KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN LAW FIRMS IN BOTSWANA

By
Madeleine C. Fombad

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION SCIENCE
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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Promoter: Professor J.A. Boon
Co Promoter: Professor T.J.D. Bothma
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Certification of Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within this text.

I also certify that this thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received during the research work and in the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used is indicated in the thesis.

Signed: .........................................................

Date: ............................................................
Dedication

To my dad, Papa Andrew Chongwain

Dear Dad, thank you for being the most wonderful and most special Dad in the world and playing the twin role of Dad and Mum very perfectly. It is almost thirty years today since Mum passed away but single-handedly you have seen us (all seven siblings) through to adulthood. You led us in the ways of the Lord, providing all the moral and financial support and instilled in us the desire to value education. I love you Dad. You have fought the good fight! May God the Almighty continue to richly bless you with good health and long life.
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Abstract

The literature reveals enormous potential of knowledge management for law firms, yet research in knowledge management seems fragmented with extensive theoretical discussions but little empirical evidence. The aim of this study is to empirically determine the guidelines and techniques of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana in the light of the rapid changing legal environment. It identified the different categories of knowledge existing in the law firms in Botswana and considered the factors that would motivate or inhibit the adoption of knowledge management. It also identified the tools and technologies for knowledge management and agents and institutions necessary for knowledge management in law firms in the country.

The study adopted the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. Open and closed ended questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data that was analysed. The survey research design was adopted and census of all the lawyers in the country undertaken. Out of the 217 questionnaires distributed to the 115 registered firms, 140 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a return rate of 64.5%.

From the study, it has emerged that law firms in Botswana are significantly affected by the changes in the legal environment. The adoption of formal knowledge management in law firms in Botswana is still however, at an initial stage. Most of the law firms do not have knowledge management policies and guidelines and there are still many challenges to the effective implementation of knowledge management. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is a growing awareness of the key role, importance and potential of knowledge management in an increasingly competitive environment as a means of making law firms more innovative and cost effective. Guidelines for knowledge management in law firms were established and several suggestions on how it can be successfully implemented made in the hope that this would not only improve the awareness and utilisation of knowledge management in the country but could also be adopted in other African countries whose legal environment is similar to that in Botswana.
# Table of Contents

CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP ............................................................................II
DEDICATION ............................................................................................................. III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................... IV
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................. V
TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... VI
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................XIV
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................XIV
LIST OF CHARTS .....................................................................................................XIV

CHAPTER ONE ...................................................................................................1
INTRODUCTION .........................................................................................................1
1.1 BACKGROUND ......................................................................................................1
1.2 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION ...........................................................................4
1.3 SUB QUESTIONS ...................................................................................................4

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .........................................................................................4
    1.4.1 Research questions for sub problem 1 (the changing legal environment and its consequences to law firms) ............................................................................................................................... 4
    1.4.2 Research questions for sub problem 2 (the role of knowledge management towards addressing the challenges in the changing legal environment) ......................................................... 4
    1.4.3 Research questions for sub problem 3 (the general status and scope of knowledge management in law firms) ................................................................................................................................ 5
    1.4.4 Research question for sub problem 4 (the current status and scope of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana) ....................................................................................................... 5
    1.4.5 Research question for sub problem 5 (the guideline for implementation of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana) ....................................................................................................... 6

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY ................................................................................6
1.6 RATIONALE OF THE THESIS .............................................................................6
1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY ..........................................................................8
1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS .........................................................................................9
1.9 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS ....................................................................................9

