

Knowledge Management And Organizational Performance In Selected Commercial Banks In Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper seeks to examine the extent to which knowledge management improves the Performance of Selected Commercial Banks in Awka. The study specifically sets out to determine if there is a significant relation between knowledge identification and organizational performance. It also examines the extent to which knowledge acquisition affects the performance of an organization. This study employed descriptive research design; primary source of data are the major instrument used for this study. Pearson's product moment correlation was used to analyze the data. The findings reveal that there is a positive relationship between knowledge identification and organizational performance. It also reveals that knowledge acquisition has a positive effect on organizational performance. In conclusion, knowledge is the key resource needed if an organization intends to operate at a level that is equal to no other. The study therefore recommends that an effective system should be put in place to ensure that relevant knowledge that will boost performance is identified. And also that knowledge acquisition is not only about acquiring mere knowledge but mindfully managing knowledge acquisition activities in order to tap into different kinds of knowledge.*

Keywords: *Knowledge management, performance, knowledge acquisition, effective system*

I. Introduction

The advancement of technology and the rebirth of new inventions have kept most organizations in the race to remain competitive in the business. For many companies, the time of rapid technological change is also the time of incessant struggle for maintaining competitive advantage (Jelena, Vesna & Mojea, 2012). It is obvious that knowledge is slowly becoming the most important factor of production, next to labour, land and capital (Sher & Lee, 2004). Though some forms of intellectual capabilities are transferable, intrinsic knowledge is not easily copied; therefore, the key objective of management is to improve the process of acquisition, integration and usage of knowledge, which is exactly what knowledge management, is all about (Kovacic, Bosity & Loncar, 2006). Tanriverdi & Venkatraman (2005) in Chang & Chuang (2009) indicated that knowledge has become the key economic resource, and perhaps maybe, even the only source of comparative advantage. Despite the fact that interest in the source, nature and quality of knowledge has been expressed since the times of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (Singh, Chan & Mckee, 2006), the idea of knowledge management (KM) is very recent (Singh et al 2006).

Hull (2000) suggests that the phenomenon of KM is "not merely some passing fad, but is in the process of establishing itself as a new aspect of management and organization, and as a new form of expertise". To some extent, KM has gained this legitimacy in academia as a result of consulting companies who have sought to capitalize on the enormous potential of information technology (Smith and Lyles, 2003). Throughout the world, organizations are facing a universal challenge consequential from rapid change in a new knowledge economy (Zwain, Teong & Othman, 2012). The result of this means that organizations that fails to keep up with this rapid change will be left behind to grope in its unpreparedness. Many organizations accept KM as a management paradigm worldwide in order to cope with the changing expectations of the organization (Zwain et al, 2012). Knowledge management consists of "leveraging intellectual asset to enhance organizational performance" (Stankosky, 2008). Knowledge sharing throughout the organization enhances existing organizational business processes, introduces more efficient and effective business processes and removes redundant processes (Bhojaraju, 2005). KM as emphasized by Kolam (2004) in Bhojaraju (2005) helps an organization to gain insight and understanding from its own experience; Knowledge management is an audit of "intellectual assets" that highlights unique resources, critical functions and potential bottlenecks, which hinder knowledge flow to the point of use. KM protects intellectual assets from decay, seeks opportunities to enhance decisions, services and products through adding intelligence, increasing value and providing flexibility (Bhojaraju, 2005). KM complements and enhances other organizational initiatives such as; total quality management (TQM), business process re-engineering (BPR) and organizational learning as well as providing a new and urgent focus to sustain competitive position (Bhojaraju, 2005).

Having perused through the above on knowledge management, the importance of KM cannot be overemphasized since organizations resort to knowledge in a bid to sustaining its competitiveness in a dynamic business environment. In regard to this, organizations often encourage employees to share experience and expertise in knowledge repositories where other employees can acquire same. Commercial banks in Nigeria are seen as knowledge repositories, this is because they tend to have very knowledgeable employee in every department within the establishment. But having knowledgeable employee does not guarantee for continuous success, this is because if this employee decides to leave the organization at will, they will create a huge void by leaving with the relevant quantum of knowledge that they possess. This directly agrees with Kovacic, Bosity & Loncar (2006) when they stated that the knowledge anchored in employees' mind can get lost if they decide to leave the organization. This means that commercial bankers in Nigeria who probably may want to move to a different industry altogether may possess knowledge that is not relevant to the proposed sector they are opting for. The underlying cause of many mistakes of early knowledge management initiatives is that organizations skip the very first step by not determining whether they know what they know and what they do not know (knowledge identification), which he called "a travesty of justice to knowledge management" Hylton (2002). This therefore serves as the crux of this study.

