

Empirical Evidence of Organizational Knowledge From a Typological Perspective and Its Linkages With Performance

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Abstract

Empirical evidence on the role of individuals' and group tacit and explicit knowledge in driving performance, is clearly missing in organisational knowledge literature. To fill this gap, a survey of 504 Managerial, technical and administrative employees of organisations in the Nigerian telecommunications industry form the sample for this study. Based on the multiple regression analysis, the relationship between organisational knowledge and performance was established. The results indicate that managers should focus on group-tacit knowledge, individual-explicit knowledge and individual-tacit knowledge as the most strategic types of organisational knowledge for enhancing performance.

Article Preview

1. Introduction

The means to achieving organisational objectives, overtime, has revolved due to environmental issues, such as, competitiveness, dynamism and turbulence. Although early existence of business undertakings witnessed mechanized and industrial methods to achieving organisational objectives, promotion of knowledge as the most strategic resource to attaining these objectives has become more pronounced. The implication of knowledge as organisations' most strategic resource is that human cognition must be applied to all organisational resources and processes to attain performance objectives (Martín-de-Castro, Delgado-Verde, López-Sáez & Navas-López, 2011). Knowledge is therefore, regarded as an important part of designing organisational strategies, ensuring survival and sustaining competitiveness in the context of the global business environment firms (Barney, 2011). Organisational managers are expected to identify and manage the different stocks of knowledge resident in the firm, and link it with organisational strategies in order to achieve high performing organisations (Ibidunni, Ibidunni, Oke, Ayeni, & Olokundun, 2018).

In organisations, knowledge exists in both tacit and explicit forms, and it is usually utilized by individuals and groups to achieve organisational objectives. Tacit knowledge possessed by individuals and groups involve intuitive ideas which the possessors finds difficult to explain and sometimes are not even aware that they possess it. The difficulty involved with explaining tacit knowledge demands that those with a desire to capture and/or replicate it would have to pass through the same experiences as those who possess such tacit knowledge. For example, some people are better innovative thinkers than others, such that in organisations some employees naturally find it easier to think innovatively and generate ideas more than others. The way to thinking innovatively is quite difficult to explain, thus making it tacit to those who possess the knowledge of innovations (Fong & Chu, 2006). In most case employees that possess tacit knowledge are retained in the organisation because of their relevance in the organisation (Pivar, Malbašić & Horvat, 2012).

On the other hand, explicit knowledge is codified knowledge possessed by individuals and groups in a firm which can be stored in its knowledge management infrastructure. Very often, organisations develop sustaining cultures and orientations based on the effective utilization of explicit knowledge. Across individual and group levels, explicit

knowledge can be communicated through education, training programmes for communicating organisational work systems and policy programmes (Ohiorenoya & Eboime, 2014). Although the organisational knowledge has been argued to be a vital means to enhancing organisational competitiveness (Grant, 1996), yet most shreds of evidence from existing literature have only explained organisational knowledge from a technology-based perspective (Sarkindaji, Hashim & Abdullateef, 2014). This implies that human cognitive capabilities have been largely expunged in relating organisational knowledge to performance. In the real world, organisational knowledge resides in humans, proceeds from them and is largely utilized by the people in the organisation. Accordingly, this research argues that conceptualizing organisational knowledge based on a combination of people and technology would present a more holistic view of the knowledge utilization process in achieving high performing organisations.

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