

DOCUMENTATION AND CORPORATE MEMORY OF OIL AND GAS COMPANIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to ascertain the relationship between documentation and corporate memory in the Oil and Gas companies in the South-South region of Nigeria. Two research questions and two research hypotheses were formulated for the study. The study adopted quasi experimental design approach taken into cognizance the cross-sectional method. The population for the study was ninety respondents, that is three respondents which comprises of the administrative manager, research and development manager as well as the government and community affairs manager from the thirty indigenous oil and gas companies in the south-south region of Nigeria. Ninety copies of the questionnaire representing hundred percent of the study respondents were administered. Seventy-two copies of the question, representing eighty percent of the study respondents were retrieved properly filled and were suitable for the study while eighteen copies of questionnaire representing twenty percent of the study respondents though were returned but were not suitable for the study therefore were completely excluded from the study elements. Data were collected and analyzed with arithmetic mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between documentation and corporate memory in the indigenous oil and gas companies in the south-south, Nigeria. The study concluded that documentation is an essential factor in building corporate memory in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria. The study recommended that Management of indigenous oil and gas companies should ensure documentation are actively practiced, utilizing all necessary information needed from different department, functions and geographical locations.. That documentation of knowledge within the organization should not just be a mere bureaucratic obligation because when proper documentation is done, it weaves a tapestry of institutional memory that transcends the individual employee thereby helping the organization to have an efficient corporate memory as well as enhance collaboration in the organization.

Key words: Documentation, corporate memory, collaboration

INTRODUCTION

The business space these days is fast-paced and so dynamic that efficiency in documentation is no longer a nicety but a necessity. As organizations gear towards innovation, growth and adaptation in this diverse business environment, the need for capturing, sharing, and preserving knowledge in terms of standard operating procedures, technical guides, project plans, enabling teams to streamline processes, reduce errors as well as make informed decisions. The list is countless and can never be over-emphasized. According to Rachabathuni (2024), other process might steal the spotlight in any project but documentation remains the unsung hero that is crucial to the success of any project. Documentation remains an essential factor in ensuring continuity, consistency, and quality. Efficient documentation promotes collaboration, improves communication and enhances transparency which are all catalysts for organizational growth and success.

Documentation which has been defined as the management and control of all structured and unstructured information such as word processed documents, presentation packages, spreadsheets, e-mail, graphics in one single database accessible through a single interface (Hwao, Abdel, & Basset, 2013) giving companies the ability to ensure the availability of information whenever it is needed as well as ensuring document integrity. Document integrity includes the ability to identify and access records over time, as well as ensuring that the document is the authentic master copy/authoritative version. A document has integrity when it can be shown that the document has not changed, without going through the proper

channels. Without documentation, it will be difficult to prove the integrity of a document, should a legal need arise. If the actual document is controlled and can be shown to be controlled, document integrity can be ensured more easily.

Avoiding or limiting duplication of effort already undertaken requires proper documentation. Just as there are standard procedures to manage and control paper documents and records, suitable procedures should be implemented to manage documentations throughout their life cycle. It is also worthy to note that administration efficiency will not be attained in an organization without proper documentation. Poor or improper documentation leads to either paucity or an excess of information that hampers successful project implementation, causes documents to be lost during or after the life of the project, causes knowledge that should have formed corporate memory to be lost as well as diminishes the competitiveness of the project team to win a subsequent tender.

The Oil and Gas companies is no exception when it comes to the need for efficient documentation owing to the nature of their operations and the processes involved in achieving set objectives. The work of many oil and gas organizations has switched from manual to computerized method, communication networks, databases and many other technological means to, process and analyze data. The landscape is huge and every stage of operation if not properly documented will amount to reinventing the wheel if by any means a new employee comes onboard. Sadly, the indigenous oil and gas companies in the south-south region of Nigeria are constantly faced with employee turnover. Some communities sees as their right to ensure that organizations change their workers every three months to give opportunities to others to benefit from the company's employment process not knowing the consequential effect it will have on the company. And when these set of employees leave without proper documentation of what knowledge they have gathered during their stay in the company, the organization starts all over again to train, teach and sometimes or most times repeats mistakes that were corrected in the past. The inability of organizations to retain organizational knowledge in the form of documentation for strategic advantage remains a difficult challenge faced in the indigenous oil and gas sector in the south-south, Nigeria today. Therefore, the objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between documentation and corporate memory of indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria. The study shall therefore be seeking answers to the following research questions:

