



Social Perspective of Organisational Management and Competitive Intelligence

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ABSTRACT:

This study examined the interaction among social and organisational learning, knowledge management and competitive intelligence in organisations. Drawing upon the literature review and analysis of social and organisational learning, competitive intelligence and knowledge management processes, we discussed several important research concerns surrounding the role of these concepts in achieving organizational performance. The focus of this study was to conceptualise the connection between the concepts of social and organisational learning, knowledge management and competitive intelligence in organisations and how their interaction can improve organisational performance.

Keywords: social, organisational learning, knowledge management, competitive intelligence, organisational performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organisational survival partly depends on environmental changes. Environmental evolution theory suggests that variable and uncertain environments demand that various organizations have high flexibility with environmental changes simultaneously. In recent years the rapid environmental changes pose serious threat to many organizational developments and rapid changes in technology and the information explosion have caused organizations to bear more pressure to stay in current competitive environment. In the rapidly changing world, knowledge becomes the most important source for the organizations to survive. Therefore, organizations need to learn faster and faster to adapt to the changing environment and to take competitive advantage.

By any measure, social learning is one of the fastest growing segments of the training and education space. Its growth is being propelled by a variety of popular technologies and applications, demand for greater individual control over learning experiences, and the training profession's eagerness to improve learning. Social learning occurs whenever individuals consult peers, friends and experts to gain information. Their ability to do so is broad, thanks to the proliferation of widely available tools in the marketplace. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, online encyclopaedias and group discussion boards are just some of the popular social media applications being employed today. Collaboration technologies such as webinars and virtual instructor-led training provide additional avenues for peer-to-peer learning.

Within the workplace, training organizations are vigorously incorporating social learning into their programs. They are motivated not only by the demands of tech-savvy young employees, but by opportunities to improve learner retention and lower training costs. In addition, new data mining technologies allow users to quickly search and locate certain stored informal content. Structured social learning represents both an opportunity and a challenge for the training profession. Companies clearly benefit when informal content from employees contains useful ideas and just-in-time solutions to problems not addressed in formal curricula. At the same time, many organizations struggle to effectively manage the influx of informal content and to measure the actual benefits gained from it.

Organizations are discovering that it's relatively easy to obtain usage data and other transaction measurements from social media contacts. By keeping track of activity within a social learning community, training departments can draw basic conclusions about its impact. But correlating those social exchanges with actual knowledge and performance requires metrics that are not easy to obtain.

Certain businesses are embracing social learning within structured learning networks. For example, among the most visible is the Cisco Learning Network, which encourages social exchanges among users taking formal training.

For many years, philosophers, scientists and intelligent laymen have been concerned about developing, acquiring, and impacting knowledge and improving the re-utilization of knowledge. However, it is only in the last two to three decades that a distinct field called “knowledge management” (KM) has emerged.

