Knowledge Management Strategies In The Telecommunication Industry in Ghana: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management techniques in Ghana’s telecommunications industry have become critical in the previous few years. It has acted as a catalyst in altering telecoms’ competitive advantage as the major industry in African countries’ development agendas. The study adopted the systematic review approach in evaluating literature and discussing and presenting findings. The findings revealed that leadership directions are vital to the knowledge management strategic approach in the telecommunication industry in Ghana. Furthermore, the creation of the Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO) in the industry has promoted the establishment and set of knowledge management priorities for competitive advantage. The study suggests that knowledge management strategies have global appeal influencing the local drive for success and so should be given the needed attention by industry players.

Introduction

Knowledge management as a socially built paradigm is based on initiatives (Demarest 1997). This component comprises both scientific contributions to knowledge growth and social knowledge building through interaction among members of an organization. Furthermore, at the point when information is built, it becomes inserted inside authoritative cycles employing both unequivocal and social communications among hierarchical elements, including the most common way of dispersing developed and exemplified information all through the inner and outside authoritative environment, with a definitive objective of building and scattering information through the whole organisation (Demarest,1997).
Bukowitz and Williams (2000) indicated a different perspective on knowledge management. They contrasted tactical knowledge management methods with strategic knowledge management procedures. This was done by distinguishing between tactical and strategic knowledge management processes, the organization focuses on the day-to-day tactical activities of the knowledge management initiative and aligning the organization’s organizational knowledge strategy with the organization’s overall business strategy. Knowledge management has become an increasingly essential competitive advantage for firms in recent years (Anantatmula, 2010). It is rapidly being recognised as a critical source of competitive advantage for enterprises (Grant, 1996). As a result, companies are said to have a competitive advantage if they understand how to expand, disseminate, and internalise organisational knowledge to protect their knowledge from expropriation and imitation by competitors, how to effectively share, transfer, and receive knowledge from business partners (Bierly & Chakrabarti, 1996; Liebeskind, 2009).

Knowledge management solutions help companies gain a competitive advantage by controlling and coordinating the flow of knowledge within the company. Localized know-how developed in one component is distributed to other areas of the organization via a knowledge flow. This allows enterprises to take advantage of the economic opportunities that multiple subunits need to work together by facilitating workflow coordination that connects multiple geographically dispersed subunits. Knowledge flows are also necessary for organizing the coordinated execution of unified strategy responses to competition, customer, and supplier changes. Finally, information flows allow for the identification and use of economies of scale and scope (Schulz & Jobe, 2001). In knowledge management techniques, codification and personification strategies have been applied. The codification strategy codifies knowledge using a people-to-documents technique; it is removed from the person who developed it, made independent of that person, and used for a variety of reasons. The codification approach allows us to reuse knowledge and, as a result, achieve economies of scale by expanding our business. Personalization techniques focus on people's interactions rather than knowledge items in the database. Uncoded information is exchanged through one-on-one interactions with brainstorming sessions. Knowledge exchange is not only done in person, but also by phone, email, and video conference.

Knowledge management is becoming increasingly important in corporate growth, consulting services, and market competitive advantage, and it must be explored to uncover new dimensions. According to Heisig (2015), knowledge has sparked significant interest in academia and practice, with multiple journals devoting special issues to knowledge in organizations and over twenty specialized peer-reviewed journals emerging under the label Knowledge Management (KM). In a 2015 survey, the Global Knowledge Research Network highlighted future research requirements in KM. This survey included 222 knowledge management specialists (38 nations, 42
nationalities, 16 industries, governments, international organizations and NGOs, and 16 academic fields) who sought to redefine the value of knowledge management. The study found that more research into knowledge-related difficulties and research subjects is needed to allow researchers to rethink their understanding of the fundamental idea of the field of knowledge and its influence on organizations and national development. They also advised that multidisciplinary research should address the value contribution of knowledge management practices in organizational life and focus more on human and social issues connected to how actors develop and utilize knowledge in organizations and society (Heisig, 2015).

Furthermore, Heisig (2015) has suggested the need for further research. In his view, future research should clarify the relationship between organisational strategy and knowledge management strategy and achieve alignment between both strategies.

