KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: A PATHWAY TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS IN TODAY'S ECONOMY

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Abstract
Knowledge is considered as the organizational power and it is the real asset of organizations when it comes to surviving in this competitive business environment. Without knowledge, organizations would find it very challenging to effectively respond to the ever-changing market needs to maintain its competitiveness and therefore the concepts of knowledge management is becoming a necessity for any organization whether it is large, medium or small; even though their managing approach can be different. The study explores knowledge management as a pathway to organizational competitiveness in today's economy but specifically seeks to ascertain the effect of knowledge sharing on employee creativity. The study employed descriptive survey design and the population of the study is 349 staff. Taro Yamane formula was used to ascertained the sample size of 230. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit vital information from the respondents. Simple regression analysis was employed in the test of hypothesis. The result revealed that knowledge sharing has significant effect on employee creativity. High degree of knowledge sharing supports individual employee' learning process and thus enhances an individual's creative skills, another building block of individual creativity. The study therefore recommends that organizations/companies should foster/ encourage knowledge sharing to enable employees generate novel and creative ideas by accessing diverse knowledge and information and interacting with people who have variety of expertise.
Keywords*: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Competitiveness, Employee Creativity.*

Introduction

Knowledge is the real power and asset for organizations and it is considered as a key source to achieving competitive advantages in todays' dynamic world.organizations are operating within a knowledge economy and are dependent on knowledge intensive activities for sustainable competitiveness, it is becoming increasingly vital to be able to effectively manage knowledge. Knowledge is now being regarded as a valued element (explicit) for knowledge embedded products while also very exposed (tacit) due to highly mobile workers and therefore, their creation and dissemination are important factors for sustainable competitiveness (Dalkir 2005). KM has emerged as one of the most popular and new management technique. Knowledge management allows for the integration of people, processes and technology to create values from both organizations' intangible and tangible assets. This integration allows for new business opportunities to be identified and developed through the use of knowledge gained from the knowledge worker (expert). It also helps to better

share the knowledge with the different stakeholders which can significantly improve existing relationships or create new ones (Muhammad, Zulkifli, Nazim, 2017).

KM is an important asset of any organization and nothing is truer about this fact than academic organizations, as intellectual capital is the corner stone for gaining a sustainable competitive edge in the age of tough competition. Organizations that create new knowledge and apply it effectively and efficiently can be successful at creating competitive advantages (Grant, 1996; Gold et al. 2001; Lee and Sukoco, 2007). KM promotes an integral approach for identifying, capturing, retrieving, sharing, evaluating an enterprise's information assets and that knowledge management system is a key component in innovation and competitiveness (Chaudhary, 2005; Carneiro, 2000). Knowledge has become increasingly associated with superior competitiveness because of its invisibility and inimitability making it a valuable asset. In this respect, knowledge-oriented organizations continuously look for new knowledge which must be effectively managed and utilized in order to deliver better customer value than their competitors.Hlupic et al. (2002) contend that "knowledge management is seen as the vehicle for organizational effectiveness and competitiveness.

Despite the relevance of knowledge management in organization, there are certain challenges confronting organization for implementing knowledge management practices, these include Failure of management commitment, **lack of governance framework**, Outdated technology, **lack of a formalized KM strategy, poor communication channels,** Resistance to organizational change, **lack of integration with other business operations,** inaccessible information and Untrustworthy source of information, **poor data quality, lack of resources,** when knowledge management challenges are not solved, they can negatively affect organizations in several ways. First, employees may not be able to access the information they need to do their jobs effectively. This can lead to decreased productivity and decreased quality of work. Furthermore, inability to manage knowledge effectively can lead to duplication of effort and wasted resources. It also can create silos within an organization, which can lead to communication and coordination problems.

