Knowledge Sharing: A Recipe for Corporate Sustainability

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***Abstract:-*The paper critically reviewed knowledge sharing as a recipe for corporate sustainability. Knowledge is the most vital strategic resource that can make an organization to achieve sustainable competitive advantage over their competitors. As a result of this, knowledge management becomes a must do process for organizations. Reviews however, show the crux of knowledge management to be knowledge sharing and this forms the focus of this paper. The main aim of this paper is to review the effect of knowledge sharing on corporate sustainability. The paper is a theoretical review of extant literature on the concepts of knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge sharing and corporate sustainability. It also reviewed the importance of sharing knowledge, challenges encountered while sharing knowledge, how to encourage knowledge sharing and its alignment with corporate sustainability. The paper further reviewed some empirical works on the outcomes of knowledge sharing; organizational performance, innovation, organizational learning, organizational culture and employee resilience. The paper then concluded that knowledge sharing is an indispensable element of an organization's intellectual capital which assists organization to remain in business in the long run and also help them maximize their stakeholders' value. The paper also concluded that knowledge will be valueless if it is acquired, converted, retained and not shared. Based on this backdrop, organizations striving to survive in the face of globalization and intense competition should develop a culture that embraces knowledge sharing.**

Key words: **Knowledge sharing, corporate sustainability, Knowledge management, organizational performance**

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the competitive nature of doing business have thrown a lot of challenges in the workplace. There are pressures from stakeholders which include higher expectations from customers and increasing public analysis on business sustenance. These challenges serve as an opportunity for organizations to achieve competitive edge above their competitors by helping them make informed decisions that will bring about a lasting solution. In a bid to find solutions to the above challenges, there is need for organizations to embrace a systematic knowledge management process (Omotayo, 2015). They need to manage, coordinate and fine-tune organizational information in order to keep abreast with market changes. This means that knowledge-related and vibrant competence such as knowledge management capability is needed. The emergence of knowledge-based economies is one of the outcomes of globalization which lay emphasis on the significance of effective management of human resources geared towards creating an impact on business and economy at large (Omotayo,2015).

This implies that effective management of knowledge brings about competitive advantage in business. The achievement of sustainable competitive advantage by organization is a basic issue in the field of strategic management (Porter, 1985). For any organization to be successful, it must have the capacity to gather, analyze and utilize knowledge while its structure should encourage innovativeness and collective desires of the employees (Senge, 1990). According to Bollinger and Smith (2001), Knowledge sharing (KS) aids in the combination of the various levels of expertise in order to generate new organizational knowledge and attain deeper levels of understanding geared towards improved business performance. Effective implementation of KS leads to organizational learning which improves the problem solving capability of the workforce; make them become more creative and innovative in their reasoning as well build confidence in them and hence become talented through acquisition of skills and competences to achieve result(Kumaraswamy & Chitale,2012).

Despite the attention given to knowledge management in millennial organizations today, the issue of how knowledge is shared within the organization still remains a challenge, partly because of its complexities (Hendriks 1999; Drucker, 1998; Lessard & Zaheer 1996). In organization, managing knowledge is as critical as its utilization. This is because it assists employees to work effectively and subsequently bring about improved quality and increased productivity (Stan, 2007). Knowledge management(KM) centers on ways of sharing and storing the knowledge of individual, as a means of improving their skills in identifying new markets, improvement of market share which results to efficiency and profitability for the organization (Civi, 2000). Reusing and sharing of knowledge still remains the major benefit of knowledge management. This implies that if knowledge is acquired, stored in an organization without putting it into use then it becomes amorphous. The effective management of Knowledge in an organization is paramount for survival, achievement of competitive edge as well as increased profitability (Omotayo, 2015). This implies that knowledge is significant for organisation seeking to ensure sustainability and meet stakeholder's expectations. In order to take complete advantage of knowledge, organizations have to intensify effort in the creation, managing, sharing and utilization of knowledge effectively. To address this concern, it is imperative to examine on one hand, the views of Davenport and Prusak, (1998) that Knowledge sharing must be initiated at human level and once it is working its application on technology will produce positive results; and on another hand, the assertion of March, (2001) that if a firm is primarily concerned with knowledge creation or application and neglects its sharing, it will be difficult to sustain competitive advantage and find lasting solutions to other challenges in the long-term.

