

Exposé for Master's Thesis

“Collaboration in Instructional Design: Enhancing Communication and Knowledge Management”

by Heeju Hong;

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1. Starting point

The urgency to re- and upskill in the corporate world arises from the necessity to adapt effectively to the constantly evolving business environments, thereby improving organizational agility and enhancing individual career resilience (Rotatori et al., 2020b). This need has become increasingly pressing due to rapid technological progress, which has led to the development of advanced eLearning platforms specifically tailored for this purpose. These platforms have played a vital role in supporting continuous learning initiatives within organizations, particularly during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang, et al., 2020). Yet, the sudden necessity for remote work due to COVID-19 exposed significant challenges when developing learning initiatives in teams, thus affecting collaboration. Especially, in communication and knowledge management issues like the blurring of professional roles in instructional design (Radhakrishnan, 2018) or the hesitation among seasoned employees to share knowledge with their newer counterparts created learning bottlenecks (Rosen et al., 2007). Addressing these challenges, this study aims to illuminate the intricacies of collaboration within instructional design and to pinpoint practices that can foster a more cohesive approach to corporate learning initiatives.

2. Research objective/research question

Following the starting point and the challenges identified therein, the research questions this paper aims to answer are:

Research Question 1: What are the roles of communication and knowledge management in enhancing collaboration within corporate eLearning environments?

Research Question 2: What practices in communication and knowledge management are effective in enhancing collaboration for reskilling and upskilling initiatives?

The responses to these questions are intended to offer valuable insights into enhancing the collaborative framework of corporate learning environments, aiming to facilitate a seamless and integrated experience for all participants.

3. Theoretical frame

The theoretical frame for this study is multidimensional, encompassing theories from knowledge management, and adult education to address the communication challenges and knowledge sharing in corporate learning environments.

Knowledge Management Theory:

Knowledge management (KM) theory will serve as a central pillar of the theoretical framework. It focuses on the processes of creating, sharing, using, and managing the knowledge and information of an organization. The Nonaka and Takeuchi's SECI model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, Internalization) will be used to understand the dynamics of tacit knowledge conversion into explicit knowledge, which is essential for effective knowledge sharing (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Organizational Communication Theory:

This research will also draw from organizational communication theory, which examines how information is exchanged within an organization and the impact of communication processes on organizational dynamics. The theory's consideration of formal and informal communication channels will help to analyze the communication breakdowns that lead to a disengaged workforce (Jablin et al., 1987).

The theoretical framework of this study interweaves the concepts of Knowledge Management Theory and Organizational Communication Theory to create a comprehensive understanding of collaboration within corporate learning environments. Employing Nonaka and Takeuchi's SECI model, the research will dissect the transformation of knowledge within organizations, pivotal for enhancing collaborative practices. Alongside, insights from Organizational Communication Theory will elucidate how the exchange of information impacts group dynamics and learning outcomes. These theoretical perspectives will guide the examination of communication and knowledge-sharing challenges, setting the stage for identifying strategies that can strengthen collaboration in corporate learning initiatives.

4. Research Methods

The primary research method will be a systematic literature review, which entails a meticulous approach: commencing with a strategic search through academic databases targeting publications on knowledge management, communication, and collaboration in the workplace. This will be followed by the careful screening of search results, guided by specific inclusion and exclusion criteria in the most relevant and latest studies. A thorough evaluation of each selected piece of literature will ensure its quality and pertinence. Findings will then be synthesized to identify key themes and insights that resonate with the research questions. Ultimately, this review will culminate in a set of grounded recommendations aimed at addressing the communication

and knowledge management challenges to enhance collaboration identified within corporate learning environments.

5. Literature

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