In the event of ascertaining relevant information needed for quick response to turbulent issues, organizations go through rigorous processes trying to retrieve information that may either exist within the organization (explicit knowledge) or in the heads of employees (tacit knowledge). Though they may be managing their knowledge (knowledge management) but KM still faces a "formidable obstacle" (Burrows, Drummond & Martinsons, 2005). One key obstacle is that organizations often do not know what they know (William, John & Peter, 2012). In other words, they are often unaware of the knowledge that exists within their organization already (Nevo, Benhasat & Wand, 2009). Employees (knowledge holders) possessing particular skills and knowledge could be invaluable to both colleagues and managers within the same organization, but it is more likely than not that those people who could make use of this knowledge do not even know these knowledge-holders and their knowledge exist (Nevo, Benhasat & Wand, 2012). This is surprising given that many scholars (Ruta, 2009; Yang & Lin, 2009 in Ann, Ezeobi & Huma, 2013) argue that intellectual capital development (knowledge management) is the hidden value that is not reflected in organizational financial statements but has the potential to contribute to organizational profitability and competitive advantage. The Nigerian Banking sector offers a rich avenue to research given that the majority of individuals that work in banks are knowledge workers (Ann, et al, 2013). Coupled with this, organizations that fail to improve on the process are hard hit if very knowledgeable employees leave the organization either voluntarily or involuntarily without the organization tapping into the knowledge that resides in the heads of these knowledgeable employees. Therefore, until organizations learn to identify employees who have relevant knowledge and tap some for the betterment of their organization, these organizations will continue to be deprived of very important resource.

Specifically, this study is aimed at achieving the following objectives;

1. To determine if there is a significant relationship between knowledge identification and organizational performance
2. To ascertain the extent to which knowledge acquisition affects the performance of an organization.

Research Questions

- 1) To what extent does knowledge identification affect organizational performance?
- 2) To what extent does knowledge acquisition affect organizational performance?

Research Hypotheses:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between KI and Organization Performance

H₁: knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on organizational performance.

II. Review Of Related Literature

2.1 Conceptual Review

Megan & Jon (2007) posit knowledge management to be the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets. It is the systematic management of an organization's knowledge assets for the purpose of creating value and meeting tactical and strategic requirements; it consists of the initiatives, process, strategies and systems that sustain and enhance the storage, assessment, sharing, retirement, and creation of knowledge (Alan, 2012).

Knowledge management is a conscious effort to get the right knowledge to the right people at the right time so that it can be shared and put into action (Aziri, Veseli & Ibraimi, 2013). Nnabuike (2009) argued that "since people have different types of knowledge from different backgrounds and fields of study and, of different

quality and form, information gathering process is seen as very important to decision quality". It is also worthy of note that information sourced internally is usually cheaper (Nnabuife, 2009).

Robbins, Judge & Sanghi (2007) states that knowledge management is the process of organizing and distributing an organization's collective wisdom so that the right information gets to the right people at the right place. When done properly, knowledge management provides an organization with both a competitive edge and improves organizational performance because it makes its employees smarter (Robbins et al, 2007). Essentially, knowledge management in organizations is believed to be an integrated process that can help enhance and expand innovation process (Parikh, 2001). Successful knowledge management can be defined as the creation of management processes and infrastructure to bring together both knowledge and communities in a common ecology that will sustain the creation, utilization and retention of knowledge (Aloyalat & Alhawari, 2008).

Knowledge processes can be though lit of a structured coordination for managing knowledge effectively (Gold, Malhotra & Segars, 2001). Typically, knowledge processes include activities such as creation, sharing, storage and usage (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Enablers provide the infrastructure necessary for the organization to increase the efficiency of knowledge processes (Sarvary, 1999).

