raudeliuniene et al. (2021)
		B. Internal networks for KM	
		C. Membership of industrial bodies	
		D. Customer feedback	
		E. Partnership and collaboration with vendors	
17.	Employee involvement, training and empowerment	A. Autonomy	O'Brien and Crause (1995), Ward (1997), Martinez (1998), Ulrich (1998), Verespej (1999), McCune (1999), Wilson and Asay (1999), Ryan and Prybutok (2001), Moffett et al. (2003), Zack et al. (2009), Kianto (2011) and Appelbaum et al. (2014),Sinha et al. (2015), Gaur and Gupta (2021). Gaur and Gupta (2022), Gaur and Gupta (2023)
		B. Promotion of experimentation	
		C. Involvement in decision making (KM)	
		D. Control over the pace of work	
		E. Empowering knowledge workers	

Source: Compiled by authors

2.3 Ethics and Knowledge Management

It is necessary to have ethics in KMS as KM practices might be unfair and unjust because focus of an organization is on profits and not on individuals (Glisby and Holden, 2003). Individuals as a member of organization, is guided to follow ethical conduct. In KM, knowledge ownership is managed and monitored by organization and knowledge process association is also encouraged (Gaur and Gupta, 2018). Since they encourage people to engage in the KM process, trust, justice, and fairness are the cornerstones of the ethical approach to KMS (Gaur and Gupta, 2018). Employees that are trusted do not hoard knowledge (DeLong and Fahey, 2000). Knowledge development and sharing are facilitated by trust (Burchell and Cook, 2008). The degree to which knowledge is communicated in a group depends on how trustworthy each member is. People may rely on an organization to look out for them when they have faith in it. Colleagues and managers can freely exchange knowledge instead of keeping it to themselves or trying to hide it because of trust (Gaur and Gupta, 2021). Patel and Ragsdell (2011) cited the need of acting in a just and moral manner. The significance of an ethical organizational atmosphere in promoting knowledge processes was emphasized by Tseng and Fan (2011). An organization can develop a database to acquire and maintain individual knowledge and experience, as well as include people in the knowledge process, by implementing an ethical approach to knowledge management (Liebowitz, 1999). Individuals that provide information are rewarded by fair knowledge management methods (Bakerville and Dulipovici, 2006). Sen (1993) asserts that companies who treat their workers well receive substantial rewards. Giving people incentives for contributing knowledge within an organization promotes equity (Bock et al., 2005). Knowledge extracting and refining can be motivational when it leads to



acknowledgement, appreciation, promotion, and salary hike (Wang and Noe, 2010). Furthermore, KM procedures must be fair. Organizations should refrain from attempting to control an individual's knowledge because it is their intellectual capital (Chen and Choi, 2005; Gorman, 2004). A just atmosphere, according to Da Costa et al. (2010), is one in which people are motivated to exchange, produce, and process knowledge.

The ethical issues pertaining to implementation of KM system indulge socio economic aspect, technical aspect and legalistic aspect (Gaur and Gupta, 2021). The socio-economic issue from the perspective of KM system implementation carries a hidden agenda (Gaur and Gupta, 2021). The primary driving force for the implementation of KM systems is to gather employee knowledge in order to execute organizational layoffs (Bryant, 2006). Technical personnel involved in the KM system's design and implementation have the ability to act as whistleblowers, alerting management to any unethical practices involved (Gaur and Gupta, 2022). Legalistic aspect is a concerned area which emphasizes on the determination of knowledge with ownership right of individual or organization (Baskerville and Dulpovici, 2006).

Knowledge hoarding, deception, defalcation, conflicts between property and privacy rights, and ampancipation in knowledge sharing are some of the unethical practices in knowledge management (Gaur and Gupta, 2022). Knowledge specifically tacit knowledge is personified, encoded and embrained and it is not evenly dispersed in the organization (Gaur and Gupta, 2021). Sharing information with the organization requires the owner to be willing to do it. Employee knowledge hoarding occurs when they refuse to share their expertise with the company (Gaur and Gupta, 2018). Sometimes knowledge is manipulated and misappropriated due to emotion, and other times it is suppressed, magnified, erased, and omitted to further personal objectives (Gaur and Gupta, 2023). In organization with KM Projects, each organization is the amalgamation of individual employee's knowledge and its implementation to achieve organizational objective (Gaur and Gupta, 2022). This view lacks in defining ownership right over knowledge of individual employee and organization.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Systematic literature review has been carried out to identify constructs and determinants under ethics and KMS and to develop a deeper understanding of the concepts. Data for this research was gathered from March 2024 to April 2024. Systematic literature review constituted five stages. In first stage, four social sciences databases including ProQuest Central, Emerald, SAGE, Business source complete (EBSCO) were assessed for high quality research papers. The criteria for search was keywords including ethics and/or KMS and/or KM. Other criteria for search was paper should be written in English and peer reviewed paper were selected. This stage resulted in 95 papers. In second stage of systematic literature review, papers were screened on the basis of relevance of title with respect to scope of the study. The second stage resulted in selection of 78 papers. In third stage, papers were selected on the basis of reviewing the abstract and identifying relevance of content with respect to scope of the study. The third stage resulted in selection of 68 papers. In fourth stage papers were reviewed completely for their inclusion in the study which resulted in inclusion of 49 papers. In last stage of systematic literature review snowball sampling was done to select the articles from reference list of selected papers to have an exhaustive list of articles. The inclusion of large number of papers will increase generalisability of the study.

