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Management of Corporate Memory in the Organization

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine if Company A has corporate memory. This study seeks to understand the issues faced by organizations and the strategies and tools used to protect and preserve this corporate memory from disappearing. Methods are conducted, and employees from three departments in Company A, including department, business, infrastructure and application, have been chosen. The purpose and goals of the study also aim to educate information professionals on the importance of corporate memory implementation and practice within their organization. This research will help expose the information professional to the best strategies and tools implemented and practised by top organizations such as Company A to increase their performance.

Keywords: Corporate Memory, Issues, Strategies, Tools

1.0 Introduction

Information explosions have led to the need for knowledge management, with corporate memory being a crucial aspect. It involves reusing previously stored knowledge to complete new tasks meaningfully. Knowledge capitalization helps organizations compete by providing prior knowledge and experiences. Corporate memory aims to organize valuable assets, make records more systematic, and facilitate decision-making, problem-solving, and task performance. The goal is to make enterprise knowledge visible and accessible for effective decision-making.

Corporate memory is a crucial asset for organizations, preserving records and specialized materials contributing to their performance. Information professionals and responsible individuals must maintain it to ensure effective business performance. As technology advances, the explosion of information makes it essential to assess the availability of corporate memory in an organization. Corporate memory is a collection of knowledge and past data for future decision-making.

Globally describing corporate memory knowledge items is crucial for identifying relevant ones. However, organizations may need proper methods for managing knowledge and preserving corporate memory. Identifying strategies and techniques for corporate memory preservation is critical for organizational success. Challenges include a need for knowledge about its importance, poor plans, and employees' expertise. Poor decisions and repurposing of solutions can lead to losses, and strategies for preserving corporate memory are essential. Therefore, the study's purpose and goals also aim to educate information professionals on the importance of corporate

memory implementation and practice within their organizations. Conducting this research exposes the information professional to the best strategies and tools that have been implemented and practised by top organizations such as Company A to improve their performance.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Definition of Corporate Memory

Corporate memory is a long-lasting representation of knowledge and information within a company, often preserved in public repositories like history centres, historical societies, and government archives. It is a collection of historical facts, data, and knowledge resources accumulated throughout an organization's history, including project workflow processes, design rationale, problem-solving expertise, electronic documents, and databases. (Lasewicz and Ryan, 2021). Corporate memory systems provide tools for knowledge retention and enable quick and systematic retrieval of organizational experiences. However, individual memory, which relates to a person's abilities and expertise, may also be a potential place for corporate memory. Corporate memory is an organizational entity that evolved from individual memory, and while the field of documentation is not new, many organizations are still unaware of the preservation procedure. Proper memory management can foster innovation and advancement, while poor management can lead to repeated errors. Research suggests that individual memory, based on a person's abilities and knowledge, could serve as a basis for corporate memory. However, these knowledge and skills may vanish without proper documentation, making them ineffective. Corporate memory, an organizational entity, evolved from individual memory, but many organizations are still unaware of its preservation procedures.

2.1.2 Corporate Memory Components

In general, three critical components of this Corporate Memory must be understood: data, information, and knowledge. There will undoubtedly be instances during the project's execution where there are monetary losses and gains, as well as project ups and downs, as well as project failure and success. For example, from the beginning to the finish of the project, several processes, paperwork, and documentation must be completed. Corporate memory refers to data gathered by a company since its inception in areas such as sales, marketing, research, and development.

Data that has been processed, organized, and assembled yields information. It organized all the data into a single context, allowing us to understand and utilize it readily. This information, however, needs to be more cohesive, such as email, and the ability to apply this information to the proper action, such as understanding how to do the activities, is hampered. (Jack, 2020). For example, the cost of developing this project can be reduced, but knowing what methods and tactics are utilized to reduce expenses to manage this project without losing millions of ringgit is knowledge. Corporate archivists, for example, define information as creating books or articles to promote their knowledge, ideas, or collections (Hull and Scott, 2020). It indirectly assists information professionals in acquiring fresh information for their references and knowledge. Furthermore, no legislative requirements exist in the United States or numerous other countries to preserve historical business documentation (Lasewicz and Ryan, 2021; ICA Section on Business Archives (SBA), 2021).

Knowledge is generated via the accumulation of observations, experiences, and opinions. It comprises a detailed understanding of a subject based on specific factors such as observation, reasoning, and experience. Consider a skilled project executive from Company A who leverages his previous experience and expertise to build seminar training for ways to manage the project effectively and efficiently for years. In this case, the method he uses to deliver the instruction is challenging because it incorporates and necessitates their personal experiences and skills. Furthermore, as a result of this significantly shifting context, a significant rebalancing of KM initiatives will occur, altering how knowledge risk is assessed and forcing mitigation efforts (Chang et al., 2022; Lazzari et al., 2022; Tseole and Ngulube, 2022).