CHAPTER TWO ................................................................................................11
THE CHANGING LEGAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE CONSEQUENCES TO THE LAW FIRMS ........................................................................................................11
2.1 Introduction .........................................................................................................11
2.2 What is a law firm? ..............................................................................................11
CHAPTER THREE  .............................................................................................29
THE BASIC CONCEPTS AND THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT ......29
3.1 Introduction........................................................................................................29
3.2 Defining knowledge...........................................................................................30
3.3 The different approaches to knowledge ..........................................................31
  3.3.1 The data, information and knowledge perspective:........................................31
  3.3.2 Personal perspective of knowledge.....................................................................35
  3.3.3 Social perspective of knowledge........................................................................35
  3.3.4 The organisational perspective of knowledge..................................................35
3.4 THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE ......................................................................36
  3.4.1 Types of knowledge ..........................................................................................36
    3.4.1.1 Tacit and explicit knowledge ..........................................................................36
    3.4.1.2 Declarative procedural and analytical knowledge ...........................................39
    3.4.1.3 Know-how, know-about, know-why, know-when, know-with and care-why ........39
    3.4.1.4 Human, mechanised, documented, and automated knowledge .....................40
    3.4.1.5 Internal, external, customer and market knowledge........................................40
  3.4.2 Knowledge levels............................................................................................41
  3.4.3 Properties of knowledge...................................................................................42
3.5 Defining knowledge management ........................................................................44
3.6 Perspectives in knowledge management ..........................................................46
  3.6.1 The information technology perspective ..........................................................46
  3.6.2 The social or people track approach ..................................................................47
  3.6.3 Individual (personal) perspective of knowledge management ..........................47
  3.6.4 The organisational perspective to knowledge management ..............................47
  3.6.5 Business perspective of knowledge management ..............................................47

2.3 Organisation of law firm ....................................................................................13
2.4 Changes in the legal information environment ..................................................14
  2.4.1 The shift from paper-based to electronic sources of information ......................14
  2.4.2 Advances in information communication technologies ......................................16
  2.4.3 The Internet .......................................................................................................17
  2.4.4 Electronic publishing ........................................................................................17
  2.4.5 Information overload ........................................................................................18
  2.4.6 Globalisation of legal services .........................................................................18
  2.4.7 Consolidation of law firms ...............................................................................19
  2.4.8 The drive towards specialisation ........................................................................19
  2.4.9 Competition amongst firms .............................................................................20
  2.4.10 Pressure on law firm from clients ....................................................................20
  2.4.11 Disintermediation ...........................................................................................21
  2.4.12 The foray of professional service firms in the legal information environment ....21
  2.4.13 Increase mobility in the legal profession .........................................................22
2.5 The consequences and challenges of the changing legal information environment to the law firms ........................................................................................................22
2.6 Conclusion..........................................................................................................26
3.7 Frameworks in knowledge management

3.7.1 Learning organisation and organisational learning conceptual framework
3.7.2 Knowledge markets
3.7.3 Process framework
  3.7.3.1 Knowledge creation
  3.7.3.2 Knowledge codification
  3.7.3.3 Knowledge transfer
  3.7.3.4 Knowledge utilisation
  3.7.3.5 Protection processes
3.7.4 Knowledge management strategies for knowledge transfer

3.8 Models of knowledge management

3.8.1 Intellectual capital model
3.8.2 SECI, knowledge asset and ba model
3.8.3 Leavitt’s diamond organisational model (Diamond Trist) as modified by Edward & Mahling, 1997; Galbraith, 1997; Pan & Scarbrough; 1999

3.9 Enabling tools and technologies for knowledge management

3.9.1 Communicative and collaborative technologies
3.9.2 Knowledge databases and software tools
3.9.3 Corporate knowledge maps and directories of explicit and tacit knowledge
3.9.4 Intelligent tools
3.9.5 Learning and professional development systems

3.10 The role of information communication technology in knowledge Management

3.11 Techniques of knowledge management

3.11.1 Communities of practice
3.11.2 Conversations by water coolers
3.11.3 Knowledge networks
3.11.4 Tutoring and mentoring
3.11.5 Developing the organisational memory
3.11.6 Other core techniques of knowledge management

3.12 Benefits of knowledge management

3.13 Drivers of knowledge management

3.13.1 Determining the value of knowledge management
3.13.2 Competition
3.13.3 Strategic knowledge asset

3.14 Barriers to knowledge management

3.14.1 Cultural barriers
3.14.2 Social barriers
3.14.3 Organisational barriers
3.14.4 Technological barriers

3.15 Enablers to knowledge management

3.15.1 Encouraging a culture of knowledge sharing
3.15.2 Leadership commitment
3.15.3 Appropriate information technology infrastructure
3.15.4 Organisational structure