Statement of the problem

There is lot of issues with knowledge management in several different organizations and one of the main issues is the lack of expert human resources. Knowledge Management is more about people centric where more tacit knowledge can be captured by experts and can be converted into explicit knowledge. Knowledge is the real power and asset for organizations and it is considered as a key source to achieving competitive advantages in todays' dynamic world (Muhammad, Zulkifli, Nazim, 2017). The lack of documentation of some of business processes within departments and lack of knowledge in some specialization areas within departments

affects the performance and organizational competitiveness. Also the concept of knowledge management is unknown to many organizations especially the SMEs (Carmen & Alexandra, 2012). These issues cause inconsistency in decision-making quality within organizations. The competitive nature of the marketplaces is putting pressures on organizations to undertake personnel reduction that may result in jeopardizing their business knowledge. Personnel reduction creates a need to replace tacit knowledge (informal, people intellect) with explicit knowledge (formal, stored knowledge) otherwise organizations will end up losing significant amount of their knowledge as most of organizational knowledge is in the form of informal knowledge. It was against this backdrop that the study seeks to explores the effect of knowledge sharing on employee creativity.

The broad objective of this study is an explore the effect of knowledge management on organizational competitiveness in manufacturing firms, while the specific objective is:

To ascertain the effect of knowledge sharing on employee creativity in manufacturing firms.

This research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study

Knowledge sharing has significant effect on employee creativity in manufacturing firms.

Conceptual and Theoretical Clarifications

Knowledge management: can simply be described as making effective use of the available knowledge resources, that is, by transforming individual knowledge (tacit) into organizational knowledge (explicit) (Rasula, Vuksic & Stemberger 2012). Or more formally, as a systematic process of acquisition, creation, refinement, storage, transfer, sharing, and utilization of knowledge to improve employees' understanding (King, 2009). KM refers to the full utilization of information and data in their explicit and implicit forms (Warier, 2003). It is argued that knowledge not only depends on information processing, but also on shared interpretation of the information, and the filtering of the knowledge into degrees of importance (Lueg, 2001). Knowledge is considered as the organizational power (Skyrme, 2011) and it is the real asset of organizations when it comes to surviving in this competitive business environment. knowledge management is process or activity by created, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it exists, to enhance learning and performance in organization. Knowledge management is process which through organizations deals with generates a wealth of knowledge and their intellectual capital (Mohammad, Samaneh et al 2013). .KM has been defined as the explicit and systematic management of vital knowledge and its associated processes of creation, organization, diffusion, use and exploitation (Skyrme, 2001). The essence of knowledge management is boosts the efficiency of an organization's decision-making ability. Knowledge management will ensure that the specialized knowledge

of employees does not leave with them, or go unutilized by other employees who would benefit from that knowledge.

Knowledge sharing:

Knowledge sharing encompasses both making information available to those who actively seek it within your organization and directly communicating the appropriate knowledge to a user who could potentially apply it for the benefit of your business. High degree of knowledge sharing supports individual employee' learning process and thus enhances an individual's creative skills, another building block of individual creativity (Gong et al., 2012). KS is the movement of knowledge among individuals in organizations to help others and to collaborate with others for solving problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures (Wang &Noe, 2010). KS provides huge impacts to the creation of learning organizational culture, knowledge, and innovation (Casimir, 2012). t and long-term survival of any organization, effective and efficient KS is essential (Gaal et al., 2008). Now, KS in organizations is increasing day by day and is considering as an essential element for successful and effective development cooperation (Kim &Tcha, 2012)

Employee Creativity:

Creativity is the ability to discriminate against new relationships, examine subjects from new perspectives, and form new concepts from existing information. Doshmanziari (2018), creativity means the ability to combine ideas uniquely or to create an affinity between ideas. Creativity is a human character that is able to take risks and promote holistic ideas and makes tasks easy in a complex environment (Sadeghi & Ofoghi, 2011). The entire workers of the organization become creative, the organization can be a competitor in global markets, enhance operational excellence, increase efficiency, and achieve profitability and growth of the organization (Albrar, 2016, Egan, 2005). Hassan et al (2013) advocated that employees' creativity plays a significant role in providing fast and quality services for customer.

