

KNOWLEDGE CONVERSION AND ORGANIZATIONAL AGILITY OF DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between knowledge conversion and organizational agility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria and moderated by organizational culture. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was the 22 Deposit Money banks in Nigeria. Census sampling was adopted because the population of study was small. Hence, the entire population of 22 Deposit Money Banks was adopted as a census. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics while the partial correlation was used to test the moderating effect of technology infrastructure. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge conversion and organizational agility of Deposit Money Banks in South-South, Nigeria. The study concludes that knowledge conversion positively enhances organizational agility of deposit money banks in the South-South region of Nigeria. Based on the foregoing the study recommends that management of deposit money banks should encourage a culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration by implementing mechanisms such as regular knowledge-sharing sessions, mentorship programs, and platforms for employees to exchange ideas and best practices. This will facilitate the conversion of individual knowledge into shared organizational knowledge.

Keyword: Knowledge Conversion, Organizational Agility, Flexibility, Proactiveness, Responsiveness

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing business environment, organizational agility has become a crucial factor for the success and survival of companies. To enhance organizational agility, it is important to promote knowledge conversion within the organization. Knowledge conversion refers to the process of transforming individual knowledge into organizational knowledge, which can be shared, utilized, and leveraged by the entire organization. According to Rafi, Ahmed, Shafique, and Kalyar (2022), there are several strategies that can be employed to promote knowledge conversion and enhance organizational agility. One such strategy is the creation of a knowledge-sharing culture within the organization. This involves fostering an environment where employees are encouraged and rewarded for sharing their knowledge and expertise with others. By creating a culture that values knowledge sharing, organizations can ensure that knowledge is not siloed within individual employees but is instead shared and disseminated throughout the entire organization. Another strategy is the use of technology to facilitate knowledge conversion. This can include the implementation of knowledge management systems, collaboration platforms, and data analytics tools that enable employees to easily access and share knowledge. By leveraging technology, organizations can streamline the process of knowledge conversion and make it more efficient and effective.

The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between knowledge conversion and organizational agility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study included:

- i. Examine the relationship between knowledge conversion and flexibility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

- ii. Examine the relationship between knowledge conversion and responsiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the relationship between knowledge conversion and proactiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

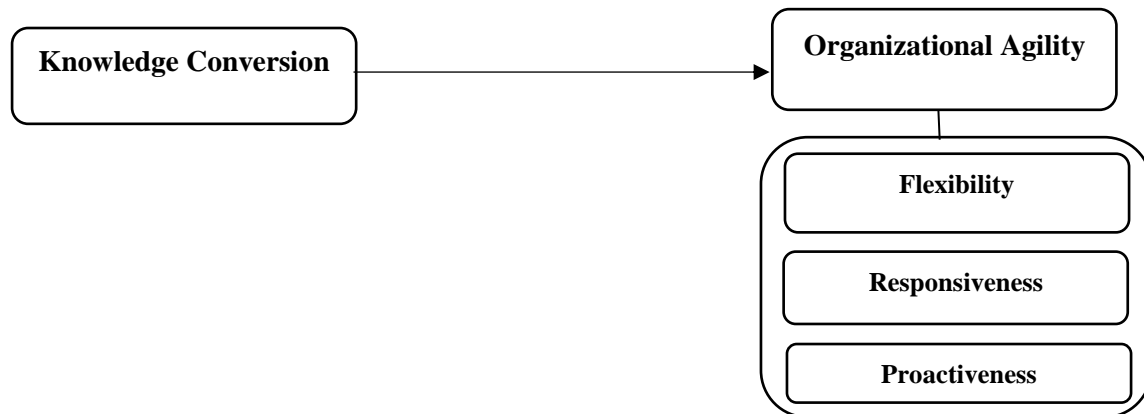


Figure 1: Conceptual model for the relationship between knowledge conversion and organizational agility.

Source: Desk Research (2023)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The Resource Based View (RBV)

This theory derives from the idea of the economist Edith Penrose. The theory argues that resources including employees, systems and business partners are combined into ways of working which are rare, inimitable, valuable and non-substitutable so that they become sources of competitive advantage (Tyson & York, 2006). HR systems create the human capital pool of skilled people so that they can sustain what Wright *et al.* (2001) described as strategically relevant behaviours. The Resource-Based Approach focuses on internal resources that are viewed as the principal factor for a sustainable competitive advantage.

