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**Assessment of Knowledge-Sharing and Entrepreneurial Networking as Correlates of  
Quality in Management of Ventures in Tertiary Institutions in Imo State**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Entrepreneurial networking involves all the connections and relationship that organization or persons have with other people. It is a system of personal relationships, based on trust, and entered into for the purpose of enhancing one's competitive advantage. The totality of technical skills needed in the effective management of ventures lie in networking. Entrepreneurial networking is a significant factor in the success of new entrepreneurship ventures. Therefore, the study sought to examine the knowledge-sharing and entrepreneurial networking and the quality in management ventures. An Expost-facto research design was used for the study, with population comprising of all heads of departments (HODs) who are involved in leadership and management of entrepreneurial ventures. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw 15% of population of HODs. To determine the reliability of the instrument, knowledge-sharing and the quality in management venture Questionnaire (KQMVQ) and the Entrepreneurial networking and the quality in management venture Questionnaire (ENQMVQ) was administered once to thirty respondents who were not part of the sample, but belonged to the population of the study. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures also, there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State. It was therefore recommended that for a business venture to be successful, the entrepreneur should reach out to other partners/competitors to share information and to get aids needed for the standing of the business.*

**KEYWORDS: Knowledge-Sharing, Entrepreneurial, Networking, Quality, Management Ventures**

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**Introduction**

Knowledge-sharing refers to knowledge centered activity, a fundamental means through which employees can contribute to knowledge application, innovations, and ultimately, the comparative advantage of the organization (Jackson Chuang, Harden and Joseph, 2006). Meaning that organizations need to emphasize and more effectively, exploit knowledge-based resources that already exist within organization. Knowledge is a critical organizational resource that provides a sustainable competitive advantage in a competitive and dynamic economy. In other word, to compete in today's world, one must begin to celebrate collective entrepreneurship endeavors in which the whole of the effort is greater than the sum of individual contribution. Teams should therefore, be honored above aggressive leaders, because the former are engine

room for knowledge manufacturing. Knowledge-sharing between employees, within and across teams, allows organizations in production costs, faster completion of new products, develop projects, team performance and innovation capabilities, including sales growth. There is therefore, need to apply knowledge sharing in the management of tertiary institutions ventures with a view of enhancing efficiency through entrepreneurial networking.

Entrepreneurial ventures currently thriving in some universities in Imo state include: property management ventures (set up to manage proceeds of rent and tenable properties from commercial and residential properties in tertiary institutions), tertiary institutions community banks, electricity/metering board (set up to levy and collect all electrical and allied service tariff), management and collection of parking tools, campus transportation system, cafeteria, laundry, bakery, table water plant, among others. Although these business ventures may appear small and medium in size, the populations of students, staffs of the tertiary institutions, residents, and the public who patronize these ventures attract and make millions of cash to pass through the tertiary institutions financial system at regular intervals. This is seen practically by commercial banks, beauty industry, desktop publishing and cafes as they jostle to have at least a business space or branch in virtually all Imo State tertiary institutions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Some tertiary institutions in Imo State reveals that most tertiary institutions are seriously involved in massive investment in entrepreneurial networking ventures within and outside the tertiary institutions campuses, yet these institution internally generated revenue base is steadily weakening as manifested in dearth of infrastructure and quality delivery, probably due to leadership problem. This poses a serious threat to federal government's policy of encouraging tertiary institution to explore other sources of funding such as endowment, consultancy and commercial ventures in order to reduce over dependence on subvention, which grossly trickles in, and in recent times, irregular due to global economic melt-down in which the country is not isolated. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the relationship between knowledge-sharing and entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State. The point question is: what is the relationship between knowledge-sharing, entrepreneurial networking and the quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State?

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study was to assess knowledge-sharing and entrepreneurial networking as correlates of quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State.
2. Access the relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in Imo State?
2. What is the relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in Imo State?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in Imo State
2. There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in Imo State

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Ejiogu, (2013) citing Benard Shaw remarked that the reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself, therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man. This further implies that man by nature is a creative being because entrepreneurship is as old as man. Adiak and Israel, (2014) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability to take the risk to create and exploit opportunities through innovation, by setting up and managing economic ventures with the determination to achieve set objectives. He also asserted that, entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunities beyond the resources you currently control, while the European Commission (2011) defined it as individual ability to turn ideas into action, and includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This becomes imperative because Chiledo (2015) viewed entrepreneurship as an appropriate venom to combat poverty.

