Knowledge creation and innovation for competitive advantage in the insurance industry, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The study investigated knowledge creation and innovation practises at Life Assurance Company in order to achieve competitive advantage in the insurance industry. Introduction of better products which are competitive in the insurance industry is difficult to attain. Organisations generally lack skills and expertise for knowledge creation. The study was anchored in the Knowledge Conversion Theory (SECI Model). It sought to establish how knowledge creation process and new knowledge influence/encourage innovation leading to better service delivery and new products at an insurance company in Zimbabwe. This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodology in a case study design. Data were collected using questionnaire and interviews from purposively sampled 3 managers and 8 employees. The researchers found out that the insurance company creates new knowledge and has innovation strategies put in place at departmental level to assist in the creation of new products and services. The study concluded that knowledge creation is not done to the optimum and as such Life Assurance Company need to enhance knowledge creation practices and the management should encourage inter-departmental interaction for the purposes of knowledge sharing. The insurance organisation needs to upgrade and improve its ICT tools. To encourage knowledge creation and innovation for the purposes of achieving competitive advantage in the insurance industry, the study recommends that there should be frequent employee training and education at this insurance organisation and all employees should be encouraged to utilise modern ICTs tools. The study recommends a constant interaction and networking between agents and other departments working to improve products and delivering services to clients.

Keywords: assurance, explicit knowledge, insurance industry, tacit knowledge

Introduction

Knowledge is the key and most the important engine of production in any organisation and it allows for creation of new ideas, new products and new ways of delivering service (Mashall, n.d). Thus in every organisation there is the need for organisational knowledge creation which allows for the creation of new knowledge that can be used in decision making and problem solving. Knowledge creation as part of knowledge management is key to the sustainable survival of an organisation (Lwanga and Ngulube, 2019). Sallis and Jones (2002:4) are of the view that "successful organisations are those that realize the importance of making the most of what they know, and at the same time developing new value by creating knowledge". This means that for an organisation to be successful it needs to identify the knowledge which is used to create new value, new products and new services. Saguy (2011) views innovation as the application of an idea/invention, technology or process to a product/service that will satisfy a specific need. Without the creation of this knowledge an organisation may lose important information which can be used in creating new values and new products. The insurance industries resource is no longer capital or labour only but it is also knowledge. For an organisation to gain new clients, improve on service delivery and have new profits, there must be innovation. The organisation needs to create, identify, disseminate use, and apply new knowledge. Innovations are tools which exploit change to businesses and services (Drucker, 1985).

In every organisation, knowledge has become a critical resource to ensuring sustainable strategic competitive advantage. Lwanga and Ngulube (2019) think that the success of an organisation partly depends on its ability to create and use knowledge. The creation, capturing, storing and reusing knowledge can have wide-ranging benefits in an insurance broking setup which include gaining advantage over competitors. Knowledge management, thus, is the process of applying a systematic approach to the capture, structure, management, and dissemination of knowledge throughout an organization, to work faster, reuse best practices, and reduce costly rework from project to project (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). It is important for an organisation to manage knowledge so as to reduce the risk of losing it through employee retirement, turnover, deaths and competition in the industry.

Knowledge management also plays a vital role in ensuring that knowledge required in the innovation process is available and accessible. As innovation creates resources, it constitutes a knowledge base which needs to be managed (Drucker, 1985). Innovation is organised and systematic which gives an allowance of the creation of newer ideas at a company which helps in the improvements of business activities. Knowledge management involves the processes of knowledge capturing, knowledge creation, knowledge dissemination, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, use, to mention but just a few. These processes assist in bringing out innovation. If these knowledge processes are used by staff members it leads to an increase in skills and knowledge, thus improving service delivery and bringing out new quality products. In all the processes of knowledge management, innovation plays a part in identifying where a problem is in the services and products of a company and thus finding a solution.

Innovation is the main aspect to every organisation, that is the employees need to develop a lot of thinking which leads to knowledge creation. The management in the organisation need to select best practises which allow for knowledge creation. A conducive environment needs to be available at a company which allows for sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge. Knowledge is embedded in practices; that is, it does not have a specific location outside social practices, human interactions and experiences (Boland and Tenkasi, 1995). Knowledge can be explicit, which exists in documented information or tacit, which is embedded in people`s minds. Managers or members responsible for knowledge management need to know how they will capture and identify the knowledge in the organisation which can be a leverage for competitive advantage.

