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International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research

P-ISSN: 2664-3588, E-ISSN: 2664-3596

Volume 3, Issue 8, P.No. 308-318, September 2021

DOI: 10.51594/ijmer.v3i8.254

Fair East Publishers

Journal Homepage: www.fepbl.com/index.php/ijmer



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Article Received:04-09-21

Accepted: 25-09-21

Published:30-09-21

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ABSTRACT

This work examined the extent of the relationship that exists between knowledge management (KM) and organizational commitment in Private Universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted by the study. The population of the study is 95 teaching staff of 4 randomly selected private universities in the studied area. A structured questionnaire was used in data collection and it was validated using face and content validity, while the reliability was done using Cronbach Alpha reliability test, with a coefficient of 0.878. The analysis of data was done using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics and the hypothesis was tested at a 5% level of significance. The result showed that there is a strong positive relationship ($r = .939$) between the two variables and that an 88% percentage change ($R^2 = .882$) in continuance commitment was explained by changes in management buy-in. With an F-statistics of 658.525 and a p-value of .000, the study stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between management buy-in and continuance commitment. Sequel to this, it was concluded that knowledge management as measured by management buy-in, spurs employee commitment level. Among others, it was recommended that the management of the studied institutions needs to take the issue of management of knowledge serious, by ensuring that the older and more experienced staff pass their wealth of

knowledge to the younger and less experienced ones, as this will breed an environment of positive competence.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Organizational Commitment, Management Buy-In, Continuance Commitment, Private Universities and Anambra State.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are formed to achieve one goal or the other; it could be the goal of producing goods or offering services. It could also be both of them, either for profit intent or for the betterment of humanity. However, achieving all these are contingent on the quality and quantity of resources at the disposal of such organizations. Production-based firms depend so much on the strength of their physical resources like equipment and materials, while service rendering firms, where the institutions studied are categorized, depend quite a lot on their Human Resources (HRs). Researchers seem to have come to an agreement that the most pertinent resource at the disposal of every organization is its HRs. This was the position of Rahmayanto, Adnan and Nursaban (2019) who aver that HRs is one of the most crucial assets for any firm. Similarly, Agbasi, Arachie and Onyekwelu (2021) posit that they are the most important resource to any organization; they make the most significant contribution to an organization's success. The effective discharge of their duty is, however, dependent on the level of skill, competencies and knowledge they have, about what to do and how to do it. Thereby, bringing the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) to the front burner.

Knowledge has increasingly become a key issue for economies of the world and organizations, especially service rendering firms such as universities. It has become to a greater extent a precious asset in all nations, and it can be considered as the cornerstone for contemporary economies since knowledge represents the key weapon to gain competitiveness for most businesses in the market (Bataineh & Alfalah, 2015). For knowledge to help organizations achieve their goal, it needs to be effectively managed, hence, the concept of knowledge management (KM). KM has been extensively practised by many organizations as a major efficiency and effectiveness tool to attain greater heights (Bataineh & Alfalah, 2015). Effectively deployed KM assists decision-makers to remove the barriers between what they know, and what they do not know (Allame, 2011). One of the key benefits of introducing KM practices in organizations is its positive impact on organizational performance (Al-Sohaim, Montasser & Al-Manhawwy, 2016).

Knowledge management is the process of capturing a company's collective expertise wherever it resides; in databases, on paper, or in people's heads, and distributing it to wherever it can help produce the biggest payoff (Al-Sohaim, Montasser & Al-Manhawwy, 2016). In a market where uncertainty is a certainty, a market characterized by top-level competitiveness and discontinuity, management of knowledge becomes key. Despite the unemployment situation in Nigeria, which is at its all-time high, people still prefer jobs that improve their skills and competencies, which appears to be lacking in private universities in Anambra State. Training programmes appear missing, knowledge is not consciously harnessed, stored and shared. The experienced staff do not stay long, they are always on the lookout for other jobs that will guarantee their development and improvement in their competencies.

When workers leave a firm, it presents some cost to the organization. It could be the cost of recruitment, training and settlements if it gets to the court. The institution also loses key knowledge that may reside within the employees that leave. Yavuz and Kubilayhan (2013) opine that if an employee quits, not only the physical capabilities of the employees are lost, but also the knowledge and abilities. Replacing this person takes much more time and costs, since new personnel will go through the process of training. Hence, organizations work to increase the commitment level of employees through various means, one of which is through KM. However, the extent to which private universities in Anambra State have effectively deployed the intricacies of KM in improving the commitment level of employees to the institutions are yet to be ascertained, hence, the need to carry out this study. The broad objective of the study is to determine the extent of the relationship that exists between knowledge management (KM) and organizational commitment in Private Universities in Anambra State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- a) ascertain the extent to which management buy-in relates to continuance commitment of employees in Private Universities in Anambra State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a concept that has attracted so much interest in management and organizational literature. However, it will be a little more productive if we look at knowledge as a standalone concept before examining knowledge management together. Knowledge can be said to be skills, competencies, know-how and experiences one has about a particular area or set of areas. It is a mix of experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that forms the framework for new experience and information (Al-Ghazi, 2014). The effective creation, deployment and utilization of these sets of skills, competencies and expertise to improve organizational performance is called knowledge management (KM).