A prerequisite of implementation of knowledge management is to understand and develop the infrastructural elements required to support the acquisition, management, and transfer of tacit and explicit organizational knowledge (Halawi, Aronson & McCarthy, 2005). Alhawari & Al-jarrah (2012) are of the opinion that there are three elements that must collaborate to effect successful application of knowledge management; these are the emphasis on people, process and technology.

William et al (2012) argues that another explanation for why organizations do not know what they know is that contemporary knowledge management frameworks are not applied effectively and key knowledge management processes are overlooked. The underlying cause of many mistakes of early knowledge management initiatives is that organizations skip the very first step by not determining whether they know what they know and what they do not know (knowledge identification), which is "a travesty of justice" to "knowledge management" (Hylton, 2002).

Knowledge identification is an action of discerning the location and value of knowledge, restraints to knowledge flow, and opportunities to leverage the value of knowledge (Zwain et al, 2012). Either looking at this perspective, knowledge can be identified by individual employees or organization (Liao & Wu, 2009). Knowledge identification can therefore be seen as the first stage of managing knowledge. Identifying knowledge gap is necessary to support staff daily work successfully (Sarawanwong, Tuamsuk, Vongprasert & Khiewyoo, 2009). Notable knowledge identification methods include; knowledge sharing systems (Hinds & Pfeffer, 2002), Expert Finding Systems (Maybury, 2006), Organizational Network Analysis (Praise, Cross & Davenport, 2005), knowledge mapping (Werler, 2001) and Expertise Transfer (Weber, Dauphin, Fuschini, Haarmann, Katzung & Wunram, 2007).

After identifying the much needed knowledge, it has to acquire to ensure its utilization. Lee & Wyang (2000) presented two activities through which organization acquires knowledge, which are; searching and organizational learning. Knowledge acquisition through searching can be achieved via three means such as scanning, focused research, and performance monitoring. Organizational learning is the development of new knowledge or insights that have the potential to influence behavior (Alexandra, 2013).

Organizational performance has been the most important issue for every organization, be it a profit or non-profit one (Ismael, Yusof & Davoud, 2010). However, defining, conceptualizing and measuring performance have not been an easy talk (Ismael et al, 2010). Lebens & Euske (2006) define performance as a set of financial and non-financial indicators which offers information on the degree of achievement of objectives and results. Organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: (1) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment); (2) market performance (sales, market share); and (3) shareholder return (Pierre, Timothy, George & Gerry,). Organizational performance involves the recurring activities to establish organizational goals, monitor progress towards the goals, and make adjustments to achieve those goals more effectively and efficiently (Richard, Devinney, George & Johnson, 2009). The assumption that knowledge management is needed for knowledge accumulation to result in improved organizational performance possibly arises from the fact that researchers have opposing views about the impact of knowledge on organizational performance (Vera & Crossan, 2003). It is expected that a particular category of knowledge, which is valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable would lead to increased performance (Barney, 1995). On the other side of the discussion are authors who do not see a direct relationship between knowledge and performance. Organizations can always attain knowledge that may not lead to intelligent behaviour (Singh et al, 2006). Leonard (1992) states that core rigidities due to deeply embedded knowledge sets hinder innovation. In conclusion, Vera & Crossan (2003) suggests that the knowledge that is relevant may have a positive effect on organizational performance.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The relevant theory that helps significantly towards realizing the important role of knowledge management is the knowledge-based theory developed by Grant (1996). He argues that the source of competitive advantage in dynamic business environment is not the knowledge that is repository to the organization, because the value of such knowledge erodes quickly due to obsolescence and imitation. Rather, sustained competitive advantage is determined by non-proprietary knowledge in the form of tacit individual knowledge. Tacit knowledge can form the basis of competitive advantage because it is both unique and relatively immobile. Yet, because that knowledge is possessed by individuals and not the organization, a crucial element of competitive advantage is the ability to integrate the specialized and tacit knowledge of individuals. The main idea of the knowledge-based theory of the firm is that organizations exist in the way that they do because of their ability to manage knowledge more efficiently than is possible under other types of organizational structures. In other words, organizations are social entities that use and store internal knowledge, competencies and capabilities that are vital for the firm's survival, growth and success (Hakanson, 2010). The theory assumes that organizations are all heterogeneous knowledge-bearing entities that apply knowledge to the production of their goods and services (Foss, 1996). Firms are able to organize the way they do because they are depositories of productive knowledge.

