HOW TO CULTIVATE INDIVIDUAL WISDOM FOR LEARNING

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Abstract

The twenty-first century is the century of prosperity and continuous learning. Learning is acquiring, modifying, or reinforcing existing or new knowledge, and involves synthesizing experience, spirit, and passion which leads to individual wisdom. This article studied the evolution of information, knowledge, and wisdom. Although wisdom is considered to be the highest form of knowledge, it is still a sophisticated concept with no consensus definition. The article describes what individual wisdom is, how to develop individual wisdom for active learning, and how to diffuse individual wisdom into organizational wisdom. In addition, this article lists the ways for individual wisdom cultivation, including how to manage individual wisdom for best practices in an organization, and last, but not least, how to contribute organizational values, or return profit to the community for reimbursement which entrepreneurs can utilize as natural resources and public utilities for his own businesses.

Keywords: Wisdom, Passion, Spirituality, and Experience

INTRODUCTION

In the past, the return from investment came predominantly from physical assets like physical products, or equipment. However, many factors such as the market or the degree of globalization of the production, higher customer needs, competitive pressures, and rapid technology change, among other factors, led to redefined knowledge as a vital strategy for innovation and competitive advantage (Bechina, 2005). It is widely accepted that environmental learning success arising from knowledge is shared at the individual, team, and organizational levels. So far, wisdom provides creativity and leads to innovation and tangible changes take place. This is same as Grant's, (2006) view that the complexity of innovation in competitive situations has been increased by the growth in the amount of talented people available to organizations as a basis of innovation.

In today's rapidly changing business context, the ability of the organization to adapt is considered to be the main factor in its survival and competitive situations. Yet, adaptation to current contingencies is unlikely to prove sufficient, it is now suggested that organizations attempt to medi-

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tate individual wisdom, build a culture of organizational wisdom, or develop a level of learning so that future trends and conditions can be predicted and continuous modifications made.

While, Drucker (2003) mentioned that "*the traditional factors of production-land, labor, and capital have not disappeared, but they have become secondary, and knowledge is becoming the only meaningful resource*". The accumulation of the intellectual capital assets of the organization with the learning process has increasingly intrigued mankind, and presently forming knowledge-based society. More broadly, intellectual capital is composed of relational and emotional wisdom. It is viewed as a central factor in the sustenance of competitive advantage (Penrose, 2006; Barney, 2006; Collis and Montgomery, 2007).

Indeed, the importance of wisdom has been well-established (Marr *et al.*, 2003). There has been a concern in recent times with the efficacy of wisdom management. It is widely accepted that both commercial and public organizations that are consciously aware of the significance of being an innovative organization largely invest in their people through both formal and informal learning.

EVOLUTION OF DATA, INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND WISDOM

Zeleny (1987) diagramed the relative definitions of data, information, knowledge, and wisdom (DIKW) in the following way:

Figure 1: Knowledge Management- Cultivating knowledge professionals, Source: Suliman Al-Hawamdeh (2003)

Data is a set of particular and objective facts about an event or simply the structured record of a transaction, raw numbers, and facts. Zack (1999) agreed that data represent facts or observations out of context that are not directly meaningful. According to Davis and Olson (1985 data is the raw material of higher order constructs.

Information is processed or organized data, as a result of placing data within some meaningful content, often in the form of a message. Zack (1999) and Tiwannna (2003) defined the meaning of information as data endowed with relevance and purpose. Its ability to inform meant it is something that changes or shapes the person who gets it.

Knowledge is categorized data, sorted based on clear or implied relationships, or something more than information, such as meaningful and authenticated information. Davenport and Prusak (1998) as well as Mcinerney (2002) agreed that knowledge is closer to action, or actionable information, and increased through interaction with information from other people. Whilest Zeleny (1987) cited that knowledge is the

purposeful coordination of action, it implies the capacity of coordinated actions toward some goal or objectives and that the coordinated action is the test of possessing knowledge.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) mentioned that knowledge, unlike information, is about beliefs and commitment. In addition, knowledge is the full utilization of information and data, coupled with the potential of peoples' skills, competencies, ideas, intuitions, commitments, and motivations. In short, knowledge is understandings that the cognitive system possesses.