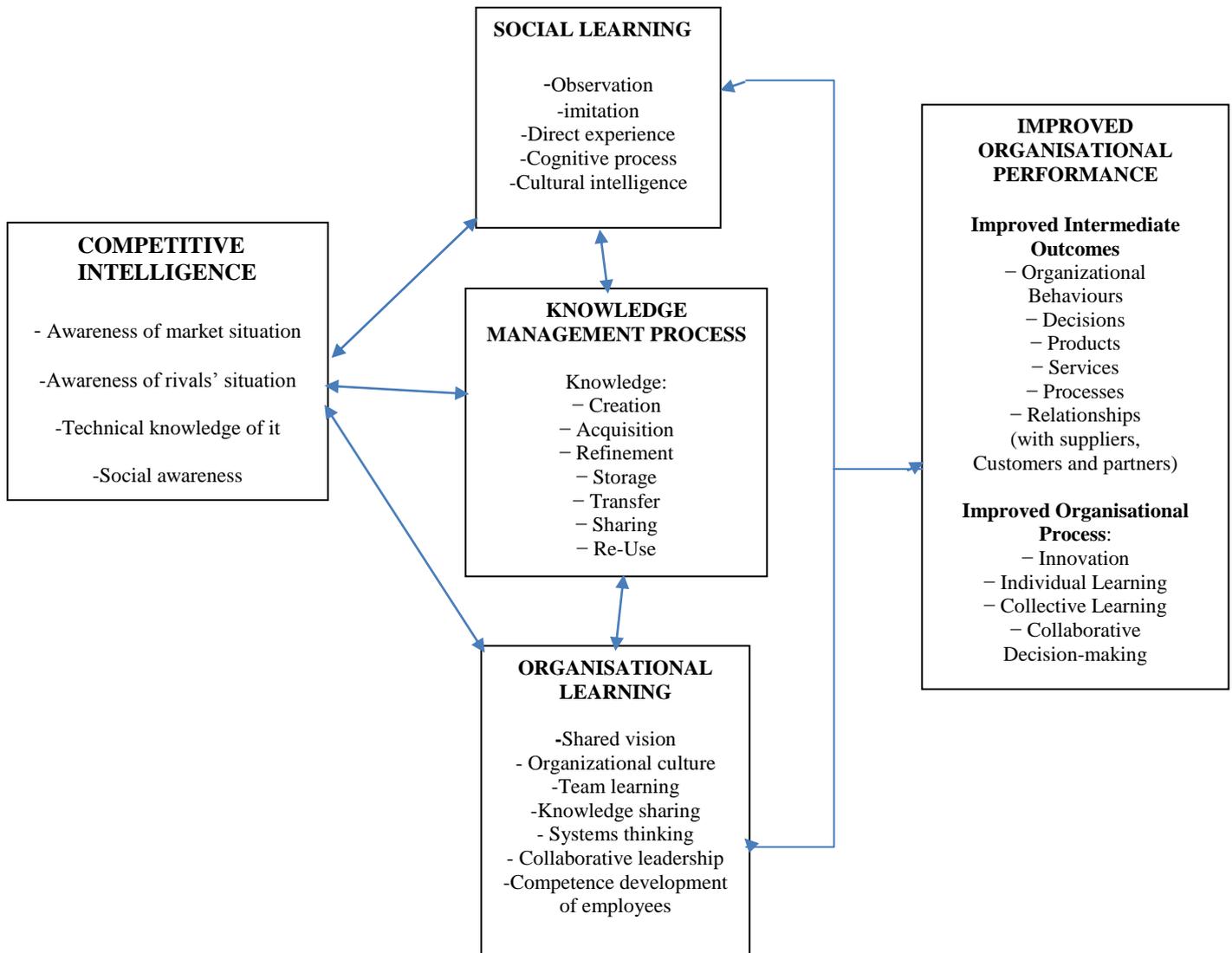


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source : *Research Desk* 2017

KM is based on the premise that, just as human beings are unable to draw on the full potential of their brains, organizations are generally not able to fully utilize the knowledge that they possess. Through KM, organizations seek to acquire or create potentially useful knowledge and to make it available to those who can use it at a time and place that is appropriate for them to achieve maximum effective usage in order to positively influence organizational performance. It is generally believed that if an organization can increase its effective knowledge utilization by only a small percentage, great benefits will result.

Organizational learning (OL) is complementary to KM. An early view of OL was “encoding inferences from history into routines that guide behaviour” (Levitt and March, 1988). So, OL has to do with embedding what has been learned into the fabric of the organization.

On the other hand, information and communication technology by providing various ways of business excellence has caused organizations to prevail over their rivals, only through increasing their competitive intelligence and adoption and use of information update (Parhizkar and Javed, 2010). According to Calof and Skinner (1999), competitive intelligence is the art and science of preparing companies for future through a management process of systematic knowledge. Competitive intelligence, as a separate domain and a specialized activity under the marketing research was formally called marketing intelligence.

Therefore, this study contextually explore the relationship between concepts of social and organisational learning, knowledge management and competitive intelligence in organisations

Conceptual Underpinning

The variables to be considered in relating social and organisational learning, competitive intelligence and knowledge management in organisations are shown in the conceptual framework below:

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

To develop a theory where the creation, transfer, and application of knowledge is the reason why firms exist, researchers have engaged in a passionate debate about what knowledge is and what forms or types of it are available (Collins, 1993; Von Krogh, Roos, & Slocum, 1994). Whereas the term learning has not been bound up in questions of veridicality and accuracy, the term knowledge has witnessed many debates. For positivists, knowledge (“justified true belief”) is universal and the result of systematic analysis of experience in a knowable reality (Spender, 1996). The positivist view of knowledge is the predominant one in Western culture and a generally accepted assumption in organizational theory (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). However, followers of Kant, for example, reject this view and assert that reality will be forever unknowable, because knowledge is constructed from sense impressions, and cannot tell us anything about reality beyond these impressions (Spender, 1996). Positivist views of knowledge are increasingly being challenged by more constructivist, relativist, and empiricists perspectives that shift the notion of knowledge as a commodity that individuals or organizations may acquire, to the study of knowing as something that they do (Cook & Brown, 1999; Polanyi, 1967).