The main thrust of this paper is to re-emphasize the importance of knowledge sharing in the organization. The paper critically reviewed some empirical works on the concept of knowledge management with emphasis on knowledge sharing. It also, examined the two major types of knowledge (explicit and tacit); challenges in transferring knowledge; the importance of knowledge sharing; how to encourage knowledge sharing and the influence of organizational culture on knowledge sharing. To achieve these objectives, the paper looked at the alignment of the concept of knowledge sharing with corporate sustainability and finally draw conclusion which helped to clarify the assertion that Knowledge sharing is a recipe for corporate sustainability.

II. THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Knowledge was regarded as a fundamental resource and sharing it contributes to improved organizational performance (Ndegwa, 2015). There are varying conceptions about the development of knowledge management (KM). Some school of thought may argue that consultants developed knowledge management to replace declining revenues from the diminishing re-engineering movement while others sense that knowledge management is presently an improvement of earlier information and data management methods (Prusak, 2001). KM like any system of thought that has value, is both old and new hence, KM is not just a consultant's invention but a practitioner-based substantive response to real social and economic developments (Prusak, 2001). The speeding up of elements of global trade (number of participants, products and channels of distribution) created awareness for knowledge management through information technology. This could be attributed also to the decline of centralized economies which then forced firms to bring new products and services to wider markets easily. This spurred organizations to seek for more knowledge on how to go about their businesses. This in turn increased the need for information accessibility with some components of knowledge such as judgment, leadership, improved decisions, innovation etc. becoming more valuable to firms. KM as a concept came into limelight in early 1993 organized by Prusak Laurence and his colleagues during a conference in Boston with more than 150 paid participants in attendance (Prusak, 2001). At the conference, many speakers attempted to define organizational knowledge by differentiating it from data and information. The aftermath of the conference was a surge in information and KM efforts by foremost organizations.

Big Organizations like McKinsey & Company, General Motors Corporation began various knowledge projects. Hughes Aerospace and Electronics Company developed an innovative system that helped capture information about recurrent problems in satellite development and how these problems were resolved. High technology driven organizations like Xerox Corporation, Hewlett-Packard Company and IBM were also pioneers of knowledge practices by using their technological capabilities to manage knowledge (Prusak, 2001). It is however, important to note that economics, sociology, philosophy and psychology are the disciplines that have helped in defining knowledge management while information management, the quality movement, and the human factors/human capital movement where the three (3) practices that brought knowledge management to bear as a concept (Prusak, 2001). Knowledge has been defined differently by various scholars.

Davenport, De Long and Beers (1998), described knowledge as information combined with experience, context, interpretation, reflection, and outlook that includes a new level of insight while Epetimehin and Ekundayo (2011) posit that it is an invisible or intangible asset, in which its acquisition involves complex cognitive processes of perception, learning, communication, association and reasoning. Knowledge is defined as "an awareness and understanding of a set of information and ways that information can be made useful to support a specific task or reach a decision'' (Gabriel, 2012:183). He further stated that it is an indispensable component of an organization's intellectual capital, which refers to the accumulation and streams of information accessible to an organization. This entails that knowledge aids quality decision making in an organization if utilize effectively. Knowledge is a mixture of data, information, facts, description and skills acquired through experience and practice (Keskin, 2005). Therefore, Knowledge is created through interaction among individuals, groups and teams in an organization. Similarly, knowledge is portrayed as "a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers" (Davenport & Prusak, 1998:4). Nonaka (1991) opined that the solution to knowledge creation is personal commitment and employees sense of identity with the enterprise and its mission. Therefore, employees in any organization should be dedicated and work towards the achievement of the organizational goal. Knowledge is generally classified into types; explicit and tacit knowledge

(Polanyi, 1962, 1967). Similarly, Nonaka (1991) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) stated that knowledge is either explicit or tacit. They further opined that explicit knowledge is tangible, clearly stated and comprising of details that can be recorded, stored as well accessible to everyone in the organization. Explicit knowledge can be stated in writing, drawings and computer programming (Haslinda, & Sarinah, 2009). It is also conveyed in some universal or appropriate language with support of words, numbers, diagrams or models as well stored in different databases and repositories (Polanyi, 1966).