Moreover, the next stage of evolution beyond knowledge management is wisdom management. It is still a debatable and complicated issue. If we draw a parallel between knowledge and wisdom, knowledge is resource, and wisdom is a method of how to get and utilize these resources. An underlying assumption of the word "***wisdom***" is the application of knowledge to make individual or organizational choices; a deep understanding of people; things; events or situations; empowering the ability to choose or act to consistently produce the optimum results with a minimum of time and energy (Mcinerney, 2002).On the other hand, Balts and Staudinger (2000) simply note that ***wisdom*** coordinates knowledge and judgments about the "pragmatics of life" such as 1) strategies and goals involving the conduct of life; 2) limits of knowledge and uncertainties of the world; 3) excellence of judgment and advice; 4) knowledge with extraordinary balance and scope; 5) search for a perfect synergy of mind and character; 6) balancing the well-being of oneself and that of others. Thus, in the view of author ***wisdom*** can be summarized as a

reasoning ability, or a comprehension of what is true or right through learning from experiences, spirit, and intensive passion with optimum judgment as to actions needed.

PATHWAY TO INDIVIDUAL WISDOM

Wisdom has a significant impact at both the individual and organizational level. The pathway to individual wisdom consists of three separate paths, namely: experience, spirituality and passion (Bierly *et al.*, 2000). Generally, experience comprises knowledge of or skill with something or some event gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event. Experience is the accumulation of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation in events or activities, or the content of direct observation or participation in an event.

Individual wisdom along the experience pathway is learned or developed in everyday of life through trial and error (Beck, 1999). The study of interactions between the self and the environment (experiences) can lead to learning and ultimately wiser actions. So far experience provides individuals an intuitive framework with which to assess the situation, detect changing circumstances, or judges the importance of innovation, or makes the right decision. However, time is not related to learning with experiences. To show that more learning it is not necessarily indicated from more experiences. Therefore, learning from experience is bounded by the individual need to go beyond description and reflect on the

experiences one acquires. Beck (1999) implied that wisdom is synthetic and subjective, and knowledge is separate and objective. Moreover, knowledge can be divided into two types of knowledge which are explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge, which is objective knowledge, a codified system, formal, and easy to communicate, and applied in a simple manner without the need for experience. Tacit knowledge, which is subjective knowledge, personal, and a valuable context for interpretation. Thus, wisdom, which is the ability to use knowledge for action, also requires experience.

Beck (1999) implied that wisdom is the science of the spirit, while knowledge is the science of matter. Spirituality is moral and emotional in nature and involves an understanding and appreciation of one's position in the universe. Bierly *et al.*, (2000) argued that spirituality can enhance wisdom in two ways; first, wisdom is gained through a self-reflection on experiences and a formulation of deeper goals, and thereby prompts a strong sense of integrity. Basically, spirituality facilitates wisdom and clarifies goals by giving a core belief in self's purpose. Second, spirituality gives faith, courage, and facilitates right decision making and actions. Not only is spirituality the result of rational analysis, but so is a strong sense of truth as well.

Top managers with make decisions based on bounded rationality many times make unsuitable judgements because of disregarding details or bounded emotions. Furthermore, Isenberg (1984) found that top managers use intuition in five ways: problem solving, behaviour learned well, scatter data synthesize, reality check, and

solutions creation. Therefore, spirituality supports the relationship between employer and employee by providing guidance, understanding, and intuition, which can lead to higher commitment to these goals with harmony as well.

Passion is the strength of belief to make things happen, and is essential to the action aspect of wisdom (Bierly *et al.*, 2000). Passion should come from intense energy, believe in one's idea and powerful doing. Indeed, passion inspires people to overcome obstacles, or manage challenging tasks more wisely, according to Beck (1999), who argued that passion is the process of becoming wise and includes a looking-within-oneself component so that a person can direct their love and motivation toward greater values. Passion is related to motivation. Consistently, to be motivated is to arouse and direct action toward a goal in a persistent manner (Bierly *et al.*, 2000). Motivation is a term that refers to a group of phenomena which affect the nature of an individual's actions, elicits controls, sustains strength of behavior, and in the persistence of the certain behaviors. In addition, passion must be concealed inside an individual's mind and push it to strive beyond the present understanding, it is derived from intellectual stimulation and makes a contribution as individual wisdom.

