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The Role of Knowledge Management on the Competitive Advantage of Food and Beverage Firms in South East Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examines the Role of Knowledge Management on the Competitive Advantage of Food and Beverage firms in South East Nigeria. The objective of the study is to ascertain the extent to which collaborative learning improves employees' knowledge empowerment for organizational sales growth. Firms are struggling to gain competitive advantage in order to survive among fierce numerous competitors. To achieve this, firms must know how to create, share and use the knowledge through the company and aligning it to the company strategy and process as well. Besides, managers have to realize which knowledge strategy should be chose to improve the company's activities to gain competitive advantage. Systematic random technique and Random sampling technique were used for the study. Crobanch's formula was adopted in the determination of the sample size of 553. A structured 5 Likert-scale questionnaire was designed based on: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagreed (D) and strongly Disagree (SD). 502 of the 553 respondents of the staff of food and beverage firms were randomly selected. Test and re-test method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Data collected from the field, were presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and simple percentage. The hypothesis was tested using Z-test statistical tool and SPSS. It was found that enhanced collaboration had significant effect on employees' empowerment that increased sales growth in the firm.
Keywords: Knowledge, Management, Knowledge Management, Competitive Advantage.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge which dates back to Aristotle's days has been evolving that today it is a strategy for success in business. Savage [1] in his Fifth Generation Management writes that Knowledge Age is the third wave of human socio-economic development. "The first wave was the Agricultural Age when wealth was defined as ownership of land. In the second wave, the Industrial Age, wealth was based on ownership of capital (that is, factories). He opines that in the Knowledge Age, wealth is based upon the ownership of knowledge and the ability to use that knowledge to create or improve goods and services. Product improvements include cost, durability, suitability, timeliness of delivery, and security.

Drucker [2], opines that "knowledge has become the key economic resource and the dominant and perhaps even the only source of comparative advantage". Today's organizations are operating in an environment where knowledge is power. As organizations vie for a competitive advantage, knowledge management has become a key element worthy of significant consideration [3-5]. Knowledge which is recognised as an important resource to organisations these days, has to be effectively and efficiently managed for organisations to leverage on it to obtain competitive advantage to achieve success in the dynamic business environment [6].

The field of knowledge management is the study of how firms manage the tacit and explicit knowledge and know-how their employees have about its products, services, organizational systems and intellectual property. Explicitly, knowledge management entails the strategies and processes that a firm employs to identify, capture and leverage the knowledge contained within its "corporate memory.

The ability to manage knowledge is becoming increasingly more crucial in today's knowledge economy. Corporations have always had some process to synthesize their experience and integrate it with knowledge acquired from outside sources (e.g. invent ions, purchased patents).” In particular, firms have long employed various knowledge management techniques. Communities of practice, for instance, have been in existence for a great many years. “In ancient Rome, ‘corporations’ of metalworkers, potters, masons, and other craftsmen had both a social aspect and a business function. In the Middle Ages, guilds fulfilled similar roles for artisans throughout Europe.” Firms have also long invested in training, mentoring and other educational and knowledge sharing programs. However, recent advancements in technology have enabled the knowledge management field to make dramatic improvements in its ability to store, retrieve, capture and transfer knowledge from one area of the firm to another. These recent technological developments have enabled firms to institutionalize their knowledge management function and integrate the knowledge management techniques mentioned above with new technologies in order to create integrated knowledge management programs. This development has enabled the field of knowledge management to take off. This example of “technological speciation” explains how advances in technological development often occur in rapid “bursts of evolutionary activity” after a small improvement in a technology opens the door to a wider range of applications.