Knowledge creation is an important aspect in the development of new ideas in the organisation. Creation of new knowledge is at the heart of every organisation for a competitive advantage and it results in the creation of new ideas which enhances the growth of an organisation and making the service delivery and products unique from other competitors. It involves continuous transfer, combination and conversion of knowledge as users practice, interact and learn (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The continuous creation of knowledge is an advantage to an organisation, for instance in the insurance industry. The organisation continues to grow with the creation of new knowledge and ideas for facilitating new quality products and improving service delivery.

Dorothy Leonard (1997) observed that innovation has become a tremendously important, competitive tool, both in the way technologies are put together into products and services and in the way organizations are structured to deliver those benefits. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) enable and facilitate knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, knowledge management and knowledge sharing in an organisation. ICTs are important as they increase the number of people who can participate in the creation of knowledge and it is shared to many individuals using various forms of ICTs. Subashini et al. (n.d) noted that ICTs facilitate sharing of knowledge and also facilitates the creation of new knowledge thus it has a prominent role in knowledge management. Different ICTs which can be used in an organisation to enhance knowledge creation include computers, e-mails, telephones, and databases for storing knowledge created, video-conferencing equipment and some other ICTs equipment.

Contextual setting

For the purposes of maintaining privacy and mutual respect between the researchers and the insurance organisation under study, this paper withheld the identity of the company. This study, was conducted at Life Assurance unit of the whole company. Life assurance is often sold as whole life or a permanent insurance. The insurance will pay a sum of money when someone dies, or at an agreed date, if he is alive (Penrose, 2004). General insurance is a non-life insurance policy consisting of automobile and home-owners policies. Payments in general insurance are done after the loss or damage of the insured item from a particular event. The whole insurance company comprises four sectors which include Life Assurance, General Insurance, Asset Management and Micro Finance. These sectors function differently and work individually according to their different functions and the services they deliver. Life Assurance have products which include the Funeral Family Plan, the Diaspora Funeral Cash plan, Whole Life Product, Personal Pension Plan, Education Protector and My Legacy Plan. General Insurance`s products include motor insurance, home insurance, travel insurance, health

insurance and commercial property insurance. Micro-finance products are mainly based on liability insurance. Asset management has cover plans which links to investing for a company or an individual and these include the Private wealth management, Institutional fund management and the Commercial unit trusts. Services offered are almost the same at these sectors and they include managing policy documents, processing of claims, allocation and collection of premiums, and continuous adding or removing beneficiaries.

Although the organisation joined one of the biggest insurance companies worldwide, It faces stiff and serious competition in the insurance industry. Competition in the insurance industry is mainly focused on attracting more clients and gaining more profits and this can be achieved through innovation and knowledge creation. Clients who are targeted by insurance companies include civil servants, employees in well-known companies in Zimbabwe, medical practitioners and the general public. Agents or Financial Advisors use their knowledge to locate these clients, creating and developing a client database and looking for potential clients. Plescan and Gavriletea (n.d) explain that employers in insurance industry have recognised the value of identifying and accessing knowledge from different sources to work on common goals. Creating new ideas and managing those ideas can afford this insurance company a competitive advantage over rivals. In using the knowledge created they can attract more clients and the available clients can refer other clients to the organisation which is one of the important sources of clients, rather than going to other insurance companies (Plescan and Gavriletea, n.d).

Innovation can be combined and used in producing new products that can attract new clients in the process. Creating new products is mainly done by project teams and sometimes by interest groups. Tacit knowledge is an important form of knowledge in which the Life Assurance can leverage upon. The importance of tacit knowledge is that a skill cannot be explained in words whether spoken or written but can be learnt through observing and it is easy to observe rather than reading (Drucker, 1993). Tacit knowledge can be demonstrated and through apprenticeship and experience it is easy for someone to learn a technique and skill.

Theoretical framework

This study was informed by the Knowledge Conversion Theory (SECI Model) (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and the Ba Concept (Nonaka and Konno, 1998).

The Knowledge Conversion Theory (SECI Model)

The Knowledge Conversion Theory (SECI Model) by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) focuses on the interactions of tacit and explicit knowledge resulting in the creation of new knowledge. In each of the four quadrants (Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination and Internalisation) in the SECI Model, new knowledge is created. The SECI Model has become the cornerstone of knowledge creation and the knowledge types can be combined and converted, showing how knowledge can be shared and created in the organization (Frost, 2010). Socialisation involves the social interaction of two people or a group of people sharing ideas and discussing in the same environment and as such new tacit knowledge is converted through shared experiences which one has gained in a working environment (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). New tacit knowledge is that knowledge which comes from different group members through observation of the works of someone, imitation, practice, and participation.