I, therefore, define a simple representation of individual wisdom in the following way: experiences + spiritually + passion. Briefly, individual wisdom is the ability to make sound judgments, learn from common experiences, and embrace spirituality. Spirituality also needs to be complimented by passion, and passions that

benefit one and others are considered wise.

Table 1: Parts to individual wisdom

Pathway from individual wisdom to Individual learning
Experience→interact with surrounding
Spiritually→ understand self and others lead to action(s)
Passion   → believes and put effort in working

Source: Adjusted from Bierly *et al.*, 2000

LEARNING LEVEL

Levels of learning with wisdom rely on the judgments and taking on appropriate action (s). Learning can be categorized into 3 levels as follows: level -Individual learning, level 2-Group/team learning, and level 3-Organizational learning (Marquardt and Bodinth, 2006). Simon (1991) asserted that "*All learning takes place inside individual human heads; an organization learns in only two ways: by the learning of its member, or by new members who have knowledge the organizations didn't previously have*". At the Level of individual learning mental models are created, or validated, or are an element in the process of translating individual learning into organizational learning (Kim, 1993). Cope (2003) posits that mental models represent a person's view of the world including explicit and implicit understandings. When individual mental models are shared with others they serve as a repository of organised knowledge (Levine and Higgins, 1993). Group members need to evolve from a collective of individuals to a team

focused on the same goals, common structures, flexible communication methods, various demands changing, or active actions. In fact, group learning is the result of acquired, retained, and retrieved information in terms of decision making, significant issues, or sound judgement set by group level knowledge structure.

Rumelhart and Norman (1978) summarized that as a result of information received is that shared mental models in organisations will continue to develop and change over time as individual models are created, reinforced, and disputed. Senge (1993) proposed that as individual learning becomes sufficiently spread throughout an organization by complex formal and informal means, shared mental models can come to represent the organization's learning.

Moreover, there is a need for continuous learning at the individual, group, and organization level. There are four reasons that organizations need continuous learning: 1) the increasing complexity of multi-cultural and multi-national environments and diversity 2) ambiguity and an unpredictable organizational environment 3) dynamics in ways of working with technology and free movement of labour and 4) the transition from the manufacturing age to a service age and the move toward a knowledge age (Manuel and Valerie, 2006).

Obviously, every level of individual, group, and organizational learning work best when various employees from different departments join in, use diverse brainstorming, facilitated by a set culture of learning, valued meeting regularly based on common rules, innovated creation, talent

assignment, and work-related issues approached from a climate of shared values.

INDIVIDUAL WISDOM WITH LEARNING

An essential basic requirement of learning is that it should take place in an environment that uses rewarded learning for motivation, so the crucial role for the manager needs to set up such an environment and employee has to be recognized as they self-develop. Developing of the image of self by viewing self as part of a larger system is key. Indeed, the author believed that many people want to receive higher position, or promotion; however, they don't know how to achieve this, or what start to do in order for their personal goals to be achieved.

First of all, an individual should be able to step back from routine jobs and devote more attention to self and time management. To start with, a wise person is the person who is acutely aware of self-limitations, dare to accept learning from mistakes or failure, and be ready for self-development. This approach uses these practices to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of current behaviour. Senge (1993) defined failure as a shortfall, evident in the gap between vision and current reality. Good learners should view failure as great opportunities to find out better solution(s), or new strategies and it is very important that they do not let the same mistake happen again. If it is repeated, it means that one has not learned anything from that mistake.

Secondly, an individual should be able

to adapt features of complex to simple issues through experience, spirituality, and passion. I personally believe that a wise person should be able to recognize the differences between an urgent problem and a crisis, what the consequences of each factor is, and how to make a proper decision. Aristotle (1985) mentioned that a prudent man knows how to act appropriately in particular cases, in those situations in which there are no formula. It is really difficult to deal with uncontrolled factor (s), and also the impact of others in the organization, or community.

Third, an individual should be a person ready to share his or her knowledge, insight, and vision with others, or ask useful questions to find best practices. Senge (1993) defined "*Vision is a vivid mental image of the future*". Generating vision should answer these 3 questions: What, Why, and How? What's the picture one wants to see in the future? Why does one run this job? And how does one do his job to succeed and move toward the shared vision of the organization? The approach to implement requires "the best practices" (defined by a panel of experts in the organization) to be used. People have to develop new knowledge about the way to improve to reach the best practice then reports to the experts for evaluation and utilizes the organization's current best models for the organization as a whole. Furthermore, wisdom creation need a full process which requires meditation together in trust. No level of performance or innovation can succeed by individual efforts without a high level of motivation and systematic disciplines to utilize wisdom's current best knowledge and business best practice

models. In addition, sharing the best practices' was an excellent way to foster the creation of wisdom, and also build mindset in learning within the community.