3.16 Strategic planning for knowledge management
5.3.4 Justification of methodology adopted for the study .................................................................157

5.4 Research design ..................................................................................................................... 158

5.5 Research questions ................................................................................................................ 160

5.6 Population ............................................................................................................................. 160

5.7 Sampling plan or design ...................................................................................................... 161

5.8 Data collection instruments ............................................................................................... 164

5.9 Construction of instrument ............................................................................................... 166

5.10 Validity and reliability issues. .......................................................................................... 167

5.11 Ethical considerations ........................................................................................................ 169

5.12 Pilot study ........................................................................................................................... 169

5.13 Data collection procedure ............................................................................................... 170

5.14 Data analysis ....................................................................................................................... 171

5.15 Problems encountered during data collection ................................................................... 172

5.16 Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 173

CHAPTER SIX ........................................................................................................................... 175
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY .................................................................... 175

6.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 175

6.2 Personal profile .................................................................................................................... 176

6.3 Organisational characteristics of the firm .......................................................................... 177

6.4 The different categories of knowledge existing in the law firms in Botswana .................... 181

6.5 Factors that would motivate the adoption of knowledge management in lawfirms (N=140) .................................................................................................................................................. 182

6.6 Tools and technologies for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana ................... 185

6.7 Techniques for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana ..................................... 188

6.8 The manifestation knowledge management in law firms in Botswana ............................. 190
   6.8.1 Law firms understanding of knowledge management ....................................................... 190
   6.8.2 Knowledge generation process in law firms ................................................................. 191
   6.8.3 Knowledge transfer process in the law firms ............................................................... 192
   6.8.4 Knowledge sharing culture in the law firms ............................................................... 193
   6.8.5 The tutoring and mentoring opportunities in the firms ............................................... 195
   6.8.6 The factors that may facilitate knowledge management in the firms .......................... 196

6.9 The perceived benefits of knowledge management for the law firms ............................. 197

6.10 Factors that inhibit knowledge management in the law firms ......................................... 199
6.11 The role of knowledge institutions and agents in the creation, sharing and capturing of knowledge in law firms ..................................................... 201
6.12 Conclusion ............................................................................................. 202

CHAPTER SEVEN ...........................................................................................204
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION ................................................................................ 204
7.1 Introduction ............................................................................................. 204
7.2 Personal profile of the respondents .......................................................... 204
7.3 Organisational characteristics of the firm .................................................. 205
7.4 The different categories of knowledge in law firms in Botswana .......... 207
7.5 Factors that would motivate the adoption of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana ................................................................................ 209
7.6 The tools and technologies for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana......................................................................................................... 216
7.7 Techniques for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana .......... 219
7.8 How knowledge management is manifested in law firms in Botswana ...... 221
  7.8.1 Lawyers’ definition of knowledge management ............................................. 222
  7.8.2 How Knowledge is generated in law firms in Botswana .................................. 223
  7.8.3 The transfer of knowledge in the law firms .................................................. 226
  7.8.4 The knowledge sharing culture in the law firms in Botswana .................................. 230
  7.8.5 Tutoring and mentoring opportunities in the firm ......................................... 233
  7.8.6 Factors critical to the success of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana .. 235
7.9 Perceived benefits of knowledge management for law firms in Botswana 237
7.10 Factors inhibiting knowledge management in the law firms................. 240
7.11 Institutions and agents for knowledge management............................... 245
7.12 Conclusion ............................................................................................. 248