This implies that, it can be transmitted orally, in writing or in electronic form hence can be manipulated. On the other hand, Tacit or implicit knowledge resides in peoples' minds; it is the knowledge we carry in our mind about how to do things; how to resolve problems and lesson learnt from experience; it is mostly intuitive, and entails personal beliefs, perception and values (Gabriel, 2012).Therefore, tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate in writing and is obtained through personal contacts. He further asserts that the main challenge in knowledge management is how to turn tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Dixon (2000) defined tacit knowledge as knowledge that employees obtain from the successful performance of organizational task while Choi and Lee (2003) see knowledge as rooted in mental processes, which emanates from practical experiences, articulated through applications and linked with the development of learning achieved through active participation.

With time and passion knowledge can be transferred between tacit and explicit (Nonaka, 1995), though there are differences between them but they complement each other, thus explicit knowledge without tacit knowledge loses its meaning rapidly (Nonaka, Toyama, Konno, 2000). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge otherwise known as knowledge conversion are in four modes; socialization; externalization, internalization and combination. Socialization entails the social interaction of two or more human beings thereby passing knowledge from human to human (tacit to tacit); Externalization involves the writing down of knowledge or capturing/ codification of knowledge by people(tacit to explicit); Combination involves the handling of knowledge by ways of creation of thoughts using different means(explicit to explicit); and internalization(explicit to tacit) occurs when human learns through reading, viewing, hearing as well put them into practice(hands-on). KM was necessitated by the dawn of globalization, which aroused the need for organizations to search for valuable means and methods for acquiring and sharing of knowledge across cultural barriers. Hence, globalization has formed the basis for organizations ability to manage knowledge globally. KM endeavors assist organizations to share valuable organisational insight; reduces workloads that are uncalled-for; reduces time for employees training; ensures retention of key talents in order to curb employees' turnover as well to adjust changing environments and markets (Epetimehin & Ekundayo (2011). This is imperative as most organizations have aging employees and to ensure continuity, intellectual capital needs to be captured, stored and shared in order to eliminate knowledge loss, mistakes and reinventing of knowledge by future generations in work environment. KM is an important capability for any employee in any type of organisation which sums to form a well-built knowledge management strategy.

KM is a logical and integrated management strategy that widens the transferring, transmitting, storing, and implementation of knowledge in order to achieve improved efficiency and effectiveness in the organization's workforce (Dahiya, Gupta, & Jain, 2012). In the same vein, Bhatti and Qureshi (2007) opined that KM means effort to advance the tacit and explicit knowledge of individuals, groups, and organizations and to convert this fortune into organizational assets that will aid decision making at different levels by individuals and supervisors. Knowledge-based theory is the applicable theory that assists extensively towards appreciating the important role played by knowledge management in an organization; by presuming that knowledge management practices such as knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and knowledge implementation play a significant role in achieving high level productivity, improves performance in both financial and human resource which leads to improvement in sustainable competitive advantage (Soderberg & Holden,2002; Spender,1996).

The success of knowledge management strategies lie within effective knowledge sharing process (Chaudhry, 2011). Thus, knowledge will be valueless if is not shared in the organization since its sharing leads to process improvements and generating of new ideas. This is evident as many organizations aside academics have embraced knowledge sharing in order to improve performance. Hsiu-Fen (2010) stated that KS is the process of sourcing, harmonizing, utilizing and transmitting expert-based knowledge resident in an organization accessible to organizational members. He further affirmed that KS has the ability to breed new inspiration and expands new business prospects achieved through interaction and learning among employees. KS is one of the basic organizational knowledge management process aside knowledge creation or acquisition, storage, application (Alavi & Leidner, 2001 & Kahreh, 2011); retention (Delong, 2004); and protection (Momeni, Shaabani, Ghasemi, & Abdullahi, 2011). KS is described as the process of transferring, disseminating and distributing of knowledge to those that needs it (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Kahreh, 2011). Reasoning in the same line of thought, Frappaolo (2006) advanced that knowledge sharing is the process by which knowledge is transmitted from one person to another, from persons to groups, or from one organization to other organizations. Therefore, it is the route through which individual and organizational knowledge is exchanged. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) assert that KS is the dynamic processes of interpersonal interaction.

