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Knowledge Management Strategies and Business Sustainability: An Empirical Study of Selected Paint Manufacturers in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study explores the several strategies that can be adopted in managing knowledge and its influence on business sustainability among Paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from the survey. 180 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 172 copies were retrieved representing 95.55%, and all of which were deployed for further data analysis. All the statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS Statistics 20 and Spearman's Rank Correlation Statistical tool to test the hypotheses one to four. The findings indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of Knowledge Management Strategies and the measures of Business Sustainability. Therefore, empirical evidence from this research confirmed the premise that strategizing the way knowledge is managed in organisations lead to business sustainability. Based on the findings and conclusions above, this study recommends that there is need to choose a strategy based on the organisation's major value drivers that will give a competitive position. The three aspects of sustainability should not be ignored. Formulation of environmental friendly policies, considering the customers' needs as priority will eventually increase the size of market serviced.

Keywords: Knowledge management strategy, business processes, value disciplines, business sustainability, customer satisfaction, market share

1. Introduction

A very important global issue in business is sustainability, this is as a result of the diverse socio-economic and environmental effect on business. Many organizations practice unsustainable socio-economic and environmental activities this of course have consequences. Khan (1997) is of the opinion that all organizations no matter where they are and where they belong need a rapid change towards sustainability, because it will help them to develop and bring up strategies or ways that will give them a long term result. It has been observed by Jones (2003) that very high numbers of companies worldwide are making frantic effort to bring in sustainability into their business. Business sustainability help to make shareholders investment have a long term value. This can be gotten by embracing opportunities and ability to manage any risk that may arise from the organization's responsibility whether economic, environmental or social. For an organization to be sustainable such business must meet the needs of all stakeholders and they must all enhance the sustainability both for now and the future. Epstein (2008) opined that competitive advantage is another need that has motivated companies to have a balance between economic progress, social responsibility and environmental protection.

Eccles, Ioannou and Serafeim (2011) found in their study that in relation to stock market and accounting performance, companies that consider sustainability as a priority do better than those other without such practice over time. Also Nidumolu, Prahalad and Rangaswami (2009) claimed that indeed enterprises who invest in sustainability activities are better put on the lead than their counterparts and therefore you cannot equate sustainability to any other. During the lunch of a business sustainability research project by the Chartered Institute of personnel and development, Catrin Ballinger (2011) stated the reasons why it is necessary to follow a sustainable approach to business. These reasons include the pressures of globalization, corporate scandals, the global economic crisis. Based on these, all stakeholders must call for an in-depth scrutiny of business activities. According to Eccles, Ioannou and Serafeim (2011), when short term activities are focused on, in order to please shareholders it can result to loss of the main value for business over a longer time because there will be failure to apportion a necessary investment in processes of production or quality management that will lead to sustainability.

Colbert and Kuruz (2007) did not totally agree that shareholders will be a barrier to a sustainable approach to business. He argues that shareholders may in fact be the driver to sustainability approach. He based his argument on the fact that there is a shifting nature of the

business and society relationship which is not just based on the monetary returns. Despite such an explosion of interest in what these researchers have done, there still seems to be scanty studies on this subject because sustainability has not really been taken as a priority in business practices and even where it is taken, many challenges come up making it necessary for more research. There are significant pressures from shareholders in relation to executive pay, pressures from communities in relation to the environmental impact, pressures from employees/trade unions on employment security and pressures from governments for high taxation. With all these, it appears that that business sustainability has not been achieved fully among firms in Nigeria, especially among the paint manufacturers in Rivers State. What could be the problem? Could it be that knowledge management strategies have not been implemented to achieving sustainability in these firms? Based on this, this study seeks to investigate the influence of knowledge management strategies on business sustainability.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Knowledge management became popular in the 1990s. A man called Drucker in 1993, tried to explain knowledge as the only invaluable asset with meaning, more meaningful than capital or labour. Senge (1990) is of the opinion that organizations who suffer from learning disabilities cannot function as knowledge based organizations. Sandvik (2001) have it that, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) in the book called the knowledge creating company brought to the public interest knowledge management as an international research field, to them knowledge management provides different perspectives on how to manage and control resources in form of humans and knowledge.

