Knowledge Management Activities in Ghanaian Businesses: Review of Literature

Vincent Amponsah
International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
vamponsah@sinapiaba.com

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to conduct a preliminary review of various studies and papers on knowledge management (KM) activities in Ghanaian businesses. The review was guided by two key questions; what has been the literature on KM in Ghanaian Businesses? How have the various KM activities been applied, and in which sectors of the economy?

Study design/methodology/approach: The study was conducted based on an organised review of several papers searched through various databases, including Google Scholar and Springer Link, with some inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the search, a total of 32 papers were deemed related to the paper's aim. A quick scan of the abstract resulted in 20 papers best fit the criteria set, and the focus was on papers that related to the KM processes and enablers and were related to the aim of the study.

Findings: The review revealed interesting findings; key among them is that the papers reviewed were dominated by studies in the public sector, specifically in the service industry, accounting for over 50% of all the articles searched. It also came up that significant challenges confronting businesses in implementing KM are lack of available KM systems, lack of leadership support, and lack of awareness of KM practices. Furthermore, on the issue of the KM processes that dominated the studies, it revealed that over 70% of the studies focused on KM sharing or transfer. Finally, it identified that applying KM activities results in several benefits, including innovation and business competitiveness.

Originality/value: The studies and papers on KM activities in Ghanaian businesses, particularly in the areas of KM processes and enablers, are dominated by knowledge-sharing activities. Again, in assessing the sectors that dominated the discussion, it was evident that services sectors prevailed.

Introduction

Organisations have many kinds of resources, intending to harness the resources into productive activities in the development of the organisations. This pertains not only to large firms but also to small firms and also not only to advanced economies. One of the key resources that are usually not mentioned but vital and critical is knowledge. Organisations, both large and small, have in recent times focused on the use of organisational knowledge in promoting business growth and performance. Many pieces of research and studies have confirmed this. According to Arsawan et al. (2020), knowledge is a useful resource that, when harnessed well, has the potential to bring development to organisations both large and small. However, the focus of knowledge usage in many studies has been on large firms, with minimal studies on small businesses. Sad to say that most economies are instead dominated by small businesses and so should rather have studies related to small businesses as against large firms.

Most studies have defined or explained knowledge in two folds; being tacit and explicit knowledge. However, several discussions on knowledge in small businesses have focused on tacit knowledge rather than explicit knowledge. This goes to buttress the point made by some writers that many knowledge management (KM) activities are going on in organisations, particularly small businesses. Still, they lack the understanding to appreciate that as KM.

Most of these KM practices and activities are aimed at the development of businesses; however, it is essential to mention, and as many studies have confirmed, that for knowledge to be utilised adequately for organisational growth, there is the need to implement appropriate practices and

systems that will support the knowledge resource. These processes involve the organisational structures, management commitment, and IT tools that will help the organisation harness the knowledge for its use. A scan into the studies conducted in the KM space has revealed that KM pertains not only to businesses in the developed world but also to the developing and underdeveloped world. And that much as businesses in the developed world use knowledge management, so do businesses in the underdeveloped. However, the application levels may not be the same since most businesses in the developed world seem to mature in using knowledge management in business activities.

This paper focuses on a literature review of papers on KM in Ghanaian businesses and how these businesses implement KM and its related activities. The paper aims to conduct a preliminary literature review of the papers identified as per the keywords used in the search. The purpose is to present the various studies available in the KM space among Ghanaian businesses and to serve as a direction and a motivation to open gaps for further research.

Knowledge management (KM)

Many researchers and authors have tried to avoid the temptation of giving a specific definition to the concept of KM. In their efforts, there has still not been a consensus on the very accepted definition of KM (Edvardsson & Durst, 2013). As a result, some have resorted to separately explaining the underlying constructs being knowledge and management. Notwithstanding the numerous attempts by many to avoid the temptation of giving definitions to KM, many have still resorted to building their thoughts and ideas on the existing literature. One major thought on the knowledge that many writers have resorted to in their attempt to define or explain knowledge has been that of Davenport and Prusak (1998). They defined knowledge as a fluid mix of framed experiences, values, contextual information, and experts' insights that provide a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. With numerous definitions, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) classify knowledge into two distinct types within every organisation; tacit and explicit knowledge. They explained tacit knowledge as the skills and experiences embedded within the individual and not easily articulated and transferred, whereas explicit knowledge, on the other hand, can be seen, felt, and documented.

Many writers have given their views and explanation for the term management; however, the term "management" generally means the act of organising and controlling a business or similar organisation. It includes two parts: responsibility and control. Peter F. Drucker was the first to identify management as an independent discipline authoring the concept of the corporation (1946) and the practice of management (1954).