Polanyi’s (1967) work, in particular, has been highly influential in defining knowledge as dynamic, when he argues that knowledge is an activity which could be better described as a process of knowing.

Several researchers (Blackler, 1993, 1995; Blackler, Reed, & Whitaker, 1993; Polanyi, 1967; Spender, 1994; Spender & Grant, 1996; Spender, 1996; Tsoukas, 1996) have tried to overcome the mind-body dualism, arguing that knowledge cannot be conceived independently from action, and that humans might be able to know in two ways, one based on the exercise of reason (mind), and the other based on experience (body).

Knowledge Management: this involves the coordination and distribution of intelligence information and knowledge acquired to the organization users for decision making to enhance performance.

The operational origin of KM, as the term is understood today, arose within the consulting community and from there the principles of KM were rather rapidly spread by the consulting organizations to other disciplines. The consulting firms quickly realized the potential of the Intranet flavour of the Internet for linking together their own geographically dispersed and knowledge-based organizations. Once having gained expertise in how to take advantage of intranets to connect across their organizations and to share and manage information and knowledge, they then understood that the expertise they had gained was a product that could be sold to other organizations. A new product of course needed a name, and the name chosen, or at least arrived at, was Knowledge Management. The timing was propitious, as the enthusiasm for intellectual capital in the 1980s, had primed the pump for the recognition of information and knowledge as essential assets for any organization.

In the KM literature, knowledge is most commonly categorized as either explicit or tacit (that which is in people's heads). This characterization is however rather too simple, but a more important point, and a criticism, is that it is misleading. A much more nuanced and useful characterization is to describe knowledge as explicit, implicit, and tacit.

Explicit: information or knowledge that is set out in tangible form.

Implicit: information or knowledge that is not set out in tangible form but could be made explicit.

Tacit: information or knowledge that one would have extreme difficulty operationally setting out in tangible form.

The classic example in the KM literature of true "tacit" knowledge is Nonaka and Takeuchi's example of the kinaesthetic knowledge that was necessary to design and engineer a home bread maker, knowledge that could only be gained or transferred by having engineers work alongside bread makers and learn the motions and the "feel" necessary to knead bread dough (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

The danger of the explicit-tacit dichotomy is that by describing knowledge with only two categories, i.e., explicit, that which is set out in tangible form, and tacit, that which is within people, is that it then becomes easy to think overly simplistically in terms of explicit knowledge, which calls for "collecting" KM methodologies, and tacit knowledge, which calls for "connecting" KM methodologies, and to overlook the fact that, in many cases, what may be needed is to convert implicit tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge.

The concepts of knowing, knowledge, and learning seem to be closely intertwined. First, knowledge can be obtained through the mind (learning by reflection, anticipatory learning) and through the body (learning by doing, experimental learning). Second, knowledge can be accumulated in our minds (knowing what, theoretical knowledge, declarative knowledge) and also in our bodies (knowing how, practical knowledge, procedural knowledge). Last, learning is the change in knowledge and the change in knowing, which involves, as mentioned before, changes in cognition and changes in behaviour. Knowledge and knowing are the content of the learning process, in other words, what we learn or get to know. The main distinction between knowledge and knowing is that knowledge is mainly cognitive, including the facts and capabilities we know, while knowing is mainly behavioural, or the expression of knowledge in action.

In addition to the efforts towards understanding what knowledge is and how it can become a source of sustainable competitive advantage, another branch of the knowledge management literature studies the processes through which knowledge is developed, retained, and transferred (e.g., Almeida, 1996; Argote & Ingram, 2000; Hoopes & Postrel, 1999; Pisano, 1994; Szulanski, 1996). Thus, this second branch of research steps back from the questions about knowledge types and forms and emphasizes the need to understand the micro-processes by which knowledge is created or acquired, communicated, applied, and utilized in organizations. Similarly, we detect a growing interest in studying the alignment between the firm's knowledge and its strategy, structure, environment, and leadership (e.g., Bierly & Chakrabarti, 1996; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Hedlund, 1994; Leonard, 1995; Sanchez, 1996; Zack, 1999).