- i. How does documentation relate to corporate memory in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria?
- ii. How does documentation relate to collaboration in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

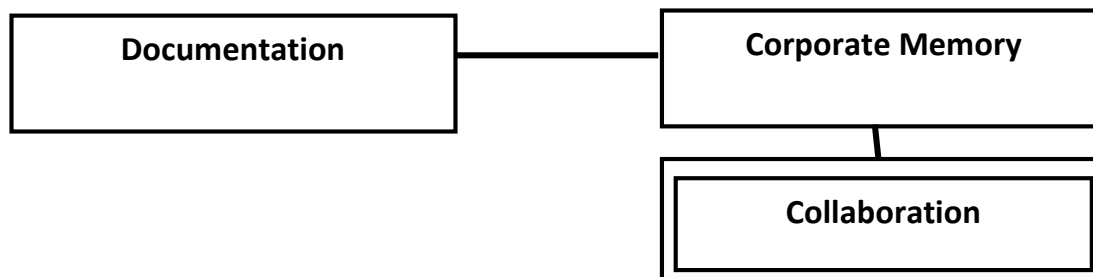


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual Framework: Documentation and corporate memory of indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2024) adopted from Shikalepo (2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The theory underpinning this study is the Organizational Learning theory. The theory emerged as an influential perspective within the field of organizational studies, offering a comprehensive framework according to Chakravarthy (2022) on how organizations are able to continuously enhance its collective ability to accept, make sense of, as well as respond to its internal and external change. The process includes creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge within the organization focusing on recording the knowledge gained via experience as well as making it available to other members of the organization when needed (Chakravarthy, 2022). This theory recognizes that in today's rapidly changing and knowledge-intensive business landscape, the ability to learn and adapt is a critical determinant of an organization's long-term success and survival. And according to Amin, Raharja and Tahir (2024), it shows exceptional learning abilities using a systematic pattern. The concept of organizational learning is rooted in the seminal works of scholars such as Argyris and Schön (1978), who introduced the notion of single-loop and double-loop learning. Single-loop learning refers to the process of detecting and correcting errors within existing organizational norms, policies, and procedures, while double-loop learning involves questioning and modifying the underlying assumptions, values, and governing variables that shape organizational behavior (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Crossan et al., 1999).

In the context of oil and gas companies in south-south Nigeria, cultivating a learning-oriented culture that embraces knowledge sharing, experimentation, and risk-taking is crucial for enabling effective knowledge management and organizational learning (Sharma & Vredenburg, 1998; Shuen et al., 2014). This requires strong leadership commitment, aligned incentive structures, and the integration of learning and knowledge-sharing behaviors into performance evaluations and reward systems (Bontis et al., 2002; Garvin, 1993). However, effective organizational learning requires collaboration, a supportive organizational culture, strong leadership commitment, and the implementation of robust knowledge management practices that promote knowledge renewal, continuous improvement, and the overcoming of knowledge rigidities.

DOCUMENTATION

Hwao, Abdel, & Basset (2013) defined documentation as the management and control of all structured and unstructured information such as word processed documents, presentation packages, spreadsheets, e-mail, graphics in one single database accessible through a single interface. This gives companies the ability to ensure the availability of information whenever

it is needed as well as ensuring document integrity. According to Indeed Editorial Team (2024), having well-organized business documents is crucial for an organization's well-being. It is important to note that in organizations, it is not only the knowledge of individual employees that needs to be captured and documented, it is also important to capture and document the processes that goes on in organizations because they form the cornerstone organizational knowledge management strategy (Reeves, 2024).

