



Business Intelligence: Role of Knowledge Management and It Tools Towards Improving the Operational Performance of Some Selected Organisations in Gusau Metropolis

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ABSTRACT:

Organisations are increasingly required to incorporate knowledge management into their business practices in order to improve/develop their business enterprises. The information Technology transformation has brought about knowledge management systems and organisations are now making substantial investment in order to improve their operations and delivery of services. Moreover, organisations that fail to implement KM risk failure because of the potentials derive in using it. The study aim to discover the existing gaps involving the extent organization make use of KM tools. The study will also review, assess and present opportunities to be derive from using knowledge management tools to achieve overall business objectives. Furthermore, the study addresses how organisations make use of knowledge management in the present turbulent business environment to achieve the objectives of profitability, survival, decision making and above all to seek competitive advantage. The study addresses the theoretical discussion in knowledge management literature thereby identifying the gaps and arguments in order to gain competitive advantage. The study further contributes to the knowledge management literature in the sense that IT has shown that knowledge management is a contributing factor in managing and leveraging organizational knowledge and resources. The study's specific findings shows that more and more organisations are transferring their business and operations through the implementation of knowledge management technique in order to achieve their objectives. The study concludes that organization needs to realize the role of knowledge management as a valuable asset to the effective business performance and sustainable competitive advantage.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The research focuses on the application of Knowledge Management and Information technology tools in some selected organisations in Gusau Metropolis Zamfara State. It assesses the level of awareness of Knowledge Management concept, practice of Knowledge Management; hindrances in the practice of Knowledge Management and ways of overcoming the hindrances in the selected organisations.

Knowledge management efforts typically focus on organizational objectives such as improve performance, competitive advantage, innovation, the sharing of lesson learnt, integration and continuous improvement of the organization. Although, one of the difficulties in attempting to apply systems ideas to organizational and management issues is in defining the system under investigation as a system is composed of many subsystems and is itself part of a larger system, but in all, it does seem to be a realistic approach.

The study therefore has much significance as it provides explanation on the application of Knowledge Management in the selected Organisations; the findings, no doubt, would provide justification for the inclusion of Knowledge Management in the operational performance. Knowledge Management as an administrative process that will improve communication, motivation and involve staff for wise decisions. The starting point of this review is knowledge which is obviously the key to continued survival and development of organization. How the organizations manage their knowledge as an organization-wide resources using knowledge management tools, solutions and approaches to achieve effectiveness of business activities. It was found by Lin, Yen & Tarn (2007) that today knowledge is regarded as the key resource to gain competitive advantage and competitive advantage drive from knowledge management could leads to efficiency, integration and collaboration of business activities.

The implementation on knowledge management for organization seeking to exploit marketplace or pursue a competitive advantage has been growing steadily. IT/IS-based technologies are also now playing significant roles by contributing to the effective solutions of business activities and achievement of objectives. Sambamurthy & Subramani (2005) identifies knowledge as the fundamental asset for firms in the contemporary economy.

They further argue that in order to be successful, firms must not only exploit their existing knowledge, but also invest in continually exploring new knowledge as a strategic option for future strategies and competitive advantage (Nonaka, 1994). They points knowledge to be a complex concept adding that a number of functions determine the nature of knowledge creation, management, valuation and sharing.

II PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The following are some of the identifiable research problems towards using KM and IT tools in the selected organisations in Gusau Metropolis:

Lack of adequate information on knowledge management and information technology opportunities - The Country is yet to have appropriate information system infrastructure to support internet, information system and knowledge management systems development.

High cost - The strategic information technology application and knowledge management could be expensive in a country rich in resources but bedeviled by corruption.

Lack of understanding information technology strategies and knowledge management strategies could disrupts implementation unlike countries where IT systems have been developed and are extremely performing well.

Cultural difference - Perception of people to adapting changes, resisting changes even technological changes could be a barrier to implementation.

There is Lack of sufficient local expertise with technical and managerial information technology skills to sustain the systems strategy and application of knowledge management in order to achieve the organizational objectives faster

III OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aims of this research are to investigate how Knowledge Management could assist the development and operational performance of organization.

Other specific objectives are:

- 1 To investigate how the selected organisations in Gusau metropolis in Zamfara State makes use of knowledge management as a tool for their operational performance in order to achieve objectives.
- 2 To discover the existing gaps involving the extent to which the organisations make use of Knowledge Management and identify the crucial factors that are responsible for the successful implementation of Knowledge Management as a tool for operational, management and administration.
- 3 Using the findings the research will identify the problems, challenges and opportunities involves in using Knowledge Management as a tool for effective administrative and operational management.

IV LITERATURE REVIEW:

In their review of Knowledge Management Laudon, Laudon & Brabston (2012) have revealed that the key problem in managing knowledge is the creation of an appropriate classification scheme, or taxonomy to organize information into meaningful categories so that it can be easily accessed. They further maintain that some knowledge exist within the organization in the form of structured text documents (such as reports and presentations) adding that Decision Makers also needs knowledge that is semi structured, such as email, voicemail and digital pictures.

Discussing on the relevance of knowledge management, Nevo&Chan (2007a) claimed that knowledge management now addresses policies, strategies and techniques aimed at supporting an organization's competitiveness by optimizing the conditions needed for efficiency, improvement, innovation, and collaboration among employees.