Chia-Nan and Huei-Huang (2016) opine that KM is the employment and development of the knowledge assets of an organization to achieve the set goals objectives. The final intendment of KM is the actualization of goals as was captured by Chia-Nan and Huei-Huang (2016). This was also the position of Branin (2003) who state that KM practices can be seen as the manner of translating ideas into actions to attain goals. It is a conscious strategy of getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time and helping people share and put information into action in ways that strive to improve organizational performance (Al-Sohaim, Montasser & Al-Manhawwy, 2016).

Effectively managed knowledge is supposed to create value, hence, timing is key. Knowledge that is effectively and efficiently deployed and managed should get to the right people, at the right, right quantity and format. Failure to meet these expectations will no longer create needed value. Bringing the value dimension to the discussion is O'Dell and Hubert (2011) that explicate that KM is a systematic effort to enable information and knowledge to grow and flow to the right people at the right time and place, in order to create value.

Knowledge could be domiciled in different places, hence, there are two basic forms of knowledge, tacit and explicit knowledge. The tacit form is more difficult to codify or transfer, it exists in the minds of people in form of experiences and competencies, while explicit knowledge is easily codified, stored and transferable. Tacit knowledge is information that is

gained through experience that is difficult to express, formalize and share, it cannot be described in words (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010). It resides in the human mind, behaviour and perception (Monavvarian & Kasaei, 2007). In contrast, however, explicit knowledge is the information that can be easily put into words and explained to others, it can be shared verbally or in documents or numerical reports (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010).

Management Buy-in

The people responsible for making strategic decisions in organizations are referred to as management. They are the ones that decide what will be done and what will not be done, hence, the success of any actions of an organization depends on whether it is supported by management or not. Any strategy or decision that does not enjoy the support of buy-in of management will suffer setbacks.

Knowledge Management (KM) as a strategy of creating, sharing and storing knowledge for better organizational performance require the support of management in terms of policy backing and financial bite. Subramaniam, Kumar and Strandholm (2009) aver that KM requires senior managers to think differently about organisational work and also require them (management) to change how they invest their effort and time. The bottom line is that knowledge management is also a strategy, not just a tactic, and it is a set of business practices, not merely a technology. There is no question that strong, active support from upper management is crucial to the successful deployment of KM, particularly in the beginning (Al-Sohaim, Montasser & Al-Manhawwy, 2016).

For KM to succeed, it must be included in an organization's overarching structure and strategy. However, such a structure must be flexible and adaptive so that they encourage sharing and collaboration across boundaries within the organization and across other organizations (Gold, et al. 2001).

Management support and commitment for KM in an organization can be seen in the amount of funds that are allocated for the process. Resources, training and infrastructure to support KM initiatives need to be back up by management. Management's commitment to KM use, on the other hand, can be demonstrated by having managers lead and support the system use, and not just by promoting the system itself. The management support and commitment factor have been found to directly influence the extent of KM deployment in organizations (Aurum, Daneshgar & Ward, 2007; Butler, Heavin & O'Donovan, 2007). Numerous KM practitioners have also attested to this argument by suggesting that management were the ones responsible for driving the required cultural and system changes to increase KM deployment (Subramaniam et al., 2009).

Organizational Commitment

It has already been established earlier that HR is the best resource at the disposal of organizations, however, these resources need to be committed and loyal to the organization for them to function optimally for the betterment of the organization, hence, the concept of organizational commitment. Robinson (2009) states that committed employees are great sources for an organization because they contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. Similarly, O'Reilly (2008) opines that an organization gains success due to employee's commitment to the organization.

Enough research has been done in the area of organizational commitment because of its importance for the very sustainability of organizations. It is regarded as a crucial and desirable

element in employees' behaviour, but one that is seen as elusive in workplaces and organizations (Aladwan, Bhanugopan & Fish, 2013). As a result, a large amount of research has been devoted to understanding the nature, antecedents, and consequences of organizational commitment (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). The importance given to organizational commitment may be attributed to the fact that organizational commitment leads to several favourable outcomes for both individuals and organizations (Chiu & Ng, 2015).