2.1.2 Corporate Memory Issues

The issues that frequently arise in managing corporate memory in organizations typically fall into three categories: people, procedures, and technology. There are people first. This problem might occasionally arise when we want to keep corporate memory since corporate memory found in people often contains the person's talent, competency, and knowledge. According to this perspective, corporate memory will convert tacit information into explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge can be recorded through the hiring of specialists, the sharing of outside information with a fixed team of employees, or the accumulation of experience. Leandro et al., 2020 as corporate memory in this context requires a variety of human qualities. Additionally, earlier studies assert that ageing societies and workforce mobility are two changes in the job market that induce competent workers to depart organizations. Poon et al., 2022, Yin et al., 2022, Zhang et al., 2022; Lazzari et al., 2022. Because of this, it's critical to maintain people's knowledge, experiences, and talents before they leave the company. This implies that there has been some loss of specialized, historical information and that some organizations today deal with the same problems related to staff leaving or being transferred to other areas. This is because the employee left the company as a result of receiving better pay from other organizations.

Second, is the process. Many businesses neglect to prioritize, maintain, and preserve their archives, leading to issues during corporate memory acquisition, recording, transfer, and retrieval. This often results in disorganized and difficult-to-understand workflow procedures, making it challenging for new hires or existing workers to take over tasks. Research is needed to explain low rates of practice replication from Project-Based Organization's (PBOs) knowledge bases using examples from firms carrying out projects.

However, despite providing essential aspects related to corporate memory, no integrated model has been developed to clarify how PBOs acquire, store, and retrieve knowledge for future usage and references.

The third is technology. In today's viable markets, innovation and technological advancement are expected and keep growing as a fundamental component of every organization's success. Companies that innovate will be able to address environmental issues more quickly and effectively than those that do not. 2017; Supardal et al. This demonstrates how quickly the adoption of new technology can boost an organization's ability to compete with other businesses. Poor management and outcomes will result from the technologies' failure to be adopted and developed.

2.2 Corporate Memory Importance

Corporate memory is crucial for an organization's performance and success. It helps make better decisions by providing valuable insights, observations, and expertise. It also helps avoid repeating mistakes by using prior knowledge and experience as references. Good corporate memory management involves using all prior knowledge and experience as references, preventing errors and recognizing error recurrences.

Succession planning helps organizations prepare for the departure of significant individuals and prevents knowledge loss. Corporate memory fosters a knowledge-based culture where project participants know their interactions and duties. This knowledge base is considered the foundation for a firm's success, and organizational culture's function significantly impacts a firm's ability to compete. However, Levallet and Chan (2019) found that organizations that use succession planning to properly prepare for the departure of their significant individuals and prevent the negative consequences of knowledge loss allow crucial tacit knowledge to stay within the company.

It promotes change and innovation by expanding corporate memory through indirect team discussions and the interchange of ideas, plans, and views. This opinion-sharing and idea-flowing foster a culture of fresh developments and creativity, improving business performance. Knowledge-sharing conduct involves sharing acquired information with other team members. On top of that, higher levels of creativity and firm performance, as reported by O'Connor and Kelly in 2017, Bellini et al. in 2019, and enhanced collaborative knowledge and trust. De Zubielqui et al., 2019 Bodolica et al., 2019 and increased company competitiveness. The literature has outlined several benefits of knowledge transfer projects, such as improved corporate competitiveness, higher levels of creativity and firm performance, enhanced collaborative knowledge and trust, and increased company competitiveness.
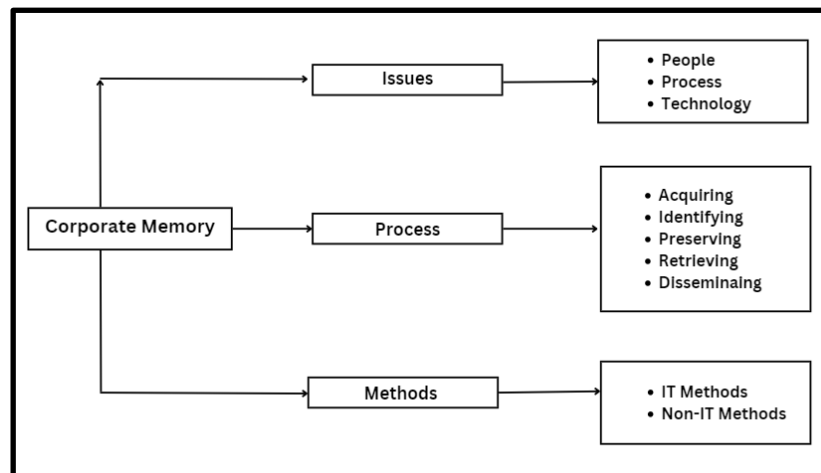
2.3 Research Framework