KM, therefore, represents the process that deals with the development, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information and expertise within an organisation to support and improve its business performance. (Gupta et al., 2000). As corroborated by many authors, they further indicated that organisations need to harness knowledge to stay competitive and become innovative. KM requires a major shift in organisational culture and a commitment at all firm levels to make it work. Through a supportive organisational climate, ideally, through effective KM, an organisation can bring its entire organisational learning and knowledge to bear on any problem, anywhere in the world, at any time.

According to Fei Gao Meng Li Steve Clarke (2008), management of knowledge has two facets: administrative efforts concerning existing explicit, "subjective" or "objective" knowledge (e.g. static substance knowledge); and facilitative initiatives to enable the dynamic process of tacit or implicit knowledge flow among knowledge workers for the effectiveness and efficiency of the human activity system (e.g. dynamic process knowledge). They further indicated that managing organisational knowledge is to manage both substance and process knowledge.

Managing substance knowledge means managing the activities of developing, creating, capturing, codifying, mining, organising, distributing, diffusing, protecting, and utilising substance knowledge, which knowledge workers or professionals generally carry out. A critical look at the KM concepts in recent times has been the duty and task of every staff, and not only a dedicated team set to work on KM. Given this, it stands to reason that management shows commitment and leads in the KM activities in an organisation setting the right structure being backed with the right organisational culture to support the knowledge practices.

KM activities

Reaching a consensus on a single standard or process defined as KM activities has been farfetched. Each organisation, both large and small, may adopt some KM activities for its operational performance. Cerchione et al. (2016) defined KM practices or activities as the set of methods and techniques to support the organisational processes of knowledge creation, storage, transfer, and application. With the extent of literature on KM and its activities, there seems to be the need to position the thoughts on KM activities and practices clearly. Many writers have stressed that KM practices are embedded in the KM processes. According to Davenport (1994), KM is the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively using knowledge. Some authors have labelled the process as a four-stage process: discovery, capture, sharing, and application. It is important to mention that it involves converting information into useful knowledge accessible by stakeholders for organisational development, and many authors and writers have corroborated this.

As captured by several writers, the processes also vary in their application from organisation to organisation, even though they have some fundamental procedure that makes them qualify as KM activities or processes. The processes, as indicated, are usually spiced with the organisation's unique practices and cultural approaches. It is these cultural and environmental practices and approaches to the implementation of the KM processes that make each organisation unique (Amponsah, 2021). In other words, each organisation or firm has a unique approach to applying the processes and is usually viewed from the perspective of the organisation's stakeholders. These cultural and environmental activities and behaviours are considered the unique practices that support the processes for KM.

Several writers, in the bid to explain KM processes or activities, have resorted to the thoughts captured by Nonaka. According to Nonaka's (1994) four modes of knowledge creation (socialisation, combination, externalisation, and internalisation), socialisation involves converting tacit knowledge to new tacit knowledge through social interactions and shared experiences. The combination also involves creating new explicit knowledge by merging, categorising, and synthesising existing explicit knowledge; externalisation involves converting tacit knowledge to new explicit knowledge. And finally, internalisation involves creating new tacit knowledge from explicit knowledge. These processes involve iterative activities embedded in sharing experiences through observation, imitation, and practice. It generally occurs through workshops, seminars, apprenticeships, and conferences. These processes are very iterative, and their continuous implementation results in a learning organisation.

According to Amponsah (2021), these processes facilitated by what is termed the organisational KM climate (environment conducive to KM practices) differentiate one organisation from the other in terms of KM application. Some organisations have a well-conditioned climate favourable for KM process implementation. The climate constitutes the cultural setting of the organisation, its management structure and commitment, the organisation's KM awareness levels, and how the KM strategy ties into the organisational strategy, resource availability, and readiness, among others.

KM in Ghanaian businesses

KM is an emerging concept, especially in developing countries of which Ghana is not an exception. There is still much to study about KM and its processes. Informal firms dominate the Ghanaian economy, and their contribution to the economy cannot be overlooked. The contribution of informal firms to the growth of the Ghanaian economy is very significant and has been established in many studies. The Ghanaian business environment is known to be friendly, with businesses registered under any of the six (6) unique legal entities. Start-ups or large multinationals may choose the entity that suits their business operations in Ghana. The six (6) unique entities are Company limited by shares, Company limited by Guarantee, Company unlimited by shares, sole proprietorship, external companies, and incorporated partnership. With these formally registered businesses, it is also known that a significant proportion of unregistered businesses operate in the informal environment in the Ghanaian business space. The sectoral analysis of the Ghanaian business environment, as shown by Ghana Statistical Service Data (2020), revealed that the share of agriculture in Ghana's gross domestic product was 19.25 per cent, the industry contributed approximately 29.74 per cent, and the services sector contributed about 45.01 per cent. With the domination of the services sector in the economy, it is important to mention that most of these SMEs operate under the services sector of the economy. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2015), 91 per cent of the small and medium enterprises are informal firms, contributing about 70 per cent of GDP and accounting for 80 per cent of employment. With this contribution of the SME sector to the Ghanaian economy, it is not surprising that a significant proportion of the studies conducted in Ghana are in the SME space, even though much has not been in the area of KM.