In the light of this, Ipe (2003) argued that KS between individuals is the process by which knowledge held by an individual is transformed into a form that can be understood, absorbed, and used by other individuals. He defined KS as the means where individuals make knowledge accessible to others within the organization. Reasoning in the same line of thought, Bartol and Srivastava (2002) sees KS as the sharing of important information, ideas, suggestions, and expertise available in the organization with one another. Davenport and Prusak (1998) emphasized that KS must commence at the individual level and once it is effective and applied using technology will have a significant impact which will yield positive results for the organization. According to Kahreh (2011), KM approaches include technological, intellectual asset, organizational learning, process and philosophical approaches.

Technological approach enhances KM worth by providing instruments for effective storage and sharing of knowledge; Intellectual asset depicts the assessment of knowledge assets in monetary terms and translating them into accounting practices. Organizational learning approach aids the creation and sharing of knowledge by increasing positive work environment and effective reward systems; process recognizes key procedures which enhances the flow and formal management of important knowledge while philosophical approach helps in the acquisition of higher understanding of knowledge by asking pertinent questions towards development of new ways of thinking (Kareh, 2011). From the diverse definitions of KS, one can infer that KS involves the exchange of ideas, information from one person to the other through a process of interaction which aids learning in the organization.

This paper adopted the definition of KS by Ipe (2003) which view KS holistically, by disseminating knowledge from one individual to the other within the organization hence moving to the organizational level which encourages learning. Based on this backdrop, the following elements of KS were deduced: (i)That effective knowledge sharing is achieved thorough organizational learning and the value improves when shared; (ii) KS is controlled; involves a conscious behaviour since knowledge is an asset to the holder and as such many of the organizational member do not give it out easily the tacit type;(iii) KS has the ability to generate new ideas and the development of new business opportunities; (iv) KS is distributed through a medium (technology), tools and through social interaction; and (v) KS involves two or more parties, the one that is willing to share knowledge and those that want to acquire the knowledge. Aside from the above elements and definitions, this paper equally advocates for organizations to maintain organizational culture that imbibes KS. It agrees with McDermott and O'Dell (2001) that organizational culture plays a pivotal role in controlling the way employees behave among themselves in and outside the organization. They opined that successful organizations build their KM approach to fit their culture and that knowledge can be shared in different ways in an organization depending on the values and styles of the organization.

In a knowledge driven economy, the culture of the work place affects the dissemination of knowledge since it has been established in literature that knowledge is the most vital strategic resource as well its management is crucial to the success of an organization (Zheng, 2017).Scholars like De long and Fahey (2000) examined the association between culture and the creation, sharing, and utilization of knowledge. Their findings showed that culture and other related culture variables (sub cultures) have significant influence on knowledge-related processes in four ways; (i) that it is culture that forms assumptions in determining the significance of knowledge;(ii) seen as the mediating variable between individual and organizational knowledge;(iii) basis for social interaction in an organization and (iv) is instrumental in the creation and acceptance of new knowledge.

The consequences of implementing effective KS practices in organizations have implications on innovation, organizational performance, organizational learning, employee resilience and sustainability. Ndegwa (2015) examined the influence of organizational learning and firm-level institutions in the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational performance of top medium–sized companies in Kenya. The result of the findings revealed that knowledge sharing had a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational performance; firm-level institutions had significant direct and moderating effect on organizational performance. On the other hand, the study established that organizational learning had neither direct nor mediating effect on organizational performance while the combined outcome of the study variables on organizational performance was positive and statistically significant. Wobodo and Asawo (2018) assessed the relationship between KS and employee resilience(ER) in tertiary institution in Port Harcourt adopting three measures of ER (employee interpersonal competence, employee adaptability and employee proactiveness). Their study showed that a positive and significant relationship exist between KS and employee resilience.