The detailed scanning, analysis and research resulted in 17 dimensions of KMS and eight major dimensions of ethics. Further various indicators for each dimension of ethics and KMS were identified (refer table 1 and table 2).

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Ethics in today's world provides the organization with guiding principles of KM and facilitates effective implementation and execution of KM practices for the success of employees, organizations and economies. Victor and Cullen model (1964) of ethics incorporated all the aspects to form a comprehensive ethical framework but it is not appropriate and complete for today's knowledge-based organizations as it do not emphasize on ethical issues like social and cultural aspect, economic aspect, legal aspect and technological aspect. PRIMES Model (Chuck Huff, 2010) is not a comprehensive and integrated model focusing on ethics relevant to KMS of an organization. Similarly dimensions of ethics emphasized by Peyman Akhavan (2013) neglected many components relevant to KMS in any organization. These models compromises as they do not emphasize on obstacles in ethical behavior for KMS and addressing these obstacles. This study focuses on developing a conceptual framework linking ethics and KMS. This study identifies the various components of ethics and KMS dimensions exploring the unrevealed relationship. The suggested framework depicts the impact of constructs under ethics (independent variable) on construct under KMS. We present the abstract view of research model in figure 1, reflecting determinants of ethics impacting different determinants of KMS. According to the suggested framework in figure 2, there are various constructs and sub consrucs of ethics which are required by an organization for successful implementation of KMS.



Figure 1 Abstract view: KMS on Ethics Source: Compiled by authors

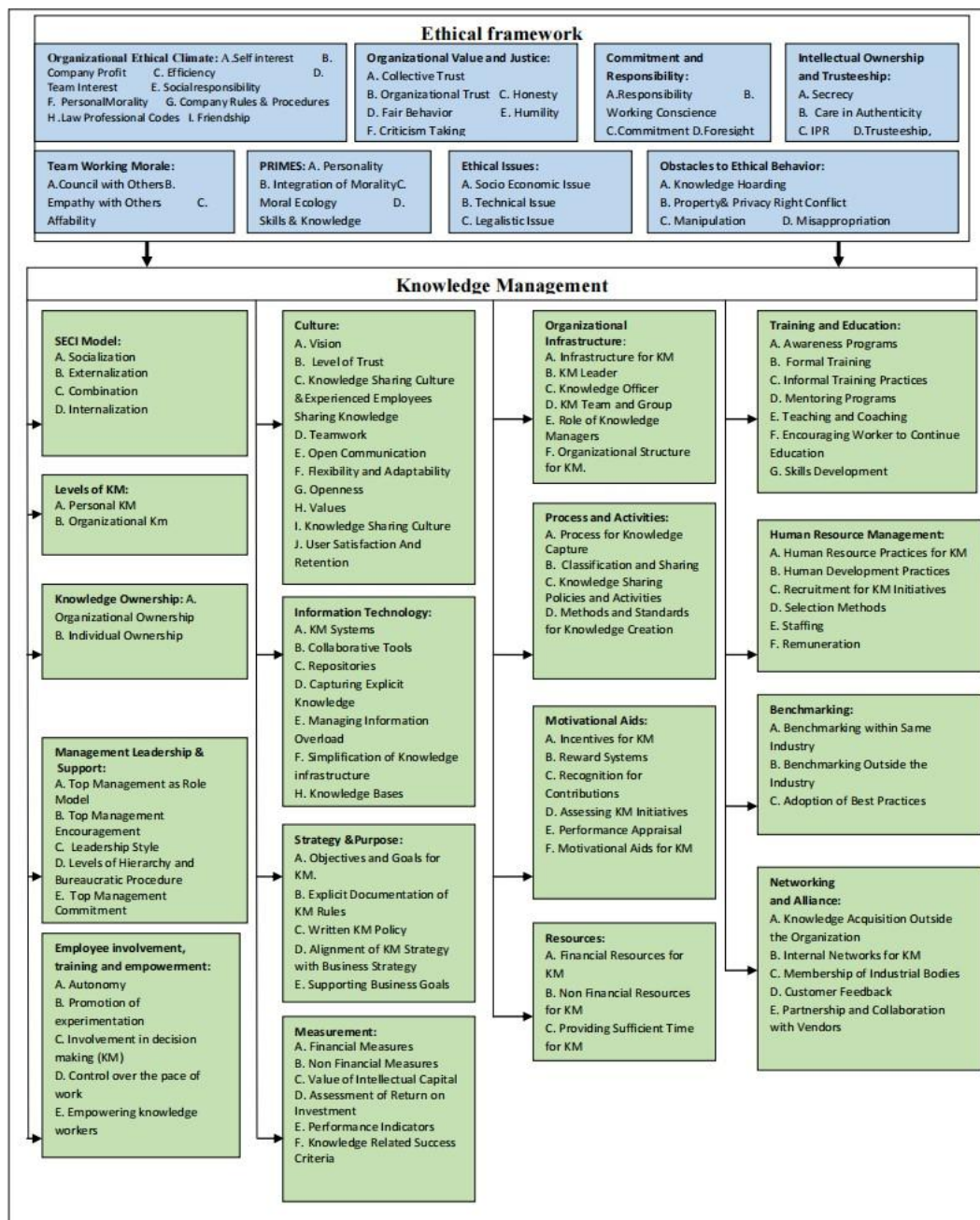
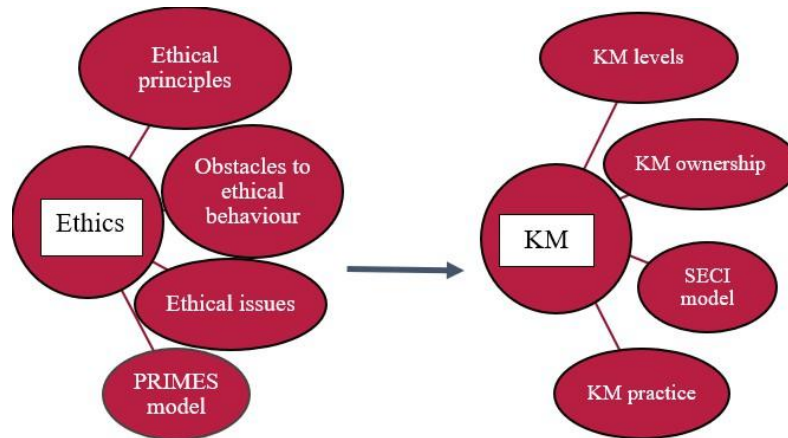


