

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE
IN A PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATION IN GHANA**

by

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I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have submitted the thesis to originality-checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements of originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at the University of South Africa for another qualification, or at any other higher education institution.

Signature:



Date: 14/11/22

Shaibu Ternni Abiru

DEDICATION

To my late parents, their prayers and value system has contributed to my desire and commitment to knowledge seeking for betterment of humanity and hereafter as continuous charity

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of knowledge-based economies globally, has emphasised knowledge management (KM) practices in organisations as the emerging path for employees' performance effectiveness. To this effect, one important way of solving employees' performance challenges is that the HR department needs to articulate how the employees can apply KM practices to create knowledge value for the organisation that will lead to their effective performance. This study was, therefore, conducted to address a continued ineffective performance of employees of public sector organisations in Ghana, which was largely blamed on ineffective HR practices attributed to lack of understanding of KM practices among the employees. Here, KM adopted as an integrative lens on this research area, has been described as a systematic way whereby HR management decides on which knowledge resource employees should rely on for the smooth and effective operation of the organisation. Hence, the study aimed to develop a validated KM framework for effective performance of employees of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), which is a public sector organisation under the Local Government Service of Ghana (LGSG).

In respect to this, the most appropriate philosophical paradigm and research design for this qualitative study was interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA). This approach helped to explore and explain the understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon, which was best done through the shared value, knowledge and experience of the participants working together in a group. Hence, employees of three metropolitan assemblies namely, Kumasi, Tamale and Tema zoned geographically as central, northern and southern zones respectively, which reflect the typology of most public sector organisations in Ghana, were purposively selected as the population for the study. These metropolitan assemblies are well-staffed with sub-metropolitan structures for effective personnel management.

Informed by the IPA methodology, 18 participants were selected as the sample size using a heterogeneous purposive sampling technique for semi-structured interviews and also using a semi-structured interview schedule as the instrument

for data collection. The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and were transcribed verbatim before analysed using an IPA framework of analysis which is sequential and a bottom-up approach. The transcribed interviews together with the observational field notes and reflexive research journal were used to generate inferential codes after they were compared with the codes of an independent co-coder for the development of superordinate themes used for interpretation of the findings for the study. The main findings revealed that nearly all participants had long years of working experience as well as good working relation with the HR management and practiced KM practices, which contribute to their commitments, competence, physical resource, and knowledge, which they used to increase their performance effectiveness as well as the knowledge resource of other employees in the organisation.

In the findings, the participants described KM practices as the internal practices for sharing employees' knowledge or internal strategies for sharing the documented knowledge of the organisation. They also revealed that enhanced internal practices and strategies also help to improve on their processes of sharing, transfer and application of the organisational knowledge (OK). This helps them to be more professional in their improved KM practices, which they described as improved practices for sharing employees' knowledge or improved strategies for sharing documented knowledge of the organisation. The findings revealed that the HR management's support for the enhanced internal practices and strategies was very necessary because these helped to improve on the employees' KM practices through effective interaction and socialisation, which is the main contribution of the study. Hence, a conceptual framework on KM for performance has been proffered to guide employees' effective performance in an organisation. It was, therefore, recommended that the HR management of the public sector organisations follows the necessary guidelines for its implementation for their employees' effective understanding of their formal ways of sharing the OK, which helps them to become open-minded and to develop quick problem-solving techniques in the organisation.

LIST OF KEY TERMS

Employees' performance effectiveness; enhanced internal organisational factors; human resource management; internal organisational factors; interpretive phenomenological approach; improved knowledge management practices; knowledge management practices; organisational knowledge; public sector organisations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEOs: Chief executive officers

CKO: Chief knowledge officer

DAPAT: District assembly performance assessment tool

FOAT: Functional organisational assessment tool

ICM: Intellectual capital management

ICT: Information and communication technology

ILGS: Institute of local government studies

IOFs: Internal organisational factors

KM: Knowledge management

LGSG: Local government service of Ghana

MLG & RD: Ministry of local government and rural development

MMDAs: Metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies

OK: Organisational knowledge

SECI: Socialisation, externalisation, combination, and internalisation

SKAAs: Skills, knowledge, attitude, and abilities

SWOT: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

TQM: Total quality management

Unisa: University of South Africa

LIST OF KEY DIFINITIONS

Change: The adoption of a new idea or behaviour by an organisation (Hameed et al., 2017: 405).

Coach: A peer or manager who works with an employee to motivate the employee, help him or her develop skills, and provide reinforcement and feedback (Kim & Kuo, 2015: 160).

Competencies: Skills, knowledge, abilities as well as personal characteristics that enable employees to perform their jobs (Shephard et al., 2018: 535).

Decentralisation: It is the transfer of responsibility of planning, decision-making, resource allocation, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organisation (Ahwoi, 2018: 32).

Development: The acquisition of knowledge, skills, and behaviours that improve an employee's ability to meet changes in job requirements and in client demands (Ohemeng & Kamga, 2020: 89).

Ethics: The fundamental principles of right and wrong by which research participants and researchers interact (Boss, 2020: 12).

Explicit knowledge: Knowledge that is well codified and documented and can easily be communicated or transferred to other persons (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995: 8).

Hermeneutic approach: It holds the view that the most basic fact of social life lies in the meaning attached to a social action, hence, interpretation of the meanings of such social actions is required (Merriam, 2016: 12)

Human resource management: The policies and practices that influence employees' behaviour, attitudes and performances (Henry, 2018: 15).

Ideographic approach: It is the commitment of analysing each case of interview in a corpus detail or the in-depth examinations of the lived experience of a single person (Smith, 2017: 10).

Inductive approach: This involves moving from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all given events (Leeming, 2018: 670).

Interactive approach: This helps to bring the five major components of the study, each of which addresses a different set of issues that are essential to the coherence of the study together (Maxwell, 2016: 23).

Internal organisational factors: The internal practices and strategies organisation adapts to help employees interact, communicate, network, and collaborate for the success of the organisation (Ali et al., 2019: 1817).

Interpretive phenomenological analysis: It is about the detailed examination of personal lived experience, the meaning of experience to participants, and how participants make sense of that experience (Noon, 2018: 78).

Knowledge management: The process of enhancing organisation's performance by designing and using tools, systems, and cultures to improve creation, sharing, and use of organisational knowledge (Dalkir, 2017: 25).

Knowledge workers: Employees who own the intellectual means of producing a product or providing service (Hussinki et al., 2018: 914).

Mentor: An experienced and productive senior employee who helps develop a less experienced employee (Kuenzi et al., 2020: 48).

Organisational knowledge: Both tacit and explicit knowledge that makes an employee to function intelligently in an organisation (Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009: 346).

Performance effectiveness: Employees having the necessary SKAAs that enables them to perform their job effectively (Noronha et al., 2018: 2).

Phenomenology: It refers to the study of human experiences and the way in which things are perceived as they appear to consciousness (Finlay, 2011: 7).

Public sector organisation: State-owned organisation that provides services for the benefit of all the people in a country (Thomas, 2017: 15).

Qualitative research: It is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns or relationships among these categories (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017: 257).

Subjective experience: Exploring the novelty or uniqueness of a person's experiences, how experiences are made meaningful and how these meanings manifest themselves within the context of the person both as an individual and in their many cultural rites (Larkin et al., 2019: 186).

Tacit knowledge: Knowledge based on personal experience that is highly personal and hard to formalise, making it difficult to share with others (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995: 8).

Total quality management: A cooperative form of doing business that relies on the talents and capabilities of both employees and management to continually improve quality and productivity (Almahamid & Qasrawi, 2017: 1035).

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

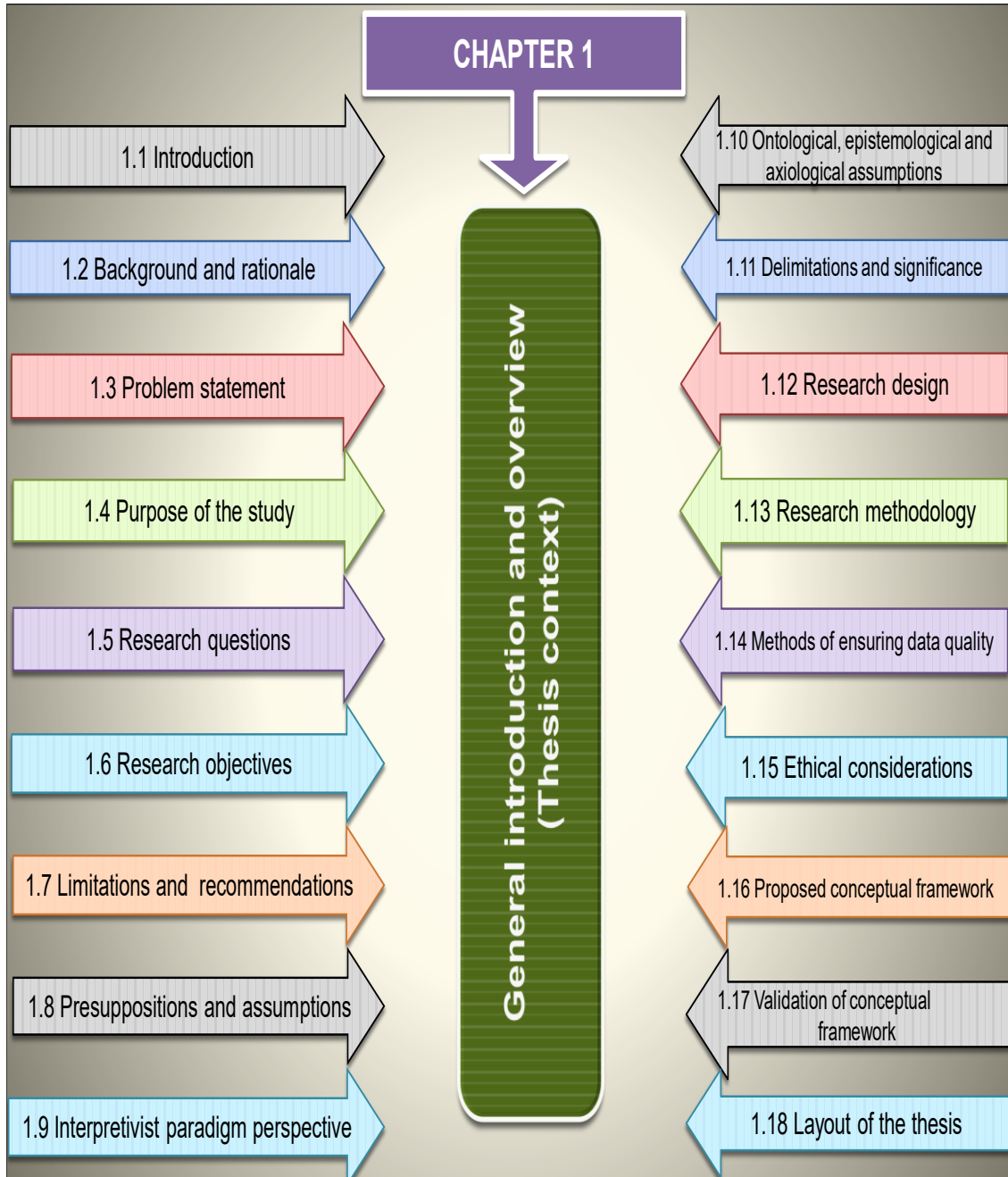


Figure 1.1 The structure of chapter one at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of this research which focused on the development and validation of a knowledge management (KM) framework for employees' performance effectiveness in a public sector organisation, namely, the LGSG, comprising the MMDAs. This was because employees of the MMDAs are responsible for the implementation of government policy decisions, programmes and projects for sound and healthy economic development at the local or district level (Ahwoi, 2015; Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development (MLG & RD), 2016; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2015). Hence, to tailor the research towards this, this chapter provides a background to and the rationale for the study leading to the formulation of the problem statement and the subsequent research questions as well as the research objectives. These research questions developed mainly from the literature reviewed allude to the need for an in-depth investigation into improved KM practices in a public sector organisation, using internal organisational factors (IOFs) that are enhanced, which lead to the employees' performance effectiveness in these organisations .

The chapter further offers a brief introduction to the interpretive paradigm perspectives, which guide the research together with its ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. Also introduced here, was the research approach, design and the methodology that was employed to address the stated research questions, with reference to various steps followed in the research process for the empirical study. A concise description of the purpose, limitations and provisional recommendations, the delimitation and significance as well as the presuppositions and assumptions of the study were all introduced in this chapter. The relevant ethical considerations and methods adopted to ensure data quality and data management of the study as well as the validation process of the research report were also highlighted in this chapter. Finally, the layout of how the thesis has been presented as well as the proposed summary has been provided as shown in Figure 1.1 as the structure at a glance.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The context of this research study was improved KM practices in a public sector organisation namely, the LGSG, comprising the MMDAs in Ghana. The research sought to explore the understanding of: organisational knowledge (OK) and KM practices; IOFs and the enhanced IOFs; and improved KM practices and employees' performance effectiveness. More specifically, the research was focused on developing an understanding of the process of the organisation's improved KM practices that lead to its employees' performance effectiveness, using the enhanced IOFs.

The rationale for this was, therefore, to explore how the human resource (HR) department of the LGSG made employees of MMDAs perform effectively in implementation of government policy decisions, programmes and projects, and resource allocations at the local or district level, using the improved KM practices. The results of this research were validated and used to develop KM framework which provides useful information for HR managers of the public sector organisations to use as a guide for effective performance of their employees in the Ghanaian context.

The motivation for this study stemmed from the fact that one of the biggest challenges facing public sector organisations in Ghana today is how to nurture efficient and effective employees who will implement government policy decisions, programmes and projects, and manage resource allocated to them effectively at the local or district level. This ineffective performance has a devastating effect on the district or local level's ability to make progress in socio-economic and political development owing to the policy of decentralisation (Ahwoi, 2018; Ayee, 2018; Damoah, Akwei, Amoako, & Botchie, 2018). Decentralisation is a public policy in Ghana which facilitates widespread of transfer of political, fiscal and administrative powers from the central government to the MMDAs (Ahwoi, 2018; Edwards, 2018; Huxley & Schneiderman, 2018). Previous research suggest that efficient and effective employees mean those who have the necessary skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes (SKAAs) that improve on their performance and also make

the organisation function effectively (Bawole & Ibrahim, 2017; Nasir & Mahmood, 2018; Storey, Wright & Ulrich, 2019).

Therefore, the MLG & RD and the HR department of the LGSG were doing everything possible to enhance the SKAAs of the employees of MMDAs, for them to perform efficiently and effectively (Bawole & Ibrahim, 2017; Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)-Ghana, 2017; Yeboah-Assiamah, 2016). To this effect, measures like the district assembly performance assessment tool (DAPAT) and functional organisational assessment tool (FOAT) were introduced to assess the performance of the MMDAs in terms of administration and performance in their provision of social services in the local areas (Aziabah, 2018; Bangase, 2018; Bawole & Ibrahim, 2017). The Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) was also established to train and retrain employees of the MMDAs to enhance their performance (CDD-Ghana, 2017; ILGS, 2018; Yeboah-Assiamah, 2016). The rationale for these measures was to help develop the employees' SKAAs and, therefore, to improve on their performance effectiveness. Studies carried out by Armah-Attoh (2015), Bawole and Ibrahim (2017) and Essuman-Mensah (2019) conclude that when the performance of employees of the MMDAs is improved, it automatically means that the organisation becomes more productive, efficient and effective in their service delivery.

Studies by CDD-Ghana (2019), Chachu (2021) and Gumah and Aziabah (2020) corroborate this view. They assert that through development of employees' SKAAs quality of work, rural communities develop, the security of the rural areas improves, food security improves, provision of health services improves, standard of education improves, citizens' well-being enhances, and personal growth and development of employees improves from higher remuneration. Despite these benefits, employees of MMDAs in Ghana continue to perform ineffectively (Agyeman-Duah, Gbedolo, Prempeh, & Arthur, 2018; Anderson & LaTrobe, 2018). According to Agyeman-Duah et al.(2018) and Anderson and LaTrobe (2018), rural communities in Ghana are still underdeveloped largely owing to low quality of social service delivery because of ineffective performance of employees of

MMDAs. The question is then, what are the underlying reasons for the continued inefficient performance of the employees of MMDAs in Ghana?

The continued poor performance of MMDA employees who implement government's policy decisions, programmes and projects despite the resources allocated to them at the local or district level in Ghana may be seen as an indication that something was wrong in the management of the employees by the HR department of the LGSG. In the literature, several reasons were identified which the HR department of the LGSG needed to consider to solve the performance problems of MMDA employees. These reasons included:

- inadequate financial resources and logistics for MMDAs (Gumah & Aziabah, 2020);
- improper recruitment and selection procedures and low remuneration and incentive packages for employees (Essuman-Mensah, 2019; Stroińska, 2020);
- ineffective HR management practices and lack of opportunities for training and development (Ohemeng & Akonnor, 2022; Ohemeng & Kamga, 2020);
- lack of career development opportunities and lack of organisational commitment by the employees (Frimpong, 2017; Yeboah-Assiamah, 2016);
- lack of information and poor performance assessment (Aziabah, 2018; Bonney, 2020); and
- corrupt practices in the governance system of public sector organisations in Ghana (Damoah et al., 2018; Kaunian, 2018).

Ineffective performance undoubtedly had a negative effect on output of the MMDAs and the economic development of the country as a whole (Agyeman-Duah et al., 2018; Aziabah, 2018; Damoah et al., 2018). This ineffective performance of employees, therefore, formed part of the concerns of the HR department of the LGSG (Bourhis, 2018; CDD-Ghana, 2017; MLG & RD, 2018). Hence, to effectively manage the employees of MMDAs, the HR department needed to engage in reforms that will promote the effective performance of employees (Bangase, 2018;

Ohemeng & Akonnor, 2022; Stroińska, 2020). There was, therefore, the need to strictly adopt these reforms because of the continued ineffective performance of employees of this public sector organisation and its associated problems, as echoed by Chachu (2021), Essuman-Mensah (2019) and Ohemeng and Akonnor (2022). According to scholars, these reforms will enable the organisation to be productive, remain globally competitive and will be working towards the attainment of its goal through the achievement of its strategic corporate objectives by developing the local communities.

Although the reasons for the inefficient and ineffective performance of the employees of MMDAs were still not clear, they were occasionally linked to the HR department's ineffective management of the employees in the organisation (Aziabah, 2018; Ohemeng & Kamga, 2020; Stroińska, 2020). It is important to state that the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act, 462), which has been superseded by the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act, 936), accorded the MMDAs the administrative, deliberative, legislative and executive functions at the local level, also made provisions for it to control large resources from different sources (Ahwoi, 2018; MLG & RD, 2019; Scot, 2019). In 2016, therefore, the common fund allocation to the 216 MMDAs alone was about 800.16 million Ghanaian Cedis, equivalent to \$333.40 million United States of American (USA) dollars (Ahwoi, 2018; CDD-Ghana, 2017; MLG & RD, 2019). In the views of Kaunian (2018) and Damoah et al. (2018), corrupt practices in the governance system of the public sector organisations in Ghana also affect their effective service delivery.

Hence, this problem of ineffective performance of employees of MMDAs was not attributed to resources alone and, therefore, needed further investigation. This was because it is the employees who will create the right value for the organisation in order to solve its performance challenges (Bangase, 2018; Chachu, 2021; Stroińska, 2020). It is also important to state that one important way of solving employees' performance challenges in the organisation is that the HR department needs to articulate how the employees in the organisation can apply KM to create value for the organisation that will lead to effective employees' performance

(Abuaddous, Al-Sokkar & Abualodous, 2018; Asiedu, 2015; Dzansi, Jensen, Lagakos, Otoo, Telli, & Zindan, 2018). This path of applying KM can be adopted by the HR department of the LGSG as a way of preventing employees' ineffectiveness (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Dalkir, 2017; Omotayo, 2015). This will enable all employees to have the OK seen as an important asset, which means having the theoretical or practical understanding of the organisation's rudiments.

However, it is important to state that this path of applying KM in the organisation must also be strategised because, in the views of Asiedu (2015) and Omotayo (2015), what worked yesterday may or may not work tomorrow because of diversity of techniques as well as socio-cultural or environmental factors. The use of KM to solve the employees' performance challenges is because knowledge is now seen as a valuable resource that helps employees to deliver quality products and services when properly managed owing to its opportunities of continues learning (Byukusenge & Munene, 2017; Stamou, 2017). KM as a field of study has existed for some period now and has moved beyond an academic theory to an essential component of organisational life. It is worth noting that in recent years, the application of KM by employees in an organisation has been widely recognised by HR managers as the foundation of industrialised economies in this globalised world (Huselid, 2018; Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017).

Scholars like Bamel and Bamel (2018) and Byukusenge and Munene (2017) were of the view that nowadays, organisations do not use their financial capital and strength as their sole competitive advantage, rather knowledge is the new competitive advantage in business. Hence, the importance of KM is no longer restricted to knowledge intensive firms in the high-tech industries but is a key driver of employees' performance effectiveness in both private and public sector organisations (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Byukusenge & Munene, 2017; Kinghorn, 2017). It is, therefore, logical for the HR department of public sector organisations to expend their energy and time to implement KM practices in the organisation using a KM framework to address their employees' performance challenges.

It was observed that owing to the broadness of the field of KM, existing KM frameworks for employees' effective performance vary in scope and focus. The most adopted models use the understanding of the concept of knowledge, how knowledge flows in the organisation and the factors that influence KM practices in the organisation as the underlying principles for a successful KM framework (Ali, Musawir & Ali, 2018; Dalkir, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017). The first two principles are, however, incorporated into the understanding of KM practices while factors that influence KM practices stand alone as IOFs that influence KM practices in an organisation (Asiedu, 2015; Dalkir, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017). Some researchers generally define KM as a set of new organisational practices ensuring insights, results and learning within an organisation that is captured and made available for employees to find, use, update, and integrate into the organisation's process (Omotayo, 2015: 2; Taskin & Van Bunnem, 2015: 160).

In their study, Bamel and Bamel (2018) and Gao, Chi and Liu (2018) conclude that KM deals with any international set of practices or processes designed to optimise the use of knowledge, in other words, to increase allocation efficiency in the area of knowledge production, distribution and application. On their part, Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Armstrong and Taylor (2020) describe KM as a discipline that seeks to improve on the performance of individuals and organisations simultaneously, by maintaining and leveraging the present as well as the future value of knowledge assets that must be created and developed. An organisation's task with KM should, therefore, be focused on considering knowledge as either tacit (a practice) or explicit (an object) within the organisation (Gamble, 2020; Hislop, Bosua & Helms, 2018). This helps to offer a strategy for transporting this tacit knowledge of individual employees (practice-based knowledge) into explicit knowledge of the organisation (objective-based knowledge). This strategy helps to ensure that the individual employees' tacit knowledge becomes the organisation's explicit knowledge for effective use by all employees (Gamble, 2020; Gao et al., 2018; Hislop et al., 2018).

After a survey of the major theoretical approaches on KM, Basit and Medase (2019), Dalkir (2017) and Gao et al. (2018) conclude that KM may be viewed as a continuous cycle of three processes namely: knowledge creation and capture; knowledge sharing and dissemination; and knowledge acquisition and application that when followed well help employees to perform effectively. This was because KM is people-centred, contextual, goes through a process, and relies on technology. In view of this, one facet of KM that was repeatedly discussed in the literature is KM practices. A number of studies have, therefore, been carried out on HR practices and KM practices (Ali, Paris & Gunasekaran, 2019; Ibrahim, 2017; Kinghorn, 2017). These studies, however, varied in purpose and context and in each, the authors briefly described some IOFs that influence KM practices. This means appropriately implementing KM practices is a function of the HR department in the organisation and are also influenced by some IOFs (Ali et al., 2019; Ibrahim, 2017; Kinghorn, 2017).

This means the successful implementation of KM practices is a function of the HR management and are highly dependent on specific IOFs, which some researchers termed as KM influencing factors (Ali et al., 2019; Singh, Gupta, Busso, & Kamboj, 2021; Basit & Medase, 2019). Therefore, using these IOFs helps the HR management to facilitate the implementation of KM practices. This is done by helping the knowledge worker to perform work that involves the generation of constructive information and knowledge by means of accessing data, personal knowledge, OK, and external knowledge (Basit & Medase, 2019; Ibrahim, 2017). Many researchers have, therefore, proven that immediate IOFs that mostly help in implementing KM practices include the organisation's internal practices such as the organisation's strategy, organisational culture and structure, leadership and technological tools (Fernandes, 2018; Islam, Jasimuddin & Hassan, 2015). These also include the organisation's internal strategies such as the organisation's internal procedures and guides, work rules and policies and internal regulations and principles (Ali et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2021).

This means when the HR management effectively utilises these internal practices as well as internal strategies in the implementation of KM practices, it enables the knowledge worker to perform more effectively to achieve the objectives of the organisation (Ali et al., 2019; Fernandes, 2018). In their studies, Almeida, Miranda and Falcao (2019), Islam et al. (2015) and Mittal, Sengupta and Agarwal (2018) explain that practices are seen as the usual or repeated ways or practices of doing systematic exercises in an organisation to influence employees' behaviour to become proficient. In their views, Gholipour, Esmaeili, Honari, and Ghorbani (2018) and Singh, Mittal, Sengupta, and Pradhan (2019) explain that strategies are the schemes that are adapted in an organisation to influence employees' behaviour to serve an important function towards achieving a goal. Therefore, one of the functions of the HR management is to establish reasonable internal practices and strategies that will help the organisation to focus on the provision of reliable directions for effective management of its employees' tacit knowledge (Rahman, Daud & Raman, 2018; Shrestha, 2018).

Some scholars referred to the internal practices as skills improvement factors because they facilitate the improvement of both soft and hard skills of employees (Mittal et al., 2018; Vu, Ngugen & Le, 2020), while the internal strategies were also referred to as motivating enhancing factors because they help to enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees in an organisation (Almeida et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018; Ji & Yan, 2020). HR departments, therefore, need to mobilise resources both human and technological to establish these internal practices and strategies for effective planning, organising, directing and controlling of employees to achieve the needed effective KM practices (Almeida et al., 2019; Ji & Yan, 2020). Hence, these internal practices and strategies are established by the HR management to help employees engage in effective interaction, networking communication, and collaboration, which lead to their effective KM practices.

Another facet of KM practices is the implementation of improved KM practices. This is an umbrella term which refers to any deliberate efforts by the HR department to improve on the knowledge of an organisation's workforce, which can

be achieved via a wide range of methods including directly, through the use of organisation's technology particularly, types of information and communication technology (Butt, Nawaz, Hussain, Sousa, Wang, & Sumbal, 2019; Kordab, Raudeliūnienė & Meidūtė-Kavaliauskienė, 2020) or more indirectly through the HR management of social process, re-structuring of particular culture and efficient people management practices (Afshari, Nasab & Dickson, 2020; Fernandes, 2018; Jamshed & Majeed, 2019). Hence, the focal point in improved KM practices is to capture the knowledge that is in people's heads as it were, and that has never been explicitly set down and make this available, so that it can be used by others in the organisation through the enhanced IOFs (Butt et al., 2019; Fernandes, 2018; Jamshed & Majeed, 2019; Kordab et al., 2020).

Studies by Dalkir (2017) and Mardani, Nikoosokhan, Moradi, and Doustar (2018) conclude that the implementation of improved KM practices is necessary in an organisation because it helps to improve on individual's performance and organisational innovation through building a vibrant and productive knowledge exchange within the organisation. In their views, Archer-Brown and Kietzmann (2018) and Maravilhas and Martins (2019) opine that strategically, for efficient and effective employees' performance, HR departments need to implement improved KM practices using IOFs that are enhanced. Research studies have found that there is a positive relationship between the enhanced IOFs and an organisation's improved KM practices. This is because these enhanced IOFs established by the HR management, help individual employees to effectively transfer their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the use of all employees, which helps them to perform effectively in the organisation (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019).

In the views of Almahamid and Qasrawi (2017) and Lee, Lanting and Rojdamrongrata (2017), enhancing means improvement in the total quality of the internal practices and strategies for effective, innovative and higher employees' performance. Hence, enhanced internal practices are related to the HR management having flexible, decentralised, self-organising, effective and

participatory internal practices (Almahamid & Qasrawi, 2017; Mittal et al., 2018). On the other hand, enhanced internal strategies are related to the HR management having effective, participatory, flexible, decentralised and self-organising internal strategies in the organisation (Gholipour et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2017). This shows that the enhancement of these internal practices and internal strategies helps in building organisational successes through the improved KM practices, which also help employees to function effectively. Employees are very important resources and play a very important role in the organisation, therefore, their effective or high performance becomes very important in the organisation (Almahamid & Qasrawi, 2017; Mittal et al., 2018).

This means that improved KM practices and high performance of employees is achieved among other factors, by motivating the employees who exercise discretionary efforts in the organisation (Chen, Nunes, Ragsdell, & An, 2018; Gagné, Tian, Soo, Zhang, Ho, & Hosszu, 2019). The motivation of employees plays a very important role when HR managers want to improve on the KM practices of employees. This helps to ensure that the organisation is successfully establishing measures for the employees to acquire, share and apply knowledge for its effectiveness (Chen et al., 2018; Gagné et al., 2019). In the views of Chmielewska, Stokwiszewki, Filip, and Hermanowski (2020), employee motivation is the force that energises, directs and sustains positive organisational behaviour, plays a very important role in achieving and sustaining a high level of employee effectiveness in the process of improved KM practices. Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Armstrong and Taylor (2020), however, argue that motivation alone is not enough to sustain employees in the improved KM practices. The structure of their employment, their job stability in the organisation, employment outcome, quality of the employment relationship, and work-life balance play very important role (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Febrianti & Se, 2020).

In their research, Park and Kim (2018) and Rahman, Daud and Raman (2018) explain that the implementation of improved KM practices is also very necessary because employees may retire or resign from the organisation with huge amounts

of OK. Hence, implementing improved KM practices will make the whole workforce more efficient and in times of staff attrition, the organisation will be able to continue effectively (Park & Kim, 2018; Rahman et al., 2018). Despite these benefits, there is still a lack of research investigating this construct of improved KM practices in relation to the context of employees' performance effectiveness in Ghana, leading to ineffective performance of public sector employees. This study, therefore, aimed to extend the research literature on improved KM practices as an HR function that can arrest these employees' ineffective performance by assessing it in association with enhanced IOFs in a single study, using an inductive and interactive research approaches through the development of a conceptual framework.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The literature in the background section clearly indicated that there was continued ineffective performance of employees of public sector organisations in Ghana and, this was largely blamed on reasons like ineffective HR management practices and lack of opportunities for training and development in the organisations (Aziabah, 2018; Ohemeng & Akonnor, 2022; Ohemeng & Kamga, 2020). This was also attributed to the lack of implementation of KM practices in the organisation as generally, public sector employees do not show an understanding of OK and KM practices (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Asiedu, 2015; Dzansi et al., 2018). Therefore, the employees do not effectively manage the OK and this contributes to them operating ineffectively, which also had a negative impact on the operations of the public sector organisations (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Dalkir, 2017; Omotayo, 2015). According to researchers like Aziabah (2018), Ohemeng and Kamga (2020) and Stroińska (2020), these public sector organisations were not operating effectively because of their ineffective employees' management strategies and this resulted in their ineffective and inefficient creation and delivery of services to the citizenry.

The MMDAs in Ghana were not left out of this ineffective service delivery to the local or district assemblies. Promises of development at the rural areas were not fulfilled, issues of poverty reduction and rural development were not met and communities remain underdeveloped and this situation was largely blamed on the

poor performance of employees of MMDAs (Agyeman-Duah et al., 2018; Anderson & La Trobe, 2018; CDD-Ghana, 2017). Hence, inefficient service delivery by the MMDAs was seen as a result of employees' poor performance which in turn affects the performance of the very important local government structure in Ghana. This made the organisation not accountable, responsive, efficient and effective to promote development (Agyeman-Duah et al., 2018; Anderson & La Trobe, 2018; Aziabah, 2018). The HR department of the LGSG has, however, been struggling to ensure that they improve on the performance of employees of the MMDAs. To this effect, institutions like the ILGS were established to train the employees for them to improve on their SKAAs for effective performance (CDD-Ghana, 2017; MLG & RD, 2019; UNDP, 2018). In addition, tools like the DAPAT and FOAT were introduced by the LGSG to assess the performance of the MMDAs (Ayee, 2018; Aziabah, 2018; Bangase, 2018; MLG & RD, 2018).

This showed that the HR department had acknowledged the impact of the employees' ineffectiveness on the effective operations of MMDAs and, therefore, took pragmatic ways to solve this problem. The question now was what can the HR department of the LGSG do further to address the issue of ineffectiveness of the employees of MMDAs in Ghana? It has however, been observed from the literature that one important approach that has a proven success record of solving and sustaining employees' ineffective performance was the implementation of improved KM practices, by using the enhanced IOFs of the organisation's internal practices as well as the internal strategies. It was noted from the Google Scholar search engine that only a few studies on KM practices have been conducted on both public and private sector organisations in West African countries particularly, Ghana (Amaya, 2013; Dzato, 2013; Kommey, 2015). Also, currently, there is a few published empirical studies on the application of KM framework as a guide for effective performance of MMDA employees.

From the literature, there were also a handful of the empirical cross-cultural KM studies that used a hermeneutic or an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology, which provides rich descriptive and interpretive data (Ibrahim,

2017; Priso, 2017; Shephard, Rieckmann & Barth, 2018). Hence, the urgent need to conduct a feasible study in this area of KM practices with its role on enhancing employees' performance using the enhanced IOFs. Phenomenology is the study of phenomena, which helps us to explore and describe events, experiences and situations that we do not fully understand, just like the experiences of improved KM practices by the employees of MMDAs in Ghana (Larkin, Shaw & Flower, 2019; Stephenson, Giles & Bissaker, 2018). The use of an IPA research methodology, therefore, helped to systematically explore the full understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This allows the HR department of the public sector organisations to convey empirically tested study and systematically improved approach to managing the effective performance of its employees successfully (Larkin et al., 2019; Shephard et al., 2018; Stephenson et al., 2018).

From the literature, improved KM practices help to enforce and improve on the linkages between an organisation's improved KM practices and its enhanced IOFs, which go through transformations for the needed employees' performance effectiveness based on improved information, learning accessible and sustaining learning in the organisation (Fernandes, 2018; Gao et al., 2018; Mittal et al., 2018). Based on these, the knowledge creation and management (SECI) theory as well as other KM theories were used as the internal context to help transform the tacit knowledge of individual employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation for effective KM practices (Astorga-Vargas, Flores-Rios, Licea-Sandoval, & Gonzalez-Navarro, 2017; Hislop et al., 2018). Hence, as suggested by Ibrahim (2017) and Shephard et al. (2018), the study used an IPA research methodology, which helped to explore and explain the understanding and interpretation of the meaning employees of MMDAs in Ghana attached to OK, KM practices and the IOFs.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- The overall purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore and make sense of the KM practices of employees of MMDAs in Ghana through the development and validation of a conceptual framework.

- The study was to explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana used enhanced IOFs like the internal practices and internal strategies to implement improved KM practices in the organisation.
- The study was also to describe how the implementation of improved KM practices of employees of MMDAs in Ghana influenced their effective performance in the organisation.
- Finally, the study intends to develop and validate a KM framework as a guide for effective performance of employees of the MMDAs in Ghana.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the background and rationale offered, a gap in understanding the research phenomenon which was KM practices became evident. This recognised gap resulted in the formulation of the problem statement and the justification for conducting this study. The main research question to ask then was: How can a KM framework be developed and validated as a guide for public sector employees' performance effectiveness in Ghana? Following from this, subsequent research questions were framed qualitatively but were put into three sequential but interrelated research phases as follows: phase one as the theoretical phase; phase two as the empirical phase and phase three as the conceptual phase.

1.5.1 Theoretical (phase one): The purpose of phase one (theoretical phase) was to obtain a deeper understanding and conceptualisation of KM, IOFs and employees' performance effectiveness through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature. To this end, the under-listed research questions were formulated to seek clarifications:

- What theories of KM will be best to inform the development of a conceptual framework for KM for public sector employees in Ghana?
- How can HR managers of MMDAs in Ghana help their employees to understand and use the IOFs to implement KM practices in the organisation?

- How do HR managers of MMDAs in Ghana enhance the IOFs to help improve their employees' KM practices in the organisation?
- What are the connections between employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness?

1.5.2 Empirical (phase two): The purpose of phase two (empirical phase) was to explore and explain the better understanding of how employees' of MMDAs in Ghana understand KM and IOFs leading to their performance effectiveness. This was best done through the selection of the study participants, engagement with the study participants through semi-structured interviews and analysing the data collected from the study participants for interpretative findings. Hence, the following research questions were identified and developed for the purpose of phase two of the study:

- How do employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand OK and KM practices in the organisation?
- How do employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand IOFs and how do these factors help them to implement KM practices in the organisation?
- How do employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand the dictates of enhanced IOFs and that of improved KM practices in the organisation?
- How do employees of MMDAs in Ghana relate their understanding of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness?

1.5.3 Conceptual (phase three): The purpose of phase three (conceptual phase) was to develop a conceptual framework for KM as a guide for public sector employees' performance effectiveness in Ghana, through the development and validation of this conceptual framework. To effectively achieve this phase, the following research questions were subsequently developed and asked the participants:

- How can a KM framework be developed as a guide for employees of MMDAs in Ghana for their performance effectiveness?

- How can the KM framework developed as a guide for employees of MMDAs in Ghana be validated?

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of this study was to explore and make sense of the KM practices of employees of MMDAs in Ghana through the development of a conceptual framework for the Ghanaian context. To achieve this overarching aim, the study was conducted over three sequential but interrelated research phases which are the theoretical, empirical and conceptual phases. The stated research objectives for each phase are identified next:

1.6.1 Research objectives for phase one

The purpose of research phase one (theoretical phase) was to obtain a deeper understanding and conceptualisation of KM, IOFs and employees' performance effectiveness through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature. To achieve this phase, therefore, the following research objectives were identified for the study:

- To obtain an overview of KM practices from different theoretical perspectives and to select the best to inform the development of a practicable conceptual framework for KM for public sector employees in Ghana.
- To obtain a deeper understanding of how HR managers of MMDAs in Ghana help their employees to understand and use the IOFs to implement KM practices in the organisation.
- To obtain a deeper understanding of how HR managers of MMDAs in Ghana enhance the IOFs which help to improve their employees' KM practices in the organisation.
- To obtain a deeper understanding of the relationships between employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness.

1.6.2 Research objectives for phase two

The purpose of phase two (empirical phase) was to explore and obtain a better understanding of how employees' of MMDAs in Ghana understand KM and IOFs leading to their performance effectiveness. Hence, the following research objectives were identified for the purpose of this phase:

- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand OK and KM practices in the organisation.
- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand IOF and how these factors do help them to implement KM practices in the organisation.
- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand the dictates of enhanced IOFs and that of improved KM practices in the organisation.
- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana relate their understanding of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness.

1.6.3 Research objectives for phase three

The purpose of phase three (conceptual phase) was to help develop and validate a KM framework as a guide for public sector employees' performance effectiveness in the Ghanaian context. To achieve this phase, the following research objectives were subsequently identified:

- To develop a KM framework as a guide for effective performance for employees of MMDA in Ghana.
- To validate the report on KM used to develop a framework as a guide for employees of MMDA in Ghana.

1.7 POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS AND PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.7.1 Potential limitations of the study

The following are some limitations identified that may impact on the research:

- In the Ghanaian politics, there is a principle of "the winner takes all" after the presidential and parliamentary elections. This principle is that when

there is a change of government, all the current ministers as well as the chief executive officers (CEOs) of the MMDAs will all be removed and new ones appointed. At the end of the presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2016, the Minister for LG and RD and all the CEOs of the MMDAs were removed from office and new ones were appointed. The newly appointed CEOs of the MMDAs were at the beginning not willing to co-operate with the researcher to carry out the research study. Eventually, when the permission was approved, the employees also saw the situation the researcher went through, hence, were not willing to take part in the study when they were approached at the beginning. This may have placed some restrictions on the methodology and conclusions of the study. However, the researcher tried to establish good rapport with the new CEOs together with the employees after which, they were thoroughly briefed on the purpose and benefits of the study. This enabled the researcher to have access to the participants for the necessary data collection.

- Some of the research participants saw the research interviews as conducting a formal appraisal interview to evaluate their performance for either demotion, transfer to remote districts or dismissal from the organisation. Employees normally have this perception anytime there is a change of government in the country. In view of this perception, the participants were not willing to take part in the interviews. Those who were even willing to take part were not willing to provide rich information with regards to their KM practices in the organisation. This may create a problem of participation bias and will affect the trustworthiness and credibility of the data collected. However, with the researcher's knowledge about the context of the organisation and the participants to be interviewed, the researcher tried as much as possible to give the participants enough briefing about the purpose and benefits of the research, which helped to relax their minds. These strategies helped to ensure confidence for the participants to participate in the interview voluntarily.

- In a qualitative study like this where a purposive sampling procedure was used to select a small number of sample size, there is a potential limitation of representation and generalisation to the wider population of public sector employees. However, it was used to provide useful insights in the understanding of issues relating to KM practices and how this can ensure effective job performance of public sector employees, which may affect the credibility and trustworthiness of the data that will be collected. This will, thereby, decrease the generalisability of the findings.

1.7.2 Provisional recommendations of the study

The following are the provisional recommendations of the research study:

- Effective implementation of KM practices in a public sector organisation requires consistent efforts by the HR department to motivate employees to understand and accept the use of the IOFs to engage in knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge application initiatives. The LGSG was, therefore, advised to adopt a holistic means of ensuring that there are adequate resources (financial and technology) for motivation and other strategies for the employees.
- It is very important when implementing KM practices in an organisation to have adequate database of organisational knowledge in the organisation. It was, therefore, recommended that the MLG and RD help the HR department to acquire the necessary technologies to have a database of OK in the organisation. It should also make it easy for the employees of the organisation to have access to the database. However, this must be constantly monitored to avoid the data being pilfered.
- It was recommended that the MLG and RD in collaboration with the LGSG should make it possible to implement the KM framework to guide the employees of the MMDAs to help make the organisation creative, innovative, productive, and competitive.
- It was also recommended that the CEOs of the MMDAs should establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to help monitor and evaluate

the KM practices of the employees in the organisation. This will help to identify the employees' strengths and weaknesses for the necessary training to bridge any performance gap identified.

1.8 PRESUPPOSITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are the presuppositions and assumptions of the research study.

1.8.1 Presuppositions of the study

- It was a qualitative research which presupposes a world which is inherently subjective with no unequivocal reality.
- The ontological dimension of the research covered the phenomenon which was investigated in reality from the point of view of the participants.
- The epistemological dimension of the research covered what constituted an acceptable knowledge in the study, was revealed by the researcher by asking the participants critical questions about the phenomenon.
- The axiological dimension of the research covered the influence of the researcher's own values and beliefs in the study.
- The methodological dimension was the beliefs about the nature of social science and the scientific research method which was IPA.

1.8.2 Assumptions of the study

- There was the need for basic research that seeks to use the enhanced IOFs to implement improved KM practices for a public sector organisation.
- The construct of enhanced IOFs will have influence on employees' improved KM practices.
- The construct of employees' improved KM practices will have influence on their performance effectiveness in an organisation.
- The understanding of what will improve individual's KM practices will increase the understanding of what will make an employee perform effectively in an organisation.

- The relationship dynamics among the constructs will constitute a framework that will explore the area of concern and that may be relevant to guide HR practitioners in the public sector organisations.

1.9 INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM PERSPECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study used qualitative research methodology that helps to focus on describing and interpreting human experiences so that issues like KM practices and effective employee performance may be better understood (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Aspers & Corte, 2019). The use of qualitative methodology helps to portray a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever changing. Therefore, this was based on the recognition of the subjective and experiential life-world of human beings and an in-depth description of their experiences (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Aspers & Corte, 2019). These constructed worldviews are termed, research paradigms in qualitative research. According to Creswell (2016) and Roberts (2017), research paradigms are set of beliefs that guides or shapes a research study with the complementary assumptions. In qualitative research, Collis and Hussey (2021) and Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021) outlined six types of paradigms, namely, positivism, post-positivism, pragmatism, interpretivism, constructivism, and phenomenology with their complementary assumptions of epistemology, ontology and axiology.

This study, however, adopted a phenomenological paradigm because according to Creswell (2016) and Merriam (2016), its focus is to identify the inherent and unchanging meaning and understanding of the issue being studied. Phenomenology is the study that helps to focus on the way things appear to people through experience or in our consciousness where the phenomenological researcher aims to provide rich and textured description of people's lived experience (Dawadi et al, 2021; Larkin et al., 2019). In a phenomenological study, Roberts (2017) and Smith (2017) advised that one can use transcendental phenomenology or other approaches they described as descriptive, existential, naturalistic and interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology. In order not to compromise the value of this research, the appropriate phenomenological

approach adopted for this study was Heidegger's hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology (IPA). This was because the study aimed to explore the understanding or interpretation of the phenomenon, which was best done through the shared knowledge and shared experience of employees of MMDAs in Ghana working together in a group with shared values (Larkin et al., 2019; Micinally & Gray-Brunton, 2021; Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2022).

Researchers adopt IPA in their study because it helps to understand the fundamental meanings employees attached to their organisational life by becoming involved in the organisation's everyday activities to understand and explain what is going on, rather than to change things (Collis & Hussey, 2021; Dawadi et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022). IPA was pioneered by Smith (1996) and now being used in the human, social and health sciences research methodology (Larkin et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2022). Hence, the theoretical underpinning of IPA comes from hermeneutic phenomenology, which is the theory of interpretation (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017; Merriam, 2016). In the views of Larkin et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2022), IPA helps to reveal and interpret the embedded beliefs and meanings in a lived experience of employees, which is of existential important to them as a group. This was, therefore, used to explore the understanding of what a given experience is, which is about phenomenology and how one made sense of this experience, which is about interpretation.

1.10 ONTOLOGICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND AXIOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

Research paradigms are complemented with qualitative and quantitative assumptions relating to ontology, epistemology and axiology, which are also important if one wishes the research results to be credible (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016). In the views of Larkin et al. (2019), complementary assumptions are what the researcher will learn about a phenomenon (ontology), what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study (epistemology) and the role of the researcher's own values in the research (axiology). Just like other research paradigms, in an IPA study, various complementary assumptions exist that the

participants may articulate in the meanings of their lived experiences. Each phenomenon, therefore, has an essence, which is the fundamental characteristic that may be located, described and understood through the participants, the researcher's interactions with them and the researcher's beliefs (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016; Smith, 2017).

The underlining assumption in this study was that the researcher using IPA is concerned with trying to understand the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants. The adoption of such curiosity is a function of the ontological assumption, which states that meaning or reality is never immediate and transparent but instead, exist beneath the surface of a phenomenon that needs to be unveiled by the researcher (Merriam, 2016; Roberts, 2017). Epistemologically, the meaning of the phenomenon may be revealed by the researcher taking up a curious position and asking the participants critical questions to make a knowledge claim (Merriam, 2016; Roberts, 2017). Finally, the axiological assumption here is that the IPA was a critical tool of the researcher during data collection owing to his deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2016; Roberts, 2017). Hence, this research was designed in line with IPA methodology, which helped to influence the search and development of knowledge of this study.