There has been no thorough evaluation of the existing contributions to knowledge management techniques in Ghana's telecommunications industry. In other situations, worldwide research on knowledge management techniques has been undertaken in businesses. However, knowledge management solutions for Ghana's telecommunication sector require a concentrated inquiry to track what has already been done and then address additional research into a very specialised area.

The major goal of this paper is to explore the knowledge management techniques employed in the telecommunications sector in Ghana and the world as a whole, with a particular emphasis on the methodologies utilised by various firms in the industry.

**Literature Review**

Knowledge Management as an organizational viewpoint has solid underpinnings, which are entrenched in the resource-based view (Barney, 1986, 1991) and the firm's knowledge-based approach (Barney, 1991). Knowledge is viewed as a crucial resource for attaining a competitive advantage from an organizational standpoint. However, the knowledge-based perspective regards knowledge as a valuable resource for the organization. Knowledge-based resources, like knowledge, skills, and capacities, are difficult to copy, and diverse resources are important contributors to long-term competitive advantage.

For decades, Knowledge Management principles have been studied in the literature and utilized across numerous worldwide sectors. A set of definitions has been given to the concept of Knowledge. According to Roos and Krogh (1995), it is rules based on the if-then logic, and it serves as the foundation for artificial intelligence and the construction of computers for knowledge generation. Furthermore, it has also been defined as a systematic strategy for capturing, organizing, creating, and successfully sharing important information across the organization's personnel, as well as the reuse
of best practices and the elimination of costly reworks from project to project (Davenport, 1994; Holtshouse and Ruggles, 1999; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Pasternack and Viscio, 1998; Pfeffer and Sutton, 2000). In today's complicated and ever-changing environment, the necessity of Knowledge Management cannot be overstated. Organizations that understand how to efficiently collect, utilise, and share information among their people will be industry leaders (Valmohammadi and Ghassemi, 2016). Knowledge management is a multidisciplinary strategy that entails producing value as well as leveraging, enhancing, and refining the firm's competencies to achieve corporate goals and purposes by making the best use of information (Wolf, 2005). Bordeianu (2015), added that KM is crucial because it offers the components required to address pressing issues with organizational adaptability, survival, and the ability to adjust to changes in the business environment. The management of generation, distribution, access, and use of knowledge encoded in artefacts (documents, training, videos, etc.), also known as information management, aims to address the management of general conditions in an organization (the cultural environment and the Knowledge management processes; the provision of assistance for the direct, inter-human Knowledge management processes, i.e. communication).

In the literature, several KM models with various methodologies and mindsets have been offered. Three main kinds of KM models will be discussed in this study. McAdam and McCreedy (1999) have recommended classifying the theories into three main models. These are knowledge category models, intellectual capital models, and socially created models. These three main kinds of KM models will be discussed in this study. The knowledge category models promote categorizing knowledge into distinct forms, such as tacit and explicit knowledge, diffused and undiffused information, and codified and uncodified knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Individual, group, organization, and inter-organizational levels are the theoretical organizational levels that Hedlund and Nonaka (1993) proposed as a key classification of organizational knowledge (customers, suppliers, competitors). The intellectual capital knowledge theories consider knowledge to be an asset and organize organizational knowledge by its intellectual assets. Intellectual capital, for example, may be divided into human, structural, and consumer assets (Chase, 1997a; Roos and Roos, 1997). On the other hand, discuss knowledge management with an emphasis on the various knowledge processes (Demerest, 1997). Demerest's approach focuses on organizational knowledge processes such as knowledge production, the embodiment of produced knowledge, diffusion of espoused information, and finally the application of knowledge for business advantages in terms of organizational outputs.

These theories' essence is to detect the basic flow of knowledge inside and between knowledge processes. The knowledge processes are simply the generation, organization, diffusion, and application of knowledge. In addition to defining these three kinds of KM models in the literature, McAdam and McCreedy (1999) critique the knowledge category and intellectual capital models, contending that they are unsuited
for KM implementation. As a consequence, they argue for socially built models with a knowledge process-based approach to be more suitable for knowledge management implementation. McAdam and McCreedy (1999) both criticize and extend Demerest's (1997) knowledge processes-based (socially constructed) model to highlight specific directions for future research on implementation-oriented knowledge management models.