Types of Documentation

Documentation are of two types. Internal documentation and external documentation. Internal documents are those created, used within the organization. They are not outsider consumption e.g implementation plans, technical specification, internal processes and procedures. They are designed to assist in-house teams understand as well as carry out their work. While external documentation is intended to help users to understand the product, service, or project better. E.g are user guides, manuals, and knowledge base, available for end users. Documentation and resources that developers use are specific for internal purposes during the development of software. Release notes – The date/time of releasing a new software update, and the list of features, and codes that come with it. Project documentation involves covering key details about a project. It's about creating comprehensive documentation to explain what's needed over the course of the project to execute it in a proper manner. Some examples of project documentation include project proposals, project plans, business cases, status reports, and so on.

Benefits of Documentation

You cannot expect to launch a product expecting your end users to figure themselves out using it. This is where documentation comes in. When an organization has a good documentation process, it helps you to get the most out of your set expectations.

- Documentation defines how professional you are whether as an individual or company.
- It makes everything organized as well as directly affects productivity and efficiency, keeps a track on progress, identifies areas of risk, and ensures that everyone is on the same page (Shevy, 2023).
- Documentation has a direct impact on the customer satisfaction level.
- Good documentation is all about providing the best possible experience to your customers. When you show your customers that you care and feel for them, you get repeat business. As a result, when your customers are happy with your product, they will continue to become repeat buyers. If there are errors in your documentation, or it fails to describe how your product works, your customers will switch to your competitors with better and clear documentation. When it comes to quality and process control, it is vital to have a unified method of completing a task. This is possible through documentation.
- According to Eleoranta, Hameri and Lati, (2001), documentation helps companies remain coherent and allows team members to maintain consistency across all departments.
- Documentation is a way to prove that a transaction occurred (Richard, 2023).
- It helps to relieve the organization from struggles occasioned by loss of key operational staff (Moromisato, 2023).
- Documentation leads to knowledge sharing, which helps teams to understand processes and the outcome of every finished project. The target audience of documentation is the end user. Writers will compile and write documentation with the assumption that the end user does not have enough expertise on how to use the product. The language is plain, simple, and clear so that even a novice user, with no prior experience in using a

product, can understand it. There was a time when companies would print user documentation. While this is still the norm with all physical products, we are now living in an online world where most users are on their smart phones and tablets. If you are a manufacturer, you also need to publish your documentation online and customers search through it. A set of documentation published on your website that users can access through a browser including Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome.

- Focus on the accessibility of your documentation in all formats; print and electronic.
- Include graphics and images as much as possible to show rather than tell your customers how to use your product.
- For electronic documentation, use video and GIFs. Documentation tools are software programs that aid a team of writers, developers, and management in creating user documentation. These tools streamline the documentation process in an easy and fast manner Eleoranta, et al. (2001). These tools work best whether you're writing internal documentation for team members or customer-facing help guides.

Every documentation tool is different. It is critical to perform thorough research on choosing the best tool that can explain your intentions to your audience without hiccups.

Corporate memory

Corporate memory has been around since early 1965 (Crossan, Lane & White, 1999). The essence of corporate memory is as a result of corporate amnesia i.e the loss of valuable knowledge and expertise within an organization when employees leave and take their accumulated knowledge with them. However, it is in the last decade that the concept attracted more attention as researchers seek to understand and develop theoretical models on how to increase organizational tranquility. It became very essential because organizations must relevant and valuable organizational knowledge usually lost to employee turnover, migration and retirements.

Corporate memory has been defined as that generic concept used in describing the saving, representation, and sharing of organizational knowledge (Croasdell, 2001; Walsh and Ungson, 1991 as cited in Lai, 2020) from an organizational history in order to revive present decisions, reduce transaction cost, support cooperation among workers, the work, and the workplace both in multi-task and multiple-user environments, technically, functionally, and socially using the power (resources) within the organization. Brayn (2024), stated that corporate memory is very vital to organizations especially when that organization is figuring out its real value in their long-term growth and success. Warwick study as cited in Kransdorff (1998) shows that organizations keep on repeating their mistakes and blunders for two reasons. The first is their inability to draw from past experiences. These organizations have either lost their corporate memory or are incapable of recalling their corporate history. The second reason is their inability to communicate lessons from one part of the organization to another in a timely manner. It is evident that organizations can only adapt as speedily as they can learn though what they learnt yesterday or today does mean that it has stamped tomorrow's success considering the fact that each day comes with its own challenges. Therefore, an organization's ability to learn faster than its competitor is its weapon of survival and continued success.