The study is anchored on resource based view theory credited by Barney, J. B. (1991). The theory contends that the possession of strategic resources provides an organization with a golden opportunity to develop competitive advantages over its rivals. Resource-based theory also states that the possession of resources is valuable, difficult to imitate, rare, and cannot be substituted. The resource-based theory suggests that organizations should look inside the company to find the sources of competitive advantage through the use of their resources. Competitive advantage is an advantage that a firm has over its competitors that allow it to generate sales or margins and/or retains more customers than the competition. A firm's competitive advantage evolves from the resources that the organization has. These competitive advantages in turn can help the organization enjoy strong profits. In the resource-based theory model, resources are given the major role of assisting companies in

achieving higher organizational performance and competitive advantage. Resource-based theory prescribes that organizations position themselves strategically based on their resources and capabilities rather than their products and services.

Empirical Review

In the knowledge-based economy era, superior organizations depend more on their knowledge-based resources to survive (Kim & Gong, 2009; Yang, Zheng, &Viere, 2009) and to cope with the changes. Therefore, the Knowledge Management (KM) implementation is increasingly becoming a main power to improve Organizational Competitiveness (OC) for various organizations (Liao & Wu, 2009; Safa, Shakir, & Boon, 2006). Knowledge is a key resource for survival, stability and growth of the organizations. Thereby, since 1990s the success of organizations is closely related to managing knowledge (Jiang & Li, 2009; Kim & Liao & Wu, 2010). The significance of knowledge management to organizations is clear and its contribution towards service and product offering is the key to organizational competitiveness thus improved organizational performance (UitBeijerse, 2006). Knowledge management allows organizations to effectively plan, create, organize and motivate employees by making the most of its knowledge resources. Integrating the people, process and technology as a single unit is also an important by-product of knowledge management (King, 2009) where organizations need to always transform the tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge making it easier for others to re-use the knowledge thus improving the business processes. The literature revealed that creation and discovery of knowledge and opportunities originated from the creative and cognitive capabilities of individuals (Muhammad, Zulkifli, Nazim, 2017). Conversely, the same can be stated about those organizations that effectively utilize the capabilities of their personnel. However, the ability of sensing and creating knowledge and opportunities is not uniformly distributed among individuals in organizations. It would be rather true that abilities to discover and exploit opportunities depends both on the individuals' capabilities and knowledge as well as the knowledge management and learning capability of the firm (Muhammad, Zulkifli, Nazim, 2017).

It is argued that knowledge not only depends on information processing, but also on shared interpretation of the information, and the filtering of the knowledge into degrees of importance (Lueg, 2001). Davenport and Prusak (1998) state that KM aims to identify, manage, and value items that organizations know or could know. Gartner Group states that KM promotes an integral approach for identifying, capturing, retrieving, sharing, evaluating an enterprise's information assets and that knowledge management system is a key component in innovation and competitiveness (Chaudhary, 2005; Carneiro, 2000).
Many empirical research results have showed that KM have great influence on organizational outcomes in terms of innovation, product quality, and improvement

of employees' morale (Alzoubi and Alnajjar, 2010; Sireteanu and Grigoruta, 2007; Pentland, 2003).Valmohammadi and Ahmadi (2015) examined the impact of knowledge management practices on organizational performance. They presented a holistic approach regarding evaluation of knowledge management practices on organizational performance in the framework of four perspectives of balance scored card (BSC). Research findings revealed that KM practices positively and meaningfully impact overall organizational performance.

Mills and Smith (2011) evaluated the impact of specific knowledge management resources on organizational performance using survey data from (189) managers and structural equation modeling. The study showed that some knowledge resources are directly related to organizational performance, while others, though important preconditions for knowledge management are not directly related.