Fig. 1: Research Framework

The framework presents various theories and models to address the problems, procedures, and technologies related to corporate memory in an organization. These models can serve as valuable knowledge, guidelines, and references for future research. The study's model is based on earlier research on corporate memory management, identifying three key factors influencing corporate memory in Company A . (Nonaka, 1991; Van Engers, Mathies, Leget, and Dekker, 1995). The framework also emphasizes the importance of process difficulties and corporate memory management techniques. The researcher aims to explore how strategies and tools for managing corporate memory develop. The structure of the research is depicted in Figure 1.

3.0 Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

For research methodology, we tend to use case studies and past research as references and guidelines to conduct the research field. Nowadays, case studies and articles provided by other previous researchers can be gained from wide and various sources and formats. The research design for this study is a descriptive and interpretive case study with quantitative data that is analyzed mostly using

qualitative techniques. The examination of inductive data is typical among qualitative researchers. In a descriptive and interpretive case study set against a theoretical backdrop, the researcher analyses, analyses, and theories about the phenomena. Merriam (1998) asserts that concepts, models, and theories are routinely used to frame qualitative case studies. Then, the inductive approach is applied to support or challenge theoretical presumptions. The qualitative approach's emphasis on "meaning" (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003) dictates that the participants' ideas about their notions of practice will be the main subject of discussion. The framework developed in this thesis makes it easier to evaluate participant opinions as a result. To demonstrate how the current study has aided in the growth of the knowledge base, the findings will be compared to the body of already available knowledge. The research methodology that will be used in this investigation is summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Research Design

Research Design Components	Choice of Study
Purposes of Research	Combination of exploration and description. It is exploratory because in this study, as stated in previous chapters, a study of corporate memory in the Company A organization yet is not available. It is also descriptive because the study will also describe the issues, processes and methods used within this organization.
Types Investigation	Case study: An investigation intended to answer specific research questions by gathering a variety of information from past research and experiences of people
Unit of Analysis	Individual: employees of Company A organization from two departments.
Sampling	Purposive sampling is a sampling approach that is based on the characteristics of the population as well as the study's goals or objectives.

The responses are both from Company A, and they are both from different departments. Given that they have both worked on government and private projects that entailed documentation, both of them are appropriate responders to questions concerning corporate memory. The sample criteria are based on both exclusion criteria, which are undesirable traits that will not be included in the study, and inclusion criteria, which are desirable traits that are required by the investigation. As a result, the two replies both have close to five years of experience managing documents. Table 2 contains the respondents' sample selection.

Table 3.2. Sampling

Criteria	Respondent 1	Respondent 2
Position	Senior Document Controller	Junior Document Controller
Experience	Experience more than 10 years	Experience less than 10 years
Achievement	Conduct training within the department.	Conduct training within the junior.

3.2 Data Analysis
Based on this study, the researcher should use thematic analysis as the appropriate technique for data analysis to organize and evaluate the material. Thematic analysis has essentially become a popular tool for qualitative research. It helps the researcher uncover themes in this research more quickly (Terry et al., 2017). Additionally, according to certain researchers, thematic analysis has historically been under qualitative descriptive design and is comparable to qualitative content analysis. As a result, it has been used to both analyze literary data and explain the theme (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The researcher records the interview with the respondents afterwards and also identifies a few themes that appeared.

3.2.1 Thematic Analysis
This phase is particularly important among others since the material that has been written down will be used for the next step; as a result, if the researcher is unable to identify the major idea from the interview, the interview session will not meet the study's primary goals. Reviewing themes is the next step, which involves making sure that the previously identified themes are still relevant to each one's nature and that the relationships between them are understood enough for the reader to understand the study's findings. The third phase of the process involves looking for themes, which requires the researcher to choose a topic that matches the most recent codes that have been provided. The researcher might frequently listen to the audio recording of the interview during the first phase to become familiar with the details provided by the two respondents. As a result, the researcher additionally records the interview through transcription to make sure that everything spoken during the interview is recorded. The researcher must define and name the topics in the fifth phase before writing a thorough analysis of each theme to make it understandable.