The information economy has brought about a new wave of opportunities and challenges that have the potential to give organizations competitive edge over their market rivals. And building corporate memory is one of such potential opportunity. Today, corporate memory is generally accepted to be represented by a cycle, with iterations commencing with the identification of existing knowledge, and subsequently followed with planning the knowledge

to collect, processing of the actual selected knowledge collected, distribution of new knowledge to where it is required, fostering the usage within the organization, controlling and maintaining its use and finally disposing of it when it is no longer required.

To facilitate corporate memory, organizations must employ various knowledge management practices. These may include creating repositories for storing and organizing corporate-specific knowledge, implementing knowledge-sharing platforms and tools, encouraging documentation of processes and procedures, conducting post-project reviews to capture lessons learned, fostering a culture of learning and knowledge sharing, and promoting collaboration and communication within and across departments in the corporation. It is crucial to recognize that the commitment to documentation transcends mere bureaucratic obligations; it is, in fact, a strategic investment in the longevity and resilience of the corporation. This commitment reflects a profound understanding that institutional memory is not a disposable commodity but a precious asset that must be cherished, nurtured, and vigilantly safeguarded for the greater benefit of the entire organization.

By meticulously documenting our processes, experiences, and accumulated knowledge, we weave a tapestry of institutional memory that transcends the transient nature of individual employees. We fortify corporate memory's foundation, ensuring that the valuable insights gained from our collective endeavors will not be lost in the ebb and flow of personnel changes. As the baton is passed to future employees, the repository of departmental memory serves as a guiding light thereby illuminating the path forward and equipping new team members with the tools they need to hit the ground running. They build upon the foundations laid before them, and propel the organization towards greater heights.

COLLABORATION

The need to maximize individual potential through collaboration has necessitated a shift from working alone to working in groups, which requires employees to cooperate, share information, confront differences, and put personal interests aside greater good of the group. Collaboration is defined as the act of individuals working together in partnership to solve problems or complete tasks for which they were created (Molinillo, Aguilar-Illescas, Anaya-Sánchez, & Vallespín-Arán, 2018). According to (Mobolade & Akinade, 2021), collaborators are an influential workgroups whose effectiveness is based on their level of desire, coordination, and purpose. According to (Kane 2019), it has become a key component in the operation of firms in today's economic environment. When individual efforts, strengths, and skills are joined with collaboration to pursue a common goal or cause, members and the organization produce meaningful results.

According to, van der Lippe and Lippényi, (2020), performance through collaboration depends on individual member effort and collective work products. People who are interdependent in their work and committed to pursuing a common objective together to meet defined goals are referred to as a team (O'Neill, & Salas, 2018). According to (Stoverink, Kirkman, Mistry, & Rosen, 2020), organizations rely heavily on the group collaboration to improve their efficacy and organizational performance. Burrows (2023) has stated that it requires collaboration and coordination between those involved in the process to ensure that documentation is accurate, complete, up-to-date, and all-round a high-quality information resource.

Collaboration has been a key factor in the progress, evolution, and survival of humanity. Research suggests that teamwork provides better results for organizations than individual work. Teamwork is considered one of the most effective work forms. Working in teams also

benefits the individual on a personal level as it fulfils needs such as social interaction and affiliation. Regardless of the profuse research validating the effectiveness teamwork brings to organizations, many management personnel still do little to build teams. Since the beginning of time, humans have been driven to form groups and work together to accomplish their goals, solve problems, generate more ideas, develop skills, survival, among other purposes. Collaboration is one of the most noticeable and essential work configurations of the 21st century. It is considered one of the most effective work forms. The 21st century has brought many changes to the structure of organizations and also to the nature of jobs. Levi suggests that even though the use of team in the workplace has a long history, the past decades have shown that the notion of organizational collaboration has reformed. In the last decades, many studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of teams (Sundstrom, McIntyre, Halfhill, & Richards 2003; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2003).