Ababneh (2008) investigated the impact of knowledge management and organization learning on organizational innovation. The study showed a strong positive correlation between knowledge management, organizational learning and organizational innovation, and that demographic variables have a significance impact on practicing each dimension, while educational level and department size have no significant impact.

Kamya, Ntayl and Ahiauzu (2010) examined the relationship between knowledge management and competitive advantage, in a developing country, Uganda; with a particular focus on the interacting influence of market orientation. A sample size of 718 organizations was selected from a population of 11,153 organizations using a simple random sampling method. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the analysis. The findings show that there is a positive correlation between knowledge management and competitive advantage; which relationship is greatly enhanced by the interaction impact of market orientation.

Kiptalam, Komene and Bulgut (2016) Investigated knowledge management, innovativeness and firm competitiveness using 252 small and medium manufacturing enterprise in Nairobi, Kenya. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS statistical packaged software. The study results showed that knowledge management processes influence innovativeness positively, innovativeness enhances firm competitiveness while innovativeness is a mediator between knowledge management and firm competitiveness.
Josephine, Chikizie, Emeh(2018) examined the Role of Knowledge Management on the Competitive Advantage of Food and Beverage firms in South East Nigeria. The study specifically study ascertain the extent to which collaborative learning improves employees Knowledge empowerment for organizational sales growth. The sample size of 533 was used for the study Data collected from the field, were

presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and simple percentage. The hypothesis was tested using Z-test statistical tool and It was found that enhanced collaboration had significant effect on employees' empowerment that increased sales growth in the firm.

Methodology

The study employed correlational survey design because the study was set out to investigate the effect of knowledge management on organizational competitiveness. Structured questionnaire was the main instrument of data collection. Questionnaire were issued owners and staff of selected manufacturing firms in Anambra state. The questionnaire was structured to place the respondents on objective response for each statement on five point Likert scale with the response score rate 5 strongly agree, 4- Agree, 3- undecided, 2- Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree. The questions were divided into sections, section A, contained questions on demographic characteristics (bio data) of the respondents while section B contained the questions on knowledge sharing and employee creativity in manufacturing firms. The population of the study consist of the staff of the selected manufacturing firms in Anambra state which include Millennium manufacturing company, Ezenwa Plastic Industries and JuhelCompany with the total of 349. Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size of 230. In analyzing the data descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed. The descriptive statistics adopted was mean, standard deviation and percentage while the inferential statistics was simple regression.

4.1 Respondents responses on the effect of knowledge sharing on employee creativity in manufacturing firms.

	Questionnaire items	**SA**	**A**	**U**	**D**	**SD**	**Mean**	**Total**
	Knowledge sharing							
1	An effective knowledge-sharing encourages employees to share their expertise and connect with other team members who can learn from or build upon that expertise.	73 31.7%	67 29.1%	11 4.7%	48 20.8%	31 13.4%	3.38	230
2	Knowledge sharing promotes productivity by reducing the need for rework.	66 28.6%	68 29.5%	20 8.6%	36 15.6%	40 17.3%	3.31	230
3	Knowledge-sharing enhanced problem-	82 35.6%	73 31.7%	13 5.6%	35 15.2%	27 11.7%	3.59	230

	solving and decision-making capacity.							
4	Knowledge-sharing has resulted to employee creativity/ innovativeness which improves the product /services of the firm	73 31.3%	67 29.1%	11 4.7%	39 16.9%	40 17.3%	3.38	230
5	Knowledge sharing provide employees opportunity to collaborate and provide feedback between departments.	62 26.9%	70 30.4%	16 6.9%	46 20%	36 15.6%	3.31	230
	Employee creativity							
6	To retain customers and to satisfy the clients, creativity within the organization was a precondition	84 36.5%	71 30.8%	10 4.3%	41 17.8%	24 10.4%	3.62	230
7	Creativity of workers is essential to bring new ways, methods, and systems in the organizations,	57 24.7%	84 36.5%	11 4.7%	38 16.5%	40 17.3%	3.31	230
8	Newly invented products become out of the market when the business organization is not engaged in creativity and innovation activities	64 27.8%	61 26.5%	19 8.2%	44 19.1%	42 18.2%	3.00	230
9	Employee creativity encourage continuous learning, help employees to seek new information, and new ways to do things.	70 30.4%	87 37.8%	15 6.5%	30 13.0%	28 12.1%	3.59	230
10	Creativity help differentiate the company	87 37.8%	70 30.4%	15 6.5%	27 11.7%	31 13.4%	3.59	230