As has been emphasised, the informal sector dominates the businesses operating in Ghana. Consequently, the level of KM activities could be said to be very limited. In terms of the sectors or industries that dominate the studies conducted were services and construction industries, constituting over 60 per cent of the papers identified and reviewed. The sectors that also featured prominently were the public services and particularly the service sectors in the public sector.

In reviewing KM in businesses, it was not out of place to conduct it with a nexus to the processes of KM in the Ghanaian economy. It came up that, in all the papers reviewed, over 70 per cent were related to knowledge-sharing activities, with the next in line being knowledge usage/ application, constituting over 13 per cent, with the rest in others.

This study excluded a search on SMEs but generalised it regarding Ghanaian businesses and KM activities. A search using the keywords as indicated revealed the following as related to the aims of the study with the various sectors as shown below.

Table 1: The number of Firms/Businesses and their Sectors

Sectors	Firms	Percentage
Service and Trading	8	40%
Construction	2	10%
Manufacturing	4	20%
Public Service*	6	30%
Total	20	100%

Method of literature review

A decision to study KM kept me wondering how and where to focus in terms of study to bring out a balance in the KM discussion in the Ghanaian economy. With the domination of the SME sector in the Ghanaian economy, it seems easier to have resorted to studying KM among SMEs; however, we saw the presentation of a balance in the discussion on whether should we venture into the general businesses in the Ghanaian economy. Consequently, our study into the KM

activities in Ghanaian businesses thereby does not restrict the review to only SMEs but other businesses. The study was conducted based on an organised review of several papers searched through various databases. Based on the paper's aim, some keywords related to the paper's aim and ideas were used for the search. The words included "knowledge management", "knowledge management in Ghanaian businesses", and "knowledge management activities".

The search focused on database sites Google Scholar and Springer Link. Some exclusion and inclusion criteria were set for the search. The inclusion criteria were articles, research papers, conference papers, English language, and Ghanaian business focus, focus on KM and KM activities. In addition, the search excluded paid articles and papers, and dissertations. In all thirty-two (32) papers deemed somewhat related to the paper's aim, a quick scan of the abstract was done to determine which papers best fit our interests. The determination was based on a priority for papers related to KM activities and processes and with a Ghanaian focus. This became necessary due to time constraints and was considered efficient means to have a broader view of thoughts and ideas on the topic. Twenty (20) papers best fit the criteria and thus constituted the basis for the review.

The review was guided by two key questions; what has been the literature on KM in Ghanaian Businesses? How have the various KM activities been applied, and in which sectors of the economy?

Investigation into the aim of the paper resulted in the findings and discussion around the processes of KM and how they are implemented in Ghanaian businesses as per the papers reviewed. Below is a table that shows some key ideas or findings that emerged from the preliminary review.

Table 2: Summary Results from Preliminary Review of relevant papers

Topic	Area of Study and Purpose	Methods used	Paper type	Key Findings and Contribution
Challenges in Adoption of KM in Construction	Explore critical challenges and strategies in Adopting KM	Survey methods with questionnaires used among 13 companies and 70 professionals	Empirical	Lack of available KM systems, lack of leadership support, and lack of awareness of KM practices
Customer KM practices on social media platforms: Case study MTN and Vodafone Ghana	Examine how social media can be employed to assist customer KM	The study employed case study and ethnography as research design. Data was obtained from Twitter and Facebook fan page MTN and Vodafone	Theoretical	The findings show that MTN and Vodafone Ghana have employed social media to manage customer knowledge and that social media is a potent tool for managing knowledge.
Innovation and Knowledge Sharing: A New Competitive Advantage in the Mobile Teleco Industry in Ghana	Examining the influence of the individual and organisational KS enablers on KS behaviour that leads to the development of firm innovation capability	A questionnaire was developed and administered randomly to a sample of 400 employees in the managerial and developmental levels of six mobile telecommunications companies	Empirical	It was revealed that employees in the Ghanaian telecommunication sector are influenced by their managers 'support, help, and encouragement to share knowledge more than the organisational rewards system
KM capability and organisational memory: a study	Explore organisational memory (OM) in three public agencies in a	The study targeted 3 large public institutions in Ghana. The study used a survey of 756 individuals in	Empirical	The findings confirm that knowledge management capability (KMC) positively and