One aspect in which the KM literature can learn from the evolution of the OL field is in terms of differentiating descriptive and prescriptive work. While the OL literature has cleared up the confusion between the concepts of "organizational learning" and "learning organization" (LO) by realizing that academics use the first term in a descriptive way, while practitioners use the second term in a prescriptive way, knowledge management still means different things to different communities. When providing prescriptions, consultants talk about the need to proactively manage knowledge and define knowledge management as "managed learning". In these discussions, KM is defined as "the explicit control and management of knowledge within an organization aimed at achieving the company's objectives" (Van der Spek & Spijkervet, 1997) and "the ability of organizations to manage, store, value, and distribute knowledge" (Liebowitz & Wilcox, 1997). In addition, technology specialists prescribe KM as heavily leveraged on information technology and discuss the implementation of KM tools such as intranets, data warehousing/knowledge repositories, electronic document systems, yellow pages catalogs, best practices/lessons databases, groupware, and decision support systems (Hansen, Nohria, & Tierney, 1999; Ruggles, 1998).

Several authors (Crossan et al., 1999; Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) in the OL and KM fields have proposed that learning occurs and that knowledge exists at the individual, group, organizational, and inter-organizational or network levels. This fourth level of analysis has attracted a lot of attention from researchers interested in the role of learning in alliances, joint ventures, strategic groups, and inter-firm relationships in general (e.g., Doz, 1996; Dussauge, 2000; Inkpen & Crossan, 1995; Khanna, 1998; Kogut, 1988). However, other scholars associate OL and KM with only the individual level or with a specific subset of these four levels.

One of the most associated concepts with the term of competitive intelligence is "knowledge management". This emerging notion has attracted a growing interest in management sciences. Many

scholars have devoted much of their researches to study knowledge management which is viewed as a "multidimensional and multidisciplinary concept" (Meihami & Meihami 2014). Thus, for Prax (2000) "knowledge management is a process of creation, enrichment, capitalization and dissemination of knowledge that involves all the actors of the organization, as consumers and producers".

Conceived as an organizational project, knowledge management mobilizes all the actors and catalyzes change. Following the same perspective, Brillman and Hérard (2006) argue that "knowledge management is regarded as a way of creating a competitive advantage and create value for customers, employees and shareholders".

In addition, for some authors such as Newman and Conrad (2000), "knowledge management is a discipline that seeks to improve the performance of individuals and organizations by maintaining and leveraging the present and future value of knowledge assets. Knowledge management systems encompass both human and automated activities and their associated artefacts".

One of the most challenging tasks of a knowledge management is to achieve high and sustainable organizational performance. In this sense, Preston *et al* (1999) consider knowledge management as a process of creating, acquiring, sharing and processing knowledge to improve learning and performance in organizations. Essentially, it is considered as "an attempt by organizations to capture, codify, organize, and redistribute the firm's tacit forms of intellectual capital or knowing and make them explicit. In other words, the essence of knowledge management is to find, awaken and harness the ingredients of sustainable benefits" (Rothberg & Erickson, 2005).

Based on all these definitions, knowledge management, as depicted above, has gradually evolved as an important discipline in the field of management sciences and regarded as a system of valuing and capitalizing knowledge that contributes to value creation for the company (Veybel & Prieur, 2003).

In most organizations, knowledge management is considered as a process that consists of identifying, mapping, preserving knowledge and putting it at the disposal of decision makers.

Social Learning: It is a process of interaction that took place among groups of individual exchanging ideas and acquiring such ideas for their benefit. It can be done individually or collectively. Such methods include blogs, instant messaging, group discussion boards, wikis, video chats and other social media applications. Social learning can be practiced by:

1. Encourage collaboration. The key to social learning is learning through collaboration with colleagues. Among the most beneficial are conversations that feature story telling and problem solving of workplace challenges.
2. Measure true success. It's helpful to know how people are utilizing social learning opportunities, but measuring that activity is limited in value. Organizations should also identify success criteria such as a track able performance metric for a sales team. Also, process automation can yield measurable business results.
3. Stress formal learning. A foundation of formal learning must be the basis of every social learning network. Learners start with a foundation of knowledge, and build around it via informal learning methods.

Organisational Learning: Organizations learn through individuals acting as agents for them. And as a result it is considered as the ability of an organization to gain insight and understanding from experience through experimentation, observation, analysis, and a willingness to examine both their successes and failures (Smith 2001). Individual and collective learning are key concepts in Organizational learning. The most genuine component of organizational learning is learning from experience, this component is common for all approaches of organizational learning.