1.2. Concept of Knowledge Management

Knowledge happens to be the greatest asset of many companies and can help when applied appropriately to achieve organizational objectives and gain competitive advantage. A company's ability to utilize available knowledge resources makes the company a successful organization and makes the company different from the less successful. Peter Drucker (1999) argues that the ability of knowledge and knowledge workers to be productive is a big challenge of our time. Knowledge in any organization can be in any form, it could be employees' skills and competences, organizational texts, routines and practices. When carefully and accurately applied the current and future goals can be realized. Organizations manage knowledge more or less intentionally

Alavi and Leidner (2001) argue that knowledge is the result you get when you process information in the individual's mind. It is only an information attributed to a particular person that may or may not be new, unique, accurate or useful but must relate to facts, procedures, interpretations, ideas, concepts, judgment and observations. The way knowledge is captured and shared depends on the type of knowledge that resulted from the process, this is the line of thought of Davenport and Prusak (1998) and Grant (1996). Knowledge management is a concept and has a set of strategies and practices that will help to capture, create, store, and spread knowledge and experience within the company.

Kaplan (2002) opined that when knowledge management becomes a process, organizations can extract value from the intellectual assets. We can therefore say that knowledge management is a process that helps organizations find, select, organize, disseminate and transfer information and expertise to gain business advantage.

1.3. Knowledge as a Competitive Advantage

It is important to manage knowledge in the organization because it plays a vital role to organizational success, Stewart (1999) argues. Groth (1999) believes that Knowledge has always been in organizations in one way or the other, that it is the management of it that has been lacking and it is important. Zack (1999) said that organizational people have not consider or given the management of knowledge the required attention. Knowledge according to Zack is a strategic resource that if managed well can give a firm and help the firm maintain a competitive advantage in business. Stewart in 1999 reiterated that the value of knowledge is greater than nature assets and the large invested capital if managed well.

1.4. Concept of Business Sustainability

A very accepted definition of sustainability is by the Brundtland Commission Report, 1987. They said, it is the ability to meet present needs without interfering with the future generations ability to meet their own needs. Dylick and Hockerts (2002) and Elkington (1998) added that any organization working towards sustainability must consider and produce results or gains on the economic, social and environmental aspect. This is called the triple bottom line. Raynard and Forstarter (2002) argue that the economic side or aspect of sustainability includes both short term performance indicators and long term considerations too. On the social aspect, it covers more beyond what the traditional management addresses and involves many groups of stakeholders. On the environmental aspect, the environmental impact of firms' operations is considered.

1.5. Dimensions of Knowledge Management Strategies

In trying to find out the dimensions of knowledge management, we reviewed related literatures and found out that some authorities opined that dimensions of knowledge management must be based on knowledge itself i.e. the types, locations of knowledge and the form in which knowledge is stored in the organization. Others argue that dimensions of knowledge management should focus on the business processes while others say dimensions should be based on end result. According to Beckman (1999) the best way to classify knowledge depends on your argument and view. To him, this can be classified thus;

1.5.1. Managing Knowledge based on Knowledge Accessibility

To utilize this strategy, there must be a combination of knowledge accessibility and knowledge transformation present in the organization. Accessibility has to do with where the knowledge is stored or located and in what form? Transformation looks at the flow of knowledge from one place to another and from one form to another. To support this, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) in their knowledge spiral, proposed that there is learning or innovation anytime there is a flow and transformation of knowledge. Boisot, the man that developed "information Space" (1-space) model supported this idea. The knowledge combination earlier stated by Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995) led to what they called knowledge matrix. This matrix has been widely accepted and quoted and it classifies knowledge as either explicit or tacit and either individual or collective. While the explicit knowledge is the artificial aspect that could be captured by manuals, written words or data compiled, the tacit aspect refers to the individual skills and the know-how, formed by intuition, beliefs and values and these are difficult to share. This is the stand of Hubert (1996) and supported by Ahmed, Lim and Zairi, (1999). Hubert, (1996) reiterated that tacit knowledge helps managers in the organization to position the organization rightly in the market by improving their ability to making better decisions.

1.5.1.1. Boisot's 1-Space Model

Boisot in 1998 proposed a model on how knowledge asset can be developed. This is in line with Nonaka and Takeuchi. The major difference is that Boisot introduced an extra dimension called abstraction, to him, knowledge can also become generalized to different situations. This is important as it allows the flow and transformation of knowledge to be analyzed in greater detail. He also proposed the social learning cycle (SLC), which was the 1-Space to model the dynamic flow of knowledge through a series of six phases:

1. Scanning: - This helps to know the available data (data is diffused)
2. Problem -Solving: As problems are solved, structures are given to the data (knowledge is codified).
3. Abstraction: - The data can be generalized to a wide situation i.e. knowledge becomes abstract.
4. Diffusion: - Knowledge is shared with a target population (knowledge is diffused).
5. Absorption: - Applying knowledge variously giving rise to new knowledge experiences. (knowledge becomes tacit)
6. Impacting: - Here knowledge is imbedded in concrete practices i.e. knowledge becomes concrete.

