

Guest editorial: Mass collaboration and knowledge management: reflections to achieve best practices

Infection with COVID-19 has become a severe public health concern all over the world, caused by novel coronavirus, which emerged from Wuhan, China. In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the novel coronavirus can be considered a pandemic (WHO, 2020). It is consequently of paramount importance to inhibiting any additional dissemination of the virus in the public and health-care environments (Alkhwaldi and Absulmuhsin, 2021; Nguyen, 2021). Many countries worldwide have enforced different measures, guidelines and strategies such as social distancing, staying home and avoiding social crowds. However, other countries have implemented stricter measures to contain the pandemic outbreak, such as lockdowns and quarantine. As a result, the WHO and government organizations highly recommended working from home by using available ICT collaboration tools to protect people's health, whereas economic, educational and various activities were being carried out normally (WHO, 2020). IT collaborative tools offer a channel for individuals and organizations to benefit from uninterrupted services, even in crisis times.

Mass collaboration (MC) assists to change the way of inventing, producing, marketing as well as distributing goods, services and information on a global basis, and this change presents far-reaching opportunities for all organizations and institutions and for every individual who gets connected (Borjigen, 2015; Scuotto *et al.*, 2017). This novel pattern of collaborative working has revolutionized the methods of creating and sharing knowledge. Also, it subtly influences organizational knowledge management (KM) as:

- it arouses self-protection awareness of key staff; and
- it requires the organizations to extend their knowledge chains (Abdulmuhsin *et al.*, 2021; Borjigen, 2015).

For example, in mass collaborative settings, knowledge workers have offered great willingness to share knowledge that is not considered as their main strength. Consequently, MC technologies and solutions will help to shorten the time and give more collective power to creating, sharing and exploiting new knowledge for dealing with this situation (Sulaiman, 2020). Therefore, we are specifically interested in reflections on how world countries, organizations and individuals rebuild their collaboration experiences to create, share and exploit new knowledge, through review the best practices and lessons learned to promote global experiences (Borjigen, 2015; Scuotto, 2017; Zamiri and Camarinha-Matos, 2019). These reflections allow us to highlight contributions on the impact of COVID-19 and the changes we may expect to see going forward.

Over the past few years, web-based applications and solutions have emerged to encourage collaboration across international borders, thus these technologies and solutions have opened new horizons for creating, sharing and exploiting new knowledge, which seemed impossible a few decades ago. The use of collaborative online technologies in different contexts assists to streamline the services delivery and KM activities at all levels:



public/private organizations, businesses and citizens; most recently, it has been considered a life-sustaining tool to manage the crisis (i.e. COVID-19) as it is able to enhance the service delivery, collaborative efforts, communications, information sharing and KM activities (Mensah *et al.*, 2021). As a multidisciplinary social science journal, we focus on economics, business and social implications rather than vaccine development or medical treatments. The objective is to gather empirical research, theoretical and critical commentaries and case studies that address the problem from a big picture outlook, which requires a multidisciplinary approach to provide academicians and social indications. Academic papers dealing with MC and KM in the context of health, education, economics, business and social fields are welcome; nevertheless, any other proposed focus could be accepted. The content of this special issue will be of interest to academia, GOs and NGOs, policymakers and all those involved in socioeconomic issues related to global collaboration and KM to face the repercussions of coronavirus.

This special issue sought to explore the reflections to achieve best practices regarding MC and knowledge management in crisis times (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic). The first paper, titled "A literature review exploring the role of technology in business survival during the Covid-19 lockdowns," focuses on introducing a literature review, of 53 studies, investigating the impact of COVID-19 on businesses generally and examining the technology role of business survival during the COVID-19 lockdowns specifically. This paper highlights the methods used, the theories and the research locations present in this literature. The second paper, "Building social media-based knowledge ecosystems for enhancing business resilience through mass collaboration," discusses how micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises can leverage MC to build social media-based knowledge ecosystems to manage interactions among internal and external stakeholders for knowledge creation and innovation. The third paper, "Impact of mass collaboration on knowledge sharing process using mediating role of innovation capability," helps to determine the impact of mass collaboration on the knowledge sharing process in the manufacturing sector of Iraq in the mediation of innovation capability.

The fourth paper, "Perception of privacy issues and awareness in health-care knowledge management systems: an empirical study in Indian health-care context," focuses on measuring the perception of privacy issues in the context of Indian health-care management systems based on the responses of health-care researchers, doctors, practitioners and patients. This empirical research will assist in offering a solution in terms of identifying the main barriers to implementing privacy policies that need to be solved first and to ensure the effective implementation of KM in health care. In the next paper, "Critical assessment of success factors of mass collaboration: a case of Jordanian retail companies," based on a quantitative approach, the authors conducted a critical assessment of success factors of MC in the context of retail companies operating in Jordan. The study found that organizational structure, the mechanism in collaborative learning along with technologies adopted in collaborative learning, evaluation of learner's performance and quality of knowledge has a significant effect on the research context. The sixth paper, "Exploring the relationships among tacit knowledge sharing, communities of practice and employees' abilities: The case of KADDB in Jordan," attempts to assess the relationships among tacit knowledge sharing, communities of practice and employees' abilities to solve problems, customer's satisfaction and innovation. The proposed study model may enable managers and practitioners to make decisions related to the improvement of collective learning by encouraging employees' engagement in the process of tacit knowledge sharing.

The seventh paper, "The effect of knowledge management in educational settings: a study of education management organizations (EMOs) schools of Pakistan," aims to explore

the influence of KM in education management organizations schools of Pakistan. This paper can benefit educational organizations, stakeholders, policymakers, provincial and federal governments and society. For example, it provides an opportunity for policymakers to modify and improve service delivery for the provision of quality education in the context of Pakistan. In the eighth paper, "Successful collaboration between smart city consortium and Hong Kong Government in Covid-19 dashboard: the case of leadership in practice," the authors aim to discover why such a public partnership project had been successful with a nonprofit third-party alliance such as a smart city consortium promoting smart city development. The next paper, "Leadership, proactive personality and organizational outcomes: role of parallel of mediators in Pakistani 3-star hotels," aims to examine the role of five mediating mechanisms between the relationships of critical constructs of frontline employees' performance and both transformational leadership and proactive personality to find out which mediating mechanism highly boosts frontline performance in three-star hotels in Pakistan. The ninth paper, "Gender disparity in leadership boosts affective commitment and tacit knowledge sharing about libraries," focuses on using an authentic leadership style to explore whether male or female leadership of private academic institutions highly influences affective organizational commitment and tacit knowledge sharing among the library teachers. Additionally, this study encompasses the trust of library teachers and justifies whether the trust under male or female leadership highly moderates the effect on tacit knowledge sharing. In the final paper, "Impact of transformational leadership on educational institutes culture: a quantitative study in the context of Pakistan," the relationship between the different aspects of transformational leadership behaviors of school principals on school culture has been examined in the context of Pakistan. This study contributes to a better understanding of school culture in secondary schools for the education and literacy department, policymakers, educational leaders and school teachers.

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Further reading

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