KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN LOW TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE IN APPAREL MANUFACTURING

by

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DECLARATION

This Dissertation paper contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University or equivalent institution in Sri Lanka or abroad, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is made in the text of this Dissertation.

I carried out the work described in this Dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Chandana Perera.

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge Management (KM) is the process through which organizations generate value from knowledge-based assets. Most of the high technology industries apply KM principles and hence foster all kinds of innovation to improve the company’s productivity and its mid and long-term advantage.

Many researches have studied KM practices in high tech industries. However, there are not much studies carried out to study how KM practices are used or can be used in low-tech industries.

In Sri Lankan context, the apparel industry is the leading industry in manufacturing and contribute a significant share of G.D.P. Today, in the free quota era, the Sri Lankan apparel industry has to face the challenges in the global market. Therefore, it is worthwhile to study how KM practices are used and how KM can contribute to improve the performance in apparel sector.

This research aims to study how these practices are presently used in the apparel sector to improve the performance in manufacturing. The research further identifies what kind of improvements can be done from the present KM practices so that they can enhance the organizational performance.

To analyze KM practices, two case studies have been carried out in selected reputed apparel manufacturing organizations. Data is collected through in-depth interviews with machine operators, supervisors, production executives, and production managers. In addition to that, documentary analysis, observations, informal conversations are carried out to gather information on KM practices in these companies.

Based on the results of case study analysis, factors important for successful implementation of KM are analyzed, and a model (named as ‘5 Factor Model’) is proposed for KM in low tech manufacturing organizations.
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