of public sector agencies	developing country context	managerial and operational level positions in institutions to test the hypotheses in the study		significantly impacts OM. In particular, knowledge acquisition and retention capabilities are critical variables in building OM.
Knowledge application in Ghanaian industries	Ascertain the factors influencing knowledge application in Ghanaian industries	Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select 300 respondents. A questionnaire was the primary data collection tool.	Empirical	The study found that organisational culture, trust and absorptive capacity are the factors influencing knowledge application in Ghanaian industries
The knowledge enablers of knowledge transfer: a study in the construction industries in Ghana	This research investigates and identifies knowledge transfer (KT) enablers within the the developing country of Ghana	A perceptional questionnaire survey was used to elicit responses from construction practitioners using purposive and snowballing non-probability sampling techniques.	Empirical	It was revealed that knowledge strategy, organisational culture, information technology, and knowledge leadership as knowledge enablers have a significant positive relationship with KT
Knowledge sharing among employees in Ghanaian Industries: The role of transformational leadership style and communal organisational culture	Investigates the effects of organisational culture (OC) and transformational leadership (TL) style on knowledge sharing (KS)	A survey research design was used. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the study's sample size. A questionnaire was used for the data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.	Empirical	The findings show the presence of communal culture in industries in Ghana. Again, it was found that OC is a significant predictor of KS
The potential for technology and knowledge transfers between foreign and local firms: A study of the construction industry in Ghana	Multinational corporations (MNCs) and other foreign firms can be conduits for technology and knowledge (T&K) transfer to host countries in the developing world	Using the Ghanaian construction industry as an empirical focus, this article explores the T&K transfer potential	Empirical / Theoretical	The findings reveal significant weaknesses in T&K transfer across industry subsectors and between foreign and local firms. This arises from the potentially complementary but dissimilar resource and knowledge bases.
Towards a model of high-performance organisations (HPO) in Ghana	The study argues that by using KM and Management Innovation as independent variables and HPO framework and competitive advantage to mediate and moderate the relationships, High Organizational	Through literature review and the development of a conceptual model	Theoretical	The study speculates a positive relationship between KM and Organizational Performance (OP), which is mediated by the HPO framework and moderated by Competitive Advantage. It also assumes a positive relationship between Management Innovation and OP, which is mediated by the

	Performance can be predicted.			HPO framework and moderated by Competitive Advantage
University knowledge transfer and innovation performance in firms: the Ghanaian experience	Examines the association between university-industry collaboration and firm innovation performance, and the effect of informal mechanisms of knowledge transfer on such an association	Using data from a survey of 245 firms in Ghana and employing partial least squares structural equation modelling	Empirical	It came up that while University-industry collaboration is positively related to innovation performance in firms; informal mechanisms of university knowledge transfer do not and negatively moderate the positive association between university-industry collaboration and innovation performance in firms.
Utilisation of ICT in KM at the Ghana Volta River Authority	Investigates the use of ICT tools in KM in the Ghanaian state organisation, Volta River Authority (VRA), in achieving set goals	The research uses the SECI model for knowledge creation and sharing as its conceptual framework.	Empirical / Theoretical	The findings show that the concept of ICT in KM is still relatively new at VRA, even though ICT tools are widely used
KM Practice in The Ghanaian Construction Industry: A Case Study of 4 Firms in The Tamale Metropolis	Investigates the environmental enablers that promote KM implementation and test them in Ghanaian construction firms.	A case study design was used. Data were collected from a set of questionnaires administered to four (4) different construction firms.	Empirical	Findings revealed that the right environmental enablers (culture, infrastructure, and technology) are essential to KM implementation
Assessing the KM Capability of the Ghanaian Public Sector through the "BCPI." Matrix: A Case study of the Value Added Tax (VAT) Service	Assess the readiness of the public sector organisations in Ghana to adopt and practice KM in the face of various exigencies – political, economic and social- that are inherent in such establishments	The research methodology is based on a case study with the Value Added Tax (VAT) Service – a revenue institution that typifies Ghana's public sector organisations. Self-administered and semi-structured interview questionnaires were employed in the data collection.	Empirical	The results of this study show that the public sector organisations in Ghana exhibit tendencies that can be receptive to implementing KM programmes. Employees in the public sector generally display a positive knowledge culture which may be improved through enhanced working conditions and infrastructure.
KM in indigenous medicine: the expected role of Ghanaian university libraries	To find out the current way of preserving and disseminating information on indigenous medicine in Ghanaian university libraries.	Two data collection instruments were used, namely a questionnaire and an interview. Quantitative data collected were analysed using simple tables with frequencies and percentages, while	Empirical/ Theoretical	Some of the findings are that apart from the Library of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology the remaining university libraries have few information resources on indigenous medicine since most of them have