2.3 Empirical Review

A number of studies have been carried out to explore the effect of knowledge management on the performance of an organization.

Mohamad, Mehrdad, Salman and Noruzi (2013) investigated the influence of knowledge management practices on organizational performance in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Iran, using structural equation modeling (SEM). A number of 282 senior managers from these enterprises were chosen, using simple random sampling. The finding showed that knowledge acquisition, storage, creation and implementation have a significant factor loading on knowledge management; and also productivity, financial performance, staff performance, innovation, work relationships, and customer satisfaction have significant factor loading on organizational performance. The results of the study suggest that knowledge management practices directly influence the organizational performance of SMEs.

Zwain et al (2012) conducted a study that focused on the impact of knowledge management processes and academic performance in Iraqi higher-education institutions. The study is based on a survey design and cross-sectional. The hypotheses were tested through correlation and regression analyses. The result suggested that Iraqi higher-education institutions can benefit from knowledge management processes. The study also suggests that decision-makers should acquire in-depth knowledge about the impact of knowledge management processes in Iraqi higher-education institutions context.

William, John and Peter (2012) carried out a research trying to fill the research gap surrounding that particular knowledge management process called knowledge identification. The paper reports on the findings of a survey sent to 973 Australian organizations to investigate their knowledge identification practices. The survey findings show that while organizations do perceive knowledge identification to be important, the practice of knowledge identification has not reached mainstream adoption yet. The survey findings also reveal two opposing approaches organizations take in practicing knowledge identification: Proactive Knowledge Identification and Reactive Knowledge Identification.

Ahmad, Mohamad and Ibrahim (2013) employed a survey method in finding out the relationship between individual's absorptive capacity and knowledge acquisition behaviour among engineers in the electrical and electronic sector in Malaysia. There were 305 responses for the survey. Partial least square (PLS) properties of structural equation modeling (SEM) were used to measure the relationships between variables. The study found that individual absorptive capacity has partial influence on employees' knowledge acquisition.

Abdel, Gawater and Mohamed (2012) investigated the role of knowledge management in enhancing organizational performance in some Egyptian organizations, using questionnaire to collect the required information. The result shows that all elements of knowledge management capabilities have a positive significant relationship with all measures of the performance at 1% level of significance; it means that there is a great correlation between knowledge management capabilities and organizational performance.

Martin (2012) examined the knowledge acquisition strategies and company performance in Young High Technology Company in Germany, making use of quantitative and qualitative data. The study reveals four distinct knowledge acquisition strategies (low-key, mid-range, focus and explorer) and shows that strategies differ in their relation to company performance as a result of their configuration of knowledge acquisition activities and the type of knowledge acquired.

This study intends to fill the gap in existing literature by using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient to analyze the generated data that will be retrieved from the employees of the selected commercial banks in Awka, Anambra state Nigeria.

III. Materials And Methods

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey design. The target population of the study was the staff of UBA and First Bank Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is made up of employees of the two selected commercial banks that are currently operating in Nigeria, with particular reference to those in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka – Anambra State. The total population of the study who were eligible to assist in filling-out the questionnaire is 20 staff from UBA and 15 staff from First Bank, giving a total population of 35 personnel. The response scoring weights were Strongly agree – 5 points, Agree – 4 points, Undecided – 3 points, Disagree – 2 points, and Strongly disagree – 1 point.

Sample Size

The population of the study is small so the researcher used the entire population of the study that is complete enumeration.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the research was collected from primary sources. The primary data used was questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured; the respondents were placed on a five point likert scale.

Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability Test

This was done using cronbach Alpha at 5% level of significance. Cronbach Alpha is the most common measure of internal consistency (“reliability”). It is most commonly used in determining if a scale is reliable.