CHAPTER EIGHT ............................................................................................250
GUIDELINES FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION IN LAW FIRMS IN BOTSWANA ........................................................................................... 250
8.1 Introduction ............................................................................................. 250
8.2 Presentation of guidelines for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana .......................................................... 251
  8.2.1 The need for formal knowledge management in law firms in Botswana .......... 253
  8.2.2 The Project Plan ......................................................................................... 254
  8.2.3 Determine the firm’s knowledge management strategy .................................. 256
  8.2.4 Organisational variables for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana 258
  8.2.5 Tools and technologies for knowledge management ...................................... 265
  8.2.6 Techniques of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana ............... 267
8.2.7 Agents and institutions for knowledge management in law firms ................................................ 270
8.2.8 Leveraging of knowledge processes and knowledge resources ....................................................... 273
  8.2.8.1 Leveraging of knowledge management processes ........................................................................ 274
  8.2.8.2 Leveraging of knowledge resources .......................................................................................... 276
8.3 Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................ 277

CHAPTER NINE ................................................................................................................................. 278
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..................................................................................... 278
9.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 278
9.2 Conclusions .................................................................................................................................. 278
9.3 Have the research questions of this thesis been answered? ....................................................... 280
  9.3.1 Research questions for sub problem 1 (the changing legal environment and the consequences to law firms) ................................................................................................................................. 280
  9.3.2 Research questions for sub problem 2 (the role of knowledge management towards addressing the challenges in the changing legal environment) ........................................................................................................................... 281
  9.3.3 Research questions for sub problem 3 (the general status and scope of knowledge management in law firms) ................................................................................................................................................................. 284
  9.3.4 Research question for sub-problem 4 (the status and scope of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana) ................................................................................................................................................................. 286
  9.3.5 Research question for sub-problem 5 (guidelines for knowledge management implementation in law firms in Botswana) ................................................................................................................................................................. 288
9.4 Recommendations ......................................................................................................................... 288
9.5 Limitations of the study .................................................................................................................. 290
9.6 Suggestions for further research .................................................................................................... 292
9.7 Concluding remarks ....................................................................................................................... 293
REFERENCES ........................................................................................................................................ 295

LIST OF APPENDICES ......................................................................................................................... 320
APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY .......................................................... 320
APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE ....................................................................................... 322
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE TO LAWYERS ON STRATEGIES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN LAW FIRMS ................................................................................................................................. 336
APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE TO STAKE HOLDERS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN LAW FIRMS ................................................................................................................................................................. 340
APPENDIX 5: RESEARCH PERMIT GRANT .......................................................................................... 341
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Distribution of law firms in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Distribution of law firms in Botswana according to number of lawyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Organisational characteristic of the firm (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Categories of knowledge in the law firm (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>What would motivate the adoption of knowledge management in your firm? (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Information communication technologies in law firms in Botswana (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>The ways information communication technologies are used for knowledge management in law firms (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>The different techniques of knowledge management applicable to the law firms (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>The different ways by which knowledge is generated in the law firms (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>The different ways by which knowledge is transferred in the firms (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>The knowledge sharing culture in the law firms in Botswana (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>Tutoring and mentoring opportunities in the law firms (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>Factors that facilitate knowledge management in the firms (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>The perceived benefits of knowledge management in law firms in Botswana (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>The factors that inhibit knowledge management in law firms in Botswana (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>Agents and institutions responsible for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana. (N=140)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Overview of the chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>The recursive relationship between data, information and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Summary of the nature of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Suggested integrated perspective of knowledge management for this study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>The Scandia knowledge management approach (Adapted and modified from Edvinsson 1997 knowledge management approach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The SECI model (Adapted and modified from Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Leavitt (1965) Diamond Organisational Model (Adapted from Leavitt, 1965)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Summary of the role of technology in knowledge management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Categories of knowledge in the law firm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>A suggested pyramid representing the different levels of knowledge and the categories of knowledge (adapted and modified from Rusanow 2001:9-11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Strategy for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Organisational variables for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Suggested tools and technologies for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Existing and suggested techniques for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Major institutions and agents for knowledge management in law firms in Botswana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>The different ways knowledge may be transferred in law firms Botswana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List of Charts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Level of Education (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Longevity of practice as a lawyer (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Number of lawyers in the firm (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>The most strategic resource in the firm (N=140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Who is responsible for knowledge management in your firm? (N=140)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>