		qualitative data were analysed thematically.		never thought of gathering documents on indigenous medicine
In search of performance-oriented leadership behaviours in the Ghanaian financial service sector: the role of KS	Examine the mediating role of knowledge sharing (KNS) in the nexus between leadership behaviours and organisational performance (OP).	Using the survey research design, data were obtained from 335 employees in the Ghanaian financial service sector. Responses were analysed using IBM SPSS (v.23.0), Smart PLS 3.0 and Haye's (2017) PROCESS macro.	Empirical	KNS mediated the relationship between leadership behaviours and OP. In addition, transformational leadership behaviour and transactional leadership behaviour positively relate to OP rather than transfor-sactional leadership behaviour.
Innovation and KS of SME in an emerging economy; the moderating effect of transformational leadership style	Examines the impact of various types of innovation (product, process, marketing, and organisation) on the KS of SMEs through transformational leadership	A total of 437 samples were collected from SMEs owners/managers in the service sector of a developing economy through a quantitative method. The data were analysed using a SMART PLS-SEM	Empirical	The findings confirmed the hypotheses that innovation has a significant influence on KS; whiles transformational leadership had a non-moderating effect
The impact of tacit knowledge sharing on the success of construction companies' operations	Examine the impact of sharing tacit knowledge on the success of a company.	Construction managers and senior managers were the study's target participants. The correlation matrix was used to assess the significant correlation between study frameworks. The statistical approach of multiple regression was also used to test the hypotheses using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) v.26.	Empirical	The findings suggest that companies will be more willing and capable of making decisions based on experience when knowledge systems are used successfully. Furthermore, new organisational knowledge and particular evaluation procedures, such as anxiety and conflict resolution preparation, personal relationship and training improvement, mediation and task clarity, are explained, which can aid in success.
Knowledge transfer in the emerging solar energy sector in Ghana	The study reports the results of an exploratory qualitative investigation into knowledge transfer processes within the solar energy industry in Ghana.	Interviewed 12 solar energy firms operating in the country and 12 solar energy users. The data were analysed using Tables and statements from the respondents.	Empirical / Theoretical	The results reveal that an increasing number of firms are entering the industry to take advantage of the growing demand for solar energy. There is also a general eagerness among individuals and firms to acquire skills and knowledge, mainly from foreign firms, and inter-firm knowledge

				transfers appear to be facilitated by social ties
The Linkage Between Knowledge Acquisition, Learning Flexibility, and Product Innovation in Small and Medium Enterprises	Seeks to establish the relationship between KA through Industry Knowledge and knowledge from prior experience on product innovation (PI)	Using Survey data was collected from 500 manufacturing SMEs in the Eastern region of Ghana,	Empirical	The result showed that both knowledge acquisition (Prior Experience and Industry Knowledge) were found to have a statistically significant effect on SMEs' product innovation. The results also revealed that Learning Flexibility partially mediates the relationship between Prior Experience and SME product innovation.

Findings and discussion

The findings are organised in two main areas: KM processes and enablers or capabilities. In terms of the KM processes, the study highlighted knowledge creation, knowledge sharing or transfer, knowledge storage, and its usage or application. And in terms of capabilities, the area of capabilities or enablers is also shown, as per the review.

KM Processes

Knowledge Creation/Acquisition/Generation

Knowledge creation or generation is considered the initial part of the KM process and, however, very useful in the process. The KM practice of getting information has been established as knowledge acquisition. Many terms or names are associated with such a practice of getting information. This includes knowledge generation, acquisition, and knowledge creation, among others. Many writers have painstakingly tried to define or explain the knowledge acquisition process. Nonaka (1994); AlMulhim (2020) opined that knowledge acquisition and creation occur when individuals engage in practical activities through participation in social practices under the guidance of individuals who are more experienced than them. Huber (1991) also defined knowledge acquisition as a process of gathering, understanding, and organising information; it includes five sub-processes: congenital learning, experimental learning, vicarious learning, grafting, and searching. From the definitions, it could be realised that knowledge acquisition in an organisation involves a lot of interaction of human activities with a lot of consciousness to creating knowledge. Thus, it could be said that several factors describe knowledge creation and acquisition: market information around the organisation; knowledge on-the-job using techniques such as quality circles, case notes, mentoring and coaching to create, acquire and share knowledge using technologies like teleconferencing, videoconferencing and groupware (Castaneda and Cuellar, 2020).