In the summary, it can be deduced that the process that grows and develop knowledge asset in an organization is not constant, it is changing always just as organizations tries to change in order to adapt to their environment, knowledge management strategy seem as appropriate at one time will need to change as knowledge move along the learning cycle.

1.5.2. Managing Knowledge based on Business Process

A study of organizations was carried out by Karl Wiig and the American Productivity and Quality Centre (APQC) in 1997 in which they identified six strategies in managing knowledge based on Business Process. These strategies reflect the different natures and strength of the organizations. They include;

1. As a business strategy- Knowledge is seen as the product, so the management of knowledge becomes an organizational and comprehensive approach.
2. Intellectual Asset Management Strategy- Here, knowledge is seen as an asset and their focus is to enhance and fully utilized the knowledge assets already existing in the company.
3. Individual Knowledge Responsibility Strategy: This method helps, gives support to individual employees to improve their knowledge base and skills and also to share such knowledge with fellow employees.
4. Ability to create knowledge: This strategy encourages new ideas and ability to create entirely different knowledge. e.g. research and development. This strategy is good for shaping a sector.
5. Ability to transfer: This method is on how improve quality of operations and achieve efficiency with the help of knowledge.
6. Customer-Focused method: It believes that a better understanding of customers and what their needs are will provide the organization an opportunity to provide customers with what they want.

Day and Wendler of McKinsey and Company in their studies in 1998 on large corporations and knowledge strategies identified five strategies employed in managing Knowledge as a business process.

1. Using best Practices to develop and transfer knowledge.
2. Bringing up another new company from knowledge already on ground i.e. exploiting existing knowledge in new ways e.g. producing new product to fill a market gap based on the knowledge about its customers.
3. Shaping organizations' action plan around knowledge. This models corporate policies around knowledge. It is usually possible where two different business groups exist, which means two different knowledge strategies e.g. a group of companies have one company focus on best practice strategy as its knowledge strategy and another company focusing on innovation based strategy as its knowledge strategy. The decision-makers of this group of companies may find their knowledge strategy so different and not aligning and may decide to sell off one business and focus on the other for effective result.
4. Fostering and Commercializing Innovation: This is similar to the knowledge creation strategy by Wiig and APQC described above. Here in this strategy, ability to create new ideas is encouraged so as to create a competitive position in the business world. The use of technology in creating the new ideas i.e. technological innovation is also encouraged.

5. Creating a standard by realizing proprietary knowledge. This strategy is similar to the intellectual asset management strategy by Wiig and the APQC study. Here, an important or key knowledge can be given away, to make huge gain in return.
- c. Managing Knowledge based on End Results

Treacy and Wiersema (1993), opined that successful organizations usually focus their efforts on a particular area, concentrate on that area and excel there. This means that it will not be proper for organizations to be found in all areas without any result at the end. It is expected that knowledge strategy will be focused on that particular area for result. This is what Treacy and Wiersema (1993) called value disciplines. This helps an organization to be focused in its activities. To them values and excellence must be placed in any of the following; customer intimacy, product leadership or operational excellence.

- i. Customer Intimacy: The knowledge strategy to be adopted here should shape the product and the services to match their customers need. Investments in knowledge about customers and what their needs are becomes priority.
- ii. Product Leadership: knowledge strategy here is focused on best product or services. This is encouraged by creating room for new ideas that create quality product better than the already existing ones in the market. The strategies here will support collaboration, discussion forums etc.
- iii. Operational Excellence Approach: This strategy makes knowledge management concentrate on how to excel efficiently, economically and effectively in the operations of the organization. Example reducing overheads, optimizing business processes etc. the strategies will include Total Quality Management (TQM), Process Improvement Initiatives etc.