1.11 DELIMITATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.11.1 Delimitations of the study

The research was focused on exploring and explaining what KM practice is and how the use of enhanced IOFs may influence the implementation of improved KM practices for effective job performance of public sector employees in the Ghanaian context. The research project is founded in the existing theory of KM through a conceptual framework developed. Hence, the study was in a position to demonstrate that the findings have a broader significance in bridging the gap between academic theory and practitioner experience in HRM (Jeong & Othman, 2016; Prison, 2017). Also, in a qualitative study like this, the findings could be subject to other interpretations, hence, cannot be used to generalise to the wider

population of public sector employees in Ghana. However, it was demonstrated that they provided useful insights into the understanding of issues relating to improved KM practices and how these can ensure the effective job performance of public sector employees in the Ghanaian context (Maxwell, 2019; Patton, 2019). The research, therefore, did not go into issues like:

- Which of the organisation's enhanced internal practices and internal strategies will have more influence on improved KM practices in the organisation and why (descriptive statistics)?;
- What public sector organisations in Ghana will do to promote improved KM practices through the use of organisation's learning cycle?;
- What other organisational strategy, apart from motivation, will drive employees to share knowledge they have with each other in the organisation or, conversely, what will drive them to hoard the knowledge they have?; and
- Which other organisation's internal practices or internal strategies will have influence on improved KM practices?

1.11.2 Significance of the study

In a knowledge-based economy, KM practices are increasingly viewed as critical to employees' effective performance (Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017). Hence, implementing improved KM practices in the organisation is vital for the organisation to take full advantage of the value of knowledge of its employees (Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017). It is, therefore, necessary for HR management to consider improved KM practices as a prerequisite for higher productivity and flexibility in both the private and public sector organisations (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Kinghorn, 2017). The expected outcomes of this proposed study will include guidelines on how to understand: OK; IOFs; KM practices; enhanced IOFs; the implementation of improved KM practices; and the facilitation of effective performance of employees of the MMDAs in the Ghanaian context. These will be very important to HR department of the MMDAs in dealing with the effective performance challenges of its employees in the organisation.

The development of a KM framework for employees of the MMDAs in Ghana will also serve as a clear guideline on how to implement improved KM practices for effective performance of the employees, using the enhanced IOFs. Implementing this improved KM practices also have the following benefits to the organisation:

- Improved KM practices are relevant to the business world as it will help in improving on employees' creativity and innovation.
- It will help to enhance and sustain continuous learning practices of employees in the organisation.
- During retirement and mobility of the workforce, the organisation will still have employees who have the OK to work within the organisation.
- It will help the organisation to survive in today's dynamic and competitive marketplace.
- It will help the organisation to innovate, thereby, differentiating itself from other public sector organisations.
- It will help management to align KM practices with the organisation's internal practices and strategies that will help to sustain employees' performance effectiveness.

1.12 RESEARCH DESIGN

The following paragraphs provide an overview of the general research design employed in this research study.

1.12.1 General research design

The choice of IPA as the most suitable strategy, stemmed from the fact that IPA is most suitable for explaining and exploring the personal experience, perceptions, beliefs, and meanings of a group which in this case, individuals hold for KM practices and effective employees' performance (Ibrahim, 2017; Jeong & Othman, 2016). The use of IPA was aimed at revealing and interpreting the embedded meaning in a lived experience. In the views of Ibrahim (2017) and Jeong and Othman (2016), IPA is used when a study aims to understand what a given

experience is like (phenomenology) and how someone makes sense of this experience (interpretation). Hence, the theoretical underpinning of IPA comes from hermeneutic phenomenology, which is the theory of interpretation (Nizza, Farr & Smith, 2021; Smith et al., 2022). The study, therefore, adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological design as it is based on the interpretation of the participants' perceptions and reactions to this phenomenon that the researcher entered the participants' contexts through interactions with them to understand the meanings they gave to their experience (Nizza et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022).

Hence, the deeper understanding of meanings inherent in what the employees of MMDAs stated about the implementation of KM, improved KM practices, and the use of enhanced IOFs took the central stage in the IPA and was a critical tool of the researcher during data collection. This enabled the researcher to have a full ideographic understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Dawadi et al., 2021; Petitmengin, Remillieux & Valenzuela-Moguillansky, 2019). Just like other research paradigms, in IPA design, various complementary assumptions exist that the participants articulated in the meanings of their lived experiences. Each phenomenon, therefore, has an essence, which is the fundamental characteristic that is located, described and understood through the participants, the researcher's interactions with the participants and the researcher's beliefs (Merriam, 2016; Petitmengin et al., 2019; Roberts, 2017).

The underlining assumption here is that the researcher using IPA is concerned with trying to understand the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants. The adoption of such curiosity is a function of the ontological assumption, which states that meaning or reality is never immediate and transparent but instead, exist beneath the surface of a phenomenon that needs to be unveiled by the researcher (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). Epistemologically, the meaning of the phenomenon was revealed by the researcher taking up a curious position and asking the participants critical questions to make a knowledge claim (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). Hence, this research was designed in line with IPA, which was used to influence the search and development of knowledge

of this study. Also, in line with the purpose and objective of the study, it was designed as an interactive study and has also, been classified as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research to explore more holistic and balanced understanding of the phenomenon (Chivanga & Mongai, 2021; Eliström, Elg, Wallo, & Bergland, 2020).

1.12.2 Interactive research design

Aside designing this research as an IPA study, the study has also been designed as an interactive research to bring the five major components of the study together for a credible and reliable finding. In the views of researchers like Eliström, et al. (2020) and Maxwell (2016), the purpose of interactive research is to bring the five major components of a study, each of which addresses a different set of issues that are essential to the coherence of the study together. These five major components which are the research objectives, research questions, research methods, validity of research and the theoretical frameworks, form an integral part and interact with each other to provide the necessary strategies and techniques for creating a coherent and workable reciprocal relationship among the components (Forero, Nahidi & Aboagye-Sarfo, 2018; Maxwell, 2016). This type of interactive research design helps to effectively explore, describe and explain the understanding of what a given experience is and how someone made sense of this experience in a holistic and balanced manner (Forero et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2016).

In this design, the research questions which look at the specific phenomenon to be addressed and how to address them, have an interactive relationship with the objectives, methodology, validity, and the theoretical frameworks of the study. This shows how the research questions affect these components and are also affected by the components in the research. In the views of Eliström et al. (2020) and Forero et al. (2018), the research objectives help to position the specific phenomenon in question for the necessary internal practices and strategies needed to address it holistically. In this situation, the research objectives also have an interactive relationship with the theoretical frameworks as the theoretical frameworks look at what really went on with regards to the phenomenon

empirically and in literature which is, therefore, used to guide the outcome of the study (Eliström et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018). The research methods of the study which also looked at what integrated approaches and techniques were used to collect and analyse the data, also have a reciprocal relationship with the validity of the research. This is because validity looks at the possible alternatives that may threaten the findings and how these were dealt with to make the data collected support the research goals for the participants and other stakeholders to believe the study report (Eliström et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2019).

1.12.3 Exploratory research

The study has been classified as exploratory because it is a valuable means designed to ask the participants open questions about the phenomenon and to discover more information through the literature search and gain more insight about the topic under investigation (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Bourhis, 2018). This approach was used because the phenomenon being studied is a fairly new area of interest in Ghana (Finlay, 2011; Guilen, 2019; Ibrahim, 2017). In his study, Creswell (2016) explains that there are three ways of conducting exploratory research and these are a search of the literature, talking to experts and conducting focus group interviews. Smith (2017) asserts that in an exploratory research, semi-structured interviews are very helpful to find out from the participants what is happening and to understand the context of the phenomenon. This research is exploratory because it seeks to discover the comprehension and awareness of the methods employees of the MMDAs in Ghana used to create and acquire the OK, how they implemented KM practices and how this helped to improve on their performance in the organisation.

1.12.4 Descriptive research

The study has been classified as descriptive research because the object of descriptive research is to gain an accurate profile of an event, person or phenomenon. It is used to describe the characteristics of an existing phenomenon (Saunders & Lewis, 2017; Smith, 2017). In other words, descriptive research is

used when the researcher wants to describe the phenomenon being studied through literature search (Merriam 2016; Miles & Huberman, 2014). Hence, by classifying this study as descriptive research, the researcher had a clear picture of the phenomenon he wishes to collect data on, prior to the collection of the data (Merriam, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 2014). In this study, descriptive research was applied in terms of the understanding of the organisation's KM practices, enhanced IOFs, improved KM practices and employees' effective performance.

1.12.5 Explanatory research

The study has also been classified as exploratory because explanatory research is designed to establish causal relationships between variables. In other words, the main purpose of explanatory research is to indicate connectedness between variables in the study (Ary, 2019; Maxwell, 2019). The emphasis in this study was to establish the relationship between the organisation's enhanced IOFs and the employees' improved KM practices; the employees' improved KM practices and their effective performance. This was used to explain the possible relationships between the variables and then went ahead to explain the themes before drawing conclusions for the conceptual framework (Ary, 2019; Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2020; Maxwell, 2019). In explanatory research, semi-structured interviews can be used to look for meanings between variables (Chivanga & Mongai, 2021; Crossman, 2020).

1.12.6 Research variables

The research has established the following six superordinate themes as the variables for the study: employees' understanding of the OK; employees' understanding of the IOFs; employees' understanding of the organisation's KM practices; employees' understanding of the enhanced IOFs; employees' understanding of improved KM practices; and employees' relation of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness. Smith (2017) and Smith and Osborn (2015), however, recommend four or five themes in IPA research design to give justice to each theme. The research also established the following relationships for

the conceptual framework of the study: the influence of enhanced IOFs on improved KM practices and the influence of improved KM practices on employees' performance. These established relationships were used in the development of the KM framework for the study (Miles et al., 2020; Maxwell, 2019).

1.12.7 Research setting

According to Roberts (2017) and Saunders and Lewis (2017), setting refers to the physical location of a research study. This study was conducted on the staff of three metropolitan assemblies namely, Kumasi, Tamale and Tema and the most common location to conduct the interviews was the district assembly's conference room which was quiet, comfortable and convenient for all the participants for the data collection.

1.12.8 Units of analysis

The unit of analysis refers to the object, phenomenon, process or event that is being researched (Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). In terms of this study, the unit of analysis was the individual employees of MMDAs, focusing on their KM practices in the organisation. The employees were made up of senior level, middle level and junior level employees in the organisation.

1.13 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To give a deeper understanding of how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understood and implemented KM practices for their performance effectiveness, the study consisted of a literature review and field study. The process of the field study constituted the description of the study area, the study population, description of sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrument, and method for data analysis used.

1.13.1 The study area

The study was conducted on employees of MMDAs in Ghana which lies within the West African region in Africa. West Africa is made up of 16 countries and spans

from the Atlantic Ocean on the West to the area of Lake Chad on the East, with a distance of about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometres). According to the United Nations World Population Prospects (UNWPP) of 2019, West Africa covers an area of 1,974,103 square miles (5,112,903 square kilometres) and has an estimated population of about 381 million people as in 2018. In Ghana, there are 16 regions which are further divided into 260 local administrative districts known as the MMDAs, based on their population with Accra as the national capital. According to the UNWPP (2019) and Ghana Statistical Service (2018), the population of Ghana was estimated at about 29.8 million people as at 2018 and covers an area of 87,854 square miles (227,540 square kilometres). A local administrative area with a population of over 250,000 people is accorded a metropolitan (M) status; an area with a population from 95,000 people is also accorded a municipal (M) status; whilst an area with a population from 75,000 people is accorded a district (D) status. Out of the 260 MMDAs in Ghana, six have metropolitan status, 57 have municipal status and 197 have district status as at 2018 (ILGS, 2018; LGSG, 2019; UNDP, 2018).

MMDAs were established under the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) and amended as the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act, 936), as a public sector organisation under the LGSG, with the primary aim of development at the grassroots level, promoting good governance, transparency and accountability, and ensuring peace and security at the district or local level (Ahwoi, 2015; MLG & RD, 2016; UNDP, 2015). The Act 936 also accords the MMDAs as the pivot of administrative, deliberative, legislative and executive functions at the local level and also, the basic unit of local government administration with the control of large resources for funding of activities (MLG & RD, 2016; LGSG, 2016; UNDP, 2015). In terms of personnel management, the local government system operates on two management structures, namely, four-tier management structure and three-tier management structure. The Metropolitan assemblies operate on four-tier management structure, which comprise the metropolitan assembly, sub-metropolitan/district councils, town councils, and unit committees; the municipal assemblies operate on three-tier management structure, which comprises the

municipal assembly, zonal councils and unit committees; and the district assemblies operate on three-tier management structure, which comprise the district assembly, town/area councils and the unit committees (Adu-Twum, 2020; Ahwoi, 2018; ILGS, 2018; LGSG, 2019).

1.13.2 Research population

The field study took place among the employees of three metropolitan assemblies, namely Kumasi, Tamale and Tema metropolitan assemblies in Ghana. These metropolitan assemblies are well staffed and administered with sub-metropolitan structures for effective administrative and personnel management. According to the ILGS (2018) and LGSG (2019), there are about 900 employees in the three metropolitan assemblies, together comprising 571 males and 329 females, which served as the population. Creswell (2016) and Merriam (2016) define population as the full set of cases from which a sample is taken. To ensure good representation, the assemblies have been zoned into three, namely, central, northern and southern zones respectively, according to their geographical location. The geographical location was also used as a diverse characteristic which may influence the participants' responses during the interviews (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016; Smith, 2017).

1.13.3 Sampling technique and sample size

It is not possible to study all members of a population, and so a sample of the population is usually taken (Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). A sample is defined as a subset of a population in a research study (Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017; Smith, 2017). The purpose of the study was not to generalise its findings, but to develop a framework that will provide useful insights viewed as an introspection into the understanding of issues relating to enhanced IOFs, improved KM practices and how these ensure effective performance of employees of MMDAs in Ghana (Maxwell, 2016; Smith, 2017). In relation to the research paradigm, the study employed a purposive sampling technique, which was first used to select the three metropolitan assemblies in the country. These

metropolitan assemblies are well staffed and can provide key information for the study (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016). Purposive sampling technique sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling, is in most cases homogeneous but it can also be heterogeneous with diverse characteristics. This sampling technique is also one that will enable the researcher to use his own judgment to select the sample that will best enable him to answer the research questions and meet the research objectives (Assaker, Hallak & O'Connor, 2020; Crossman, 2020).

In view of the diverse characteristics of the population, a heterogeneous purposive sampling also known as maximum variation sampling technique was used for the selection of the participants appropriate for this study. This technique helped the researcher to select a small sample of participants with shared experiences of the phenomenon to be studied as required in an IPA study. This sample has the sufficiently diverse characteristics, categorised according to their job levels and geographical location (Assaker et al., 2020; Crossman, 2020; Patton, 2019). The use of this technique helped to ensure data saturation, which is a tool used for ensuring that adequate and quality data are collected from the sample to support the study (Miles et al., 2020; Morse, 2015a; Patton, 2019). According to Miles et al. (2020) and Smith et al. (2022), in qualitative research, data saturation occurs when the researcher is no longer hearing or seeing any new information from the participants during the interviews.

In an IPA research design where the researcher aims to understand commonalities from a heterogeneous population, Creswell (2016) advises the selection of ten individual participants. The important point is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon by the small number of individual participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). On the contrary, Smith (2017) advises that a small sample size of 15 to 30 participants are usually used in data collection and analysis because IPA study design involves detailed analysis of verbatim accounts of a small number of participants. The researcher in this study considered a reduced number of participants because this number allowed him to have a richer depth of analysis that may have been inhibited with a larger

sample size (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). Hence, six participants were selected for interviews from each of the three sampled zones, bringing the sample size from the three zones to 18 participants who were interviewed. This number allowed each case to be explored with the necessary time, energy and rigour required for this type of analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith et al., 2022). During the process, the selected participants were given special numbers as their filenames, which was based on their geographical location and job level and were used for the data analysis.

In a qualitative study like this, there were eligibility criteria for selecting the sample (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). The eligibility criteria that informed the selection of the sample size for this study were as follows:

- Working with the metropolitan assembly for at least five years continued working experience. This was to ensure that rich information about the phenomenon was obtained from the participants during the interviews.
- Being sent at least three times for on-the-job training within the last five years. Three times on the job training is an adequate period that allowed for a comprehensive knowledge creation and sharing strategies in the organisation.
- Employees who showed interest and were willing to participate in the study voluntarily. This enabled the participants to share their knowledge and experiences of KM practices in the organisation freely.

However, criteria such as from a specific sex or group, having less than five years working experience, having less than three times on the job training, and not willing to participate in the study voluntarily were excluded (Chan, 2018; Dodgson, 2019). Hence, this period was enough for proof of participant's knowledge acquisition, working and sharing knowledge as well as application of knowledge together in the MMDAs (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). Also, in an IPA, the researcher has to interpret meanings from the participants' lived experiences in a language they both understand fluently and, therefore, English language being the

official language in Ghana was used as an eligibility criterion for the selection (Rettie & Emiliussen, 2018; Spiers & Smith, 2020; Stephenson et al., 2018).

1.13.4 Data collection instrument

The field study involved the use of an instrument to collect data from the field for analysis. Merriam (2016) and Patton (2019) define qualitative data as information collected from the participants during the course of the study. In this study, the instrument used to collect primary data from the field of study was a semi-structured interview schedule. In IPA, the use of a semi-structured interview schedule guides the researcher who is seen as the research instrument for data collection, to gather valid and reliable data that are relevant to the research questions and objectives (De La Croix et al., 2018; Patton, 2019). This also gives the researcher the opportunity to freely probe interesting areas that arise from the participants' interests and concerns, to ensure a broader coverage of issues on the phenomenon (De La Croix et al., 2018; Patton, 2019). In this study, the semi-structured interview schedule developed had the following headings for key questions and probes covered for interviews:

- name of the metropolitan assembly;
- personal data including the filename;
- employees' understanding of OK and KM;
- employees' understanding of IOFs and KM practices;
- employees' understanding of enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices;
- challenges employees face in implementation of improved KM practices;
- influence of enhanced IOFs on improved KM practices of employees; and
- the influence of employees' improved KM practices on their effective performance.

The semi-structured interview schedule had mostly, open-ended questions and probes for the participants to provide responses. The advantages of using semi-structured interview schedule are that in IPA, where the researcher needs to understand the meanings that the participants ascribe to various phenomena,

interviewees may use words or ideas in a particular way. The researcher had the opportunity to probe further with the semi-structured interview schedule for the understanding of these meanings, which will add significance and depth to the data collected (Franzosi, 2016; Wilhelmy, Kleinmann, Konig, Melchers, & Truxillo, 2016). The semi-structured interview schedule also affords the interviewees an opportunity to see for themselves, the responses they have provided and also provided them with the opportunity to receive feedback and personal assurance about the way and manner in which the information will be used (Franzosi, 2016; Mohajan, 2018; Wilhelmy et al., 2016).

1.13.5 Data collection method

In IPA studies, one of the primary means of collecting information is the use of semi-structured interviews (Noon, 2018; Peat et al., 2019). The use of this method provides the researcher with an opportunity to generate rich data contextually from the participants based on their deeper understanding of meanings of the phenomena which in this case, was improved KM practices (Mohajan, 2018; Rettie & Emiliussen, 2018). It is important to state that an IPA research design encourages open-ended dialogue between the researcher and participants. Therefore, to discover meanings in the data the participants provided, the researcher developed an attitude open enough to let unexpected meanings to emerge from the interviews (Noon, 2018; Smith, 2017). The data were collected from the employees of the three selected metropolitan assemblies focusing on meaning and understanding of the issue, using the 'five Ps'. Saunders and Lewis (2017) explain that the 'five Ps' mean 'prior planning prevents poor performance'. This was effectively done before the interviews to make the data collected credible and trustworthy.

It is important to state that with the IPA, during the process of data collection with the semi-structured interviews, the researcher is seen as the research instrument who has to enter the participants' perceptions contextually through interactions with them to understand the meanings that the participants gave to their experience with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith, 2017). It was,

therefore, the perceptions of the participants that provided the researcher with information about how an individual or groups of individuals lived and reacted to the phenomenon of KM in an organisation. This was done by the researcher taking up a curious position and asking the participants critical questions (Micinally & Gray-Brunton, 2021; Nizza et al., 2021). Hence, it was with the semi-structured interviews that the researcher made sense of or interpreted the meaning the participants gave about the phenomenon before the data were transcribed verbatim during data analysis (Mohajan, 2018; Nizza et al., 2021).

As indicated, to ensure the confidence of the participants to participate in the interview, the researcher first sought permission and approval from the LGSG about the research on the three metropolitan assemblies through correspondence. Subsequently, permission was then sought from the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the three metropolitan assemblies to have access to gather the data from the employees through semi-structured interviews. The sampled participants were then briefed and informed about ethical considerations of the research through meeting. In this regard, the consent of respondents was sought before participating to know the purpose, potential risks and benefits of the research and any information (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Manti & Licari, 2018; Smith, 2017).

A research assistant who has about eight years knowledge experience on the local government system and was fluent in English language was recruited and trained to help carry out the interviews in all the three geographical locations. The recruitment of the research assistant was based on referral of competent undergraduate students from the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) in Tamale. The selected research assistant was then trained on the objectives and methodology of the study; how the research will be carried out; his roles as research assistant; and how he will be helping in the audio-recordings and taking down notes during the interviews for only one day (Marathe & Toyama, 2018; Micinally & Gray-Brunton, 2021; Mohajan, 2018).

In collecting the data, the participants were first given the semi-structured interview schedule to study before the event. Doing so helped to promote trustworthiness

because it informed the participants about the information the researcher was interested in and also provided the participants with the opportunity to prepare for the interview by assembling supporting organisational documentation from their files, if necessary (Stephenson et al., 2018; Tuffour, 2017). Access to organisational documentation also allowed triangulation of the data they provided. The most common location where the interviews were conducted was the district assembly's conference room, which together with its precinct was quiet, comfortable and convenient for all the participants. The discussion was opened with friendliness to relax the participants and also developed a positive relationship with them (Roberts, 2017; Tuffour, 2017). These enabled the researcher to ask focusing questions about the phenomenon and listened carefully to the participants (Merriam, 2016; Smith & Osborn, 2015). At this point, opportunity was once again taken to allay, whatever possible, the participants' uncertainties about the confidentiality of information they were going to provide and then re-established their rights and anonymity during the process of data collection and analysis.

Open-ended questions were used to explore the understanding of OK and implementation of KM practices, using the critical incident technique (CIT). Using the CIT means participants were asked to describe in details critical incident or number of incidents, focusing on their understanding and experiences within the context of the phenomenon (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017). The researcher, with the assistance of the research assistant, read out the questions and further probed the participants to provide responses that were audio recorded and field notes taken by the research assistant. In the process, reflexive notes were also taken by the researcher to record further probes and explanations during the interviews. Using these methods to record the interview data have a number of advantages. Making the field notes helped to maintain the researcher's concentration on the recording and further probes and also helped the researcher to ask follow-up probing questions for understanding. The field notes also helped to make comparisons with the audio recordings, which helped to formulate points to summarise the interviews. The reflexive journal helped the researcher to record his own thoughts

during the interviews (Barrett, Kajamaa & Johnson, 2020; Fleming, 2018; Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, & Caricativo, 2017).

After each day's interviews, initial analysis of the data was made in the evening by the researcher and the research assistant before carrying out further interviews the next day. This was when field notes taken by the research assistant were compared with the audio recordings of the researcher and his reflexive journal (Bryman & Bell, 2018; Palaganas et al., 2017). Doing this continuous analysis helped to avoid data overload, where data are continuously collected without any sufficient analysis (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Bryman & Bell, 2018). During the data collection period, one week was used for each geographical zone and within the week, three days were used to conduct the interviews. This means that one day was used for the face-to-face interview for two or three participants to ensure effective participation. Hence in all, three weeks were used to conduct all the interviews and at most one week for each geographical zone, to make room for travelling from one zone to the other. It is important to note that the interview date, time and place were all agreed with the participants before the start of the interview (Jeong & Othman, 2016; Mohajan, 2018; Rettie & Emiliussen, 2018). During the data collection process, issues of potential biases such as, interviewer bias, interviewee bias and participation bias emerged and were, therefore, dealt with (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Bryman & Bell, 2018; Dörfler & Stierand, 2020).

In a study, interviewer bias was where comments, tone or non-verbal behaviour of the interviewer creates bias in a way such that the interviewee responds to the questions being asked. The interviewee or response bias was also caused by the perception about the interviewer trying to impose his own beliefs through the way the questions are framed. Finally, the participation bias related to the number of individuals or the organisational participants who were willing to take part in the interview (Buetow, 2019; Dörfler & Stierand, 2020). Measures were, therefore, established to overcome these biases which included:

- the show of knowledge about the context of the organisation, the group interviewed and the subject (reflexivity);

- the show of knowledge of the level of information supplied by the participants;
- used an appropriate location for the interviews;
- appeared in good mood for the interviews;
- used the appropriate comments to open the interviews;
- used the appropriate frame for probing specific and open-ended questions;
- listened attentively to the responses;
- had the test of understanding of what they said;
- able to recognise and handle participants who wanted to be difficult;
- adequate briefing on the study; and
- recorded the data accurately and fully during the interviews (Buetow, 2019; Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018; Palaganas et al., 2017).

1.13.6 Method of data analysis

Qualitative data are derived from narrative materials with verbatim transcription from the interviews. It is, therefore, important to use an approach like the hermeneutic (interpretive) approach or IPA to analyse the data to enhance trustworthiness based on the objective of the study (Linneberg & Korsguard, 2019; Noon, 2017; Saldāna, 2016). The use of IPA to analyse the data from one-on-one interviews was to try to develop rich descriptions of human experience (Linneberg & Korsguard, 2019; Smith, 2017) and emphasise the importance of individual account (Franzosi, 2016; Neale, 2016; Noon, 2017).

This study aimed to seek in-depth information regarding how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understood their world with regards to the phenomenon and how this understanding shaped their practices in the work setting (Franzosi, 2016; Neale, 2016; Saldāna, 2016). Furthermore, a conceptual framework was developed to guide this research using construct relationships which are: using enhanced IOFs help employees to implement improved KM practices and employees implementing improved KM practices lead to their effective performance. This conceptual framework was, therefore, used to guide the data

analysis for the generation of inferential codes and the development of subordinate and superordinate themes for the study (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Saldāna, 2016).

The analysis of this qualitative data using an IPA framework approach was helpful as the approach is sequential, which begins with analysis at an individual level of the transcribed interview before proceeding to a group level analysis that brings together data spanning from all individuals for the development of the inferential codes (Morse, 2015b; Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016). To this effect, the sequence of data analysis of this study was grouped into six-step approach that guided the data analysis and the six-steps are as follows:

Step one: This step begun with the reading and re-reading of transcripts to familiarise with the account of participant's experience. This involved getting closer to the original data by also listening to the audio recordings, reading through the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal. Hence, this iterative process enabled the discovery of new information, not noted in the initial reading of the transcript on the phenomenon (Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

Step two: This step was where making notes of interesting issues about the account of the participant's experience took place (free association and exploring of semantic content). In other words, this step was the identification and labelling of relevant features of the data in relation to the research questions. These were in the form of descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments. Descriptive comments took the form of rephrasing the participant's account; linguistic comments were the words and expressions that the participant used; and conceptual comments involved researcher's knowledge from literature and life experience (Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

Step three: This step involved identifying and developing emergent themes, referring from the three comments made from step two above. This helped to cluster and capture meaning of the participant's account (focusing on transcripts and analysis of notes made). This step was more focused on the interpretive of

codes or categories as they were developed from phrases and sentences (Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

Step four: This step involved searching for connections across emergent themes (abstracting and integrating) to ensure that the themes collected are good in relation to the research questions. The emergent themes were first divided under the overarching research questions, were grouped under different superordinate themes, these superordinate themes were based on subordinate themes which, were derived from the inferential codes and were organised chronologically. The subordinate and superordinate themes were guided by the conceptual framework of the study at the same time (Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

Step five: This step involved the development of a hierarchical table or node tree of the themes containing first the research questions, followed by superordinate themes, followed by subordinate themes and finally the inferential codes or categories from the transcripts. This is where theme definitions are summarised briefly in relation to the conceptual clarity of each theme. The organisation and relationship of themes were clearly seen in this step (Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

Step six: This was the final step and involved looking for patterns across cases for development (finding patterns of shared higher order qualities). The superordinate themes were used as the boundaries within which the patterns of convergences and commonalities, and those of divergences and nuances were observed. A single master table was developed starting with the superordinate themes followed by the subordinate themes before the inferential codes, which helped to address the research questions (Neale, 2016; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

1.14 METHODS OF ENSURING DATA QUALITY

Data quality issues were considered as very important because with IPA, it is the understanding of the interpretation of the phenomenon by the participants that bring about trustworthiness of the data. This shows that the study is rigorous and relevant as the theoretical frameworks are aligned with the research questions and

the methodology used (Morse, 2015b; Stenfors, Kajamaa & Bennet, 2020). This means that the preparation for and conduct of qualitative research is influenced by the need to avoid data quality issues, where language is used to describe these data (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Smith, 2017). Qualitative research, therefore, establishes trustworthiness, which is very important in IPA study. In the views of Forero et al. (2018), Mackieson et al. (2018), Ravitch and Riggan (2017), and Stenfors et al. (2020), data quality can be achieved in a study through credibility, authenticity, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

1.14.1 Credibility

One of the ways of ensuring data quality was through credibility which, aims to ensure confidence in the data collected and its interpretation. Credibility refers to the extent to which the researcher has gained access to the participants' knowledge and experience, and is able to infer meanings that the participants intended from the language they used (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Petitmengin et al., 2019). In this study, credibility was established through the alignment of the research process using an interactive research design and a prolonged engagement with the participants. Here, care was taken in the clarification of the questions and probing of meanings through rapport with the participants to explore responses and themes from a variety of angles during data collection (Eliström et al., 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020). During the sampling and data collection process, the researcher ensured that the appropriate methods were used, the participants were also well briefed, the setting for the interview was quiet, and the general atmosphere was conducive for the data collection to ensure the validity of the data collected for analysis (Eliström et al., 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020). Also the triangulation method and the validation of the report were used to achieve credibility of the study (Barrett et al., 2020; Dodgson, 2019).

1.14.2 Transferability

Another way of ensuring trustworthiness of data was through transferability which, Eliström et al. (2020) and Forero et al. (2018) refer to as the extent to which the

findings of the research study are applicable to other settings similar to the study area. This is where one establishes the relationship to existing theory to demonstrate the broader significance of the findings (Eliström et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018). In this study, the researcher described the context of the research and processes involved, provided a detailed report of the study and related the study to existing theories (Smith et al., 2022; Strenfors et al., 2020). This approach allowed readers to evaluate the quality of this study and the applicability of its findings to other contexts (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Strenfors et al., 2020).

1.14.3 Dependability

Another way of ensuring data quality was through dependability which, Smith et al. (2022) and Strenfors et al. (2020) refer to as the measures established to ensure the reliability of data collected over time and the conditions under which it was collected for easy replication. This process is seen as parallel to the process of confirming reliability in quantitative data, and once credibility is established in a study, then dependability is said to have also been achieved (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017). In this study, dependability was enhanced through the provision of sufficient information such as the use of the semi-structured interview schedule, validity checks of the interview schedule, the careful reading and probing of questions, the careful recording of all interviews, and step-by-step analysis of the data collected (Forero et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2022; Strenfors et al., 2020).

1.14.4 Conformability

In the views of Forero et al. (2018) and Strenfors et al. (2020), conformability is the mechanisms established to ensure that the data represent the information that was collected from the participants during the interviews. This relates to the objectivity of the study and refers to the degree to which the outcomes of the study could be confirmed by another researcher (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017). In other words, conformability relates to how the researcher's findings agree with that of other researchers on the same phenomenon in terms of its accuracy, meaning and relevance of the data collected (Monrouxe & Rees, 2020; Strenfors et al., 2020). In

this study, detailed descriptions were made on how during the data collection process, responses were audio-recorded while observational field notes and reflexive journal were also taken as back-ups. Validity checks were also made during the data analysis to ensure the triangulation of the data collected (Eilström et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018; Monrouxe & Rees, 2020). All these processes helped to enhance conformability of the study.

1.14.5 Authenticity

Another method employed to ensure data quality is authenticity. In their views, Ravitch and Riggan (2017) and Roberts (2017) explain that authenticity refers to the measures established to provide detailed descriptions of a range of participants' lived experiences and feelings in relation to a phenomenon being studied. The measures of authenticity of this study were enhanced through: writing detailed report with detailed descriptions of the methods used; context of the study; participants varied lived experiences and the meanings the participants gave to the constructs, KM practices, IOFs, and improved KM practices (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017). Authenticity was also enhanced through keeping a detailed audit trail of the raw data by an independent coder, data reconstruction and synthesis and process and notes of materials relating to the interview were thoroughly looked at during the research process (Morse, 2015b; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017).

1.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every research has the potential of exposing respondents or participants to potential risks associated with their participation in the study. These risks may be physical, psychological or social injury (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Hence, without paying careful attention to how participants will be exposed to potential risk by acting ethically, what seem like good ideas of research may flounder and proved impractical or problematic (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Mohd Arifin, 2018). To avoid this problem, ethical issues were taken seriously once human participants were involved in collecting valid data. In the views of Bos

(2020) and Dodd (2020), research ethics are the standard behaviours that guide one's conduct in relation to the rights of those who become subjects of the research or affected by it. Mohd Arifin (2018) and Fleming (2018) were also of the view that research ethics are a system of moral values that are concerned with the degree to which the research procedures conform to legal, social and professional obligations of the study participants.

The research ethics of this study started with the identification of the study area and subjects and continued throughout the study process from the dissemination of study materials to the collection of data (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This means the researcher has the responsibility to ensure that this research plans are ethically sound and acceptable (Smith, 2017; Unisa Policy on Research Ethics (Unisa), 2014). In the views of researchers, there are a number of ethical issues to be considered in a research study and in this study, these include: rights of participants and organisation; autonomy; confidentiality; anonymity; and scientific integrity of the researcher (Mohd Arifin, 2018; Dodd, 2020).

1.15.1 Rights of participants and organisation

In this study, one of the ethical considerations was that the researcher developed procedures to protect the rights of the participants as well as the organisation. Social responsibility and obligations are important to protect the rights of those who participate in the research and are affected by it (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Unisa, 2014). Hence, the rights of all persons were recognised and their dignity respected (Smith, 2017; Unisa, 2014). To this effect, the researcher sought ethical approval and access to conduct this study on the three metropolitan assemblies from the LGSG and from the CEOs of the three metropolitan assemblies. In the correspondence to all cases, the background, aims, assurances, and potential benefits of the study to the organisation were explained alongside issues of confidentiality and time requirements. Assurances in the form of emotional wellbeing, mental or physical health, or social or group cohesion were given. Also, assurances in the form of embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain or conflict were included (Bos, 2020; Mohd Arifin, 2018). Finally, ethical clearance was obtained

from the Unisa Research Ethics Committee before the research begun. Also, all ethical concerns relating to the study were cleared and clearance was sought for the entire research process from proposal to the final thesis (Dodd, 2020; Kang & Hwang, 2021; Mohd Arifin, 2018).

1.15.2 Autonomy

Participants in a research are capable of controlling their own destiny and hence, must be treated as autonomous individuals who have the freedom to conduct their lives as they choose without any external control (Babbie, 2013; Unisa, 2014). Those taking part in this research have the right to determine how they will participate in the data collection process. These rights include rights: not to answer any question or set of questions; not to provide any data requested; to modify the nature of their consent; to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty; and possibly to withdraw data they have provided (Ciuk & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018). Hence, enough time was spent with the study participants to brief and inform them about the purpose of the study, the potential risks and the benefits for them to understand before they were made to participate in the research. Eventually, the participants were asked to give their written consent to participate in the study or not, after the briefing (Ciuk & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018). In this situation, sufficient information and assurances about taking part were allowed for individuals to understand the implications of participation and to reach a fully informed, considered and freely given decision whether to take part or not (Ciuk & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018).

1.15.3 Confidentiality

In the views of Bos (2020) and Dodd (2020), reliability of data will be enhanced where confidentiality and anonymity are assured. Confidentiality in a research project comes about when the researcher may identify a participant's responses, but promises not to do so publicly (Bos, 2020; Dodd, 2020). In this study, the names of the participants were not required during the interview but were only given filenames. Participants were also assured that their responses will be kept

confidential and the findings of the study will not be linked to any participant (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018). The researcher was able to allay the fear of the participants' uncertainties about confidentiality of information they provided during the briefing (Babbie, 2013; Fleming & Zegward, 2018).

1.15.4 Anonymity

Research is designed to answer research questions but not to focus on those who provide the data to answer these questions (Fleming & Zegward, 2018). Hence, individuals and organisations taking part in the research must remain anonymous and the data they provide must be processed to make it non-attributable to any of the participants (Fleming & Zegward, 2018). Anonymity in a research project is when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given participant. In this study, the participants were not required to provide their names on the semi-structured interview schedule but only wrote a unique filename that they were provided by the researcher (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018). The data collection was held in the assembly's conference room which was separate, quiet and comfortable, the discussion was one-on-one, was opened with friendliness, and opportunity was taken to re-establish the participant's rights and anonymity (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018).

1.15.5 Scientific integrity of the researcher

Researchers will present results and findings from the field, which sometimes form the basis of policy development and decisions of government. It is, therefore, important that this research was conducted with integrity and in accordance with high ethical standards (Ciuk & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018). The researcher, therefore, maintained professional ethics and scientific conduct throughout the study. Hence the researcher considered whether any type of harm could occur to the participants as part of the research. Measures were then established to prevent any potential psychological or physical harm during the interviews (Ciuk & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018).

1.16 A PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This research aimed to explore, describe and explain the theoretical constructs of the phenomenon in the real world and so, the appropriate methodological tradition adopted was IPA which is not so much about objectivity but, rather about a reality which is socially constructed (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017). It is, therefore, to investigate the meaning employees of MMDAs in Ghana attached to the different constructs based on their experience and understanding. This then helped to develop a conceptual framework for KM as a guide for employees' effective performance. From the literature, this proposed conceptual framework falls within the conceptual framework model of Huberman and Miles (1984), *the conceptual framework for a multicase*. This conceptual framework model follows the quality driven design approach of KM as suggested by Handzic (2011) and Hislop (2013) and is used as the outcome of this research. In this conceptual framework, researchers tried to explore and establish the presumed interrelationships of impinging factors, variables or constructs – internal context as host – adoption of decision – cycle of transformations – outcomes. In the views of Maxwell (2019) and Patton (2019), this type of conceptual framework is developed at the beginning of the study as exploratory and evolves as the study progresses but, is confirmed by the field study as confirmatory in an inductive approach.

A conceptual framework is a product of qualitative process of theorisation that explains either graphically (Robson & McCartan, 2016) or narrative form (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), the main things studied which, are the constructs or variables and the presumed interrelationships among them. The proposed conceptual framework for this study was, therefore, adapted and modified from the conceptual framework model of Huberman and Miles (1984). Within the context of this study, the impinging constructs are described as the employees' understanding of OK and IOFs, which are related to the internal context as the host of the study. The internal context is KM where, three theories of SECI, integrated KM and KM practices were used for directions, which lead to the adoption of decision for the understanding of KM practices (Dalkir, 2017; Kinghorn. 2017; Omotayo, 2015). The employees' understanding of KM practices also goes through transformations for the outcome of their performance effectiveness. These understandings help

individual employees to focus on transporting their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge leading to their performance effectiveness in the organisation (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Dalkir, 2017; Hislop et al., 2018).

1.17 VALIDATION OF REPORT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In a qualitative study like this, during the data collection and analysis, the researcher may distort and filter the information collected which may also affect the development of the themes and conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017). This constrains can, therefore, affect the credibility and validity of an IPA study like this hence, measures like the validation of the results of the findings were introduced to enhance the trustworthiness of the data analysed. This validation was done using triangulation process of the data collected and by returning the results of the findings to the study participants to cross-check the information provided during the interviews (Buetow, 2019; Dodgson, 2019; Gough, 2016). The process of returning the results of the findings back to the participants helped them to ascertain if their answers to any question needed to be rectified, and ensured that the researcher had not misinterpreted the data. It also helped to best represent what was intended by the participants (Birt et al., 2016; Jae-Nam & Young-Gun, 2015; Slettebø, 2020). This, therefore, helped to address the issue of bracketing associated with IPA, where practical strategies like adequate mental preparations were established to facilitate bracketing in the data collection and analysis (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Vagle, 2018; Weatherford & Maitra, 2019).

1.18 LAYOUT OF THE THESIS

The chapters of this thesis will be presented as follows:

Chapter 1: General introduction and overview

This chapter provides the overview of the research and included the following: introduction; background and motivation; purpose of the study; research problem; research questions; research objectives; and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Knowledge management

This chapter also reviewed relevant literature on the concept and epistemologies of knowledge; activities to increase knowledge resource; concept of KM; description, development, and conceptualisation of KM; challenges of KM practices; contingencies, best strategies and benefits of improved KM practices.

Chapter 3: Internal organisational factors

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on the concept of IOFs; description, development, and conceptualisation of IOFs; best practices and challenges of IOFs necessary for KM; and the contingencies of enhanced IOFs.

Chapter 4: Performance effectiveness

This chapter reviewed relevant literature on the concept of employee performance; description and development of employees' performance effectiveness; conceptualisation of effective performance; contingencies, challenges, and importance of employees' effective performance for HRM practices; the integration of enhanced IOFs with improved KM practices and improved KM practices with employees' effective performance which leads to the development of the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter 5: Research design and methodology

This chapter include the following: debate on the rationale for the choice of qualitative method; the use of hermeneutic approach as the research design; the study area and study population; the use of purposive sampling technique for the sample; the sample size of the study; the use of semi-structured interview schedule as the data collection instrument; semi-structured interview as data collection method; methods of ensuring data quality; ethical issues considered in the study; and using an IPA framework for data analysis as well as methods used in validating the research report.

Chapter 6: Presentation of research findings

This chapter focuses on the presentation of a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the research findings, which involved the IPA approach used, description of the research participants and the discussion and interpretation of the participants' narration of their beliefs and experiences on the phenomenon. The findings were based on the context of the individual interviews transcribed verbatim, the observational field notes taken and the reflexive research journal, which were used to develop the superordinate themes used for the findings.

Chapter 7: Presentation of a conceptual framework

This chapter was also focused on a comprehensive presentation of a practicable KM framework developed as a guide for performance and for any future research in this area. This conceptual framework was developed using the guidelines under the framework of Huberman and Miles (1984). This was commenced with the discussion of the significance of the interpretative research findings, the conceptual framework for KM, background colours, the context and dynamics, role players, and benefits of the conceptual framework were all discussed here.

Chapter 8: Conclusions, contributions and recommendations

This chapter includes the conclusions of the study based on the objectives and the findings; implications and limitations of the study; significance and contributions of the study; recommendations for the study; and the research conclusion.

1.19 SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to develop a KM framework for effective performance of employees of the MMDAs in Ghana, using the enhanced IOFs. The chapter, therefore, formed the thesis context of the study, which commenced with the background and the rationale for the study. In the background, arguments on KM and improved KM practices were put forward. In addition, the IOFs and enhanced IOFs that help employees in their KM practices leading to their effective performance were also introduced. These were followed by the problem statement, research questions and the research objectives. Also in this chapter, the

philosophy adopted which is qualitative but specifically, IPA as well as the research designs and methodology were discussed.

Hence, there was a brief description of a semi-structured interview schedule used to collect the primary data from the employees and the use of semi-structured interviews as the method of data collection. An IPA framework of analysis used to analyse the data for the findings was also introduced here. A brief description of the significance, recommendations, limitations, delimitations, presuppositions, and assumptions of the study were all introduced here. The relevant ethical considerations as well as methods adopted to ensure data quality and the validation process of the research report were also outlined in this chapter. This gave the signals for the beginning of chapter two which was a literature review on KM and KM practices and starts with the theoretical context of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

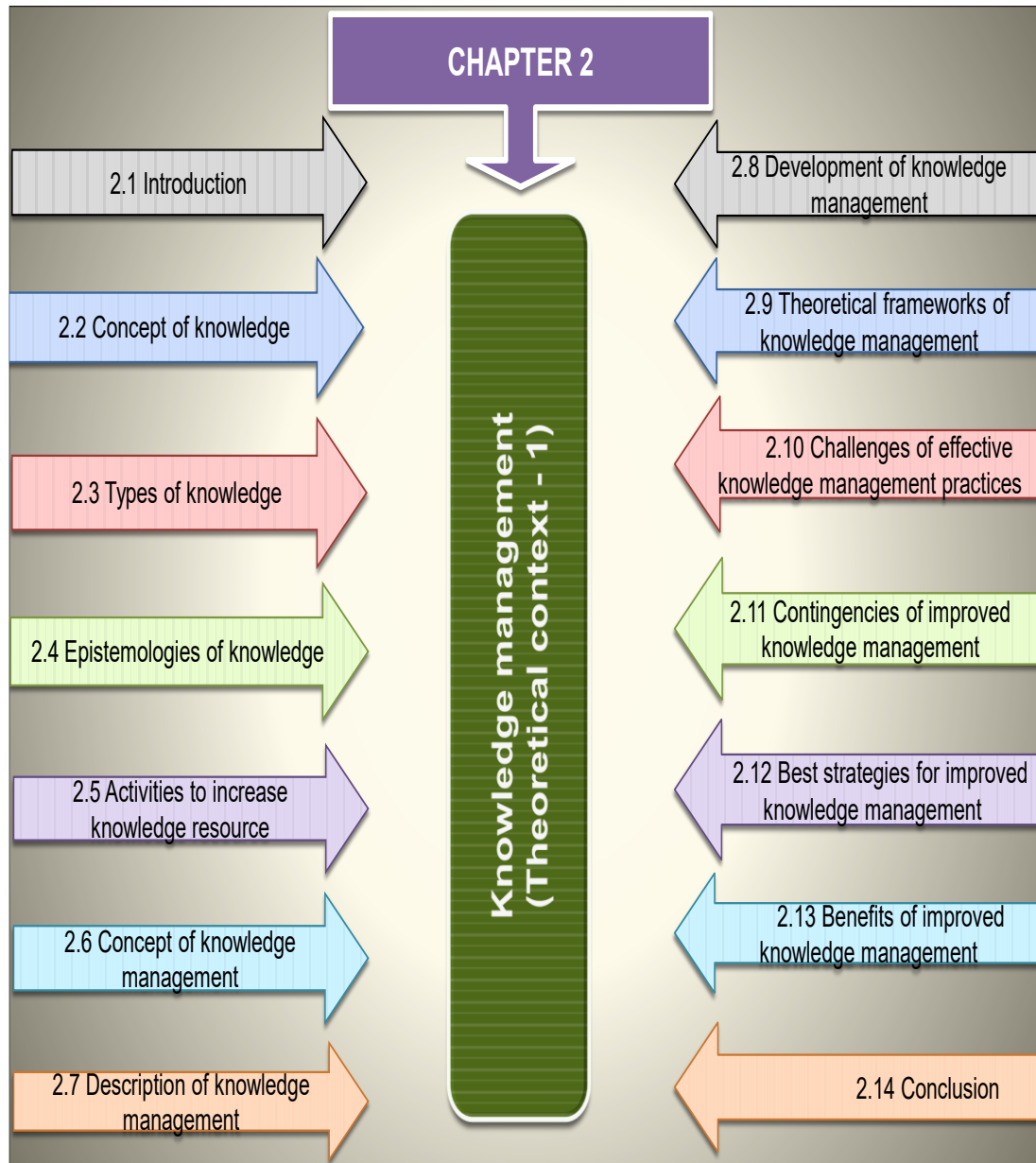


Figure 2.1 The structure of chapter two at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one provided the thesis context of the study, which paves the way for the beginning of the theoretical context for the study. Chapter two, therefore, forms the first phase of the theoretical context as shown in Figure 2.1, which is the structure of the chapter at a glance. This chapter provides an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding the construct of KM. The overall aim of this literature review is to identify, describe and critically analyse the theoretical frameworks needed for the study. This is to enable the researcher to reposition the organisational context for KM to identify areas in need of further exploration within the construct. In this study, KM is seen as a major driver of employees' performance effectiveness in both public and private sector organisations. Hence, the creation and management of OK classified as tacit and explicit knowledge have become very important for every organisation (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Hislop et al., 2018).