Their study demonstrates that KS advanced employee interpersonal competence; employee adaptability with an insignificant impact on employee's proactiveness and highlighted the need for organizations that crave for sustainability and improvement in competitive edge to incorporate KS mechanism into their KM Program as well support the employees to willingly share knowledge. Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi (2015) investigated the effect of KS processes namely donating and collecting on product innovation of higher education in Iraq. The results established that knowledge sharing play a crucial role in improving product innovation within higher education environment hence positively related to product innovation. The findings of other studies on effect of KS on innovation (Jaberi, 2016; Zohoori, Mohseni, Samadi, & Attarnezhad, 2013) have affirmed that knowledge sharing has significant effect on innovation.

Importance of Knowledge Sharing (KS)

The importance of knowledge sharing cannot be overemphasized as it contributes to creation of new knowledge which supports innovation and eventually leads to efficiency and effectiveness. Knowledge sharing is a new idea in strategic management hence the study offers new insights on how to utilize knowledge resource (Ndegwa, 2015).She further stated that KS and organizational learning (OL) can minimize organizations' reliance on individuals by elevating the structure of intellectual capital of an organization through conversion of individual knowledge to organizational knowledge. KS transfer knowledge that resides with an individual to the organizational level by converting it to economic and competitive value for the organization thereby creating a bond between the individual and organization (Hendriks 1999). This implies that KS produces the ability for the exchange of pertinent ideas, knowledge, experiences and information after knowledge has been generated.

This means that KS facilitates the exchange of ideas hence is a give and take process; beneficial to both the giver and the receiver without loss of value to each party which the value increases when it is shared. Scholars posit that knowledge sharing improves organizational performance (Baraja, 2015; Hsu, 2008; Lin, 2008); promotes competitive advantage (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Hsu, 2008; Lin, 2008); enhances organizational learning and innovation (Cohen & Levinthal, 2000). Appleyard (1996) opined that KS stimulates growth both in the regional and national economies through practices that support innovation and dissemination of knowledge. In the same light, Dunford (2000) asserts that KS is very essential in view of the fact that a great deal of the key knowledge is held by individuals unless there are some structures to retain it within the organizational memory. Therefore, KS can be used to capture, organize, reuse and transfer experience-based knowledge which leads to retention of knowledge in the organization after the employees has left the organization. Furthermore, KS assists the organization to utilize the available resources efficiently by transferring the best practices from one department to another, individual to another. According to Keskin (2005), it fosters innovation; minimizes errors; reduces production or service costs as well contribute to the success of any organization. Knowledge sharing brings about the entrenchment of organizational processes, products and services. Effective use of knowledge increases organizational learning by reproducing internal knowledge and making it available to employees for reuse (Damodaran & Olphert, 2000; Haseman, Nazareth, & Paul, 2005). By doing so, knowledge in form of skills and experience will be optimize in the organization.

Gurteen (1999) put forward five reasons why knowledge sharing is important: (i) knowledge is seen as an insubstantial product that comprises ideas, processes and information. These intangible products are taking an increasing share of global trade from the traditional, tangible goods of a manufacturing economy.(ii) leads to creation of new knowledge which helps in the achievement of competitive edge;(iii) enables retention of knowledge within the organization as a result of increased staff turnover; (iv) helps organization to extend and apply knowledge gathered from one aspect to other aspect of the organization where it will be useful for the benefit of achieving organizational goal ;and(v)in speeding up changes in technology, business and social life. KS is also of immense benefit in the network setting business, without the sharing of knowledge firms cannot have access as well utilize specialized resources and capabilities of the different companies taking part in the network while the ability to share knowledge is also a crucial condition for new knowledge creation (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995).