Learning organization and organizational learning has much in common and it is widely recognized that organizational learning is the process of becoming a learning organization (Structure and outcome). According to Finger and Brand (1999) "organizational learning is the activity and the process by which organizations eventually reach the ideal of a learning organization". In this sense the learning organization is an ideal, "towards which organizations have to evolve in order to be able to respond to the various pressures they are faced with".

Theorists of learning organizations have often drawn on ideas from organizational learning but there has been little traffic in the reverse direction. One of the main ideas in organizational learning is the idea of single-loop and double-loop learning (Argyris and Schön 1978,1996).

In single-loop learning, individuals, groups, or organizations modify their actions according to the difference between expected and obtained outcomes. In double-loop learning, the entities (individuals,

groups or organization) question the values, assumptions and policies that led to the actions in the first place; if they are able to view and modify those, then second-order or double-loop learning has taken place. Double loop learning is the learning about single-loop learning.

For organizational learning,(OL) we agree with the growing group of theorists (Argyris & Schoen, 1978; Duncan & Weiss, 1979; Miller, 1996), who emphasize the interrelationship between cognition and behaviour and conclude that the learning process encompasses both cognitive and behavioural change. Individuals and groups learn by understanding and then acting or by acting and then interpreting (Crossan *et al.*, 1995). The definition of OL adopted for this paper incorporates this thinking: "organizational learning is the process of change in individual and shared thought and action, which is affected by and embedded in the institutions of the organization" (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1998): 4). When individual and group learning becomes institutionalized, organizational learning occurs and knowledge is embedded in non-human repositories such as routines, systems, structures, culture, and strategy (Crossan, Lane, & White, 1999; Nelson & Winter, 1982; Walsh & Rivera, 1991). Because of its intrinsic notion of change, organizational learning research has dealt with questions of how organizations evolve, transform (e.g., Barnett, Greve, & Park, 1994; MacIntosh, 1999), and renew themselves (e.g., Crossan *et al.*, 1999; Lant & Mezias, 1992; Mezias & Glynn, 1993) in order to face the challenges of a continuously changing environment.

Peter sange's explanations of organizational learning dimensions are:

1) **Shared vision:** The importance of shared vision to become learning organization:

First, shared vision provides centralization and energy for learning. Second, outlook leads people to act. Outlook expresses their hopes and dreams and give meaning to them. Third, stretching toward the upper desirable goal fights with force governing available situation. Shared vision creates the ultimate goal and encourages risk-taking and innovation. Fourth, values and shared vision are important in determining the type of knowledge that is stored and transmitted by organization (Neefe,2001) . Shared vision can make sense of commitment to the group and is followed by creation, principle and Leading practices that we are hoping to get it (Veisi,2010)

2) **Organizational learning culture:** When members of the community, organization or group attempt to be compliant with an external environment and solving internal integration problems, they have attempted to learn unconsciously. In theory, learning and solving problems are not only different but also must be seen that different views have some basic process (Neefe, 2001).

3) **Work and group learning:** Group learning is crucial element in all learning organizations (Veisi, 2010). In work and group learning emphasis is on the importance of the alignment and personnel to avoid wasting energy. Collective learning is a process which group members develop.

4) **To share knowledge:** Transmission and distribution of knowledge, organizational and technological transfer of data include knowledge and information. The capacity of organization to transfer knowledge represents probability and sharing power which also is requisite for success. Knowledge should be distributed carefully and quickly throughout the organization or areas of company (Neefe, 2001)

5) **System thinking:** System thinking is a discipline to have a holistic view of the entire organisation. Different people of organization's sectors and regions should have clear view toward objectives of the organization and know how they can help to develop those objectives. It means the use of system approach in analysis and corporate governance and in paying attention to organizational influences on each other with general idea, business activities and in general all other human endeavours are systems that are limited by related constructive activities (activities that usually require long time to fully effect on each other).

6) **Collaborative leadership:** Consequences of participative leadership are to have the sense of partnership staff. The result of such an effort is to make staff feel they need to be and they are useful.

7) **Competence development of staff:** Competence in human resource literature is a set of knowledge skills, measurable and observable behaviours that share in success of post or job. The level of knowledge information, skills and competence of staff should be raised and they should be on merit.

The debate in the literature mostly focuses on the organizational level, because of the concerns about anthropomorphism. On one side, Simon (1991) states that "all learning takes place inside individual human heads; an organization learns in only two ways: (a) by the learning of its members; or (b) by ingesting new members who have knowledge the organization didn't previously have". On the other

side, Hedberg (1981) argues that “although organizational learning occurs through individuals, it would be a mistake to conclude that organizational learning is nothing but the cumulative result of their members’ learning. Members come and go, and leadership changes, but organizations’ memories preserve certain behaviours, mental maps, norms and values over time” Hedbeg(1981).