Effectively managing OK means converting individual's tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation and make it possible for all employees in the organisation to have access to this knowledge for their effective performance (Hislop et al., 2018; Hui, Chautin & Dianzhi, 2018). This makes it imperative on every HR department to develop policies, structures, practices, and strategies that will allow the organisation to exploit and develop these knowledge resources through KM practices. Hence, to scholarly align the issues of KM practices in this study, this chapter focuses on the concepts of knowledge and KM, types and epistemologies of knowledge, activities that will increase knowledge resources, the description, development and challenges of KM, theoretical frameworks of KM, and contingencies, best strategies and benefits of improved KM practices.

2.2 CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE

In KM, it is important to understand the practicalities of the knowledge employees possess which has an individualistic focus. This knowledge is said to be the underlying resource that makes an employee function intelligently in an organisation (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). In the

views of scholars like Limaye, Sullivan, Dalessandro, and Jenkins (2017) and Omotayo (2015), it is the employees' knowledge that is later transformed into tangible forms such as books, technology, practices, symbols, and video materials that are coded to become OK over a period of time. It is this OK when used constantly and over time that cumulates into experience, competences and proficiency of individual employees (Abubakar, Elvehail, Alatailat, & Elci, 2019; Ngoc-Tan & Gregar, 2018). This OK also forms an important foundation for an organisation's creativity, innovation and performance (Al-Abbadia, Alahawabkeha & Rummana, 2020; Mardani, Nikoosokhan, Moradi, & Doustar, 2018).

This situation makes employees to think and see their knowledge as their source of power and will, therefore, do anything to hoard (Bilginoğlu, 2019; Omotayo, 2015) or hide (Garg & Anan, 2020; Zhang & Min, 2019) it to maintain an advantage over other employees in the organisation. In view of this, Gagné et al. (2019) and Zhang and Min (2019) advise that the HR department should see this OK as one of, if not the most important factor that makes individual employees, teams or groups and the organisations' development possible. Hence, HR managers should regard knowledge acquisition and sharing as very important activities towards an organisation's effective performance in this contemporary knowledge-based economy (Gagné et al., 2019; Kinghorn, 2017; Zhang & Min, 2019).

Many researchers term knowledge as an intellectual capital and, therefore, define it as the physical resources, competences and commitments of the individual employee, which he or she uses to contribute effectively to the organisation's goals (Byukusenge & Munen, 2017; Ngoc-Tan & Gregar, 2018). In relation, knowledge has been identified in two related areas for feasibility and desired results which are knowledge related to a process or practice that must be created, compiled, organised, transformed, transferred and applied in the organisation (Anand & Hassan, 2019; Garg & Anan, 2020) and knowledge related to an asset or object that must be created, transferred, applied and stored for future use by the employees (Bilginoğlu, 2019; Gagné et al., 2019; Serrat, 2017). Knowledge has also been identified from the practical perspective as information being used in

action, which includes ideas, facts, insights, intuitions, expertise, experience, values, and judgments that are processed for the individual, team and organisation performance effectiveness (Qian, Zhang, Qu, & Wang, 2020; Zhang & Min, 2019).

Al-Abbadia et al. (2020) and Al-Ahbabi, Singh, Balasubramanian, and Gaur (2019) explain that identification of knowledge as information and an asset provides the HR department with the opportunity to link knowledge with action for the measurement of knowledge effectiveness. Here, good knowledge is seen to have a high probability to produce desired outcomes while poor knowledge is seen to have a low probability to produce the expected outcomes (Al-Abbadia et al., 2020; Al-Ahbabi et al., 2019; Limaye et al., 2017). However, using these for the measurement of knowledge effectiveness is also dependent on the belief that for one to know that a given information is true, one must not only believe it, but must have the justification for believing that the information is indeed true (Hislop et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 2017; Limaye et al., 2017). Beside these, knowledge is also classified mainly as either tacit knowledge or explicit knowledge and Polanyi (1966) was the first to make this distinction. Both tacit and explicit knowledge, therefore, play very important roles in KM practices in any organisation (Al-Ahbabi et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018; Qian et al., 2020).

Scholars like Jilani, Fan, Islam, and Uddin (2020) and Shashi, Centobelli, Cerchione, and Merigo (2022) explain that KM in an organisation is focused on converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and see to it that the individual knowledge (tacit) becomes organisational knowledge (explicit). However, Gu (2013) and Jasimudeen (2014) also identified another type of knowledge which they classify as implicit knowledge. This knowledge is a collection of data and information, which are not processed to become knowledge because they lack the pattern relationship needed among data and information for use in an organisation. In these KM initiatives, however, many organisations face challenges that need to be tackled efficiently and effectively because in many cases, employees in these organisations hold a sentiment that hoarding or hiding their knowledge is more beneficial to them than sharing it to other employees (Anan & Hassan, 2019;

Gagné et al., 2019; Garg & Anan, 2020), which is one of the areas this study sought to explore using the organisation's IOFs.

2.3 TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE

Scholars like Bilginoğlu (2019), Kinghorn (2017) and Stamou (2017) argue that in this modern economy, knowledge has become the competencies of an organisation and, therefore, its competitive advantage which is realised through the full utilisation of information and data coupled with the harnessing of people's skills, ideas, understanding and their commitments. In view of this, many researchers posit that knowledge is a very valuable resource and in the corporate context, it is the product of an organisation's systematic reasoning applied to data and information, hence, there are two main types of knowledge in an organisation, namely, tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge (Kim & Yun, 2015; Taskin & Van Bunnan, 2015; Marques, Falce, Marques, Muylder, & Silva, 2019). Tacit knowledge is what is stored in the brain of an individual employee while explicit knowledge is contained in documents or other forms of storage other than the human brain. Both types of knowledge can be produced as a result of interactions, networking, discussions, and collaborations among employees in an organisation (Kim & Yun, 2015; Taskin & Van Bunnan, 2015; Marques et al., 2019). However, there is another potential knowledge that is buried in the data, and in the form of information in action which is termed as implicit knowledge, which permeates in the daily functioning of every organisation (Gu, 2013; Jasimudeen, 2014).

2.3.1 Tacit knowledge

In their studies, Al-Abbadia et al. (2020) and Mardani et al. (2018) opine that tacit knowledge generally accepted as know-how, is primarily the total experiences, insights, expertise, know-how, intuitions and learning that a person possesses. They maintain that this type of knowledge is imbedded in the person, is unstructured and intangible and therefore, hard to be codified. Ali et al. (2018) and Borges et al. (2019) corroborate this view and add that tacit knowledge is the property of *the knower*. This implies that what is easily articulated by the person is

difficult to be externalised by another person, difficult to be articulated and difficult to be put into words, text or drawings easily (Ali et al., 2018; Borges et al., 2019). Tacit knowledge is, therefore, highly personalised and deeply rooted in the employee's experiences, intuitions, values, culture and emotions. This is, therefore, seen as the intellectual capital of the employees and is, therefore, shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact in an organisation (Borges et al., 2019; Clinton & Gamble, 2019; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). This shows that it is difficult to express tacit knowledge in words or try to codify it into documents. Hence, researchers suggest that to successfully share tacit knowledge to other employees within an organisation, it requires effective interaction, communication, collaboration, and networking among the individual employees (Ali et al., 2018; Borges et al., 2019; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019).

2.3.2 Explicit knowledge

The other main type of knowledge is explicit knowledge also generally accepted as know-what and in the views of Chaudhary and Batra (2018) and Hislop et al. (2018), can be described as the policies, practices, strategies, procedures, reports, guides and rules of the organisation that has already been codified and can, therefore, be shared and transferred to any employee of the organisation without or with minimal interpersonal interactions. They add that explicit knowledge then represents the core policies, practices and strategies of the organisation that has been captured in some tangible form such as documents, audio recordings, or video images. This means that explicit knowledge presents knowledge that has been codified in a tangible form and as a consequence, can be communicated easily among employees in the organisation (Butt et al., 2019; Dubricks & Gaile-Sakane, 2017). In their studies, Gamble (2020) and Werner and Dickson (2018) explain that explicit knowledge represents the final end product of knowledge in the organisation that can be created, developed and shared freely without an individual's influence. Hence, this knowledge is encultured, that is, it is easily shared among employees who share a similar culture (Hui et al., 2018; Werner & Dickson, 2018) or encoded, that is, it is easily written down and expressed in many

tangible forms, stored in databases and assessed through many means including using ICT tools (Park, Kim & Park, 2021; Werner & Dickson, 2018).

2.3.3 Implicit knowledge

Apart from the two main types of knowledge (tacit and explicit) explained above, there is also an implicit or potential knowledge which is described as knowledge buried in the data that are often collected into information but not yet used. It forms part of the practices of an organisation but, does not depend on an individual's context (Gu, 2013; Jasimudeen, 2014). In their studies, Bellinger, Castro and Mills (2011) explain that data is a number, word or letter without any context and without reference to either space or time and, therefore, no relationship. In their views, what is essential in transforming *data* or collection of data into *information* is the context, that is, the relationship between the pieces of data and this is referred to as implicit knowledge in KM hence, it is not processed to become knowledge (Bellinger et al., 2011; Gu, 2013; Park et al., 2021).

For example, when we are given numbers like 1 and 30, they do not mean much to anybody as they must first be related to a context. However, if one associates 30 with the number of days in 1 month, then he or she creates a context which becomes information. The information given by the context is that there are 30 days in 1 month which, then establishes a relationship between the two pieces of data 1 and 30 (Bellinger et al., 2011; Gu, 2013; Park et al., 2021). In the views of Ellis and Roever (2018) and Hui, Chuantin and Dianzhi (2018), when implicit knowledge is further processed, it becomes explicit knowledge which is, therefore, dynamic and constantly changing until they are fully understood by employees. Hence, this contextualisation of data into information and then into explicit knowledge is referred to as the hierarchy of knowledge, which constitutes data, information, knowledge, and wisdom (DIKW) in an organisation (Ellis & Roever, 2018; Gu, 2013; Hui et al., 2018) as shown in Figure 2.2.

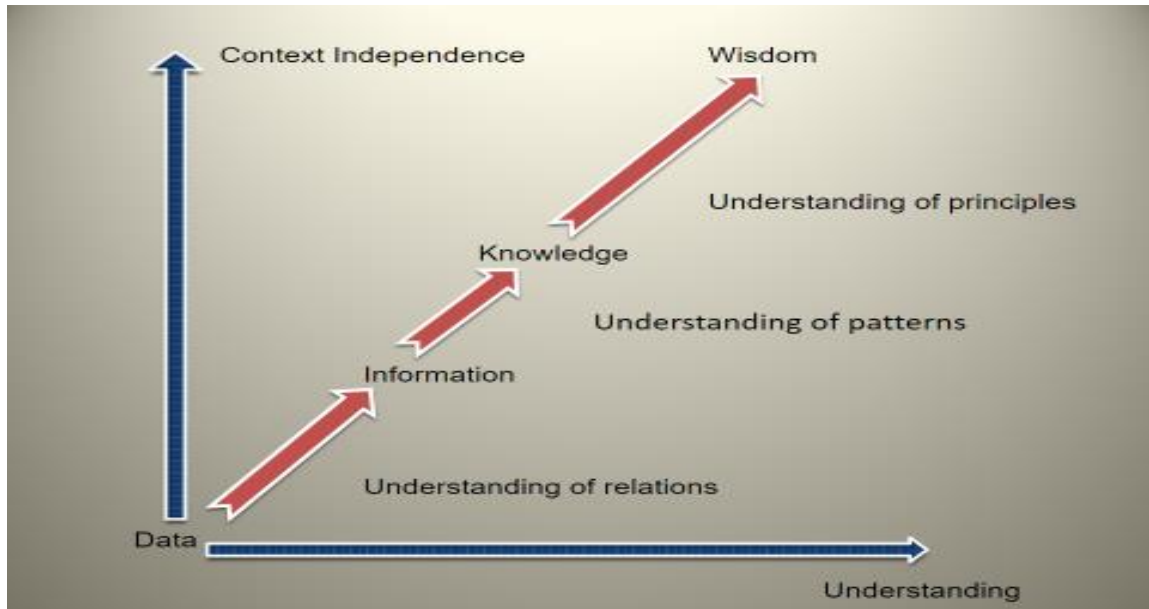


Figure 2.2: A hierarchy of knowledge (DIKW)

Source: Bellinger et al. (2011) and Gu (2013)

2.4 EPISTEMOLOGIES OF KNOWLEDGE

In this study, the classification of knowledge as either tacit or explicit as discussed above plays a very important role in KM practices. This dynamic helps to focus on how tacit knowledge of individual employees is converted and transported into explicit knowledge of the organisation to become OK for the use of all employees (Intezari, Taskin & Pauleen, 2017; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). Authors like Kinghorn (2017) and Serrat (2017) opine that this classification makes the epistemologies of knowledge very important and, therefore, needs to be well understood by HR managers as well as employees in the organisation. In the study, epistemology of knowledge refers to the various perspectives in which the tacit knowledge is converted into explicit knowledge during KM practices (Hislop et al., 2018; Limaye et al., 2017). Three types of epistemologies of knowledge have, therefore, been presented in the study and these are objective-based, practice-based and propositional perspectives.

2.4.1 Objective-based perspective

In this epistemology, the objective-based perspective sees knowledge as an asset or a distinct entity from the person who owns it and is, therefore, free from the individual's influence. This shows that knowledge exists independently from the mind of individual who owns it and is in the form of an object or entity referred to as know-what (Liu, Dutta & Park, 2020; Park et al., 2021). In view of this, the objective-based perspective, also termed knowledge as an object and, therefore, defines knowledge as intuitively established true information, which means that knowledge is independent from an individual's characteristics such as culture or language or the personal insights such as knowledge experiences or abilities (Intezari et al., 2017; Hislop et al.,2018). This development is evident in the objectivist-based epistemological knowledge framework in which there is an either/or logic to the two main classifications of knowledge where, knowledge is being seen as either tacit or explicit (Hislop et al., 2018; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). In this epistemology, therefore, researchers have privileged explicit knowledge over tacit knowledge due to its nature of being free from an individual's influence. This knowledge is codified and shared freely which, therefore, makes it separate from the individuals who have captured or created it from those applying it in an organisation (Fryczyriska & Ciecierski, 2020; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019).

In their views, Anand et al. Centobelli and Cerchione (2020) and Gamble (2020) explain that the objective-based perspective presents this epistemology as a model where only explicit knowledge exists in an organisation and is easily understood and shared by all employees without any formal interaction with each other. This should, however, not be so because in KM, social activities such as knowledge creation, application, transfer, dissemination and sharing are very important through mass collaboration, interaction and networking. These play very important role in the use of either tacit or explicit knowledge within an organisation (Anand et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020). Scholars like Hislop et al. (2018) and Limaye et al. (2017) explain that though, some organisations with excellent structures of communication, interaction, networking and collaboration fail in the process of this knowledge sharing and dissemination activities, it is still believed that for people to

share and transfer knowledge effectively, the willingness of the person sending the knowledge plays a very important role.

This epistemology, therefore, makes KM practices universalistic and a-contextual, which makes it independent of all subjective and contextual elements (Miles, Belousova & Chichkanov, 2018; Sergeeva & Andreeva, 2016). It does not, therefore, consider the socio-cultural background of the individual employees as well as the context of the knowledge as this is mostly influenced by the socio-cultural background of both the sender and the receiver of the knowledge. This proves that the socio-cultural background of individual employees shapes the orientation of both the sender and the receiver of the knowledge, which contradicts the views of the objective-based perspective in this epistemology (Anand et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020; Serrat, 2017).

2.4.2 Practice-based perspective

In the practice-based perspective who termed knowledge as practice, the researchers contend that tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge are not separable but are mutually linked together. Hence, all knowledge that employees possess is personal and should, therefore, not be seen as separate since all knowledge is regarded as tacit or emanates from tacit knowledge (Clinton & Gamble, 2019; Hoarau, 2016; Ibrahim, 2017). In the views of the practice-based perspective, there are two levels of reality, namely, focal knowledge and tacit knowledge. The first reality is where a person uses his or her focal knowledge to focus on an object or a phenomenon, which is visible and is, therefore, regarded as explicit knowledge. The second reality is where, for the person to improve on the knowledge of such an object or a phenomenon regarded as explicit, one must use his or her tacit knowledge (Hoarau, 2016; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). These scholars, therefore, suggest that both the focal knowledge and tacit knowledge are very important for knowledge acquisition, creation, application, transfer and dissemination as it is regarded as the OK.

The perspective of this epistemology of knowledge follows Polanyi (1966) and other theorists' work who argue that knowledge cannot be separated from any individual's activity, which they termed as knowledgeable activity. Employees in an organisation are, therefore, recognised for these two levels of reality where they use their experiences and beliefs as their source of knowledge (Anand et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020; Hislop et al., 2018). This suggests that the acquisition and sharing of this type of knowledge which is tacit, is always an ongoing process that develops once the people continue to conduct routine activities but this does not make it change into explicit knowledge. Hence, acquiring, sharing and application of such an embodied knowledge require communication, interaction, networking and collaboration among the employees (Borges et al., 2019; Durst & Bruns, 2018; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). Muthuveloo, Shanmugam and Teoh (2017) also support the view that knowledge is indeed embodied but add that explicit knowledge can only be in the form of instructions, which is normally shared to a new employee to understand better. However, to fully have a better understanding of an issue, it requires the tacit knowledge of the employee in the organisation (Muthuveloo et al., 2017; Olaisan & Revange, 2018).

Borges et al. (2019), Chen et al. (2018) and Hislop et al. (2018) argue that the theorists of the practice-based perspective focus more on 'knowing' rather than 'knowledge' which it is supposed to present. Knowledge is, therefore, not separable and is closed to the tacit knowledge that an individual has gained through his or her interaction and collaboration with other employees, networking with the group and learning activities in the organisation (Borges et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2018; Hislop et al., 2018). Again, the practice-based perspective postulates that knowledge is gained through social interactions and is inseparable, which makes this applicable to both the sender and receiver of knowledge. This perspective, therefore, opposes the objective-based perspective, which makes the creation, transfer and application of knowledge simple and straightforward and without any interaction between the sender and the receiver of knowledge (Clinton & Gamble, 2019; Simeonova, 2018). Because the socio-cultural background of an employee influences his or her knowledge acquisition and sharing activities and

cannot, therefore, be separated from the individual who acquires it and is also to some extent not separable from the socio-cultural beliefs of the person who gives or receives it (Borges et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2018; Simeonova, 2018).

2.4.3 Propositional perspective

The principles and assumptions of the epistemologies of objective-based and practice-based perspectives were studied and refined by researchers, which brought about another perspective they defined as propositional perspective. This perspective is rooted more in the principles and practice of the practice-based perspective. The propositional perspective suggests that socio-cultural and the experience background of an individual employee has an influence on his or her knowledge acquisition and sharing activities (Durst & Bruns, 2018; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). This shows that an employee's true belief of knowledge stems from the process of interaction and collaboration with other colleagues where, the person's knowledge is derived from and is influenced by his or her explicit knowledge based on the socio-cultural background (Durst & Bruns, 2018; Geiger, Horbel & Germelmann, 2018). Again, this perspective also accepts the principles of the objective-based perspective, which admits that knowledge is independent from the influence of the individual's characteristics which makes knowledge either tacit or explicit. This classification, therefore, enables a person to define and understand situations, which help him or her to act according to these situations (Iheukwumere-Esotu & Yunusa-Kalyungo, 2021; Miles et al., 2018).

The conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge for employees to understand and share under this perspective, enabled researchers like Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) to propound the Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination and Internalisation (SECI) theory. This theory as shown in Figure 2.3 is said to be successful only when there is a continuous interaction between the tacit and explicit knowledge of employees and there is also a strategy through which this tacit and explicit knowledge can be managed effectively in the organisation (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Shashi et al., 2022). In the SECI model of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), socialisation refers to an impulse of a person, which

encourages him or her to interact, collaborate and communicate with other employees in an organisation on a daily basis, to share and disseminate tacit knowledge with each other. This is where, new employees acquire the tacit knowledge held by old employees in an organisation through working together (Clinton, McAdam, Gamble, & Brophy, 2020; Santoro & Usai, 2018; Singh et al., 2019). Also, externalisation is where tacit knowledge is transferred from an individual employee and transformed into explicit knowledge to a group of employees in the organisation through processes like communication, networking and interaction with models, images, signs and books in the organisation (Clinton et al., 2020; Santoro & Usai, 2018; Singh et al., 2019).

The combination stage in the model depicts where the explicit knowledge is again transferred from the group of employees to the organisational level and formalised through procedures, rules, values and working environment. This is where an individual employee has the advantage to share and disseminate more explicit knowledge to other employees through various channels like meetings, workshops, telephone conversations or computer networking (Clinton et al., 2020; Fryczyrska & Ciecierski, 2020; Singh et al., 2019). Finally, the internalisation stage is where explicit knowledge is again converted to tacit knowledge and is therefore, transferred from the organisational level back to an individual employee's level for more experience (Fryczyrska & Ciecierski, 2020; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Santoro & Usai, 2018). Scholars like Anand et al. (2020), Gamble (2020) and Holfelder (2020) argue that this epistemology admits that knowledge is either tacit or explicit and the socio-cultural background of an employee influences his or her knowledge acquisition, sharing and dissemination activities in an organisation.

2.5 ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE

The epistemologies of knowledge discussed earlier make it imperative for HR management to establish internal practices and strategies to enable employees to interact, communicate, network and collaborate to increase and develop this knowledge resource in the organisation (Clinton et al., 2020; Santoro & Usai, 2018; Singh et al., 2019). In their studies, Ali et al.(2019) and Gholipour et al. (2018)

advice that HR management needs to adopt internal best practices and strategies to help enrich their employees' knowledge resource for effective KM practices which require various methods to enable the employees to interact, acquire and develop the required knowledge resource. HR management must also adopt KM practices that match with its desired objective to help increase the knowledge resource of its employees (Ali et al., 2019; Borges et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). From the literature, some strategies that HR management will adopt to help increase its employees' knowledge resource in a bid to influence KM practices include mentoring, group work, networking, storytelling, and training.

2.5.1 Mentoring of employee

Mentoring relates to a system where an experienced person called mentor supports an inexperienced person called mentee with the required OK informally, socially and psychosocially in the organisation. In this system, the mentor supports, guides and teaches the mentee who is capable and willing to develop his or her SKAAs in the organisation (Henning, Gut & Beam, 2019). Mentoring, therefore, involves the mentor supporting the mentee with the necessary knowledge and skills of a particular job or industry with the aim of increasing the mentee's knowledge but this is dependent on willingness, trust and commitment level of the mentee towards the mentoring (Henning et al., 2019). In the views of Kim and Kuo (2015), there is a deeper level of mentoring in an organisation which is referred to as coaching and in this system, the mentee is the one doing the actual work but being supervised by the mentor. In both mentoring and coaching, the ultimate is to support the mentee to have a deeper understanding of the job, which also helps him or her to increase knowledge acquisition, sharing activities and the knowledge resource (Kim & Kuo, 2015; Utrilla, Grande & Lorenzo, 2015).

2.5.2 Group or teamwork

HR management puts in place strategies to create and increase interactions among employees, which then encourages group formation or teamwork for effective knowledge acquisition and sharing activities in an organisation. These

strategies most often, happen informally or formally and encourage interactions between new, old and experienced employees (Almeida et al., 2019; Ji & Yan, 2020). This helps the employees to share knowledge and skills willingly to the group or team members in the organisation and through these strategies, they are encouraged to exchange knowledge and share experiences and interact and observe thereby, creating new knowledge and increasing their knowledge resource in the organisation (Almeida et al., 2019; Ji & Yan, 2020).

2.5.3 Creation of networks

HR management helps to create networks within an organisation to encourage interaction and communication among the employees. These networks can be either formal or informal depending on the objectives and strategies adopted by the HR management (Al-Iqbal, Latif, Marimon, Sahibzada, & Hussain, 2019; Latilla et al., 2018). These networks are created depending on the type of knowledge the employees have to share so that the knowledge receivers know how to acquire such knowledge. The type of knowledge here is either tacit or explicit knowledge and is usually shared among employees working together in the same unit or department in the organisation (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Latilla et al., 2018). In the views of Olainsen and Revang (2018) and Park and Kim (2018), picnics or other types of leisure activities, which are usually informal, can be organised by organisations to get employees connected and help facilitate the sharing of tacit knowledge among them. Formal networks can also be arranged and created through seminars, workshops or exhibitions by the organisation for the sharing of explicit knowledge among employees. The creation of networks within an organisation, therefore, help the employees to effectively share, increase and sustain their tacit and explicit knowledge resources within the organisation (Olainsen & Revang, 2018; Park & Kim, 2018).

2.5.4 Storytelling

Most HR managements now adopt storytelling as a strategy to achieve specific purposes such as effective communication, effectively connecting individual

employees and organisations together and as a way of enhancing storage and sharing of OK. Stories and storytelling activities, therefore, provide good opportunities for knowledge acquisition and sharing strategies because they provide and stimulate the intellectual abilities of the person telling the story as well as the person receiving it (Park et al., 2021; Sundin, Anderson & Watt, 2018). Hence, organisations use stories and storytelling strategies because they have many learning features like easy to remember, are memorable, economical, entertaining, participatory and encouraging to both parties in KM. They are also ongoing process as they are passed on from one person to another and can be used at different levels of the organisation to share, transfer and increase the tacit knowledge resource of employees (Park et al., 2021; Sundin et al., 2018). Researchers like Spraggon and Bodolica (2017) also recommend the sharing of tacit knowledge through play as it serves the purpose just like storytelling.

2.5.5 Training of employees

HR management puts in place training activities as a systematic way of giving new and existing employees the necessary job skills that are required for them to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently in the organisation. This strategy is used to improve on the skills and abilities of the individual employees by providing them with the necessary information that is new to them or bridging a job gap (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017; Halawi & Haydar, 2018). To cover a larger number of employees as participants for a training programme at a reduced cost, some researchers advise that the organisation should organise and implement the training programme internally. Management can do this by choosing a manager or a head of department or unit with excellent OK and skills within the organisation to become the trainer (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017; Halawi & Haydar, 2018). A training programme can also be organised externally when the organisation itself does not have the required human resources to train its employees internally but this is mostly at a higher cost. This external training usually comes in with new skills and knowledge on the specific topic been trained on and is expected to increase the

employee's explicit knowledge and is to reflect on his or her work and behaviour (Khan & Baloch, 2017; Shu-Rung & Chun-Chieh, 2017).

2.6 CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

In the epistemologies of knowledge where the tacit knowledge of individual employees is converted into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the benefit of all employees, is referred to as KM. This is where employees converge to interact, communicate, network, discuss, and collaborate to share and disseminate their knowledge resource among themselves. Hui et al. (2018) and Sousa, Krot and Rodrigues (2018) posit that KM in a knowledge-based economy, is seen as a systematic way whereby HR management decides on which knowledge resource employees should rely on for the smooth and effective operation of the organisation. HR management, therefore, makes this knowledge resource readily available to all employees who would need it to perform effectively. Scholars like Almahamid and Qasrawi (2017) and Byukusenge and Munene (2017) opine that managing this knowledge resource involves a systematic process of capturing, coding and sharing the individual's tacit knowledge and the organisation's explicit knowledge to enhance the performance of all employees in the organisation.

KM is, therefore, seen as a systematic process of capturing, coding, sharing and application of tacit and explicit knowledge to all employees in an organisation (Almahamid & Qasrawi, 2017; Byukusenge & Munene, 2017). This process enables the HR department to create, acquire, codify, store, share, and apply the tacit as well as explicit knowledge which is termed as OK to all employees, through the use of web-based technologies and other practices and strategies of the organisation (Chen et al., 2018; Santoro, Vrontis, Thrasson, & Dezi, 2018; Soto-Acosta, Popa & Martinez-Conesa, 2018). Hence, the concept of KM can be described as any process or activity that enables the HR department to create, acquire, capture, codify, share, and apply the OK wherever it resides, to all employees to enhance their performance in an organisation (Ali et al., 2018: 469; Durst & Bruns, 2018: 498; Santoro et al., 2018: 348).

In the views of Armstrong and Taylor (2020) and Maravilhas and Martins (2019), the concept of KM is any practice or activity that is concerned with the acquisition, gathering, sorting, storing, and sharing of OK accumulated in the organisation to all employees through technological means. This means that KM is all about practice or strategy of the organisation that helps to focus on transforming individual's tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation, and see to it that all the individual employees' tacit knowledge becomes OK which is well coded for effective sharing and application by all employees (Anand et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020; Hislop et al., 2018; Holfelder, 2020).

2.7 DESCRIPTION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Based on the concept, many researchers generally, describe KM as a practice established by the HR department, using the organisation's IOFs with the aim of ensuring that best practices, experiences, insights, learning practices and other forms of employees' knowledge have been captured, codified, disseminated, shared and applied by all the employees in an organisation (Hislop, 2013: 56; Omotayo, 2015: 8). The description of KM here as a practice is to help ensure that all the employees are assisted to acquire, share, update, adopt, and integrate effectively in the KM practices in the organisation (Hislop, 2013; Omotayo, 2015). In their studies, Durst and Bruns (2018: 497) and Singh et al. (2021: 788) also describe KM as any internal and external set of practices or strategies designed to improve on the use of OK that helps to increase employees' efficiency in the area of knowledge creation, sharing and application.

These descriptions suggest that KM is seen as a practice or strategy that should be developed and sustained to help improve on performance of the individual employee, group and the organisation simultaneously. This helps the organisation to have coherent KM practices that are necessary for the organisation's innovation by maintaining and leveraging the present and the future value of the OK (Archer-Brown & Kietzman, 2018; Singh et al., 2021). In view of this, Ali et al. (2018) and Clinton and Gamble (2019) considered KM practices or strategies from three

perspectives, each with a different purpose and practice or strategy. These perspectives are:

- Business perspective - which focuses on why, where, and to what extent the organisation must invest in the development of knowledge and KM activities. Here, strategies, products and services, acquisitions or investments are considered from a KM-related point of view;
- Management perspective - which focuses on determining, organising, directing, facilitating, and monitoring KM-related activities that are required to achieve the desired business strategies and objectives; and
- Hands-on perspective - which focuses on the strategies for coding, sharing and application of knowledge to conduct KM-related activities effectively.

On their part, Clinton et al. (2020), Singh et al. (2019) and Rezaei, Khalilzadeh and Soleimani (2021) also describe KM as fundamentally, the management of OK and intellectual assets that is used to improve on a range of organisational performance characteristics and value addition by enabling the employees to act more intelligently. This description enables the HR management to help its employees in the identification, acquisition, organisation, dissemination and sharing of vital and important information, knowledge and skills that are a part of the organisation's knowledge repository (Shashi et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2019). Therefore, the description of KM as a practice or process is to enable HR management to support individual employees with hands-on effective and efficient techniques for problem solving, effective and dynamic learning strategies, strategic planning techniques and apt decision-making strategies (Clinton et al., 2020; Jilani et al., 2020; Rezaei et al., 2021).

There was also a strategic description of KM by chief knowledge officers (CKOs) like Ali et al. (2018), Clinton and Gamble (2019) and Fryczyriska and Ciecierski (2019) who strategically describe KM as a systematic management practices established to help take care of critical issues of the organisation as well as employees' SKAAs, to help it adapt to survive and improve on its competences in

an increasingly competitive environment. By this description, KM is again seen as a continuous practice or strategy necessary because what seemed to have worked yesterday may not necessarily work tomorrow as market trends change frequently and rapidly (Al-Abbadie et al., 2020; Rezaei et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021). In their studies, Al-Iqbal et al. (2019), Archer-Brown and Kietzmann (2018) and Sahibzada, Jianfeng, Latif, Shafiat, and Sahibzada (2020a) corroborate these views but add that KM has four main objectives, which they describe as creating an effective knowledge repository, regularly improving on knowledge assets, enhancing the organisational environment, and managing the OK as an asset.

In KM, HR management must, therefore, identify and capture its employees' knowledge, organise and develop this knowledge into the organisation's repository, have an efficient and effective mechanism for sharing this knowledge, and finally, ensure the efficient and effective reuse of this knowledge by all employees in the organisation (Clinton & Gamble, 2019; Clinton et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2019). Doing so helps to ensure that the OK is well captured, shared and transferred to all individual employees in an organisation using both human and technological means that can be applied on their job effectively (Ali et al., 2018; Clinton et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2019). Some organisations, however, do not have the strategy and capacity for these activities and means of accessing, exploiting and transferring this OK to its employees effectively and easily. Also ways and means of accessing the appropriate OK within or outside by the employees is sometimes problematic, difficult, time consuming and frustrating (Bilginoğlu, 2019; Wang, 2018). This study is, therefore, sought to come out with the needed practices and strategies to address this challenge of KM.

2.8 DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

KM is, therefore, seen as an HR function that must make the OK available for the use of all employees in an organisation. In their studies, Becker (1995) and Denning (2000) relate to how in the olden days, the elders, the traditional healers and the midwives in the village have been the living repositories of refined experiences in the life of many communities. This shows that narrative repositories

have existed for a long time and people have found different ways of sharing this kind of knowledge to build on the existing experiences and develop strategies for community development (Becker, 2017; Denning, 2018; Dubicks & Gaile-Sarkane, 2017). Sharing and applying this kind of knowledge in those periods, took the form of town hall-meetings, group discussions, external workshops, seminars, and mentoring sessions (Becker, 2017; Denning, 2018). Presently, what is being practiced and researchers termed KM is how people now interact effectively among each other, simulate rich knowledge, have face-to-face knowledge encounters directly or virtually, and sharing of knowledge through the use of ICT tools such as intranet and internet (Ogunmokum, Eluwole, Avci, Lasisi, & Ikhide, 2020; Razzaq, Shujahat, Hussain et al., 2019; Santoro & Usai, 2018).

The development of KM, therefore, has a long history including narrative repositories, corporate repositories, networking, face-to-face interactions, formal apprenticeship, discussions, seminars, forums, networking, training, and mentoring programmes in organisations (Barad, 2018; Gharamah, Noordin, Ali, & Brohi, 2018; Kinghorn, 2017). In the second half of the 20th century, there has been the increased use of ICT tools in KM which, has also resulted in the adaptation of specific technologies such as knowledge bases, information repositories, expert systems, group decision support systems, intranets, and computer-supported cooperative work in many organisations (Gharamah et al., 2018; Santoro et al., 2018; Waheed & Muhammad, 2020). It has, therefore, been established that in every aspect, KM practices of employees start with knowledge creation and acquisition through human activities such as interactions, discussions, meetings, training, seminars and data mining activities to knowledge sharing, dissemination and application (Gharamah et al., 2018; Hislop et al., 2018; Olaisen & Revang, 2018; Waheed & Muhammad, 2020).

Chen et al. (2018), Dalkir (2017) and Serrat (2017) explain that knowledge sharing is key in all KM practices because for knowledge to be applied or utilised effectively in an organisation, it must be shared with colleagues and teammates. This sharing and application of knowledge by employees has, therefore, been

widely recognised by the HR department as the foundation of industrialised economies in this globalised world (Barad, 2018; Chen et al., 2018; Stamou, 2017). In view of this, Clinton and Gamble (2019) and Maravilhas and Martins (2019) explain that organisations no longer compete only on the basis of their fixed and current assets or strength rather, knowledge has been identified as the new basis of competitive advantage. KM practices must, therefore, not be restricted to only knowledge intensive firms but be seen as a major driver of employees' effective performance in both private and public sector organisations (Gharamah et al., 2018; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Ogunmokum et al., 2020).

In the literature, there is a plethora of KM studies in which the authors recognise the importance of key lessons such as beliefs, norms, socio-cultural background of employees, how these influence their behaviours and, therefore, play a critical role in any successful KM practices (Ansari, 2019; Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2017; Delshab, Winand, Sadeghi, Boroujerdi, Pyun, & Mahmoudian, 2019). These lessons are, therefore, essential to the success of any KM practice initiative by the HR department, its process and measurement of its effectiveness in an organisation. Hence, to address these key lessons, provision of incentives, motivation and evaluation of the individual employees are very important dimensions to be considered in the learning process of the organisation to help drive the socio-cultural change of the employees in their KM practices (Borges et al., 2019; Delsha et al., 2019). These areas of concern have been considered in this study to ensure a credible and reliable outcome of a coherent KM practices for effective performance, creativity and innovation.

2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

It has been established that in KM, it is required of the HR management of an organisation to identify, create, capture, share and apply the accruing benefits of the OK, which provides it with the necessary strategic advantages over its competitors. This shows that the successful implementation of any KM practice or strategy is largely dependent on a framework to guide its practical implementation in an organisation (Ansari, 2019; Barad, 2018; Gharamah et al., 2018; Waheed &

Muhammad, 2020). From the literature, three major KM frameworks have been selected and presented together to provide a conceptual framework to guide and inform this study. These KM frameworks are: knowledge creation and management (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), integrated KM (Dalkir, 2005) and KM practices (Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014). These theoretical frameworks presented their perspectives differently on the major concept of KM and, therefore, form the basis of this conceptual framework for KM. Hence, the conceptual framework of these studies provides the structure that is been used to guide and inform the study using the organisation's enhanced IOFs and the improved KM practices, which lead to performance effectiveness of the employees (Centobelli, Cerchione & Esposito, 2019; Gharamah et al., 2018; Gulshen, Mousumbi & Sanket, 2021).

2.9.1 Knowledge creation and management

In this theoretical framework of knowledge creation and management, the structure has its roots in the SECI model developed by Nonaka (1991). This is where, both the tacit and explicit knowledge form the basis of the epistemological dimension as shown in section 2.4.3 while the individuals, groups and the organisation's practices and strategies of knowledge sharing and diffusion form the ontological dimension (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This KM framework was developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and, therefore, has more tacit-driven approach to knowledge creation and management (Durst & Bruns, 2018; Miles et al., 2018). This was because in the Japanese context, employees have their values and beliefs centred on the oneness of humanity and nature, the body and mind, and self and others, which have much influence on the employees' KM practices in an organisation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). Hence, the two dimensions of epistemology and ontology are integrated with the socio-cultural beliefs of the employees to enable them acquire new cultural and operational tools for better KM practices (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Delshab et al., 2019).

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), therefore, based their knowledge creation and management framework on the four-interactive platform of the SECI model for any successful KM practices in an organisation. In the model, socialisation is (S),

externalisation is (E), combination is (C), and internalisation is (I). This SECI model shown in Figure 2.3 was, therefore, embraced by many KM practitioners during the 1990s because it stands out tall in terms of being expressed as an interactive centre between tacit and explicit knowledge and an effective platform for KM practices in an organisation (Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009).

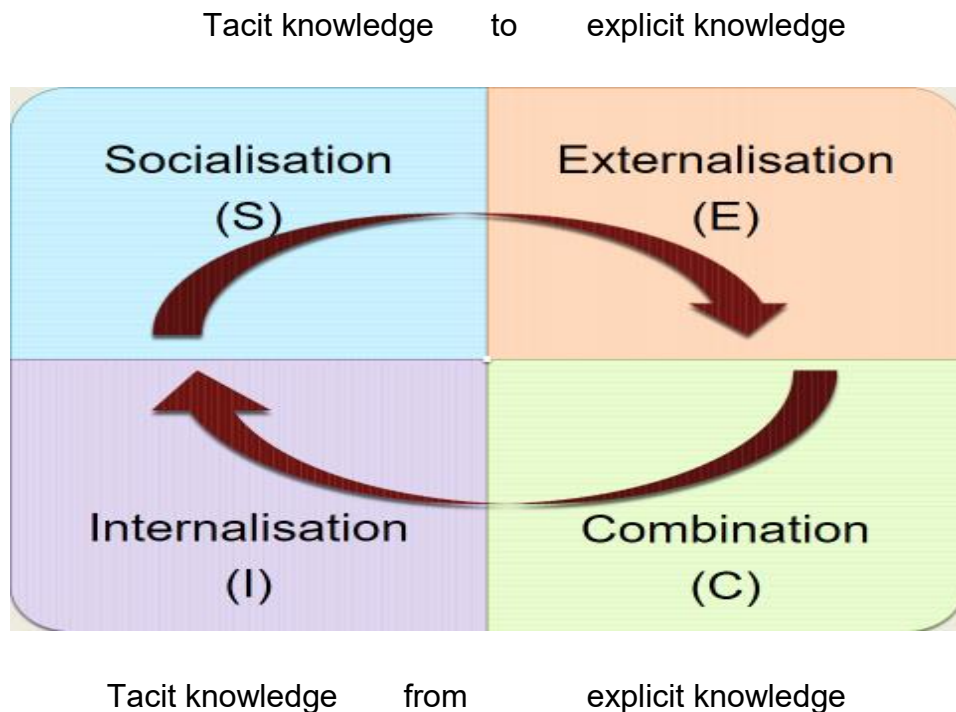


Figure 2.3: Knowledge creation and management framework

Source: Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)

Barad (2018), Dubricks and Gaile-Sarkane (2017) and Gao et al. (2018) explain that this model of knowledge creation and management focuses on how knowledge is being created, how the knowledge creation process is being managed, how the knowledge is being converted within the organisation, and how the knowledge converted is being shared among employees in the organisation. This knowledge creation and management framework, therefore, shows that the conversion of tacit knowledge of an individual to tacit knowledge of another individual employee is through socialisation (S); the conversion of tacit knowledge of an individual employees to explicit knowledge of the organisation is through

externalisation (E); the conversion of explicit knowledge to another explicit knowledge is through combination (C); and the conversion of the organisation's explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge of an individual employee is through internalisation (I) (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009).

In the framework, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) explain that there are, however, five important conditions that are necessary to drive this knowledge conversion into a KM practice for the employees to understand which, they termed as intentions, autonomy, fluctuation and creative chaos, redundancy, and requisite variety. This shows that for the creation and management of OK, the entire conversion process of individual's tacit knowledge creation has to go through the SECI process on the platform several times where the individuals having the tacit knowledge have to socialise and integrate with other employees in the organisation (Gao et al., 2018; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009).

This framework according to authors like Dubicks and Gaile-Sarkane (2017) and Gao et al. (2018), has a major weakness which is that it does not appear to be sufficient in its explanation of all the stages involved in the KM aspect of employees in an organisation but, focuses so much on how knowledge is being transformed between tacit and explicit knowledge. The larger issue of how decision-making processes take place for the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and how the OK is effectively created before its management in an organisation, has also not been fully addressed in the framework (Dubicks & Gaile-Sarkane, 2017; Gao et al., 2018; Manaf, Armstrong, Lawson, & Harvey, 2018). This study, however, links well with the KM process or practice (knowledge acquisition, creation, sharing, and application), which contributes to improved employee performance (Dubicks & Gaile-Sarkane, 2017; Manaf et al., 2018). The study, therefore, sought to explore these areas for a comprehensive KM practices in an organisation using the SECI model for effective KM practices.

2.9.2 Integrated knowledge management

In this second theoretical framework of integrated KM by Dalkir (2005: 12), he proposed three major phases in KM practices in an organisation, which he describes as capturing and creation, sharing and dissemination and acquisition and application. In this KM model, he explained that the process must be monitored and evaluated at every phase to ensure its smooth practices by all employees. This integrated KM model as presented in Figure 2.4 shows the transition process from knowledge creation and capture to knowledge sharing and dissemination and then to knowledge acquisition and application where, at every stage of the practice, knowledge is updated and contextualised for relevance and reuse in the organisation (Dalkir, 2017; Durst & Bruns, 2018). This shows that his proposed phases of KM are not different from other KM activities like knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing and application already proposed (Durst & Bruns, 2018; Hislop et al., 2018).

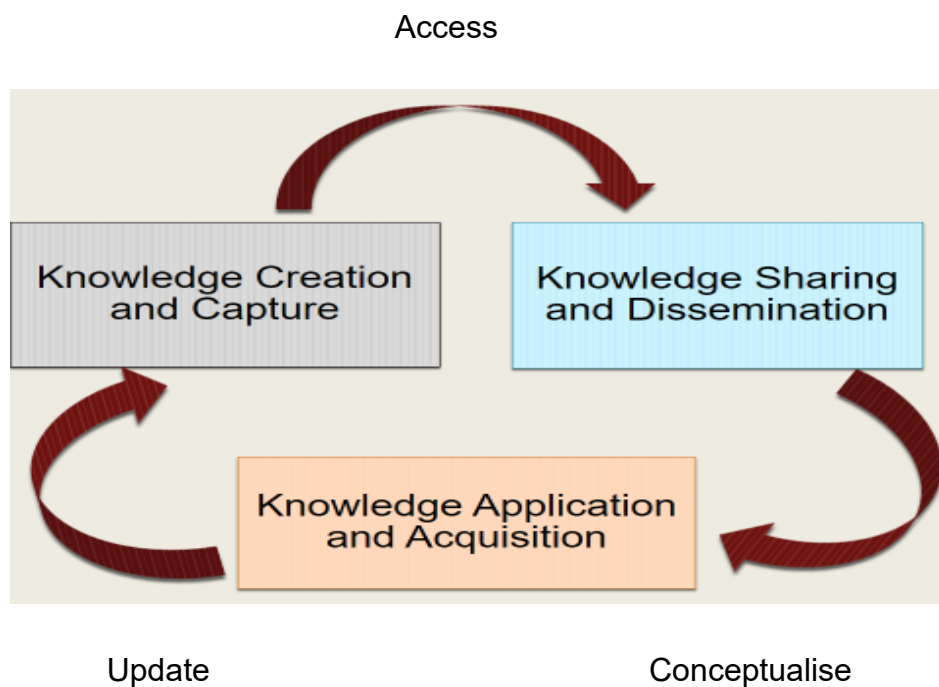


Figure 2.4: Integrated KM framework

Source: Dalkir (2005)

In the framework as shown in Figure 2.4, Dalkir (2005) explains that the knowledge capture and creation phase is where the knowledge capture is for existing (explicit)

knowledge while knowledge creation is for new (tacit) knowledge; the knowledge sharing and dissemination phase is where the knowledge created and captured is codified then shared and disseminated by the group of employees who have a common culture and identity; and the knowledge acquisition and application phase shows where the knowledge acquired, coded and put into the organisation's knowledge repository is applied in the organisation.

Hence, in all the phases of this theoretical model, it is the employees who create and share knowledge through their interactions and communication which, is in line with the social constructivist view of KM, who argue that knowledge is created through activities of social interactions among employees (Al Shraab, Abu-Ramman, Al Madi, Alhammad, & Aljboor, 2021; Dalkir, 2017). This view has been corroborated by many researchers who argue that there is a significant correlation between KM practices and the socio-cultural and personal characteristics of the individual employees in an organisation (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018; Ibrahim, 2017; Yazdi & Soltanali, 2019). These views, therefore, provided a very important dimension, which was necessary to be looked at with clarification in this study. This was to help make this improved KM practices coherent, that is, cultural and context dependent.

