

Knowledge Sharing and Performance in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to determine the impact of knowledge sharing on organizational performance in the Oil and Gas industry in Nigeria. The sample size of 100 was based on the population of 300 staff drawn from each of the three Oil and Gas firms (Nigerian Petroleum Development Company, Petroleum Product Marketing Company; and Integrated Data Service Limited) in the Oil and Gas industry in Edo State, Nigeria. The paper employed a survey design. Questionnaire was the main tool used to gather data. Regression was done using Econometric view-7. The paper revealed that: knowledge sharing was highly positively related with organizational performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria; and Organizational performance in the oil and gas industry would manifest in terms of better financial performance, improved marketing of the organizational output, better supplier support, process efficiency and cost reductions if knowledge sharing was managed well. The paper recommends that: knowledge sharing practices be encouraged, managed and properly documented to improve organizational performance; employees' efficiency should be enhanced through training; and Organisations should reward managers for providing the necessary support to employees who share their knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge sharing, performance, oil & gas and industry

1. Introduction

The world is today a global village and is being transformed to a knowledge economy where knowledge has now become the product that gives an organization its competitive advantages. The creation of knowledge, such as sharing and application can influence organization in a significant way. Knowledge management may be a veritable tool for the improvement of products and process and for growth and productivity and sustainable competitive advantage hinges on effective management of organizations' vast and varied knowledge assets (Kulkarni & St. Louis, 2003)

Knowledge sharing which is an important part of knowledge management is very vital to the day-to-day running of business organizations; they are very important in improving organizational output and performance thereby forming part of the organization's business strategy and assisting to achieve its objectives. Knowledge sharing can help employees to understand their jobs better and bring personal recognition within the department. Once the knowledge is built, companies will be able to have sustainable competitive advantage.

The oil and gas industry is one sector where knowledge sharing is required. This is because of the competitive nature of the industry. Team work is required in the industry for its objective to be achieved, and knowledge sharing is the core aspect of team work (Lu, Leung, & Koch, 2006).

In the world over including Nigeria, many business organizations, including the oil and gas industry, practice knowledge sharing, but the question is does knowledge sharing always translate to organizational performance? The world has seen very large business organizations that are perceived to have vibrant knowledge sharing practices go down. Among them are WorldCom, Tyco, Quest, Enron and Computer Associates, all in the U.S.A. (Jackson, Moldrich and Roebuck, 2007). This is not limited to the developed world alone; even the developing world like Nigeria has witnessed the collapse of organizations that are also perceived to have good human resources management and even knowledge sharing practices (Sahara Reporters, 2010). Knowledge sharing is supposed to make organizations to be focused in achieving their desired outcome.

Huang (2001) concludes his study on Taiwanese firms that there is no empirical evidence to support that firms with knowledge sharing system have better organizational performance than those who do not. The data collected for Huang's (2001) study also suggests that the mere implementation of a knowledge sharing process does not make a significant difference to reported organizational performance. The factor that affects knowledge sharing in the oil and gas industry is knowledge internalization which consists of knowledge ownership, knowledge commitment and knowledge satisfaction. Knowledge ownership is the notion that knowledge is property and ownership is very important (Dalkir, 2005), knowledge commitment is the notion that top management should support knowledge sharing while knowledge satisfaction is the notion that owners of

knowledge should receive satisfaction from sharing knowledge (Ohiorenoya, 2014). People may not be willing to share knowledge because they may have the misconception that they will lose such knowledge and that there is no leadership commitment to sharing knowledge. They may also not derive satisfaction from sharing their tacit knowledge because they feel that there is no sufficient reward for sharing knowledge. The consequence is that knowledge is not shared and performance is not enhanced.

This paper is thus set to empirically investigate the knowledge sharing practices in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, and to establish how this impacts on organizational performance.

Specifically the objectives of this paper are to:

- (i) determine the impact of knowledge sharing on financial performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria;
- (ii) determine the impact of knowledge sharing on supplier support in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria;
- (iii) determine the impact of knowledge sharing on sales improvement in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria;
- (iv) determine the impact of knowledge sharing on process efficiency in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria; and
- (v) determine the impact of knowledge sharing on cost reduction in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria.

2. Social Exchange Theory of Knowledge Sharing

There are different types of social exchange theories in the literature. Some of them are the communication theory of social exchange and cost/benefit analysis. The communication theory of social exchange is a theory based on the exchange of rewards and costs to quantify the values of outcomes from different situations for an individual. People strive to minimize costs and maximize rewards and then base the likelihood of developing a relationship with someone on the perceived possible outcomes. When these outcomes are perceived to be greater, they disclose more and develop a closer relationship with that person.