Furthermore, work by Nelson and Winter (1982) describes knowledge at the organizational level and refers to organizational routines as the organization’s genetic material, some explicit in bureaucratic rules, some implicit in the organization’s culture. We agree with this second growing group of scholars that organizations are more than the sum of individuals and that by acknowledging the existence of non-human repositories of knowledge and organizational learning systems (Shrivastava & Grant, 1985), the capacity to learn, to know, and to have a memory (Walsh & Rivera, 1991) can be attributed to firms.

Competitive Intelligence: Competitive Intelligence (CI) involves the use of public sources to develop data on competition, competitors, and the market environment. It then transforms, by analysis that data into intelligence. Public, in CI, means all information you can legally and ethically identify, locate, and then access McGonagle and Vella (2002).

The Society for Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP), gives a more precise definition: “A systematic and ethical program for gathering, analysing, and managing external information that can affect your company’s plans, decisions, and operations. Put it another way, CI is the process of enhancing marketplace competitiveness through a greater-yet plainly ethical-understanding of a firm’s competitors and the competitive environment” (SCIP 2000).

CI can be defined, also, as knowledge and foreknowledge about the external operating environment. The ultimate goal of each intelligence process is to facilitate decision-making that leads to action. “Competitive intelligence is a formalized, yet a continuously evolving process by which the management team assesses the evolution of its industry and the capabilities and behaviour of its current and potential competitors to assist in maintaining or developing a competitive advantage. Prescott and Gibbons, (1996).

Competitive intelligence comes from the three main academic areas: information science, collective management and security studies. However these three seek to claim they are mental and spiritual home of competitive intelligence, but only security studies can claim that it is the basis for competitive intelligence (Odendaal, 2004).

Competitive intelligence as an emerging discipline has been relevant in business since early 1980. Although the practical origin refers to previous decade, we can attribute its intellectual origins to Michael Porter, Harvard professor, when in 1980 he used the technique of competitive method to analyse industries and competitors (Fourie, 1999).

A possible explanation for this emerging discipline is the information explosion characterized by the increasing availability of information itself, as reflected in the proliferation of commercial databases worldwide. Other causes of this growth is possibly the very nature of the times in which we now live times of great worldwide political and social changes, increasing pace of business, increased global competition from new competitors, more aggressive competition, and rapid technological changes.

Combs and Moorhead (1992,) point out that never before have so many opportunities or dangers presented themselves. In fact, in an unassuming, but diligent and measured manner some multinational companies are increasingly treating business like an economic war. With ever-increasing vehemence, such enterprises are methodically monitoring and investigating their competitors, while deploying all the resources they have at their disposal in order to beat their current or future rivals. Kahaner (1996,) states that competitive intelligence has become the ‘latest weapon in the world war of economics’, where many emerging economies view competitive intelligence as a way to win economic wars against larger, more industrialized countries. By using their intelligences instead of weapons, these countries are able to turn raw information into usable intelligence to further their economic status.

According to Fuld (1995,) most corporate victories result from well-designed products and services, hard-won marketing campaigns, and the strategic use of intelligence. On the other hand, most failures come from a combination of bad timing, poor judgement, and misuse, or insufficient use, of competitive intelligence.

Calof in Patterson (2000) defines competitive intelligence as actionable recommendations arising from a systematic process, involving planning, gathering, analysing and disseminating information on

the external environment, for opportunities or developments that have the potential to affect a company or a country's competitive situation. In practice, companies seeking competitive advantage in the marketplace are the primary users of competitive intelligence.

Competitive intelligence is the product of processed business information. Processed means that it has been analysed and interpreted. Intelligence is anchored in past and present data to anticipate the future, in order to drive and guide decisions in enterprises.

The growth of an enterprise often depends on its ability to gain a competitive edge by establishing new standards of performance in the market place. To achieve this, an enterprise needs not only to master its own activities, but also to have relevant information about competitors to position itself and its products or services against competitors.

Competitive intensity within an industry depends on the number and type of the enterprises competing in it. Additional competitors will therefore influence the profit appeal of an industry. If an enterprise is to compete successfully in the marketplace, it needs to know a great deal about its competitors, their products and how they are likely to react to any strategic initiative the enterprise may take. In fact being able to analyse the situation of both potential and existing competitors is the pivotal point of competitive strategy. All actions of competitors must be carefully and continuously scanned for direct and indirect indications of its intentions, motives, goals or internal situation (Du Toit, 1998).