2.9.3 Knowledge management practices

The final theoretical framework of the study was the KM practices framework by Yusuf and Wanjau (2014). In this model, the theoretical framework presents factors that affect KM practices in state corporations in Kenya. Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) argue that corporations in Kenya need to create and implement KM practices using their IOFs like the organisation's culture, organisation's structure and organisation's human resource. In the study, most organisations in Kenya confirm that they use ICT in their KM practices. However, they need to synergize it with the IOFs stated above. Hence, Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) developed a KM practices model where they linked a relationship between independent variables like organisation's culture, organisation's structure, organisation's human resource

capacity and information technology which, they termed IOFs, to a dependent variable, which is termed KM practices in their study.

This KM practices model is presented in Figure 2.5, in which Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) conclude that there is a relationship between IOFs like culture, structure, human resource capacity and level of application of ICT and KM practices in state corporations in Kenya as they influence KM practices. Yusuf and Wanjau (2014), therefore, recommend that KM practices need to be improved by enhancing these IOFs and also the improved KM practices need to be implemented as part of the organisational practices to enhance employees' performance effectiveness in the organisations. This recommendation has, therefore, been the major area of focus in this study, where the IOFs were used as the influencing factors, which are enhanced for the needed improved KM practices in an organisation.

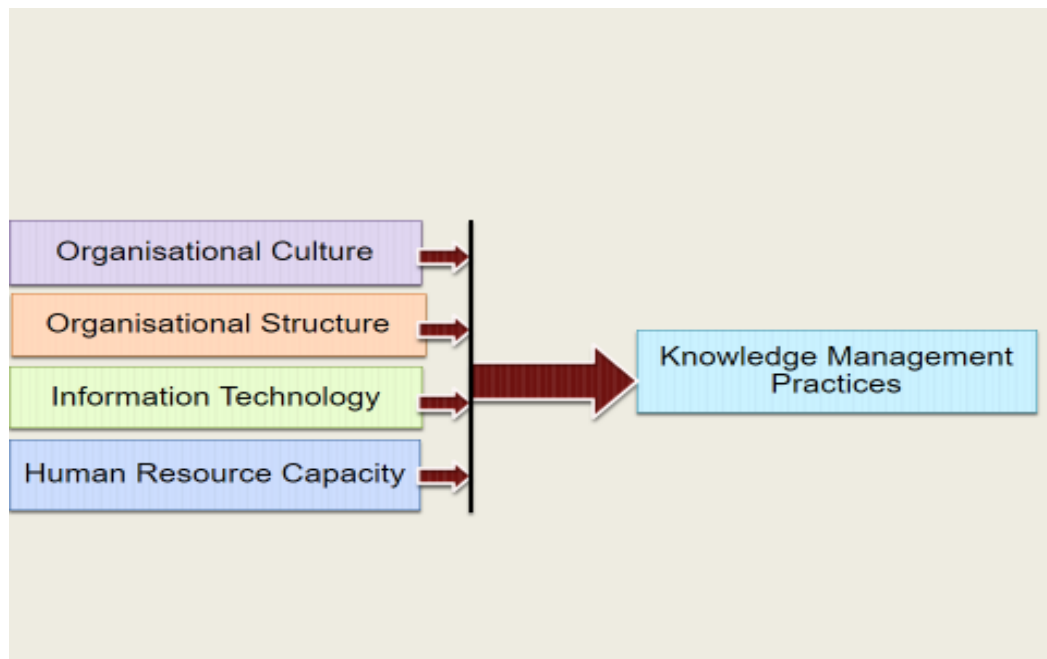


Figure 2.5: KM practices framework

Source: Yusuf and Wanjau (2014)

Hence, in the framework shown in Figure 2.5 and in view of the importance of KM practices to state corporations in Kenya, Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) suggest that

HR departments need to build vibrant and productive knowledge exchange strategies within the organisations by using the organisation's culture, organisation's structure, human resource capacity and information technology to achieve a coherent KM practices. This will help to improve on the KM practices once the IOFs are well coordinated and enhanced for effective employees' performance (Borges et al., 2019; Serrat, 2017; Shujhat, Sousa, Hussain, Nawaz, Wang, & Umer, 2019). Further, Fryczyriska and Ciecierski (2020) and Sahibzada, Jianfeng, Latif, Shafiat, and Sahibzada (2020b) explain that enhancing the IOFs help the HR management to encourage employees' knowledge exchanges, increase accessibilities of knowledge, and enable dissemination and application of knowledge from its creation stage to the sharing stage effectively.

However, Sokoli, Koren and Hajrizi (2019) aver that this model has failed to prove that not all KM practices have a positive influence on employees' performance effectiveness. This is because there are many parameters like effectiveness of employees' interaction and collaboration, employees' personal and socio-cultural background, employees' familiarity with the OK content, and employees' familiarity with the organisational environment that need to be considered to ensure that there is a successful knowledge acquisition, sharing and application initiatives by employees in an organisation (Borges et al., 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). However, Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) did not indicate in the model how the IOFs can be enhanced or what constitute enhanced IOFs to be used for improved KM practices in an organisation (Santoro, Thrassou, Bresciani, & Del Guidice, 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). This area is also what this study sought to explore for further clarification, with regards to enhanced IOFs, leading to improved KM practices, which leads to employee' effective performance.

2.10 CHALLENGES OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Stemming from the conceptual frameworks on KM explained earlier, in its basic form, KM is, therefore, about converting tacit knowledge wherever it resides into explicit knowledge and place same in a repository for the benefit of current as well as future use of employees to enhance their performance effectiveness. Kazemi,

Ghasvari, Eshlaghi, Morad, and Molavi (2020) explain further that the successful implementation of KM is dependent on some IOFs that are established by the HR management in the organisation. In this respect, there are some challenges associated with these KM practices that stem from the implementation and use of these IOFs established by the HR management as well as the behaviour of employees towards the use of these IOFs (Ali et al., 2019; Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018).

Within the concept of KM in this study, challenges are defined as the total effects of embedded difficulties that deter or work against successful knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and knowledge application initiatives in an organisation (Ali et al., 2019; Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). In the literature, there are significant challenges like employees' socio-cultural background, tendencies of employees to hoard or hide knowledge, uncertainties about employees' positions, ineffective decision-making processes, lack of motivation, legitimating knowledge power, employees' fear of redundancy, and a lack of organisational trust all of which can impede effective KM practices in an organisation.

2.10.1 Employees' socio-cultural background

In KM practices, employees' socio-cultural background sometimes affects their ability to effectively understand the OK. This is so because according to scholars like Borges et al. (2019) and Omotayo (2015), socio-culture background of employees plays a very important role in KM practices, as the willingness of employees to share their knowledge in an organisation is largely influenced by their personal and socio-cultural background. HR management must, therefore, harmonise the various employees' socio-culture, which to a large extent, influence their behaviour to sacrifice time to acquire, share and apply their knowledge in the organisation (Borges et al., 2019; Delshab et al., 2019).

2.10.2 Employees' tendency to hoard or hide knowledge

It has been established that effective KM practices are dependent on the willingness of the employees to participate in the KM practices. This was because

the acquisition, sharing and application of knowledge are highly dependent on the willingness of employees to give away their knowledge they see as their source of individual power for other employees to receive and apply in the organisation (Bilginođlu, 2019; Gagnē et al., 2019). Hence, employees who are unwilling to share their knowledge hold on to it because they see it as their source of individual power and, therefore, start hoarding or hiding and manipulating it to their own benefit (Akaegbu & Usoro, 2017). Management must, therefore, give bonuses and incentives to the employees whose performances in KM are outstanding in the organisation (Gagnē et al., 2019; Qian et al., 2020).

2.10.3 Employees' uncertainty about positions

In an organisation, employees would rationally hold on to their knowledge because of the positions they occupy in the organisation. Scholars like Astoga-Vergas et al. (2017) and Limaye et al. (2017) opine that this attitude makes them to behave differently towards KM practices in the organisation. Many researchers also reveal that rational behaviour shapes employees' emotions and their willingness to share or receive knowledge in an organisation. Hence, any uncertainty about an employee's position in the organisation makes him or her unwilling to share his or her knowledge because he or she may have a sense of feeling that exposing his or her personal knowledge will make him or her vulnerable and eventually lose his or her position (Keikha, 2018; Liu et al., 2020; Novak, Breznik & Natek, 2020). In such situations, management must establish strategies to show their commitment to the employees for them to also believe and have confidence that their positions in the organisation are secured (Keikha, 2018; Liu et al., 2020; Novak et al., 2020).

2.10.4 Ineffective decision-making process

It has been established that participatory decision-making process in an organisation helps in effective KM practices. In their views, Archer-Brown and Kietzmann (2018) and Armstrong and Brown (2019) explain that participatory decision-making process relates to the extent to which employees are involved in the organisational decision-making process. Here, a participatory decision-making

process includes the way management communicates and clarifies their expectations to employees, explains to the employees what is expected of them and the reasons why some policies and strategies are established (Abubakar et al., 2019; Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018).

2.10.5 Motivation and incentives

In KM, it is employees who possess knowledge that is a resource locked up in their mind. Hence, sharing of this knowledge is an intangible activity that requires willingness on their part to participate in such an activity (Chen et al., 2018; Fritoli, Laffin, Banacin, Gaio, & Gatsios, 2021). In view of this, HR management needs to motivate the employees intrinsically or extrinsically to encourage them to share this knowledge they possess willingly (Chen et al., 2018; Fritoli et al., 2021). Authors like Acevedo (2018) and Moodley and Hore (2018) explain that extrinsic motivation is in the form of payment for increased performance. Hence, this material reward system is an incentive that can enhance employees' knowledge acquisition and sharing initiatives in an organisation. On the other hand, Chen et al. (2018) and Gangnē et al. (2019) explain that intrinsic motivation is where employees know that their knowledge as a whole can bring success to other employees in the organisation and, therefore, can increase the possibility of these employees sharing their knowledge to their colleague employees.

2.10.6 Legitimizing knowledge power

As indicated, knowledge that employees possess is said to be the source of their individual power in the organisation. Management must, therefore, address the issue of who owns this individual knowledge to make it legitimate to the one who owns it. This will make the employee who owns the knowledge to freely and effectively participate in any KM practices in the organisation (Biberhofer, Linter, Bernhardt, & Rieckmann, 2018; Shephard et al., 2018). Hence, making ownership of knowledge legitimate is necessary because power is seen as something that is innate in people and can, therefore, influence the way they act, talk and interact with each other in an organisation (Biberhofer et al., 2018; Shephard et al., 2018).

Again, scholars like Anand et al. (2020) and Clinton et al. (2020) explain that knowledge is something that cannot be transferred straightforwardly to another person in an organisation because the one sending the knowledge has the individual power he or she wants to protect by way of hoarding or hiding the knowledge. HR management must, therefore, formalise the use of employees' knowledge in the organisation to address the issue of knowledge power held by employees (Anand et al., 2020; Clinton et al., 2020; Shephard et al., 2018).

2.10.7 Employees' fear of redundancy

Knowledge is seen as an intellectual asset that belongs to employees rather than the employer in an organisation. In view of this, there is usually tension with regards to the context of the knowledge, the one who owns it and the willingness of employees to share this knowledge effectively in the organisation (Abdullat & Dababneh, 2018; Ellis & Roever, 2018; Garg & Anan, 2020). This tension makes employees reluctant to create and share knowledge willingly with others with the fear that this effort will affect them negatively by diminishing their knowledge and, therefore, become redundant and be replaced by new employees in the organisation (Abdullat & Dababneh, 2018; Ellis & Roever, 2018; Garg & Anan, 2020). HR management must, therefore, establish policies and strategies that will encourage employees to create and share their knowledge willingly.

2.10.8 Lack of trust in organisation

The extent to which employees develop trust in an organisation has so much influence on their willingness to share knowledge effectively in the organisation. This trust could be one that employees have on management to provide them with the necessary and conducive working environment or interpersonal trust and relationship that is built among employees which, encourages collaboration, enhances sharing experiences and tightens cohesiveness (Keikha, 2018; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018; Novak et al., 2020). It has been proven that the higher the trust employees have on management the more likely they have positive attitudes towards effective KM practices with their colleagues in the organisation (Keikha,

2018; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018; Novak et al., 2020). It has also been proven that the lower the level of trust employees have with each other, the less willingness they are to share their knowledge with them (Rezaei et al., 2021; Shrestha, 2020; Wang, Cao, Xi, & Chen, 2021). Management must, therefore, establish strategies to help enhance organisational-based trust and interpersonal trust of employees to ensure effective KM practices in the organisation.

2.11 CONTINGENCIES OF IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

It has been established that for effective KM practices, HR management needs to establish enhanced internal practices and strategies to address the significant challenges of KM practices identified in the literature. This will help an organisation to effectively look at another facet of KM which is the implementation of improved KM in the organisation. In their scholarly views, Ali et al. (2019), Al-Qatawneh, Al-Tarawneh, Al-Qatawneh, & Al-Adaileh (2019) and Gholipour et al. (2018) explain that this facet refers to any deliberate efforts by the HR department to develop and improve on the knowledge resource of its employees, which can be achieved directly through effective use of the organisation's ICT tools or indirectly through effective HR management strategies.

This means the main objective of improved KM is trying to capture the embedded tacit knowledge that is in employees' heads as it were, and that has never been explicitly coded and, therefore, make this knowledge available so that it can be used effectively by other employees in the organisation (Ali et al., 2019; Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). However, this can effectively be done only when the IOFs are also enhanced, to help convert this embedded tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, have it coded and have it shared to all employees in the organisation (Berbergu, 2018; Hui et al., 2018; Liu, He & Zhang, 2021). It has been confirmed in literature that effective implementation of improved KM, is contingent on significant roles played by the employees and the HR department in the organisation for the needed improved KM practices (Hui et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021).

This shows that implementing improved KM practices in an organisation is contingent on enhancing the IOFs and establishing effective socio-cultural systems. These will help make it possible for HR management to tap the innovative creativity, improved sense of duty and hard work-spiritedness of the employees in the organisation (Latilla et al., 2018; Manaf et al., 2018; Olaisen & Revang, 2018). In this KM study, contingencies are defined as the practices or strategies that are embedded in the IOFs which can facilitate or promote effective capturing of the embedded knowledge to make it easily accessible to all employees in an organisation (Latilla et al., 2018; Manaf et al., 2018; Olaisen & Revang, 2018). Hence, some practices like effective internal strategies and practices, strong organisational culture and structure, availability of knowledge repository, conducive organisational work environment, and availability of knowledge workers and technology are highly contingent on the implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation.

2.11.1 Effective internal practices and strategies

The implementation of improved KM requires an effective and conducive internal practices and strategies for integration and collaboration of the organisation's employees to make its knowledge actionable (Dalkir, 2017; Fernandes, 2018; Islam et al., 2015). Several research studies on the relationship between improved KM practices and effective performance of employees reveal that the effective use of organisation's internal practices and strategies has been the basis of the effective performance of employees in an organisation (Fernandes, 2018; Gholipour et al., 2018; Huselid, 2018). In view of this, investment in training and provision of modern technology that will enhance knowledge transfer should be part of the internal practices and strategies and practices to address the concerns of employees to improve on their performance effectiveness.

Researchers like Sokoli et al. (2019), Sousa, Krot and Rodrigues (2018) and Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) advise that the enhancement of these internal practices and strategies should be focused on management and leadership of the organisation as well as how its policies will be geared towards short-term and long-term results

of the organisation. These internal strategies and practices should, however, follow the description of an ideal successful organisation, which should include the structure of its employment, the job stability, quality of the employment relationship, effective compensation, and work-life balance in an organisation (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Sousa et al., 2018; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014).

2.11.2 Strong organisational culture and structure

The implementation of improved KM practices requires a strong organisational culture and structure conducive for effective knowledge acquisition, creation, sharing, transfer, and application initiatives. Organisational culture refers to the underlying assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes and expectations shared by employees in an organisation (Afshari et al., 2020; Grau & Moghaddassi, 2016). Scholars like Hartnell, Ou, Kinichi, Choi, and Karam (2019) and Jamshed and Majeed (2019) also opine that organisational culture is seen as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that employees learned as they solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well. These basic assumptions are to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new employees as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems in the organisation. Management, therefore, needs to evaluate the organisational culture by making it open, flexible and strong that will value trust and stimulate employees' interaction and integration (Hartnell, et al., 2019; Jamshed & Majeed. 2019).

In the views of Teeroovengadam, Nunkoo and Dulloc (2019) and Vu et al. (2020), organisational structure shows the spine of employee control in an organisation. Therefore, strong or informal, non-hierarchical or team-based organisational structure helps to bring about decentralisation of the decision-making process by the facilitation of an effective communication process. Hence, a strong organisational culture and structure make improved KM efforts successful because it helps employees to have a positive orientation to the OK, helps employees to be intellectually curious, willing and free to explore, help management to encourage employees in their knowledge creation efforts, and helps employees to have open mind (Teeroovengadam et al., 2019; Vu et al., 2020).

2.11.3 Availability of knowledge repository

The successful implementation of improved KM practices is also contingent on the availability of employees within the organisation who have the required knowledge or those who have the capability to acquire that knowledge. Researchers advise that if this knowledge repository does not reside within the organisation, external knowledge sources can be identified for mining for the current and future knowledge needs of the organisation (Antunes & Pinheiro, 2020; Taskin & Van Bunnan, 2015). This external knowledge sources should, however, be analysed first in relation to their ability to support the objectives of the organisation. This analysis can be done effectively by performing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and treats (SWOT) analysis of the objectives of the organisation (Papapdakis, 2016). This shows that the availability of knowledge repository means that the organisation has sufficient OK for the needed improved KM practices and this can form part of the organisation's strategy for effective performance in the organisation (Adobor, Kudonoo & Daneshfan, 2019; Orenga-Roglā & Chalmetra, 2019).

2.11.4 Organisational work environment

Improved KM practices are also contingent on a conducive work environment in an organisation. Researchers have established that in our fast moving and unpredictable world of work, conducive work environment is one of the most important factors organisations look at for effective performance of its employees because they encourage effective communication and involvement of employees and help address issues relating to all forms of discrimination among its employees (Kuenzi, Mayer & Greenbaum, 2020; López-Cabarcos & Quiñoā-Piñeiro, 2022). In view of this, the nature and characteristics of the organisation's work environment play a major role in the improved KM practices in the organisation. Big and multinational organisations for example, are more likely to have challenges with effective knowledge sharing initiatives among its employees who come from different socio-cultural background than an organisation that is local, small or medium in nature with few employees (Eliyana, Ma'arif & Muzakki,

2019; Saifulina, Carballo-Penela & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2021). In the same vein, Grandos, Mohammed and Hupic (2017) and Zhang, Bal, Akhtar, Long, Zhang, and Ma (2018) corroborate this view but add that in a knowledge intensive organisation such as the big and multinational companies, shortage of knowledge workers in a particular branch can easily be moved from other branches where such employees are considered as important elements of the organisation's KM strategy.

2.11.5 Availability of knowledge workers

Successful implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation is also dependent on the availability of knowledge workers in the organisation. A knowledge worker is a person whose work is primarily intellectual, creative, non-routine in nature and involves the use of some reasonable amount of tacit, contextual and conceptual knowledge in an organisation (Butt et al., 2019: 340; Holfelder, 2020: 5). This shows that these knowledge workers have the requisite expertise of the organisation, which they acquired from training, reading and experience and enables them to make better and faster decisions in solving organisational problems (Butt et al., 2019; Holfelder, 2020).

2.11.6 Availability of technology

Another contingent factor of improved KM practices is availability of technology and employees who can effectively use this technology. Technology, of which ICT is part, plays a key role in the trend towards KM practices in an organisation (Clinton et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020; Park et al., 2021). In today's business environment, ICTs support knowledge transfer and broad sharing of information, which are good examples of effective KM tools. When facilitating knowledge transfer initiatives in an organisation, ICT tools such as telephone, fax, teleconferencing, chat rooms, automatic routing, intranets and internets are utilised to establish virtual meeting places where employees can engage in dialogue and collaboration (Park et al., 2021; Santoro & Usai, 2018). Also KM activities such as information creation, information seeking, information dissemination and information interpretation can successfully be performed using these ICT tools but

must have employees who can communicate and collaborate with these ICT tools effectively (Park et al., 2021; Santoro & Usai, 2018).

2.12 BEST STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

As indicated, one of the functions of HR management in an organisation is to ensure the total quality management (TQM) of its employees, which can be done through effective implementation of improved KM practices in the organisation. This means that HR managers need to use improved KM practices to optimise the effectiveness and efficiency of its employees to maximise productivity at reduced cost (Abdul, 2018; Zaidi & Ahmed, 2020). They add that this can effectively be done by linking employees' effectiveness through their KM initiatives, which provide the opportunity for the organisation to measure their performance in relation to KM practices in the organisation. KM practices are embedded and inseparable from IOFs, which help to facilitate and coordinate the flow of knowledge between employees and their overall performance effectiveness (Alshaima et al., 2016; Gholipour et al., 2018).

HR managers, therefore, establish best strategies that are very necessary for effective, efficient and successful coordination of OK for improved KM practices in the organisation. These strategies help to create and enhance mental, emotional and attitudinal states of the employees, which help to bring together varied knowledge of the individual employees to help implement improved KM in the organisation (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Asbari, Hidayat & Purwanto, 2021; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). According to researchers, best strategies that constitute the dictates for effective and successful improved KM practices are establishment of KM methodology; appointment of chief knowledge officer; empowerment of experienced employees; management of customer-centric knowledge and core competencies; encouragement of collaborations and innovations; consolidation of best practices; effective knowledge sourcing; development of links with expertise; and evaluation of knowledge assets in an organisation (Asbari et al., 2021; Mazhar & Akhtar, 2018).

2.12.1 Establishment of knowledge management methodology

One of the best strategies for a successful improved KM practices in an organisation is for HR management to establish a KM methodology. This methodology can be based on the intellectual capital management (ICM) methodology, which is mostly adopted by many international and multinational organisations (Ibrahim, 2017; Odor, 2018). The key components of this ICM are that the organisation must have a strategy that values sharing and reusing of the OK; have processes in place that will efficiently gather, structure, distribute, assess, and evaluate the OK; have competent employees consisting of experienced workers who have the OK as core of its employees; have efficient and effective ICT tools that can enhance OK sharing initiatives; and establish incentives that will encourage employees to participate in the KM practices. However, these strategies must be in line with the organisation's vision and goals (Hussinki, Ritala, Vanhala, & Klanto, 2017; Singh et al., 2019).

2.12.2 Appointment of chief knowledge officer (CKO)

Another best strategy for successful improved KM practices in an organisation is for HR management to establish an experienced employee known in KM as the chief knowledge officer (CKO). The role of this CKO is to identify which type of knowledge will deliver value to the organisation and, therefore, requires attention, continuation, nurturing, sustaining and promotion for KM activities in the organisation (Fryczyrska & Ciecierski, 2019; Rezaei et al., 2021). The CKO must, therefore, be an employee who has enough of the OK and must head a unit or department so that he or she can assist other employees (Fryczyrska & Ciecierski, 2019; Rezaei et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021).

2.12.3 Empowerment of experienced employees

Another best strategy for a successful improved KM practices in an organisation is for HR management to empower, encourage, inspire and support experienced employees. Empowerment and support are done by making the employees key component of the KM system in the organisation (Butt et al., 2019; Wang et al.,

2021). HR management must, therefore, demonstrate trust for the employees, clearly communicate its vision to the employees, practice open door policy for the employees, inspire creative thinking among the employees, encourage self-development for the employees and then show some appreciation for excellent performance (Butt et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021). These strategies will go a long way to empower the experienced employees who play a critical role in the success of the organisation's improved KM practices.

2.12.4 Management of core competencies

For successful implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation, HR management needs to establish effective strategies to manage core competencies of the organisation. These core competencies can effectively be managed through effective use of the organisation's human capital, intellectual and intangible assets, internal practices and strategies, and the use of ICT tools in the organisation (Afshari et al., 2020; Mardani et al., 2018). However, core competencies in organisations may vary because of their mission, vision, goals and their unique intended benefits. In view of this, HR management must identify these core competencies, develop employees' understanding for them and encourage communication and involvement for the management of these core competencies (Afshari et al., 2020; Mardani et al., 2018). Hence, Abbas and Sağsam (2019) add that core competencies of one organisation may not be easily replicated by other organisation because their capabilities may not necessarily be the same. The organisation can also focus on learning lessons about their customers and learning from them to effectively to increase their customer services and increased their market shares (Abubakar et al., 2019; Inayat & Khan, 2021).

2.12.5 Encouragement of collaborations and innovations

Another best strategy for successful improved KM practices in an organisation is that HR management needs to encourage and support collaborations and innovations among employees in the organisation. These collaborations and innovations can effectively be done through nurturing and accentuating the

importance of team working, learning, sharing of knowledge, knowledge sourcing, trust among employees and flexible organisational culture (Abbas & Sağsam, 2019; Basit & Medase, 2019). To achieve this, Abbas and Sağsam (2019) and Basit and Medase (2019) advise that HR management needs to develop an appropriate reward and compensation systems for those who innovate as this will help boost high creative potentials among employees.

2.12.6 Consolidation of best practices

One other best strategy for a successful improved KM practices in an organisation is for HR management to consolidate the existing best practices in the organisation. This consolidation can be done through coding and documentation of best KM practices, thereby, encouraging the reuse of best ideas and methods in the organisation (Abbas & Sağsam, 2019; Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018). The coding and documentation will also help to prevent reinvention of knowledge by the employees and therefore, be more efficient and effective in performance. This will also help the organisation to share and learn about their best practices through activities such as workshops, symposia, conferences, durbars and seminars (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018; Mardani et al., 2018). To this effect, Soto-Acosta et al. (2018) advise that in such situations, the organisation can use web-based tools like chat rooms videoconference, internet and intranet facilities, phone text messaging, emails, zoom, and automatic routing to effectively disseminate and document its best practices in the organisation.

2.12.7 Effective knowledge sourcing

Another best strategy for successful improved KM practices is effective knowledge sourcing in an organisation. Knowledge sourcing is a pragmatic effort that aims at effectively retrieving value-added knowledge that has been coded and then speedily disseminated to all employees in the organisation (Dalkir, 2017; Santoro & Usai, 2018). It is important to state that knowledge sourcing is mostly done in organisations using ICT tools like internet, intranet, extranet and other web-based tools. This method helps to retrieve and deliver efficiently coded knowledge,

thereby, paving the way for improved KM practices in the organisation (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Santoro & Usai, 2018).

2.12.8 Development of links with communities of expertise

Developing links with communities of expertise is also one of the best strategies for successful improved KM practices in an organisation. Developing links with communities of expertise helps to foster internal as well as external integration and collaborations and thereby helps to enhance effective communication inside and outside the organisation (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Clifton & Harter, 2019). These links can be developed through the use of formal virtual communities, organisational teams and electronic libraries such as white papers or knowledge banks. Internal communities of experts help internally to solve problems of employees, while external communities of experts are generally connected with senior management to advice on specific management problem and, therefore, help to influence improved KM practices in the organisation (Clinton & Harter, 2019; Sahibzada et al., 2020b).

2.12.9 Evaluation of knowledge assets

One other strategy for successful improved KM practices in an organisation is the regular evaluation of the organisation's knowledge assets. This can be done by the organisation measuring how the KM practices contribute to the success of the organisation through the number of patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secrets or how effective and competitive the organisation is in terms of its institutional memory (Adobor et al., 2019; Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019). This strategy may however, be a bit difficult because of challenges of many types of KM practices, yet, it is still very important for the organisation to evaluate the development and use of the KM practices it has adopted. This proves to the organisation, how good the information system management adopted helps in improved KM practices in the organisation (Adobor et al., 2019; Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019; Centobeli et al., 2019).

2.13 BENEFITS OF IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Researchers have established that in a knowledge-based economy, implementing improved KM practices in an organisation is vital for the organisation to take full advantage of the value of knowledge of its employees. This makes it necessary for HR managers to consider improved KM practices as a prerequisite for flexibility and higher productivity in both the private and public sector organisations (Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017). This is because improved KM practices help to guide on the use of the enhanced IOFs and also help to facilitate effective performance of employees in organisations. This means effective implementation of improved KM practices come with the benefits to the organisations like increase in productivity, improvement on organisation's best practices, knowledge value advantage, unity among employees, promotion of organisational learning, and development of professional skills (Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017).

2.13.1 Increase in productivity

Improved KM practices encourage flexible and quick knowledge sharing activities and, therefore, help to increase employee satisfaction through greater personal development and empowerment. This will eventually, increase employees' performance effectiveness, which also helps to increase productivity (Cai, Ashraf, Shahzad, Bashir, Murad, Syed, & Riaz, 2020; Huselid, 2018).

2.13.2 Knowledge value advantage

Improved KM practices help HR management to take full advantage of the value of the personally encoded (tacit) knowledge of the individual employees in the organisation. This adds to the OK and therefore, helps to enhance and sustain employees' life-long learning practices (Armstrong, 2018; Becker, 2017; Huselid, 2018). Because employees may retire or resign from the organisation with huge amounts of OK and experience, these practices help the organisation to have adequate OK for its smooth operation. This helps employees in sustaining the OK for their effective performance (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Hislop et al., 2018).

2.13.3 Improvement on organisation's best practices

When HR management implements improved KM practices in an organisation, it helps to reinforce and improve on the linkages between the organisational repository and effective knowledge sharing practices of the employees in the organisation. This eventually helps to improve on the organisation's best practices and enhance employees' performance and effectiveness through the application of learning accessible and sustain learning practices in the organisation (Abbas & Sağsam, 2019; Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018).

2.13.4 Encouragement of unity among employees

Improved KM practices in an organisation help to minimise risks and conflicts among employees. This is because through interactions and collaborations, employees' mistrust and prejudices are removed. This, thereby, encourages employees to unite through teamwork, networking and collaboration (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Gharamah et al., 2018). This also helps employees to do their jobs well and save time through better decision-making and problem-solving strategies. This helps employees to keep up to date OK and provides them with the challenges and opportunities to contribute to the success of the organisation (Cabrito & Dahms, 2018; Denning, 2018).

2.13.5 Promote organisational learning

Improved KM practices help an organisation to bring its entire organisational memory and knowledge to bear on how problems can effectively be solved in the organisation. Best practices can, therefore, be captured into the organisation's memory to promote organisational learning (Orenga-Roglă & Chalmetra, 2019; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2017). This helps employees to develop quick problem-solving techniques, improves on the development of employees' tacit knowledge creation, increases opportunities for innovation, and helps to build and sustain the organisational memory (Aboassin & Sultan, 2017; Adobor et al., 2019).

2.13.6 Development of professional skills

Improved KM practices help employees to improve on their professional skills, promote fertile grounds for mentoring of employees, facilitate effective networking and collaboration among employees, help to develop professional code of ethics that employees can follow through interactions, and help to develop common socio-cultural norms for the employees in the organisation (Denning, 2018; Huselid, 2018; Latilla et al., 2018).

2.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter has concluded a literature review of OK and KM practices. Here, the stances on the diversity in ontological and epistemological dimensions of the construct have been thoroughly explored, as well as its conformity regarding the essential description and development of KM. Types of knowledge, the epistemologies of knowledge and activities to increase the knowledge resource of an organisation were all examined. Three theoretical frameworks with regards to KM were critically examined and reviewed. The review also looked at challenges that confront some public and private organisations in the implementation of improved KM practices. The contingencies of improved KM were also scrutinised and lastly, the best strategies and benefits of improved KM practices were also looked at. This chapter, therefore, forms the first phase of the theoretical context of the study, which provides an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding the construct of knowledge and KM. Hence, this literature reviewed, paves the way for the second phase of the theoretical context, which forms Chapter 3 of the study. Chapter 3 is, therefore, dedicated to an in-depth investigation into the needed IOFs (internal practices and strategies) established by the HR management and how they are used to help employees implement KM practices.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

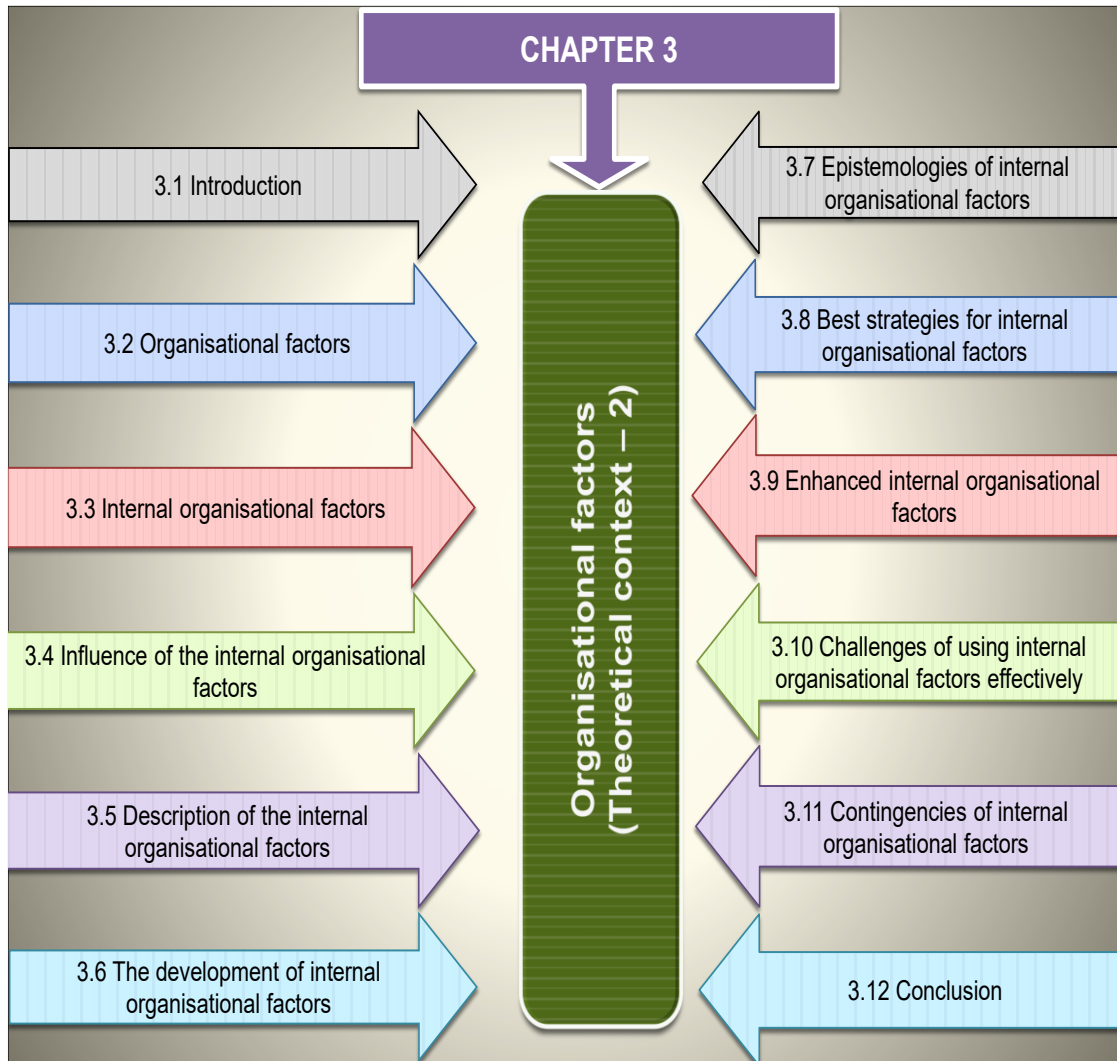


Figure 3.1: The structure of chapter three at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two provides the research orientation on the first phase of the theoretical context of the study, which was on KM. This chapter, therefore, forms the second

phase of the theoretical context of the study, which provides an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding the construct of IOFs. These IOFs are the enablers of KM activities in an organisation. The overall aim of this literature review, therefore, is to identify, describe and critically analyse the needed theoretical frameworks surrounding this construct and also to reposition the context of IOFs reasonable for KM practices to identify areas in need of further exploration. The diagram in Figure 3.1 shows the structure of this chapter at a glance, which provides the structure on how the scholarly thought on this construct is introduced for the discussion, which leads to the discovery of the needed enhanced IOFs which are necessary for improved KM practices in an organisation.

The discussion of this construct becomes necessary because the creation, acquisition and management of OK classified as tacit and explicit knowledge, have become very important for every organisation and this can effectively be done only with the use of key IOFs also classified in the study as internal practices and strategies of an organisation (Kazemi et al., 2020; Novak et al., 2020). This chapter, therefore, looks at these key IOFs necessary for KM practices and how these key IOFs influence KM practices. The chapter also explores the description and development of these key IOFs, epistemologies of these key IOFs, the best strategies, enhancement, contingences and challenges of these key IOFs necessary for improved KM practices.

3.2 ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

As discussed in chapter two, KM is seen as a systematic process that enables the HR department to create, acquire, codify, store, share and apply both the tacit and explicit knowledge termed OK wherever it resides, to all employees to enhance their performance effectiveness. This process is effectively done when the organisation uses key IOFs because KM practices are embedded and insuperable from some key IOFs, which affect employees' job satisfaction and performance effectiveness. To this effect, organisations need to show strengths in these key IOFs which are necessary for effective KM practices (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Eliyana et al., 2019; Novak et al., 2020). These key IOFs help to focus on building

organisational capacity and commitments in ways that allow concrete indicators of employees' effectiveness to be identified, pursued, implemented and experienced through networking, communication and collaboration (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Eliyana et al., 2019; Novak et al., 2020).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the New World of Work come with increased need for effective performance of employees in an organisation. According to Deming (2018) and Ulrich and Yeung (2019), to achieve this, management has to be pragmatic in the use of its organisational factors in the face of inadequate resources. Organisations, therefore, need to develop and use effective organisational factors to put the organisation in a good position to ensure timely identification of problems for quick solutions and improvements (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Deming, 2018; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019). Authors like Sokoli et al. (2019) and Teeroovengadum et al. (2019) explain that organisational factors are strategies or systems established by management to influence employees' behaviour with the aim of converting employees' ideas into organisational actions that keep the core function and culture of the organisation going.

However, according to Kazemi et al. (2020) and Sokoli et al. (2019), strategies or systems function very well under the influence of the organisation's history and interests and the actions and interests of the employees to render the employees competent. On their part, Gholipour et al. (2018) and Rezaei et al. (2021) explain that organisational factors are practices or processes established in an organisation that help in directing, coordinating and controlling employees' activities. From the organisational perspective, organisational factors which can either be external or internal of the organisation are made up of practices and strategies and how employees are managed by the organisation using these practices and strategies for them to perform their duties effectively, which leads to the organisational performance (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019).

3.3 INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The concern of this study is on the IOFs (within the organisation). This is with regards to the practices or strategies that the organisation adapts to help employees in their KM practices. In the views of Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Sokoli et al. (2019), IOFs are made up of internal practices or internal strategies that are within the control of the organisation and are used to affect employees' communications, collaborations and interactions for the success of the organisation. Authors like Gholipour et al. (2018) and Kazemi et al. (2020) explain that it is the HR department which puts in place these internal practices and strategies for effective planning, organising, directing and controlling of employees' activities in the organisation. These activities then help to guide, facilitate and sustain employees' effective interactions, networking and communication for any effective KM practices. The HR department is, therefore, involved in mobilising resources both human (employees) and artificial (technology), to work in this coordinated manner for effective knowledge sharing activities leading to effective performance of employees (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Sokoli et al., 2019).

Hence, to have effective internal practices or internal strategies, the HR department needs to harness all strategies to help employees to interact, communicate, collaborate and network to facilitate knowledge acquisition, sharing and application initiatives in an organisation (Fernandes, 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019). In their views, Ali et al. (2019) and Gholipour et al. (2018) explain that practices are seen as the usual or repeated ways of doing systematic exercises to influence employees' behaviour to become proficient. On their part, Rezaei et al. (2021) and Sokoli et al. (2019) explain that strategies are seen as the schemes that are adapted to influence employees' behaviour to serve an important function towards achieving a goal. HR management, therefore, puts in place reasonable internal practices and strategies that will help the organisation to focus on the provision of reliable directions for effective management of its employees. This strategy helps to bring about visibility to a common function for easy and effective employees' interactions (Kazemi et al., 2020; Teeroovengadum et al., 2019).

Abdullat and Dababneh (2018) and Eliyana et al. (2019) corroborate these views but assert that an organisation's internal practices and strategies have different menus with each relating to a particular functional area of HR management but all have direct and positive effects on employees' performance effectiveness. Furthermore, Ali et al. (2019) and Gholipour et al. (2018) explain that these internal practices constitute usual systems in the organisation such as the strategy, culture, structure, leadership and technology, which HR management relies on in KM practices. On the other hand, Rezaei et al. (2021) and Sokoli et al. (2019) assert that these internal strategies constitute schemes such as the internal policies, procedures, guides, regulations, work rules and principles the organisation adapts for effective KM practices in an organisation. In addition, some scholars referred to the internal practices as skills improvement factors because they facilitate the improvement of both soft and hard skills of employees (Kordab et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2020) while the internal strategies were also referred to as motivating enhancing factors because they help to enhance both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of employees in an organisation (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Schleicher, Bauman, Sullivan, & Yin, 2019; Zhang, 2018).

The most important thing is that these internal practices and strategies are established by the HR management and are necessary for employees' effective communication, interaction, collaboration and networking, which lead to effective KM practices in the organisation. This is because these internal practices and strategies help the organisation to facilitate employees' effective performance such as knowledge acquisition, sharing and application initiatives by all employees in the organisation (Abubakar et al., 2019; Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Latilla et al., 2018). It is, therefore, necessary for HR managers to consider these key internal practices and strategies as prerequisite for effective KM practices, which come with the benefits like knowledge value advantage, promotion of organisational learning, encouragement of unity among employees, development of employees' professional skills, and cross-fertilisation of organisational ideas, which come with increased productivity (Bakator, Petrović, Boric, & Dalić, 2019; Ha & Lo, 2018).

3.4 INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

It has been established that key IOFs which constitute internal practices such as organisation's strategy, culture, structure, leadership and technology and internal strategies such as organisation's policies, procedures, guides, regulations, work rules and principles, help in KM practices of an organisation. These IOFs, therefore, help the organisation to focus on transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and see to it that all the individual employees' knowledge become OK for effective sharing and application by employees (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Hislop et al., 2018). This shows that KM practices are about using IOFs to connect people to activities and information through a structure so that the IOFs are used to guide employees to improve on their knowledge creation, sharing and application initiatives (Byukusenge & Munene, 2017; Dalkir, 2017). It is, therefore, through this structure that the IOFs are used to influence KM practices from the individual employees' knowledge into the organisation's knowledge repository for the general reuse by all employees in the organisation (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Dalkir, 2017; Islam et al., 2015).

This structure helps the HR management to use its internal practices and strategies effectively to direct, coordinate, control and influence inner workings, affect relationships and interactions to accomplish employees' behaviour to influence KM practices in an organisation (Byukusenge & Munene, 2017; Teeroovengadum et al., 2019). In the literature, many researchers have come out with different structures or models on how internal practices and strategies can be used effectively to influence KM practices in an organisation. In this study, however, the structure or model on how the use of internal practices and strategies have influence on KM practices has been adapted and modified from the research work of Alnaqbi (2014). In the study, Alnaqbi (2014) tried to establish the relationship between some internal HR factors like organisation's strategy, structure, culture, leadership and technology and employee management as pertained in the public sector organisations in the United Arab Emirates.

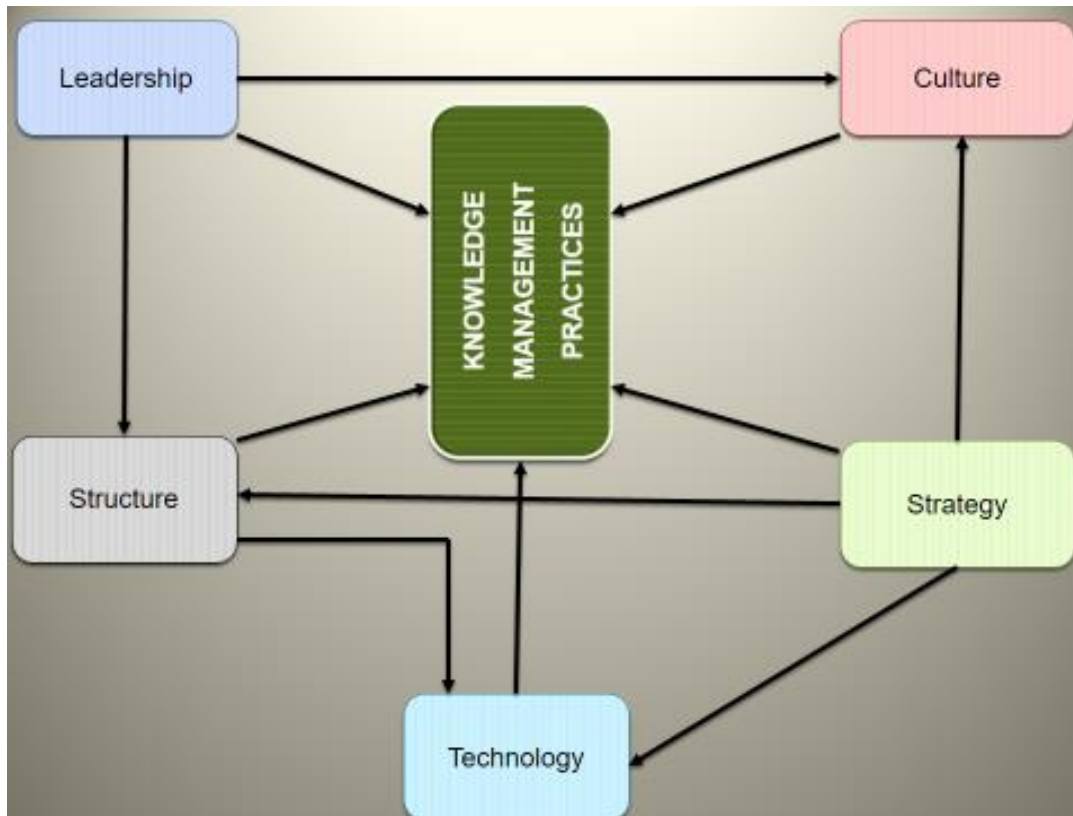


Figure 3.2: The structure of influence of the internal practices

Source: Adapted and modified from Alnaqbi (2014)

This adapted and modified structure or model as presented in the diagram in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 also present the purpose and context of the study, which calls for the modification of the internal practices and strategies used as presented by Alnaqbi (2014). From the literature, in the Ghanaian context, the internal practices that HR management will use to implement KM practices are simple variables like the strategy, structure, culture, leadership and technology of the organisation. On the other hand, the internal strategies that HR management will use are the variables like work policies, internal procedures, guides and regulations, work rules, and internal principles the organisation adapts. From the structure in Figure 3.2, all the internal practices interact with each other. However, strategy and leadership interact more with other variables like the culture, technology and structure of the organisation for effective KM practices because relative to other

variables, leadership and strategy play important roles in affecting KM practices in an organisation as shown in Figure 3.2.