Figure 2- Conceptual - Ethical framework for KMS Source: Compiled by authors



5. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of the study is to assess the impact of ethics and related factors on KMS. Ethics appears as a relatively new area in KMS. Thus, the authors have tried to encapsulate various ethical parameters in KMS. Organizational ethical atmosphere, organizational values and justice, commitment and responsibility, intellectual ownership and trusteeship, moral teamwork, ethical concerns, PRIMES, and barriers to ethical behavior are some of the different ethical dimensions.

This study has made efforts to develop a comprehensive and integrated framework to develop a model of ethics for KMS. KM-specific ethical considerations are the study's primary emphasis. There are discussions about a range of barriers to moral behavior in knowledge management. Complex topics including knowledge hoarding, manipulation, misappropriation, and privacy rights are covered by these issues. There has also been discussion of the legal, technical, and socioeconomic difficulties. An organization's knowledge management can function well if a person's personality, environment, commitment to morality, and moral abilities are thoroughly examined. When applying KM, the writers endorse the moral and ethical acts worldview. An organization's KM procedures and practices are supported and organizational and individual knowledge are synergized when all these ethical guidelines are ingrained in the organization's culture. The KM system that supports ethical action is a new application area, which results in organizational success. The moral or ethical action is not a general thing person does while doing other tasks. Moral action is inherited in a way that how someone goes about work, the path chosen, the objectives to be achieved and skills possessed. Thus an ethical KM system is required in which KM system incorporates various ethical aspects.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STUDY

The creation and use of an ethical-KMS relationship may lead to an ethical understanding of knowledge management. People within an organization are essential to the planning and execution of knowledge management. This ought to be incorporated into KMS theory and practice. In terms of practical ramifications, managers should be aware that until the ethical framework is in place, KM process adoption will not ensure success. Managers should focus on implementing ethical norms and assessing their impact on the KM initiatives including creating, acquiring and sharing knowledge with shared values and beliefs. The conceptual framework presented in the study can be further tested empirically.

Moreover, many other conceptual models can be designed and developed on the various dimensions and indicators of KMS and ethics discussed in the study. In future, studies assessing the impact of each ethical dimension in KM processes can be interesting area for research. This study provides a basis for development of new conceptual as well as empirical studies for researchers. The research findings will provide individuals and organizations a better understanding of the linkage. KM systems are more likely to be successfully developed and run in firms that place a higher priority on ethics.

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