Michael Zack, (1999) also proposed a strategy that focuses on end result. He opines that the competitive position of an organization will help in determining the knowledge management strategy to be adopted. To him, knowledge that an organization possess could be core, advanced or innovative. Core knowledge is required to be possessed by all in the organization, it is needed to be able to function. It does not represent a competitive advantage. Advanced knowledge differentiates an organization from its competitors therefore, it gives an organization a competitive advantage. Innovative knowledge helps an organization to be a market leader. With the innovations, the organization changes the way the market is with the introduction of new ideas unknown to competitors. The position of the company in terms of competitive knowledge, according to Zack is used alongside with S-Strength, W-Weaknesses, O-opportunities and T-Threats analysis, to identify any action gap in knowledge. Such gaps include where the organization has unexploited knowledge, or where to maintain, grow or develop knowledge for better competitive position.

1.6. Measure of Business Sustainability

For an organization to be able to measure its performances and improvement on business sustainability, it has to focus its effort on specific areas of sustainability. This will help the organization identity and give priority to sustainable activities. Business sustainability has three aspects, social, environmental and economic aspects. They are all important. Many businesses see the financial impact from environmental and social issues and economic factors are as critical as the environmental and social factors to any business.

1.7. Environmental Sustainability

This aspect of sustainability focuses on the environmental protection, energy, fuel consumption, waste removal such as elimination of the use of toxic solvents in paint manufacturing as these toxic is harmful to the environment. Enkvist, (2007), Hoffman, (1999) and Baugartner, (2009) proposed that Corporate environmental sustainability if pursued can achieve cost savings from ecology- efficiency programmes, new revenue opportunities, improved reputation and reduced risk due to emissions. Others include reduction in waste, and can be achieved by using environmentally friendly packaging, recycling. According to Orlitzky Schmidt, and Rynes (2003); Walsh, Weber and Margolis, (2003); Hoffman, (1999), Environmental decision making is becoming more a co-business issue. In fact, Hoffman, (2005) argues that managers of business will be doing their organizations a disfavor if the treat environmental and business issues as separate. Environmental measures to sustainability among paint manufacturers could be replacement of toxic organic solvent with water based product, this will drastically reduce emissions of organic solvent during application. Also, they can use environmentally friendly contents to package their products. More so, the solid waste from production can be recycled or used up in energy production.

1.8. Social Sustainability

This sustainability rest on the business impact on the people may be in the organization or local community. This may be more difficult to quantify than the environmental aspect. There may not also be direct measures sometimes for the social aspect of sustainability. Yet several indicators that shows this aspect exist e.g. To measure corporate culture and its image in the community where the organization is located, surveys are used to measure it not equation from any theory as in environmental measures. Other social indicators are customer satisfaction, employee turnover rate and cost, Industrial relations actions etc.

1.9. Customer Satisfaction

Customers patronize companies products or services. Therefore, a customer is a part of an organization and makes payment for the goods or services offered by the organization. The aim of the customer is to fulfill a need. He gets satisfaction when he is contented with what he bought. Satisfaction differs from one person to another as it is utility and so it is sometimes very difficult to satisfy everybody or to determine a group of individuals' satisfaction. According to Schiffman & Karun (2004) Customer satisfaction is defined as "the individual's perception of the performance of the products or services in relation to his or her expectations". To

measure customer satisfaction is challenging as it amounts measuring human feelings. Levy, (2009, p. 6) opined that asking the customers is a better way to knowing how they feel.

1.10. Factors that Influence Customer Satisfaction

Hokanson, (1995) argues that a company's ability to recognize the importance and meet the customers' needs can influence their satisfaction. Studies shows that a customer who is satisfied will tolerate the price of the product, be loyal to the product and even trust the product. Therefore, building customer relationship is a backbone for all organizations in general, and among paint manufacturers in particular.

1.11. Economic Sustainability

This aspect of sustainability remains as vital as others. It is very important that the business has well established financial performance indicators. e.g. rate of return, payback periods for capital investments, market share, cost of servicing, liquidity ratio, gross net profit etc. all these economic indicators will help an organization determine its economic sustainability, it is imperative that the organization in its choice, to choose indicators relevant to the business activities and goals.

1.12. Market Share

This refers to the company's sales in turnover or volume in quantity as a percentage of the sales in its target market (Czinkora, M.R, Ketabe, M and Mercer, D. 1997). The percentage of an industry total sales that is controlled by a particular company over a specified time period is the organisations market share. Market share helps an organisation know the untapped business that can be obtained. Investors look at market share increases or decreases carefully before they will indicate interest.

1.13. Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following research question: What is the relationship between Knowledge Management Strategies and Business Sustainability? Therefore, the study seeks to address the following specific research questions;

- i. What is relationship between Business Processes and Customer Satisfaction?
- ii. What is the influence of Business Processes on Market Share.?
- iii. What is the relationship between Value disciplines and Customer Satisfaction?
- iv. What is the influence of Value Disciplines on Market Share?