#### **Knowledge-Sharing and Quality Management of Entrepreneurial Ventures**

Knowledge sharing activities are generally supported by knowledge management systems. However, technology constitutes only one of the many factors that affect the sharing of knowledge in organizations, such as organizational culture, trust, and incentives. The sharing of knowledge constitutes a major challenge in the field of knowledge management because some employees tend to resist sharing their knowledge with the rest of the organization. Although knowledge is commonly treated as an object, Dalkir (2005) has argued that it is more appropriate to teach it as both as a flow and a thing. Knowledge as a flow can be related to the concept of tacit knowledge, discovered by (Polanyi 2003), which was later further explicated by Nonaka (2009). The difficulty of sharing knowledge is in transferring knowledge from one entity to another, and it may prove profitable for organizations to acknowledge the difficulties. Explicit knowledge sharing occurs when explicit knowledge is made available to be shared between entities. Explicit knowledge sharing can be successfully when the following criteria are met:

- Articulation: the knowledge provider can describe the information.
- Awareness: the recipient must be aware that knowledge is available.
- Access: the knowledge recipient can access the knowledge provider.

- Guidance: the body of knowledge must be defined and differentiated into different topics or domains so as to avoid information overload, and to provide easy access to appropriate material. Knowledge managers are often considered key figures in the creation of an effective knowledge sharing system.

Knowledge processes and leadership management have both been central to discussions within the academic literature. It was found that a combined leadership approach was the most effective when considering knowledge processes, through the SECCI model. The study contributes to the literature by allowing us to identify specific leadership style attributes. One of the most cited elements of the leadership that contributes to knowledge sharing in schools is the style of the leader (Leithwood, 1999).

In addition, Constant (1994) argued that experienced workers learned that they should share their knowledge which was acquired from their work and training. Therefore, the author argues that workers may have a negative attitude towards receiving extrinsic benefits in return for knowledge sharing behavior which they perceive as a normal business activity. One might expect that transactional leaders promote the sharing of knowledge, but only to the extent that it clarifies role and task requirements or serve some other clear purpose. Hsiu-Fen (2007) identifies five areas of emphasis of knowledge sharing research: organizational context, interpersonal and team characteristics, cultural characteristics, individual characteristics, and motivational factor. Knowledge is a critical organizational resource that provides a sustainable competitive advantage in a competitive and dynamic economy. (Foss and Pederson, 2002). To gain a competitive advantage it is necessary but insufficient for organizations to rely on staffing and training systems that focus on selecting employees who have specific knowledge, skills abilities, or competencies or helping employees acquire them (Brown and Duguid, 1991). Organizations must also consider how to transfer expertise and knowledge from experts who have it to novices who need to know (Hinds, Patterson, and Pfeffer, 2001). That is, organizations need to emphasize and more effectively exploit knowledge-based resources that already exist within the organization (Damodaran nad Olphert, 2000) as one knowledge-centered activity, knowledge sharing is the fundamental means through which employees can contribute to knowledge application, innovation, and ultimately the competitive advantage of the organization (Jackson, Chuang, Harden, Jiang, and Joseph, 2006). Noaka and Takeuchi (1995) describe how firms create and share new knowledge through four primary modes that involve the interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge: Socialization is the process of sharing one's experience with another, thereby creating tacit knowledge in the form of mental models and technical skills. Tacit knowledge is shared among people through modeling and mentoring, conversation, workplace culture, and shared experiences. Externalization converts tacit knowledge into explicit concepts.

The success of knowledge management initiatives depends on knowledge sharing. Thus, a review of qualitative studies of individual-level knowledge sharing becomes imperative. Chen (2004) examined the relationship between leadership behaviors and knowledge sharing in professional service firms in Taiwan and the United States. The results showed transformational leadership behaviors as a significant predictor of internal knowledge sharing. And Contingent reward leadership behaviors are significantly and positively correlated with both internal and external knowledge sharing. However, Bock and Kim (2002) examined the factors that support or contains the individual's knowledge sharing behavior. Bock and Kim (2002) argued from a theoretical perspective, economic exchange theory also suggests that a person behaves after

collating the expected rewards and costs incurred by his or her behavior. However, they argue that contrary to many researchers' expectations, their study shows that the attitude toward knowledge sharing is negatively related to the expected rewards. They add that expected rewards discourage the information of a positive attitude toward knowledge sharing.