Statement of the Problem

Organizations are turning to management of knowledge and skills their employees possess as a means of survival and success in today’s knowledge economy, hence knowledge management has been recognized as a tool to gain competitive advantage, achieve long-term success on the market and consequently receive benefits in terms of organizations’ performance such as return on investment and so on. Individuals who are rich of tacit knowledge constitute a wealth of intangible asset to the organization. As long as they stay on employment with the organization, they continue to play competitive figure through effective decision making, communication and contribution. Once employees leave an organization, knowledge in their heads is also gone. The Knowledge and learning have become the new strategic imperative of organizations. Today knowledge is seen as one of the most important strategic resources with the ability of creating and maintaining a competitive advantage. Knowledge is acquired through education, mentoring, on –the- job and outside trainings, seminars, conferences, workshops; the result is that most organizations loose this intellectual capital through retirement and to other organizations through employment. Also most organizations might not have embraced knowledge sharing, collaborative learning and the use of information communication technology (ICT) which is a major tool of knowledge sharing, implementing new learning approaches such as e-learning, establishing after-action review processes and formalizing the role of knowledge brokers. Most organizations do not have well designed knowledge information systems. It then becomes imperative that if organizations should sustain its competitive advantage they should increase their employees’ involvement at different levels when striving to reach the operational goals. Organizations that do not realize the significant role of Knowledge may go aground.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this study is an examination of the Role of knowledge management on the Competitive Advantage of food and Beverage firms, while the specific objective is:

- To ascertain the extent to which collaborative learning improves employees’ knowledge empowerment for organizational sales growth.

RESEARCH QUESTION

This research question was formulated:

- To what extent does collaborative learning improves employees’ knowledge empowerment for firm’s sales growth?

Research Hypotheses

This research hypothesis was formulated:

- The extent to which organizational learning improves employees’ knowledge empowerment for firm’s sales growth is positively significant.

Concept of Knowledge

Wiig [7] defines knowledge as “the insights, understandings, and practical know-how that we all possess as the fundamental resource that allows us to function intelligently.” There are two types of knowledge: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge, as supported by Duffy [8], Nonaka [9], Tiwana [10], Zack [11]. Tacit knowledge is the form of knowledge that is subconsciously understood and applied, difficult to articulate, developed from direct experience and action and usually shared through highly interactive conversation, storytelling and shared experience. Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is easy to articulate, capture and distribute in different formats, since it is formal and systematic. For the purposes of this paper, the author regards knowledge as the human expertise stored in a person’s mind, gained through experience, and interaction with the person’s environment. Knowledge is also highly subjective, depending on a number of factors such as culture, beliefs, values, insights, intuitions and emotions of the individual. Furthermore, it is contended that as knowledge is shared and disseminated throughout the organisation, it increases in value, as argued by Davenport *et al*., [12], Sveiby [13], Tiwana [10], Zack [11], Zack [14].

Concept of Management

Management constitutes a part of any organization. The survival of any organization depends largely on the quality of management or administration services rendered. Management can be simply be defined as the organization and mobilization of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in the system [15]. The two key words are 'human' and materials. It is the business of management to ensure that both human and material resources within a system should be organized, mobilized and utilized so that the objectives of the system can be achieved to the fullest. Then management therefore influences the results to be achieved, the direction to be pursued and the priorities to be recognised.

Drucker [16] sees management as denoting a function as well as the people who discharge it. He further regards management as:

- Taking place within a structured organizational setting and with prescribed roles.
- Directed towards the attainment of aims and objectives.
- Achieved through efforts of other people; and
- Using systems and procedures.
- Hicks and Gullett [17], defines management as the process of getting work done by and through others. This means that managers achieve their goals through and with people.
- Management is the process of combining and utilizing the resources of a firm to achieve the desired objective [18]. This definition views management as an activity.

Concept of Knowledge Management

Saffady [19] defines Knowledge management as the systematic, effective management and utilization of an organization's knowledge resources and encompasses the creation, storage, arrangement, retrieval, and distribution of organization's knowledge. This includes the 'methods and tools for capturing, storing, organizing, and making accessible knowledge and expertise within and across communities' [20]. It also includes the active management and support of human expertise [21]. In this sense, knowledge management deals equally with the acquisition, handling and use of explicit knowledge as well as the management of tacit knowledge in terms of improving people's capacity to communicate and collaborate with one another [22].

Du Plessis [23] posits that "knowledge management is a planned, structured approach to manage the creation, sharing, harvesting and leveraging of knowledge as an organizational asset, to enhance an organization's ability, speed and effectiveness in delivering products or services for the benefit of clients, in line with its organizational strategy."