1.14. Purpose of the Study

It is to examine the relationship between Knowledge Management Strategies and Business Sustainability in the Paint Manufacturing firms in Rivers state. Based on this, the specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To investigate the relationship between Business Processes and Customer Satisfaction.
- ii. To examine the influence of Business Processes on Market Share.
- iii. To ascertain the relationship between Value disciplines and Customer Satisfaction
- iv. To examine the influence of Value Disciplines on Market Share.

1.15. Research Hypotheses

Based on the purpose of the study and the above research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated;

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Business Processes and Customer Satisfaction.
- Ho₂: There is no significant influence of Business Processes on Market Share.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between Value disciplines and Customer Satisfaction.
- Ho₄: There is no significant influence of Value Disciplines on Market Share.

2. Methodology

2.1. Population and Sample size

The study specifically considers all paint manufacturing firms in Rivers State. The list was obtained from Rivers State Chamber of Commerce Office in Port Harcourt. Also, some small businesses outfits not yet registered with Chambers of Commerce were recognized. Altogether seven companies were selected for the study. Convenient sampling was employed in the selection process. 180 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, out of which 172 questionnaires were returned, having 95.55% response rate, all returned questionnaires were used in the data analysis.

2.2. Instruments Used

Knowledge Management Strategy is measured by Knowledge accessibility, Business process and End results using the EED Survey. In the time of researching, a researcher can choose to use a quantitative or a qualitative method to obtain data. The later can be called interpretative and is always associated with the hermeneutic school. (Bryman,1995). The former is based on numerical scoring and grading. In this research, both came to play in measuring knowledge management strategies giving us a mixed approach because of the nature of the study. The instruments were adopted from EED (European Engineering Database) on knowledge management

strategies. These questionnaires and interviews were for the then EED which catered exclusively to the Experts and Virtual Team Members in September 2003. The questionnaire has numeric variables and the interviews were aimed at helping the interviewees knowing the subject better and also serving as a guide to cross check the numeric variables too.

Business Sustainability is measured by environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability using Kessler and Sheila (2003) survey and Customer satisfaction toolkit for ISO 9001:2000 survey. They have a set of statements using a five-point Likert scale. Evaluation is made by the customer according to his own perceptions and expectations of performance of the organization being measured.

2.3. Operational Measures of Variables

The underlying constructs are Knowledge management strategies and Business Sustainability. Their effect was measured with the help of question items as they cannot be observed directly. Examples of question items are;

- a. Business Processes: Does your organization identify and maintain key knowledge assets like customer knowledge?
- b. Market Share: The increase in my organisation's market share is related to the level of its customers' care.

2.4. Validity and Reliability

Validity is a concept related to what degree the findings can be applied across social settings (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is defined as the degree to which a measurement gauges the constructs that are intended to be measured, and is evaluated by assessing the consistency of experts' analysis about the measurement. Bryman and Bell, (2011) explained that validity is to what extent the collected data can be authenticated and relevant to the study. They added that validity determines if the researchers are actually measuring what they had in mind. To increase the validity of this study questionnaires were distributed and in addition, interviews were put across to employees working at different hierarchical levels in these companies. The respondents to our instruments are considered to hold the relevant company information about our study and are therefore able to describe how knowledge is captured, spread and reused in the company. After the interviews were made, they were carefully put in writing and later analyzed to find out relevant details, which were interpreted in its context.

Reliability refers to the consistency or precision of the measure (Baridam, 2001). It means to what extent the study can be done once again and get the same results. Tuckman (1978) states that test unreliability creates instrumentation bias. For reliability of the scale for this present study, all scales exceeded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.70. Nunnally (1978) model recommends a bench mark of 0.70 and so, the reliability levels of the study scale are acceptable.

3. Data Analysis and Results

All the statistical analyses were conducted using Spearman's Rank Correlation Statistical tool and SPSS Statistics 20 to test the research hypotheses one to four. The correlation result for H_1 ($Rho = 0.215$ $p < 0.05$) shows a positive relationship between Business Processes and Customer Satisfaction. The correlation result for H_2 ($Rho = 0.430$, $P < 0.05$) have established comparatively a better positive significant relationship for Business Processes on Market Share. H_3 when correlated between Value disciplines and Customer Satisfaction, has a significant relationship at result ($Rho = 0.245$ $P < 0.05$). Correlation result with respect to H_4 ($Rho = 0.320$ $P < 0.05$) between Value Disciplines on Market Share has shown a positive significance between them.