Knowledge sharing could be regarded as a kind of social exchange (Bock et al. 2005) with people sharing their knowledge and skills with their colleagues and expecting, reciprocally, to receive others' knowledge in return. Much research has been undertaken on social exchange theory (SET) as a way of investigating personal behavior in knowledge sharing (e.g. (Bock et al. 2005; Kankanhalli et al. 2005). Since social exchange is a complicated activity, different research projects have highlighted different aspects of it. Kankanhalli et al. (2005) used cost/benefit analysis to analyze incentives and inhibitory factors in knowledge sharing. Further, while Chua (2003) emphasized reciprocity in knowledge sharing, Constant et al. (1994) emphasized self interest and context. There are also researchers who have used SET to analyze how knowledge sharing behavior can be rewarded more effectively (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002). Finally, it has been suggested that relationships and personal networks function through social exchange (Weir and Hutchings, 2005). This study will adopt the communication theory of social exchange as its theoretical framework.

3. The Nigeria Oil and Gas Industry

The Nigerian oil and gas sector plays a very dominant role in the nation's economy with over 90 per cent of the nation's foreign exchange earnings coming from the sale of crude oil. Nigeria is Africa's most populous, resource rich country with a population of about 160 million. It is made up of over 250 ethnic groups and bedeviled in the past by incessant political instability, bad governance, inadequate infrastructure and macro-economic mismanagement (Atakpu, 2007). Nigeria has about 36 billion barrels of crude oil reserve and 19.2 billion cubic metres of natural gas. It is estimated that the country has realized about 600 billion US dollars since 1956 - when it first discovered oil in commercial quantity in Oloibiri, present day Bayelsa state from oil and gas (Atakpu, 2007). Besides the large crude oil and natural gas deposits there are also deposits of gold, tin, talc, gemstones, kaolin, bitumen, iron ore and barites that can be harnessed to earn foreign exchange for the country; oil and gas remains the country's major source of foreign exchange earnings and revenue base (Adebola et al, 2006).

Indeed, over the years, oil has become the main stay of the Nigerian economy as the earnings from crude oil are used for infrastructure developments as well as improving the socio-economic well being of Nigerians (Agusto, 2002). The Nigerian government earns income from oil through the sale of crude, gas; Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), royalties and rent (from the industry operators). Activities in the oil and gas industry are classified into the Upstream and Downstream sectors. Three major business arrangements are operated in the industry, vis-à-vis: Joint Ventures (JV) i.e. Joint Operating Agreements (JOA) between the Federal government and multinational operators such as Shell, Agip, Chevron and Elf; Production Sharing Contract (PSC) i.e. arrangements between the government and operators, where NNPC acts as concessionaire, usually in the deep offshore operations where the operator funds exploration, development and production activities and revenues are shared between both parties; and Service Contract (SC) i.e. where Oil Prospecting License (OPL) title is held by the NNPC while the operator designated as the service contractor provides all the funds required for exploration and production works. In the event of a commercial find, the contractor recoups its cost in line with

the procedures stipulated in the contract. The difference with the PSC is that while the SC covers only one OPL, the PSC may span more than two or more OPLs at a time. Also, the SC covers a fixed period of five years and should the effort result in no commercial discovery, the contract automatically terminates. Only Agip Energy and Natural Resources (AENR) operate SC (NAPIMS) (Agusto, 2002; 2004).

In addition, Ariweriokuma (2009) broadly divided the sector into two, vis-à-vis the upstream and downstream oil and gas activities. Upstream oil and gas activities involve operations in the areas of Exploration and Production (E & P) of oil as well as services. E & P activities span from drilling the initial appraisal wells, through seismic data processing, to drilling of wells and extraction of crude oil, condensates, natural gas or associated gas from the well (Nwosu et al, 2007). The Nigerian government is a major investor in the production activities of the upstream sector and her activities are co-ordinated mainly by the NNPC, which has shares in the major upstream activities. The downstream oil and gas activities involve refining the products from crude oil, and distribution until it reaches the final consumer. There are three main functional areas within the downstream sector - refining, distribution and marketing of petroleum products. The downstream sector is of strategic importance to the nation, as petroleum products constitute a key source of energy used for various purposes (Obasi, 2003).