Knowledge management is a capability pertaining to knowledge creation, knowledge organization, storage and retrieval, knowledge transfer, and knowledge applications which enhances a firm's ability to gain and sustain a competitive advantage [24]. Knowledge management is defined as the process of consciously creating new knowledge, disseminating it widely through the organization and embodying it quickly in new products/services, technology, and systems [25].

Duffy [8] defines knowledge management as "the identification, growth and effective application of an organisation's critical knowledge." However, Hirotaka Takeuchi proposes a contradictory view on Knowledge Management which advocates less control over employees and involving everyone in the organisation to create and share knowledge, which in turn fuels the organisation's innovative strategy. This different philosophy is shared by Sveiby [26] who argues that knowledge is not something that can be "managed", and that the term to be Knowledge Focused" is preferable.

Sveiby [27] also states that knowledge focussed managers do not manage knowledge, since this is impossible, but the environment in which knowledge is created. The author adopts the view of Duffy [8] and, including some of Takeuchi's [28] and Sveiby's [26] arguments, proposes that knowledge management is the process of identifying, growing and effectively applying an organisation's existing knowledge in order to achieve the organisation's goals, while creating an organisational culture that permits further knowledge creation.

Concept of competitive Advantage

The term competitive advantage refers to the ability gained through attributes and resources to perform at a higher level than others in the same industry or market [29-32]. "A firm is said to have a competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential player" [33, 34].

Ansoff [35] defines it as characteristics of unique opportunities within the field define by the product-market scope and the growth vector.

It seeks to identify particular properties of individual product markets which will give the firm a strong competitive position". NNN South [36] defines competitive advantage as the "philosophy of choosing only those competitive arenas where victories are clearly achievable".

Porter [31] states "competitive advantage grows fundamentally out of value a firm is able to create for its buyers that exceeds the firm's cost of creating it." He argued that a firm's ability to outperform its competitors lay in its ability to translate its competitive strategy into a competitive advantage. Competitive strategy entails positioning the firm favorably in an industry relative to competitors. He confirmed that there are, in general, only two possible competitive advantages a

Firm may possess, a cost advantage or a differentiation advantage. Others, particularly proponents of the resource-based view of the firm [33, 37], have extended the definition to include a wider range of possible advantages such as physical capital [38], human capital [39], technological opportunities and learning [40-42], and organizational capital [43].

Successfully implemented strategies will lift a firm to superior performance by facilitating the firm with competitive advantage to outperform current or potential players [44]. To gain competitive advantage, a business strategy of a firm manipulates the various resources over which it has direct control and these resources have the ability to generate competitive advantage [45, 46]. Superior performance outcomes and superiority in production resources reflect competitive advantage [47, 48].

Companies would be able to achieve competitive advantage through use of different strategies. These strategies as Almahamid [49] says are cost reduction, innovation, alliance, differentiation and growth. On the other hand [50], thinks that in order to apply all these strategies successfully it depends on the degree of organizational knowledge and skills. Knowledge Management is another strategy that company may apply to gain a competitive advantage.

Theoretical framework of Competitive Advantage: The Resource-Based View (RBV)

The resource-based view of the firm (RBV) draws attention to the firm's internal environment as a driver for competitive advantage and emphasizes the resources that firms have developed to compete in the environment. During the early strategy development phase of Hoskisson's account of the development of strategic thinking [51], the focus was on the internal factors of the firm. Researchers such as Ansoff [35] and Chandler [52] made important contributions towards developing the Resource-Based View of strategy [51]. From the 1980s onwards, according to Furrer *et al.*, [53], the focus of inquiry changed from the structure of the industry, e.g., Structure-Conduct-Performance (SCP) paradigm and the five forces model) to the firm's internal structure, with resources and capabilities (the key elements of the Resource-Based View (RBV). Since then, the resource-based view of strategy (RBV) has emerged as a popular theory of competitive advantage [53, 51]. The origins of the RBV go back to Penrose [54], who suggested that the resources possessed, deployed and used by the organisation are really more important than industry structure. The term 'resource-based view' was coined much later by Wernerfelt [55], who viewed the firm as a bundle of assets or resources which are tied semi-permanently to the firm [55]. Prahalad and Hamel [56] established the notion of core competencies, which focus attention on a critical category of resource – a firm's capabilities. Barney [33] also argued that the resources of a firm are its primary source of competitive advantage.