They further argued that it is through KS that a foundation of mutually held knowledge can be formed; the mutually held knowledge also aids in the development of trust among firms, which results to deeper cooperation (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000). Von Hippel, (1988) argued that networks with higher knowledge transfer systems will outshine those with fewer knowledge sharing practices. Finally, it has been established in literature that KS is also critical to performance achievement in organization (Barthol & Srivastava, 2002). It can be deduced that knowledge sharing has the potential to generate value and the numerous benefits that accrued from KS helps organization to attain sustainability. Despite the numerous benefits of knowledge sharing, there are various conditions where knowledge is not shared effectively hence organizations encounter challenges in the dissemination of knowledge.

The Challenges in Knowledge Sharing

KS is a complex process (Hendriks 1999; Lessard & Zaheer, 1966) and intellectuals have advanced some of the challenges hindering the transfer of knowledge from individuals to individuals and individual to organizations. According to Sveiby & Simons (2002), the size of an organization is one of the challenges encountered in sharing knowledge. Organizations of different sizes faced challenges in knowledge sharing. Big size organizations with formal (well documented) KS process will run into minor challenge while smaller organizations with informal process will encounter major issues. This means that the size of an organization affects the effectiveness of knowledge sharing. In a network business, Dyer and Nobeoka (2000) suggested three major reasons that inhibit KS: (i) lack of motivation from the organization to the employee to openly share treasured knowledge;(ii) the problem of free riders; and (iii) the cost implication involved with the chances to share knowledge.

Furthermore, Sun and Scott (2005) stated that KS among different organizations can also be subdued as a result of: (i) fear of losing competitive edge by sharing treasured knowledge;(ii) top management not in support of inter-company sharing of knowledge;(iii) differences involving organizational cultures and practices; (iv) disagreements due to personal differing values;(v) people being averse to innovative ideas when introduced; and (vi) rigid organizational processes. According to Larsson et al. (1998), the existing relationship between two or more networking firms with respect to lack of trust experienced in the past will dampen KS.

In the construction industry and other sectors of the economy, challenges are encountered also while disseminating knowledge as opined by different scholars which includes: inadequate time (Carrillo *et al*.,2014);organizational culture(Carrillo *et al*; 2014; Isa & Haddad,2008), lack of standardized work processes(Carrillo etal.,2014*)*; poor communication structure (Isa &Haddad,2008);Trust(Isa& Haddad,2008;Tschannan-Moran, 2001); poor information technology infrastructure (Isa & Haddad,2008); supervisor and team support(Delong & Fahrey,2000; Michailova & Husted,2003; Sveiby & Simons,2002); and insufficient funding(Carrillo *et al.*,2014*)*.

While the above are different challenges relating to knowledge sharing; there are also some impediments between knowledge and KS process. This is in relation with the sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge as well as the limitations related with the ability to absorb and understand shared knowledge (Polanyi 1966; von Hippel 1994; Cohen & Levinthal 1990). This entails that despite the uncomplicated sharing of explicit and codified knowledge, tacit or implicit, is hard to codify and imitate, hence difficult to share (Kogut & Zander 1992; Szulanski, 1996). In lending his voice to this discourse, Weiss (1999) opined that the embedded nature of knowledge hinders the smooth sharing among individuals since it is context-dependent and personalized. Since knowledge is an indispensable element of an organization's intellectual capital, therefore its sharing must be encouraged.

How to Encourage KS in Organizations

For any organization to remain in business for a long time, it has to adopt appropriate KS approaches. Thus, if knowledge is created and is not being shared in an organization it becomes valueless. The aim of KM is to aid learning in an organization. Knowledge is an asset to the holder, not many employees in the organization might want to share it easily particularly the tacit type (Gabriel, 2012). He suggested some ways to encourage KS in an organization; (i)Human Resource Managers in organization should uphold an environment of trust and commitment among organizational members; (ii)Since the culture of an organization determines the behaviour of employees, organizations should develop a culture that lays emphasis on the importance of knowledge sharing; (iii)Organizations should hold symposia, seminars, workshops; conferences regularly as these will enable the sharing of knowledge from person to person; (iv)Organizations should have an effective reward system for organizational members that embraced knowledge sharing as well the retention of key talents that contributes to knowledge creation and sharing; (v)Develop processes that support both organizational and individual learning which assist KS; (vi) Organizations should develop and facilitate KS through networks and group of employees who have common aspirations about work and team spirit; and (vii) develop systems that captures as well codifies explicit and tacit knowledge done in concurrence with the information technology unit of the organization.

