Knowledge and Organisational Learning Theme Group – Summary of Activities (2014-15)

Theme Group Leader: Professor Alice Lam

The Knowledge and Organisational Learning (KOL) group brings together staff and doctoral students at the School of Management who share a common interest in understanding how organisations learn, create and utilize knowledge, and respond to the challenges of new technology and globalisation. Our research adopts a cross-disciplinary approach, drawing on the expertise of colleagues from organisation studies and human resource management, technology and information management, innovation studies, and strategic management and international business. The group provides an intellectual space in which staff, students and visiting researchers can work together in a supportive environment. It acts as a link between various collaborative projects and the focus for external engagement with a wide range of academic and non-academic stakeholders.

The KOL group held a series of successful and well-attended research seminars and workshops this year. These include seminars given by eminent external speakers, a roundtable discussion on common research themes (February) and a one-day workshop (May) based on thematic and research papers given by colleagues, external collaborators and doctoral students. Colleagues and doctoral students particularly welcomed these workshops which provided opportunities for networking and obtaining detailed feedback on their work. In addition, the group also held a successful one-day Practitioner Engagement Workshop at Senate House London in July (in collaboration with SMEM project PI Amany Elbanna).

Research Seminars

22nd October 2014
Speaker: Professor John Hagedoorn, SOM, Royal Holloway
"The co-alignment of open innovation with environmental contingencies and its effect on innovation performance"

4th March 2015
Speaker: Dr. Jonathan Sapsed, University of Brighton
"Creative-Digital-IT Fusion: Evidence on firm performance, freelance lives and the future of learning"
13th May 2015
Speaker: Professor Robert Chia, University of Glasgow
“Problems, Paradigms and Peripheral Awareness: In Praise of Oblique Ways of Knowing”

Research Roundtable, 4th February 2015

At this meeting, we presented our current research and held open discussion on common themes and grant opportunities. The following colleagues gave presentations on their current projects: Almany Elbanna (TIM), G. Harindranath (TIM), Chloe Preece (Marketing), Sukanya Sengupta (HRM/OS), Neil Conway (HRM/OS) and Bitssam Aboubichur (doctoral student).

One-day Workshop, 28th May 2015

The purpose of this one-day workshop was to provide opportunities for colleagues to present more fully their papers and research proposals. We also invited some external collaborators. The following papers were presented:

Huaichuan Rui and Miao Zhang
“Relevance, recipient ownership and knowledge transfer strategy: a case of Chinese MNCs in Africa”

Wenxian Sun & Jose Cordoba
“The Diffusion of Knowledge through a System Approach”

Meera Sarma and Alice Lam
"Ambidextrous Collaborative Communities and Innovation in the Virtual Environment- A Case of Open Source Software Development"

Sukanya Sengupta
"The impact of contextual influences on employment relations in SMEs: Work organisation practices in the Indian and UK film and television industry”

John King
“Experts, mediators, and entrepreneurs: social scientists’ modes of engagement in UK vocational skills policy”

Seyydali Ziaei and Alice Lam
“Commensality and social relations in the workplace: the ‘pork gap’ and ethnic barriers to knowledge sharing”
Practitioner Engagement Workshop, Senate House London, 13th July 2015

This engagement workshop, entitled ‘Social Media for Emergency Management: Innovation at difficult time’ was sponsored by the KOL group and held in collaboration with the SM4EM Project coordinated by Amany Elbanna. It brought together 25 professionals and academics interested in social media and emergency management together in a joint exploration of the potential role of different web-based platforms and how they could be managed to support agencies and communities.

Seed corn funding

Research funding awards were made to the following projects:

‘Social Media for Emergency Management (SM4EM)’ (Amany Elbanna)

‘Manufacturing Creativity: A study of the Hindi film industry’ (Sukanya Sengupta)

‘Global human mobility and knowledge transfer: returning foreign-educated professional knowledge workers as innovators in South America (Alice Lam; in collaboration with research team at the University of Compinas, Brazil).