In effect, the value brought by human resource is the core of this approach where flexibility is optimized in order to reduce costs and increase efficiency. Human resources, by adding value, uniqueness and the most effective way to use resources, tend to increase the competitive advantage of a company in comparison to another (Porter, 1991). The (RBV) tends to ignore the baseline of specific industries as it takes into account the differences of firms in the same sector as a competitive advantage. However, competitive advantages are gained by the rightsizing process (Hamel & Prahalad, 1993), which implies that an organization obtains more output from its existing resources and optimizes the way in which they are used.

According to Mavrinac and Siesfield (1997), 35% of an institutional investor's valuation of a company is attributed to non-financial attributes, such as management credibility and expertise, proactiveness, the ability to attract and retain talent, compensation practices, and the quality and execution of the business strategy. As a basis of competitive advantage, the (RBV) lies primarily in the application of the bundle of valuable interchangeable and tangible resource at the firm's disposal (Wernerfelt, 1984). To transform a short-run competitive

strategy into a sustained competitive advantage requires that these resources are heterogeneous in nature and not perfectly mobile (Peteraf, 1993).

Knowledge Conversion

Knowledge conversion is a social process where individuals with different knowledge interact and thereby create new knowledge which grows the quality and quantity of both tacit and explicit knowledge (Sanchez & Palacios, 2008). The purpose of enterprises implementing KM is to improve and enhance corporate performance (Gottschalk, 2007). A process model of knowledge creation presupposes that individual and organizations create and enlarge knowledge through conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and vice versa. Through knowledge conversion, the whole organization can share the explicit knowledge created and convert it into tacit knowledge for individuals Tseng (2010). Knowledge that is captured from various sources needs to be converted to organizational knowledge for effective utilization within the business (Lee & Suh, 2003).

Creating knowledge requires the existence of a person or group of people who come up with new ideas, new concepts, innovative product or process. Knowledge creation can be achieved through research, innovation projects, experiments, observations etc. Firestone Chen and Huang (2009) suggests that knowledge production begins with the request of knowledge, followed by individual or group learning, information acquisition, application for evaluation of knowledge and ultimately, build organizational knowledge. Ceptureanu and Ceptureanu (2010) define knowledge creation process in organizations as the process of making available and amplifying knowledge created by individuals as well as crystallizing and connecting it to an organization's knowledge system.

Nonaka (1991) postulated four stages of knowledge conversion commonly known as SECI, involving socialization, externalization, combination, internalization. Nonaka and Takeuchi (2004) asserted that the knowledge conversion process is a spiral that involves transformation from tacit into explicit knowledge and the subsequent re-transformation from explicit into tacit knowledge. The model showed that tacit knowledge is explicated or codified based on the end result of the knowledge conversion spiral, which is derived from the interactions between explicit and tacit knowledge. In this model, socialization is the method of adapting implicit knowledge into new tacit knowledge, externalization is the process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, combination is the method of transferring explicit knowledge into more intricate and organized sets of explicit knowledge, and internalization is the process of integrating explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge.

Concept of Organizational Agility

The concept of agility refers to the ability to quickly and easily make move through fast thinking or a thoughtful approach. The origin of the concept was derived from the term “agile production” which has been in existence in the literature for a long period (Mehrabi, Siyadat, & Lameh, 2013). Organizational agility is the ability to survive and grow in an unexpected business surrounding and constant change via frequent market changes and still meet up providing the wants of stakeholders such as government, employees, host communities, and others (Gunasekaran, 1999). The Organizational Agility (OA) is one of the methods for responding to these changes and revolution factors. Indeed, OA is a new paradigm for engineering competitive organizations and firms. Today, the organizations must have different competitive features to compete; otherwise, they will move towards annihilation. (Nafei, 2016).

Organizational agility is the ability to continuously and adequately adjust and adapt in appropriate time the strategic direction in core business in relation to changing circumstances. This may include creating new products and services or creating new business models and

innovative ways to create value for the company (Swafford *et al.*, 2006). The performance of a company depends on its activities and activities of its competitors, customers, suppliers, partners and governments. These activities could wholly be referred to as the business environment. The current business environment characterized by intense technological innovation, powerful customers with diverse requirements and short product life cycle in a global economy have significantly shortened market visibility and increased uncertainty (Swafford *et al.*, 2006).