The telecommunications sector has served as a trial ground for the demonstration of the various knowledge management models aimed at driving development in main business streams and possibilities. With the high expectations of customers, as well as the environmental and political backdrop, the base of the telecom sector's needs has been high. Telecom firms must use several knowledge management techniques to ensure knowledge codification, transfer, and dissemination. According to Ghoshal and Bartlett (1990), there are four types of cross-border competition; multinational, global, international, and transnational. Foreign subsidiaries operate almost autonomously or as a loose federation in a multinational strategy. Autonomy enables affiliates to respond quickly to market developments. The headquarters or home office actively supervises and regulates the operations of the subsidiaries as part of the global plan. This strategy enables global efficiency through economies of scale.

Through worldwide transmission and adaptation, the international strategy utilises the parent organization's knowledge. The key operating principle here is the rapid deployment of innovation through dynamic interaction between the parent and subsidiaries, the transnational strategy aims to achieve the motto "think globally, act locally." It is critical to remember that the various knowledge management strategies must be connected with the overall business plan of the firm. The bulk of telecom firms in Ghana, including MTN Ghana, AirtelTigo, and Vodafone, have an international view and so choose a global knowledge management strategy.

Recently, there has been a flurry of interest in knowledge management methods among multinational firms operating in the local environment, particularly in the telecommunication sector. Considerable changes in the technology environment, significant consumer wants and expectations, and the quick expansion of the global technological marketplace are all creating new pressures and needs. This has been worsened by growing concerns about transparency, competition, and quality, all of which are motivating telecommunication businesses to strengthen their knowledge management methods (Kidwell et.al, 2000; Levine, 2001; Serban & Luan, 2002; Arntzen et.al, 2009; Esposito et al., 2013; Froelich et al., 2013).

Even though several studies have highlighted the benefits and implications of knowledge management strategies globally, as well as in the Ghanaian telecommunications sector, research on the theme stays divided and inexacty engaged because of the covering of knowledge management techniques across several
disciplines (Inkinen, 2016; Earl, 2001; Snowden, 2002), and the profoundly diverse nature of the Ghanaian telecommunications sector. There has been no thorough evaluation of the existing contributions to knowledge management techniques in Ghana's telecommunications industry. In other situations, worldwide research on knowledge management techniques has been undertaken in businesses. However, knowledge management solutions for Ghana's telecommunication sector require a concentrated inquiry to track what has already been done and then address additional research into a very specialised area.

Method

The study was carried out in a systematic review approach that utilized key steps like, “planning, conducting, and reporting the review descriptively”. It does this through a nomothetic approach, which aims at taking a broad view of explanations from a large number of past investigations which was done with diverse methods and systems of measurement. To develop a complete picture of the literature on the facilitators of knowledge management approaches in the telecommunications sector, all forms of articles being it qualitative or quantitative or a combination of the two (mixed methods) were incorporated. The study searched for articles all over the internet using academic search engines like google scholar, semantic scholar and core.ac.uk. Papers containing keywords like "knowledge strategies" or "knowledge approaches and methodologies" were picked, and 65 articles were gathered based on the study’s search criteria. Nineteen (19) of the publications focused on knowledge management techniques in telecommunications and organisational performance. Even though the emphasis was on knowledge management strategies in the telecommunication industry, the content of retrieved articles on knowledge management as a whole was not ignored. These articles, as well as those that specifically addressed the benefits and drawbacks of knowledge management systems in general and within the telecommunications industry, were examined.