The Knowledge-Based view

While most researchers subscribing to the RBV regard knowledge as a generic resource, some researchers [57, 41, 10] suggest that knowledge has special characteristics that make it the most important and valuable resource. Hamel and Prahalad [56] argue that knowledge, know-how, intellectual assets and competencies are the main drivers of superior performance in the information age. Evans [58] and Tiwana [10] also suggest that knowledge is the most important resource of a firm. Evans [58] pointed out that material resources decrease when used in the firm, while knowledge assets increase with use.

Tiwana [10] argued that technology, capital, market share or product sources are easier to copy by other firms while knowledge is the only resource that is difficult to imitate.

Grant [59] argued that there are two types of knowledge: information and know-how. Beckmann [60] proposed a five-level knowledge hierarchy comprising data, information, knowledge, expertise and capabilities. Zack [11] divides organisational knowledge into three categories: core knowledge, advanced knowledge, and innovative knowledge. Core knowledge is the basic knowledge that enables a firm to survive in the market in the short-term. Advanced knowledge provides the firm with similar knowledge as its rivals and allows the firm to actively compete in the short term. Innovative knowledge gives the firm its competitive position over its rivals. The firm with innovative knowledge is able to introduce innovative products or services, potentially helping it become a market leader [11].

The Capability-Based View

Grant [59] argued that capabilities are the source of competitive advantage while resources are the source of capabilities. Amit and Shoemaker [61] adopted a similar position and suggested that resources do not contribute to sustained competitive advantages for a firm, but its capabilities do. Haas and Hansen [62], as well as Long and Vickers-Koch [63], supported the importance of capabilities and suggest that a firm can gain competitive advantage from its ability to apply its capabilities to perform important activities within the firm.

Amit and Shoemaker [61] define capabilities in contrast to resources, as 'a firm's capacity to deploy resources, usually in combination using organizational processes, and effect a desired end. They are information-based, tangible or intangible processes that are firm-specific and developed over time through complex interactions among the firm's resources'. Teece *et al*., [41] define dynamic capabilities as, 'the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments'. Grant [59] defines organizational capability as, 'a firm's ability to perform repeatedly a productive task which relates either directly or indirectly to a firm's capacity for creating value through effecting the transformation of inputs to outputs'. Grant [59] also divides capability into four categories: cross-functional capabilities, broad-functional capabilities, activity-related capabilities and specialised capabilities. Sirmon *et al*., [64] stressed the importance of organisational learning. They suggest that capabilities and organisational learning implicitly and explicitly are a part of any strategy within a firm. It has been argued [11] that the ability to learn and create new knowledge is essential for gaining competitive advantage. Lee *et al*., [65] discussed the influence of internal capabilities and external networks on firm performance.

Knowledge Management can Gain Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Knowledge Creation

Hislop [66] opines that it is important for all companies to survive among surrounded competition in the market place by creating knowledge that leads to generation of a competitive advantage. The creation of knowledge is an important part of KM [67, 68]. Knowledge creation happens in the daily activities at work with many forms, it can be through humanistic way or technical mechanisms. Experts say that knowledge creation is mainly a human process; it can be facilitated by technology but cannot be instead of human being. Companies need to leverage its key resources to create knowledge, innovate, and generate value with new knowledge. It is because it leads to innovative products and improve the ability of making strategic decision of the organizations.

The majority of studies agree about that correlation between KM and sustainable competitive advantage is very positive [69]. Studies agreed upon that knowledge management process leads to improve the competitive advantages which lead to improve the organizational performance by improving managing of corporate knowledge [70].

However, authors and managers have different opinions on what is the best way to do that. Some authors prefer using a process called Competitive Intelligence (CI) in order to gather important knowledge of the external business environment and transform it to the intelligence required to make strategic decisions. Competitive Intelligence enables the company to gain competitive advantage [71].

Authors believe that, both KM and CI systems are created to improve the information resources of the organization. Falkenberg [72] supported the previous idea and suggested that external knowledge can be gained from other companies within value chain. The value chain shows the company's connection with different companies. This makes numerous opportunities for businesses. Sharing consumer's data within the value chain let employees to be updated when there is any change and this grants opportunities to those who make decision to reach customer's satisfaction [73].