KS is very paramount for any organization who desires to remain in business for a long period. The organization should be a learning organization and should encourage regular meetings and trainings sessions (Alavi & Leidner, 2001); key in to mentoring programs (Eddy et al., 2005; Langkau & Scandura, 2002) especially for newly employed or junior staff which by so doing, ideas, experiences and skills will be exchanged among organizational members effectively and seamlessly. This was corroborated by Nonaka (1991) which emphasized that mentoring programs can also be the precise method for sharing tacit knowledge.

III. CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

Most organizations have suffered a lot of environmental challenges and pressures from legislation as well as the society at large which necessitated their alignment with sustainability (Hahn & Scheermesser, 2006). As a result of uncertainties in the business environment coupled with competition, organizations strive to improve their performance standard in order to remain in business for a longtime thereby avoiding winding up. Employees being the greatest asset of any organization (Du Plessis, 2009) are used to achieve the above objective through effective distribution of knowledge. Corporate Sustainability is a relatively new concept based on its evolution; it was during the 1990s to be precise that academia and organizations developed interest on the subject (Swarnapali, 2017). Corporate sustainability (CS) is a practicable business strategy based on the understanding by investors and has developed over the years; which some researchers in the academics have carried out intense study on (Swarnapali, 2017). According to Bhatia and Tuli, (2016), CS as a concept attracted public interest after the publication of Brundtland report in 1987. Gallo and Christensen, (2011) stated that the report highlighted the need of making progress towards economic development that could be sustained without reducing natural resources as well not being harmful to the environment. Three (3) fundamental elements to sustainable development were emphasized in the report as: environmental protection, economic development, and social equity (Lackmann, Ernstberger, & Stich, 2012).

Development of Corporate Sustainability (CS)

The development and reporting of CS undergo several movements (Kolk, 2010; Fifka, 2012). Studies conducted during 1970 to 1980 called it social reporting; in 1990 it was known as environmental reporting which drew much attention while as from 2000, it was referred to as CSR or sustainability reporting(Efika,2012) while CS reporting was connected to the Global Reporting initiative (Kolk,2010). CS and CSR acceptance passed through five(5) stages of maturity; (i) During the first stage organizations began to create a favourable impression of their activities to replicate CSR; (ii) second stage was known as cost containment which entails the restructuring of some business operations geared towards cost reductions and improved financial performance; (iii) the third stage was known as the stakeholder engagement which focused on customer and workers' satisfaction; (iv) the fourth stage comprised of dissemination of information about CSR reports while;(iv) the fifth stage was the sustainability change which is the ability to meet the present needs of stakeholders as well in the future (Aras & Crowther, 2008).

Based on this backdrop, the field of CS is still growing and there is no universal definition of CS; how is measured and the underpinning theory (Swarnapali, 2017). By implication, there are different ways to measure and theorize CS. In some modern studies, CS and Corporate social responsibility (CSR) have been applied concurrently and impossible to differentiate. Several scholars have defined CS differently; Dylick and Hockerts (2002) defined Sustainability from the business perspective as the process of meeting the needs of both direct and indirect stakeholders of firms as well meet their needs in the future. Accordingly, Sustainability is the ability of a firm to last longer in any business endeavor in relation to profitability, productivity and financial indices of measurement as well the effective management of environmental and social assets which form the capital base; hence in a nut shell, business sustainability simply put means staying in business (Doane & MacGillivray, 2001). Yu and Zhao (2015) assert that the most widely recognized definition of sustainability that has evolved over time is the triple bottom line (TBL) which concerns economic capability, social and environmental responsibilities. In lending their support to this definition, Dyllick and Hockerts (2002) posit that if emphasis is centered on economic capability alone, it will only achieve result in the short run but if all the three components (economic, social and environmental) are satisfied together will achieve result that will last over time.