The concept of commitment has been viewed differently by many people, the most prominent and earliest among them is that given by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979). They defined it as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p.225). It is the sincerity and loyalty of employees to organizational goals (Drucker, 2011). Hence, employees that are committed to an organization are loyal and ready to go the extra mile to see that an organization succeeds.

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment is one of the three core dimensions of organizational commitment. It is that dimension that is calculative and rational in nature. That is, that commitment employee decides to give to an organization as calculating what they stand to lose from leaving a firm. When an employee calculates that he will give up a good salary, bonus, training and development programmes and other fringe benefits, such an employee could decide to stay back. Also, when an employee rationalizes that it might be difficult to get another job if he quits, then he may decide to stay back in the organization, such kind of commitment is referred to as continuance commitment. Continuance commitment develops when an employee recognizes that he or she stands to lose investment in the organization, or realize that no alternatives exist other than remaining in the organization (Rego, Leite, Carvalho, Freire and Vieira, 2004).

Continuance commitment refers to the awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organization (Shiva and Suar, 2010). It is related to the performance required to keep a job and the costs encountered by leaving the organization (Bell-Ellis, Jones, L., Longstreth, M., & Neal, 2015). It is the awareness of the costs associated with leaving an organization. It is calculative in nature because of the individual's perception or weighing of costs and risks associated with leaving the current organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This type of commitment is based on the benefits that employees' get from an organization. Employees work hard to avoid losing anything of value (Meyer & Allen, 2004). When employees are enjoying the benefit of a well structured KM programme in the form of training, refresher courses, developmental and management ascendancy programmes, such an employee may be afraid to lose such things and could decide to be committed to the organization.

Empirical Review

Evwierhurma and Onouha (2020) carried out a study to determine the relationship between knowledge management tools applications and organizational performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Social media and collaborative tools were used as the dimensions of knowledge management tools applications while profitability and customer satisfaction were used as the measures of organizational performance. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design with an accessible population of 144 managers as the respondents. Data was collected through a questionnaire and spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient statistical was used to test stated hypotheses with the aid of SPSS. The

findings showed a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of knowledge management tools applications and the measures of organizational performance. The study concluded that knowledge management is an important aspect of the organization and by applying it using the right tools such as social media and collaborative tools organizations will be able to increase their performance especially that of profitability and customer satisfaction. Thus, we recommended that for managers of manufacturing firms to enhance their organizational performance in terms of profitability and customers' satisfaction, they should manage their organization's knowledge effectively and efficiently through the applications of social media and collaborative tools.

Seyed, Younes, Azhdar and Younes (2019) investigated the comparative effect of knowledge management strategy on the service innovation performance in public and private hospitals through the mediating role of knowledge management practices. Drawing on knowledge management theory, all organizations require a suitable knowledge management strategy to perform successfully. Therefore, this research focuses on this under-researched subject. This research benefits from a quantitative and hypothetical-deductive approach. The sample of the research includes 852 therapy sections of both public and private hospitals in Tabriz. The data was collected via a research questionnaire. The data has been analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM) methodology. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between the knowledge management strategy and the knowledge management practices. Moreover, the mediating role of knowledge management practices was confirmed in the relationship between knowledge management strategy and service innovation performance in public and private hospitals.

Adelekan, Erigbe, Ojoand, & Toriola (2019) in their study examined the effect of knowledge management on the performance of manufacturing firms in Nigeria, by employing two components of knowledge management (knowledge creation and knowledge application). Survey research design was adopted, structured questionnaire was administered on 396 purposively selected staff of five manufacturing firms in South-West, Nigeria. The research instrument was validated through content validity index (CVI) while the reliability of the research instrument was tested through the test-retest method. Multiple regression analysis was employed in analyzing the data at a 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that the two components of knowledge management adopted for this study have an individual positive significant effect on manufacturing firms' performance. It is therefore concluded that knowledge management components (knowledge creation and knowledge application) are important drivers of manufacturing firms' performance. It is recommended that manufacturing firms should embrace effective knowledge creation and application towards the enhancement of their overall performance.

Shawaqfeh, Alqaied and Jaradat (2019) examined the impact of knowledge management on the performance of commercial banks' employees in Jordan, the sample of the study consisted of 150 employees from 12 commercial banks located at Irbid Governorate of Jordan, a set of questionnaire was distributed to them and collected in order to conduct this study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A simple regression test was used in testing the hypotheses. The results of the study showed that there is a statistically significant impact at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for knowledge management in the functional performance of employees of commercial banks, as well as,

there are no differences in the responses of members of the sample to the impact of knowledge management on the performance of employees of commercial banks due to the functional variables (age, gender, academic qualification, and years of experience).