Although it did not reveal much about knowledge acquisition as part of the KM process, the literature search had some interesting results. The following were the few findings from the review:

- In an organisation's KM journey, it is important to consider knowledge acquisition as a critical variable in building organisational memory. This is important because there is a tendency for businesses to try to manage their knowledge to neglect the initial process of knowledge acquisition.

- In corroboration to many studies conducted, the result showed that both knowledge acquisition (Prior Experience and Industry Knowledge) were found to have a statistically significant effect on business' product innovation. This is important because innovation is considered a by-product of KM activities. Many writers have pointed out the potential of KM for innovation. According to (Goh, 2005), innovation is an intentional change in the existing products, services, ideas, and operations new to the end-user or unit of adoption. For many, it is imperative for survival in competitive markets; thus, businesses invest heavily in Research and Development to stay competitive (Hayes et al., 2005). However, it must be said that there cannot be meaningful research in the organisation without organisational knowledge. Plessis (2007) noted that innovation is dependent on knowledge.

Knowledge Storage

As already indicated, the KM process involves creating knowledge through storage and sharing and using the created knowledge. As part of the KM process, having a sound knowledge storage system or organisational memory is important. Alavi (2000) claimed that creating new knowledge is not enough and that mechanisms are needed to store acquired knowledge and retrieve it when needed. According to Raghu and Vinze (2002), effective knowledge storage practices enable storing observations, consequences, and exceptions in workflow execution and decision-making activities. Most effective storage practices tend to be non-intrusive and occur naturally as part of workflow and decision-making activities. Traditionally, knowledge storage and organisational memory are more akin to technology. However, it is important to mention the cultural dimension of organisational memory. Organisational memory includes knowledge residing in various component forms that may include written documentation, structured information stored in electronic databases, codified human knowledge stored in expert systems, documented organisation procedures and processes, and tacit knowledge acquired by individuals and networks of individuals (Tan et al., 1998). Some writers believe a knowledge storage system must have some factors to make it work. These include structure allowing the system to quickly and correctly present information and classify events, policies, or procedures based on learning needs.

The review of the papers related to Ghanaian businesses had a minimal study on knowledge storage and organisational memory. Reasons could not be assigned to the few numbers of research in this area; however, that could not be suggested for less relevance in terms of the KM processes. With the very few studies shown in the area of knowledge storage, it was revealed that KM capabilities have a positive and significant impact on organisational memory and that knowledge acquisition and retention capabilities, particularly, are critical variables in building organisational memory.

Knowledge Sharing/Transfer/Dissemination

Knowledge sharing is considered a key component in the KM process. It has been recognised as the most important factor in the success of KM. Several authors have explained knowledge sharing in various ways; however, it is all centred on exchanging knowledge, skills, and experience among employees in an organisation. Knowledge sharing is a mutual exchange of ideas and information that could influence how teams learn in organisations (Shamsie & Mannor, 2013). It involves the capturing, organising, reusing, and transferring tacit knowledge, often characterised as the implicit knowledge of one's own practices (Brooks, 1994). According to Davenport et al. (1998), knowledge is created invisibly in the human brain, and only the right organisational climate can persuade people to create, reveal, share and use it.

The study revealed that knowledge transfer was far the most written about among the KM processes. Furthermore, it was revealed that with the search, over 70 per cent of the papers concerned KM transfers among Ghanaian businesses. This confirms the many thoughts on the importance of knowledge transfer in the KM processes. The following were some interesting findings from the review conducted on Ghanaian businesses and KM activities.

- In knowledge sharing, employees are influenced by the manager's support and help to share knowledge even more than reward systems that may be implemented for knowledge sharing strategies.
- Knowledge enablers (strategy, organisational culture, information technology, and knowledge leadership) have a significant positive relationship with knowledge transfer.
- The studies revealed the presence of communal culture in industries in Ghana. And that communal culture, as part of most Ghanaian organisational culture, was found to be a significant predictor of knowledge sharing.
- The findings reveal significant weaknesses in Knowledge transfer across industry subsectors and between foreign and local firms. This arises from the potentially complementary but dissimilar resource and knowledge bases.
- Knowledge sharing mediated the relationship between leadership behaviours and Organisational performance.
- The findings confirmed the hypotheses that innovation significantly influences knowledge sharing, while transformational leadership had a non-moderating effect.
- The results reveal a general eagerness among individuals and firms to acquire skills and knowledge, mainly from foreign firms. Moreover, inter-firm knowledge transfers appear to be facilitated by social ties.