However, despite being a major oil producing country for decades, and accruing huge revenues from oil, Nigeria is ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world. Also, the lack of equitable distribution of the oil wealth and environmental degradation resulting from exploration activities have been identified as key factors aggravating actions from environmental rights groups, inter-ethnic conflicts, and civil disturbances from ethnic militias such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Niger Delta Vigilante Force (NDVF) (NDDC Report). Warner (2007) noted that like the Nigeria case, there are a number of oil rich countries where their governments have failed to translate their oil wealth into economic sustainability and higher standards of living; stressing that literature abounds on the issue of 'resource curse' and 'Dutch disease.' In literature, there are also some theories and propositions used in explaining the causal linkage between natural resources and civil conflicts such: 'grievance' theory (Gravin and Hausmann, 1996); 'weak states' theory (Fearon and Laitin, 2002, Karl 1997); 'separatist incentive' hypothesis (Ross, 2003; Collier and Hoeffler, 2002, and Le Billion, 2001); and 'looting' hypothesis (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). Apart from these oil wealth failures, there was also the problem of capital flight from the country via monies used in servicing the industry and the cause for this was attributed to the issue of low local content in the OGI. There was therefore an urgent need to deregulate and liberalise the downstream sector to enable indigenous entrepreneurs with experience in the oil and gas sector to come in and fill the gap that was evident (Okolo, 2006).

4. Hypotheses

After a review of the literature, the following null hypotheses (Ho) were formulated

- (i) Ho₁. The impact of knowledge sharing on financial performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is not significant.
- (ii) Ho₂. The impact of knowledge sharing on suppliers support in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is not significant.
- (iii) Ho₃. The impact of knowledge sharing on sales improvement in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is not significant.
- (iv) Ho₄. The impact of knowledge sharing on process efficiency in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is not significant.
- (v) Ho₅. The impact of knowledge sharing on cost reduction in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria is not significant.

5. Research Design

The design of this research was survey method to know the knowledge sharing practices in Nigerian organisations. The reason for using the survey method was because it involves the systematic gathering of information from respondents, for the purpose of understanding and predicting some aspect of the behavior of the population of interest, in this case to examine the impact of knowledge sharing on organisational performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria.

5.1 Population

The group to which this study generalized its findings is the staff of the three oil and gas companies operating in Edo State of Nigeria. The companies are the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC); Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC); and Integrated Data Services Limited (IDSL). The sample size of 100 is based on the population of 300 staffs drawn from each of the three companies totally 900. Questionnaires were administered to staffs that were available.

5.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The group to which this study generalized its findings is the oil and gas industry in Nigeria, the study borders on knowledge sharing and organizational performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. The sample of this study covers three oil and gas companies that operate in Edo State of Nigeria. For the purpose of this research and because of lack available data of staff in these companies, the researcher selected a sample of one hundred (100) respondents because according to Hill, Barley and Dougl (2003) a sample of one hundred and above is sufficient for a good representation of the population, or organisation, or any subject investigated as this will present good findings.

6. Methods of Data Collection

In this study, the main instrument used for collecting data was the questionnaire designed by the researcher. This was necessitated by the willingness of the researcher to ensure that all relevant information to the research work was obtained. It was structured to reflect the entire variables of interest which are important to knowing if knowledge sharing has effect on the organisational performance in Nigerian oil and gas industry. The questionnaire has seven sections, section A of the questionnaire was designed to explore the organisation's background or demographic profile of the respondents. Section B of the questionnaire asked question about the knowledge sharing practices. In section C questions on the financial performance were asked. Section D asked questions on supplier support. Section E, of the questionnaire asked question on marketing. In section F questions on the process efficiency were asked. Section G, of the questionnaire asked question on cost reduction. The respondents were asked to express their opinions on each question in section B to section G, and each statement in the questionnaire had five (5) options for which respondents picked an option ranging from; Great Extent, Some extent, Little Extent, Slight Extent and Very Slight Extent. All respondent were promised anonymity and confidentiality for themselves.

7. Variables Specification

To analyze the impact of knowledge sharing on organizational performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria, the different organizational performance measures are regressed on the knowledge sharing measure. Since, organizational performance depends on knowledge sharing, then financial performance. Suppliers support, marketing, process efficiency and cost reduction will be the dependent variables in the regression equation, while knowledge sharing will be the independent variable. Therefore the study will have five regression models, taking the general regression model form:

$$OP = f(KS) \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (1)$$

Then,

$$FP = f(KS) \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (2)$$

$$SS = f(KS) \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (3)$$

$$SI = f(KS) \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (4)$$

$$PE = f(KS) \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (5)$$

$$CR = f(KS) \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (6)$$

Then,

$$FP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 KS_i + E_i \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (7)$$

$$SS = \beta_0 + \beta_1 KS_i + E_i \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (8)$$

$$SI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 KS_i + E_i \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (9)$$

$$PE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 KS_i + E_i \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (10)$$

$$CR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 KS_i + E_i \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad (12)$$