Externalisation is a process of converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge (Nonaka et. al, n.d) and there is the emergence of new ideas through the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. This new knowledge which has been captured is then used for the creation

of new products and for improvement of service delivery. Combination means the mixture of explicit knowledge which is collected, blended, and connected to the processes which are done at the company (Nonaka et al., n.d). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) refer to internalisation as a process of embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge such that new ideas are developed and learned within the organisation. New ideas can be created, for example, when individuals sit together in groups, which are sometimes called communities of practice, or they can make use of ICTs and gain new tacit knowledge. Figure 2 illustrate the knowledge conversion theory.

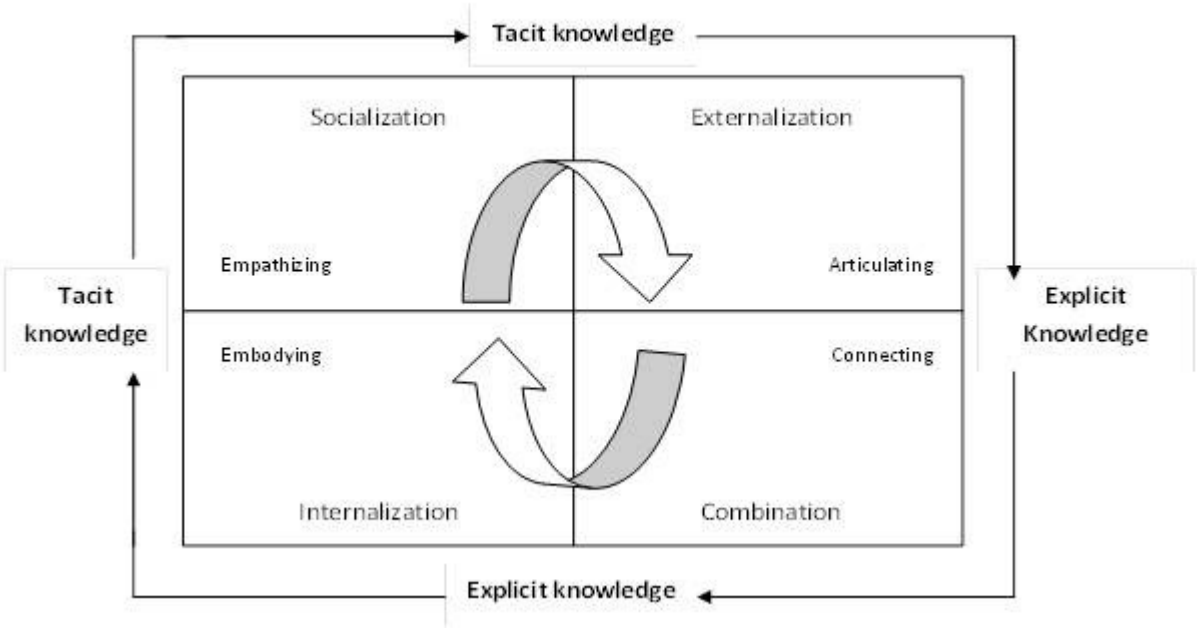


Figure 2 SECI Model (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995)

Ba Concept

Ba concept is a context for knowledge creation and for knowledge to be actually managed. Like any other resources there is the need for space (Neto and Choo, 2010). The Ba Concept connects with the SECI model in that for all processes occurring at each level of the SECI there is the need for space. The space can be physical, virtual or mental. Examples of physical space include offices or business space located at a distant area from the company. Virtual spaces include emails or video conferencing and mental space include shared experiences and ideas.

Nonaka`s interpretation of the Ba concept is that it gives space for the exchange of data, information and opinions, collaborations that are seen in an organisation. These exchange of data can be done in physical space which may be in offices. The Ba appreciates the need for space in knowledge creation, management, dissemination and use (Neto and Choo, 2010). The Ba Concept suggests that individuals can make use of virtual space in knowledge creation. Virtual space include emails, video conferencing or auditorium and these are important aspects in the creation of new knowledge. The concept also considers mental space as an example of space which can be used by individuals in the creation of knowledge. Nonaka (1995) explained that Ba can be thought of as a shared space which can be mental, that is allowing the sharing of experiences. Mental space mainly shows ordinary human interactions and provides the

platform for knowledge creation in an organisation. As individuals interact with one another, either in offices or by making calls, they share ideas and experiences. The interaction of the Ba Concept and the Knowledge Conversion Theory is illustrated in figure 3.

