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KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIVENESS OF HOTELS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT
This study examined the relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational innovativeness of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was made up of 80 managers of 20 selected 3-star hotels in Port Harcourt. There was no need for sampling as the entire population was used as a census. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The test of hypotheses was done using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The study finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational innovativeness of hotels in Port Harcourt. In view of the foregoing, it was concluded that knowledge transfer significantly influence organizational innovativeness of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study therefore, recommended that management of hotels should practically create knowledge repositories as a means of storing and retaining its knowledge resources.

Keywords: *Knowledge Transfer, Organizational Innovativeness*

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational innovativeness can be viewed as engagement in innovative behaviours, which includes behaviors related to the innovation process that is idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization, with the aim of producing innovation (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slantery & Sadessail, 2005). Damanpour & Gopalakrishnan (2001) argues that innovation is connected to the implementation or adoption of novel ideas and can be categorized as either technological (change in production, services, production processes) or administration (changes in activities, social processes, structures), and either radical or incremental, depending on the extent of their influence on existing products or processes.

Although creativity is central to the whole innovation process, many authors draw a line between creativity and innovation (Miron, Erez & Naveh 2004). Innovation can be seen as a successful implementation of creativity that produces economic value and creativity has to do with ideas production (Scott & Bruce 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that every innovation requires creativity, but creativity does not necessarily lead to innovation. Organizational innovativeness can thus be argued to cover a broader range of behaviors than creativity. There is no doubt that employees are the main force for organizations and their innovative behaviors are vital for effective innovation performance of an organization. Therefore, the organizations have to take measures to stimulate the innovation willingness of employees and promote their innovation behavior so as improve organizational performance.

Practically, organizations can obtain competitive advantages through several ways such as entering new markets, developing new business models (Markides, 1997), or making strategic innovations. Furthermore, technological advances, high accessibility to product information, and availability of similar services/products in the marketplaces make strategic innovation issues more important than ever before for almost all industries. Practices regarding Strategic Innovation Management (SIM) in firms are one of the main topics of interest in business, politics and academic environments (Lopez-Nicolas & Merono-Cerdan, 2011). This interest is not surprising because innovation is assessed as the most important differentiation strategy to acquire a competitive advantage in the market. The concept of innovation is defined as a new structure or management process, a policy, a new plan or program, a new production process, or a new product or service produced in an enterprise (Lopez-Nicolas & Merono-Cerdan, 2011). Freeman (1982) defines the concept of innovation as marketing a new (or developed) product or as technical, design, production, management and commercial practices in the use of a new (or developed) process or equipment commercially for the first time (Bessant & Tidd, 2007). Firms that obtain innovations improve their efficiency, which makes them better fit to survive (Esteve-Perez & Manez-Castillejo, 2008). The imperative for knowledge management such as knowledge transfer in attaining this cannot be overemphasized.

Knowledge is the awareness and understanding of a set of information and ways that information can be made productive in supporting specific tasks or attaining a crucial decision. Knowledge management is, according to Chen and Huang (2009), the process that connects the firms' internal and external information convenient for the right recipient at the appropriate time. Knowledge Management (KM) was popularized in the early 1990s although it can be traced earlier than that. Knowledge Management involves the creation, archiving and sharing valued information, expertise and insight both within and across communities of people in organizations with similar needs (Tong, Tak & Wong, 2015).

An organization's stock of knowledge can include technological knowledge as well as knowledge about how to function in global markets, work with local

laws, how to protect intellectual property and how to operate successfully in various forms of partnerships. The need by the organizations to perform optimally comes as a result of creation and accumulation of knowledge-based competencies in order to yield long-term survival. The organization's stock of knowledge includes technological knowledge as well as knowledge about how to function in global markets, work with local laws, how to protect intellectual property and how to operate successfully in various forms of partnerships. This package of knowledge resources is critical for the successful development and maintaining competitive advantage through creating value for the company's stakeholder. (Jolly & Rolland, 2004) posit that knowledge transfer is necessary to firms, as this allows firms to access knowledge that is otherwise outside their reach. Therefore firms try to learn, to transfer knowledge and acquire it in most of the interactions with their internal and external environments.