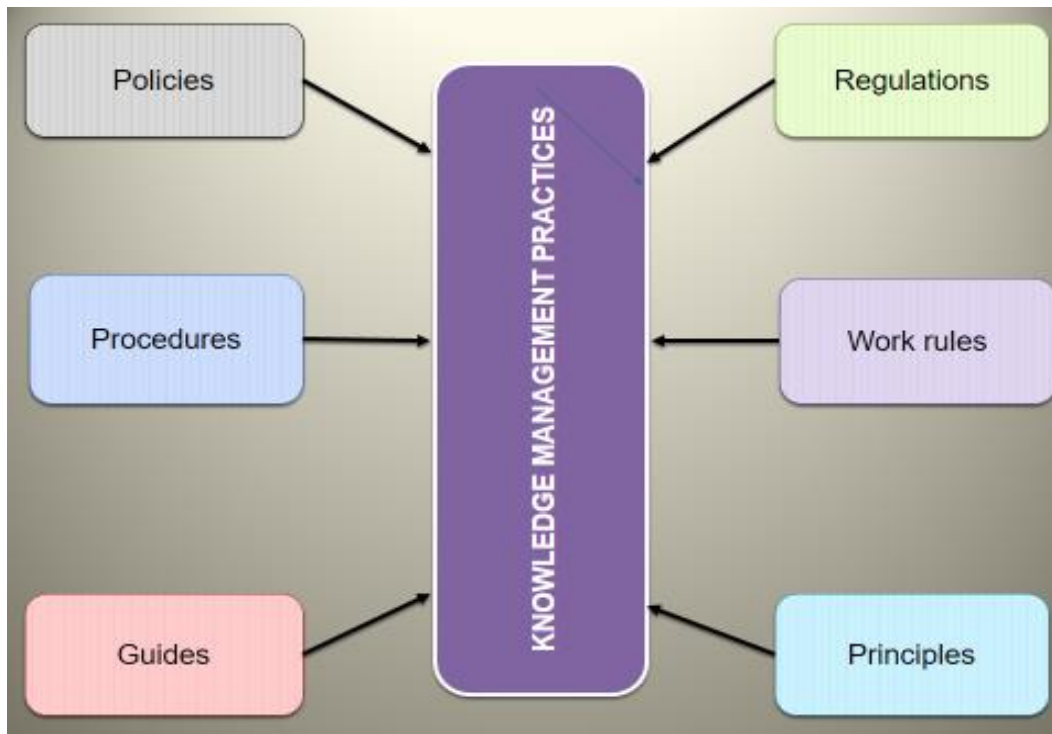


Figure 3.3: The structure of influence of the internal strategies

Source: Adapted and modified from Alnaqbi (2014)

Also, from the structure in Figure 3.3, all the internal strategies interact in the structure for effective KM practices because at the base of this internal strategies lie various policies, procedures, guides, regulations, work rules and principles necessary for the organisation's operations. All these internal strategies, therefore, play very important roles in affecting KM practices as shown in Figure 3.3.

The models or structures depicted in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show that key internal practices like strategy, structure, culture, leadership and technology all have influence on KM practices in an organisation. In addition, internal strategies like policies, procedures, guides, regulations, work rules and principles also have influence on KM practices in an organisation (Alnaqbi, 2014; Islam et al., 2015; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014). The developments of these models (Figures 3.2 & 3.3) are

in line with the recommendation made by Alnaqbi (2014) and Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) that HR departments need to build vibrant and productive knowledge exchange mechanism in the organisation. This is because in KM practices, activities like knowledge creation, capturing, codification, sharing and application are all carried out through a structure for the employees to communicate, interact, and network effectively. This mechanism is referred to as social interaction and is being implemented by the HR management of the organisation. During this social interaction, employees interact and communicate freely, they mutually influence each other's view and finally influence their behaviour for effective KM practices in the organisation (Alnaqbi, 2014; Islam et al., 2015).

3.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

The understanding of IOFs (internal practices and strategies) and the structure on how they influence KM practices pave the way for its description. In the scholarly views of Sokoli et al. (2019) and Teeroovengadum et al. (2019), IOFs are described as internal practices or internal strategies established by HR management to direct the behaviours and actions to affect employees' interactions, collaborations, relationships, communications, teamwork and performance in an organisation. Scholars like Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Maravilhas and Martins (2019) also explain that IOFs are the internal practices or strategies meant to change behaviours and also help to convert ideas into actions, which help to keep the core objectives and culture of the organisation alive. However, as indicated, these key internal practices or strategies function effectively in an organisation under the influence of the organisation's history and interest and the employees' interests and actions.

On their part, Islam et al. (2015) and Zhang et al. (2019) explain that IOFs are strategies or practices that exist in an organisation for the direction, coordination and control of employees' activities. They add that IOFs are, therefore, made up of the people and the various activities within the organisation. There are, however, various perceptions and perspectives of these IOFs, which lead to a variety of approaches to its implementation in an organisation which, include unitary,

coherent and pluralist approaches (Kaufman, Barry, Wilkinson, Lomas, & Gomez, 2021; Van Buren, 2022). In their views, a unitary approach is where management and employees are seen as having a common interest but the main aim of management is to use these IOFs such that employees can best be managed in the interest of the organisation. On the contrary, coherent approach is where management views employees as the most valued assets (human talent) working for the organisation who, individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Kaufman et al., 2021; Van Buren, 2022). In view of this, management uses IOFs that can best manage its employees such that they are valued and managed as assets in the interest of the organisation.

Kaufman et al. (2021) and Van Buren (2022) explain that the pluralist approach is where management views an organisation to contain a number of interest groups but the interest of management and employees do not necessarily coincide. Hence, during recruitment, the selection of best employees for the organisation is the paramount interest such that any IOFs management puts in place the employees are best managed in the interest of the organisation (Kaufman et al., 2021; Van Buren, 2022). Therefore, the yardstick for measuring the effective implementation of any IOFs in an organisation is dependent on its best management approach that helps to develop, maintain and sustain relationships with management and employees (Kaufman et al., 2021; Van Buren, 2022). There are also two broad approaches for employees' acceptance of using the IOFs of which, researchers termed as hard or soft approach (Kaufman et al., 2021; Shrestha, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018).

Consequently, Shrestha (2020) and Vu et al. (2020) explain that under the hard approach, HR management sees employees as one of the organisation's resources. Therefore, extrinsic motivational factors like monetary incentives are used to induce employees to achieve their acceptance of the use of the IOFs. On the other hand, under the soft approach, management considers multiple stakeholders' interests where employees are seen as important group of stakeholders and one of the resources that should be managed differently to

achieve their acceptance for the use of the IOFs (Dai & Akye-Torku, 2020; Shrestha, 2018). Most management, however, see the soft approach as a measure of complete evaluation of the effectiveness of the IOFs as it aims at the satisfaction of the concerns of the multiple stakeholder groups, especially the employees' acceptance. In view of this, careful selection of employees is looked at seriously during recruitment and intrinsic motivational factors are used to induce employees' acceptance for the use of the IOFs (Dai & Akye-Torku, 2020; Schleicher et al., 2019; Shrestha, 2018).

3.6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

It has been established that management devices effective ways to implement the IOFs necessary for KM practices as well as effective ways for employees' acceptance of these IOFs. At the turn of the 20th century, the most notable organisations were large, industrialised and often included ongoing and routine tasks that manufactured a variety of products. Hence, through the implementation and employees' acceptance of their IOFs, these organisations paid much attention to their employees who have unique skills and capabilities with the views to develop and sustain the operations of the organisations (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019). This was so because their IOFs were seen to have more influence on the employees' performance effectiveness during the period (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019).

Organisational factors were first conceived by Kurt Lewin (1898 – 1947) who was recognised as the founding father of organisational development. Kurt Lewin identified key organisational factors in his study, "*employees' collaborative change process*", which he said can either be internal (within the organisation) or external (outside the organisation). His study was, however, focused more on IOFs because he believed that an employee in an organisation who has expertise in the behavioural sciences can influence his or her colleagues to successfully change their behaviour but this depends so much on the IOFs (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Teeroovengadum et al., 2019; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019).

Hence, based on the belief and recognition of the influence of Kurt Lewin's IOFs on employee's behavioural change, more attention has been given to individual employees and their unique capabilities in the organisation during the latter part of the 20th century. During this period, there was a major belief that an organisation would prosper if its employees prospered as well, hence, behavioural sciences or human relations movement played a major role in helping employees to understand and accept the IOFs used in the organisation (Shrestha, 2020; Vu et al., 2020). This belief, therefore, helped HR management to apply and sustain the knowledge on IOFs in the organisation through effective employee management strategies. Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Ngoc-Tan and Gregor (2018) believe that effective employee management strategies are, therefore, needed to be in place to achieve effective IOFs necessary to help employees to communicate, interact, collaborate, have an efficient group dynamics and network together as a team for successful KM practices.

At the beginning of the 21st century, however, there was a shift to contemporary approach to management where organisations shifted their focus of production into inputs, process, outputs and outcomes approach, which researchers termed as the system theory owing to career and technological advancement (Kaufman, 2019; Lovas, 2020). Inputs were made up of resources such as raw materials, money, technologies and employees. These inputs go through a process in which they are planned, organised, motivated and controlled to meet the goals of the organisation. Outputs are also the products or services sent to a market for customer satisfaction while outcomes are in the form of enhanced quality of life of the employees or productivity for customers (Kaufman, 2019; Lovas, 2020; Vivek, 2018). Researchers like Intezari et al. (2017) and Somers, Bimbaum and Casal (2019) corroborate these views but add that to meet these outcomes, there is the need for the organisations to raise productivity and increase their competitiveness through effective and efficient employees' management using the IOFs.

In recent times, organisations have developed new ways of managing their employees, which focus on aligning the organisation with the changing and

complex business' internal and external environments for improved productivity. Management, therefore, needs to strategise so that their employees are managed effectively for the desired improved productivity. Consequently, Bray, Budd and Macneil (2020) and Kaufman (2019) explain that key among the strategies include practices that will influence employees' collective behaviour, help employees to collaborate and network, help employees to identify problems and take actions, help employees to negotiate changes and evaluate their progress in an organisation. Hence, the effective coordination of the influence of employees' behaviour and effective utilisation of employees' SKAAs and talents in an organisation is very critical and, one way of realising this is using effective IOFs with which the organisation operates (Bray et al., 2020; Kaufman, 2019; Shrestha, 2020). IOFs are, therefore, critical in today's knowledge-based economy where, organisations grapple with decisions about which IOFs are reasonable for effective KM practices for improved performance.

3.7 EPISTEMOLOGIES OF INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

IOFs have been seen to be critical in today's knowledge-based economy since organisations grapple with decisions about which IOFs are reasonable for implementation to achieve its improved performance and productivity. In view of this, organisations adopt various approaches such as unitary, coherent and pluralist to implement effective IOFs to address issues affecting the organisation and the development of its employees (Heery, 2016; Kaufman et al., 2021; Van Buren, 2022). Researchers like Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Kaufman (2019) explain that effective IOFs are very important because they help employees with the necessary procedures and processes to communicate, collaborate, interact and network within an organisation. They add that this is so because these IOFs have inextricable link to the overall performance effectiveness of employees hence, organisations must support this.

In view of the importance of these IOFs, researchers have come out with various epistemological perspectives on the procedures and processes of how IOFs can be used to support and influence employees' behaviours to accept these IOFs.

From the literature, four of these epistemological perspectives which, are the organisational support perspective (Chang, Max, Mao, & Chu, 2018; Gao & Yan, 2018), social exchange perspective (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017; Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018), employee family-needs support perspective (French, Dumanis, Allen, & Shockley, 2018; Hameed, Khan, Sabharwal, & Arain, 2017; Wei & Mao, 2018), and job satisfaction perspective (Jalaqat, 2016; Shmailan, 2016; Siddiq, Takreem & Iqbal, 2016) were reviewed to assist organisations in this direction.

3.7.1 Organisational support perspective

This epistemology explains that one of the common themes in organisations in recent times is the "take-up of a new style" strategy on the use of IOFs. This theme is aimed at achieving a good relationship, flexible working environment and ensuring employees' commitment for high productivity (Chang et al., 2018; Davideseu, Apostu, Paul, & Casunearu, 2020). This means in contemporary management, IOFs are implemented with more involvement of employees and have a more direct relationship with the organisation's policies, procedures, work rules and performance issues than it was the case with the traditional system of personnel management (Davideseu et al, 2020; Gao & Yan, 2018; Liu, 2018). Researchers of this perspective argued that currently, most IOFs have inextricable link to employees' perception of how the organisation supports them to work effectively and takes care of their well-being. This strongly influences employees' commitment to work and perform effectively because employees feel more involved in the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Hence, they are likely to work harder because they believe that the organisation values their contributions, cares more about their well-being and, therefore, will fulfil their social and economic needs (Fu, Yu & Liang, 2019; Liu, 2018).

From the organisational support perspective, IOFs that give support to employees, encourage them to adopt a higher level of responsibility for their career, empowers them, enhances their skills level and motivates them for the benefit of the organisation (Wang, 2018; Zheng, Li, Yang, & Lv, 2017). HR management must,

therefore, make a significant investment in human capital for easy understanding and acceptance of the IOFs by these employees. But, such an investment in the views of Hussinki et al. (2017) is justifiable only when the future benefits in terms of employees' effective performance and increased productivity will be assured but not just for the sake of understanding and acceptance of the IOFs.

The organisational support perspective has two broad effects on employees, which are high involvement with work and high commitment to work, all of which help to enhance the experience and performance of employees in an organisation (Chang et al., 2018; Liu, 2018; Wang, 2018). Hence, in this perspective, IOFs are grouped into two categories, namely, skills improvement factors and motivation enhancing factors. In the skills improvement factors, the IOFs are the internal practices like culture, structure and technology which are tied and associated with the employees' skills development (Kordab et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2020). On the other hand, in the motivation enhancing factors, IOFs include the internal strategies like policies, procedures, work rules and principles, which are linked to employees' performance appraisal, compensation, motivation, and measurement of employees' performance (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Zhang, 2018).

3.7.2 Social exchange perspective

In this epistemology, social exchange theorists posit that employees' behaviour in an organisation is dependent on their potential benefits against risks. This shows that the level of acceptance of IOFs by employees in an organisation have a direct and positive relationship with their potential benefits from the organisation (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018). Therefore, going by the principles of social exchange, this shows that the attitude of employees and their behaviours including performance reflect their perceptions and expectations of potential benefits they are expecting from management of the organisation (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018). In trying to link IOFs and employees' performance, Porter (2018) and Zhang et al. (2018) established a relationship that suggests that acceptance of IOFs are significantly associated with employees' perceptions and attitudes towards their expectations. Employees'

expectations of their potential benefits are, therefore, closely associated with their acceptance of the IOFs established by HR management (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Fu, Flood, Rousseau, & Morri, 2021; Porter, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018).

In this epistemology, therefore, social exchange theorists hypothesise that if individuals enter into a relationship with an organisation within which both parties can identify a benefit, then a set of obligations is created that both parties feel obliged to fulfil. For example, employees who feel that their job is secured are much more likely to demonstrate a high commitment to the acceptance of IOFs in an organisation than employees who are afraid of being made redundant in the near future (Fu et al., 2021; Karaaslan & Aslan, 2019). Likewise, if employees are regularly provided with the opportunity to attend training and career development workshops, they will recognise the organisation's commitment to improve their skills and will be more likely to remain in the environment where they have regular use of the IOFs and a continual opportunity to learn (Febrianti & Se, 2020; Geiger et al., 2018; Wang, 2018). This is mutually beneficial for the employees and the organisation, as it improves on the strength of the organisation by retaining its key talented employees.

3.7.3 Employee family-needs support perspective

The theorists of the epistemology of the employee family-needs support perspective looked at the employees' family-needs and how they could be supported by management. These theorists explained that an organisation that is interested in helping their employees to achieve a true work-life balance will have an effect on the employees' acceptance and use of the IOFs. This means that an organisation that is committed to its employees' family-needs and work-life balance will have an impact on the commitment level of its employees and their performance effectiveness (Choi, Cundiff, Kim, & Akhatib, 2018; French, Dumanis, Allen, & Shockley, 2018). An example of a family-need support system that an organisation can use to assist its employees to combine their personal life and work demands is a flexible working schedule, which French et al. (2018) and

Hameed et al. (2017) allude that it is one of the most effective strategies to sustain employees' use of the IOFs for their effective performance in an organisation.

Hence, the availability of family-needs support systems together with the organisational support for individual employees can have a strong and positive influence on the level of employee's acceptance and use of its IOFs for performance effectiveness (Rashmi & Kataria, 2021; Wai, 2019). In their studies, Bryson, Forth and Stokes (2017) and Nabawanuka and Ekmekcioglu (2022) also conclude that employees who perceive that their organisation can support them in their difficult times of integrating work-life responsibilities are more likely to accept the IOFs, remain loyal to the organisation for a longer period of time, and more likely to be committed to the organisational goals.

3.7.4 Job satisfaction perspective

In this epistemology, Inayat and Khan (2021) explain that job satisfaction constitutes an individual's cognitive, affective and evaluative approach to his or her work. Their perspective in this study is in support to a large extent, by the works of Cranny, Smith and Stone (1992), who studied the influence of cognitive and affective reactions on job performance. Cranny et al. (1992) argue that the satisfaction one derives from his or her job is mostly dependent on the way and manner in which the person perceives that the organisation will meet his or her organisational needs using its effective IOFs. This shows that the significance of an organisation's ability to increase job satisfaction of its employees is largely dependent on the IOFs they implement to manage these employees effectively (Dai & Akye-Torku, 2020; Keith, Warshawsky, Neff, Loerzel, & Parchment, 2020). Effective IOFs, therefore, have a direct influence on their acceptance and job satisfaction of employees, which also helps to promote effective performance and commitment of these employees (Dai & Akye-Torku, 2020; Inayat & Khan, 2021; Keith et al., 2020). In their study, Carvalho, Castro, Silva, and Carvalho (2018) and Čulibrk, Delić, Mitrović, and Čulibrk (2018) support this view but add that it is also important for HR management to understand that IOFs are so distinct in usage but are tangible activities that have direct influence on employees' performance.

Much research publications have been focused on the ways in which IOFs can be used to encourage employees to accept and become aligned with an organisation's objectives. Authors like Kitsios and Kamariotou (2021) and Lu, Zhao and White (2019) argue that one of the most successful methods used to encourage effective employees' acceptance, performance and job satisfaction is through the use of IOFs that help to improve employees' levels of participation, interaction, collaboration and communication in an organisation. They add that IOFs established by HR management have a high propensity to affect employees' acceptance and job satisfaction leading to organisational commitment in a variety of ways. HR management, therefore, recognises the important role of IOFs that help in managing their employees and will, therefore, employ the methods that suit their needs (Bray et al., 2020; Delshab et al., 2019; Sparrow & Cooper, 2018).

3.8 BEST STRATEGIES FOR INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

As it has been established, IOFs are so distinct in usage but are tangible activities that have direct influence on employees' behaviour for their acceptance, performance and commitment levels in an organisation. This is because these IOFs help to improve the levels of participation, interaction, collaboration and communication between employees and management for the needed KM practices. Hence, one of the ways through which organisations can realise this is through effective strategies for employees to accept and use its IOFs (Lu et al., 2019; Shrestha, 2018). HR managers, therefore, established best strategies that are necessary to achieve high acceptance and commitment of employees to the use of these IOFs. Some of the best strategies researchers have come out with include changes in organisation's work environment (Hameed et al., 2017; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018), effective internal structures (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Bray et al., 2020), new approaches to employee management (Shrestha, 2018; Zhang et al., 2019), effective recruitment and selection process (Acikgoz, 2019; ; Khan & Baloch, 2017), effective training and development (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017; Halawi & Haydar, 2018), effective relationship (Green, 2016; Jain & Moreno, 2015) and retention of talented employees (Delshab et al., 2019; Hussinki et al., 2017).

3.8.1 Changes in organisation's work environment

Authors like Hameed et al. (2017) and Qureshi and Waseem (2018) assess changes in organisation's work environments as a result of changes in both organisation's structure and employer and employee relationships. They concluded that there are positive changes in organisation's work environment as a result of both formal and informal contracts of employment, which also affect employees' motivation and commitment. This shows that a positive and successful adjustment to an organisation's work environment has a positive influence on sustaining the use of IOFs, which is also based on the ability to access and retain a committed and skilled employee (Hameed et al., 2017; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018). In such a conducive organisational work environment, employees appear to be more committed to the use of the IOFs in their respective organisations. However, Bratton (2017) and Grandos, Ahamed and Hlupic (2017) argue that management cannot guarantee the stability of such employee commitments as in many situations, employees' loyalty and commitments were exchanged for their job security owing to changes in employer requirements in many organisations.

3.8.2 Effective internal structures

Ineffective internal structures of an organisation like policies and recruitment strategies, opportunities for career progression, rewards system, compensations and benefits, and training and development mostly affect its employees' effective use of the IOFs (Ali et al., 2019; Armstrong & Brown, 2019). This suggests that to improve on employees' use of IOFs, HR management needs to take all the internal structures seriously and manage them congruently because when there are ineffective internal structures, the reason can rarely be attributed to one single policy or strategy (Ali et al., 2019; Armstrong & Brown, 2019). Hence, the understanding of how different policies or strategies relate to each other, and the influence they have on employees' commitment to the use of the IOFs can be very challenging (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Asbari et al., 2021). Therefore, as a best strategy, internal structures must be strengthened for employees to have confidence for the use of these IOFs (Ali et al., 2019; Bray et al., 2020).

3.8.3 New approaches to employee management

Effective employees' management is relevant to effective internal practices, which constantly requires new approaches. This is because modern and global markets provide the best conditions necessary to ensure that employees' management and retention do not pose any challenges to the organisation (Shrestha, 2020; Zenglin et al., 2020). This suggests that the risk of developing and managing employee's talent without looking at his or her retention is necessary but then, much also depends on the success of his or her effective use of the IOFs (Shrestha, 2020; Zenglin et al., 2020). Hence, more emphasis should be placed on employees' flexibility in the acceptance and use of the IOFs as this will make him or her more competitive (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Saifulani et al., 2021). This suggests that for an organisation to be effective in its IOFs in this modern and global markets, its employees must be flexible and have the capacity to learn, train and adapt to new situations (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Butler & Muskwe, 2021; Saifulani et al., 2021).

3.8.4 Effective recruitment and selection process

Any process through which an organisation seeks applicants and attracts potential employees is called recruitment. Selection also refers to the process by which an organisation identifies those applicants with the necessary SKAAs that will help it to achieve its goals. Hence, the overall aim of the recruitment and selection process is to obtain the number and quality of employees required to satisfy the human resource needs of the organisation at a minimum cost (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Huber & Schubert, 2019). This process is also referred to as hiring of capable people, which is an attractive point in the process but there is another process of building and sustaining a committed workforce facilitated by a range of IOFs (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Huber & Schubert, 2019). In their views, Vargas-Hernández and Pérez-Ortega (2018) explain that as HR managers put in enough measures to hire capable candidates, job seekers also gather the relevant information about jobs offers to outwit them in the hiring process. Organisations are, therefore, handicapped of having complete information of job seekers and

their potential characteristics. Hence, organisations which hurry to fill their vacancies quickly or are unwilling to establish proper verification processes become victims of selecting inappropriate employees who do not understand the use of their IOFs (Acikgoz, 2019; Vargas-Hernández & Pérez-Ortega, 2018).

3.8.5 Effective training and development

Training is perceived to reflect an organisation's overall strategy that involves adding an increased and improved value to its employees and it is, therefore, imperative that employers provide opportunities for training and development for their employees as this will improve on the capabilities of their team as well as motivate them to be committed to perform effectively (Khan & Baloch, 2017; Mdhalose, 2020). Therefore, investments in training and development schemes have become increasingly acknowledged as vital elements for effective employees' acceptance and use of IOFs because many studies have found a positive correlation between investment in training, advancement and employees' use of IOFs for effective performance (Mdhalose, 2020; Mpofo & Hlatwayo, 2015). For example, studies by Dai and Akye-Torku (2020) and Olusengu and Olusoji (2020) were focused on managerial work environment and employee job satisfaction among healthcare employees in Ghana and nurses in government tertiary hospitals in Nigeria respectively. Both studies confirm that employees were more committed to their jobs and the achievement of the objectives of the organisation among other factors, when they felt that the organisation cared more about their training and advancement needs. Hence, appropriate training contributes positively to employees' effective performance as this makes them to better understand the IOFs (Dai & Akye-Torku, 2020; Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020).

3.8.6 Effective relationships

Management's general approach to relationship building with employees has a strong effect on the IOFs. Several studies have established that employees are more likely to stay in an organisation when their relationships with their work colleagues and management are stronger (Kim & Yun, 2015; Khan & Balock,

2017). In effect, employees who work together as a team are more likely to feel an increased use of the IOFs and are committed to their work unit in the organisation. This encourages them to remain in the organisation where they have established a strong teamwork relationship at the workplace (Kim & Yun, 2015). In another studies, Miller, Chen and Waller (2017) and Ogbonnaya and Valizade (2018) establish that employees' relationship with HR management are closely tied to the values and meanings the employees attach to the use of the IOFs. This was because these IOFs help in building and strengthening relationships with work colleagues and management (Miller et al., 2017; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018).

3.8.7 Retention of talented employees

The retention of talented employees has become increasingly important to organisations because of periodic labour shortages that reduce the availability of experienced and high performing employees. In view of this, employees always search for better employment opportunities elsewhere while organisations also continuously seek to improve on their performance. This, therefore, brings about management's challenges in efforts to retain its talented employees in the organisation (Delshab et al., 2019; Hussinki et al., 2017). In view of this, researchers have concluded that HR management's efforts at attracting and retaining talented employees has become problematic in many organisations because of bounded rationality particularly of cultural and social norms associated with many employees. In such situations, organisations have to shoulder the cost of hiring and the cost of losing these employees as they try to retain them because of their appreciated skills (Esther-Mirjam, 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019). This helps the organisation to preserve its investment on training of employees, causing lower loss of human capital and yielding higher employees' retention (Esther-Mirjam, 2018; Gallagher et al., 2019). Management should, therefore, take steps to retain employees who are used to their IOFs to avoid unwanted turnover owing to ineffective HR management practices. Management should also use different strategies such as employee compensation, training, development, and conducive

work environment to retain their talented employees who perform effectively and are used to the IOFs (Gallagher et al., 2019; Mostafa & Bottomley, 2020).

3.9 ENHANCED INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

It has been established that key IOFs help to improve on the levels of participation, interaction, collaboration, networking, and communication among employees for the needed KM practices in an organisation. This is because in the views of Bakator et al. (2019), Ha and Lo (2018) and Kazemi et al. (2020), these key IOFs help the knowledge worker to perform work that involves the generation of constructive information and knowledge by means of accessing organisational data, personal knowledge, external knowledge and other OK. Researchers have also established that when the HR department effectively enhances these key IOFs used in KM practices, it enables the knowledge worker to perform more effectively for a better achievement of the objectives of the organisation (Almeida et al., 2019; Alshaima et al., 2016; Gholipour et al., 2018). These authors further explain that the enhanced IOFs help in building organisational successes through vibrant and productive knowledge exchanges among employees leading to improved KM practices in an organisation.

This means that the HR department needs to implement an improved KM practices using the IOFs that are enhanced. In KM, to enhance means to improve on the quality of the IOFs for higher performance. Previous researchers have established that there is a positive relationship between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices in an organisation. This is because these enhanced IOFs help employees to put their creative ideas into practice and encourage them to be professional in their knowledge creation and sharing initiatives in the organisation (Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Gharamah et al., 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019). From the literature, within the IOFs, key internal practices which can be used for KM practices include the organisation's strategy, structure, culture, leadership and technology (Ali et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2015). On the other hand, within the IOFs, key internal strategies which are necessary for KM practices include the organisation's work policies; internal procedures, guides, regulations,

and principles; and work rules (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019). These key internal practices and strategies when enhanced will help to the implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation (Islam et al., 2015; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014) as shown in Figure 3.4.

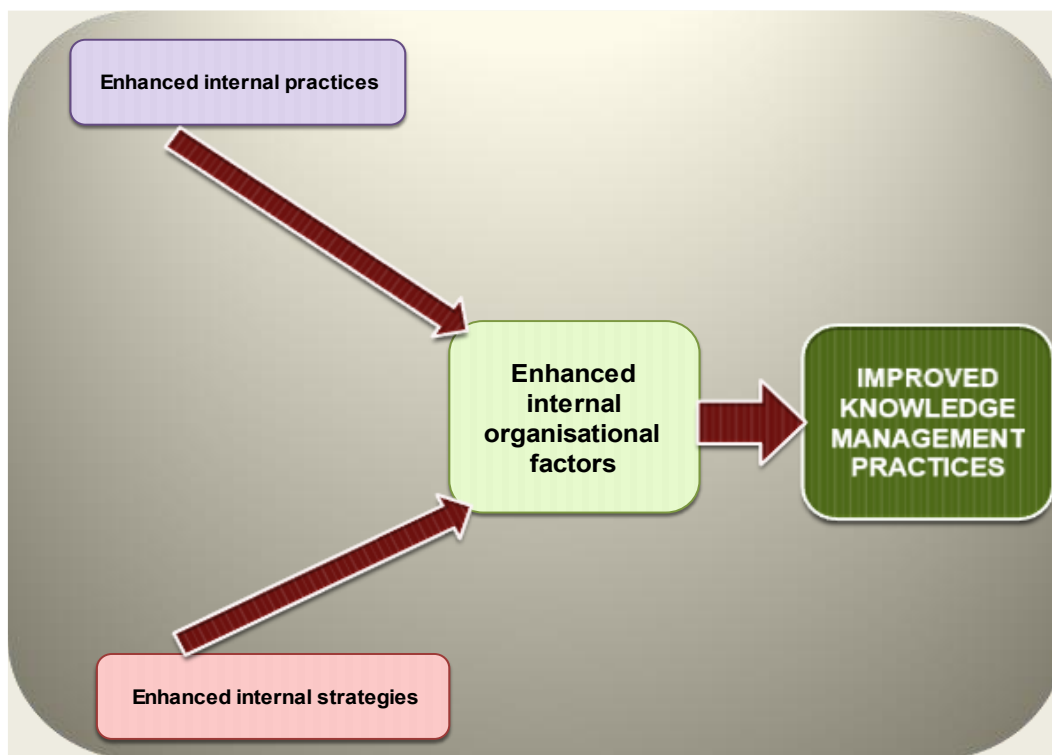


Figure 3.4: Enhanced IOFs on improved KM practices

Source Adapted and modified from Yusuf and Wanjau (2014)

3.9.1 Enhanced internal practices

In the implementation of improved KM practices, scholars like Ali et al. (2019) and Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) explain that enhanced internal practices are related to the HR management having flexible, decentralised, self-organising, effective and participatory strategy, structure, culture, leadership and technology in the organisation. This is because in every organisation, employees are the most important resource whose effective performance can be achieved among other factors, by management motivating those who possess the OK locked up in their mind. Hence, motivation plays a very important role in ensuring that the

organisation is successfully establishing measures for the employees to acquire, share and apply knowledge for its effectiveness and also helps to retain employees who possess valuable knowledge (Chen et al., 2018; Gagné et al., 2019). Employee motivation, according to Chmielewska et al. (2020) and Kitsios and Kamariotou (2021), is an internal strategy that helps to energise, direct and sustain positive organisational behaviour, plays very important role in achieving and sustaining a high level of employee performance effectiveness.

Researchers like Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Febrianti and Se (2020) are however, of the view that motivation alone is not enough to sustain and retain employees who possess valuable knowledge or make them participate in knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing activities in the organisation. Rather, the process involved in handling a variety of the internal strategies all play very important roles especially, when enhanced. This shows that the organisation's structure, which shows the spine of control in an organisation, is enhanced when it is team-based, non-hierarchical and informal (Febrianti & Se, 2020; Ji & Yan, 2020). Enhanced organisation's structure helps to bring about the decentralisation of the decision-making process by the facilitation of an effective communication process at all the organisational levels, helps in easing information flow between cross-functional teams and contributes positively to support the implementation of improved KM practices (Islam et al., 2015; Ji & Yan, 2020; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019). Another internal practice is the organisational culture which shows that it is enhanced when it is flexible, values trust, is open and sociable or stimulates employees' interaction. This also, helps in achieving decentralisation of the decision-making process by facilitating the process of communication at all levels of the organisation for a successful improved KM practices (Afshari et al., 2020; Grau & Moghaddassi, 2016; Jamshed & Majeed, 2019).

Leadership in an organisation can be described as a dynamic process whereby one individual over a particular period of time and in a particular organisational context, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of the group's or organisation's goals (Back, Han & Ryu, 2019: 1657;

Build, Martinez & Matute, 2019: 68; Ouakouak, Zaitouni& Arya, 2020: 262). Leadership is enhanced when management adopts a contingency approach, which is a situation in which the leader adapts his or her behaviour to suit the needs of the situation by being a team or employee-centred leader but not a task-centred leader. This makes a leader who adopts the informal type of group flexible and helps to ensure the most productive balance between the requirements of the tasks, the needs of the groups, the nature of the organisation's environment and the pressures exerted by the situation (Ouakouak et al., 2020; Mitonga-Monga, 2020; Mostafa & Bottomley, 2020). Also, technology of which ICT is a part, is the use of computers, storage devices, networking and other physical devices, infrastructure and processes that help to create, process, store, secure and exchange all forms of electronic information and data (Santoro et al., 2018; Soto-Acosta & Martinez-Conesa, 2018). ICT is enhanced when the tools are effectively used to facilitate effective interaction, communication, collaboration, and content management for better knowledge creation, capturing, sharing, dissemination, and application activities in an organisation (Santoro & Usai, 2018; Santoro et al., 2019; Wang et al, 2021).

This shows that electronic learning ICT tools are used to help improve the process of knowledge dissemination because knowledge that has been captured and packaged or coded is easily made available using these electronic learning ICT tools to all employees regardless of any time or distance constraints (Santoro & Usai, 2018; Santoro et al., 2019; Wang et al, 2021). However, while ICT tools are important and can significantly improve KM, it is pertinent to state that it is a solution by itself. This is because ICT does not support employees to share knowledge automatically but if the employees want to share knowledge, ICT can then be used to facilitate both the reach and scope of such exchanges for the benefit of the organisation (Santoro & Usai, 2018; Wang et al., 2021).

3.9.2 Enhanced internal strategies

Again, in the implementation of improved KM practices, scholars like Alshaima et al. (2016) and Gholipour et al. (2018) explain that enhanced internal strategies are

related to the HR management having flexible, decentralised, self-centred, effective and participatory policies, procedures, guides, regulations, work rules and principles in the organisation. The formulation of these internal strategies helps the organisation to execute its functions effectively for the achievement of the organisation's objectives. This is because at the base of these internal strategies are the work policies, internal procedures, guides, regulations, and principles as well as work rules that are necessary for improved KM practices (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Armstrong & Brown, 2019). Work policies are method of actions selected from among alternatives and in the light of given conditions to guide and determine the present as well as future decisions in an organisation. On the other hand, internal procedures are developed from these policies for supervisors or managers to use as reference for effective employees' management. Internal procedures are, therefore, living documents or series of steps followed by an organisation to accomplish a function while internal guides are things that provide employees with guiding information for the employees to function effectively (Asbari et al., 2021; Soto-Acosta, Popa & Martinez-Conesa, 2018).

Another organisation's internal strategy is work rules in the organisation, which are said to be prescribed internal guides or internal regulations governing procedures in the organisation. Work rules are, therefore, needed for direct guidance for employees, which cover day-to-day responsibilities within and outside specific work-related performance and standard of their positions (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Lee, Pak, Kim, & Li, 2019; Saifulina et al., 2021). This means that internal regulations are areas of legal concerns that HR management must comply with in an organisation. These internal regulations may include equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, sexual harassment and other internal regulations. Finally, internal principles which are part of the internal strategies used as the IOFs for KM are referred to as the code of conduct for employees. They specifically aim to ensure that employees' SKAAs are used effectively and efficiently (Lee at al., 2019; Saifulina et al., 2021; Vu et al., 2020).

In an organisation, principles may include:

- Principle of individual divergent – this offers an opportunity for every employee to realise his or her potential and capability;
- Principle of scientific selection – this helps to place the right individual employee in the right job opening;
- Principle of free flow of communication – this helps to have an open and encourage upward, downward, formal and informal communication;
- Principle of participation – this helps management to associate with employees at each and every level of decision-making process;
- Principle of fair remuneration – this is to pay fair and equitable wages and salaries to experienced employees;
- Principle of adequate incentive – this is to help review the performance of the employees and reward them accordingly;
- Principle of dignity of labour – this is to help treat every employee with respect and dignity;
- Principle of labour-management cooperation – this is to help promote individual relations and labour laws;
- Principle of team spirit – this is to ensure cooperation and teamwork among employees; and
- Principle of contribution to national prosperity – this is to help provide a higher work purpose to all employees and to contribute to the national propensity and integrity (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Saifulina et al., 2021; Vu et al., 2020).

3.10 CHALLENGES OF USING INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

As indicated above, enhanced IOFs help the knowledge worker to perform work that involves the generation of constructive information and knowledge by means of accessing organisational data, personal knowledge, external knowledge and other OK for his or her effective performance. Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Maravilhas and Martins (2019) explain that in trying to use these IOFs for improved KM practices, many organisations face difficulties or challenges that keep them away from effectively using these IOFs for KM practices. Some of these

challenges stem from HR management activities as well as the influence of employees' behaviour, which therefore, contribute to lowering of employees' morale and commitment for effective participation of individual employees in KM practices (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018). From the literature, these challenges range from retention of talented employees, learning and development, management of diverse employees, organisational conflicts, technological challenges, pay structure and compensation, relationship between management and employees, organisational culture, to inadequate employees' data that have been identified and need to be addressed by management for effective use of its IOFs.

3.10.1 Retention of talented employees

Many organisations find it difficult to retain the best employees who are efficient, effective and with the required organisational SKAAs for it to perform effectively. This challenge stems from most organisations' inability to put in the right processes for recruitment, selection and attraction of the right applicants (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Delshab et al., 2019). This makes it difficult for such organisations to retain the best employees who are well trained, talented and experienced in using its IOFs. In some cases, the right applicants were employed. However, other challenges have to do with the issues of bounded rationality and high employee turnover associated with these employees, which hamper their effective use of the IOFs (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Delshab et al., 2019).

3.10.2 Learning and development

Organisations function effectively when they have skilled employees who are well trained and experienced in using IOFs. Employees develop these skills when HR management gives them on-site (within the workplace) and off-site (outside the workplace) job training (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017). Employees who are, therefore, not given the opportunity to learn and develop their skills will lack the necessary SKAAs that will enable them to effectively use the organisation's IOFs for any effective performance (Long, Kowang & Hee, 2016; Mpofu & Hlatwayo, 2015).

3.10.3 Management of diverse employees

In their studies, Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Vivek (2018) opine that most organisations have now moved away from ethnocentric views (our way is the best) to a culturally relative perspective (let us take the best of a variety of ways). This perspective has helped organisations to effectively manage their diverse employees as the composition of employees in most organisations is getting diverse, which helps them to have more experienced IOFs users (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Ji & Yan, 2020; Vivek, 2018). The diversity of employees is mostly in terms of age, gender, educational background, religion, race and the nature of personality and socio-cultural background of these employees. Hence, HR management's inability to effectively manage these diverse situations will serve as a challenge for any effective use of its IOFs (Ji & Yan, 2020; Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019).

3.10.4 Organisational conflicts

Management normally expects that work is done timely and accurately by its employees who are experienced in using its IOFs to achieve their set objectives. This kind of expectation sometimes exerts pressure on the employees as some of them will have to work for long hours to achieve these objectives (Alzamel, Abdullah, Chang, & Chua, 2020; Cao, Liu, Liu, Yang, & Lin, 2019). This situation sometimes causes stress and conflict between management and employees in the organisation and prevents experienced employees from effectively using and applying the organisation's IOFs. Lack of general discipline in an organisation can also cause various problems which hinder experienced employees from effectively using and applying the IOFs. Hence, these various conflicts ultimately serve as challenges for effective application of IOFs (Alboliteh, 2020; Eliyana et al., 2019; Somers et al., 2019).

3.10.5 Technological challenges

The present production methods demand that every organisation moves along with technological changes or be left behind and get extinct. Management must,

therefore, make it a point to provide the necessary modern ICT facilities and have employees who are capable of adjusting within these technological changes (Lee et al., 2017; Xerri & Reid, 2018). These technological changes are very vital because they help employees to effectively use and apply the IOFs for their effective performance. These effective and efficient ICT tools serve as virtual meeting places for employees' dialogue, networking, collaboration and exchange of ideas in sharing the IOFs (Lee et al., 2017; Xerri & Reid, 2018). However, insufficient modern ICT facilities and employees who are not ICT compliant pose a bigger challenge for any effective application and usage of any IOFs (Santoro & Usai, 2018; Soto-Acosta et al., 2018).

3.10.6 Pay structure and compensation

Effective internal pay structure and other benefits like health insurance, life assurance, dental plan, and employee product discounts have direct and positive impact on employees' use of IOFs in an organisation (Fritoli et al., 2021; Moodely & Hore, 2018; Rashmi & Kataria, 2021). This is because these pay structures and other benefits help to motivate employees to put in extra efforts in their use of these IOFs for the benefit of these reward policy packages management has offered. Hence, skilful and competent employees do well to use and apply these IOFs effectively to perform efficiently and effectively to be given the right pay package and other benefits for his or her efforts (Fritoli et al., 2021; Moodely & Hore, 2018). This shows that low pay structure and compensation can serve as a challenge for employees' effective usage and application of IOFs (Alboliteh, 2020; Fritoli et al., 2021; Rashmi & Kataria, 2021).

3.10.7 Relationship with employees

Effective and sustained relationship between management and employees has a strong impact on employees' effective use and application of IOFs. This is because employees are more inclined to stay in an organisation when they have a stronger relationship with management and their colleagues leading to their understanding and application of the IOFs (Halawi & Haydar, 2018; Khan & Balock, 2017). This

shows that employees value and give meanings to the attachment they have to organisation's diverse IOFs hence, poor relationship between management and employees and their colleague employees has a challenge for effective usage and application of IOFs (Ellis & Roever, 2018; Keikha, 2018).

3.10.8 Participatory organisational culture

The norms and values of organisational culture which are invisible have serious effects on employees' usage and application of the IOFs. This is because these norms and values define the rules for social interaction, communication, collaboration and behaviours of the organisational members (Afshari et al., 2020; Sparrow & Cooper, 2018). This organisational culture, therefore, becomes participatory (widely shared) is said to be one that supports the adaptation and development of employees' participation in their usage and application of the IOFs. This means ineffective participatory organisational culture has undesirable consequences on employees' participation in their usage and application of the IOFs necessary for KM (Afshari et al., 2020; Hartnell et al., 2019).

3.10.9 Inadequate employees' data

Up-to-date information on employees is essential for effective operation in any organisation in this modern economy. This shows that effective management of any kind of employees' information is very important to the survival of the organisation (Cabrilo & Dahms, 2018; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). Employees' demographic information such as age, sex, health status, disability, race, educational and socio-cultural background help HR management to know employees who can effectively understand and use the IOFs. Hence, inadequate employees' data can be a big challenge to the organisation. This is because management will not have adequate information to rely on to know employees who can effectively use and apply its IOFs for their effective performance (Cabrilo & Dahms, 2018; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018). According to Park and Lee (2020) and Zhuang and Pan (2022), methods of safe storage and

retrieval of this information is very important. Therefore, ineffective storage can also serve as a challenge for employees' effective usage of the IOFs.

3.11 CONTINGENCIES OF INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS

As indicated, HR management needs to implement improved KM using the IOFs that are enhanced to facilitate an efficient and effective performance of employees (Bakator et al., 2019; Ha & Lo, 2018; Hislop et al., 2018). The effective use of IOFs is, however, contingent on factors some of which are personal to the employees (Armstrong & Taylor 2020; Febrianti & Se, 2020) and others like strategic internal strategy, credible organisational culture, flexible organisational structure, contingent leadership, and coordinated internal strategies, which are related to the organisation (Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018). In their scholarly views, Alqudah and Ruzo-Sanmartin (2022: 3) and Iheukwumere-Esotu and Yunusa-Kaltungo (2021: 54) explain that contingencies here are defined as conditions that can promote enhanced IOFs and can lead to effective facilitation of improved KM practices in an organisation.

3.11.1 Personal factors

Demographics like age, sex, educational background, ethnicity, disposition, job level factors and mobility of workforce of employees differ widely among different socio-economic groups in an organisation. These personal factors lead to individual's psychological attachment and loyalty to an organisation, which therefore, have influence on the use of the IOFs (Armstrong & Taylor 2020; Bellmann & Hübler, 2020; Febrianti & Se, 2020). Such attachment and loyalty create active relationship with the organisation such that individuals are willing to give something off them to contribute to the organisation's well-being to embrace any enhanced IOFs in the organisation (Bellmann & Hübler, 2020; Qureshi & Waseem, 2018; Xiao & Chen, 2019).

3.11.2 Strategic internal strategy

The size of an organisation has an influence on the understanding and usage of its IOFs as it is easier to enhance the IOFs of a small or medium size organisation than a large size organisation where the focus is more on business rather than employees (Fu et al., 2019; Keith et al., 2021). Management, therefore, needs to ensure that enhancing the IOFs is made a strategic imperative in the organisation, which ensures that all levels of management are aware of the strategic importance of these enhanced IOFs, their potential benefits and their role in achieving employees' effectiveness (Fu et al., 2019; Keith et al., 2021). This strategy is to help ensure that there is effective interaction and collaboration of employees across all functional boundaries, which serve as a beacon of hope to engage employees to help make enhancing of the IOFs a reality (Fu et al., 2019; Keikha, 2018; Keith et al., 2021).

3.11.3 Flexible organisational culture

To build a culture that is friendly helps to enhance the IOFs. Hence, management needs to be inspirational, enthusiastic, visible and accessible in building a credible culture (Armstrong & Taylor 2020; Fernandes, 2018). This culture will help management to create the needed trust and integrity that is built on mutual respect and have credible employees who keep their words and do what they say they will do – walking their talking (Afshari et al., 2020; Fernandes, 2018). This will also help with the issue of who interacts with whom, how they interact in the organisation and the way decisions are articulated to the employees, all have impact on enhancing the IOFs (Afshari et al., 2020; Grau & Moghaddassi, 2016). This type of organisational culture helps to achieve decentralisation of decision-making process by facilitating communication process among employees, teams or groups and within the organisation. This also ensures the existence of a common language and shared meaning of the culture among employees in the organisation. This is a fundamental enabler to enhancing the IOFs (Oyemomi, Liu, Neaga, Chen, & Nakpodia, 2019).

3.11.4 Organic organisational structure

Employees are very important resource and play very important roles in an organisation's strategy and effectiveness hence, its flexible structure helps management to energise, direct and sustain positive organisational behaviour of the employees (Chmielewska et al., 2020; Ji & Yan, 2020). This helps to ensure that an organisation is successfully establishing measures to help its employees acquire, share and apply improved knowledge in the organisation for its performance effectiveness (Huselid, 2018; Hislop et al., 2018). Employees relate well if the organisational structure is team-based, non-hierarchical, flexible and self-organising, which helps them to interact, communicate and collaborate freely and effectively. This also helps the organisation to achieve a decentralisation of decision-making and communication process among individual employees and groups, which also ensures effective information flow among cross-functional groups in the organisation (Ji & Yan, 2020; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019).