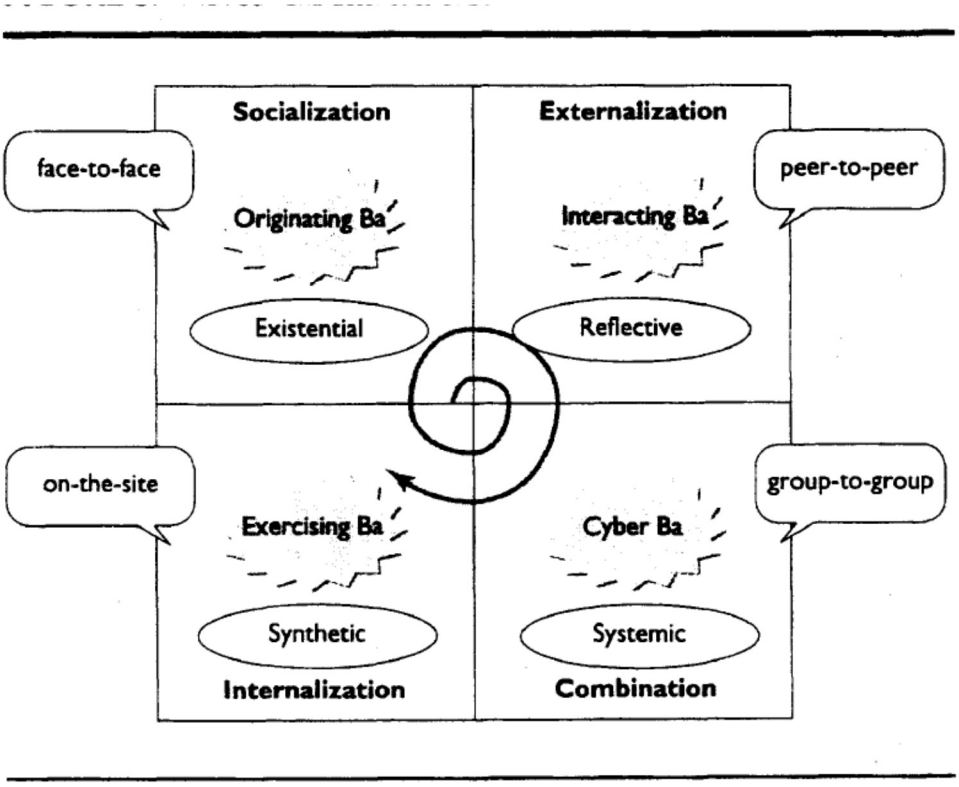


Fig 3 the four characteristics of the Ba Concept (Nonaka and Konno, 1998)

Statement of the problem

Introduction of better products which are competitive in the insurance industry is difficult to attain especially in a struggling economy. Organisations generally lack skills and expertise for knowledge creation. In an insurance industry, the main job activities which are critical to the organisation include the daily routines of insurance agents in locating clients and the service delivery practised by insurance employees at the company and that is how knowledge is created (Plescan and Gavriletea, n.d). It seems the managers are failing to create that knowledge so that it can be used in creating new products and better service delivery. Customer satisfaction has become one of the burning issues confronting every business. Likewise this Life Assurance needs to have new products and better service delivery practices to keep current customers and attract more clients. The study therefore sought to assess how insurance company`s knowledge creation and innovation practises can achieve competitive advantage in the insurance industry. Specifically the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. How is new knowledge created at the insurance organisation?
2. What role can the available ICTs at the insurance organisation play in creating new knowledge?

3. Does the initiatives available at the insurance organisation allow for the creation of new knowledge?
4. To what extent does knowledge creation enhance better service delivery at the insurance organisations?
5. Does new knowledge lead to innovation and new products at the insurance organisations?

Methodology

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodology in a case study design. Data were collected using questionnaire and interviews from purposively sampled 3 managers and 8 employees. In this study the researchers focused on the main branch in Harare. The population comprised 8staff members from different departments and 3 general managers. The researchers made appointments a week before data collection and emailed the interview guide to the key participants for them to study the questions before the interview date and enable them ask for clarity on pertinent issues before the interview. The researchers collected the filled in questionnaire for analysis together with the data gathered from the interviews. Qualitative data from interviews were presented in themes. Quantitative data were analysed using Microsoft Excel. Out of eight questionnaire six were completed and returned to give a response rate of 75% which rendered copies of the study results reliable for analysis. Individual Life Manager, Group Business Supervisor and the Customer Care Manager were targeted for interviews. The Customer Care Manager was not available on the date of the interview due to other commitments. Only the Individual Life Manager and Group Business Supervisor were interviewed to give 66.67% response rate for interviews.