Dialoke and Agomuo (2018) investigated the relationship between knowledge management and organizational commitment of deposit money banks in Abia State. It adopted a quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study was one hundred and twenty-five (125) staff of ten (10) deposit money banks in Abia State and a sample size of ninety-five (95) was determined with the aid of Taro Yamane formula. Primary source of data collection was used. A simple random sampling technique was used to select ten deposit money banks. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed as a statistical tool. The study found that knowledge management has a significant relationship with organisational commitment. It concluded that knowledge management that is operationalized with knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing will improve organisational commitment. The study recommended that bank managers should always encourage sharing of knowledge as it has proven to encourage organisational commitment.

METHODS

The study adopted a survey research design, because of the nature of the study that collected data from sampled respondents through a questionnaire. The area of the study is Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study is 95 teaching staff of 4 randomly selected private universities in the studied area. Complete enumeration was used for the study. The source of data collection was primary, using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated using face and content validity while the reliability was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability test, with a coefficient of 0.878. The data collected were analyzed using a combination of descriptive (frequencies and mean) and inferential statistics (simple regression, using Ordinary Least Square Method). The hypothesis was tested at a 5% level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1
Questionnaire Responses

S/N	Questionnaire Items	SA (5)	A (4)	UD (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean
Management Buy-In							
1	The management of my organization takes the issue of training seriously.	10	16	-	34	30	2.36
2	We make sure that we keep knowledgeable employees within my organization.	5	19	11	23	32	2.36
3	Sharing of knowledge is made a norm in my institution.	9	5	8	28	40	2.06
4	Workers are made to put down what they know, so as to transfer the same to others in my firm.	-	9	12	40	29	2.01
Continuance Commitment							
5	I am still with my organization because I do not have a choice.	23	38	-	29	-	3.61
6	I do not have anything to lose if I leave my institution.	17	40	-	30	3	3.42
7	Quitting from my institution will not be difficult for me.	37	29	-	18	6	3.81
8	I enjoy fringe benefits from my organization, therefore, I would not want to give it up by resigning.	11	10	-	22	47	2.07

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 shows the responses of respondents on Management Buy-In and Continuance Commitment as measurement variables for KM and Employee Commitment. The analysis here is based on the individual mean of the questionnaire items, with an acceptance threshold of 3. That is, every questionnaire item with a mean of 3 and above should be considered accepted while any with a mean of less than 3 is considered not accepted by the respondents. Questionnaire items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 are all less than 3, and therefore, rejected while questionnaire items 5, 6 and 7 have a mean of 3 and above and are, therefore, accepted.

Test of Hypothesis

H_{a1}: Management buy-in significantly relates to the continuance commitment of employees in private universities in Anambra State.

Table 2
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.939 ^a	.882	.881	1.644

a. Predictors: (Constant), MBIN

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Key:MBIN: Management Buy-in

Table 2 shows the model summary of the simple regression analysis carried out to test the extent to which management buy-in relates to continuance commitment. The regression result indicates that there is a strong positive relationship ($r = .939$) between the two variables and that an 88% percentage change ($R^2 = .882$) in continuance commitment is explained by changes in management buy-in.

Table 3
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1779.492	1	1779.492	658.525	.000 ^b
	Residual	237.797	88	2.702		
	Total	2017.289	89			

a. Dependent Variable: CONCOM

b. Predictors: (Constant), MBIN

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Key

CONCOM: Continuance Commitment

Table 3 shows the ANOVA for the regression analysis which will show if the relationship shown in Table 2 is statistically significant or by chance. From Table 3, it is seen that F is 658.525 and p-value as represented by sig is .000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance adopted in the study ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$). Therefore, the study states that there is a statistically significant relationship between management buy-in and continuance commitment. Hence, the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSIONS

Employee skills and competencies are part of the knowledge base of organizations, and they drive the innovativeness and performance of firms. Organizations that can boast of a knowledgeable workforce could outcompete organizations that do not. More so, organizations

that make a conscious effort to organize, store and retrieve knowledge from those that possess it can withstand competition in the environment. This is because they will give their employees reasons to stay within the organization and grow. The study, therefore, concludes that knowledge management as measured by management buy-in spurs employee commitment level and makes them unwilling to leave the organization because of what they will give up if they do.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this work, the study recommends that:

- a) the management of the studied institutions needs to take the issue of management of knowledge serious by ensuring that the older and more experienced staff pass their wealth of knowledge to the younger and less experienced ones, as this will breed an environment of positive competence.
- b) The retainment of knowledgeable staff should also be at the front burner of the studied institutions as it is through these sets of staff that knowledge flows to others.

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