Knowledge has become one of the most important elements of core competence, and firms try to transfer and absorb it in each interaction with their environment. The deposit money banks in Nigeria has adequate skilled workforce and what might be lacking is effective fit of this knowledge to the organizations objectives and as Kim, Shin, Kim and Lee (2003) pointed out, in order for enterprises to be successful in the exploitation of their knowledge assets, an appropriate "fit" between the organization's mission and objectives and its knowledge management strategy should be found. This means that the goals and strategies of knowledge management should be reflective of those of an organization. Strategists (strategic business managers and knowledge managers) should therefore take note of the major impact of knowledge on the formulation of corporate strategy and organizational success. Furthermore, enterprises need to ensure that their knowledge strategy and knowledge program is consistent with corporate ambitions, and that the techniques, technologies, resources, roles, skills, culture, etc. are aligned with and support the business objectives (Mayo, 1998). Thus, when such alignment between the knowledge transfer strategy and the business strategy is clearly established, the knowledge transfer system will be moving in a direction that holds promise for long-lasting competitiveness of the organization. This study therefore examined the relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational innovativeness hotels in Rivers State. Furthermore**,** this study was also guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between knowledge transfer and product innovation of hotels in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between knowledge transfer and process innovation of hotels in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between knowledge transfer and market innovation of hotels in Rivers State?

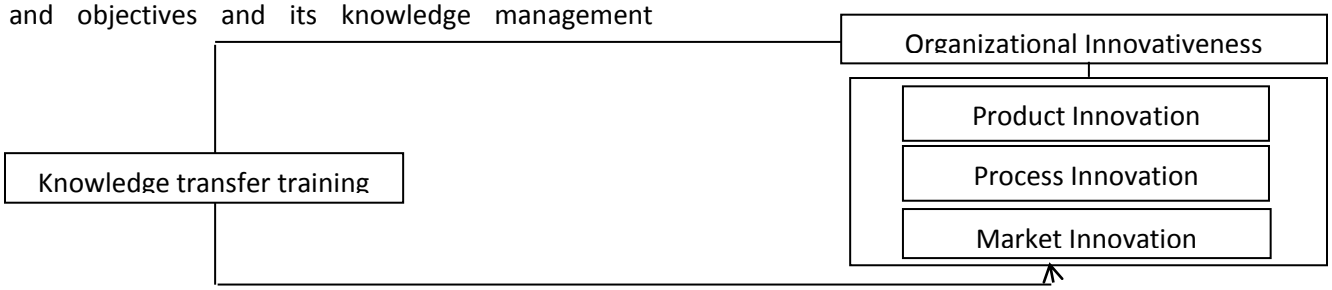

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational innovativeness

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource Based View of the Firm (RBV)

Resource Based view of the firm (RBV) which is an economic baseline theory. Resource Based-view of the firm is concerned with the fundamental question of why firms are different and how these firms deploy their resources to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. This theory has been examined by some management experts who contributed to its development. There is a shift away from external forces to internal resources as what contributes to the competitive advantage of the firms in strategy literature over the last decade. The reasons for the shift are: firstly, the increase rate of change in products, technology and shift in customer preferences. Secondly, the activities and coverage of some industries overlap, especially the information-related ones (Hamel & Prahalad1994). Thirdly, the rate of change in both the external and internal environment of business has made firms to react very quickly, as competitive advantage is often tied to time (Stalk & Hout, 1990).

The primary concern of RBV is resource, and the performance of a firm is determined by the firm-specific resources and capabilities (Barney 1991). According to Barney (1991) Resources refer to a firm's assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firms' attributes, information, knowledge etc controlled by a firm that enable the firm conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness". Resources are those asset that are tied semi-permanently to the firm (Wernerfelt, 1984). It includes Economic, physical capital, human capital, commercial, technological, organizational capital resources, or assets used by the firm to develop, manufacture, and deliver products and services to its customers, its reputation and informational resources, including a firm's corporate culture, as well as its management team (Barney 1991). Resources are the inputs into the production process. The resources of a firm comprise the tangible resources (physical resources) and intangible resources (employees experience, skills, and firms good will) which are the sources of the firm's in competitive advantage. The competitive advantage of a firm according to Barney (1991) is dependent on the characteristics of a firm's resources. These characteristics include whether the resources are; valuable (in that they exploit opportunities and or neutralized threats in a firm's environment), rare among a firm's current and potential competitors, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIM).

Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge transfer enables the exploitation and application of existing knowledge for the organization's purposes (Lyer et al., 2006). In firms, varieties of specialized knowledge are distributed among individuals, teams and units. Knowledge transfer strategy must also be aligned with network strategy. Thus, centers are characterized by their business and network objectives and their efforts to plan and control transfer from the center to network partners. The part that knowledge transfer can play in achieving these objectives differs according to the knowledge intensity of the industry that the center is active in (Bates, 2005). Walsh and Ungson (1991) postulated that the firm's knowledge repositories or knowledge stock are found in individual members, roles and organizational structures, standard operating procedures and practices, culture and physical layout of the workplace. This knowledge stock is made up of best practices and proprietary knowledge accumulated over the years.