Results

The findings are presented and discussed under the headings below:

How knowledge is created at the Life Assurance

The first objective of this study was to establish how knowledge is created at the insurance organisation. Respondents were asked to indicate strategies in place at the company which facilitate knowledge creation by the staff. Results indicate that training (4:66.67%) was a common strategy, followed by workshops and seminars (1:16.67%). A total of 5 (83%) respondents from different departments indicated that they conduct training programmes and seminars which lead to the creation of new knowledge. These training programmes and seminars are mostly done at the company, thus a combination of a mixture of explicit knowledge.

Regarding how knowledge is created at the insurance organisation interviewees reported as follows:

Individual Life Manager: *"The Life Assurance mainly conducts training programmes to its employees and a few workshops which facilitate knowledge sharing".*

The Group Business Supervisor: *"Mentorship of employees by senior workers and managers is another strategy".*

Results indicate that management encourages knowledge creation and it is a norm for insurance organisation that every employee should be mentored and coached by seniors or managers as soon as they join the company. IGI Global (2010) defined knowledge creation as the ability to create new knowledge which applies to both an individual and a shared reflection on the new working processes.

Market research for new clients and products

Respondents were asked whether the insurance organisation conducts market research which leads to the acquisition of new knowledge about existing and new clients. It emerged that 5 (83%) respondents agreed that market research is constantly conducted thus aiding creation of new knowledge with resources being deployed in that regard. This finding confirms De Koker and Du Plessis (2020) who observed that product or service development, market testing and marketing allow for improvement of the prototype in an iterative cycle until the prototype is transformed into the actual product. Dorothy Leonard (1997) observed that the most agile companies are able to build upon their knowledge assets—both the tacit knowledge in people's heads and the explicit knowledge in work processes and skills—to redirect themselves toward new markets.

Role of ICTs in creating new Knowledge

In order to establish how ICTs tools help in Knowledge Sharing or Transfer at the insurance organisation respondents were asked to indicate the types of ICT they use in their departments. Results indicate that computers, laptops and websites are commonly used for Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Transfer. Smart phones are less used mostly become many employees cannot afford to buy them. Denning (2002), indicated that electronic databases, interactive tool and multimedia presentations have become available to extend the techniques for capturing content. Respondents were asked to indicate the different types of social media platforms they use with other colleagues to create knowledge. All 6 (100%) respondents indicated that they use Whatsapp to share knowledge with colleagues. This was followed by Emails (5:83%), Facebook (4:66.67%), LinkedIn (4:66.67%) and Twitter (1:16.67%), the last three being social media platforms used by employees in creating and sharing knowledge. This confirms Hajarian, Bastanfard, Mohammadzaden and Khalilian (2017:283) who regard social media as websites and applications which are designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently, and in real-time.

Regarding improvements done on the current ICT tools for the purposes of enhancing knowledge creation and innovation, interviewees remarked as follows:

The Individual Life Manager: *"Discussions were done earlier in 2018 on improving the ICT tools used by employees so that they can use smart phones which enhance knowledge creation".*

The Group Business Supervisor: *"The management of the Life Assurance has tried to make all employees including interns to have their own computers or laptops which enhance innovation".*

ICTs allow the smooth flow of communication among employees and it helps in capturing and creating new knowledge. The findings of the present study revealed that ICT tools are used by employees in sharing, transferring and creating data. Employees transfer knowledge, thus

internalization, where a skilled worker shares idea and captures those using ICTs tools. It was also revealed that Life Assurance provides a computer to every individual whose duties require the use of computers in the company. Findings indicate that Whatsapp (100%) and Emails (83%) platforms are the most used by employees for knowledge creation. Results reveal that the management discourages employees from using Facebook (4:66.67%), Twitter (1:16.67%) as they indicated that it results in employees not doing their work. These platforms, however, make employees acquire knowledge through researches and interaction with other individuals. Availability of the virtual platforms (confirming the applicability of the Ba Concept) allows new knowledge and ideas to be created**.** In internalisation, individuals learn new ideas from meetings held and these meetings can be done in physical or virtual platform. Frost (2010) comments that as explicit sources are used and learned in the company the knowledge is internalised, modifying the user`s existing tacit knowledge. This means that as explicit knowledge is shared throughout an organisation, an individual then converts it into tacit knowledge.

Initiatives at Life Assurance that allow Knowledge Creation for Innovation

One of the objectives of this study was to establish the initiatives made to allow for the creation of new knowledge and encourage innovation. All 6(100%) respondents indicated that Life Assurance encourages staff to acquire higher qualifications and new knowledge through learning. Figure 4 shows that 4(67%) acknowledge that they have since acquired other qualifications while only 2(33%) have not yet acquired other qualifications.