3.11.5 Contingent leadership

Leadership plays a very important role in internal practices because leadership is related to motivation of employees, fostering inter-personal relationships, coordinates other practices in the organisation and thus, puts in place good process of communication as well as delegation in the organisation (Armstrong, 2018; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Employees, therefore, see contingency approach to leadership as most essential and productive. This is because the leader is seen as a team or employee-centred who adapts his or her behaviour to suit the needs of the situation, brings the balance between the needs of the group, the requirements of the tasks, the nature of the organisation's work environment and the pressure exerted by the situation or context together in an organisation (Baek, Han & Ryu, 2019; Denning, 2018; Zeier, Phimmer & Francken, 2018).

3.11.6 Well-coordinated internal strategies

Management of OK has to do with the HR management's direction of resources and efforts to achieve individual and organisational success through building a vibrant and productive knowledge exchange within the organisation (Huselid,

2018; Sparrow & Cooper, 2018). This is best done when the organisation's internal strategies are well coordinated and enhanced. This will help in implementation of the organisation's improved KM practices, which also help to achieve high employees' performance (Lee et al., 2017; Lei, Khamkhoutlavong & Le, 2021).

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter has concluded a literature review of key IOFs necessary for KM practices in an organisation. Here, the literature on key IOFs necessary for KM was thoroughly reviewed. Also, the theoretical frameworks surrounding this construct were thoroughly examined. The description and development of key IOFs were thoroughly explored as well as the epistemologies with regard to these key IOFs. The review also looked at the best strategies for the implementation of these IOFs as well as the challenges that confront organisations with regards to the implementation of these IOFs. The contingencies of the IOFs were also scrutinised and lastly, the enhancement of these IOFs for improved KM practices were also examined.

This chapter, therefore, forms the second phase of the theoretical context of the study which provides an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding the construct of the IOFs. Hence, this literature reviewed paves the way for the third phase of the theoretical context which forms chapter four of the study. Chapter four is, therefore dedicated to an in-depth investigation into employees' performance effectiveness, which comes as a result of their implementation of improved KM practices using the enhanced IOFs.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

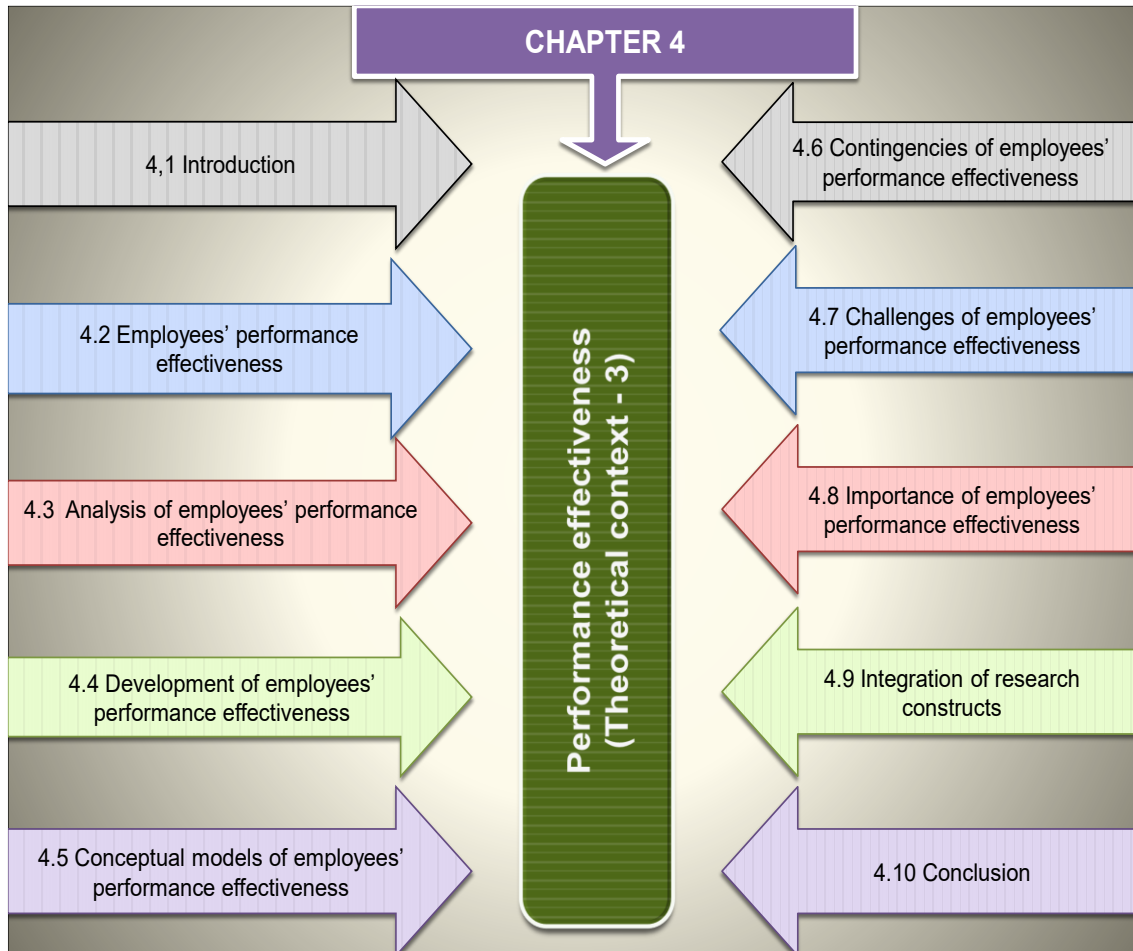


Figure 4.1 The structure of chapter four at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three presented the research orientation on the second phase of the theoretical context of the study, which provides an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding the construct of IOFs. The literature reviewed on chapter three, therefore, paves the way for the third construct or the third phase of the

theoretical context which forms chapter four of the study. Chapter four is, therefore, dedicated to an in-depth investigation into employees' performance effectiveness, which comes as a result of the implementation of improved KM practices using the enhanced IOFs. The overall aim of this literature review is to identify, describe and critically analyse the theoretical frameworks surrounding this construct and also, to reposition the context of employees' performance effectiveness as a result of improved KM practices in an organisation. The diagram in Figure 4.1 therefore, shows the structure of this chapter at a glance, which provides the structure on how the scholarly thought on this construct is introduced for the discussion. Eventually, this leads to the integration of other constructs to employees' performance effectiveness.

This discussion becomes necessary because one of the functions of HR management in an organisation is to ensure TQM of employees for effective organisational performance. This involves the use of the organisation's internal practices and strategies to help shape the employees' organisational behaviour and their employment relationships (Abdul, 2018; Almahamid & Qasrawi, 2017). Hence, this chapter focuses on the concept of employees' work performance, description and development of employees' effective performance, some concepts of employees' effective performance, contingencies, challenges and importance of employees' effective performance. This chapter also critically reviewed the relationship between the constructs: the enhanced IOFs and organisation's improved KM practices; and employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness in the organisation.

4.2 EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

Many researchers have proved that the importance of improved KM practices using the enhanced IOFs is to ensure that employees have the necessary SKAAs that enable them to perform effectively in the organisation. The concept of employees' job performance, therefore, has to do with the quality, quantity and timeliness of output, the presence of employees on the job and the efficiency and effectiveness of the output (Intezari et al., 2017; Keinan & Karugu, 2018). In their

scholarly views, Borst et al. (2020) and Butler and Muskwe (2021) explain that employees' performance relates to how successful a selected individual or group of individuals complete a set task and measured by a supervisor in relation to an already defined and acceptable standard. This means that employees' performance represents the outcome of their behaviour and their contributions towards the success of the organisation's output (Borst et al., 2020; Butler & Muskwe, 2021; Yahaya, Tan & Tay, 2017). This shows that to be able to properly diagnose employees' performance challenges, it is important to use the performance model, $Performance = Ability + Motivation + Opportunities$ ($fP = A + M + O$), where P = Performance; A = Ability; M = Motivation; O = Opportunities; and f = function (Kellner, Cafferkey & Townsend, 2019; Yahaya et al., 2017).

Researchers explain that the determinants of this performance model, $fP = A + M + O$ are three independent work system components, which are declarative and procedural knowledge, motivation, and opportunities. This shows that organisational strategies like empowering and motivation of employees as well as opportunities provided to employees, have a positive impact on their performance in an organisation (Kellner et al., 2019; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). There are five practices in an organisation that have effect on employee performance and these are competitive compensation level, training and development, performance appraisal, recruitment package, and maintenance of morale (Borst, Kruey, Lako, & de Vries, 2020; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). In view of this, many researchers carried out studies on organisational practices like recruitment and selection, placement, compensation, training, employee performance evaluation, promotion, grievance procedures and pension or social security in relation to perceived performance of employees. The conclusion was that these organisational practices have a significant positive impact on the perceived job performance of employees. Therefore, their performance effectiveness is the measure of efficiency in terms of inputs or resources being utilised and processed to create outputs (Borst et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2019; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018).

This employees' performance effectiveness, therefore, comes in the form of controlling the OK, improvement in performance, sustaining life-long learning, and the availability of knowledge workers in the organisation (Dillon, Towns, Livne-Taraandach, & Wasieleski, 2020; Kellner et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2019). This situation is where the HR management relates employees' performance effectiveness to how successful he/she or the team completes a set task measured by a supervisor in relation to an already defined and acceptable standard (Dillon et al., 2020; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018; Yahaya et al., 2017). This means the development of this KM framework for effective performance of employees was related to effective employees' management strategies, which take into account the needed IOFs and the external environmental factors necessary for improved KM practices, which lead to employees' performance effectiveness (Gharamah et al., 2018; Shujhat et al., 2019).

4.3 ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

As established above, IOFs have a significant positive impact on employees' performance effectiveness which is the measure of efficiency in terms of inputs or resources being utilised and processed to create outputs. This shows that employees' performance effectiveness has so much to do with the outcome of improved productivity and enhanced organisational performance (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018; van Kemenade & Hardjono, 2019). In the views of Schleicher, Baumann, Sullivan, and Yim (2019), there are two approaches to performance effectiveness in an organisation, which are (a) the humanistic framework approach and (b) the rational process framework approach. In the humanistic framework approach, employees are given the needed inputs and empowered by management of the organisation to link up, have trust in them and also connect them with the external community and other stakeholders of the organisation. In this approach, therefore, teamwork is a strong attribute as the employees are strongly interconnected with teams and stakeholders of the organisation (Acevedo, 2018; Prison, 2017; Schleicher et al., 2019). On the other hand, in the rational process framework approach, management uses the organisation's cultures more

and with the given inputs, make them flexible to maintain values, which are core to enable the organisation to adjust with its outputs to meet any new demands (Prison, 2017; Schleicher et al., 2019).

Some scholars are of the view that organisations using the rational process framework approach normally use the business environment in which they operate as their capacity to predict and act with regards to new business opportunities arising in the future. This makes them to be responsive to their practices and infrastructure, to improve employees' behaviour, to develop and manage market conditions, and make the organisational culture flexible (Fremeau & Michelson, 2017; Schleicher et al., 2019). Hence, these organisations are able to set joint principles and experiences, which fundamentally define an organisation's identity and eventually guide its employees' behaviour (Borst et al., 2020; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). This shows that employees' performance effectiveness under this framework approach is a function of their ability, motivation and opportunities ($fP = A + M + O$), where ability comprises of the skills and knowledge required of an individual to perform a task and motivation and opportunities are the forces and resources required to drive individuals to act positively towards something (McDermott, Conway, Cafferkey, Bosak, & Flood, 2017; Yahaya et al., 2017).

Some researchers are, however, of the view that employees' performance effectiveness is very necessary for improving an organisation, not every employee that is effective has to be efficient but every employee that is efficient has to be effective to perform effectively. This shows that working effectively and efficiently are clear signs of a good employee performance since, the variables, ability, motivation, and opportunities are three interdependent work system components (Noronha, Aquinas & Manazes, 2018; McDermott et al., 2017). This means ability, motivation, and opportunities influence each other, they also influence and are influenced by other factors. For example, the clarity of a role is key for an employee to be able to work effectively and efficiently. This role clarity is also instrumental to a good and productive working atmosphere. This is because as long as employees know what their tasks are, the best way to perform their duties

and the priority of each task, they will feel less pressured and be more productive (Noronha et al., 2018; Ozcelk & Uyargll, 2019; Shuck, Kim & Chai, 2021).

4.4 DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

Much research works on employees' performance effectiveness stem from the early research work of Deming (1986) and modified by Butler (1991). Butler (1991) explains that employees were seen as being constrained in an organisation by their environments. In view of this, management had to set the criteria for effectiveness through performance norms, which are underpinned largely by the organisation's culture. This criteria for performance effectiveness was, however, seen as problematic to HR managers because the criteria itself was too open, too diverse and had many managerial challenges (Kang & Hwang, 2021; Schleicher et al., 2019). Currently, therefore, HR managers try to relate employees' effective performance to both theory and practice of KM because it is now seen that one of the key drivers of employees' effective performance is the implementation of KM practices. This is also embedded and not separable from the IOFs, which help to facilitate the flow of knowledge among employees (Sahibzada et al., 2020b; Zaim, Muhammed & Tarim, 2019).

Aryanny and Iriani (2020) and Shuck et al.(2021) however, disagree with this view and state that for employees' performance effectiveness, management must rather foster the IOFs with the employees through in-depth planning, requesting feedback, thinking as a group and using tools to measure change. This strategy will help to minimise organisational risks, remove employees' prejudices, encourage employees' unity, and then help the flow of OK among employees for effective performance (Aryanny & Iriani, 2020; Shuck et al., 2021). In view of this, HR managers who are responsible for employees' management need to look into the organisation's internal practices and strategies to ensure that employees use them effectively during KM practices (Shuck et al., 2021; Trommater, 2021). This is because individual's performance can only be derived from these internal practices and strategies that are used to bring out the varied individual's tacit knowledge that

produces the organisation's explicit knowledge during KM practices (Ali et al., 2019; Alshaima et al., 2016; Rezaei et al., 2021).

It is however, not well understood how different KM practices influence employee's performance effectiveness. This is because in the views of Baskerville and Dulipovici (2017) and Sergeeva and Andreeva (2016), existing KM frameworks are universalistic in practice. But some researchers have also shown that KM practices affect employee's performance effectiveness in a positive manner but this relationship is very difficult to be proved (Gharamah et al., 2018; Sahibzada et al., 2020a). Hence, this study aims to explore and explain the understanding and interpretation of the meaning employees of MMDAs in Ghana attached to improved KM practices, which lead to their performance effectiveness. This stems from the views of Cai et al. (2020), Delbash et al. (2021) and Park et al. (2021) who explain that KM practices that are improved help to enforce and improve on the linkages between an organisation's improved KM practices and the enhancement of its IOFs. This process goes through transformations for the needed employees' effective performance based on improved information and learning in the organisation (Delbash et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021).

4.5 CONCEPTUAL MODELS OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

Studies have explicitly shown that KM practices affect employee's performance effectiveness in a positive manner. This finding has been made possible because one of the functions of HR management is to devise practices and strategies to optimise the performance effectiveness of its employees through the use of various benchmarks (Cai et al., 2020; Latilla et al., 2018). Most of these benchmarks have, however, become problematic to both management and employees because employees' performance effectiveness is linked to the employees' SKAAs as well as the internal practices and strategies established by HR management. In view of this, organisations have become more concerned about the effective utilisation of its employees' SKAAs in spite of the provisions of effective organisational practices and strategies, which they say are key to

organisational efficiency and effectiveness (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Mohajan, 2019; Singh et al., 2021).

There are, therefore, various conceptual models which explain ways of enhancing employees' SKAAs to achieve their performance effectiveness. In relation to this study, however, three of these conceptual models have been thoroughly discussed and presented as a guide to employees' performance effectiveness. These conceptual models are total quality management (Aryanny & Iriani, 2020; Van Kemenade & Hardjono, 2019); employee effectiveness (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018) and KM practices models (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Cabrilo & Dahms, 2018; Ha & Lo, 2018).

4.5.1 Total quality management model

The TQM model of employees' performance effectiveness was first found by Drucker (1964) and later explained by Deming (1986). They explain that TQM denotes a path in which at both stable and transitional environment, in professional and scientific approach and by applying a variety of methods and techniques, through constant improvements and involvement of all employees, management is presented with a model that shows a simultaneous achievement of improved quality level of employees on one hand and improved management level on the other. TQM, therefore, explains a paradigm of business success, which is set up to improve on the IOFs of an organisation, to instil confidence in customers and to trigger improvement chain reactions with employees and other stakeholders of an organisation (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Deming, 1986; Drucker, 1964). TQM is, therefore, a comprehensive system for achieving continuous improvement in employees and customer satisfaction of products and services as it serves as a philosophy of the system theory that explains the total integration of all the distinct parts in an organisation that form a complex whole to remain competitive and stay in business (Abdul, 2018; Deming, 2018; Keinan & Karugu, 2018).

This shows that TQM is focused on how to constantly increase the process of production and services and improving the quality of productivity by constantly

decreasing costs of production and improving on employees' performance effectiveness (Deming, 2018; Farish, Anil & Satish, 2017). To this effect, employees are considered as the potential source of growth and success of an organisation. Hence, it is believed that employees' preferences such as their SKAAs are required to tolerate reasoned judgements within the changing and ambiguous situations in an organisation (Aryanny & Iriani, 2020; Van Kemenade & Hardjono, 2019). To achieve this TQM, HR managers need to work beyond their limit to produce highly qualified applicants during recruitment and selection process, improve on the SKAAs of these employees and finally, assess how these employees will keep abreast with the objectives of the organisation. This will eventually lead to the achievement of TQM, which helps to improve the quality of the systems of the organisation and the performance of employees (Abdul, 2018; Deming, 2018; Noronha et al., 2018).

TQM, therefore, helps employees to improve on their SKAAs through seminars, meetings, workshops and trainings given to them, which lead to effective interaction, collaboration and networking. In addition, it helps employees to get involved in the organisation's participatory planning, which also helps to boost employees' morale and job satisfaction. Organisations must, therefore, transmute themselves to invest in the future development of employees for them to perform effectively to enhance customer satisfaction (Almahamid & Qasrawi, 2017; Farish et al., 2017). This shows that the continuous improvement of employees' performance should be the HR management's paramount concern that will lead to the cultivation of a culture of innovation and constant improvement within the organisation, improvement of employees within the organisation and having a shared understanding of the vision, mission and channel of communication. This will eventually lead to effective participation in decision-making process in the organisation (Liu et al., 2020; Zaidi & Ahmed, 2020).

4.5.2 Employee effectiveness model

The next model critically reviewed was employees' effectiveness model, which explains that for employees to perform effectively in an organisation, HR

management needs to pursue strategies for innovation, build less cost production systems, have efficient and effective processes, and shift the focus of organisation to become more customer centric. These strategies, however, require a constant cross-disciplinary insight to understand their implications on the organisation's effectiveness on both the employees and the organisation's IOFs because there is a thin line that connects employees and their performance effectiveness to the organisational effectiveness (McDermott et al., 2019; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018).

In view of this, employees took the central stage and became more important when organisations started to manage employees in the broader context of their strategic business model and changing strategies that concerned the sustainability of their business. Researchers then came out with the view that employees' effectiveness in an organisation should be seen as key for its profitability, employee satisfaction and effective community values (Kang & Choi, 2019; Noronha et al., 2018). Scholars under this model, therefore, linked employees' performance effectiveness to the contribution of individual employees to the organisational success from the planning stage to the production stage through their interactions with the environments in the organisation. However, many organisations are being constrained by their environments because of ineffective communication and interactions between management and employees (Oufkir et al., 2017; Ozcelk & Uyargll, 2019; Schleicher et al., 2019).

4.5.3 Knowledge management model

In relation to this study, this model was considered very important and, therefore, an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding it was done critically. Becker (1995) introduced the concept of work engagement, which he describes as the harnessing of people comprehensively towards their work such that they invest all their resources, be it physical, cognitive and emotional into the work process. Work engagement is the manifestation of the energy involved, which has been focused for the achievement of organisational goals in the knowledge-based economy (Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019; Huber & Schubert, 2019). Knowledge-based economy is

where knowledge is seen by the HR management as a significant resource for production and an important factor for an employee's well-being. Hence, knowledge-based economy has now become a nation's main agenda for development and is seen as one of the components of the knowledge society where there is a shift to the use of knowledge and technological tools (Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2017; Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017).

Many scholars argue that the world has changed and there is, therefore, the need to exploit knowledge in this knowledge-based economy, which has now become the focus of many countries within the globalised trade environment for competitiveness. This also brings to bare, the need for change in employee management in this knowledge-based economy that is characterised by increased demand for more highly skilled and knowledge workers who would also enjoy high wage premiums and also, popularised KM (Borges et al., 2019; Kinghorn, 2017). It was discovered that knowledge workers have skills and knowledge that are not available to all employees in the organisation and the skills and knowledge of these employees tend to diminish very fast over a period of time owing to retirement and staff attrition (Butt et al., 2019; Byukusenge & Munene, 2017; Delshab et al., 2019). Many organisations, therefore, adopted teamwork for their employees, an organic organisational structure and a knowledge-centric organisational culture as a means towards knowledge sharing and application, which are important for human capital management and sustaining a competitive advantage in organisations (Butt et al., 2019; Hussinki et al., 2018).

Knowledge is a coordinated deployment of assets and capabilities that help to sustain the achievements of organisational goals (Abubakar et al., 2019) or knowledge is what employees know about their customers, products, processes, insights and successes (Gagné et al., 2020). KM is, therefore, about employees and how they acquire, exchange and disseminate knowledge to other employees using internal and external technological tools, which has a strong position to exert influence in the management of these employees. This shows that KM is about getting knowledge from individual employees who have it, to those who need it, to

improve on the general performance effectiveness of all employees (Centobelli et al., 2019; Durst & Bruns, 2018). In technical terms, KM is about bringing together the knowledge of the organisation that is scattered across the organisation by codifying the tacit knowledge (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Centobelli et al., 2019; Intezari et al., 2017). In social and political terms, KM involves bringing together the OK so that it is no longer the exclusive preserve of an individual or a group (Ali et al., 2018; Manaf et al., 2018). In economic terms, KM is a response by organisations to the need to intensify the creation, acquisition, sharing and application of OK (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Assaker et al., 2020; Cai et al., 2020).

4.6 CONTINGENCIES OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

As established, one of the functions of HR management is to devise practices and strategies to optimise the performance effectiveness of its employees through the use of various benchmarks. This, therefore, involves the use of decisions relating to the organisation's internal practices and strategies to help shape and develop employment relationships. This means that HR managers need to establish practices and strategies and to optimise the effectiveness of its employees to maximise production and minimise its associated cost (Inayat & Khan, 2021; Keith et al., 2020; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021). Employees' performance effectiveness is looked at in terms of the degree to which the employees achieve a stated objective at reduced cost. These achievements are, however, dependent on some important factors which include remuneration for employees, effective leadership, coaching, positive work empowerment, effective participation, strong organisational culture, organisational work environment, motivation, and training.

4.6.1 Remuneration for employees

Good remuneration by management has been found over the years, to be one of the policies and strategies an organisation can adopt to enhance employees' performance effectiveness and, thereby, increase productivity. Organisations can, therefore, make extra efforts to allow remuneration and reward packages to match with the organisation's business strategies by developing performance-based pay

structures (Aboliteeh et al., 2020; Fritoli et al., 2021). This is where organisations create and maintain a sense of fairness, equity and consistency in their pay structures to improve on their employees' performance effectiveness. This suggests that salaries and other compensations given to employees form a major part of an organisation's bid to employees' performance effectiveness (Aboliteeh et al., 2020; Fritoli et al., 2021; Goncharuk, 2018). Researchers like Acevedo (2018), Chen et al. (2018) and Chmielewska et al. (2020), however, disagree with this view and explain that a satisfying job can also act as a motivating factor to employees' performance effectiveness even if the salaries are not very high because employees tend to describe satisfying jobs in terms of factors that are more intrinsic to the job, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth and development.

4.6.2 Effective leadership

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals or a team to achieve a common goal. Leadership is, therefore, the combination of attitude and behaviour of a person in the group which helps him or her to develop certain patterns in dealing with the followers in the group (Back et al., 2019; Build et al., 2019; Daft, 2018). The style of leadership within an organisation has a bearing on encouraging or inhibiting employee's performance effectiveness because a supervisor or a manager who demonstrates good leadership skills will motivate the employees and provide them with the clarity and feedback wherever necessary for his or her employees to go the extra mile to work more effectively and efficiently. Hence, an effective leadership style in an organisation helps in bringing diverse operations, practices and functions together, helps in facilitating effective communication, collaboration and teamwork (Chen & Chen, 2018; Back et al., 2019; Mitonga-Monga, Flotman & Moerane, 2019).

4.6.3 Coaching

Coaching is a concept that helps an employee to improve on his or her performance and has a two-way communication system where the coach identifies

the skills gap that need to be improved and how this improvement can be done for the benefit of the new employees (Kim & Kuo, 2015; Utrilla et al., 2015). Coaching, therefore, helps to address the attitudes and behaviours that hinder employees' performance effectiveness (Kim & Kuo, 2015; Utrilla et al., 2015).

4.6.4 Positive work empowerment

Employees' performance effectiveness is a success that is achieved through efficient and effective accomplishment of many tasks in an organisation. The attainment of this status is as a result of the achievement of positive work empowerment in the organisation (Bost et al., 2020; Huber & Schubert, 2019; Karaaslan & Aslan, 2019). In the views of Bost et al. (2020) and Karaaslan and Aslan (2019), positive work empowerment is a success in relation to the various organisational levels which are:

- individual employee's success – which is in relation to the role employees play in terms of performance;
- team's or group's success – which is in relation to the role the members of the team or group play to accomplish a collective organisational goal and objectives;
- and organisation's success – which is where all the employees of the organisation share the benefits and satisfying work experiences, which helps to meet their social and personal growth and development needs.

Hence, positive work empowerment has a significant positive correlation with both employees' performance effectiveness and employees' job satisfaction (Bost et al., 2020; Hussain, 2018; Karaaslan & Aslan, 2019).

4.6.5 Effective participation

Effective participation in management is about involving employees in the decision-making process for them to feel that they have the opportunity to discuss problems and can influence decisions of the organisation. This calls for planning with the employees but not for the employees, freedom to participate in an

organisation's decision-making process, and having a higher chance of having mutual trust and cooperation between management and employees, which help to ensure positive relationship for employees' performance effectiveness (Shrestha, 2020; Zeier et al., 2018). Effective participation helps to increase job performance of employees, decrease the levels of mediating variables within their employees, which also helps to strengthen employees' performance effectiveness, and motivates employees as they perceive management to consider them as partners in the contribution of the organisational success (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Shrestha, 2020; Zeier et al., 2018).

4.6.6 Strong organisational culture

Organisational culture is the common values and behaviours of employees that are most often considered as tools that lead to the successful achievement of organisation goals. Organisational culture is, therefore, seen as the mind-set of employees that binds them together within an organisation or outside the organisation (Afshari et al., 2020; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Organisational culture includes norms, values, beliefs and behaviours of employees in an organisation which is different from other organisations. These norms and values of organisational culture define the rules for social interaction, communication, collaboration and behaviours of the employees and have direct or indirect effects on the employees in the organisation (Afshari et al., 2020; Fernandes, 2018; Jamshed & Majeed, 2019). A strong organisational culture supports adaptation and develops performance through motivation of the employees towards a shared goal and objectives. This, therefore, helps in shaping and channelling employees' behaviour towards the organisational direction and functional strategies, which lead to employees' performance effectiveness (Afshari et al., 2020; Fernandes, 2018; Jamshed & Majeed, 2019).

4.6.7 Organisational work environment

Organisational work environments have much influence on employees' performance effectiveness and job creativity, leading to higher job satisfaction and

lower intentions for turnover. Enhancing the effective performance of employees has, therefore, been recommended for remaining in a dynamic work environment, which will help to enhance the overall performance of the organisation (López-Cabarcos et al., 2022; Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020). While it is evident that a favourable work environment is desirable, other factors such as good health, lack of accidents at workplace, and efficient, well maintained and risk-free equipment that will reduce injuries and illness will all result in lower damages and liabilities. All these, therefore, foster innovations and improve communications for employee's effective performance (Edem, Alpan & Pepple, 2017; Werder & Maedche, 2018).

4.6.8 Motivation

Motivation is a major determinant of employees' performance effectiveness and is seen as the desire and energy that drive employees to be continually interested and committed to the performance of a job. Hence, poorly motivated employees will be very expensive to the organisation in terms of excessive employees' turnover, higher recurrent expenses, low employees' morale and excessive waste of managements' time (Goucharuk, 2018; Moodley & Hore, 2018). Management must, therefore, know what exactly drives their employees to avoid misallocation of resources and the development of dissatisfaction among them. Hence, motivation must be proactive in dealing with employees who perform effectively. Otherwise, their performance will be low or they will simply leave the organisation (Goucharuk, 2019; Huber & Schubert, 2019; Rubel, Kee & Rimi, 2020). It is also essential to deal with poor performing employees before they drag the effective performers down and lower productivity. This is because the poor performers would certainly not leave the organisation as they will have nowhere else to go (Chmielewska et al., 2020; Rubel et al., 2020).

4.6.9 Training

Training refers to systematic programmes or strategies, which are designed to help individual employees to improve on their SKAAs that are required for their improved and effective performance in the organisation. Training is, therefore,

seen as a process designed to change employees' behaviour at work through the application of the principles and strategies of adult learning (Mpfu & Hlatywayo, 2015; Shu-Rung & Chun-Chieh, 2017). The purpose of training is to develop the ability of the employees to satisfy the current and future needs of the organisation. This shows that training is planned by an organisation to help modify employees' behaviour and attitude through learning events, programmes and instructions, which enable the individual employee to achieve a high level of competencies needed for effective performance (Long et al., 2016; Mdhalose, 2020; Mpfu & Hlatywayo, 2015).

4.6.10 Teamwork

Teamwork is where two or more employees interact and coordinate to accomplish a specific goal or an objective. That is to say, teamwork is where employees of an organisation work together in teams for effective and easier coordination of organisational goals and objectives (Denning, 2018; Jashed & Majeed, 2019). Teamwork is, therefore, a situation where the team members share performance goals with ease and therefore, lead to the improvement of morale of the employees, which in the long-run leads to employees' performance effectiveness.

This strategy encourages open and effective communication among employees, improves on employees' skills, which helps them to achieve more in a short period of time as compared to individuals who work alone, helps employees to unleash enormous energy and creativity, helps to reduce boredom as teamwork creates belongingness and affiliation, and helps to increase employees' feeling of dignity and self-work (Denning, 2018; Geiger et al., 2018). However, Akkaya (2020), Berberglu (2018) and Kim, Han, Son, and Yun (2017) argue that even though teamwork has the potential for increased productivity, the degree of performance on the productivity is dependent largely on the relationship between management and the team members in the organisation.

4.7 CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

Despite the HR managers' efforts of trying to establish effective practices and strategies to optimise the performance effectiveness of its employees to maximise production and minimise its associated cost, they also face challenges that need to be addressed in the organisation. This suggests that HR managers in the public sector need to look at the challenges associated with the implementation of these practices and strategies to achieve the needed employees' performance effectiveness. Challenges like ineffective communication, ineffective leadership, weak organisational culture, ineffective organisation's social programmes, ineffective employee performance management process, ineffective training, learning and development, corrupt governance practices, and ineffective working environment have been identified by some researchers and need to be addressed for the employees' performance effectiveness in an organisation.

4.7.1 Ineffective communication

Effective communication among teams and management in an organisation helps to support and improve on employees' attachment to the team and the organisation, which leads to increase in the level of employees' performance effectiveness. Therefore, ineffective communication is a barrier to employees' motivation which also affects the employee's intention to stay longer with the organisation (Alnaqbi, 2014; Islam, 2015; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014). This suggests that lack of effective communication between management and employees on one hand and between departments on the other are the reasons why employees perform ineffectively in an organisation. Organisations should, therefore, establish good lines of communications among employees to ensure effective interaction and communication among employees which will also ensure employees' performance effectiveness (Islam, 2015; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014).

4.7.2 Ineffective leadership

The role of a leader has become very important especially, in constantly changing environments. A leader is effective when he or she establishes good relationship, which effectively and efficiently helps to influence work-related experience of

employees in an organisation (Baek et al., 2019; Zeier et al., 2018). This suggests that the relationship that exists between employees and their immediate leader is the most effective and a powerful indicator for job satisfaction and employees' performance effectiveness. As such, effective leadership has a direct impact on the job satisfaction of employees as they serve as the connection between management and employees in the organisation (Qureshi & Butt, 2020; Shafique, Kalyer & Ahmed, 2018). This shows that inaccessible, insensitive and ineffective leadership style has a big challenge on an organisation both directly and indirectly, through employees' ineffective performance indicators such as frustrations at and lateness to work, absenteeism, loss of working hours, and low productivity (Armstrong, 2018; Kuenzi et al., 2020; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2019).

4.7.3 Weak organisational culture

Organisational culture is a set of shared beliefs and values among employees of an organisation who work in a team or group. These beliefs and values help to shape employees' perceptions of issues and challenges they encounter on a daily basis in the organisation, which underpins their behaviour and outlook (Afshari et al., 2020; Fernandes, 2018). These beliefs and values are, therefore, linked to the way in which employees think and act within their group and are the heart of many activities that take place within the value chain of the organisation. Weak beliefs and values can, therefore, affect the way in which employees react to work issues and challenges and the level of their commitment to the organisation as a whole (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Schleicher et al., 2019).

4.7.4 Ineffective socialisation in organisation

When new employees are recruited in an organisation, they usually show excitement about their new job and the organisation they have joined. However, they also show the feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. In view of this, organisations need to implement social activities for the newcomers to overcome these uncertainties and anxieties for them to build on their entry excitement and enthusiasm (Alzamel et al., 2020; Ren, Tao & Hu, 2018). Li (2018: 94) and Porter

(2018: 78) define socialisation as the process in which an employee comes to appreciate the beliefs, values, abilities, expected behaviours, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organisational role and for participating as an organisational member. Socialisation, therefore, plays very important role in employees' performance effectiveness and so, there were many research studies that focused on the effects of socialisation on reduction of job uncertainties, knowledge and information acquisition, learning strategies, sustaining positive energy and excitement of new job entrants and how to engage new entrants on their new job (Li, 2018; Porter, 2018; Zhang, 2018). These findings were used to prevent the initial high excitements and expectations of the new job entrants, which easily wear off as they settle down and engage in more mundane job activities owing to ineffective socialisation in the organisation (Alzamel et al., 2020; Ren et al., 2018; Zhao & Deltor, 2021).

4.7.5 Ineffective employees' performance management systems

Performance management systems which include performance appraisal and employee development are challenges to many organisations where management regularly bemoans the ineffectiveness of their employees. Most employees, therefore, agree that their organisation's performance management processes or styles do not help in their performance effectiveness (Fu et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2019). This suggests that there are many performance management systems that are poorly designed in many organisations. These poorly designed tools and poor processes most often, cause difficulties of performance management to many organisations (Kim et al., 2017; Werder & Maedche, 2018). Performance management systems are, therefore, ongoing organisational processes, which involve a wide range of activities that include the identification, assessment and promotion of individual employees and the team's performance. Effective use of these systems helps in employees' performance effectiveness, which helps to achieve the organisation's objectives (Kang & Choi, 2019; Lu et al., 2019; McDermott et al., 2017; Noronha et al., 2018).

4.7.6 Ineffective training, learning and development

One of the functions of HR management is to provide an organisation, its teams and individual employees with systems and processes through, which they are able to identify and satisfy their learning and development needs (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017; Halawi & Haydar, 2018). Training and development refer to activities and strategies established by the HR management to help individual employees to improve on their SKAAs, increase their work engagement and develop their personal resources. These help employees to learn and improve on their performance effectiveness (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017; Somers et al., 2019). Some research results have, however, detected differences between locations, departments and teams in terms of the job demands and resources, engagement and its consequences on training, learning and development in an organisation. These lead to ineffective training, learning and development strategies, which hinder positive self-evaluation, motivation and effective performance in an organisation (Halawi & Haydar, 2018; Khan & Baloch, 2017).

4.7.7 Ineffective working environment

Highly qualified new job entrants are increasingly looking for good job roles, conducive working environments and opportunities for challenge, growth and engagement. This suggests that for an organisation to attract and retain highly qualified employees who are energetic, committed, dedicated and focused on achieving the organisation's goals, then HR management needs to provide working contexts with good job role expectations and good working environment to the employees for effective performance (Al-Haroon & Al-Qahtani, 2020; Berberglu, 2018). These good job roles and conducive working environments help to increase employee's performance and work engagement as they can easily adjust to the organisation's culture. This is because good job roles and conducive working environments are positively related to extraversion, which is related to employee work engagement and effective performance (Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). When these are not provided, employees will be in neuroticism, which is also negatively related to employee engagement and performance effectiveness as self-conscious employees are more likely to

perceive their job roles and working environments as threatening, less safe, and taxing of their emotional resources, which will not help them to perform effectively (Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020; Wang, 2018; Wang et al., 2020).

4.7.8 Corrupt practices in governance system

HR managers establish practices and strategies in organisations to optimise their employees' performance effectiveness in the implementation of programmes and projects in the organisation (Inayat & Khan, 2021; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021). However, corrupt practices in the governance system in the organisations, especially the public sector organisations are some of the challenges hindering employees' effective performance, which also affect their effective service delivery (Damoah et al., 2018; Kaunain, 2018). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2022), corruption is the misuse of publicly entrusted resources or power for an individual's private gain, which has an overwhelming effect on employees' performance effectiveness. Corrupt practices in the literature include nepotism, cronyism, kick-backs, bribery, fraud, rent-seeking, facilitation of embezzlements, payments, theft, collusion, market rigging, insider trading, and tax dodging, which all effect employees' performance effectiveness in an organisation (Damoah et al., 2018; Kaunain, 2018; UNODC, 2022).

4.8 IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS

From the literature, human resources are the set of individuals who make up the workforce of an organisation, business or an economy. It is sometimes used synonymously with human capital, which is typically referred to a more narrowed view – the skills and knowledge the individuals embody and can contribute to an organisation's performance effectiveness (Noe et al., 2019; Storey et al., 2019). The function of the HR management is, therefore, to establish effective practices and strategies that will help the organisation focus on recruitment, management and provision of directions for this workforce. These practices and strategies help HR management on securing, maintaining and utilising an effective work force,

which the organisation requires for both their short- and long-term operations (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Storey et al., 2019).

Organisational practices and strategies, however, have different menus with each relating to a particular functional area of HR management but have effects on employees' performance effectiveness. However, for the importance of employees' performance effectiveness like control of organisational knowledge, improvement in performance, sustaining lifelong learning, availability of knowledge workers, competitive and innovative organisation, and sustaining employees' performance, HR management must mobilise resources both human (employees) and artificial (technology) to work in a coordinated fashion towards the achievement of this function (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Shephard et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2019).

4.8.1 Control of organisational knowledge

In a knowledge-based economy, KM practices are increasingly viewed as critical to employees' performance effectiveness. Therefore, implementing improved KM practices in an organisation is very vital for the organisation to take full advantage of the value of knowledge of its employees (Hislop et al., 2018; Kinghorn, 2017). HR management, therefore, needs to consider improved KM practices as a prerequisite for higher productivity and flexibility in both the private and public sector organisations (Gharamah et al., 2018; Waheed & Muhammad, 2020).

4.8.2 Improvement in employee performance

Improved KM practices are relevant to the business world as they help to improve on employees' SKAAs for their performance effectiveness. HR management, therefore, needs to nurture efficient and effective employees who will use the organisation's IOFs to implement improved KM practices effectively for their effective performance (Butt et al., 2019; Byukusenge & Munene, 2017).

4.8.3 Sustaining life-long learning

Employees' performance effectiveness helps management to enhance and sustain life-long learning practices of their employees in the organisation, as this helps to

sustain their KM practices. Because according to many researchers, KM's beginning in the contribution of individuals performance must be combined with the IOFs to bring together the varied knowledge of individuals for improved KM practices (Abouyassin & Sultan, 2018; Orenge-Rogla & Chalmetra, 2019). Hence, this improved KM practices help to sustain employees' performance effectiveness and life-long learning strategies of the employees in the organisation.

4.8.4 Availability of knowledge workers

During retirement and mobility of the workforce, an organisation still has employees who have the OK to work with and as a result, have an availability of knowledge workers (Manaf et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016). A knowledge worker is an employee who has the organisation's knowledge, which makes him or her function effectively and has now become essential ingredients of the modern economy. Hence, central to this philosophy is the view that employees are organisations' most valuable resource and that HR management's function is to prepare and free the employees to perform as knowledge workers (Latilla et al., 2018; Serrat, 2017; Zaim et al., 2019).

4.8.5 Innovative and competitive organisation

Employees' performance effectiveness helps an organisation to survive in today's dynamic and competitive marketplace by differentiating itself from its competitors through innovations. HR management must, therefore, create a workforce whose contributions are valuable, unique and difficult for competitors to imitate (Abbas & Sağsam, 2019; Madani et al., 2018). Their effective performance has a direct impact on the organisational outcomes with regard to competitiveness and innovation. However, the understanding of this effective performance must be considered in terms of the depth of innovations and quality production (Abbas & Sağsam, 2019; Natalicchio, Ardito, Savino, & Albino, 2017).

4.8.6 Sustaining employee performance

Employees' performance effectiveness helps management to align KM practices with the organisation's IOFs which then help the organisation to further improve and sustain its performance effectiveness. This is because KM practices help to develop employees' SKAAs, which also help to improve on their performance and when this happens, the organisation will automatically perform effectively (Antunes & Pinheiro, 2020; Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018). As a result, employees' quality of work improves, rural communities develop, the security of the rural areas improves, food security improves, standard of education improves, provision of health services improves and personal growth and development of employees improves through higher remuneration (Clinton & Harter, 2019; Denning, 2018; Shields, 2017).

4.9 INTEGRATION OF RESEARCH CONSTRUCTS

As discussed earlier, the purpose of this research was to develop a descriptive understanding of KM practices through a unified and coherent conceptual framework for effective performance of employees of MMDAs in Ghana. To this effect, the integration of the literature reviewed and the empirical study was done based on the understanding of the concept of KM, KM practices in the organisation and the factors that influence KM practices (Hislop et al., 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019; Waheed & Muhammed, 2020). This framework was, therefore, developed using the qualitative driven design approach where the superordinate themes and the relationships between the constructs of the study were established and integrated. The established constructs are the enhanced IOFs; the organisation's improved KM practices; and the employees' performance effectiveness. In the literature, many studies were found integrating these constructs hence, they were extensively reviewed for the necessary linkages required in the conceptual framework. The integration of these constructs helped to explore and explain the meanings and understandings the employees of MMDAs in Ghana attached to the IOF, the IOFs, KM, and the organisation's KM practices.

4.9.1 Internal organisational factors and knowledge management practices

In the literature, a number of studies have been carried out on IOFs and KM practices. These studies, however, varied in purpose and context and in each, the authors briefly described some IOFs used in KM practices (Ali et al., 2019; Ibrahim, 2017). Implementing KM practices is a function of the HR management and is highly dependent on some organisation's internal practices and strategies. The understanding and use of these internal practices and strategies help employees to facilitate the implementation of KM practices (Alshaima et al., 2016; Basit & Medase, 2019).

The HR management can also effectively enhance these internal practices and strategies to help implement improved KM practices. This will help the knowledge worker to improve on his or her performance through building a strategic, vibrant and productive knowledge exchange. This is because the focal point in improved KM practices is the effective use of the OK through the use of the enhanced IOFs (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). This shows that there is a direct and positive relationship between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices. The enhanced IOFs effectively help to transport tacit knowledge of individual employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation, which helps to make all the employees in the organisation perform effectively (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Dubricks & Gaile-Sakane, 2017; Ha & Lo, 2018; Hislop et al., 2018). Despite these benefits, there is still a lack of research investigating these variables of using the enhanced IOFs in relation to the context of employees' improved KM practices which, therefore, necessitates this study in the Ghanaian context.

4.9.2 Knowledge management practices and performance effectiveness

It has also been established in the literature that one of the key drivers of employees' performance effectiveness is the implementation of improved KM practices in the organisation. However, improved KM practices are embedded and inseparable from the IOFs, which help to facilitate and coordinate the flow of knowledge between employees and their overall performance effectiveness (Al-Iqbal, 2019; Latilla et al., 2018). Improved KM practices have become more

important because what links people and performance effectiveness are employees' engagements and how the OK is well managed to ensure employees' performance effectiveness (Borst et al., 2020; Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). However, it is not well understood how different improved KM practices affect employees' performance effectiveness because the relationship is very difficult to prove. This can, therefore, be done when HR managers use enhanced IOFs to create mental, emotional and attitudinal states that proceed to produce improved type of KM practices for employees' performance effectiveness in the organisation (Limaya et al., 2017; Sergeeva & Andreeva, 2016).

As indicated, in this KM practices, the process of sharing knowledge falls within the SECI and the integrated KM theories where an organisation must first identify and capture knowledge, organise it to bring it within the organisational boundaries and transfer and share it throughout the employees using the IOFs (Ali et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019). Many organisations, however, suffer from ways or means of accessing and exploiting their knowledge and often times, trying to access the appropriate knowledge can be difficult, time consuming and frustrating for them. HR management must, therefore, direct resources, efforts and effective IOFs to achieve success in building a vibrant and productive knowledge exchange strategies for the employees within the organisation (Alnaqb, 2014; Islam et al., 2015; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014). This can best be done when the IOFs are well coordinated and enhanced because this helps the implementation of improved KM practices in the organisation leading to high performance effectiveness of the employees (Gharamah et al., 2018; Latilla et al., 2018).

4.9.3 Internal organisational factors and performance effectiveness

The parameters for assessing employees' performance effectiveness need to be considered in any successful KM practices. This is where HR management relates employees' performance effectiveness to the use of IOFs of the organisation, which is one of the key drivers of performance effectiveness (Shields, 2017; Shrestha, 2018). Hence, to achieve performance effectiveness, HR management

needs to implement improved KM practices using the enhanced IOFs that are required (Lee et al., 2017; Gholipour et al., 2018; Mittal et al., 2018).

The enhanced IOFs help to focus on transporting tacit knowledge of individual employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation and see to it that all the individual employees' knowledge become OK for effective sharing and application by all employees in the organisation (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Butt et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018). Hence, KM is about using the IOFs to connect people to people activities and information through a structure for transformation so that the IOFs when enhanced can help employees to improve on their knowledge creation, sharing and application initiatives (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Charband & Navimipour, 2018; Mohajan, 2019). This structure helps the HR management to use its IOFs effectively to direct, coordinate, control and influence inner workings, affect relationships and interactions to accomplish employees' behaviour to influence improved KM practices for their performance effectiveness (Shahzad, Qu, Ul-Rehman, Zafar, Ding, & Abbas, 2020; Shujhat et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2021).

Many researchers, however, disagree with this conclusion and contend that HR management must rather foster enhanced IOFs with the employees through in-depth planning, requesting feedback, thinking as a group and using tools to measure change. This will help to minimise risks, remove employee prejudices and encourage unity, which will then help in effective knowledge capturing, creation, sharing and application among employees in the organisation for the needed performance effectiveness (Gharamah et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2021). Despite these views, employees' understanding of improved KM practices and the enhanced IOFs are still important to ensure employees' performance effectiveness. Hence, there is a need to investigate these constructs of relating improved KM practices of employees to their performance effectiveness, using the enhanced IOFs. In view of this, the study had aimed to extend the research literature on improved KM practices in association with the enhanced IOFs as an HR function that can arrest employees' ineffective performance.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has concluded a literature review on employees' performance effectiveness derived from improved KM practices. Here, the literature on key issues relating to employees' performance effectiveness was thoroughly reviewed. Also, three theoretical frameworks, namely, TQM, employee effectiveness and KM practices models surrounding this construct were thoroughly examined. The development and analysis of employees' performance effectiveness were thoroughly explored as well as the epistemologies with regard to employees' performance effectiveness. The review also looked at the contingencies for employees' performance effectiveness and the challenges that confront organisations with regards to employees' performance effectiveness. The importance of employees' performance effectiveness was also explored and lastly, the integration of the main research constructs needed for the conceptual framework were examined.