Some authors have different opinions; they said that attention should be paid more into grasping the knowledge which is kept inside individual employees minds [74]. In other words, it is necessary to push the individuals to gain data, and to make them understand it, store it in their memories and turn it to skills and use it in their performance [72]. Bagshaw [75], Johnson [76], and Rubenfeld [77] support and suggest that to gain competitive advantage companies should use Knowledge Management for gathering, organizing, and sharing inwardly created knowledge.

Align KM with Company Strategies

Another point of view can be seen when Desouza [78] states that the main cause of ineffective delivery of products is not paying enough care toward managing knowledge in proper way. Therefore, it is urgent to adopt the idea of aligning Knowledge Management with company's strategy [79, 80]. Other authors argue that, the matter is no longer whether or not, knowledge is a critical company resource, but to align it [81]. It is also necessary to realize that aligning company's strategy with Knowledge Management is about how the company serves its customer [82]. Aligning company strategy with knowledge management to gain sustain competitive advantage imposes that managers should be aware of the latest in the markets and what are customers latest needs and they should also be aware of the threats that came from the competitor's position and other factors that may have influence on the business such as technology. All these requirements are important in order to make strategic decisions [83].

Knowledge Sharing

Believe that the main activity of effective Knowledge Management is Knowledge sharing [84-86, 65, 79, 87, 88]. Knowledge must be shared with co-workers, group team. Knowledge sharing and transferring is very important to the company; it is because companies face difficulties with knowledge loss which is because of employee turnover or retirement. Studies mentioned that the workers at all levels of the company should make a structured attempt to use the knowledge which is available at different points of their activities. This will defiantly improve the operations efficiency, improve the innovations quality and quantity, and improving competitiveness [66, 67]. From above discussion, it can be said that each way has its own special standards that distinguish it from the other.

METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. The state was chosen due to existence of industries. Survey research method was adopted for the study. Both primary and secondary sources were used for the study. The researchers developed the instruments that were used for gathering relevant data for the study. A 5- item questionnaire with open-ended questions was designed for the study in accordance with the research objectives. A structured 5 Likert-scale questionnaire was designed based on: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was designed to extract information for the study. Systematic random technique and Random sampling technique were used for the study. A sample of 554 was determined from a population of 5681using Freud and William formula. 554 respondents of the staff of selected food and beverage firms were randomly selected across the South East, Nigeria. Out of the 554 copies of questionnaire that were designed and distributed for the study, only 502 copies were collected by the researchers after several attempts. 32 copies were not returned. 10 copies were invalid. In a whole, 502 copies of the instrument were analyzed. Content and face to face validity were used to validate the study, while test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Data collected from the field, were presented using tables, frequencies and simple percentages. The hypothesis was tested using Z-test.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTION (1)

The hypothesis was tested using Z test

Table 1.1: To ascertain the extent to which collaborative learning improves employees' knowledge empowerment for organizational sales growth.

S/N	Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Collaborative learning helps employees have knowledge of new products and processes that enhance sales growth.	Strongly agree	301	59.96
		Agree	201	40.04
		Undecided	-	-
		Disagree	-	-
		Strongly disagree	-	-
2	Collaborative learning capitalizes on one another's experience and skill for improved products.	Strongly agree	205	40.84
		Agree	221	44.02
		Undecided	42	8.37
		Disagree	-	-
		Strongly disagree	-	-
3	The emergence of new products has largely been attributed to organizational and individual learning that creates new knowledge.	Strongly agree	204	40.64
		Agree	232	46.22
		Undecided	43	8.56
		Disagree	23	4.58
		Strongly disagree	-	-
4	There is significant improvement in the product quality resulting from collaborative learning and employee's empowerment.	Strongly agree	276	54.98
		Agree	226	45.02
		Undecided	-	-
		Disagree	-	-
		Strongly disagree	-	-
5	Volume of sales of your product is as a result of high quality linked to collaborative learning and empowerment.	Strongly agree	221	44.02
		Agree	240	47.81
		Undecided	23	4.58
		Disagree	18	3.59
		Strongly		

		disagree		
		Total	**502**	**100.0**

Hypothesis One: The extent to which collaborative learning improves employees' knowledge empowerment for organizational sales growth is positively significant.