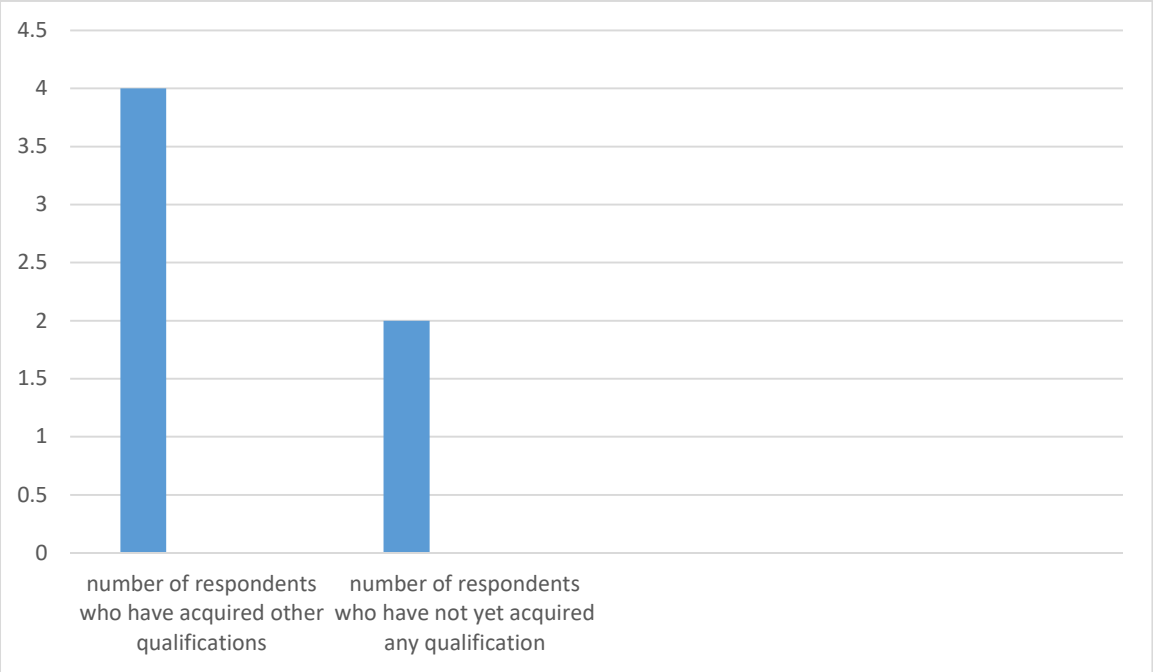


Figure 4 New qualifications acquired by respondents [N=6]

During the interview the Individual Life manager pointed out that *"The organisation encourages its employees to acquire other qualifications which lead to improvement in services to internal and external clients".* The manager further indicated that, *"there is an educational policy in our organisation which encourages employees to further study and acquire other*

qualifications that only suits their line of work". The findings show that employees are rewarded through promotion when they have acquired a higher qualification.

Results show that Life Assurance encourages its employees to continuously acquire other qualifications which lead to the acquisition of new knowledge. The current findings confirm Odoyo's (2014) observation that continuous commitment to organizational learning will allow organisations to keep a pool of intellectually rejuvenated, proactive and competent work force with up-to-date skills and sharpened talents.

When asked about activities available which encourage new knowledge creation and innovation, the Individual Life manager and the Group Business supervisor indicated that there are "breakfast meetings" and "lunch meetings." The Group Business manager added that, "Employees also do other interactions with external employees." Table 1 shows the different types of social interactions done at insurance organisation.

Table 1 Social interaction [N=6]

Interactive environments	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Sports	6	100%
Social outing	4	66.67%
Lunch	4	66.67%
Tea break	3	50%
Parties	2	33%
Family fun day	1	16.67%

The results indicate that employee acquire knowledge during sporting interactions (6:100%) and far less during family fun day (1:17%). Sporting activities are one of the interactive environments available at Life Assurance. Social outing and lunch accounted for 66.67%. Though these activities were introduced to make employees relax their minds and not for the acquisition of new knowledge, it emerged that through these interactive environments thus socialisation of employees acquire new tacit knowledge through sharing work experiences. Indeed, Khoza (2019) views knowledge sharing as a process of innovation and value creation that leads to competitive advantage. The findings show that most lunch and breakfast meetings are done with top clients and other clients including civil servants. For the process of socialisation to be successful there is the need for an organisation to create a physical or virtual space where a given community can interact on a social level (Sallis and Jones, 2002).