from its competitors and attract customers.	
Grand Average	**3.40**

Source: Computed by Researcher

Table 4.1 shows the respondents responses to the questions relating to knowledge sharing and employee creativity with the grand mean of 3.40.

Test of hypothesis

Knowledge sharing has significant effect on employee creativity in manufacturing firms in Anambra State.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.985[a]	.971	.967	1.148

a. Predictors: (Constant), knowledge sharing
b. Dependent variable: employee creativity

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	347.564	1	347.564	263.902	.000[b]
	Residual	10.536	8	1.317		
	Total	358.100	9			

a. Dependent Variable: employee creativity
c. Predictors: (Constant), knowledge sharing

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-5.746	1.464		-3.924	.004
	KS	1.340	.082	.985	16.245	.000

a. Dependent Variable: employee creativity

R, the correlation coefficient which has a value of 985, indicates that there is a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and employee creativity. R square, the coefficient of determination, shows 971 of the variation in the employee creativity. Knowledge sharing coefficient of .985 indicates a positive significance between knowledge sharing and employee creativity, which is statistically significant (with t = 16.245). Therefore, the null hypothesis should be rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted. Thus knowledge sharing has positive significant effect on employee creativity in manufacturing firms in Anambra State.

Summary of the findings

The result of the analysis revealedthat there is a positive significant effect between knowledge sharing and employee creativity, this implies that increase in knowledge sharing will lead to increase in employee creativity vice versa. The R correlation coefficient is .985 while the R square is .971, t =16.245 and .000 level of siginificant.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that there is a positive significant effect between knowledge sharing and employee creativity, this implies that increase in knowledge sharing will lead to increase in employee creativity vice versa.Knowledge is considered as the organizational power (Skyrme, 2011) and it is the real asset of organizations when it comes to surviving in this competitive business environment. Without knowledge, organizations would find it very challenging to effectively respond to the ever-changing market needs to maintain its competitiveness and therefore the concepts of knowledge management is becoming a necessity for any organization whether it is large, medium or small; even though their managing approach can be different (Rizea, et al., 2011). Therefore, scholars generally believe that an individual employee is more likely to generate novel and creative ideas if he/she can access diverse knowledge and information by interacting with people who have variety of expertise (Gibson and Gibbs, 2006; Sosa, 2011).People involved in creative processes may be more motivated to share their information and ideas with others before they can better evaluate the ideas and make a wise decision.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Knowledge is the real power and asset for organizations and it is considered as a key source to achieving competitive advantages in todays' dynamic world. Knowledge management allows for the integration of people, processes and technology to create values from both organizations' intangible and tangible assets. This integration allows for new business opportunities to be identified and developed through the use of knowledge gained from the knowledge worker (expert), quick and easy access to the needed knowledge at any time and under any circumstances. It also helps to better share the knowledge with the different stakeholders which can significantly improve existing relationships or create new ones, improved customer relationships which result in better customer loyalty and better organizational public image. Therefore, to successfully operate, achieve and sustain a competitive advantage within such economy, it is crucial to manage the organization's knowledge assets or resources efficiently and effectively and also incorporate the knowledge management practices within organizations. The study recommends that organizations/companies should foster/ encourage knowledge sharing to enable employees generate novel and creative ideas by accessing diverse knowledge and information and interacting with people who have variety of expertise.

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