Knowledge Usage / Application

The initial KM process of knowledge generation, storage, and sharing is meaningless unless linked to an effective and efficient strategy for applying knowledge to business decisions. Knowledge not properly harnessed may not achieve the desired benefits that accrue to businesses who have intentions of using knowledge resources for business decisions. Wiig (1999) notes that the value of knowledge assets is realised when the assets are used to create products or deliver services or when they are sold or traded for value. Knowledge application is said to be the actualisation of knowledge to make decisions, improve processes, and make the best use of this knowledge to solve business problems. Many businesses have used different ways and means to implement knowledge resources into developing the business or solving organisational problems.

As suggested in many studies, the review showed that the acquisition and application of knowledge affect product innovation in Ghanaian business resulting in the business gaining a competitive advantage. It further revealed that the use of knowledge resources in institutions makes the business more willing and capable of making decisions resulting in the organisation's success.

The application of knowledge resources helps the organisation's leadership behaviours, which positively affect organisational performance.

There is a tendency to assume that the fact that ICT tools are available in organisations will result in using ICT in KM. However, it was revealed that the availability of ICT tools does not necessarily impact ICT in KM. Since it became evident in some public organisations that even though there were ICT tools, they did not necessarily affect the ICT usage in KM activities.

One of the key propellers of knowledge sharing or transfer is the institution of a reward system in organisations. However, the study revealed that support and encouragement from managers in some Ghanaian businesses influence the knowledge-sharing behaviour more than the organisational rewards system.

KM enablers or capabilities

A firm's KM culture, structure, and technology constitute a firm's internal KM capabilities (Gold et al., 2001). KM enablers are the mechanisms for organisations to develop their knowledge and stimulate the creation of knowledge within the organisation and the sharing and protection of it (Yeh et al., 2006). Many studies have identified these three factors as the key enabling factors supporting organisational KM. Many writers have considered organisational communication systems, communal culture, transformational leadership, and information technology as the essential KM enablers. Some have named it KM capabilities, tools, or factors. Some writers seem to put the processes and capabilities together in several discussions. Gold et al. (2001) described the processes, practices, and systems as factors affecting KM and called them KM capabilities. He further categorised the capabilities into two infrastructure capabilities and process capabilities. The infrastructure capabilities have three factors; Technology, Structure, and Culture, and the process capabilities are discussed in four-factor perspectives. These four factors are acquisition, conversion, application, and protection.

Each of the three KM enablers or capabilities has a specific and unique role in making the knowledge activities function well in a business environment. Whereas technology refers to the information technology and infrastructure and its capabilities supporting the KM architecture, organisational structure refers to the formal relationships and allocation of activities and resources among people. And finally, the organisational culture is the set of values, beliefs, norms, meanings, and procedures shared by organisation members. The effective and efficient interplay of these capabilities creates a suitable environment for organisation KM activities, ensuring the right resources and capabilities technologically and the right structure and framework supported by a good organisational culture. In an environment such as this, there is communication, collaborative learning, trust, support for one another, and the desire to have the knowledge permeate through the various levels of the organisation. Studies have shown the contribution or impact on the KM processes.

The review of the studies did not reveal any known differences in the KM capabilities of businesses in developed countries and those in developing or underdeveloped countries. There might be some differences in its application among small and large firms. The review of studies on Ghanaian businesses and their KM activities had some interesting findings as follows:

- In corroboration to many studies, it was revealed that the right environmental enablers (culture, infrastructure, and technology) are essential to KM implementation.
- It is widely known that ICT is an enabler to KM activities and processes; however, the findings revealed that the presence of ICT does not necessarily propel KM activities and processes. One of the studies showed that the ICT concept in KM is still relatively new even though ICT tools are widely used in the organisation.
- It was also revealed that public sector organisations in Ghana exhibit tendencies that can be receptive to implementing KM programmes. Employees in the public sector generally display a positive knowledge culture which may be improved through enhanced working conditions and infrastructure.
- The findings suggest that companies are more willing and capable of making decisions based on experience when knowledge systems are used successfully. This explains the importance of KM systems in KM activities.

Conclusion

This paper aimed to identify and review the body of knowledge regarding KM activities in Ghanaian businesses. And to summarise its findings in connection with the existing knowledge in the KM space.

The study revealed several KM activities conducted among Ghanaian businesses. These activities were highlighted in two main areas for discussion. These were KM processes and enablers.

The review shows knowledge transfers or sharing as the most written about among the KM processes. However, there were no findings to prove its superiority in terms of its potency in the KM process journey among organisations in Ghana. It also came up that over 60% of the papers reviewed were in the service industries, and also, the papers were empirical in nature as others.

