Understanding Knowledge Enabler:
A Literature Review

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Abstract: This paper is a review of literatures on Knowledge Enabler in various terminologies and the exploration of the set of Knowledge Enablers that influence to Knowledge Management (KM) in general, alongside with the current status of Knowledge Enabler in KM, agreements and disagreements on Knowledge Enablers in KM field among researchers and practitioners. This literature based article provides historical background of KM Enablers in comprehensive, analyse concepts and results from different researches, to understand KM Enablers in the large scale fundamentally; There are summarised of KM definitions, found KM Enalers and KM Enabler benefit(s). At the end, this article aims to analyse the current and short future trends of investigating KM Enablers in current decade based on literature survey. The main contribution of this study is the compilation of literatures which related to KM Enablers for understanding basic concept, different views of experts and important research contributions in KM Enabler history. This paper provide the overview of key terms, concepts, definitions and theories that support Knowledge Enablers in KM field.

Keywords: Knowledge Enabler; Knowledge Management; KM Literature; KM Success Factors; Benefits of KM Enabler
*This is a literature based article which focuses on theories and models, and the combination between conceptual and academic characters.

I. INTRODUCTION
Knowledge Management (KM) is a semi-modern field, started from around 1990. Although It is adopted to use as a part of organisations internationally more than 20 years, It is still complex to understand. From the beginning until now, there are hundreds of KM definitions published [16] in English. This is because it can play multidisciplinary in various field [16]. This is the reason why it is mostly integral to business activities [16], and other fields willingly such as engineering, software developing and academic fields.

From the widely use of KM in numerous fields which have different factors and environments to support KM success in groups or organisations, KM Enabler is identified as an organisational factor that foster the development of knowledge through a typical KM process[8] or the key factors that determine the effectiveness of knowledge management within an organisation[7]. Even KM enabler was identified from 1997, there are a lot of specific factors which influence to KM success in various fields, are not yet be identified as KM enabler, not ranked from its importance and not set as a group for specific fields.

From the reasons above, understanding the KM enablers that affect to knowledge management success is the key point to
develop the felicitating factors in different environments and factors effectively.

II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In this article, its theoretical perspective is concerned with defining and describing the fundamental of KM enabler. Upon the youth of KM [6], KM Enabler is just at the blossom time. To present KM enabler in various and different views, and in different fields, is what I believe that it will be better than just select only one or two of them from only narrow perspectives.

**Definition of Knowledge Management**

Definition of Knowledge Management began from the term of Tacit Knowing or Tacit Knowledge, It was firstly introduced in public by Michael Polanyi in 1958 as the knowledge that cannot transfer by only verbal way. However, the perception of knowledge can be investigated back to ancient Greeks. Socrates, in Theaetetus by Plato in 369 BC, conceptualised knowledge as a true belief with an account commonly identified as concept of justified true belief but then indicated this definition remained inadequate (Anand and Singh, 2011).

In 1987, Chorafas termed Knowledge Management as managing the knowledge and encouraging people to share the same to create the value adding product and services (Chorafas, 1987; Malhotra, 1998; Bhatt, 2011; Anand and Singh, 2011)

However, the new concept shown that KM cannot be applied to only single definition. Different researcher have used different approach to define KM in their literature (Anand and Singh, 2011).


Anand and Singh (2011) classified KM definition into 8 group from their research on the present study of KM in 2011 by added more 3 categories, KM and Strategy, KM and Intellectual Capital, and What KM can do, to the previous concept of Singh et al.

* The full paper and table 1 to 5 can be found in http://www.inrit2013.com or http://www.charm.siamtechu.net/

**Types of Knowledge**

Types of Knowledge are commonly classified by its accessibility, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) initially divided Knowledge into two categories by its accessibility: Tacit and Explicit. This two categories concept is still widely used nowadays. Besides, after Nonaka and Takeuchi termed this two categories, Liebowitz and Beckman (1998) argued that Knowledge should be divided to three categories instead: Tacit, Implicit and Explicit. This three categories concept is widely accepted in KM as well.

* The full content of this topic, the full paper and table 1 to 5 can be found in http://www.inrit2013.com or http://www.charm.siamtechu.net/

**Definition of KM Enablers**

The idea of KM Enablers was initially from Socio-Technical Theory in 1977 which assume that there are two interacting factors within Knowledge Management, The Technical System, The Social System (Bostrom and Heinen, 1977; Heeseok and Byounggu, 2000). From 1997, there has been various definitions of KM Enablers in different aspects from different practical and conceptual of investigators. KM Enablers has been defined its meaning for almost 40 years, however, KM Enabler is not be able to defined in one best definition in KM field; this is because there is no single best definition in KM, different researcher have used different approach to define KM in their literature (Anand and Singh, 2011). In 2002, Chauvel and Despres firstly claimed that KM Enablers not only be in positive influence but also become negative factors as KM Barriers. Then, Wong (2005) defined KM Enablers in alternative view, he identified KM Enablers as activities and practices that need to be nurtured or developed depend on its existent and its place. One of the most favorable definition of KM Enabler is "KM Enablers are organisational factors that foster the development of knowledge through a
typical KM process" from Anderson (1997), IT has been confirmed and applied to use in various researches and articles (i.e. Aurum et al.(2008) and Iuliana(2009) research articles). Table 1 presents the definitions of Enabler(s) that had been relevant to the topic of KM.