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.651[a]	.423	.423	.79988	.035
a. Predictors: (Constant), collaboration increases empowerment of employees					
b. Dependent Variable: product quality					

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	470.504	1	470.504	735.386	.000[b]
	Residual	641.085	1002	.640		
	Total	1111.590	1003			
a. Dependent Variable: product quality						
b. Predictors: (Constant), collaboration increases empowerment of employees						

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.123	.077		-1.596	.111
	collaboration increases empowerment of employees	1.385	.051	.651	27.118	.000
a. Dependent Variable: product quality						

R = 0.651
R^2 = 0. 423
F = 735.386
T = 27.118
DW = 0. 035

Interpretation

The regression sum of squares (470.504) is less than the residual sum of squares (641.085), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is not due to chance. The correlation coefficient which has a value of 0.651, indicates that there is positive relationship between collaboration increases empowerment of employees and product quality. R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 42.3% of the variation in product quality is explained by the model.

With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of about .79988. The Durbin Watson statistics of 0.035, which is not more than 2, indicates there is no autocorrelation.

The collaboration increases empowerment of employees' coefficient of 0. 651 indicates a positive significance between collaboration increases empowerment of employees and product quality, which is statistically significant (with t = 27.118). Therefore, the null hypothesis should be rejected and the alternative hypothesis accordingly accepted.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Result of the hypothesis indicates that enhanced collaboration had significant effect on employees empowerment that increased sales growth in the organization (r = 0.874, P =0.002 < 0.05). We therefore, conclude that the two variables are to a large extend associated. The result of the test hypothesis one agrees with the findings of David, Macbeth, and Wagner [89] which disclosed that collaborative learning is especially based on the model that knowledge can be created within a population where members actively interact by sharing experiences and take on asymmetry roles. Collaborative learning which refers to a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together, is different from individual learning because people who engaged in collaborative learning capitalize on one another's resources and skills to ask one another for information, evaluate one another's ideas, monitor one another's work, and by so doing improve individual performance. With the emergency of many new collaborative tools, as well as the cost benefit of being able to reinforce learning in workers and in trainees during collaborative training, many work environments are now looking toward methods that involve collaborating with older employees and giving trainees ore of a hands-on approach. Most companies are transiting from traditional training programs that include instructor-led training sessions or online guided tutorials.

Collaborative learning is extremely helpful because it uses past experiences from prior employees to help new trainees get over different challenges. There are many facets to collaboration in the workplace. This was supported by Singh [90], who found that collaborative learning is critical to helping worker's share information with each other and creating strategic planning, documents that require multiple inputs. It also allows for forms of vertical integration to find effective ways to synchronize business operations with vendors without being forced to acquire additional businesses.

This was also corroborated by Lee and Bonk [91], in their work which disclosed that collaborative learning has high effectiveness in the workplace and that collaboration is becoming very necessary in workplaces and tools such as wikis are very commonly used. It is crucial to consider the interactive processes among people, but the most critical point is the construction of new knowledge brought about through joint work that leads to competitiveness.

FINDING

Enhanced organizational learning had significant effect on employees empowerment that increased market shares in the organizations that leads to competitive advantage ($r = 0.874$, $P = 0.002 < 0.05$).

CONCLUSION

This means that a positive learning climate is valuable for firms that seek to outperform its competitors through various collaborative communities ‘and networks that results to innovation, which brings about competitiveness. Managers should therefore, create and promote the eagerness to learn and share ideas by their employees so that they develop new skills and share existing knowledge that will give their organization competitive edge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the finding that organizational learning is extremely helpful because it is the acquiring of new knowledge and skills that will improve firms' existence and increase their potential market shares. From the collaborative perspective it uses past experiences from prior employees to help new trainees get over different challenges, collaborative learning enables employees bring specialized expertise to the organizations' problem among others. It becomes imperative that organizations should de-emphasis single learning and support collaborative and organizational learning as it helps in eliciting knowledge from the employees in solving problems, therefore, enhanced sales growth and bring about superior performance that gives organization competitive advantage.

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