Reasons for collaboration

In this competitive and globalized economy, organizations face many challenges due to their constant evolution. There is still limited knowledge about how work collaboration function and many questions remain about how employers can successfully create productive and effective work teams. Given the globalized economy of the 21st century, there is also a lot to learn about oil and gas collaboration. Additionally, there is much to learn about the support systems needed to manage this work configuration. Many organization's workforces are using different types of collaboration, such as production group, project group, service group, and action teams to accomplish its different goals and stay competitive. The literature based on collaboration suggests many benefits for organizations and for individuals. Some of the benefits of collaboration include their effectiveness at improving employee relations, employees' technical and interpersonal skills, quality of work life, job satisfaction and performance, organizational effectiveness growth, and flexibility. Collaboration also provides social support, encourage cooperation, and make jobs more interesting and challenging.

Benefits of collaboration

According to Hartenian, (2003) managers and supervisors are becoming more aware that collaboration is more effective in providing results than employees working individually. This is one of the reasons the use of work teams has become more popular. Alie, Beam, and Carey (1998), speculates that collaboration is becoming the foundation in organizations. As part of many reorganization agendas, many organizations are using work teams as the principal component to staying competitive. Cohen and Bailey, (1997) found that 85% of the organizations composed of 100 employees or more are using work teams to achieve their goals, and in fact there is a strong enthusiasm for this work configuration. Employers are confident that they can hire employees with the ability to work in squad. Despite the many benefits collaboration brings, developing them is not always an easy task. However, employers are under the notion that they can develop this dexterity in their team members through training and mentoring.

Hartenian's research study in 2003, about team member acquisition of team knowledge, skills, and abilities found that work group who were offered training and mentoring demonstrated higher collaborative skills than those who did not receive it. Stevens and Campion, (1994) performed a study with the purpose of determining the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for collaboration and also with the purpose of considering the implications of these teamwork for Human Resource management. After an extensive literature review, Stevens and Campion concluded that it is imperative for HR to understand the requirements of the job, and requirements for collaboration, to effectively hire employees. It was also concluded that

HR needs to understand the tasks and role expectations, required trainings, job analysis, appraisals, among others factors that can potentially affect the implementation of collaboration programs.

Collaboration is necessary for tasks that require creativity, problem solving, and innovation. Collaboration is a competitive method for achieving difficult goals and tasks. As globalization keeps forcing organizations to face more challenges, more tasks are assigned to and performed by work teams. Fitz-Enz, (1997) speculates that work collaboration are the most noticeable indicator that organizations are changing towards a collaborative environment. Organizational management is becoming more aware that jobs are becoming more complex. Wheelan suggests that this complexity is requiring employees to work in unions to ensure organizational success. The implementation of work collaboration is known to be one of the most effective organizational interventions for improving organizational performance. Recent findings by Manzoor, Ullah, Hussain and (Ahman 2022) suggest that teamwork is the most significant independent variable having a strong relationship with the dependent variable of employee performance. Manzoor, (2011) research study analyzed the effect of collaboration on employee performance of the staff members of an Education Department. It revealed that collaboration when properly implemented is of significant importance, which brings benefits in terms of increased product quality and quantity, competitive advantage and higher productivity, and performance.

