

## INFORMATION SHARING CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS OF PAINT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

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### ABSTRACT

*This work examined information sharing culture and in paint manufacturing firms Port Harcourt. The study adopted the explanatory survey research design, a sample size of five (5) top managers in each of the selected paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt with 95 top managers as respondents. After validation by the supervisor, 95 copies of structured questionnaire were administered while 76 copies were retrieved. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using test-retest. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while Spearman Rank Order Correlation through SPSS was used for the bivariate analysis. The results showed that information sharing significantly and positively affects organizational competitiveness. The study concluded that information sharing brings about managers' organizational competitiveness. Consequently, the study recommended among other things that organizations should endeavour to select or appoint qualified individuals to deputize in their various units or place of assignment.*

**Keywords:** *Information Sharing Culture, Innovativeness, Organizational Competitiveness*

### INTRODUCTION

Organizational competitiveness is the capacity of an m to gain advantage over other firms in the same industry by continuously improving its products and services as well as having good reputation. Organizational competitiveness is referred to as the ability of an organization to design, produce and or market products superior to those offered by competitors, considering the price and non-price qualities (D'Cruz, 2012). The paint industry in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular is a very competitive one. Numerous firms, both big and small, continuously push the boundaries through innovation in order to churn out the finest paints.

Paints manufacturing firms in Nigeria and Rivers State in particular seem experiencing declining performance, they have continued to record low profit margins and low patronage. Supporting the above fact, Nwabali (2018) identified low sales, fluctuating market share, low profit margin, and retrogressing in service reputation comparing to their counterpart in other part of the world (poor brand image) as some of the major problems faced by the paints manufacturing sector in Rivers State as a result of the conservative administrative and poor service delivery. Thus, the competitiveness of paints manufacturing firms in Rivers State is quite low.

The tacit knowledge harnessing in the manufacturing firms could also manifest in the dimension of the information sharing culture which some of the manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt strives in their production and managing tacit knowledge because they have flexible method of sharing information between and among employees in the firm. Apparently, information sharing culture is the sharing of relevant information as it will aid the work of others. It involves the rapport employees have in the firm which enables them performing their task. Information sharing culture is the relationship employees have in the organization in sharing information within them. In spite of the fact that knowledge management and organizational competitiveness have been objects of research interest in recent times, the relationship between tacit knowledge strategies and organizational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in Rivers State seem to have dearth of literatures. Previous researchers have dwelt on knowledge management and organizational performance (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001; Lee & Choi, 2003; Abidi, Cheah, & Curran, 2005; Nonaka, 2014; Nonaka&

Konno 2015); knowledge management adoption in Nigeria (Lemos & Nascimento, 2017); factors influencing organizational performance (Ramlah, Mohamad, & Nor, 2008; Power, 2013; Harit & Chetioui, 2017). None of these studies provided empirical evidence about the relationship between information sharing culture and organizational competitiveness of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. This is the knowledge gap which the present study sought to fill which gives credence to this research effort.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To determine whether information sharing culture relate to product innovation of paints manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
2. To determine whether information sharing culture relate to satisfactory service delivery of paints manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
3. To determine whether information sharing culture relate to outstanding brand image of paints manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses are formulated in line with research questions formulated above.

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship on the product innovation of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship the satisfactory service delivery of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship on the outstanding brand image of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

### **Information Sharing Culture and Organizational Competitiveness**

Information sharing within the organization is often considered to represent a crucial aspect affecting the overall performance of the company (Boehm, 2018). Knowledge sharing enables employees to increase their working skills (Bock et al. 2005). Information sharing creates a social context for individuals to create valuable knowledge contents that enhance the production of organizational intellectual property capital and growth (Nonaka, 2017).

Information sharing culture is supported by acceptance of change, innovation, trust, communication, collaboration and IT support, teamwork, etc. (organizational culture) and will be correlated with factors like types, processes and procedures of sharing information to understand their impact (Wang, Wang & Liang, 2014). The success of employees' performance is greatly influenced by its rapport in the work place, therefore, lack of communication hinders productivity.