Where,

OP = Organizational Performance

KS = Knowledge Sharing,

FP = Financial Performance,

SS = Supplier Support,

SI = Sales Improvement

PE = Process Efficiency,

CR = Cost Reduction,

E = the Error Term, and

i = the ⁱth Variable.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretations

8.1 The Relationships between Financial Performance and Knowledge Sharing

Table 1 shows that coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.1568; implying about 15.68% of the variations in financial performance is explained by knowledge sharing. The F-statistics value of 19.41 gave us a Probability

(F-statistic) of 0.000027 showing a highly significant relationship between the financial performance and knowledge sharing.

The model is free of autocorrelation and this made the model very efficient and the test of regression coefficient very reliable; this can be interpreted from the Durbin-Watson statistics result which is 2.07. The closer the value of the Durbin-Watson statistics is to 2.00, the less the presence of autocorrelation. It was observed that knowledge sharing has positive signs indicating that knowledge sharing has positive relationship with financial performance.

Knowledge sharing has t-statistic of 4.405773, with probability of 0.0000 indicating that the relationship between knowledge sharing and financial performance is statistically significant even at the 1% level of significance.

Table 1: The relationships between financial performance and knowledge sharing

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	2.794767	0.324801	8.604565	0.0000
KS	0.345930	0.078517	4.405773	0.0000
R-squared	0.165324	Mean dependent var		4.220000
Adjusted R-squared	0.156807	S.D. dependent var		0.317185
S.E. of regression	0.291256	Akaike info criterion		0.390572
Sum squared resid	8.313372	Schwarz criterion		0.442676
Log likelihood	-17.52861	F-statistic		19.41084
Durbin-Watson stat	2.069948	Prob(F-statistic)		0.000027

Source: Iyamah (2014).

8.2 The Relationships between Suppliers Support and Knowledge Sharing

Table 2 shows that coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.086701 implying about 8.67% of the variations in suppliers support is explained by knowledge sharing. The F-statistics value of 9.30 and a probability of 0.002942 shows a highly significant relationship between the suppliers support and knowledge sharing.

The model is free of autocorrelation and this made the model very efficient and the test of regression coefficient very reliable as confirmed by the Durbin-Watson statistics result of 2.029.

Knowledge sharing has positive signs implying that knowledge sharing has positive relationship with suppliers support.

Knowledge sharing has a t-statistic of 3.050137, with probability of 0.0029. This shows that knowledge sharing is significantly related to suppliers support at the 5% significant level.

Table 2: The relationship between suppliers support and knowledge sharing

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	3.030233	0.378481	8.006306	0.0000
KS	0.279070	0.091494	3.050137	0.0029
R-squared	0.086701	Mean dependent var		4.180000
Adjusted R-squared	0.077382	S.D. dependent var		0.353339
S.E. of regression	0.339393	Akaike info criterion		0.696480
Sum squared resid	11.28837	Schwarz criterion		0.748583
Log likelihood	-32.82400	F-statistic		9.303337
Durbin-Watson stat	2.029218	Prob (F-statistic)		0.002942

Source: Iyamah (2014).

8.3 The Relationships between Sales Improvement and Knowledge Sharing

Table 3 shows that coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.316947; implying about 31.70% of the variations in sales improvement is explained by knowledge sharing. The F-statistics value of 46.93 with a probability of 0.0000 showed a highly significant relationship between the sales improvement and knowledge sharing.

The model is free of autocorrelation and this made the model very efficient and the test of regression coefficient very reliable as confirmed by the Durbin-Watson statistics result of 2.1029.

Knowledge sharing has positive signs implying that knowledge sharing has positive relationship with sales improvement.

Knowledge sharing had a t-statistic of 6.851100, with probability of 0.0000 indicating that knowledge sharing is significantly related to sales improvement at the 5% significant level.

Table 3: The relationships between sales improvements and knowledge sharing

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	2.559302	0.249241	10.26837	0.0000
KS	0.412791	0.060252	6.851100	0.0000
R-squared	0.323847	Mean dependent var		4.260000
Adjusted R-squared	0.316947	S.D. dependent var		0.270428
S.E. of regression	0.223501	Akaike info criterion		-0.139008
Sum squared resid	4.895349	Schwarz criterion		-0.086904
Log likelihood	8.950382	F-statistic		46.93758
Durbin-Watson stat	2.102855	Prob(F-statistic)		0.000000

Source: Iyamah (2014).