Strategic knowledge transfer is concerned with capturing an organization's know-how and knows-what through creation, collection, storage, distribution, and application (Miller et al 2009). Knowledge transfer therefore involves identifying and harnessing the collective knowledge of the organization gained through experience and competencies. According to Pillania (2005), knowledge transfer is defined as a systematic, organized, explicit and deliberate ongoing process of

creating, disseminating, applying, renewing and updating the knowledge for achieving organizational objectives. According to Gopal and Gagnon (2005), knowledge cannot easily be stored. Knowledge is something that resides in people's minds rather than in computers. Unlike raw materials, knowledge usually is not coded, audited, inventoried, and stacked in a warehouse for employees to use as needed.

Organizational Innovativeness

Innovation refers to the process of translating an idea or invention into a good or service that creates value or for which customers will pay; it is finding a better way of doing something (Frame and White, 2004). Innovation can be viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, in-articulated needs, or existing market needs. Innovation is accomplished through having effective products, processes, services, technologies, or ideas that are readily available to markets, governments and society. The term innovation can be defined as something original and, as a consequence, new, that breaks into the market or society (Frankelius, 2009). The measures of innovation at the organizational level include financial efficiency, process efficiency, employees' contribution and motivation, as well benefits for customers. Measured values will vary widely between businesses, covering for example new product revenue, spending in research and development, time to market, customer and employee perception & satisfaction, number of patents, additional sales resulting from past innovations (Frankelius, 2009).

Innovation can be defined as an organizations tendency towards experimenting with new ideas and supporting creative processes which precede the actions of competitors. It is a concept that is concerned with the creative tendencies of the organization through the organized actions of workers and research activities carried by the organization (Coulthard, 2007). McFadzean, O'Loughon and Shaw (2005) defined innovation as a process that provides added value and novelty to the business, its suppliers and customers through the development of new procedures, solutions, products and services as well as new methods of commercialization. Innovation encompasses the various inventive measures taken to enhance production and delivery as well as the nature of the product or service. Innovation is the successful development, implementation and use of new or structurally improved products, processes, services, or organizational forms (Hartley, 2006).

Product Innovation

Product innovation is the introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly improved regarding its characteristics or intended uses; including significant improvements in technical specifications, components and materials, incorporated software, user friendliness or other functional characteristics (OECD Oslo Manual, 2005). Damanpour (1991) defined product innovation as the introduction of a new or significantly improved product or service that advances the range and quality of the product that is offered currently. Product innovation is considered an obvious means of generating revenue and thus improving performance. Product innovation is prevalent among new entrants in any industry as it has been used to boost their popularity in the market in a surprising short time (Hult, Hurley & Knight, 2004). It is used as a business strategy for any business trying to acquire a larger market share too as product innovations are believed to attract diverse customers with varied needs (Oke, Burke & Myers, 2007). Some enabling factors of product innovation have been identified in literature.

Product innovation is the introduction of a good or service that is new or has significantly improved characteristics or intended uses. Product innovation requires appreciation of customer needs, design and production while innovation process is linked to the application of technology to improve efficiency in the

development and commercialization of the product, (Alegre, Sengupta & Lapiedra 2011). Furthermore, theories of organizational innovation argue that information imported from sources outside an organization facilitate the creation of new ideas and enhance product innovation.

Process Innovation

A process innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method, including significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software OECD (Oslo Manual, 2005). Process innovation is intended to decrease unit costs of production, to increase quality and to improve delivery of products and services (Oke *et al.,* 2007). According to Hippel (2005) process innovation achieves quality function deployment and business processing reengineering. This type of innovation is sometimes considered complex and hard to comprehend but recent studies and exploration have made it easier to understand. When mastery is grown over time on productivity gains, there is a high likelihood that products can be developed that offer the same performance at a lower cost. Such reduction in cost may be passed on to the customer which eventually will increase sales volumes and influence performance positively (Sinkula & Baker, 2005). In the modern world of hyper competition, firms do not only focus on product innovation (Oke *et al.,* 2007). They also explore process innovation to integrate improvements, service delivery as well as reduce cost to consumers (Danneels, 2000).

Market Innovation

Market innovation is defined in the OECD (Oslo Manual, 2005) as the implementation of a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing. Market innovations target at addressing customer needs better, opening up new markets, or newly positioning a firm's product on the market with the intention of increasing firm's sales (Gunday, Ulusoy, Kilic & Alpkan, 2011). Market innovations are strongly related to pricing strategies, product package design properties, product placement and promotion activities along the lines of four P"s of marketing (Kotler, 1991).Information technology is noted in literature as a key facilitator to the success of market innovation (Govindarajan & Ramamurti, 2011). In the recent years, new ways of gathering consumer information through market innovation have enabled firms to reach customers more effectively than before. The use of technology has led to the development of new ways to market, key among them the use of the internet in marketing.