DOCUMENTATION AND CORPORATE MEMORY

Bauer, Kilb, and Renner (2018) focused specifically on the documentation practices and challenges encountered in the submission and peer review processes of scholarly journals. Based on their analysis of empirical studies, the authors identified several critical issues, such as the lack of standardization in submission formats, inconsistencies in documentation requirements across journals, and the need for better tools and workflows to facilitate the documentation and exchange of scholarly knowledge during the submission and review processes. Corral and Lester (2013) found that while libraries have been actively engaged in knowledge documentation efforts, there is a need for more systematic and coordinated approaches. They highlighted the potential of emerging technologies, such as linked data and semantic web technologies, to enhance knowledge documentation practices in academic libraries, but also noted the challenges related to interoperability, metadata standards, and the lack of skilled personnel. Another study by Abbas, Ali, and Balqees (2020) discovered that building information modelling (BIM) and geographic information system (GIS) are very important technologies in the building industry, conducted a research on how to link GIS and BIM data using Autodesk InfraWorks as platform. Their results showed the visualization process in the models (3D), as well as calling the files in different formats using the tooltip tool in InfraWorks to compile all the case studies within one environment. Based on the foregoing, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- H₀₁:** There is no relationship between documentation and corporate memory of indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.
- H₀₂:** There is no relationship between documentation and collaboration in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

McCombes (2021) as cited in Bhandari (2023) stated that a research design is that strategy the researcher adopted in answering the research questions using empirical data. Therefore, this study adopted quasi experimental design approach. It also took into cognizance the cross-sectional design method. The population for the study was 90 respondents and because the

study was an institutional study, the whole population was taken as the sample size. The research instrument was a well-structured close-ended questionnaire validated through the supervisor's vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha 0.70 value. Data generated were analyzed. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) using the 95% confidence interval and 0.05 benchmark for the assessment of its level of significance.

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the variable measures

S/N	Dimensions/Measures variable of the study	Number of Items	Number of Case	Cronbach Alpha (a)
1	Documentation	4	60	.850
2	Collaboration	4	60	.954

Source: SPSS Result (Version 20.0)

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Documentation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Documentation of organization knowledge enhances workplace collaboration	72	1	4	3.31	.850
Valid N (listwise)	72				

Source: SPSS Output 2024 version 20.0

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Collaboration

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Collaboration improves organizational service delivery.	72	1	4	3.19	.959
Valid N (listwise)	72				

Source: SPSS Output 2024 version 20.0

Table 4: Correlation matrix for Documentation and Corporate Memory

		Documentati on	Memory Bank	Informati on Optimizat ion	Collaborati on
Documentati on	Pearson Correlation	1	.956**	.981**	.981**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	72	72	72	72
Collaboratio n	Pearson Correlation	.981**	.963**	.984**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	72	72	72	72

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output 2024 version 20.0

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no relationship between documentation and corporate memory of indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.

The relationship between documentation and corporate memory was observed to be significant. This is because documentation was observed to impact significantly on the measure of corporate memory (collaboration); documentation and collaboration had $r = 0.956$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. The value revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between documentation and corporate memory. The study therefore rejects the null hypotheses earlier stated that there is no relationship between documentation and corporate memory in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between documentation and collaboration in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.

The relationship between documentation and collaboration was observed to be significant. This is because documentation was observed to impact significantly on the collaboration in that $r = 0.981$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. The value revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between documentation and corporate memory. The study therefore rejects the null hypotheses earlier stated that there is no relationship between documentation and collaboration in the indigenous oil and gas companies in south-south, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The relationship between the study variables is founded through the use of statistical techniques. And the results of the analysis demonstrated that there is a very significant and positive relationship between documentation and corporate memory.

The findings in Table 4 of this study revealed that there is a strong positive significant relationship between documentation and collaboration which is a measure of corporate memory of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria. This study is correlated with the finding of Keyton (2017) who emphasized that collaboration is a process of sustaining systems spanning from organizational resources, knowledge and expertise. Thereby aligning with the Organizational Learning theory as stated by Chakravarty (2022), that organizations are able to continuously enhance its collective ability to accept, make sense

of, and respond to changes through creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge via collaboration.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concluded that documentation has a very strong positive relationship with corporate memory. The study therefore recommends that Management of indigenous oil and gas companies should ensure proper documentation are actively practiced, utilizing all necessary information needed from different departments, functions and geo-graphical locations. They should also ensure that documentation of knowledge within the organization is not just a mere bureaucratic obligation because when proper documentation is done, it weaves a tapestry of institutional memory that transcends the individual employee thereby helping the organization to have an efficient corporate memory as well as enhance collaboration in the organization.

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