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**Groups of KM Enablers**

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**III. KEY TERMS RELEVANT TO KM ENABLER**

From this literature survey, it was found that KM experts widely use 5 terms of KM Enablers (KM Enabler, Influencing Factor, Critical Factor, Key Success Factor, Success Factor) from 18 terms of KM Enablers from this KM literature survey. The term KM Enabler is the term that use in KM literature the most, It would be because it is the term that represent its definitions from people's perceptions easiest.

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**IV. THE LIST OF FOUND ENABLERS**

From this literature survey, the idea of investigating KM Enablers can be divided to 3 groups, Investigating All KM Enablers, Investigating New KM Enablers, and Investigating Key KM Enablers. Table 3 demonstrates that KM researchers had been focusing on finding the best all KM Enablers in their aspects until the end of 2000s. The trend of investigating new KM Enabler(s) arose from mid 1990s together with the trend of investigating key KM Enabler(s); In 1990s, these two trends were new and similar in their favouring. The trend of investigating all KM Enablers was continuing stably in demand by KM researchers in 2000s. All of the trends were increasing from 1990s, nevertheless, only the trend of investigating Key KM Enablers was rising up remarkably in that decade.

After 2000s, in the current decade, the trend of investigating all KM Enablers is less in researchers' interest significantly, the number of researches focused on the three trends is currently not distinct. This is possibly because, after 2005, the trend changed to emphasize on KM Enablers or Key KM Enablers in specific field (i.e. SMEs, Large Companies, Software Engineering Companies, Engineer Industries, Semiconductor Manufacturing Firms, Software Engineering Students, Universities) and different/distinct location (i.e. Australia, Malaysia, South Africa, Romania, Iran, Greece, India). After 2000s, the trend has been changed to focus more on investigating KM Enablers in specific factor(s), almost a haft of the KM Enabler researches now focus on KM Enablers or Key KM Enablers in specific factor(s). From the reason above, experts are currently interested in KM Enabler in specific factors because the three trend has been investigated for more than 2 decades, there are various of KM Enablers found, but not all of them can be applied in every specific situation. That is possibly the reason why experts are now focusing on KM Enablers in specific factors that can be applied or practically used in specific situation efficiently, which will make more profits, organizational performance or KM success for the one who adopt the specific KM Enabler(s).

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**V. DEVELOPMENT OF KM ENABLER**

From this investigation based on literature survey, this article was decided to divide the generation of KM Enabler from the trends of Investigating KM Enablers that is described on The list of found Enablers topic above
(main topic number 4), with the information in the table 4. There are 3 divided generations of KM Enabler in this literature. The first generation is from 1977, when the first KM Enabler were identified by Socio-Technical Theory (Bostrom and Heinen, 1977; Heeseok and Byounggu, 2000). The second generation is between 1995 to 2004, began from when the new additional Enabler and Key Enablers were first investigated (Pentland, 1995; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The third generation has been since 2005, when researchers changed their interest to KM Enabler(s) in specific factor(s).

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VI. KM Enablers in different fields
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VII. THE IMPORTANT RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO KM ENABLERS
* The content of this topic, the full paper and table 1 to 5 can be found in http://www.inrit2013.com or http://www.charm.siamtechu.net/

VIII. KM Enabler Benefits
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IX. Conclusion
Knowledge Management has been a key interesting area of researchers and practitioners from different field. The interest in KM make people investigate the factors that can support KM in one way or another. Literature review shows that KM Enablers has been developed in its terms and its categories by investigating over three decades, however, the KM Enablers are still being investigated. This is not the final stage of KM Enablers yet, there has been no consensus in the definition, categories and benefit(s) of KM Enablers among experts, researchers and practitioners. This is because KM Enabler is the part of KM which does not belong to only one area; It has been investigated from people with different disciplines. The main aim of this study is to track historical background of KM Enablers in comprehensive, analyse concepts and results from different researches, to understand KM Enablers in the large scale fundamentally. Another benefit is to acknowledge the current and short future trends which is found based on literatures that are the trend of investigating KM Enablers in the specific field or/and location that has never been investigated before.

* The full paper and table 1 to 5 can be found in http://www.inrit2013.com or http://www.charm.siamtechu.net/

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