Relationship between Knowledge Transfer and Organizational Innovativeness

Tsai (2001) was of the opinion that better information network leads to improved innovation but Maihotra (2005) in contrast argued that lack of capability in assimilating and transforming the acquired information into new product could affect innovation. It implies that organizations must develop and encourage knowledge sharing culture amongst their employees as well as adopting a motivational strategy that will make people share their expertise with others without hoarding it. Davenport and Prusak (1998) support this argument in their assertion that employees need to be incentivized to create, share and use knowledge. Knowledge sharing may be associated with organizational citizenship behaviour, hence, it rests on the discretion of the knowledge owner to share it with the knowledge seeker. Therefore, there must be a motivational element to drive such altruistic tendencies. For an organization to enjoy the full benefits of its knowledge, such knowledge must be shared across its members. Conclusively, knowledge sharing culture and practice helps to improve success in business.

From the foregoing discussion, the study thus hypothesized that:

- **H_{01}** There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer training and product innovation of hotels in Rivers State.

- **H_{02}** There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer training and process innovation of hotels in Rivers State.
- **H_{03}** There is no significant relationship between knowledge training and market innovation of hotels in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design. Primary data was collected using self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was made up of 80 managers of 20 selected 3-star hotels in Port Harcourt. There was no need for sampling as the entire population was used as a census. The reliability of the research instrument was determined using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The test of hypotheses was done using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Tests of Hypotheses

Table 1: Correlation for Knowledge Transfer and Organizational Innovativeness

			Knowledge Transfer	Product Innovativeness	Process Innovativeness	Market Innovativeness
Spearman's rho	Knowledge Transfer	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.710**	.795**	.458**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	59	59	59	59
	Product Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.910**	1.000	.874**	.932**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	59	59	59	59
	Process Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.795**	.874**	1.000	.822**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	59	59	59	59
	Market Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.458**	.932**	.822**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	59	59	59	59

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

Source: Research Data 2019 and SPSS output version 23.0

Table 1 illustrated the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results showed that for:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and product innovativeness of hotels in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) showed that there is a significant between knowledge transfer and product innovativeness. The *rho* value 0.710 indicated this relationship and it was significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represented a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and product innovativeness of hotels in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and process innovativeness of hotels in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) showed that there is a significant between knowledge transfer and process

innovativeness. The *rho* value 0.795 indicated this relationship and it was significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represented a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and process innovativeness of hotels in Rivers State.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and process innovativeness of hotels in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) showed that there is a significant between knowledge transfer and market innovativeness. The *rho* value 0.458 indicated this relationship and it was significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represented a high correlation indicating a moderate relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and market innovativeness of hotels in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results from the tests of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational innovativeness of hotels in Port Harcourt. It implied that organizations were subject to do better if skills, information, expertise of the firm could be made accessible within the reach of the growing employees who could convert these skills into product and services that respond to the demands in the environment. This finding reinforces previous research efforts by Tsai (2001) who was of the opinion that better information network leads to improved innovation but Maihotra (2005) in contrast argued that lack of capability in assimilating and transforming the acquired information into new product could affect innovation.

It implied that organizations must develop and encourage knowledge sharing culture amongst their employees as well as adopting a motivational strategy that will make people share their expertise with others without hoarding it. Davenport &Prusak, (1998) support this argument in their assertion that employees need to be incentivized to create, share and use knowledge. Knowledge sharing may be associated with organizational citizenship behaviour, hence, it rests on the discretion of the knowledge owner to share it with the knowledge seeker. Therefore, there must be a motivational element to drive such altruistic tendencies. For an organization to enjoy the full benefits of its knowledge, such knowledge must be shared across its members. Conclusively, knowledge sharing culture and practice helps to improve success in business.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of our findings, the empirical data analyses and the review of related literatures thus far, the study affirmed that owners of hotels may maintain their market share and continue to exist extensively while knowledge is successfully and proficiently created, retained and transferred to the appropriate channel in organized manner to boost their innovation capacity. The study thus concluded that knowledge transfer significantly influences organizational innovativeness of hotels in Port Harcourt.

The study thus recommended that management of hotels should create knowledge repositories as a means of storing and retaining its knowledge resources for future retrieval and usage. Creating a knowledge bank was hereby recommended.

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