The review looked at knowledge management techniques in the telecommunications industry, as well as difficulties, challenges, and trends. During the screening step, each article was reviewed and evaluated using the inclusion criterion. The main parts of the study's goal for an article to be included in the study were knowledge management approaches, with a focus on the benefits and drawbacks of each of the highlighted components. Furthermore, the notion of knowledge management strategies was investigated from an altogether different perspective in several selected papers, which did not relate to knowledge management strategies in telecommunications. As a result, a large number of publications were omitted from this study. This study examined publications published between 1999 and 2021 that highlighted knowledge management techniques' experiences, concerns, challenges, or trends. That is since it received scholarly attention throughout the era. All the selected papers are organized and presented in table form (Table 1).
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<th>Authors</th>
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<td>Schulz and Jobe</td>
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<td>Desouza and Evaristo</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Impact of Multinational, global, international, and transnational management strategies in the telecoms industry</td>
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<td>Johansson, Moehler and Ramesh Vahidic</td>
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<td>Ahmad, Shahid and Syed</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Knowledge management and decision making in the telecoms industry</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>The impact of knowledge management on decision making in the telecommunications industry</td>
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<td>Abdi, Mardani, Senin, Tupenate,</td>
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<td>Hansen, Nohira and Tierney</td>
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<td>Elashaheb</td>
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<td>Drew</td>
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<td>Mahlangu</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>knowledge management strategy for a multinational telecommunications company</td>
<td>Leveraging the Knowledge management strategy for telecoms</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Alqhaiwi</td>
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<td>Stefanescu</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>The role of knowledge management in project implementation and completion</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Greiner</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Strategy for knowledge management</td>
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Result and Discussion

The world's demands and requests are transforming, as are the climate and seasons, which not only alters the personalities of persons outside of organisations but also restricts the ability of representatives to produce such advancements that are acceptable for the customers and their organisations (Wild & Griggs, 2008). One of the most innovative and active domains of technology in telecommunications. According to Ahmad and Shahid (2015), services and products in the telecommunications business must not only be produced regularly but must also be managed efficiently. One of the most essential concerns in businesses is information management, and another is strategic decision making. Telecommunication firms, as well as other organisations throughout the world, have identified knowledge management techniques as a vital component in generating success and competitive advantage.

The purpose of this systematic study is to investigate the trends, challenges, and advantages of knowledge management systems in the telecommunications business. A thorough review of the 19 research articles chosen revealed a multitude of knowledge management techniques in businesses, notably in the telecommunications industry. It was determined that knowledge management techniques must be connected with the organization's business plan and strategy. To achieve a competitive edge, organisations in the telecommunications sector develop annual and yearly plans. Due to fast expansion, changing technology, diminishing margins, and a highly competitive industry, telecommunication businesses are fighting for any advantage, according to Saha (2018). As a result, telecommunication businesses are increasingly depending on knowledge management systems to extract valuable information from their internal data. It has been used throughout all business areas, including customer service, sales and distribution, company-wide communications, and support teams, and it has even been used to recognise experts and share best practices.

For the successful adoption of knowledge management strategies in the telecommunications business, leadership is required. The leadership's direction and strategic emphasis influence whether a codification or personification method is used. A multitude of techniques for knowledge management has been presented by researchers and practitioners, most of which may be broadly classed as codification and personalization approaches (Hansen et al., 1999). Experts have advocated for a hybrid of the two strategies, particularly in firms with a global strategy and identity, such as the telecoms industry. Knowledge management strategy must be driven by competitive strategy. According to Hansen (1999), only strong leadership can give the guidance an organisation needs to select, implement, and overcome objections to a new knowledge management approach. When the competitive strategy is obvious, selecting the best main knowledge management approach is simple. Leadership must draw a clear link between their company's competitive strategy and how knowledge is used to support it.
It should be noted that several approaches to knowledge management have been used in the telecommunications industry. In general, human-centred knowledge management strategies differ from those based on technology (Maier & Remus, 2003). However, evaluations of knowledge management strategies differ, highlighting the complexities. Swan et al. (2000) state that knowledge management strategies in the telecommunication sector are centred on cognitive or communal benefits (Brown & Duguid, 2009; Amin & Cohendet, 2011; Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014). According to Zack (1999), there are further difficulties with the utilisation of corporate knowledge, particularly by telecommunications businesses with an aggressive approach that extends beyond. Telecommunications companies must deal with a range of strategic knowledge management situations in this endeavour, ranging from the codification of explicit information to the promotion of tacit knowledge.

Furthermore, there is evidence that knowledge management systems in the telecommunications industry should limit corporate knowledge migration. It is often assumed that immovable assets provide a source of reasonable advantage for firms (Dierickx & Cool 1989). Maintaining static organisational information is a high-risk option, particularly when the knowledge at hand is critical and difficult to create. It is also commonly understood that organisations must keep knowledge resources mobile enough to allow for cross-functional cooperation and to replicate earlier success while expanding into new foreign environments (Simonin, 1999; Egelhoff, 1991). Indeed, the current interest in intranets, groupware (and related technologies) demonstrates that enterprises have a strong need to distribute knowledge accurately and simply.