According to Holsapple&Wu (2008) they argues that the critics of knowledge management have characterized it as a temporary buzzword or hype, and predicted that knowledge management would fall into dustbin of management fads or at most, have a minor impact on research and practice. However, they maintain that knowledge management has proven to have relevance to modern organizations and is here to stay. Adding that knowledge management is now of great importance to firm's performance because it allows the firm to better leverage its knowledge and resources. Therefore, an understanding of an organization's knowledge management capabilities is essential to both efficient deployment of resources and achievement of the organizational values.

McGinnis&Huang (2007) identified two types of knowledge that exist. The Explicit knowledge exists as words and numbers, which can easily be communicated. The Tacit knowledge which is personal and hard to formalize such as the subjective insights and intuition are its examples. They further maintain that there are four possible conversion paths or modes between these two types of knowledge: Socialization(S), Externalization (E), Combination (C), and Internalization (I), and that all of these modes contributes to the effective knowledge management adoption and practice.

McKenzie (2008) have argued that within the established KM literature, there is a general consensus that the common aim of most organizations is to be able to create and transfer the knowledge of the organization in a way that results in firm success, be it financial or operational. There are two main types of knowledge. The first is the knowledge that can be readily communicated, that is 'explicit knowledge'. This type of knowledge is derived from technical or propriety data and information sources and often serves as the basis for the development of tools and systems that help the firm to increase

efficiency or other management metrics. In contrast, the knowledge that a organization possesses that is more difficult to articulate, and thus more difficult to translate operationally within formalized system is labelled 'tacit knowledge'.

Technology has brought significant impacts to every sphere of human life and activities. In her study Lucey (2004) claims that technology has alters the skills requirements for individuals and it changes jobs and the way they are done, alters relationships between individuals and departments within organization, example with customers, suppliers and clients. Elsewhere, McGinnis&Huang (2007) maintain that knowledge management is now use by organization to capture, documentation and sharing knowledge. They added that knowledge management has increasingly become a business process, supported by database technologies and activities aimed at the creation and sharing of knowledge.

In general, the study has significant implication in that it has confirm the role of knowledge management to the organisational success. The literature confirmed how organisation now depend and use knowledge management tools and solutions in the face of increased competition and acceleration of organizational activities. The study identified these knowledge management tools and the IT based support they are providing and how organisations are using them for Knowledge Management promotion. It has also identified with the organisational characteristics and structure, the people and cultural factors to the success of organization processes in the context of Knowledge Management adoption and practice. Furthermore, the research suggest that use of these Knowledge Management would definitely improve the overall organisational performance in terms of decision making processes, operational efficiency and adopting organizational changes and general enterprise. This is because organisational success has always depended on the sharing of knowledge, but now in the face of the increased competition and acceleration of knowledge, organisation are putting even greater emphasis on the dissemination of knowledge and best practice. The rapid development of information technology has given organizations new ways to improve access to what they know and they have deployed the technology in new knowledge management initiatives (Gorry, 2008).

V METHODOLOGY:

The research will be conducted in Gusau Metropolis of Zamfara State. The population for the study will comprise staff in the selected public and private organisations. The research will further focus on the application of Knowledge Management and IT tools in in the selected organisations. It will assess the level of awareness of Knowledge Management and its overall impact to the development of operation and management of the selected organisations using random sampling and survey.

The research is limited to the application of Knowledge Management and Information Technology tools use in the selected organisations with the aim of investigating the patterns of behavior and interaction that actually emerge with a group context study.

VI FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

In general, the study has significant implication in that it has confirm the role of knowledge management to the organisational success. The literature confirmed how organisation now depend and use knowledge management tools and solutions in the face of increased competition and acceleration of business activities. The study identified these knowledge management tools and solutions, the IT based support they are providing and how organisations are using them for KM promotion. It has also identified with the organisational characteristics and structure, the people and cultural factors to the success of business processes in the context of KM adoption and practice. Furthermore, the report suggest that use of these KMS systems and solutions would definitely improve the overall organisational performance in terms of decision making processes, operational efficiency and adopting business changes and general enterprise. This is because organisational success has always depended on the sharing of knowledge, but now in the face of the increased competition and acceleration of business, companies are putting even greater emphasis on the dissemination of knowledge and best practice. The rapid development of information technology has given companies new ways to improve access to what they know and many businesses have deployed the technology in new knowledge management initiatives (Gorry, 2008).

VII CONCLUSION:

In conclusion the study has shown the implication for the organisation using knowledge management solutions tends to promote their business excellence and profitability, survival and more competitive edge over rivals. All previous research conducted on the impact and relevance of knowledge management to the organizational performance has attested to the strategic role in decision making and general purposes.

VIII RECOMMENDATION:

A potential extension of this type of work would be to investigate the role, impacts and contribution of the latest knowledge management tools and solution in the form of Artificial Intelligence tools, the simulation tools, semantic networks due to the rapid technology development that could support effective KM implementation and practice. Moreover, since to date there is no total KM solutions with this technology, it means the roles and relevance

of people, culture, organizational structures would continue to be studied in the future research. A related question for future research is whether there would be a total KM 'solutions' with technology. Would the roles of people and culture be overtaken by these technologies in KM practice and adoption?

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