Validity of the Instrument

The study followed the departmental guideline in writing this work, after which the supervisor read through and offered valuable corrections which were effected by the researcher. The study therefore adapted content validity to validate the research instrument.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.715	10

From the reliability test, the measuring instrument measures what it is purported to measure at an alpha value of 0.715

IV. Data Analysis

Table 3.1: schedule of Questionnaire Administered and Returned

Number of Questionnaire Administered	Number of Questionnaire Returned	Number of Questionnaire not retrievable
35	30	5

Source: field survey (2014)

Table 3.4: Work Experience

1 – 5 years	20
5 – 10 years	8
10 – 15 years	1
Above 15 years	1
Total	30

Source: field survey (2014)

Table 3.5: Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire

		Descriptive Statistics				
		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Your organization knows about knowledge management	30	3.00	5.00	4.6000	.56324
2	Your organization is experienced in knowledge management	30	1.00	5.00	4.3333	1.06134
3	Identification of knowledge within your organization is very important	30	1.00	5.00	3.8667	1.25212
4	Your organization puts-in so much effort in identifying existing knowledge	30	1.00	5.00	3.3333	1.06134
5	Internal knowledge within your organization	30	1.00	5.00	3.6667	.95893

	is becoming known					
6	Your organization is doing so much to see that the necessary knowledge needed is acquired	30	1.00	5.00	3.9333	1.22990
7	Knowledge identification will help improve your organization's performance	30	2.00	5.00	4.1000	1.12495
8	There is no link between knowledge acquisition and organizational performance	30	1.00	5.00	3.6000	1.58875
9	Knowledge acquisition is detrimental to profit maximization	30	1.00	5.00	2.7667	1.67504
10	The current methods in identifying who knows what within your organization seems problematic	30	1.00	5.00	2.4333	1.38174
	Valid N (listwise)	30				
	Grand Mean				3.6633	

Test of Hypothesis:

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no significant relationship between KI and organizational performance

H₁: There is a significant relationship between KI and Organizational Performance.

Correlations

		KIF	OPF
KIF	Pearson Correlation	1	.445*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.014
	N	30	30
OPF	Pearson Correlation	.445*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	
	N	30	30

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant positive relationship between knowledge identification and performance of an organization since the p-value (0.014) is less than 0.05 (at 2- tailed test) as can be seen in the Table of Pearson correlation above. This implies that knowledge identification contributes to organizational performance.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: Knowledge Acquisition has no significant effect on the Performance of an organization

H₁: Knowledge Acquisition has a significant effect on the Performance of an organization

Correlations

		KAF	OPF
KAF	Pearson Correlation	1	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	30	30
OPF	Pearson Correlation	.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant positive relationship between knowledge acquisition and performance of an organization since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.01 (at 2- tailed test) as can be seen in the Table of Pearson correlation above. This implies that knowledge acquisition has effect on organizational performance.

V. Discussion Of Results

From the analysis carried out, it was found that knowledge identification contributes to organizational performance. It further reveals that knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on organizational performance. It is important to note that for an organization to operate an effective knowledge management system, knowledge identification and knowledge acquisition are the first two stages that they cannot afford to misrepresent. William et al (2012).Ahmad et al (2013) and Abdel et al (2013) noted that knowledge identification and knowledge acquisition are important for an effective practice of knowledge management.

VI. Conclusion And Recommendations

Organizations are often faced with the challenge of remaining competitive in a dynamic business environment, and also sustaining its comparative advantage which they hold over their competitors. Knowledge is the key resource needed if an organization intends to operate at a level that is equal to no other. However, an effective knowledge management system cannot be practiced if organizations do not what knowledge that exists within their organization and where the knowledge resides. It is also important to note that it is only when organizations have identified the relevant knowledge will they then talk about the acquisition of the identified relevant knowledge.

Based on the findings, the following are recommended;

1. Organizations who crave to remain competitive in business should embed knowledge identification into their knowledge management strategy. It is believed that organizations do practice knowledge identification, but it is not done as extensively as it should be. An effective system should be put in place to ensure that relevant knowledge that will boost performance is identified.
2. Organizations should also note that knowledge acquisition is not merely the acquisition of more knowledge; instead organizations will benefit from orchestrating and mindfully managing knowledge acquisition activities in order to tap different kinds of knowledge.

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