Fourth, acting as a group thinker (or team player), in the commercial world, playing as a team is one of the fundamental elements which lead to learning organization. Robbin and Finley (1995) noted that team is "*people doing something together*". Team is "*the process of aligning and developing the capacities of a team to create the results its members truly desire*" (Senge, 1993). In the view of author, group thinkers should be people who can interpret unseen problem(s), view a problem in the same way as a challenging inquiry, enjoy finding out how to solve it, and make it better. Therefore, group thinkers will have more opportunities for reflection via coping with problem(s), addressing the goal, gaining new competences, guiding, and promoting others.

Fifth, usually, McGregor (1960) argued that Theory Y is a participative style of management which assumes that people will exercise self-direction and self-control while Theory X assumes that individuals are base, work-controlling, and constantly in need of incentives. Actually, the capability of stimulation with theory X employees is quite a challenging exercise for a talented manager. A revealing result of the survey indicated that an inert employee always received negative feedback without any useful recommendations or encouragement (one way communication), and another pitfall of inactive performance is the lack of time and comment from a manager because these employees are isolated in relationship between self-management with others. It is the same as learning without any evaluation, no feedback, no two-way communication, and this finally leads to a lack of motivation, therefore, an important source of individual wisdom development is social interaction for exchange materials and moral support as well.

Comparable to learning that can be divided into 2 types of loop learning defined as single and double loop learning. Single loop learning is correcting an action, solving a problem, or avoiding a mistake, whilst double-loop learning is correcting the underlying causes behind the problematic action. Underlying causes may be an organization's norms and policies, individuals' motives and assumptions, or informal and ingrained practices that block inquiry about these causes. Double-loop learning requires the skills of self-awareness and self-management, and the willingness to candidly inquire into why what went wrong did so, without sliding into defensiveness, blaming others, making excuses, protecting each other's egos, and other unconscious patterns of behavior that block honest feedback, inquiry, and learning. In short, single-loop learning looks at technical or external causes without changing the core of assumptions; double-loop learning additionally looks at cultural, personal, or internal causes by changing a core of assumptions. (http://apintalisayon.word press. com).

On the other hand, most recently, the concept of triple loop learning has emerged. Triple loop learning includes a higher order learning cycle, or controls the process of how to learn. Rowley (2006) noted that learning to learn to learn, and engaging with the process that changes the learning pro-

cess. It involves understanding what affects ways in which the learning process evolves and changes in an organization, and the influence to create outcomes that accommodate multiple perspectives.

By so doing one starts to improve further insights into the relationship between a continuous learning process and individual wisdom, it seems reasonable that cultivated individual wisdom can explore the learning process at higher levels and desirably manage an organizational learning framework.

Sixth, individual wisdom must pay attention to values and virtues, as well as be morally responsible for one's own decisions. Managerial decision-making is a type of action, and the practice of decision-making becomes a source of moral learning. Aristotle (1985) proposed that moral learning is a process by which one shapes oneself morally through action and relies on the ambiguous, particular (non-repeated) situation, which include a moral component that is individually configured. According to Aristotle, ambiguous situations force managers to assume personal responsibility for decisions and constitute a key component of experience and learning.

Only employee can exercise individual wisdom autonomously, because it is possible to have responsibility for his own conduct. In addition, particular situations force managers to learn how to adapt or change for flexibility. Last, moral individual configuration should be part of the inherent nature and characteristics of high IQ and EQ people. Assuming a core value of individual wisdom is a virtue. Hence, learning how to develop emotional common sense plays an essential role for work.

INDIVIDUAL WISDOM WITH OR-GANIZATIONAL WISDOM

Limas and Hansson (2004) stated that wisdom is of great consequence in the capability of organizations to fill the gap during a turbulent environment and a high level of change in business. Even though individual wisdom is relative within an organization, it may not be possible to ascribe wisdom to any particular individual within the organization. Wisdom's benefits can be realised by putting knowledge into action with moral virtues, providing useful advice on a variety of matters, acting prudently, judging development, making decisions appropriately, and implementation of those decisions. A simple summary of the relationship between individual wisdom and organizational wisdom can be found in the following expression: knowledge transferring with morality.