Again, the literature revealed that complex knowledge management techniques have an impact on performance in the telecommunications business. When subunits focus on certain types of codification rather than recording their information in all accessible forms, performance improves. Focusing on a specific type of classification has various advantages, including data consistency and economies of scale due to the usage of the same or comparable codification forms.

One of the objectives of knowledge strategies, according to Earl and Scott (1999), is to provide environments and activities where new information may be obtained for competitive advantage. To that end, telecommunications companies have established Chief Information officers (CKO) who assist in the creation and management of knowledge sharing. They also play an essential liaison role by facilitating informal meetings. Additionally, they foster a culture of collaboration and sharing (Bell De Tienne et al., 2004). Similarly, knowledge management practices in the telecommunications business differ greatly from trying to manage locally. The majority of companies have a worldwide appeal and structure. In the global setting, for example, the role of language, which is missing in the local arena, is critical. While a knowledge object can be generated and programmed in English (British English) in London, its relevance and utility to Brazilians who speak Portuguese are restricted. As
a result, telecommunications corporations are increasing their investments in multilingual knowledge storage facilities. MTN Group, for example, in South Africa, uses simultaneous multiple language translations in English, French, and Arabic to enhance worldwide information sharing (McCune, 1999).

An examination of the literature found three (3) global and local knowledge management methodologies in the telecommunications business. Companies in the business must focus considerably more on cross-border knowledge sharing and management. As a result, for these firms to be effective in managing and executing their knowledge management strategies across borders, their leaders must endeavour to live up to the tagline "think globally, act locally."

Knowledge management is crucial for firms in the telecommunications sector to make strategic choices. The industry's fast-paced nature needs efficient knowledge management solutions. Obtaining strategically aligned goals and objectives for a company, on the other hand, is not just difficult but also impossible. To keep ahead of the competition in the market, telecommunication businesses should handle their information as effectively as possible. Aside from the various advantages of improved knowledge management techniques, it gives competitive advantages, a lucrative customer relationship, and preserves companies' secret information, all of which are regarded as advantageous.

**Future Direction**

Knowledge management methods are a relatively new notion, particularly in developing nations like Ghana. There is still much to learn about strategic knowledge management and the activities that accompany it. To prosper in a universal environment, organisations must adopt efficient knowledge management approaches. According to the study's findings, knowledge management procedures are essential for managing an organization's knowledge. Regardless of the number of writers that have contributed to knowledge management techniques, there is still plenty to learn. Knowledge management techniques have been examined mostly in wealthy nations; however, comparable studies may be undertaken in poor countries. Simultaneously, there is minimal evidence of study into knowledge management techniques in the telecommunications industry; consequently, this area may be further researched. The issues that a business is likely to experience if knowledge management techniques are not adequately applied inside the firm and its subsidiaries around the world may be fully investigated. The influence of the multinational character of businesses and its effect on knowledge management techniques may be evaluated in the context of codification and personalization tactics. Various formal and informal organising techniques can also be examined.
Conclusion

This systematic review's goal was to offer evidence for knowledge management techniques in Ghana's telecommunication sector. Knowledge management solutions have piqued the interest of academics and practitioners from a wide variety of fields. The study identified a large vacuum in the literature on knowledge management techniques or strategies in Ghana’s telecommunication industry and developing countries in its entirety. The available literature mostly focuses on knowledge management techniques for diverse work-related outcomes, with gaps in creation, process mechanism, and implementation.

According to the review, the most relevant issue for future research is the influence of knowledge management techniques. However, to handle possible problems, the type and technique of such procedures would change from one industry to the next. As a result, a thorough investigation in this area is required. This study backs up the idea that knowledge management strategies and tactics will be extremely beneficial to businesses, particularly in emerging countries with few resources. The process of designing formal strategies increases employee learning processes, which influence corporate performance and creativity. As a result, companies should devote significant resources to establishing and implementing strategies for generating and implementing knowledge-based activities.

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