The purpose behind competitive research is to collect information about competitors to provide benchmarks, avoid surprises and identify opportunities. It seems plausible that the number of an enterprise's competitors, the enterprise's basic strategy, and its size would all affect the degree and versatility of intelligence gathering (Du Toit, 1995).

The role that competitive intelligence plays in the business process is an important one. Any solid strategic plan begins with an in-depth look at the current environment. Strategy and planning will tell enterprises in which direction they should be heading, but by incorporating competitive intelligence into their planning process will assist in creating better business plans, require that they revisit strategic assumptions, and help define and refine their corporate strategy (Burnet & Scaffidi 2013).

Enterprises today operate in a global market in an increasing turbulent and volatile environment and must withstand competitive pressures both from other producers or suppliers and from new technologies and products or services. Corporate management therefore needs an input of competitive information and has to manage and utilize this information.

Competitive intelligence management is a well-established function in enterprises in developed countries, because managers realize that if they do not monitor the actions and activities of their competitors, their strategic plans would fail. However, enterprises in developing countries continue to be surprised by undesirable changes in the environment and it appears that the advances in managing intelligence are as yet largely unknown to these countries.

Roach and Santi (2001) described the following dimensions for competitive intelligence:

1) **Market Intelligence** : This kind of intelligence means draw a map of the current situation and future customer needs and preferences and new markets, creative opportunities for market segmentation and the main movements and changes in marketing and distribution.

2) **Competitor Analysis Intelligence**: This kind of intelligence is the evaluation of changes in competitor strategy in specific return time that results to changes in competitors, new replacement product and new price in industry.

3) **Technology Intelligence**: In this is intelligence cost – benefit of current new technologies are rated and technology changes are anticipated.

4) **Social Intelligence**: Early researchers like Svandayk offered that social skills are an important element of intelligent and operation behaviour in relation to others. During the past two decades, social intelligence has been considered as one of the most important topics in social sciences and humanities among the managerial, organizational and educational areas and always its ability and applications have been discussed, compared with other intelligences. Social intelligence is the ability to establish interpersonal relationships and a group, working with others, use the power of the mind and body to communicate with others and understand them better. Also, social intelligence means to obtain this attitude that we encourage others to develop interpersonal relation and friendly behaviour, and also awareness of how others have become friends and how to keep it (Rezaei and Khalilzade ,1388).

LINKING SOCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENT

The way social learning is promoted depend on the objectives pursued by the organization learning it and its context. The three elements of knowledge management (use, creation and sharing) are always present although the form in which they are combined may vary greatly.

Blondel, Edouard & Mabrouki (2007) argue that competitive intelligence and knowledge management are two distinct approaches. Competitive intelligence and knowledge management practices have a number of differences, but both fields aim at creating actionable knowledge in order to improve organizational performance. Thus, it has been argued that knowledge management and competitive intelligence share complementary objectives (Blondel *et al* 2007).

On the one hand, they both contribute to the process of organizational learning through the transformation of information into actionable knowledge and, on the other hand, they rely on the same collective cognitive abilities. However, each of these practices follows very different methodologies in organizations. Thus, for knowledge management, the information sought emanates essentially from the internal environment of the company, whereas competitive intelligence refers to an organizational process designed to take advantage of information emanating from the external environment.

Accordingly, it seems that knowledge management is considered as a "methodological support" and a "tank of knowledge" for competitive intelligence which, on its side, should select and filter the knowledge that the company considers relevant and necessary for the decision-making process. Therefore, competitive intelligence can rely on the methods and tools of knowledge management to improve strategic decisions and lead to better performance. In summary, the major common ground between these two processes is to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

The concept of organizational performance has been an active research area and has attracted significant attention among organizational theories and business strategy researchers, particularly with a focus on its explanatory elements and sources. Several researchers in management sciences acknowledge the existence of a relationship between firms practicing competitive intelligence and/or knowledge management and organizational performance (Cohen 2007). However, little empirical work has confirmed or refuted this correlation. Thus, in an increasingly competitive context, Bouvard and Storhaye (2002) consider that the value of information depends largely on its operational utility.