One critical issue most written about is the contribution of KM processes to an organisation's innovation ability. In confirmation of existing knowledge, the study revealed that the acquisition and application of knowledge affect product innovation in Ghanaian business resulting in the business gain a competitive advantage.

In reference to knowledge enablers or capabilities, an organisation's ICT capabilities are a key component of knowledge capabilities. However, it was revealed that just the presence of ICT does not necessarily propel KM activities and processes. Finally, it came up that KM capabilities have a positive and significant impact on organisational memory and that knowledge acquisition and retention capabilities are critical variables in building organisational memory.

Some challenges were highlighted in the papers as challenges confronting the businesses in implementing KM. Key among them was lack of available KM systems, lack of leadership support, and lack of awareness of KM practices and their business application.

Given the importance and contribution of SMEs to the Ghanaian economy, it would not be out of place to consider a study into KM activities in Ghanaian SMEs. Again It would be interesting to have further study on how each of the sectors of the businesses in Ghana applies KM activities and how the implementation of KM activities influences their business operations. Finally, it would be interesting to study further how Information systems support each of the KM processes in SMEs or Ghanaian businesses.

References

Alavi, M., & Leidner, D. E. (2001). Review: Knowledge Management and Knowledge Management Systems: Conceptual Foundations and Research Issues. *MIS Quarterly*, *25*(1), 107–136. https://doi.org/10.2307/3250961

AlMulhim, A. (2020). The effect of tacit knowledge and organisational learning on financial performance in service industry. *Management Science Letters*, 10(10), 2211-2220.

Amponsah, V. (2021). Knowledge Management Systems and Practices and SME Growth. Management, 20, 21.

Arsawan, I. W. E., Koval, V., Rajiani, I., Rustiarini, N. W., Supartha, W. G., & Suryantini, N. P. S. (2020). Leveraging knowledge sharing and innovation culture into SMEs sustainable competitive advantage. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, *ahead-of-print* (ahead-of-print).

Brooks, A. K. (1994). Power and the production of knowledge: Collective team learning in work organisations. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *5*(3), 213–235. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.3920050303

Castaneda, D. I., & Cuellar, S. (2020). Knowledge sharing and innovation: A systematic review. *Knowledge and Process Management*, *27*(3), 159–173. https://doi.org/10.1002/kpm.1637

Cerchione, R., Esposito, E., & Spadaro, M. R. (2016). A literature review on knowledge management in SMEs. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice*, *14*(2), 169–177. https://doi.org/10.1057/kmrp.2015.12

Davenport, T. H., & Prusak, L. (1998). *Working knowledge: How organisations manage what they know*. Harvard Business Press.

Du Plessis, M. (2007). The role of knowledge management in innovation. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, *11*(4), 20–29. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270710762684

Edvardsson, I. R., & Durst, S. (2013). Does Knowledge Management Deliver the Goods in SMEs? *Business and Management Research*, *2*(2), p52. https://doi.org/10.5430/bmr.v2n2p52

Gao, F., Li, M., & Clarke, S. (2008). Knowledge, management, and knowledge management in business operations. *Journal of knowledge management*.

Goh, P. C. (2005). Intellectual capital performance of commercial banks in Malaysia. *Journal of intellectual capital*.

Gold, A. H., Malhotra, A., & Segars, A. H. (2001). Knowledge management: An organisational capabilities perspective. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *18*(1), 185–214.

Gupta, B., Iyer, L. S., & Aronson, J. E. (2000). Knowledge management: Practices and challenges. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, *100*(1), 17–21. https://doi.org/10.1108/02635570010273018

Huber, G. (1999). Facilitating Project Team Learning and Contributions to Organizational Knowledge. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, *8*(2), 70–76. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8691.00122

Nonaka, I. (1994). A Dynamic Theory of Organizational Knowledge Creation. *Organization Science*, *5*(1), 14–37. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.5.1.14

Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995). The Knowledge Creating. *New York*, *304*.

Raghu, T. S., & Vinze, A. (2007). A business process context for Knowledge Management. *Decision support systems*, *43*(3), 1062-1079.

Shamsie, J., & Mannor, M. J. (2013). Looking Inside the Dream Team: Probing into the Contributions of Tacit Knowledge as an Organizational Resource. *Organization Science*, *24*(2), 513–529. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1120.0741

Tan, K. C., Kannan, V. R., & Handfield, R. B. (1998). Supply chain management: supplier performance and firm performance. *International Journal of Purchasing & Materials Management*, *34*(3).

Wiig, K. M. (1999). What future knowledge management users may expect. *Journal of knowledge management*.

Yeh, Y., Lai, S., & Ho, C. (2006). Knowledge management enablers: A case study. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, *106*(6), 793–810. https://doi.org/10.1108/02635570610671489