Vera and Crossan (2004) propose a theoretical model where good leaders are those that know how to switch between a transformational and a transactional style of leadership in accordance with the situation in order to facilitate knowledge sharing. One might expect that transactional leaders promote the sharing of knowledge, but only to the extent that it clarifies role and task requirements or serve some other clear purpose, Research has shown that knowledge sharing and combination is positively related to reductions in production costs, faster completion of new product development projects, team performance, firm innovation capabilities, and firm performance including sales growth and revenue from new products and services (Mesmer-Magnus and DeChurch, 2009). Several empirical studies in the past have shown a correlation between knowledge sharing and quality management. For instance, studies by Bradshaw, Chebbi and Oztel (2015), and Hsiu-Fen (2007). Bradshaw, Chebbi and Oztel (2015) investigated the relationship between leadership and knowledge sharing in schools in United Arab Emirate. Population involved all principals in public secondary schools while the sample size was 223 respondents. A five-point likert scale of transactional leadership of 20 items questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed with correlation statistics using corresponding t-values. Calculated by PLS Algorithm and the application of book strapping respectively, in the smart –PLS 2.0 soft-ware package (Ringle, 2005). Finding showed that leadership and knowledge sharing are positively correlated. Meaning that, leaders are central in the process of creating, sharing and exploiting knowledge. If therefore, managers of in tertiary institutions ventures choose to attain substantial gains, then, knowledge-sharing rather than, isolation should be entrenched. At the end of this study, the extent of relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures will be ascertained.

### **Entrepreneurial Networking and Quality Management Ventures**

Entrepreneurial networking refers to informative network in which business owners garner ideas and share information as well as well aids in grant to members, especially start-ps. In a dynamic world of globalization, driven swiftly by information and communication technology, networking becomes inevitable for business that wants to survive competitively. Schallenkamp and Smith (2015) defined networking as a process of encouraging the entrepreneurs' circle of trust and that it is a function of negotiation process. The authors also asserted that entrepreneurial networking is a function of personal relationships, based on trust, and entered into for the purpose of enhancing one's competitive advantage. Meaning that in tertiary institutions ventures would be better-off if their managers boldly involve in networking (locally and globally) as a management model to revolutionize entrepreneurial activities. Neegard and Madson cited by Schallenkamp and Smith (2015) noted that lager the network, better the access to outside recourses. The authors also made 8 propositions based on trust on the relationship between networking and entrepreneurial success. These are resource availability, legitimacy, accessibility, environmental opportunities, social interaction, technology and intellectual property, personal satisfaction and benefits. This implies that the ultimate success of the firm's management hinge on the size of information network needed by business start-ups to stand and old ones to consolidate. Unknown to many, a significant resource sought by entrepreneurs from other

members of the network in the start-up phase of business development is capital. Networking is trust embedded in individual ties that provides to all other kinds of resources and also helps to overcome institutional business. It effects and builds professional assistance. A study of start-up technology-based firms in the southwestern US, revealed that the firms received a significant percentage of their start-up capital from network partners. Specifically, they posit that networks provide a bridge between the social and economic dimensions of human conduct. Within this context, entrepreneurial networks provide four general benefits:

First, they help create new patterns of economic activity, assist innovation, bridge supply and demand and help integrate fields of activity that have previously been separated.

Second, they assist the entrepreneur in his/her effort to scan the environment for opportunities that may be exploited in the future. Third, they provide a type of governance for entrepreneurial behavior. Fourth, interaction within the network assist the entrepreneur in building his/her own fund of social capital within the marketplace.

Entrepreneurial network is a system of personal relationship, based on trust and entered into for the purpose of enhancing ones competitive advantage, and also a significant factor in the success of new entrepreneurial ventures (Schallenkamp and Smith, 2015). Meaning that, for a business venture to be successful, the entrepreneur should reach out to other partners/competitors to share information and to get aids needed for the standing of the business. The totality of technical skills needed in the effective management of ventures lie in networking. Of seventeen specified skills which were broken into four broad categories, entrepreneurial skills are acquired through the ability to use an advisory board and utilization of an entrepreneurial network (Lichtentein and Leons, 2001). To this end, innovative leadership approach like networking has been advocated to be more efficacious in the management of these ventures since no business can thrive in isolation. Networking is a critical factor in the success of entrepreneurial ventures (McAdam, 2000). Meaning that informational network is a *sinequanonto* business climate since the principal cause for entry into networks include a desire to learn from peers and to gain local expertise as to know how to succeed in business. Often, there appear to be talent fear among the entrepreneurs of given away too much information (about their ideas) in network discussions, and this borders largely on their intellectual property. It is important that entrepreneurs operate in a dynamic environment and even those who have a competitive advantage over others need networking the more in other to sustain their gains or lose out a key component of efficiency in growth, especially in today's business climes where corruption and fraudulent practices persist. The statement of the problem is that most universities management seems to totally abandon or under-utilize entrepreneurial networking activities thereby making the commercial component on universities a mirage.