Information sharing culture is beneficial for all organizations. The organizational optimization of information sharing culture create an edge for organizations' product innovation. When organization maximizes the information box, tacit Knowledge is shared transfer to other employees and increases the firms' innovativeness (Davidavicien & Raudeliunien 2010).

Leonardi & Treem (2014) studied the habit of Information dissemination and organizational performance. The study found that information culture is propeller of organizational productivity through the innovativeness, employees early task completion, organizational reputation and satisfactory service delivery. From the above it was observed that information sharing culture is a force that moderate tacit knowledge sharing for firms' competitive advantage.

### **Person–Environment Fit Theory**

Lewin and Edwards' Person–Environment Fit Theory was popularized in 1962 as cited in Osita (2018). Person–Environment Fit Theory of psychological stress describes the interaction between the person and environment (P × E) as the key to comprehending people's cognitive, emotional and

behavioural reactions such as stress as well as operational productivity level. Two relevant assumptions of this theory are as follows:

- i. A mismatch between a person and his work environment will lead to tension and uneasiness capable of hampering his level of productivity;
- ii. Worker's capabilities (experience or value) will determine the level of work pressure and how environmental press affects their output (Lewin and Edward as cited in Odu, 2018). This aspect of the theory amplifies the fact that a match on the ability of an employee to his or her senior employee, the organization will maintain high level of productivity and compete favorably in the market through rebranding of its product couple with high service delivery.

The adoption of person-environment fit theory as the major theoretical framework for this study is predicated on the fact that the theory is related to the predictor variable (tacit knowledge harnessing strategies) which the theory calls individual capabilities/skills. The theory is also appropriate to serve as the theoretical foundation of this study because it explains and predicts that employee capabilities/skills (in our case tacit knowledge harnessing strategy) will determine the organizations' competitiveness in the market in terms of innovativeness, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image as well as replicating the value of the experienced employee (s) in the event of retirement, death, resignation etc.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research design for this study was the explanatory survey research design. The population of this study consists of managers of the selected nineteen (19) paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State Nigeria. The population of this study stated above was adopted from paint manufacturing association of Nigeria, Rivers State branch. The sample size of this study consists of five managers in each of the selected paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State who possess knowledge of the respective companies. The above sample size was conveniently selected by selecting five (5) managers from each of the firms. The selected managers were: The General Manager, Operations Manager, Human Resource Manager, Customer Relations Manager, and Marketing Manager. Therefore, a total of 95 top and middle level management staff was selected for this study using the census sampling. Instrument for data collection for the study was through structured questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0 was used for the analysis. Arithmetic mean was used for the univariate analysis while the test of hypotheses was done using Correlational Statistical tool such as Spearman Rank Order Correlation.

## **RESULTS**

### **Information sharing culture and Organization Competitiveness**

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: Information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship on the product innovation of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: Information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship the satisfactory service delivery of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: Information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship on the outstanding brand image of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

**Relationships between Information Sharing Culture and Organizational Competitiveness**

			Information Sharing Culture	Product Innovativeness	Satisfactory Service Delivery	Outstanding Brand Image
Spearman's rho	Information sharing culture	Correlation	1.000	0.649**	0.620**	0.610**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	Product Innovativeness	N	76	76	76	76
		Correlation	<b>0.549**</b>	1.000	0.793**	0.794**
		Coefficient				
	Satisfactory Service Delivery	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	76	76	76	76
		Correlation	<b>0.524**</b>	0.793**	1.000	0.666**
	Outstanding Brand Image	Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	76	76	76	76

\*\* . Relationship is Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: SPSS Output**

Column two of table above shows r value of 0.649 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating information sharing culture and product innovativeness. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) which states that information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship on the product innovation in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) is accepted. This implies that information sharing culture has high positive relationship with organizational competitiveness in terms of product innovativeness in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Column three of table above shows r value of 0.620 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating information sharing culture and satisfactory service delivery. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) which states that information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship the satisfactory service delivery of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a2}$ ) is accepted. This implies that information sharing culture has high positive relationship with organizational competitiveness in terms of satisfactory service delivery in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

Column four of table above shows r value of 0.610 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating information sharing culture and outstanding brand image. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) which states that information sharing culture does not have any significant relationship on the outstanding brand image of manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt is rejected and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_{a3}$ ) is accepted. This implies that information sharing culture that has high positive relationship with organizational competitiveness in terms of outstanding brand image in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt.