The extent to which Knowledge Creation enhance Service Delivery

The fourth objective was to establish the extent to which knowledge creation could enhance better service delivery at Life Assurance. Results indicate that 4(66.67%) agreed that service delivery has been improved as a result of new knowledge while 2(33.33%) were not sure. On

a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Agree", 2 "Strongly agree", 3 "Neutral", 4 "Disagree" and 5 "Strongly agree", respondents were asked to rate how knowledge creation can improve services and products. **For purposes of the discussion, the scales were merged into three scales to ease discussion, that is, strongly agree and agree were merged into agree, strongly disagree and disagree were merged into disagree and not sure remained as is.** Figure 5 shows the results.

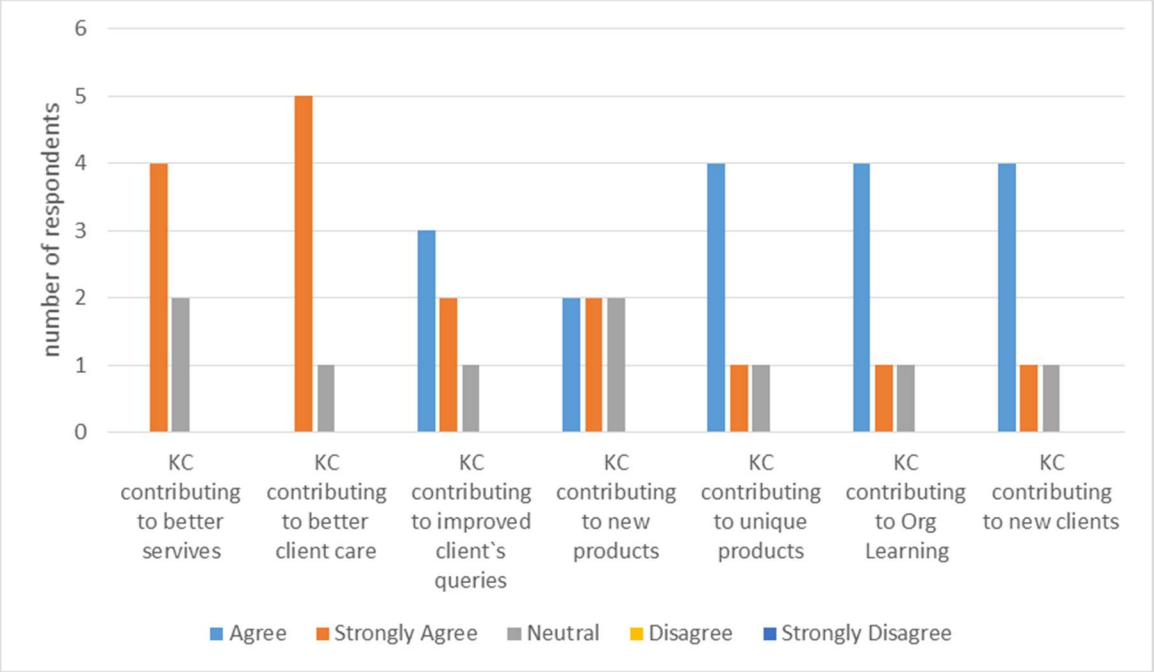


Figure 5 Contributions of Knowledge Creation (KC) in different areas [N=6]

Managers were asked if the acquisition of new knowledge improves service delivery to both internal and external clients. The results are presented as follows:

Group Business Supervisor: *"It helps a lot as employees are the ones working with clients thus as they acquire new knowledge from seminars or conferences new ideas come in which can help in improving service delivery*".

Individual Life Manager: *"New knowledge can help in solving queries which can be raised by clients*".

This finding is in line with Lwanga and Ngulube's (2019) who in their study found that training was widely espoused as a conduit for knowledge creation through the attendance of conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings.

New knowledge leading to innovations and new products at Life Assurance

The last objective was to establish how new knowledge could lead to innovations and new products at Life Assurance. Managers were asked if innovations are improving the available assurance products and how such innovations are promoted in the organisation. Individual Life manager revealed that *"innovations are always done in the organisation when employees meet especially during holidays in different outings and these innovations have helped in improving the available life assurance products".*

Respondents were asked to identify the products that have been introduced as a result of innovation and the majority, 5(62.5%), mentioned that the Security Plan was currently being introduced as a result of innovation. The result confirms Saguy's (2011) study that innovation process creates value though it should also include implicit social responsibility. The other 2(25%) highlighted that work is in progress in working out other products. Only one (13%) did not respond to the question.