Alignment of KS with Corporate Sustainability

Knowledge is the recipe for sustainability in any organization and as such should be managed appropriately and effectively. Intellectual capital is referred to as the stocks and streams of knowledge existing in an organization (Gabriel, 2012). In support of this, Nonaka (1994) proposed that knowledge was the only major factor of production in relation to organizational survival; the process of achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. This implies that knowledge is the most important element that can be utilized by organization to create a competitive edge, attracts innovation and improves performance which can be sustained over time. Also, Prahalad and Hamel (1990) stated that the improved understanding of knowledge as the core capability is becoming a decisive survival issue.

Similarly, Zheng (2017) asserts that knowledge is the most important strategic resource in the knowledge economy that can provide competitive advantage which aids the transferring of information and intellectual properties into a long lasting worth. KS is the main characteristic for an organization success in the long run (Mansell & When, 1998; Stewart, 2001; Tat & Stewart, 2007) since it connects people or employees with the knowledge to carry out their task when needed. Therefore, KS is essential for the success or failure of an organization in the long run. More so, knowledge management which KS is a dimension is essential in the milieu of dynamic capabilities and proven to be a guideline for achieving sustainability in any organizations as opined by scholars.

Effective management of knowledge in the form of intellectual properties help organization to achieve competitive advantage (McGaughey, 2002; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Teece, 1998); in research productivity (Henderson & Cockburn (1994); technological development (Lichtenthaler & Lichtenthaler, 2009); as well as in the growth, transfer and utilization of capabilities (Zander & Kogut, 1995), Herciu et al. (2011) opined that in a knowledge based society, KM is the greatest prerequisite for firms craving competitive advantage. Consequently, Kale and Singh (2007) posit that the gathering and sharing of appropriate knowledge assists organization to improve performance on a given task. They further assert that knowledge-related resources are highly germane to the achievement of result for a given task and hence assist firms in the accomplishment of task. Despite the fact that studies have shown that KS can be used as a recipe for corporate sustainability, not much has been done on how KS can be made effective in order to achieve corporate sustainability. Thus, fostering sustainable development requires making knowledgeable interpretations and recommendations to support sustainability across a wide range of stakeholders (Gloet, 2006). Therefore, in order to generate and manage sustainable business ventures, managers of contemporary organizations need both stakeholder and sustainability knowledge geared towards achieving efficient and effective decision making. To this regard, Robinson, Anumba, Carrillo, and Al-Ghassani, (2006) suggested that for Km to be effective in an organization, it needs to be institutionalized via a four (4) step road map. These steps are: (i) aligning the KM policies with all business objectives;(ii) dispersing the KM practices in the entire organization;(iii) incorporating KM into the organizational culture, business processes, product development and employee behaviour; and (iv) continual evaluation of the performance of KM with regards to its impacts on corporate sustainability.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that knowledge sharing is a recipe for corporate sustainability. Knowledge sharing remains an indispensable asset in any organizations; whether in academics, banking sector, construction companies etc. The importance of sharing knowledge cannot be overemphasized despite the challenges encountered in the sharing of knowledge. KS has outcomes in organizations in the area of achieving performance, competitive edge, innovation employee and organizational resilience and ultimately sustainability. For any organization to experience loyalty from its customers, achieve competitive advantage, and maintain profitability in the long run should manage their knowledge resources effectively. If Knowledge is acquired and not shared in an organization is valueless, hence organization should imbibe a knowledge driven culture that supports learning and continuous improvement.

Corporate sustainability has resulted to fundamental changes in business which requires organizations to simultaneously address environmental and social issues, alongside traditional financial issues. The emergent of a knowledge sharing approach is vital to the achievement of sustainability since when managed effectively can lead to improvement in stakeholders value, innovation, organizational performance as well as in corporate governance. In order to avoid loss of competitive advantage and business opportunities, organizations should take the concept of knowledge sharing serious. Knowledge sharing improves organizational performance and serves as a prerequisite for achieving competitive edge in organizations as established in strategic management literature. Therefore, knowledge is a valuable resource and is very fundamental for the survival of the organisation in the long run.

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