4.0 Result

4.1 Issues

The thematic analysis reveals that issues arise throughout the documentation process in corporate memory, with problems varying depending on the organization. These issues typically arise from technology, processes, and people. Respondent 1 states that most employees in the company do not consider the benefits and methods of corporate memory preservation, expecting the management documentation department to keep all records. Despite having document controllers trained by the management department, many employees are not aware of the importance of preserving corporate memory and do not take the initiative to explore and apply it more effectively. Additionally, some employees may be reluctant to share their knowledge due to a lack of trust and fear of being taken credit for their ideas. The culture within the organization does not apply the importance of preserving corporate memory according to its department. In conclusion, the concept of "people" is crucial in preserving corporate memory, as issues such as staff disengagement, lack of awareness, and resistance to change can make the process more difficult.

Next, the lack of advanced technology, such as advanced systems, and the manual digitization of documents through SharePoint are significant issues. The organization's single system poses a risk to its security. Respondent 1 has taken the initiative to manually back up digitized corporate memory, which may lead to fragmentation and difficulty in aggregating information. This can cause frustration and lower productivity among employees.

Additionally, employees who lack awareness about the process of retaining corporate memory and knowledge transfer may not document or share their valuable knowledge, potentially leading to knowledge loss when they leave the company. This lack of knowledge transfer procedures may also discourage the use of new tools or approaches that simplify knowledge management. Understanding the process of knowledge transfer and maintenance of corporate memory is crucial for maintaining safety and accessibility in every department. Both physically and digitally, this process must be understood.

4.2 Process

In this organization, the process involves identifying project needs and creating report documentation. The document must be double-checked and approved by top management before being sent to a vendor for printing. The physical document is then sorted by sub- and minor title projects, taking a week for the vendor to settle down all documents. The documents are signed and authorized by the Project Director and Project Manager. Both digital and physical documentation are preserved, with digitization being done through scanning and uploading to one drive and SharePoint basic EDMS systems. The Senior Document Controller will access the document controller for each department, while the physical documents are preserved for future reference. The process also involves the dissemination of corporate memory, which allows complete information to be used for decision-making. Knowledge transfer and corporate memory awareness can be enhanced through training programs.

4.2 Methods

Respondent 1 discusses the preservation of corporate memory in organizations, stating that digital copies are created by scanning physical copies and posted to the EDMS for access only by authorized individuals. The actual copies are stored in a file room, accessible only to the document controller unit team. There are two methods for corporate memory preservation: IT (IT) and Non-IT (Non-IT). Respondent 1 explains that Company A manually scans physical copies. The study highlights the ongoing relevance of issues related to corporate memory within organizations, despite the modern integration of various technologies. The complexity of corporate memory, including its preservation, accessibility, and utilization, is a crucial issue that requires attention and a tactical solution.

5.0 Discussion

Research suggests that non-archivists in archives should possess fundamental knowledge of recordkeeping. Current efforts are being made to improve these skills, with many universities instructing faculty and graduate students in research data management. It is crucial for archivists and record-keeping managers to have the necessary knowledge to handle tasks effectively. Organizations must consider voluntary knowledge loss and invest in knowledge acquisition and retention, while employees should develop adaptable skills and subject-matter expertise. A learning culture within organizations is essential, encouraging continuous learning and curiosity. Digital archiving training is crucial for current and future archivists working on corporate archives. Organizations must foster teamwork and engage with digital technologies to preserve corporate memory. Comprehensive training programs for new employees are essential, along with ongoing updates on best practices.

Organizations should establish a common knowledge repository, including documents, movies, forums, and other collaborative tools, to facilitate staff access and contribute to the organization's knowledge. Implementing a comprehensive Knowledge Management System (KMS) allows employees to capture, organize, and share knowledge, ensuring it is user-friendly, searchable, and accessible to all employees. The system should accommodate various content types.

Last but not least, researchers recommend regular training and workshops for organizations to improve knowledge management, documentation methods, and efficient knowledge exchange. Employees should learn how to navigate the digital knowledge repository. Cooperation among teams and departments is also crucial for idea sharing through cross-functional meetings, workshops, and brainstorming sessions.

6.0 Conclusion

In the field of IT projects, the effective and efficient preservation of corporate memory is crucial. Document control, which is in charge of managing all documents, must fully assume responsibility for developing and refining their process as well as other areas to keep their

valuable assets secure and organized. The results of this study also allow us to pinpoint the exact method that company A uses to keep track of all the paperwork related to the IT projects they manage. Based on the study, we are indirectly aware of the precise methods, processes, and equipment used in IT and non-IT processes. Therefore, it is crucial to research this area so that it can serve as a guide and a point of reference for us in the future. Corporate memory preservation can enhance organizational learning. By putting the study's recommendations into practice, you might promote a culture of ongoing growth and learning. By properly conserving corporate memory, organizations can gather and disseminate the knowledge gained from prior experiences.

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