In Imo State, Onyama, Nzewi, and Chikezie, (2013) investigated the effect of entrepreneurial networking and social capital on new business creation process of immigrant entrepreneurs in Wukari, Taraba state. The sample size was 40 respondents who were selected randomly. Likert-Scale structured questionnaire of 24 item questions was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using percentage and mean scores. Result showed that network factors which include information and capital had significant effect when business had been established, that is, a significant effect was found. This implies that social capital inherent in working serve as a source of insurance. Hence, networking is a cover for both old and new entrepreneurs. However, at the

end of this study, the extent of relationship between networking and quality management of ventures will be ascertained.

## **Methods**

The sub-heading treated were area of study, design of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, validity of the research instrument, administration of the instrument, and statistical treatment of data.

### **Design of the Study**

The ex-post-facto research design was used for the study.

### **Area of the Study**

The study was carried out in Imo State.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised all heads of departments (HODs) who are involved in leadership and management of entrepreneurial in Imo State.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size for the study was 15% of population of HODs drawn using purposive sampling technique. In addition, academic and non-academic staff who are in the selected departments constituted the sample.

### **Validation of the Research Instrument**

The validity of an instrument is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Uyanga and Etudor-Eyo, 2015). In other words, the instrument is to provide dependable measurement it ought to, regardless of the specific nature and purpose (Ndiyo, 2010).

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the Innovation in knowledge-sharing and the quality in management venture Questionnaire (KQMVQ) and Innovation in Entrepreneurial networking and the quality in management venture Questionnaire (ENQMVQ) was administered once to thirty respondents who were not part of the sample, but belonged to the population of the study.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Hypothesis Testing One**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in Imo State. In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data. (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in Imo State.**

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Knowledge-sharing (X)	1355	23115	19331	0.84*
Quality management (Y)	1134	16182		

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 78; N = 80; Critical r-value = 0.235**

The above table 1 presents the obtained r-value of (0.84). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.235) at 0.05 level with 78 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.84) was greater than the critical r –value (0.235). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in Imo State.

### Hypothesis Testing Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in federal universities in Imo State. In order to test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data. (see Table 1).

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**TABLE 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in Imo State.**

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Entrepreneurial networking (X)	1161	16981	16548	0.76*
Quality management (Y)	1134	16182		

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 78; N = 80; Critical r-value = 0.235**

The above table 2 presents the obtained r-value of (0.76). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.235) at 0.05 level with 78 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.76) was greater than the critical r –value (0.235). Hence, the result was significant, meaning that there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in Imo State.

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 1 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.84) was greater than the critical r-value (0.235) at 0.05 level with 78 degree of freedom. This result implies that there is significant relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality



management of ventures in Imo State. The result is in agreement with the research findings of Ringle, (2005), who posits that leadership and knowledge sharing are positively correlated, meaning that leaders are central in the process of creating, sharing and exploiting knowledge. If therefore, managers of in tertiary institutions ventures choose to attain substantial gains, then, knowledge-sharing rather than, isolation should be entrenched. The result of the analysis caused the null hypotheses to be rejected and the alternative one was retained.

The result of the data analysis in table 2 was significant due to the fact that the obtained r-value (0.76) was greater than the critical r-value (0.235) at 0.05 level with 78 degree of freedom. The result therefore means there is significant relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management of ventures in Imo State. The result is in agreement with the research findings of Schallenkamp and Smith (2015), who defined entrepreneurial networking as a process of encouraging the entrepreneurs' circle of trust and that it is a function of negotiation process. The authors also asserted that entrepreneurial networking is a function of personal relationships, based on trust, and entered into for the purpose of enhancing one's competitive advantage. The result of the analysis caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was retained.

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurial networking implies that a leader who ignores networking risks a key component of efficiency in entrepreneurial growth. The growth of this network is sometimes inhabited by a lack of trust, often exhibited by an unwillingness to share information. It provides the entrepreneur with market intelligence as well as tangible resources, access to physical and financial resources, overcome the liability of newness and smallness, a generator of resources, builder of reputation and credibility as well as capital at their start-up. Meaning that, entrepreneur managers who eschew networking despite its obvious advantages are not supposed to be there. There exist a positive relationship between knowledge-sharing and quality management of ventures in tertiary institutions in Imo State, there is also a significant relationship between entrepreneurial networking and quality management.

### **Recommendations**

1. Organizational culture of an entity should encourage discovery and innovation, this will help promote knowledge sharing and remove knowledge sharing obstacles in the organization.
2. The ultimate success of the firm's management hinge on the size of information network, leaders must ensure effective exploitation of knowledge-based resources that already exist within the organization.
3. Knowledge sharing are positively correlated therefore, therefore leaders are central in the process of creating, sharing and exploiting knowledge. He must also learn to motivate his workers.
4. For a business venture to be successful, the entrepreneur should reach out to other partners/competitors to share information and to get aids needed for the standing of the business.

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