These results show that information sharing culture has high significant positive relationship with organizational competitiveness in terms of product innovativeness, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image of paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Information Sharing Culture and Organizational Competitiveness**

The test of hypotheses one, two and three revealed that there is a significant strong relationship between information sharing culture and organizational competitiveness in terms of product

innovativeness, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. This implies that paint manufacturing firms who encourage information sharing culture within their organization stand a better chance having a high competitive advantage over others. This finding showed that information sharing culture bring about corresponding improvement in organizational competitiveness in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt in terms of product innovativeness, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image.

These findings are in consonance with the findings of Boehm, (2018) that relevance reasons why employees should share information within an organization points to the fact that Increasing turnover of staff, when someone leaves an organization their unshared knowledge walks out of the door with them, intangible products are taking a growing share of global trade from the application of new knowledge and increasingly the only sustainable competitive advantage is continuous innovation. Information sharing culture is supported by acceptance of change, innovation, trust, communication, collaboration and IT support, teamwork, etc. (organizational culture) and will be correlated with factors like types, processes and procedures of sharing information to understand their impact (Wang, Wang & Liang, 2014). The success of employees' performance is greatly influenced by its rapport in the work place, therefore, lack of communication hinders productivity.

Base on the above postulation, since all employees of the organization especially paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt are not employed at the same time, it is pertinent to say that job experience in the organization (firms) is very necessary. This is because most it involves the sharing of information in the workplace either from superior to subordinate or either case. Nnonaka and Takeuchi (2017) contend that employees benefit from having a common experience during the learning process. This social interaction helps employees digest new concepts and gives them an opportunity to learn from each other. Information sharing should always be looked at as an ongoing experience that connects new ideas and processes with real work tasks. In a work environment, shared or collaborative learning takes place when a group of employees is presented with a problem to solve. They must work together and focus on the complimentary skills each person brings to the table. This technique forges strong teams, team members will be committed and willing to achieve organizational goals, hence gaining competitiveness.

More often among employees in the workplace, there is usually an interactive session that enable workers feel among and balance their work-life, this manifest in terms of informal discussion. Informal discussion in this sense improves or brings about organizational competitiveness because it is casual communication between coworkers in the workplace. It is unofficial in nature and is based in the informal or social relationships that are formed in a workplace outside of the normal hierarchy of business structure. That is why informal business communication can take place between the CEO and an hourly worker. This type of communication is important in the workplace as it can help with employee morale and can encourage the feeling of belonging for the employees as well as a client or customer this will enable them work even more in organizational related issues, however achieving organizational competitiveness in terms of product innovativeness, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers state, Nigeria.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analyses of data and discussion of findings, the study concluded organizations such as paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, can achieve high level of competitive advantage over others if information sharing culture are properly employed. It was also concluded that information sharing culture influences organizational competitiveness in terms of product innovativeness, satisfactory service delivery and outstanding brand image in paint manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be a form of informal relationship that organizations should encourage to allow the less experience employee interacts with the high experience employees on issues outside work setting.
2. Paint manufacturing firms should encourage discussion of previous happenings of the organization which called job experience among employees this could make them solve similar problems when necessary.
3. When employee feel loved as a result of the informal relationships that exist with his or her employer, they become more committed. So, employer most treat employees well to enable them feel loved.
4. Sharing of job experiences among employees goes a long way in solving some minor issues in the firm, it should be greatly encouraged.

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