This chapter, therefore, forms the final phase of the theoretical context of the study, which provides an in-depth investigation of the literature surrounding the last construct of employees' performance effectiveness. This literature review, therefore, paves the way for the research process phase, which forms Chapter five of the study. Chapter five is, therefore, dedicated to the discussion of the research paradigm, approach, design and methodology adopted in addressing the study's research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

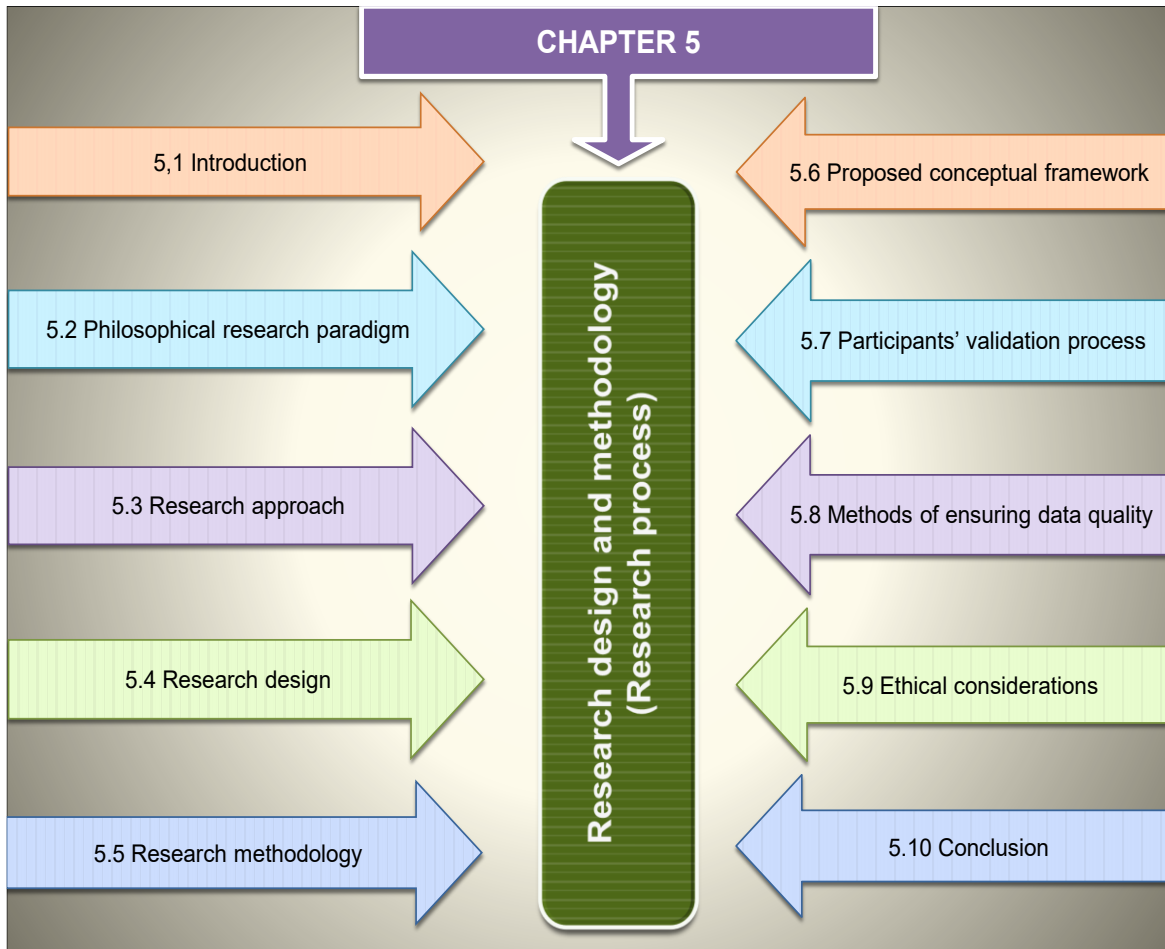


Figure 5.1 The structure of chapter five at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review in chapters two, three and four aimed to identify, justify and describe the theoretical frameworks and epistemologies guiding the empirical phase of this study. This literature review, therefore, paves the way for the research process phase, which forms Chapter five of the study. Chapter five is, therefore, dedicated to the discussion of the research philosophy, approach,

design and methodology adopted in addressing the research questions of the study. Hence, the mechanics of the chosen philosophical disposition, the research approach and the consequential research design adopted by the researcher is thoroughly discussed here. This is because the philosophical worldview and the research approach, together with the theoretical frameworks, represent the essential building blocks in the development of the conceptual framework that is used to guide the empirical phase of the study. Figure 5.1, therefore, depicts the structure of this chapter at a glance, which shows the processes followed and the specifics of the research designs adopted during the empirical research phase.

The comprehensive discussion of a philosophical worldview and the researcher's subscription to its complementary assumptions were deemed necessary because a qualitative research like this, which is also designed as explanatory research does not enjoy the same level of acceptance from the research community (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Tracy, 2020). In line with this view, a constructivist paradigm, which is aligned with the phenomenological worldview and guided by realist ontological and subjectivist epistemological views, were chosen for this qualitative study. This chapter, therefore, endeavours to reveal how a phenomenological worldview guided this research and has been connected with the supported theories and the necessary assumptions.

The chapter also focused on the type of phenomenological methodology employed, the main units of analysis and the research settings. The data collection instrument and method within this phenomenological study design was also discussed, followed by an explanation of how the data were analysed and integrated for the findings. Issues relating to methods of ensuring data quality, data management, ethical considerations, the proposed conceptual framework and methods of validating the report of the findings were all discussed in this chapter.

5.2 PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research design and methodology are dedicated to the explanation of the research philosophy, approach, the design, and methodology used in addressing

the research questions of the study. Scholars like Bryman and Bell (2018: 45) and Denzin and Lincoln (2017: 93) describe the concept paradigm as a way of shared beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher in a specific discipline sees the world and how he or she interprets and acts within. Chivanga and Mongai (2021) and Darlington and Scott (2021) also opine that the concept paradigm refers to the conceptual eyes through which a researcher looks at the methodological aspect of his or her research project to determine the research methods that will be applied and how the data will be collected and analysed. This is because a researcher within this paradigm anchors his or her research design in the research question and then identifies the appropriate research methodology and its epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions in addressing this research problem (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017). Within the context of social and behavioural sciences, paradigms largely follow two main approaches which Bryman and Bell (2018) and Saunders and Lewis (2017) term as scientific or naturalistic while Denzin and Lincoln (2017) and Spiers and Smith (2020) use the terms positivist and constructivist.

The nature of underlying and understanding of these two approaches of paradigm have been a source of debate in the field of research with regards to the influence that a paradigm position can have on the approach to the research design. Denzin and Lincoln (2017) and Spiers and Smith (2020) hold on to the view that a largely quantitative research method is an indicative of underlying positivist paradigm beliefs while a largely qualitative research method is more indicative of a constructivist paradigm belief. These authors in highlighting the importance of philosophical underpinnings to worldviews argued that these two approaches represent a competing paradigm in understanding social phenomena. The debates on approaches to paradigms, however, continued and evolved throughout history and the once dominant positivist approach that was founded on the grounds of observable facts (quantitative) then became less popular when post-positivist position emerged. This position became popular and hence, there was a distinction between positivist and post-positivist approach depending on the weight of the

observations made, weight of facts gathered and the weight attached to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Spiers & Smith, 2020).

As the positivist and post-positivist approaches developed, they seem to be superseded by the constructivist perceptions of social reality during what was termed as the mono method period. This perception satisfies the aim of this research, which sought to explore and understand the experiences, perceptions, beliefs and meanings individual employees of MMDAs in Ghana held for the phenomenon. During this period, researchers confined their studies to either a quantitative or qualitative approach but were also underpinned by either post-positivist or constructivist beliefs respectively (Collis & Hussey, 2021; Darlington & Scott, 2021). Hence, the positivist or post-positivist beliefs were referred to as a quantitative research paradigm while the constructivist or interpretivist beliefs which emerged later, were also referred to as a qualitative research paradigm (Collis & Hussey, 2021; Darlington & Scott, 2021). This social science research was, therefore, conducted using a constructivist or interpretivist beliefs and a qualitative research paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality of knowledge is socially constructed, complex and ever changing (Gray, 2018; Mohajan, 2019; Roberts, 2017).

5.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

To support the process of methodological description in a research, it is essential to follow the research paradigm with the appropriate research approach. In the views of Babbie (2013) and Roberts (2017), a research approach describes what is studied and the way in which it is studied. Research approach, therefore, involves using the appropriate method of reasoning towards the development of theory in a research. There are mainly two contrasting approaches to reasoning, which are deductive and inductive in social research and their understanding is essential to increase the efficiency of the research study (Ary, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Deductive approach to reasoning occurs when the conclusion is derived logically from a set of premises, that is to say, moving from the general (theory) to the specific (observation). This involves

moving from a pattern that may be logically or theoretically expected of observations that test whether the expected pattern actually occurs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). On the contrary, in an inductive approach to reasoning, there is a gap in the logical argument between the conclusion and the premises observed, that is to say moving from the particular (observation) to the general (theory). This involves moving from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all given events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders & Lewis, 2017).

It has been established that inductive reasoning is a key means of advancing knowledge with the associated assumptions that it is flexible and begins with an observation. It allows the researcher to provide subjective reasoning with the help of various real-life experiences and it helps to explore a phenomenon before generating or building a theory (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Rettie & Emiliussen, 2018). From the literature, deductive reasoning is associated with the positivist or post-positivist beliefs and therefore, associated with quantitative research paradigm, while inductive reasoning is associated with the constructivist or interpretivist beliefs and therefore, associated with qualitative research paradigm (Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). In a research process, these two approaches have their own purposes, methods of conducting an inquiry, strategies for producing and analysing data, and the criteria for judging data quality. Qualitative research paradigms commence with a knowledge claim, which is aligned with a qualitative research methodology to guide the methods of data collection and analysis of data.

In the literature, there were different types of qualitative research paradigms in which Collis and Hussey (2021) and Darlington and Scott (2021) outline six types they described as positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, constructivism, phenomenology, and pragmatism. These research paradigms are, however, complemented with their qualitative assumptions relating to ontology, epistemology and axiology, which are also important if one wishes the research outcome to be credible and reliable (Collis & Hussey, 2021; Darlington & Scott. 2021). The

complementary assumptions are what the researcher will learn about a phenomenon (ontology), what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study (epistemology) and the role of the researcher's own values in the research (axiology). Some researchers, however, use multiple research paradigms that are aligned with their research objectives and purpose together with the complementary assumptions to bring a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016; Smith, 2017).

Out of the research paradigms outlined earlier, this study adopted a phenomenological paradigm because in the views of Creswell (2016), Merriam (2016) and Smith (2017), the focus of phenomenology is to identify the essential and unchanging meaning and understanding of the issue under investigation as this applies to the study. Many researchers saw phenomenology as an umbrella term, which encompasses both philosophical movement and a range of research approaches (Creswell, 2016; Finlay, 2011; Smith, 2017). Philosophically, phenomenology is described as a discipline that aims to focus on people's perceptions or experiences of the world in which they live and what it means to them while methodologically, it focuses on how to fully understand people's lived experiences in the world in which they live (Finlay, 2011: 12; Smith, 2017: 302). On his part, Creswell (2016) asserts that philosophically, phenomenology focuses on the way things appear to us through experience in our consciousness in the world while methodologically, the phenomenological researcher aims to provide rich, well explained and textured description of people's lived experiences. Creswell (2016), Merriam (2016) and Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019) explain that in a phenomenological study, one can use Husserl's approach referred to as transcendental phenomenology or other approaches described as descriptive, existential, naturalistic, and Heidegger's interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology.

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is based on the intuitive experience of people of a phenomenon as its starting point while an approach like Heidegger's interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology is based on the interpretation of

people's experience of the phenomenon contextually based on influences such as culture, gender and employment experience (Merriam, 2016; Neubauer et al., 2019). In their scholarly views, Jeon and Othman (2016) and Tracy (2018) explain that hermeneutic approach postulates that the most basic fact of social life lies in the meaning attached to a social action. Hence, interpretation of the meanings of such social action is required.

The current study has consequently subscribed to a hermeneutic approach because the aim was to explore, describe and explain the personal understanding, experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and meanings which individual employees of MMDAs in Ghana held for the phenomenon (Jeon & Othman, 2016; Larkin et al., 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019). In view of this the researcher adopted qualitative research paradigm associated with Heidegger's interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenological approach (IPA) as the most appropriate approach to address the purpose of the study. This approach, therefore, helped the researcher to explore, describe and explain the understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon. However, this was best done through the shared knowledge, value and experience of the participants working together and its complementary assumptions (Larkin et al., 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019).

5.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

In view of the purpose of this research, the most suitable research design for this qualitative study was IPA, which has been used to understand and interpret the fundamental meanings the employees attached to the organisation's everyday activities. IPA was pioneered by Smith (1996) and is now being used in the human, social and health sciences as an important research methodology (Jeon & Othman, 2016; Smith, 2017). In addition, this qualitative study has been classified as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory because it seeks to answer questions on why and how participants think and feel about the phenomenon and therefore, try to explore, describe and explain the data collected to establish a presumed interrelationships between the constructs of the study (Agwu & Bwalja, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017). This classification has also helped to discover the comprehension

and awareness of the methods used to create and implement KM practices of the employees and how these relate to their performance and effectiveness in the Ghanaian context (Agwu & Bwalja, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017).

Many scholars have varied perspectives with regard to the classification of a qualitative study like this as explanatory because explanatory research is aligned heavily towards quantitative research paradigms, which try to establish cause-and-effect relationships in the study. However, qualitative researchers like Leeming (2018), Maxwell (2020) and Patton (2019) argue that in contrast to explanatory research identifying regularities in a study, it also helps to identify and understand a phenomenon better by investigating the process, or mechanism at play in causal outcomes within a specific context in a qualitative study. A study like this is, therefore, useful in reporting on explanations offered by interviewees for why certain things happened as it focuses on their understandings, experiences and the interviewer's share of interpretation of his explanatory insights (Leeming, 2018; Maxwell, 2020; Patton, 2019). This classification helped to offer credible and powerful causal explanations that allowed the researcher to decipher meaning from the data collected. However, this cannot be used for generalisation in a study like this, designed to explore more holistic and balanced understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation contextually (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Pillow & Cruz, 2019; Sousa et al., 2018).

As discussed earlier, an exploratory study such as this one is for the researcher to become familiarised with the novel phenomena to gain more understanding, as descriptive to describe the phenomena in details and as explanatory to establish any interrelationships between the constructs of the study. Fade (2011), Finlay (2011) and Miles and Huberman (2014) assert that IPA study believes in a chain of connections between embodied experiences, talk about that experience and a participant's making sense of it, and emotional reaction to that experience. This means that an IPA study though ideographic and linked to qualitative research, also tries to explore, understand and make sense of the subjective meaning of the individual participant's experiences to generalise to the theoretical proposition

(Smith et al.,2022; Miles et al., 2020; Maxwell, 2020). Hence, IPA study looks at what a person is saying (what factors influence what he or she is saying) and what that person thinks and feels about what he or she is talking about (how does the condition affect the person's sense of identity) in a study (Jeong & Othman, 2016; Pillow & Cruz, 2019; Tuffour, 2017). This, therefore, suggests that IPA study operates from the logic of attempting to understand and explain a specific phenomenon holistically from the perspective of a particular person or group. In view of this, Franzosi (2016) and Jeong and Othman (2016) explain that qualitatively, an IPA study helps to find out from the participants through “how” and “why” questions. However, this study used “how” questions to elucidate the participants' view on the phenomenon.

Denzin and Lincoln (2017); Jeong and Othman (2016) and Smith (2017) however, explain that in IPA research design, there are pragmatic limitations in relation to use, time and resources in its application. Hence, to remain true to IPA's core epistemological principles to maintain its trustworthiness, Larkin et al. (2019) and Neubauer et al. (2019) suggest the use of some specific but critical tools in following the principles of phenomenology, hermeneutic and idiography in the the research study. These tools include:: the focus of the research should be clear and aligned with the IPA values; research participants should be selected voluntarily for their ability to richly describe the phenomenon under investigation; analyses of participants' experience should be detailed in both the first and second order analyses; train the interviewer for a skilful and respectful interviewing process; pilot test the interview schedule for effective feedback; select the superordinate themes based on prevalence and relevance of the study; and validation of the research report. All these suggested tools were followed meticulously during the study to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study outcome.

5.4.1 IPA research design

The choice of IPA as the most suitable research design, therefore, stems from the fact that IPA is most suitable for exploring, describing and explaining the personal experience, perceptions, beliefs and meanings of a group which in this case,

individual employees of MMDAs held for KM practices for their performance effectiveness (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017). This helped to reveal and interpret the embedded beliefs and meanings in a lived experience of the employees, which is of existential importance to them as a group. This was, therefore, used to explore the understanding of what a given experience is, which is about phenomenology and how someone made sense of this experience, which is about interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Roberts, 2017). The theoretical underpinning of IPA, therefore, comes from hermeneutic phenomenology, which is also known as the theory of interpretation. In the hermeneutic phenomenology, it is through the participants' perceptions and reactions to a phenomenon that the researcher enters the participants' contexts to interact with them to understand the meanings that they give to their experiences with the phenomenon. The participants' address of the phenomenon comes through the research questions (phase two) of the study, which looked at the specific problems and how to address them is shown in Figure 5.2 (Larkin et al., 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019; Noon, 2018).

The IPA research design shown in Figure 5.2 shows that the deeper understanding of meanings inherent in what the employees of MMDAs stated about the implementation of KM practices, improved KM practices and the use of the organisation's enhanced IOFs took the central stage in the IPA and was, therefore, a critical tool of the researcher during data collection. This enabled the researcher to have a full ideographic understanding and interpretation of the phenomenon through the complementary assumptions the participants articulated in the meanings of their lived experiences (Larkin et al., 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019; Noon, 2018). In the views of Smith (2017) and Smith and Osborn (2015), ideographic in IPA is concerned with a thorough and systematic depth of analysis of the way a particular phenomenon is understood from the point of view of particular participants in a particular context. On the contrary, interpretive holds the view that participants' understanding and experiences are always acquired from somewhere as people are inextricably linked together in the world. Hence, these

understanding and experiences shape people's perceptions of the world and the way they interpret them (Noon, 2017; Roberts, 2017; Smith 2017).

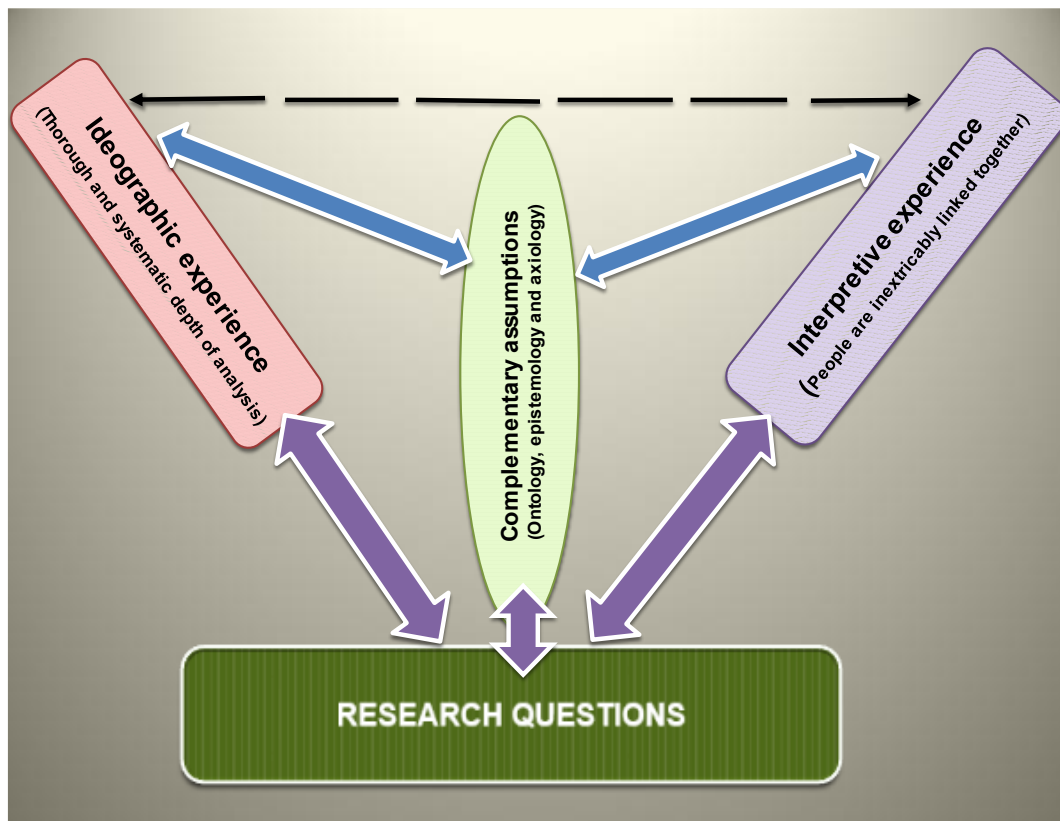


Figure 5.2 IPA research design

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2019)

Ideography focuses on specific participants. Hence, the researcher in trying to explore the meaning of the beliefs and experiences of each of the participants, interviewed them individually to focus on the significance of each person's understanding and experience of the phenomenon, which was also first analysed at individual level (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Larkin et al., 2019). This means each phenomenon has the fundamental characteristics that are located, described and understood through the participants, the researcher's interactions with the participants and the researcher's own beliefs. Hence, the underlining assumption in hermeneutic phenomenology is that the researcher using IPA is concerned with the understanding of the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants

(Dawadi et al., 2021; Larkin et al., 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019). The adoption of such a concern of curiosity is a function of the ontological assumption, which asserts that meaning or reality is never immediate and transparent but instead, exist beneath the surface of the phenomenon, which needs to be unveiled by the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The other assumption is epistemological assumption which also posits that the meaning of a phenomenon is revealed by the researcher taking up a curious position and asking the participants critical questions to make a knowledge claim as depicted in Figure 5.2 (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Smith & Osborn, 2015). It was, therefore, in line with these concerns and the underlining complementary assumptions adopted under the IPA research design that the researcher adopted the IPA methodology to influence the search and development of knowledge of this qualitative study (Jeong & Othman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This study also offered an opportunity to identify and understand the phenomenon better by investigating the processes and mechanisms at play in causal outcomes within the study's specific context. Hence, the study was designed as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research to explore more holistic and balanced understanding of the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Jeong & Othman, 2016; Larkin et al., 2019; Noon, 2018).

5.4.2 Research phases of the study

As explained in Chapter 1, this research was carried out over three sequential and interrelated research phases. Each of the research phases was aligned to a specific set of research objectives articulated for the study and there were conclusions arrived at with these objectives. Although all three phases are interrelated, each phase was dealt with separately to explain how the objectives of that phase were addressed. Hence, this research design gave a structure to the study and was beneficial to create a logical course of action for the study.

5.4.2.1 Research objectives for phase one

The purpose of research phase one (theoretical phase) was to obtain a deeper understanding and conceptualisation of KM, IOFs and employees' performance effectiveness through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature (Bourhis, 2018; Palmatier, Houston & Hulland, 2018; Waterfield, 2018). To this end, the following research objectives were identified in relation to this phase.

- To obtain an overview of KM practices from different theoretical perspectives and to select the best to inform the development of a conceptual framework for KM for public sector employees in Ghana.
- To obtain a deeper understanding of how HR managers of MMDAs in Ghana help their employees to understand and use the IOFs to implement KM practices in the organisation.
- To obtain a deeper understanding of how HR managers of MMDAs in Ghana enhance the IOFs which help to improve their employees' KM practices in the organisation.
- To obtain a deeper understanding of the connections between employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness.

5.4.2.2 Research objectives for phase two

The purpose of phase two (empirical phase) was to explore and obtain a better understanding of how employees' of MMDAs in Ghana understand KM and IOFs leading to their performance effectiveness. This was best done through the selection of the study participants, engagement with the study participants through semi-structured interviews and analysing the data collected for interpretative findings (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Hence, the following research objectives were identified for this purpose:

- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand OK and KM practices in the organisation.
- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand IOFs and how these factors do help them to implement KM practices in the organisation.

- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand the dictates of enhanced IOFs and that of improved KM practices in the organisation.
- To explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana relate their understanding of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness.

5.4.2.3 Research objectives for phase three

The purpose of phase three (conceptual phase) was to help develop a KM framework as a guide for public sector employees' performance effectiveness in the Ghanaian context through the development and validation of the conceptual framework (Ibrahim, 2017; Maxwell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). To achieve this phase, the following research objectives were subsequently identified for the study.

- To develop a KM framework as a guide for effective performance for employees of MMDA in Ghana.
- To validate the report on KM used to develop a framework as a guide for employees of MMDA in Ghana.

5.4.3 Exploratory research

This study is exploratory because it is a valuable means designed to ask the participants open questions about the phenomenon, discover more information through the literature search and gain more insight about the topic under investigation (Agwu Bwalya, 2017; Bouris, 2018). This approach was used because the phenomenon being studied is a fairly new area of interest in Ghana and there are three ways of conducting exploratory research, which include a search of the literature, talking to experts and conducting interviews (Guilen, 2019; Ibrahim, 2017; Roberts, 2017). Smith et al. (2022) and Tracy (2020) advise that in an exploratory study like this one, semi-structured interviews are very helpful to find out from the participants what is happening and to understand the context of the phenomenon, which is KM practices and how this improves on the performance of employees of the MMDAs.

5.4.4 Descriptive research

The study has also been classified as descriptive research because the object of this research is to gain an accurate profile of the phenomenon and was, therefore, used to describe the characteristics of the phenomenon (Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). Classifying the study as descriptive research gave the researcher a clear picture of the phenomenon. He wished to collect data on in terms of the understanding of KM practices, the use of the enhanced IOFs and how these were used to influence improved KM practices for effective performance of employees of the MMDAs in Ghana (Saunders & Lewis, 2017; Smith, 2017).

5.4.5 Explanatory research

Finally, the study, though descriptive, has also been classified as explanatory because explanatory research is designed to explore and explain the presumed interrelationships between constructs in a study (Ary, 2019; Maxwell, 2019; Smith, 2017). This study, therefore, sought to explore and explain from the conceptual framework, any interrelationship between organisations' enhanced IOFs and employees' improved KM practices, and employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness (Chivanga & Mongai, 2021; Miles et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2022). This then explains the possible interrelationships between the constructs, which also explains the conclusion drawn for the conceptual framework developed in the study. In a qualitative and explanatory research like this one, semi-structured interviews were used to look for the interrelationships and meanings between the constructs (Chivanga & Mongai, 2021; Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020).

5.4.6 Interactive research design

Aside classifying this IPA research as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, the study has also been designed as an interactive research because this helps to bring the five major components of the study together for a credible and reliable finding. Denzin and Lincoln (2017), Maxwell (2016) and Miles et al. (2014) explain that a qualitative study designed as interactive research, helps to bring the five major components of the study, each of which addresses a different set of issues

that are essential to the coherence of the study together. These five major components which are the research goals, research questions, research methods, validity of research and the theoretical framework, from an integral part and interact with each other to form important and reciprocal relationships for credible and reliable findings as shown in Figure 5.3 (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Maxwell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014).

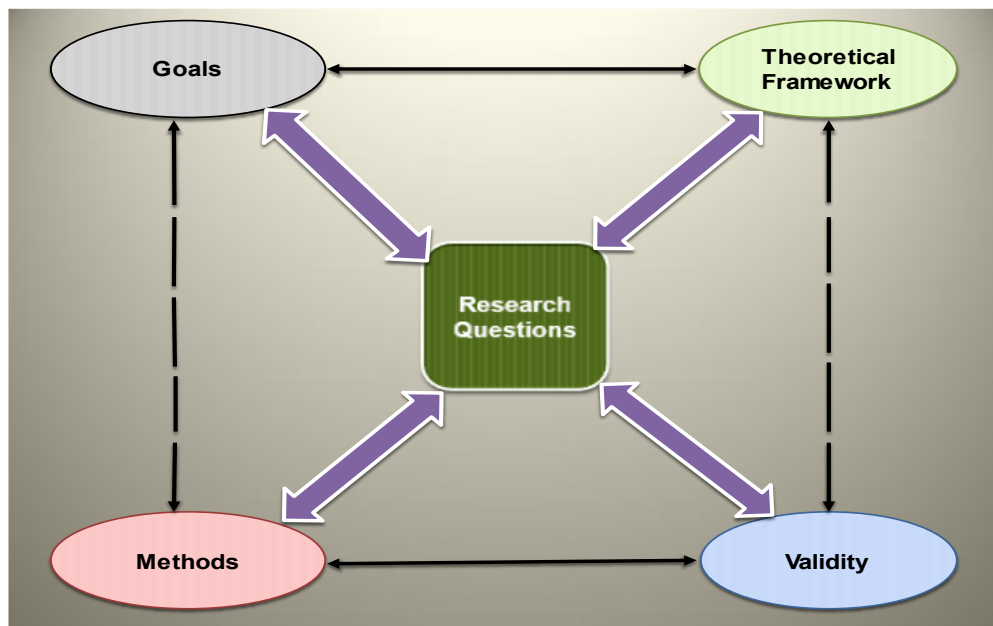


Figure 5.3 An interactive model of research design

Source: Adopted from Maxwell (2016)

The interactive research design shown in Figure 5.3, therefore, shows how the five major components of a qualitative research like this interact with each other to provide the necessary strategies and techniques for creating a coherent and workable reciprocal relationship among the components (Eilstrom et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018). This type of interactive research design, therefore, helps to effectively explore, describe and explain the experience and understanding of what a given experience is and how someone made sense of this experience in a holistic and balanced manner (Eilstrom et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2020). In the views of Yazdi and Soltanali (2019), this type of study design helps explicit knowledge to be easily articulated, codified, and expressed in words,

numbers, and symbols which makes such knowledge easy for sharing to all employees in the organisation.

In this interactive model of research design, the research questions which look at the specific phenomenon to be addressed and how to address them, have an interactive relationship with the goals, methodology, validity and the theoretical framework of the study. This shows how the research questions affect these components and are also affected by the components in the research. According to Maxwell (2016) and Miles et al. (2014), the research goals help to position the specific phenomenon in question for the necessary practices and strategies to address it holistically. That is why the research goals in the study also have an interactive relationship with the theoretical framework because the theoretical framework looks at what really went on with regards to the phenomenon empirically and in literature which is, therefore, used to guide the outcome of the study (Eilstrom et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2016). The research methods of the study which also look at what integrated approaches and techniques were used to collect and analyse the data, also have a reciprocal relationship with the validity of the research. This is because validity looks at the possible alternatives that may threaten the findings and how these were dealt with to make the data collected support the research goals for stakeholders to believe the study (Eilstrom et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2016).

5.4.7 Research superordinate themes

The research has established the following six broad and higher-order themes as the superordinate themes for the study. These are employees' understanding of the types of OK; employees' understanding of types of IOFs needed for KM; employees' understanding of the organisation's KM practices; employees' understanding of the dictates of enhanced IOFs; employees' understanding of the dictates of the organisation's improved KM practices; and employees' relation of improved KM practices to performance effectiveness. In the views of scholars like Smith (2017) and Smith and Osborn (2015), four or five themes are recommended in an IPA research design to give justice to each of the themes. This is to help

develop rich descriptions of human experience from the interviews and probes especially, of interesting areas that were unprompted but arose from the participants' interests and concerns, to develop subordinate and superordinate themes for the study (Smith, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The research has also established the following relations in the conceptual framework for the study: the influence of enhanced IOFs on employees' improved KM practices and the influence of employees' improved KM practices on their effective performance.

5.4.8 Research setting

Roberts (2017) and Saunders and Lewis (2017) explain that research setting refers to the physical location of a research study and in this research, the study was conducted on the staff of Kumasi, Tamale and Tema metropolitan assemblies. The most common location the interviews of the study were conducted was the district assembly's inner conference room, which was detached from the assembly's office premises. The place was quiet, comfortable, convenient, and more importantly the participants were not visible to other employees during the interviews (Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017; Smith, 2017).

5.4.9 Research units of analysis

The unit of analysis in this study refers to the understanding of improved KM practices for effective performance by employees of MMDAs in Ghana, using the enhanced IOFs that are being researched. In this study, therefore, the unit of analysis was the individual employees of MMDAs in Ghana, focusing on their understanding of KM practices in the organisation (Guillen, 2019; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017). The employees were made up of senior, middle and junior levels within the organisation and were drawn from the central, northern and southern zones respectively.

5.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To give a deeper understanding of how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understood and implemented KM practices for their performance effectiveness, the

study consisted of a literature review and field study. Literature on the various constructs of the study was thoroughly reviewed in line with the objective of the research. A field study was also conducted for the production of data, which was analysed for the findings. The process constituted the understanding of the study area, the study population, the sampling technique adopted and the sample size, the data collection instrument and the method used, and finally the method used for data analysis. In a qualitative research like this also designed as an interactive research, data production methods are holistic, emergent, flexible, reflective, continuous in nature, and often develop or change along the way (Creswell, 2016; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The adoption of this type of methodology helps the researcher to come out with rich and well tested new knowledge for HR management theory and practice and knowledge development.

5.5.1 The study area

The study was conducted on employees of MMDAs in Ghana, which lies within the West African region in Africa. West Africa is made up of 16 independent countries and spans from the Atlantic Ocean on the West to the area of Lake Chad on the East, with a distance of about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometres) as shown in Figure 5.4. According to the United Nations World Population Prospects (UNWPP) (2019), West Africa covers an area of 1,974,103 square miles (5,112,903 square kilometres) of land and has an estimated population of about 381 million people as at the end of 2018. The various coloured areas in the map as shown in Figure 5.4 depict the 16 independent countries in West Africa (LGSG, 2018; UNWPP, 2019).



Figure 5.4: Political administrative map of West Africa

Source: Local Government Service of Ghana (2018)

In Ghana, there are 16 administrative regions, which are further divided into 260 local administrative districts known as the MMDAs, based on their population with Accra as the national capital, as shown in Figure 5.5. According to the LGSG (2018) and UNWPP (2019), the population of Ghana was estimated at about 29.8 million people as at 2018 and covers an area of 87,854 square miles (227,540 square kilometres). A local administrative area with a population of over 250,000 people is accorded a metropolitan status; an area with a population from 95,000 people is also accorded a municipal status; and an area with a population from 75,000 people is accorded a district status. Out of the 260 MMDAs in Ghana, six have metropolitan status, 57 have municipal status and 197 have district status as at 2019 (ILGS, 2019; LGSG, 2018; MLG & RD, 2019).

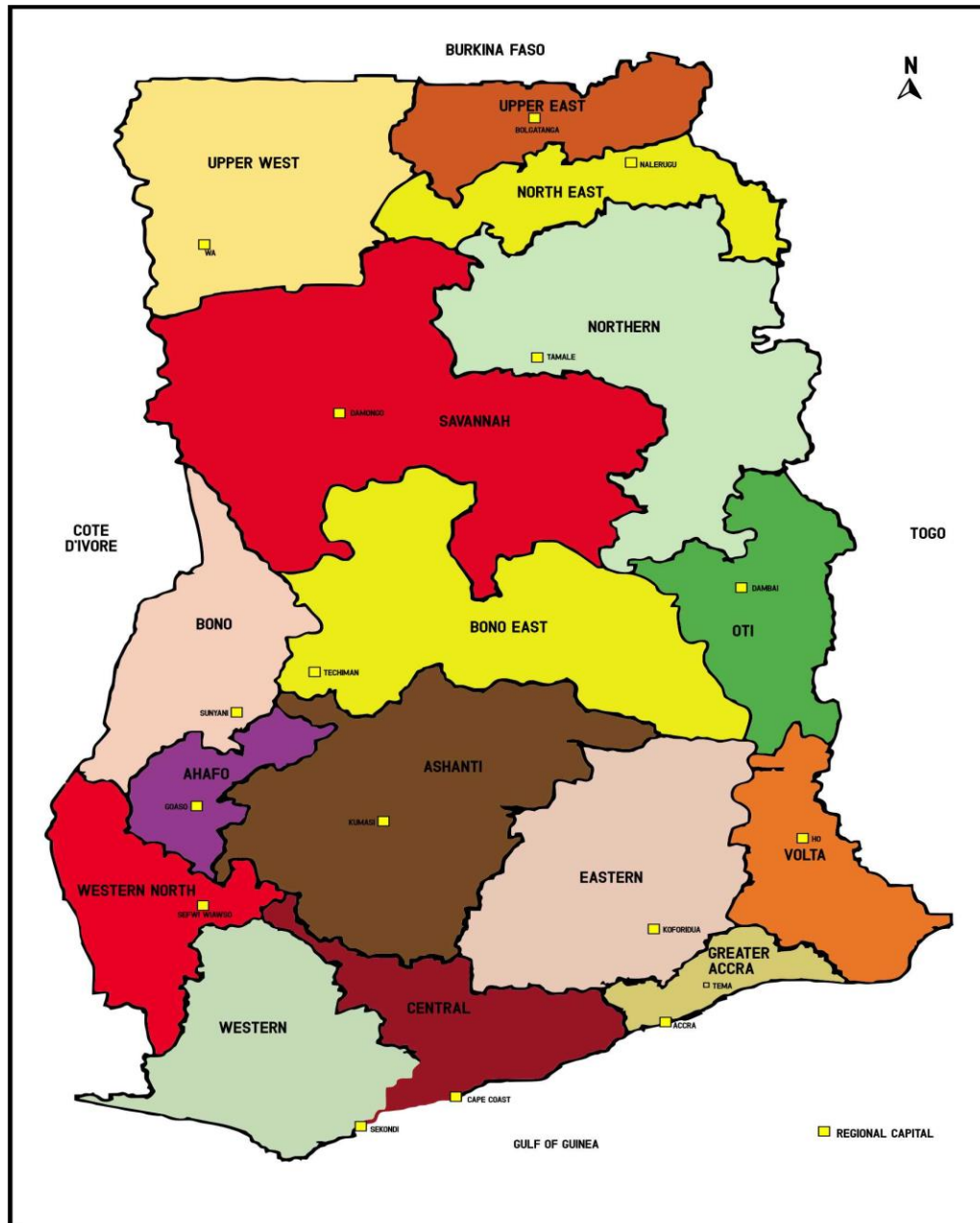


Figure 5.5: Regional administrative map of Ghana

Source: Local Government Service of Ghana (2018)

MMDAs were established under the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) and amended as Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act, 936) as a public sector organisation under the LGSG, with the primary aim of development at the rural or grassroots level, promoting good governance, transparency and accountability, and ensuring peace and security at the district or local level (Ahwoi, 2015; MLG &

RD, 2019; UNDP, 2019). Act 936 also accords the MMDAs as the pivot of administrative, deliberative, legislative and executive functions at the local level and also, the basic unit of local government administration with the control of large resources for funding of activities (LGSG, 2018; MLG & RD, 2019; NDPC, 2018; UNDP, 2019).

In personnel management, Ahwoi (2018), Adu-Twum (2020) and LGSG (2018) indicate that the local government system operates on two personnel management structures, namely, four-tier management structure and three-tier management structure. The Metropolitan assemblies operate on four-tier management structure, which comprise the metropolitan assembly, sub-metropolitan/district councils, town councils, and unit committees. The municipal assemblies also operate on three-tier management structure, which comprise the municipal assembly, zonal councils and unit committees. The district assemblies also operate on three-tier management structure, which comprise the district assembly, urban/town/area councils and the unit committees. The employees of the metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies as well as the sub-metropolitan assemblies are permanent staff of the central government while the employees of the zonal, urban, town, and area councils are temporal staff under the MMDAs. The staff at the unit committee level are temporal and voluntary positions within the local government structure in Ghana (Ahwoi, 2018; Adu-Twum, 2020; LGSG, 2018). The various coloured areas in the map of Ghana as shown in Figure 5.5 depict the 16 regions in the country (LGSG, 2018; MLG & RD, 2019).

5.5.2 Research population

The field study took place among the employees of three metropolitan assemblies, namely, Kumasi, Tamale and Tema metropolitan assemblies in Ghana. These metropolitan assemblies are well staffed with sub-metropolitan structures for effective administrative and personnel management. These employees comprised permanent staff of the central government and temporal as well as voluntary staff paid by the metropolitan assemblies. According to the GSS (2018), LGSG (2018) and MLG & RD (2019), the employees in these three metropolitan assemblies

together were about 900, comprising 571 males and 329 females, which served as the population for the study. Creswell (2016) and Merriam (2016) define population as the full set of cases from which a sample is taken. The biographic data of the employees of these three metropolitan assemblies was applied from the CEOs and sourced from the various metropolitan assemblies. To ensure the representation of this population, the assemblies were zoned into three, namely, central, northern and southern zones respectively, according to their geographical location. This geographical location was used as a diverse characteristic which may influence the responses of the participants during the interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2018). This sourced data of the employees is shown in Table 5.1 and was used as the sampling frame for the study.

Metropolitan Assembly	No. of Employees		
	Male	Female	Total
Kumasi	206	127	333
Tamale	136	79	215
Tema	229	123	352
Total	571	329	900

Table 5.1: Population of the study

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2018)

5.5.3 Sampling technique and sample size

It was not possible to study all the 900 members of the population, and so a sample of the population was taken. According to Roberts (2017), Saunders and Lewis (2017) and Smith (2017), a sample is a subset of a population in a research study. In selecting a sample for a qualitative study like this, Creswell (2016), Roberts (2017) and Smith and Osborn (2018) advice the researcher to position himself or herself close to the sample selected in their natural setting to be able to

interact freely with them during the data collection process. This is because the researcher is also seen as the research instrument during the data collection process in IPA. In research, there are two types of sampling techniques which are probability – with rigorous selection approach and mostly used in quantitative research paradigm and non-probability – with no particular selection approach and mostly used in qualitative research paradigm (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Saunders & Lewis, 2017). This shows that in non-probability sampling technique, the selection of the sample is dependent on the researcher's understanding about the phenomenon because the participants are to help deepen his or her understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

In an IPA research design like this one, the aim of the researcher was to look for a homogeneous sample because the research questions have relevance and personal significance to this defined group (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Assaker et al., 2020). From the literature, the most widely used non-probability sampling technique in IPA research was purposive sampling hence, a purposive sampling and sometimes referred to as judgmental sampling technique was first used to select employees of the three metropolitan assemblies in the country. This was because these metropolitan assemblies are well staffed and the employees have the necessary training to be able to provide key information for the study. Judgmental sampling technique enables the researcher to use his own judgment to select the sample that will best enable him or her to answer the research questions and meet the objectives (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Assaker et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2022).

In consonant with the IPA research design, the researcher focused on the group from these three metropolitan assemblies that was fairly homogeneous. However, it was observed that this group was rather made up of different characteristics in view of their job levels and geographical location. In respect to this the researcher used a heterogeneous purposive sampling also known as maximum variation sampling technique for the selection of the participants appropriate for this study (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Assaker et al., 2020; Bazeley, 2020). This sampling

technique enabled the researcher to select a small sample of participants with shared experiences of the phenomenon to be studied, but with sufficiently diverse characteristics, categorised according to their job levels and geographical location (Assaker et al., 2020; Bazeley, 2020). In an IPA study, the number of participants selected depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the study, what is regarded as useful, relevant and credible information, and the time and resources available to the researcher during the research process (Assaker et al., 2020; Bazeley, 2020; Chivanga & Mongai, 2021).

Hence, in this research where the researcher aims to understand commonalities from a heterogeneous population, Creswell (2016) and Merriam (2016) suggest the selection of a sample size of up to ten individual participants because the important point is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon by this small number of individual participants who have experienced it. On the other hand, Smith (2017) explains that a small sample size of 15-30 participants is usually used in data collection and analysis because it involves detailed analysis of verbatim accounts of a small number. This small sample size will also ensure that data saturation, which is a tool used to ensure that adequate and quality data are collected from the sample to support the study, was adhered to. In qualitative research, data saturation does occur and this is when the researcher is no longer hearing or seeing any new information (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017). In an IPA study, an interview is, therefore, not about collecting facts rather, it is about exploring meanings. In view of this, samples in IPA studies are usually small which in turn, enables the researchers to have a detailed and time consuming case by case data analysis in a qualitative study (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016).

Another distinctive feature of an IPA study is the researcher's commitment to a detailed interpretative account of the experiences being explored. Hence, in this study, the researcher considered a reduced number of 18 participants because this number allowed for a richer depth of analysis that may have been inhibited with a larger sample size. Also, the analysis sought to understand what is

happening and looking for patterns, which may be repeated in other similar situations. This shows that six participants were selected from each of the three geographical locations for the interview as shown in Table 5.1 (Creswell, 2016; Smith 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delpont (2011) and Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), a sample size of at least 12 interviews of a heterogeneous group is all that is needed to reach data saturation because the more heterogeneous a sample is, the more interviews are required for data quality. This number of 18 participants, therefore, allowed each case to be explored with the necessary time, energy and rigour required in an IPA framework of data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith, 2017).

The selection of these 18 participants for the study was based on eligibility criteria set because the intent of the study was to explore both the real life and retrospective experiences of the participants working together (Creswell, 2016; Dodgson, 2019; Smith, 2017). In view of this, criteria such as from a specific sex or group, having less than five years working experience, having less than three times on the job training, and those who were afraid and not willing to participate in the study voluntarily were excluded (Chan, 2018; Dodgson, 2019; Grove, 2017). This means the periods stated below for inclusion were deemed enough for the participants to be able to interpret meanings from their lived experiences of working life, knowledge acquisition, sharing and application in the three metropolitan assemblies (Dodgson, 2019; Morse 2015a; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The eligibility criteria that informed the inclusion of this sample size are:

- Employees who worked with the metropolitan assembly for at least five years continued working experience. This was to ensure that rich and relevant information about the phenomenon was obtained from experienced and less afraid participants during the interviews.
- Employees who were sent to at least three times on the job training within the last five years. Three times on the job training was an adequate period that allowed for a comprehensive understanding of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing and knowledge application initiatives in the organisation.

- Employees who have worked for this long period have showed interest and were willing to participate in the study voluntarily. This enabled the participants to share their knowledge and experiences of KM practices in the organisation freely.

The process of selecting the sample first started with the application of access and consent attached as Appendix C from the CEOs of the three metropolitan assemblies and also, for the biographic data of the employees. Approval for access and consent attached as Appendix D was received from the CEOs together with a soft copy of the biographical data of 900 employees of the MMDAs. Based on these 900 employees, the researcher grouped the permanent employees according to their geographical location and job levels. With the permission from the CEOs, personal letters were then sent to 108 permanent employees through their HR directors, informing them about the study and inviting them to participate. They were asked to respond by filling a personal form designed by the researcher and deposited with the HR directors, where they were to indicate their contact numbers, number of years of continued working experience, number of times for on-the-job training and their interest to participate in the study voluntarily or not. Some (38) of the permanent employees responded by filling the personal form and indicated their interest to participate voluntarily while the remaining 70 did not respond at all out of disinterest in the study. Upon checking the filled forms, 25 of these permanent employees who responded met the selection criteria and were, therefore, purposively selected based on their job levels and geographical location and invited them for an individual face-to-face meeting on proposed dates and time, which was scheduled at the assembly's inner conference room.