Furthermore, Rowley (2006) suggests that the identification of organizational wisdom is the capability to act wisely in term of making sophisticated use of knowledge, using proper judgment that accommodates multiple realities, taking into social and ethical consideration, exercising wisdom in decision-making, and taking a long-term perspective. Decision-making is a central component of management. It is a process in which problem(s) are clearly defined in order to solve them with multiple alternative solutions proposed. Such alternatives are morally evaluated and equitably compared by reference to certain criteria, and finally one is chosen (Mele, 2010).

Table 2: Parts to organizational wisdom

Pathway from Individual wisdom to Organizational wisdom
Experience → leadership skill (communication, decision making, motivation)
Spirituality → organizational culture
Passion → knowledge transferring

Source: Adjusted from Bierly *et al.*, 2000

Meanwhile, wisdom becomes a manageable resource for the organizational spine of 4 'Es': efficiency, effectiveness, explicability, and ethics.

Efficiency is about doing things right, effectiveness is about doing the right things, explicability is about being able to understand and explain one's action, and ethics is about assuming responsibility for one's action. Wisdom and ethics are clearly and closely related, often being indistinguishable and inseparable because an unethical person cannot be considered wise. Briefly, wisdom knows why things should or should not be done. In other words, "*it does not matter what we say, the only thing that matters is what we do*".

Clearly, information supports us to do things right (efficiency), knowledge already aspires to do the right things (effectiveness) especially in business, and requires not only knowing how, but also knowing why. Explicability of purpose is an essential ingredient of its effectiveness in attainment. Wisdom is about the explicability and ethics of our doing.

Additional considerations for the relationship between individual wisdom and organizational wisdom active in such an environment would be:

- Community of practice (COP) that supports knowledge sharing with experiences, spirituality, and passion.
- Understanding employee needs and listening to the voice of employees
- Motivation of employees with right compensation and benefits
- Retention of wise and talented employees
- Having enough leaders with high competency overall at the right time
- Building happiness and diversity in the workplace
- Establishing an organizational culture which includes the value of "wise"
- Co-creating the field of useful CSR and sustainability involves direct participation of employees
- Integration of an innovated CSR program (s) by proactively engaging local stakeholders within the community
- Integrating local store marketing (LSM) into the local business operation in order to flexibly respond to clients' needs

Nonetheless, there is a note to show that not only does the organization need talented people who have abundant skills, knowledge, or experiences but also organizations have to run his own business within a moral context. The study of successful business needs both an individual wisdom perspective and an organizational wisdom perspective which must work altogether well.

Despite the long recognition of the im-

portance of the notion of individual wisdom and learning within an organization, wisdom and learning is an elusive and abstract concept because of the continuity and collaboration requirements. The first and most obvious towards wisdom exercise is self development. If an organization can seek and keep these wise practitioners longer, organizations will grow and sustainably compete in global business. All the above mentioned items must be addressed with executive(s) to be concerned about their human resources values, how large an investment for training and development, how surroundings or environment in workplace impact the employees, or how they can grow in their career path.

Finally, any organization employs such thrived learners; they will gain high productivity with good quality of work life balance. Last, but not least, the bottom lines of this writing is "***Eventually wisdom is the source of everything***".

CONCLUSION

This article has revealed an evolution of data, information, knowledge, and wisdom, including the learning levels of individual wisdom and organizational wisdom with learning. Basically, wisdom is a concept with no consensual definition; nevertheless, it has been the subject of significant work in management. It is evident that individual wisdom is associated with experience, spirituality, and passion. So far, there are six cultivations for higher levels of individual wisdom that are the following: develop self and time management, change complex into simple issues, share

vision, act as a group thinker, activate inert employees with a virtues basis. The role of individual wisdom with organizational wisdom is the capability to act wisely, such as making sophisticated use of knowledge, using proper judgment that accommodates multiples realities, taking into social and ethical considerations, exercising wisdom in right decision-making. Finally, it is really necessary that the added value process of developing one's experience bounded it with spirit and passion and contributed to the organization. It is one of the crucial duties for good citizen corporation in the community.

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