8.4 The Relationships between Process Efficiency and Knowledge Sharing

Table 4 shows that coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.053749; implying about 5.38% of the variations in process efficiency is explained by knowledge sharing. The F-statistics value of 6.623448 with a Probability of 0.011562 shows a highly significant relationship between the process efficiency and knowledge sharing.

The model is free of autocorrelation and this made the model very efficient and the test of regression coefficient very reliable as confirmed by the Durbin-Watson statistics result of 2.033

Knowledge sharing has positive relationship with process efficiency as revealed by its positive signs. Knowledge sharing has a t-statistic of 2.573606, with probability of 0.0116 showing that knowledge sharing is significantly related to process efficiency at the 5% significant level.

Table 4: The relationship between process efficiency and knowledge sharing

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	5.138372	0.327075	15.71005	0.0000
KS	0.203488	0.079067	2.573606	0.0116
R-squared	0.063307	Mean dependent var		4.300000
Adjusted R-squared	0.053749	S.D. dependent var		0.301511
S.E. of regression	0.293296	Akaike info criterion		0.404531
Sum squared resid	8.430233	Schwarz criterion		0.456635
Log likelihood	-18.22656	F-statistic		6.623448
Durbin-Watson stat	2.032673	Prob(F-statistic)		0.011562

Source: Iyamah (2014).

8.5 The Relationships between Cost Reduction and Knowledge Sharing

Table 5 shows that coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.029277; implying about 2.93% of the variations in cost reduction are explained by knowledge sharing. The F-statistics value of 3.985882 with a probability of 0.048657 showed a highly significant relationship between the cost reduction and knowledge sharing.

The model is free of autocorrelation and therefore very efficient and reliable. The result indicates that knowledge sharing has a statistically significant relationship with cost reduction at the 5% significant level.

Table 5: Result of the relationships between cost reduction and knowledge sharing

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	3.793023	0.265022	14.31209	0.0000
KS	0.127907	0.064067	1.996467	0.0487
R-squared	0.039083	Mean dependent var		4.320000
Adjusted R-squared	0.029277	S.D. dependent var		0.241209
S.E. of regression	0.237652	Akaike info criterion		-0.016223
Sum squared resid	5.534884	Schwarz criterion		0.035881
Log likelihood	2.811131	F-statistic		3.985882
Durbin-Watson stat	1.877366	Prob(F-statistic)		0.048657

Source: Iyamah (2014).

9. Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that that knowledge sharing had statistically significant relationship with financial performance, supplier support and sales improvement, process efficiency and cost reduction. If knowledge

sharing is managed well it will improve organizational performance in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. The results therefore a confirmation of the finding of Saenz, et al, (2009) that Knowledge sharing is associated with organizational performance

Thus with improved knowledge sharing, Nigerian oil and gas industry will have better financial performance, supplier support and sales improvement as well as process efficiency and cost reduction, thereby improving firm performance in the industry.

10. Summary of Findings

At the end of the research, the following is a summary of the key findings:

1. Knowledge sharing and financial performance in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were highly related and the relationship was positive.
2. Knowledge sharing and suppliers support in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were highly related and the relationship was positive.
3. Knowledge sharing and sales improvement in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were highly related and the relationship was positive.
4. Knowledge sharing and process efficiency in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria were highly related and the relationship was positive.
5. Knowledge sharing and cost reduction in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria was highly related and the relationship was positive.

11. Conclusion

It was realized from the research that if knowledge sharing is managed well, it will increase financial performance, suppliers support and sales improvement, process efficiency and reduces cost in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. The firms in the oil and gas Industry in Edo State (Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC); Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC); and Integrated Data Services Limited (IDSL) should put in place knowledge sharing if they have not already done so to improve organization performance.

12. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following are the recommendations of the researcher.

1. Knowledge sharing practices should be encouraged and managed well in every organization in order to improve organizational performance.
2. Knowledge sharing should be properly documented so as to keep the organizational culture.
3. Organizations should require and reward managers for providing the support necessary for encouraging knowledge sharing among employees.
4. Knowledge sharing should be enhanced by increasing employees' self-efficacy through training. In other words, the organization should help shape and facilitate employee perceptions of knowledge ownership which have been found to enhance their knowledge sharing because of internal satisfaction.

When the above are put in place, the organization's goal will be achieved.

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