Table 2 shows the types of assurance products that have been improved as a result of innovations. Table 2 Improved assurance products [N=6]

Assurance products	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Funeral Family Plan	5	83%
Whole Life Product	5	83%
Diaspora Funeral Cash Plan	4	66.67%
Personal Pension Plan	3	50%
My Legacy Plan	3	50%
Education Protector	1	16.67%

The result confirm Dorothy Leonard's (1997) observation that companies are experiencing more competitions from unexpected sources and must be more creative in developing responsive strategies quickly. Garrick and Chan (2017) are of the view that the high levels of creativity that exist in corporate organizations might be of use to other businesses faced with the challenge of creative innovation.

New ideas, new knowledge and assurance products

When asked on how new knowledge can make the insurance organisation unique from other competitors,5(83%) respondents indicated that it brings new products that are marketable and thus improves competitive advantage in the insurance industry. The other 1 (16.67%) did not respond. Managers were also asked the same question and the Group Business supervisor indicated that the "*interactions done help in bringing new ideas which are of an advantage to the company leading to improved products and service delivery*". This result seem to confirm Dorothy Leonard's (1997) position that the organizations that can move most quickly are those with a store of skills on which to draw and such organizations know how to create knowledge, to transform knowledge, and to channel knowledge to those who need it. The process of combination helps in the creation of new knowledge which benefits an organisation and this new knowledge, as it is documented in physical or electronic format, it can be accessed by several people at the same time. The main purpose of combination is to integrate different concepts into a knowledge system which can be used to create new products and improve service delivery in an organisation.

Group innovations improve service delivery. From the findings 4 (66.67%) indicated that service delivery have been improved at Life Assurance as result of new knowledge. The Life Assurance thus adopts the knowledge creation practices which lead to improvements of services and products. Findings also show that departments such as Marketing department cash on innovations by producing product and agencies market it to potential clients. This new

knowledge leading to a new product indicates externalization of knowledge. Frost (2010) observes that in the process of externalisation, tacit knowledge is codified into documents or manuals so that information or knowledge can spread more easily through the organization. These manuals can also be used by managers as they create new products which are an advantage to the company.

The majority 5 (83%) revealed that they are rewarded through promotion as a way of motivation for creating new knowledge but not always. Only 1(16.67%) respondent disagreed. In a similar study Lwanga and Ngulube (2019) found that the reward culture has influence on knowledge creation. Govender, Perumal and Perumal (2018) state that proper reward systems encourage knowledge exchange.

Conclusions

The article is based on the study that aimed at investigating the knowledge creation leading to innovations for competitive advantage in the insurance industry with Life Assurance Company as a case study. The key finding of the study was that knowledge creation and innovation bring about competitive advantage for Life Assurance Company through the improvements of products and services. The results support Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) Knowledge Conversion Theory (SECI Model) and the Ba Concept. The study concluded that at Life Assurance the knowledge creation activities enhance service delivery, improve the available products and make new products through innovations. Available ICT tools are used to capture and store knowledge that is created but there is the need to improve and upgrade their ICTs tools in order to enhance the creation of new knowledge. Employees use Emails and social media platforms to create and share new knowledge. Seminars, conferences, colloquiums and workshops are used to allow for the creation of new knowledge and encourage innovations. As new knowledge is created new ideas come in which are used to improve service delivery at the company. Handling clients` queries and best customer care are improved through innovative means and the creation of new knowledge. New knowledge leads to innovation and the new ideas can be used to introduce newer marketable products.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions the study recommended the following:

1. Life Assurance should improve customer satisfaction through continuous interaction with its clients so as to develop newer products which meet their needs. Life Assurance should also invest in employee training and education which helps in enhancing knowledge creation. Management should encourage its employees to acquire higher qualifications.
2. The study recommends a constant interaction and networking between agents and other departments working to improve products and delivering services to clients. The Life Assurance management should encourage employees to interact with other employees even if their lines of work are not the same. For example agents should not only have social interactions with Customer Care employees only but also with other employees in the Actuary Department or Group Business Department. This helps in enhancing the creation of new knowledge thus the introduction of newer products and improvements in service delivery which satisfy clients` needs.
3. The company should allow all employees to make use of ICTs which enhances knowledge creation practices and innovation.

4. Further research can be done on the importance of knowledge creation practices to the whole organization that includes Life Assurance, General Insurance, Asset Management and Microfinance. A similar research can be conducted on how the knowledge created can be organised, collected, retained and managed for future use.

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