Measures of Organizational Agility

Flexibility

With growing uncertainty in the business environment, it is essential for organizations to build flexibilities into the systems to cope with the dynamic environment, which point to the capability of an organization to respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges presented by the competitive environment (Sanchez 1995; Nandakumar, Jharkharia & Nair, 2014). Agility and versatility are needed by flexible organizations to change and innovate; the strength and resilience to ensure stability and sustainability of competitive advantage (Rahrami, 1992). Organizations are operating in the era of changing environment that are characterized by globalization, computerization, information technology, and changing purchasing patterns. The sustenance of competitive advantages has become challenging and there little or no longterm stability. Therefore, organizations need to be flexible and act more intelligently with their environment; high firm performance comes from not only having timely and needed information about changing markets but understanding the implications or actions that are necessary as a consequence of this knowledge, and acting appropriately (Javalgi, Whipple, Ghosh, & Young, 2005).

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the extent to which firms react rapidly to changes in a business environment to seize potential opportunities (Bernardes & Hanna, 2009). This responsiveness reflects “the efficiency and effectiveness with which firms sense, interpret, and act on market stimuli” (Garrett, Covin & Slevin, 2009), and has been treated as a competitive advantage. For example, Wei and Wang (2011) proposed that this responsiveness represents a competitive marketing advantage by deploying resources to satisfy customer needs. Inman Sale, Green, Jr and Whitten (2011) noted that a firm with a high level of responsiveness outperforms its competitors in terms of operations. Inman *et al.* (2011) noted that a firm with a high level of responsiveness outperforms its competitors in terms of operations.

Proactiveness

According to Onyema and Hamilton (2020) proactiveness is a firm’s ability to think ahead, foresee, initiate a change or take a first mover leap rather than being reactionary or defensive in its strategic posture. Proactiveness refers to an on-going perspective where a firm actively seeks to anticipate and take advantage of opportunities to develop and introduce new products and implement changes to existing firm’s strategies and tactics. Pro-activeness is related to initiative and first-mover advantages and to taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). The oxford dictionary defines proactiveness as acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes. Lumpkin & Dess (1996) argued that pro-activeness may be crucial to an Entrepreneurial Orientation because it suggests a forward-looking perspective that is accompanied by innovative and entrepreneurial activity. Pro-activeness relates to market opportunity in entrepreneurship by seizing initiative and acting opportunistically in order to shape the environment, that is, to affect trends and, perhaps, even to create demand. The characteristics of a Proactive enterprise involve

aggressiveness and unconventional tactics towards rival enterprises in the same market segment, such enterprises shape their environments by actively seeking and exploiting opportunities. Proactive firms introduce new products, technologies, administrative techniques to shape their environment and not react to it (Callaghan, 2009).

Proactiveness is an opportunity-seeking, forward-looking perspective involving introducing new products or services ahead of the competition and acting in anticipation of future demand to create, change and shape the environment (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Kreiser et al., 2002). Proactiveness is manifested in: aggressive behavior directed at rival firms and the organizational pursuit of favorable business opportunities. It is simply the ability to take initiative, whenever the situation demands. Porter (1985) suggested that in certain situations, firms could utilize proactive behavior in order to increase their competitive position in relation to other firms.

Knowledge Conversion and Organizational Agility

Berraies, Chaher and Yahia (2014) conducted a study to assess the Knowledge Creation Process and Firms' Innovation Performance: Mediating Effect of Organizational Learning. The study acknowledges the importance of knowledge as a primary ingredient for ensuring the sustenance and survival of companies in the extremely competitive market today. Knowledge creation is therefore vital in creating wealth for firms. The study shows that Japanese ICT Companies (such as yahoo and Canon) thrive mostly due to their special approach in managing creation of new knowledge. Langeroodi (2014) studied the effect of the knowledge management and Intellectual capital on organizational performance in state banks of Rasht, Naragh, Iran. The results from casual modelling indicated that factors such as efficiency, innovation and dynamic capabilities affect organizational performance directly and furthermore has indirect effect on organizational performance through efficiency, innovation and dynamic capabilities. It is also considered that the culture of learning and knowledge creation has a positive effect on intellectual capital and performance. Forghani and Tavasoli (2017) undertook a study to test the relationship between knowledge management dimensions and organizational performance in lean manufacturing companies in Iran. The model tested the impact of knowledge function, creation, acquisition, sharing and registration on organization's performance. Research samples were collected through simple random method of 194 Staff of Mes Sarcheshmeh company using a standard questionnaire. Data was analysed using SPSS and Kolmogorov test and Pearson correlation test were used. The study findings indicated that a significant relationship exists between knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge registration and organizational performance in lean manufacturing companies in Iran.