According to the "Resource Based Theory", an organization is a combination of tangible and intangible commodities whose nature and attributes determine its competitiveness and performance. Thus, as previously mentioned, information and knowledge are seen as a valuable resource contributing to organizational performance. This idea was emphasized by Mahoney and Pandian (1992) who point out that information and knowledge constitute resources that confer a greater competitive advantage.

Resource-based theorists suggest that firms can and do differentiate themselves on the basis of their resources. Based on this view, a firm's knowledge assets are widely recognized as valuable resource. Thus, organizational performance depends on the way that the company manages its intangible resources. In this sense, the creation of organizational value requires the development of a knowledge management approach (Mallet, Rousseau & Valoggia 2006). Indeed, competitive intelligence and knowledge management support decision makers with relevant and value-added information and contribute to the transformation of this latter into knowledge.

Being an outside business activity, competitive intelligence relies on a work of internal self-examination that knowledge management tools provide. In contrast, knowledge management process can be exploited in order to develop a relevant competitive intelligence system. In other words, competitive intelligence can rely on information provided by a knowledge management system when this information is strategic, while competitive intelligence aims to provide actionable information to decision makers and therefore fosters the process of knowledge management. This synergy between these two practices contributes to improve firm's overall performance.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have presented a discussion of knowledge management, competitive intelligence, organisational and social learning and organizational performance based on a review, interpretation, and synthesis of a wide array of pertinent literature. Some typical conclusions may be drawn from our work by examining the roles of knowledge management and competitive intelligence in enhancing

organisational and social learning. This research paper revealed the existence of synergy between these concepts via a number of aspects of complementarities like competitive intelligence is an extension of knowledge management process. Knowledge management is a process that focuses on the exploitation of cognitive assets and internal information, whereas competitive intelligence is a process that focuses on external information emerging from the business environment. Knowledge management tends to be more reactive; however, competitive intelligence is associated with a proactive behaviour of the company especially in predicting the evolution of competition and market developments. Knowledge management is often associated with collaborative computing device that allow sharing information and making strategic decisions while competitive intelligence uses analytical and understanding capacities and skills to comprehend the company's external environment. Competitive intelligence and knowledge management are two distinct approaches. On one hand, they both contribute to the process of organizational and social learning through the transformation of information into actionable knowledge and, on the other hand, they rely on the same collective cognitive abilities, but both fields aim at creating actionable knowledge in order to improve organizational performance. Our findings indicate that the firm is required to continuously develop a knowledge culture which contributes to encourage the creation of intangible assets that are considered as the main factors of its competitiveness in the business market. From the various literature reviews, we conclude that by combining competitive intelligence and knowledge management in a judicious and efficient way within the organization, this latter would be able to develop a learning capacity enabling the organisation to be constantly alerted to changes and to face the potential risks and threats emanating from its environment. An understanding and use of competitive intelligence and knowledge management practices, and their relationship with organizational performance, might provide directives to decisions makers regarding the unexploited opportunities that these two managerial practices offer them in a rapidly changing environment.

WAY FORWARD

- 1) Further review on competitive intelligence and knowledge management should examine the critical success factors for implementing competitive intelligence and/or knowledge management practices in organizations or how firms should actively manage these practices to encourage organizational learning and social learning.
- 2) Most of the valuable knowledge is tacit. For retrieving and sharing this knowledge, conversations, dramatizations and storytelling are much more effective than writing. It is necessary to develop cognitive methods and tools for enabling knowledge sharing among local institutions, without much abstraction, without much systematization.
- 3) As knowledge management is an emergent phenomenon, development professionals need to develop their sensitivity to identifying emerging patterns at local and global level, fostering those patterns with higher potential and achieving greater effectiveness for making knowledge a key factor in organisational and social learning that may lead to improved organisational performance.
- 4) It is necessary to train knowledge promoters, development practitioners and local experts in knowledge management: in methods of eliciting and expressing tacit knowledge, as well as in reflective practice, knowledge community promotion, knowledge project design, social networking, etc.
- 5) To be sustainable, social learning requires institutional support in cognitive, social, logistic, and economic resources. Development organizations need to learn how to promote that institutional support for making social learning a new component of development processes.
- 6) To remain competitive, organizations must create and use new knowledge. However, the current practices in knowledge acquisition, utilization, and management are mostly limited to capturing, recycling, and deploying the existing information, and making it available on a technology platform. Knowledge management and competitive intelligence are in this regard two important strategies or practices through which organizations could use effective knowledge to improve organizational effectiveness, improve productivity, improve decision making, and especially, obtain a sustainable competitive advantage.

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