4. Findings

Based on the results above, the following findings were made;

- i. Business Processes enhances and Customer Satisfaction
- ii. Business Processes enhances Market Share
- iii. Value disciplines improves Customer Satisfaction
- iv. Value Disciplines enhances Market Share

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings in H_1 explain the fact that the success of these paint manufacturers choice of strategy to manage knowledge based on business processes, depends on their ability to satisfy their customers. Even when best practices are maintained in order to improve operational quality and efficiency, to be successful, paint manufacturers in Rivers State should aimed to understand customers and their needs and so provide them with exactly what they want. Then customers will be satisfied when their needs are met and this can create a competitive advantage for the companies. This is in line with the argument of Eptein, (2008) who opined that competitive advantage motivates companies to desire sustainability. Zack, (1999) argues that well managed knowledge gives a firm competitive advantage. H_1 can also be imply that business processes initiated around customer's satisfaction should be a direct reaction to customer's feedback and the sustainability focus here is driven by customers' needs. This supports the study of Karl Wiig and American Productivity and Quality Centre (APQC), (1997), knowledge is seen as the product and so the business strategy is how knowledge can survive. The customer's satisfaction becomes imperative, so there will be an organisational and comprehensive approach to satisfying customers. Knowledge is an asset and can be managed by strategizing the business processes. The focus is to embrace and fully utilize the knowledge assets.

For H₂, the positive relationship explains the fact that the high level of implementation of knowledge management strategy based on business processes across the organisation fosters and commercializes innovation. This strategy focuses on establishing a competitive position by increased technological innovation and reduced time to market. This brings about high quality products, attracting customers and invariably increasing the market share of these paint firms. Where the business processes are so efficient that it leads to cost reduction in manufacturing paints, then a range of untapped market opportunities will be captured and this can be very helpful to making greater profits. This falls in line with the argument of Eccles, Ioannou and Serafeim, (2011), in relation to market assessment, high sustainability companies outperformed their competitors over a long term. These companies must create the enabling environment and invest to achieve high technology. Nidumolu, Prahalad and Rangaswami, (2009) insists that investment in sustainability is a necessity. Where this is managed well, Stewart (1999) added that managing knowledge well leads to organisational success.

The finding in H₃ is evidenced on how values and directions are reinforced, Shaping Corporate Strategy around knowledge repeatedly encourage and promote new ideas, creativity, experimentation, and broad search for customers. Some organisations will focus on their relationship with their customers to increase customer satisfaction and retention by better understanding the customer's needs and preferences. This shows that it is imperative that paint manufacturers establish clear values for themselves, looking at the range of relevant drivers and needs involving every function within the business to ensure that customers satisfaction is of high priority. Tracey and Wiersema, (1993) have it that successful organisations usually focus their efforts on a particular area, concentrate on that area and excel there. Customer intimacy will be a useful area.

In H₄, the need for formulating an overall strategy for knowledge management around your value driver comes forward very strongly, as this will help these businesses maintain focus in other to achieve the desired goals such as target market. Michael Zack, (1999) argues that your knowledge management strategy based on your End result or value driver is important. It is your value driver that you will pursue to excel and have competitive position. The area of excellence, where the organisation has competitive position will help determine the knowledge management strategy to be adopted as this will help the company maintain or establish its competitive advantage. This according to this study has enhances the market share you have because you are known as better than others in that aspect.

6. Recommendations

1. Determine and choose your value driver, pursue it, excel in it to have a competitive position which will help determine the knowledge management strategy to be adopted
2. To sustain the business environmentally, there should be the elimination of the use of toxic solvents in paint manufacturing as they are harmful to the environment.
3. Replacement of toxic organic solvent with water based products, this will drastically reduce emissions of organic solvent during application.
4. Use of environmentally friendly containers in packaging the paint products is recommended.
5. Solid waste from production can be recycled or used up in energy product.
6. Study your organisation and decide on the strategy to adopt to manage the knowledge assets. Whichever strategy chosen, customer from whom profits are made must be satisfied if you are to remain in business. Take your customer needs as priority.
7. Don't pursue all goals. Find out the one you are competent, pursue it, excel in it and gain competitive position, this will give you more customers and more market share because you will be known as better than others in your area of excellence.

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