Cheruiyot, Jagongo and Owino (2012) investigated the Institutionalization of Knowledge Management in selected manufacturing enterprises in Kenya. A sample of 60 senior managers in the three selected manufacturing enterprises revealed that there are two critical factors that influence institutionalization of knowledge management which are organizational practices and technological infrastructure. The study concludes that the organizational practices that include knowledge creation, distribution have the highest influence in creating value for the organization and therefore when a comprehensive view is taken in instituting knowledge management practices, organizational practices must be considered first and technological infrastructure second. Further studies were conducted by Chweya, Ojera, Ochieng, and Riwo-Abudho (2014) targeting commercial banks in Kisumu city, Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between knowledge creation and organizational performance ($r=0.614$, $p<0.001$).

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between knowledge conversion and flexibility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between knowledge conversion and responsiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between knowledge conversion and proactiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was the 22 Deposit Money banks in Nigeria. There was no need to be involved in the rigorous procedures for determining an appropriate sample size rather census sampling was adopted because our population of study was not large. Hence, the entire population of 22 Deposit Money Banks was adopted as a census. The research instrument was validated by supervisors' vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics while the partial correlation was used to test the moderating effect of technology infrastructure. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Correlations matrix for knowledge conversion and measures of organizational agility

			Knowledge conversion	Flexibility	Responsiveness	Proactiveness
Spearman's rho	Knowledge conversion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.879**	.925**	.931**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.	.000
		N	98	98	98	98
	Flexibility	Correlation Coefficient	.879**	1.000	.879**	.969**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	98	98	98	98
	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.925**	.879**	1.000	.931**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.	.000
		N	98	98	98	98
	Proactiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.931**	.969**	.931**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	98	98	98	98

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

Source: SPSS Output

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between knowledge conversion and flexibility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.879 on the relationship between knowledge conversion and flexibility. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in flexibility was as a result of the adoption of knowledge conversion. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between product knowledge conversion and flexibility of deposit money banks in South-

South, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in the table 1 is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from table 1, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between knowledge conversion and flexibility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between knowledge conversion and responsiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.925 on the relationship between knowledge conversion and responsiveness. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in responsiveness was as a result of the adoption of knowledge conversion. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between knowledge conversion and responsiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria. Also displayed in the table 1 is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from table 4.21, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between knowledge conversion and responsiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between product innovation capability and growth of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.931 on the relationship between knowledge conversion and proactiveness. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in proactiveness was as a result of the adoption of knowledge conversion. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between knowledge conversion and proactiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria. Also displayed in the table 1 is the statistical test of significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained from table 1, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between knowledge conversion and proactiveness of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings as presented in table 1 revealed that there is a very strong positive significant relationship between knowledge conversion and organizational agility of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria. The finding corroborates with Forghani and Tavasoli (2017) who undertook a study to test the relationship between knowledge management dimensions and organizational performance in lean manufacturing companies in Iran. The model tested the impact of knowledge function, creation, acquisition, sharing and registration on organization's performance. Research samples were collected through simple random method of 194 Staff of MesSarcheshmeh company using a standard questionnaire. Data was analysed using SPSS and Kolmogorov test and Pearson correlation test were used. The study findings indicated that a significant relationship exists between knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge registration and organizational performance in lean manufacturing companies in Iran.

Also, the current study finding concurs with Cheruiyot, Jagongo and Owino (2012) who investigated the Institutionalization of Knowledge Management in selected manufacturing enterprises in Kenya. A sample of 60 senior managers in the three selected manufacturing enterprises revealed that there are two critical factors that influence institutionalization of knowledge management which are organizational practices and technological infrastructure. The study concludes that the organizational practices that include knowledge creation, distribution have the highest influence in creating value for the organization and therefore when a comprehensive view is taken in instituting knowledge management practices, organizational practices must be considered first and technological infrastructure second. Further studies were conducted by Chweya, Ojera, Ochieng, and Riwo-Abudho (2014) targeting commercial banks in Kisumu city, Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between knowledge creation and organizational performance ($r=0.614$, $p<0.001$).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that knowledge conversion positively enhances organizational agility of deposit money banks in the South-South region of Nigeria. The study highlights the critical role of effective knowledge transfer in enabling banks to adapt, innovate, and thrive in a rapidly evolving business environment. Therefore, the study recommends that management deposit money banks should encourage a culture of knowledge sharing and collaboration by implementing mechanisms such as regular knowledge-sharing sessions, mentorship programs, and platforms for employees to exchange ideas and best practices. This will facilitate the conversion of individual knowledge into shared organizational knowledge.

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