They were, however, asked to indicate whether the proposed dates and time for the face-to-face meeting were conducive to them and if not, should indicate their most convenient date and time. The assembly's inner conference room is detached from the assembly's main office premises. Hence, as required in an IPA design, the participants were not visible to other employees in the assembly. The 25 employees, who were invited, also responded and agreed on the proposed

dates and venue and in addition, the researcher also agreed on their proposed time for the face-to-face meeting. These employees were met and to ensure their anonymity, the participants were met individually and were briefed about the nature and aim of the study, were informed about the ethical considerations of the research, their consent to participate, and the potential risks and benefits of the research. Eventually, all of them expressed interest and affirmed their willingness to participate in the study voluntarily.

The researcher thought that the participants' geographical location and job levels were important diverse characteristics that needed to be considered as well as the need to position himself close to this final sample to be able to interact freely with them during the data collection process. In view of this and based on the advice of Linneberg and Korsguard (2019) and Silverman (2020), the researcher also seen as the research instrument, took his time to select those who met these conditions and were also very interactive and expressed themselves freely during the meetings. Out of this number, 18 of them who satisfied these conditions and were interactive, were later given formal invitation letters with proposed dates for another face-to-face meeting and were also later made to sign the ethical consent agreement form attached as Appendix F before the interviews. The heterogeneous purposive sampling process used in the selection of the participants for this study, is presented in Figure 5.6.

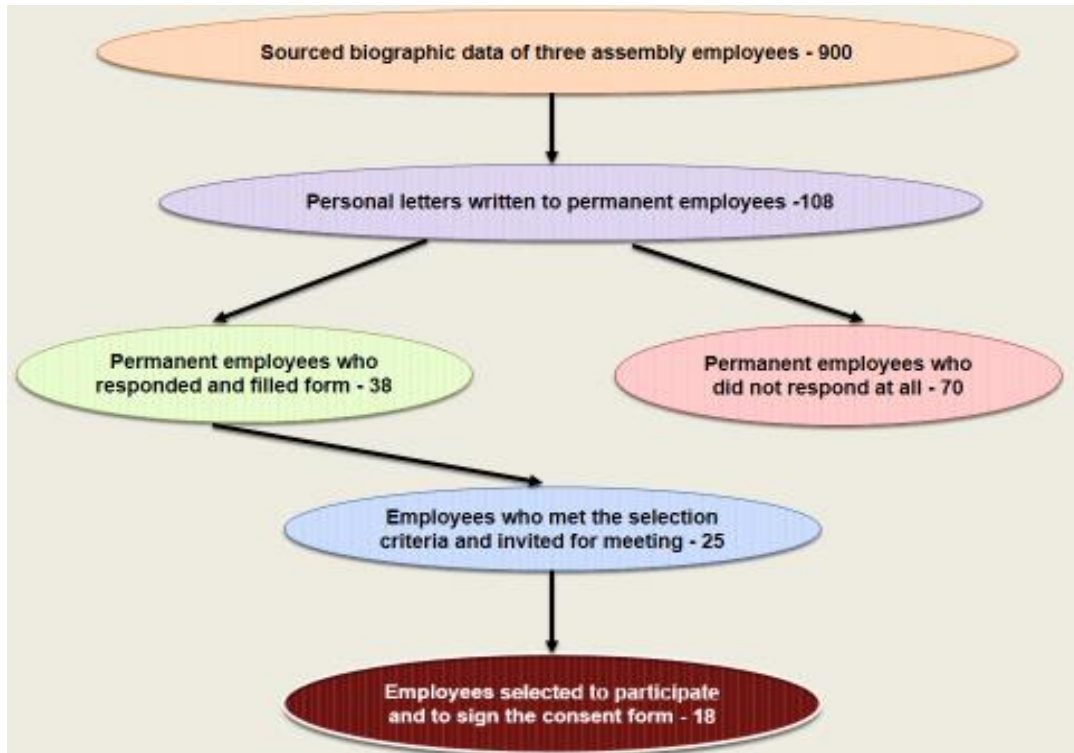


Figure 5.6 A heterogeneous purposive sampling process

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2018)

Figure 5.6, therefore, shows how the sample size of 18 participants was purposively selected to participate in the study. In addition, Table 5.2 also shows the final sample size with their geographical location and job levels as the diverse characteristics whiles Table 5.3 also shows the filenames used for the selected participants for the study. During the second and final face-to-face meeting, to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, they were given filenames based on their geographical location and job levels used for the data analysis.

Job Level / Geographical Zone	Central Zone Kumasi Metro (KU)	Northern Zone Tamale Metro (TA)	Southern Zone Tema Metro (TE)	Total
Senior Level (S)	2	2	2	6

Middle Level (M)	2	2	2	6
Junior Level (J)	2	2	2	6
Total	6	6	6	18

Table 5.2: Sample size of participants based on geographical zone and job level

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2018)

Central Zone		Northern Zone		Southern Zone	
Participant	Filename	Participant	Filename	Participant	Filename
Participant 1	KUS1	Participant 1	TAS1	Participant 1	TES1
Participant 2	KUS2	Participant 2	TAS2	Participant 2	TES2
Participant 3	KUM1	Participant 3	TAM1	Participant 3	TEM1
Participant 4	KUM2	Participant 4	TAM2	Participant 4	TEM2
Participant 5	KUJ1	Participant 5	TAJ1	Participant 5	TEJ1
Participant 6	KUJ2	Participant 6	TAJ2	Participant 6	TEJ2

Table 5.3: Geographical zone and filename of participants

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2018)

5.5.4 Data collection instrument

There are different types of data collection instruments in the field study of a qualitative research like this for analysis. Smith (2017) and Smith and Osborn (2015) advice that with IPA research design, one should look for a data collection instrument which provides the flexibility to allow the selected participants to provide detailed account in their own words. Qualitative data are information collected from participants during the course of a study and in IPA research, the common instrument used with the participants that provides them with the flexibility to tell

their own stories is the semi-structured interview schedule. The semi-structured interview schedule has a prepared set of questions for the researcher to ask but these are used very flexibly during the interviews and do not also necessarily follow the order in which they are numbered (De La Croix et al., 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015; Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). In this IPA study, the use of the semi-structured interview schedule for the data collection also served as a guide to the researcher who was seen also as a research instrument. This data collection instrument, therefore, helped the researcher to gather valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives (Magnussen & Marecck, 2015; Saldāna, 2016; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

The semi-structured interviews schedule was developed using information from an extensive review of the literature on KM, IOFs and employees' performance effectiveness as well as informal discussions with some senior staff of the ILGS in Tamale, in the northern region of Ghana. The data collection instrument were, therefore, compiled with a set of predetermined questions based on the study's research questions to engage the participants and designate the narrative area for the interviews (Gamble et al., 2019; Palmatier, et al., 2018). This helped to prepare the researcher to think explicitly about what the interviews will reveal and hence, the questions were developed flexibly such that it gave the researcher the opportunity to freely probe interesting areas that arose from the participants' interests and concerns, which ensured a broader coverage of issues on the phenomenon (Gamble et al., 2019; Palmatier, et al., 2018; Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). Using this data collection instrument helped the researcher to clearly understand the meanings that the participants ascribed to the phenomenon, helped to probe further words or ideas the participants used in a particular way, helped the researcher to have control over the interview, and helped the researcher to use the instrument as a guide instead of being dictated by it (Gamble et al., 2019; Roberts, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015).

The use of the instrument also enabled the participants to give responses that were unprompted by the researcher, but were seen to be of especial importance to

them, afforded the participants the opportunity to hear for themselves, the responses they provided as the interviews were audio recorded, and also provided the participants with the opportunity to receive feedback and personal assurances about the way in which the information will be used (Bazeley, 2020; Bryman & Bells, 2018). Hence, the interview questions on the data collection instrument attached as Appendix G had the following headings covered for key and open-ended questions and probes to address the research objectives:

- biographical details of participants;
- employees' understanding of OK;
- employees' understanding of KM practices;
- employees' description of IOFs;
- employees' description of IOFs necessary for KM practices;
- employees' use of IOFs for KM practices;
- employees' description of contingencies of enhanced IOFs;
- employees' description of contingencies of improved KM practices;
- employees' relation of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness;
- development of KM practices framework as a guide; and
- validation of the KM practices framework (Bazeley, 2020; Bryman & Bells, 2018; Chivanga & Mongai, 2021).

5.5.5 Pilot testing of data collection instrument

In the views of Creswell (2016) and Doody and Doody (2015), there is always a risk that the questions on the data collection instrument may not sufficiently probe the research participants to provide detailed responses needed for the study. To avoid this risk, Fraser, Fahlman, Arscott, and Guillot (2018) advice the researcher to pilot test a new instrument of data collection within a population similar to that from which the sample for the study would be taken, before proceeding with the research. A pilot test of the instrument was, therefore, conducted on the employees of the Savelugu/Nanton Municipal Assembly in the northern region of

Ghana, to ensure that the questions on the instrument were neutral and clear, were focused and open-ended and were arranged in the needed sequence. The pilot test was also done to test the reliability, readability, understandability, and accuracy of the content of the instrument. The employees of the Savelugu/Nanton Municipal Assembly were not part of the study population. However, they have characteristics similar to the population for the study.

The targeted sample of this study was not large. Hence, based on the advice of Fraser et al. (2018) and Tracy (2018), the participants in the pilot study were also six and according to their job levels. The semi-structured interview schedule was, therefore, given to six purposively selected employees of the municipal assembly to study for three days before the interview date. The six purposively selected employees were based on their job levels within the municipal assembly and had more than five years working experience. It was planned that three days were to be used for the one-on-one interview based on the plan developed and the dates agreed on by all. However, two days were used for the one-on-one interview and three employees were interviewed per day. The pilot-test of the instrument helped to identify minor problems such as how to open the interview with friendliness, how to ask focusing questions about the participants' biographical details and how to probe further for the logical flow of the questions. It also helped to identify the challenges associated with the principles of data saturation in a qualitative study. Data saturation helped to ensure that adequate and quality data are collected for the study and this also, helped to deal with the issue of bracketing (Mackieson et al., 2018; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017).

According to Miles et al. (2020) and Tracy (2020), data saturation is mostly associated with qualitative research during interview process where, at a point the interviewer starts to receive repetitive responses from the interviewees. In such situations, no new codes were produced nor did new themes emerge. Hence, failure to reach saturation in qualitative interviews has a methodological impact on the quality of the research (Bazeley, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Tracy, 2020). In view of this, after the pilot interviews, the questions on the semi-structured interview

schedule were refined and rearranged, which put the researcher in a better position to proceed with the research. During the pilot study, issues concerning interviewer bias and interviewee bias cropped up. Interviewer bias was related to comments, tone or non-verbal behaviour of the interviewer, which created this problem whereas interviewee bias was also related to the perception of the interviewee about the interviewer when he tried to impose his own beliefs on them. Hence, these problems were taken note of and were dealt with at the end (Gillen, 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019; Mackieson et al., 2018).

5.5.6 Data collection method

In this study, the primary means of collecting information was conducting individual interviews using the semi-structured interview schedule, which provided the researcher with an opportunity to generate rich data contextually from the participants based on their deeper understanding of meanings of the phenomena (Creswell, 2016; Franzosi, 2016; Smith, 2017). This encouraged open-ended dialogue between the researcher and participants, which helped the participants to freely share their experience, therefore, enabling a thorough description of their experience as well as a reflection on this description by the researcher (Franzosi, 2016; Morse, 2015b; Van Manen, 2016). This also helped the researcher to discover meanings in the data the participants provided as well as helped to develop an attitude open enough to let unpredicted probes and unexpected meanings to emerge from the interviews (Dodgson, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). Semi-structured interviews are particularly well suited for a research like this where the researcher wants to explore a detailed picture of participants' beliefs about a particular phenomenon such as the experiences of the employees of MMDAs in Ghana on their KM practices.

The data were, therefore, collected from the employees of three selected metropolitan assemblies using semi-structured interviews, which focused on the meaning and understanding of the phenomenon but used the 'five Ps' strategy. Saunders and Lewis (2017) and Wilhelmy et al. (2016) explain that the 'five Ps' mean, 'prior planning prevents poor performance', which is a strategy that was

applied before the interviews were conducted and this helped to make the data collected credible and trustworthy. The participants were regarded as the experts on the research topic; hence, adequate planning was made to give them maximum opportunity to tell their stories freely during data collection (Ary, 2019; Morse, 2015b; Wilhelmy et al., 2016). During the data collection process, the researcher also, seen as the research instrument, had to enter the participants' perceptions contextually through adequate interactions with them to understand the meanings that the participants gave to their experience (Fleming, 2018; Stephenson et al., 2018). It was, therefore, the perceptions of the participants that provided the researcher with information about how the individual or groups of individuals lived and reacted to the issues of the phenomenon.

In an IPA study, effective interviewing is not confined to asking questions and recording answers. However, quality interviewing and data production are dependent primarily on the skills of the interviewer. These interviews were, therefore, effectively conducted by the researcher establishing rapport with the participants, taking up a curious position and asking them critical questions to acquire relevant information from them (Merriam, 2016; Smith, 2017; Wilhelmy et al., 2016). Hence, it was with the semi-structured interviews that the researcher made sense of or interpreted the meaning the participants had about the phenomenon, which was tape-recorded before the data were transcribed verbatim and analysed using an IPA framework (Morse, 2015b; Van Manen, 2016). During the interviews, the researcher applied good communication skills such as providing minimal verbal responses to show the participant that he was listening, clarifying the information they were providing, encouraging them to expand on the ideas they were putting across, and probing them to increase the richness of the information obtained (Crossman, 2020; Forero et al., 2018; Larkin et al., 2019).

A week to the interviews, the researcher gave the detailed information sheet attached as Appendix E and the semi-structured interview schedule attached as Appendix G to the participants and explained to them the process of the one-on-one interview. They were told that at the interview, they will tell the researcher their

lived experiences and feelings about the phenomenon for interpretation and their strong role in determining how the interview proceeds (Smith, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). They were also given the ethical consent form attached as Appendix F to study, fill and sign voluntarily for their participation before the interview day (Guillen, 2019; Manti & Licari, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015). These measures were established to make the participants to feel comfortable and have confidence to participate in the interviews.

A research assistant who had about eight years knowledge experience on the local government system and was fluent in English language was recruited and trained to help carry out the interviews in all three geographical locations of the metropolitan assemblies. The recruitment was based on referral of competent undergraduate student from the ILGS Tamale Campus, by head of department of the Governance and Public Administration department. The recruited student was then trained on the objectives and methodology of the study, how the research was to be carried out, his role as a research assistant, how he was to help in the audio-recording, and how to take down notes during the interviews (Dodgson, 2017; Fleming, 2018; Fleming & Zagward, 2018). This training was quite brief but comprehensive and was done by the researcher for six hours because of his experience as a worker of the Local Government Service. At the end of the training, the research assistant signed a confidential agreement form attached as Appendix H before the start of the data collection process.

During the one-on-one interview, the assembly's inner conference room which was detached from the assembly's main office premises was used. Therefore, the participants were not visible to other employees and the place was precinct, quiet, comfortable and convenient for all the participants. The interviews were opened with self-introduction to relax the participants and to develop a positive relationship with them (De La Croix et al., 2018; Magnussen & Mareck, 2015). This helped the researcher to ask focusing questions about the participants' personal and academic life, about the phenomenon and had the opportunity to ask probing questions while he listened carefully to the participants' responses (Magnussen &

Mareck, 2015; Wilhelmy et al., 2016). At this point, opportunity was once again taken to allay, whatever possible, the participants' uncertainties about the confidentiality of information they were going to provide and then re-established the participants' rights and anonymity. All the participants were asked the same questions but not necessarily in the same order because the researcher wanted to allow the participants to move away from the questions contained in the interview schedule to go deep into their psychological and social world of experience (Vagle, 2018; van Manen, 2016).

In the interview process, the researcher used open-ended questions to explore the participants' understanding and personal experience of implementation of KM practices, which also allowed for further probes. The questions and probes were read out by the researcher for the participants to provide responses that were audio-recorded while field notes were also taken by the research assistant. Using both methods to record the interview data had a number of advantages like the field notes helped to maintain one's concentration, helped to formulate points to summarise, helped to ask follow-up probing questions for understanding, and helped to record one's own thoughts after the interview (De La Croix et al., 2018; Fleming & Zagward, 2018). During the interviews, a reflexive journal was also kept by the researcher to record his own experience, feelings and observations about what he heard, saw and understood throughout the interviews and the purpose was to establish triangulation of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Stephenson et al., 2018). In concluding the interviews, the researcher asked the participants whether they had any questions or additional information they wished to share. Eventually, the researcher thanked the participants for voluntarily participating in the interview (Monrouxe & Rees, 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020).

After each day's interview, initial analysis of the data was made in the evening by the researcher and the research assistant before carrying out further interviews the next day. This was when notes taken by the research assistant were compared with what has been audio-recorded by the researcher and his reflexive journal (Neale, 2016; Saldāna, 2016). Doing this daily continuous analysis helped to avoid

data overload where data are continuously collected without any sufficient analysis (Neale, 2016; Saldāna, 2016). Two weeks were used for each geographical zone and within the two weeks, a maximum of one week was used to conduct the interview within a geographical zone. This means that one day was used for the one-on-one interview for at most two participants to ensure effective participation. Hence, six weeks were used to conduct all the interviews but enough room was also made within the period for travelling from one zone to the other. During the data collection process, issues of biases such as interviewer bias, interviewee or response bias and participation bias emerged but were dealt with owing to the experience from the pilot study (Mackieson et al., 2018; Tuval-Meshiach, 2017).

Interviewer bias was where comments, tone or non-verbal behaviour of the interviewer creates this bias, which leads the interviewees to respond to the questions being asked by the researcher. The interviewee or response bias was also caused by the perception of the interviewee about the interviewer when he tried to impose his own beliefs and the way he frames the questions for the interviewee to respond. Finally, the participation bias relates to the number of individuals or the organisational participants who were really willing to take part in the interviews (Mackieson et al., 2018; Tuval-Meshiach, 2017). In the process, therefore, the following measures were established to overcome all these biases:

- The interviewer showed knowledge about the context of the organisation, the group being interviewed and the subject (reflexivity) under investigation, which made him careful not to lead the participants in their response.
- The interviewer showed knowledge, through further probes, about the level of information the participants provided.
- The locations for the interview were so appropriate hence, the interviewer appeared good and was relaxed for the interview.
- The interviewer used appropriate comments for exchange of greetings, for self-introduction and to open the interview, which relaxed the participants.

- The interviewer used appropriate frames for the open questions and for probing specific questions.
- The interviewer listened to the participants attentively and showed the understanding of what was been said.
- The interviewer was quick to recognise participants who may be difficult at the meetings and was, therefore, prepared to handle them with ease.
- The data were also audio-recorded accurately and fully with the notes well taken during the interviews.

In an IPA study where the understanding of the world is from the perspective of participant's lived experience, also recognises the interpretive work by the researcher who makes sense of what the participants say. This means that the researcher may also go to the field with pre-conceived attitudes, beliefs or opinions that may taint the research process. This issue is referred to as bracketing, which accepts that the researcher has his own biases and will not be able to be completely free from them in any case (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Mackieson et al., 2018). This issue of bracketing was thought of during the data collection and the researcher, therefore, went to the field with fresh and open eyes prepared to expect the unexpected by been neutral in dressing, used objective tone and body language and avoided beliefs and opinions during the interview. No leading, difficult or ambiguous questions were also used during the interviews and finally, the interview questions also followed logically with their accompanying probes (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Petitmengin et al., 2019).

5.5.7 Method of data analysis

Qualitative data analysis helps to bring order, structure and meaning to the data collected and the interpretation also, helps to develop an organised, detailed plausible and transparent account of the meaning in the data (Agwu & Bqalya, 2017; Aspers & Corte, 2019; Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020). In the views of Busetto et al. (2020) and Chivanga and Mongai (2021), there are many techniques used in the analysis of qualitative data. However, in an IPA study where researchers reduce the complexity of the data through rigorous and systematic

verbatim extracts, data analysis revolves around the process of interpretation where people make sense of the world and their experiences. This process of data analysis is referred to as the IPA framework approach, which helps to develop rich descriptions of human experience. This approach, therefore, emphasised how individual employees of MMDAs in Ghana understood their world with regards to the phenomenon and how this understanding shaped their practices for their effective performance (Noon, 2018; Patton, 2019; Tracy, 2018; Tsiolis, 2018).

The IPA framework is a bottom-up approach where codes are inductively generated from the transcribed data rather than using pre-existing theory to identify codes from the data for application. Hence, theories are not tested but are only relevant to the development of existing theories based on a conceptual framework developed inductively (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). This approach is sequential and begins with the analysis of data at an individual level before proceeding to the group level analysis which brings together data spanning from all the individuals (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). At the individual level, the researcher read through the verbatim transcript of each interview together with the observational field notes and his reflexive research journal severally to immerse himself in the details to obtain a sense of the interviews.

At this stage, the researcher used structural or open coding method on each transcript based on his own interpretative emotional reactions on the participant's experiences before coming out with the inferential codes. In the structural coding method, excel as well as selective coding processes were followed before looking for patterns across all cases for the final inferential codes, which were used for the development of potential subordinate and superordinate themes for the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). The structural or open coding process is where codes are associated with responses to context interview questions, which helps to organise the processed data well for analysis. The approach used for this analysis was bottom-up and was grouped into six steps to guide the IPA data analysis, as shown in Figure 5.7 (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

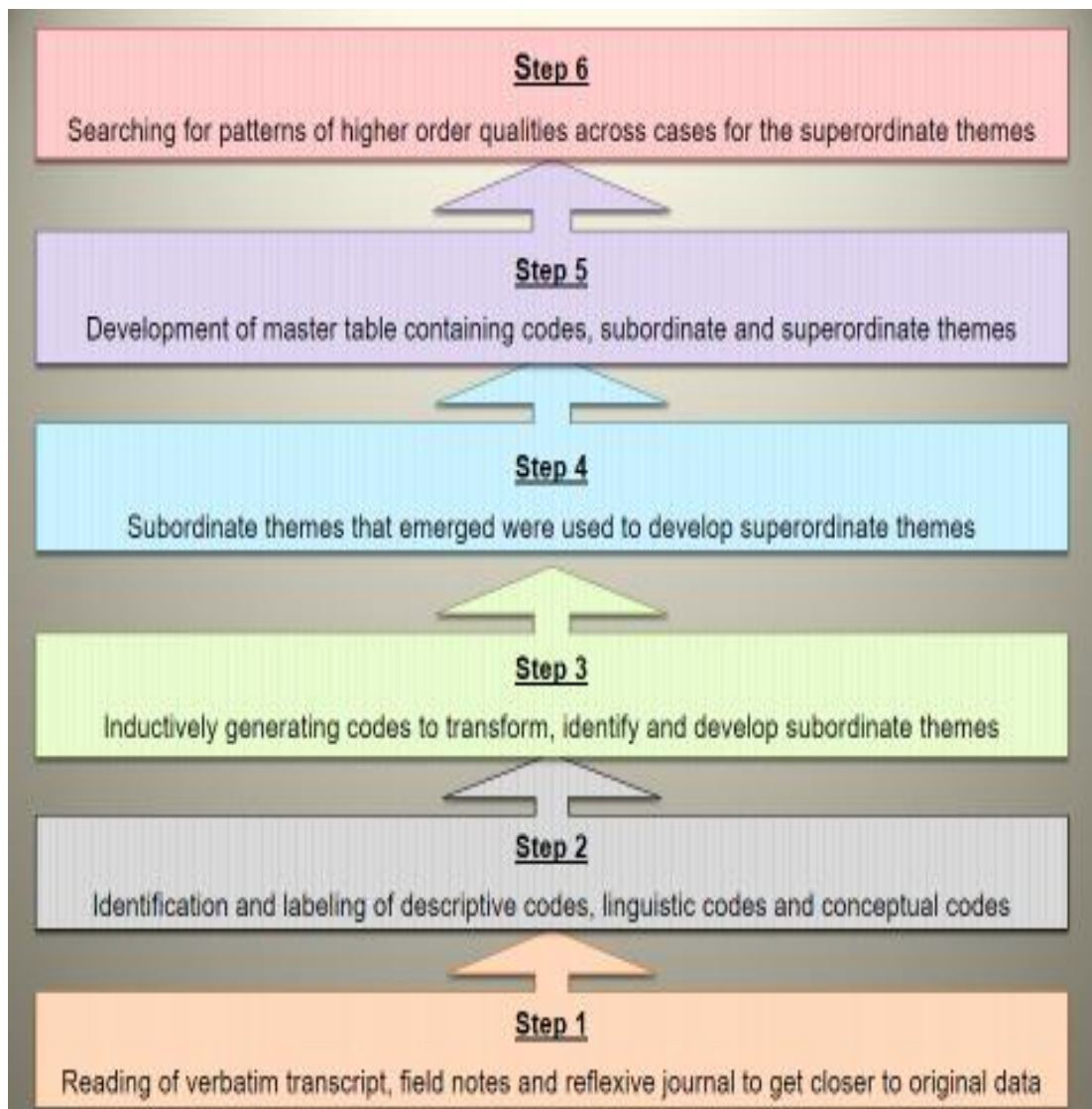


Figure 5.7: IPA framework approach of data analysis

Source: (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016)

Step one: This step as shown in Figure 5.7 begun with the researcher reading and re-reading through the verbatim transcript of each response to interview question together with the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal severally, to immerse himself in the detail account of participant's experience. This was done to obtain a sense of the interview as a whole and to get closer to the original data by listening to the audio-recordings and reading through the notes. This iterative process enabled the researcher to discover new

information for example, discovering some of the organisational knowledge not noted in the initial reading of some transcripts (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

Step two: This step as shown in Figure 5.7 was where the researcher after obtaining the sense of the interview of the individual participant, made notes of interesting issues, ideas and understandings conveyed by the participant in a notebook (free association and exploring of semantic content) by means of coding. In other words, this step was the identification and labelling of relevant features of the data in the form of descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments by means of coding (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). Coding is described as the process of transforming raw data into a standardised form by classifying it into codes that are either descriptive – codes that are used to rephrase participant's account; linguistic – codes that used exact words or expressions of the participant; and conceptual – codes that involved researcher's knowledge from literature with regards to the participants' life experience. Codes are, therefore, words or phrases that are used to assign a piece of data such that these words or phrases capture the core meaning in the data (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017).

Step three: This step as shown in Figure 5.7 involved the analysis of all the transcripts of the interviews in a similar manner from step two above at a group level, taking into account any convergence and/or divergence views that emerged during the process of analysis. The process of coding the whole transcript then continued at the group level using excel and selective coding process for the generation of 109 inferential codes inductively that helped to transform, identify and develop emergent subordinate themes (Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). This initial development of the subordinate themes helped to further cluster and capture meaning of the participant's account (focusing on the verbatim transcripts, the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal). This step was more focused and interpretive of the categorisation of codes as they were developed

mostly from phrases and sentences used by the participants (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

Step four: This step as shown in Figure 5.7 involved searching for connections across the emergent subordinate themes, through abstraction and integration to ensure that the subordinate themes collected were good in relation to the research questions. Eventually, twelve subordinate themes emerged and were divided under the overarching research questions. This helped the researcher to group the subordinate themes under different superordinate themes in relation to the research questions, which was then used to guide the development of knowledge inductively based on the conceptual framework of the study (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

Step five: This step as shown in Figure 5.7 involved the development of a master table of the themes containing first the inferential codes, followed by subordinate themes and finally the superordinate themes. This was where theme definitions were made and summarised in relation to the conceptual clarity of each theme, hence, the organisation and relationship of the themes were clearly seen in this step through open-mindedness of the researcher (Creswell, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

Step six: This was the final step as shown in Figure 5.7 and involved looking for patterns of shared higher order qualities across cases for the six superordinate themes developed. The various superordinate themes were used as the boundaries within which the patterns of convergences and commonalities, and those of divergences and nuances were thoroughly observed. Communal patterns that emerged from the participants' responses were used to develop a report of the subordinate and superordinate themes, which were analysed and used to address the research questions. This report was later sent to the research participants for validation (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016).

The researcher, to be sure of the inferential codes generated from the verbatim transcript, assigned an independent co-coder to also co-code the transcribed

interviews concurrently with the researcher's coding. The independent co-coder was first made to sign a confidentiality agreement form attached as Appendix I before doing the co-coding. The results of the coding were then compared with the inferential codes, subordinate and superordinate themes on the master table developed by the researcher to enhance the credibility of the results used. The co-coder was an independent and objective person from the ILGS in Tamale Campus, who had no knowledge on the phenomenon under investigation. This helped him to generate the codes independently, which the researcher finally used to compare and update his master table of inferential codes, subordinate and superordinate themes as presented in Table 6.3 in section 6.4 of Chapter six of the study (Linneberg & Korsguard, 2019; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Once this was done, the researcher classified the phenomena in an attempt to simplify and organise the themes to establish the needed relationships between them, which result in the development of the conceptual framework for KM as shown in Figure 7.3 in section 7.4.3 of Chapter seven of the study (Nizza et al., 2021; Shashi et al., 2022).

5.5.8 Method of data management

Data collected should be managed for possible future use in verifying research findings, setting priorities, or research analysis. However, what data management method one adopts is dependent on the policies with regard to the record keeping process of the institution. Scholars like Denzin and Lincoln (2017) and Pillow and Cruz (2019) explain that data management in a qualitative study, which emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality and establishes intimate relationship between the researcher and the research participants, needs to have a well-structured data management method. This is because data management is a designed structure for systematising, categorising and filling the data materials to make them efficiently retrievable and duplicable. Data can, therefore, be managed in many forms and the rules are either keeping a numbered hard copy bound in a notebook for easy follow-up in the event of future questions or keeping an electronic copy, which also provides a way to validate the date when the data were entered (Antonio, Schick-Makaroff, Dioron, et al., 2020). From the literature, the

length of time that should be required for the data to be kept or retained also ranges from three to ten years but varies by the institution. The researcher should, therefore, understand the data storage and retention policies of the institution before adopting the appropriate length of time for the data management (Antonio et al., 2020; Tracy, 2020; Roark, 2020).

Data management in qualitative study where, meaning is given to the collected data like codes that are assigned to text that represent participants' beliefs and experiences, confidentiality is one of the responsibilities of the researcher and a professional commitment to respect and maintain the participants' privacy of information gathered. Hence, protecting participants' information is part of a professional commitment and an obligation to maintain confidentiality, which is rooted in the participants' right to privacy and control of information (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifi, 2018). Therefore, properly storing research records ensures that researchers maintain the integrity of the collected data. Hence, in this data management structure, the researcher kept a data notebook in which recordings were legible, accurate, complete, replicable, and accessible to authorised persons only and was kept in a safe place with backups or in secured computer files (Antonio et al., 2020; Roark, 2020; Tracy, 2020).

The data collected were on personal records of the participants, which included their names and workplace locations which could comprise their privacy and confidentiality. In view of this, strict precautions were established to prevent this information from being disclosed inappropriately (Pillow & Cruz, 2019; Tracy, 2020). The data were, therefore, managed through the recording of each case in a sequence of major events with its unique identifier. This process was started by transcribing the audio-recorded interviews from a digital audiotape into verbatim transcript. Thereafter, the manual documents like the verbatim transcript, observational field notes, reflexive research journal, consent forms signed by the participants, and the confidentiality agreement forms were all placed in arch lever files numbered in a logical order. These arch lever files have been locked in a steel cabinet at the house of the researcher for at most five years after completion of the

study (Antonio et al., 2020; Roark, 2020; Tracy, 2020). A directory of the documents has also been kept on a Microsoft Excel spread sheet with the appropriate key words. This spread sheet has been cross-referenced to where the documents can be retrieved, either on the computer, a memory stick or the relevant file. These documents have been password-protected, which is known only to the researcher (Tracy, 2020; Tsiolis, 2018; Yin, 2016).

5.6 PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to explore, describe and explain the theoretical constructs of the phenomenon in the real world and so, the appropriate methodological tradition adopted was hermeneutic phenomenology, which is not so much about objectivity but rather about a reality which is socially constructed (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Guillen, 2019; Prison, 2017). It is, therefore, to investigate the meaning employees of MMDAs in Ghana attached to the different constructs based on their experience and understanding. This then helped to develop a KM framework as a guide for employees' performance effectiveness. To this effect, a conceptual framework was proposed for the study and from the literature, the proposed framework falls within the conceptual framework of Huberman and Miles (1984), *the conceptual framework for a multicase field study*.

This conceptual framework for KM follows the qualitative driven design approach of KM suggested by Finlay (2011) and Handzic (2011). This approach is where the created KM framework helps to step-by-step, map out how the OK can be created, documented and disseminated to all employees through the people, adopted process, the content, and adopted strategies (Barad, 2018; Dalkir, 2017). The researchers here tried to explore and establish the presumed interrelationships of impinging variables or constructs – internal context as host – adoption of decision – cycle of transformations – outcomes as shown in Figure 5.8.

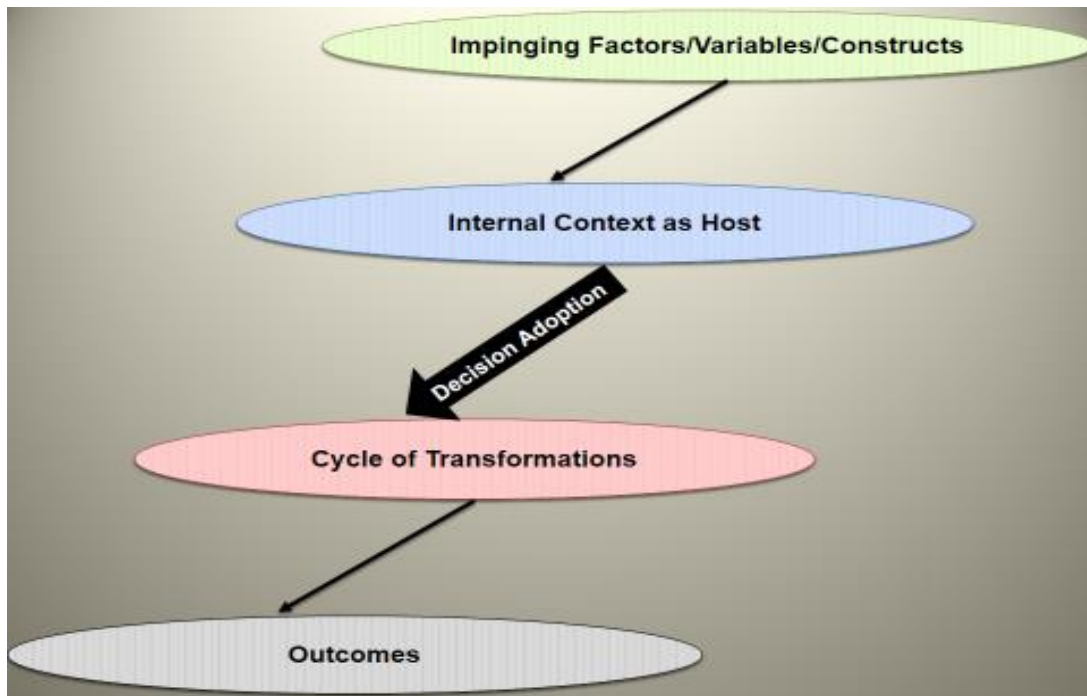


Figure 5.8 Conceptual framework adapted for the study

Source: Huberman and Miles (1984)

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2017) and Miles et al. (2014), this model of conceptual framework is developed at the beginning of the study as exploratory and evolves as the study progresses but is confirmed by the field study as confirmatory in an inductive approach. KM frameworks are developed as guides to explore the OK and its interdependencies, which aim to lead the understanding of any KM practices (Barad, 2018; Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2017). In the literature, KM frameworks are described as prescriptive, descriptive or hybrid, which is both prescriptive and descriptive (Dalkir, 2017; Gao et al., 2018; Ha & Lo, 2018). In the views of Sergeeva and Andreeva (2016), the KM frameworks developed are seen as universalistic and, therefore, a-contextual in form and design. This universalistic and a-contextual position by Sergeeva and Andreeva (2016), therefore, leads to a limited and reductionist approach of KM practices in many organisations.

This approach is compared to the broad and holistic approach explained by Grant (2013) and Hislop (2013). The broad and holistic approach considers key issues

like beliefs, experience, socio-cultural background, norms and context dependent of participants (Borges et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018; Limaye et al., 2017). Hence, these subjective, socio-cultural and context dependent frameworks embrace the practice-based and propositional view of knowledge, which is seen to be dependent on all forms of subjective, cultural and contextual influence (Borges et al., 2019; Hoarau, 2016).

In this study, therefore, the framework is developed to maintain the coherence of this KM practices where, the tacit knowledge of individual employees works together with the explicit knowledge of the organisation, by taking into consideration the employees' experience, academic qualification, culture, job level and geographical location (Ibrahim, 2017; Limaye et al, 2017). In their framework, Huberman and Miles (1984) tried to explore and develop a relationship between the impinging variables or constructs and the internal context of the study, which serves as the host. This was followed by the adoption of decision stage which also went through a cycle of transformations for the outcome of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Miles et al., 2014). This framework, therefore, adopts the broad and holistic approach which is more integrative, interactive and coherent.

A conceptual framework is a product of qualitative process of theorisation that explains either graphically (Robson & McCartan, 2016) or narrative form (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), the main things to be studied, which are the constructs or variables and the presumed interrelationships among them. In a study, a conceptual framework that guides inquiry consists of five major components, which are the research goals, research questions, research methods, context of research and the theoretical framework all of which form an integral part and interact with each other (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; O'Connor & Jeff, 2020). Hence, the framework of Huberman and Miles (1984) was adapted and modified for this proposed conceptual framework of KM as shown in Figure 5.8. Within the context of this study, the impinging constructs are described as the employees' understanding of OK and IOFs, which are related to the internal context as the host of the study. The internal context is the use of the SECI model by Nonaka and

Takeuchi (1995) together with the integrated KM model by Dalkir (2005) and KM practices model by Yusuf and Wanjau (2014), which then lead to the adoption of decision for understanding of KM practices in an organisation.

This means the employees' understanding of this KM practices went through transformations before the outcome of their performance effectiveness. As reviewed from the literature, the impinging constructs also support and interact with each other within the internal context for the employees to have the full understanding of improved KM practices in the organisation (Anand et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020; Holfelder, 2020) for their performance effectiveness. Hence, the understanding of KM practices means helping individual employees to focus on transporting their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the use of all employees (Barad, 2018; Dalkir, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017).

This conceptual framework, therefore, helped to guide the empirical phase of the study to keep it within the broad parameters of KM. This also helped to ensure that the main constructs of the study, which are KM, IOFs and employees' performance effectiveness were adequately explored through the research questions. This proposed conceptual framework, therefore, helped in the completion of the empirical phase of the study (Rezaei et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021), which was also used to develop a practicable KM framework as a guide for public sector employees in Ghana (Miles et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2022) as graphically presented and discussed in Chapter seven.

5.7 PARTICIPANTS' VALIDATION OF RESULTS OF FINDINGS

In a qualitative study, during the data collection and analysis, the researcher may distort and filter the information collected, which may also affect the development of the themes and conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017). This constrain can affect the credibility and validity of an IPA study. Therefore, measures like the validation of the results were introduced to enhance the trustworthiness of the data analysed. This validation was done using the triangulation of the data collection method (Buetow, 2019; Jae-Nam & Young-Gun,

2015) and by returning the results of the data collected to the study participants to cross-check the information provided during the interviews (Birt, Scott & Cavers, 2016; Dodgson, 2019; Sletteboø, 2020).

Validation of results for the development of a conceptual framework aims to ensure that the developed framework and its concepts make sense not only to the researcher but also to other scholars, practitioners and the participants. This process starts with the researcher who seeks a validation from the study participants or outsiders through a conference, a seminar, or some other type of academic framework that provides an excellent opportunity for the researcher to discuss and receive feedback on the data collected (Guilen, 2019; Jae-Nam & Young-Gun, 2015; Neubauer et al., 2019). In this study, to ensure that the participants' lived experiences was correctly interpreted, the analysed data was sent back to the participants for validation through three separate meetings before the development of the conceptual framework. This procedure helped the participants to ascertain if their responses to any question needed to be rectified and also to ensure that the researcher had not misinterpreted the data they provided (Birt et al., 2016; Jae-Nam & Young-Gun, 2015; Sletteboø, 2020).

The validation procedure, therefore, helped to best represent what was intended by the participants during the data collection and analysis, which also helped to address the issue of bracketing, associated with the IPA methodology (Giorgi, 2017; Neubauer et al., 2019; Smith, 2017). The issue of bracketing was addressed through practical strategies like adequate mental preparation of the participants, effective interactions with the participants to understand the meaning of their experiences, open and friendly discussions to relax the participants, keeping a reflexive journal to record the researcher's own feelings and observations about the interviews, and the use of open-ended questions to explore better understanding of the responses established, which all facilitated the issue of bracketing in the data collection and analysis (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Neubauer et al., 2019; Vagle, 2018; Weatherfield & Maitra, 2019).

5.8 METHODS OF ENSURING DATA QUALITY

In this study, data quality issues were considered as very important because with IPA study, it is the understanding of the interpretation of the phenomenon by the participants that bring about trustworthiness of the data. Hence, preparation for and conduct of this qualitative research was influenced by the need to avoid data quality issues where language was used to describe these data (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Smith, 2017; Stenfors et al., 2020). Trustworthiness of data relates to reliability of data, which is concerned with whether alternative researchers would reveal similar information as presented in the study. This qualitative study established trustworthiness through the following identified standards: credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability, and authenticity as explained below (Forero et al., 2018; Mackieson et al., 2018; Stenfors et al., 2020).

5.8.1 Credibility

One of the ways of ensuring data quality is through credibility, which aims to ensure confidence in the truth of the data collected and its interpretation. Credibility in IPA study refers to the extent to which the researcher had gained access to a participant's knowledge and experience, and was able to infer meanings that the participant intended from the language used by that participant (Petitmengin et al., 2019; Stenfors et al., 2020). In this study, credibility of data was established through prolonged engagement, referential adequacy, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, cross-validation, co-operative inquiry, and triangulation (Elistróom et al., 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020). Also, to enhance credibility, care was taken in the clarification of the questions and probing of meanings through rapport with participants to explore responses and themes from a variety of angles during the data collection. Again, during the data collection process, the researcher ensured that the participants were well briefed, the setting for the interview was quiet and the general atmosphere was conducive for the data collection to ensure the validity of the data collected for analysis (Collis & Hussey, 2021; Elistróom et al., 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020). Also, the triangulation method and the validation of the research report were all used (Barret et al., 2020; Dodgson, 2019).

5.8.2 Transferability

Another way of ensuring trustworthiness of data is through transferability, which Elistróm et al. (2020) and Forero et al. (2018) refer to as the extent to which the findings of the research study are applicable to other research settings similar to the study area. This is where the researcher establishes a relationship to an existing theory to demonstrate the broader significance of the findings (Elistróm et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018). In this study, the researcher explicitly described the context of the research and the processes involved, provided a detailed report of the study and then related the study to existing theories on KM and performance effectiveness. This allowed readers to evaluate the quality of the study and the applicability of its findings to other research contexts (Smith et al., 2022; Stenfors et al., 2020). This approach also allowed readers to evaluate the quality of the study and the applicability of its findings to other contexts (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Stenfors, et al., 2020).

5.8.3 Dependability

Another way of ensuring data quality is through dependability, which is referred to as the measures establish to ensure the reliability of data collected over time and the conditions under which they were collected. This process is seen as parallel to the process of confirming reliability in quantitative data, and once credibility is established in a study then dependability is said to have also been achieved (Smith et al., 2022; Stenfors et al., 2020). In this study, dependability of data was enhanced through the careful use of the semi-structured interview schedule, careful reading of the questions and probes, careful audio-recording and notes taken of all interviews and a step-by-step analysis of the transcribed data (Forero et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2022; Stenfors et al., 2020).

5.7.4 Conformability

According to Forero et al. (2018) and Stenfors et al. (2020), conformability refers to the mechanisms established to ensure that the data represent the information that was collected from the participants during the interviews. This relates to the objectivity of the study and refers to the degree to which the outcomes of the study

could be confirmed by another researcher. Hence, conformability relates to the degree of agreement among other researchers on the same phenomenon in terms of its accuracy, meaning and relevance of the data collected (Forero et al., 2018; Stenfors et al., 2020). During the data collection process of this study, responses were audio-recorded, notes were also taken as a back-up and a reflexive journal was also kept to record the researcher's own feelings and observations to ensure triangulation of the data. Validation and validity checks were also made during the data analysis, all of which helped to enhance conformability of this study (Monrouxe & Rees, 2020; Stenfors et al., 2020). Here, detailed descriptions were made on how during the data collection process, responses were audio-recorded while observational field notes and reflexive research journal taken as well as triangulation process followed (Eliström et al., 2020; Forero et al., 2018).

5.8.5 Authenticity

Another method employed to ensure data quality in this study is authenticity. According to Ravitch and Riggan (2017) and Roberts (2017), authenticity refers to the measures established to provide detailed descriptions of a range of participants' lived experiences and feelings in relation to the phenomenon being studied. The measures of authenticity of this study were enhanced through writing of detailed report with detailed descriptions of the methods employed, vivid context and main variables or themes of the study, recording of participants' varied lived experiences, and the explicit meanings the participants gave to improved KM practices, the organisation's enhanced IOFs and performance effectiveness (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017). Authenticity was also enhanced through the keeping of a detailed audit trail of raw data, data reconstruction and synthesis, validation of the findings, and careful notes of materials relating to the interviews were looked at vividly (Morse, 2015b; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017; Roberts, 2017).

5.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

Every research has the potential of exposing respondents or participants to potential risks associated with their participation in the study and to Smith and

Osborn (2015) and Yin (2016), these risks may be physical, psychological or social injury. Therefore, without paying careful attention to how participants will be exposed to potential risk by acting ethically, what seems like good ideas of research may flounder and prove impractical or problematic (Smith & Osborn, 2015; Yin, 2016). To avoid this problem in this study, ethical issues were taken seriously once human participants were involved in collecting valid data. According to Bos (2020) and Dodd (2020), research ethics are described as the standard behaviours that guide one's conduct in relation to the rights of those who become subjects of the research or affected by it. Fleming and Zegward (2018) and Mohd Arifin (2018) also describe research ethics as system of moral values concerned with the degree to which the research procedures conform to legal, social and professional obligations of the study participants.

Research ethics of this study started with the application for ethical clearance from the UNISA HRM Ethics Review Committee, which was approved with the certificate reference number 2017_HRM_012 attached as Appendix A before the start of the data collection process. This was followed by the identification of the study area and subjects and continued throughout the study from the dissemination of study materials to the collection of data (Smith & Osborn, 2015; Yin, 2016). This explains that the researcher has the responsibility to ensure that the research plans are ethically sound and acceptable. Thereafter, there were several ethical issues that were considered in this study, which include rights of participants and organisation, confidentiality, autonomy, anonymity and scientific integrity of the researcher (Dodd, 2020; Mohd Arifin, 2018; Smith, 2017; Unisa Policy on Research Ethics (Unisa), 2014).

5.9.1 Rights of participants and organisation

The researcher developed procedures to protect the rights of the participants and the organisation. Social responsibility and obligations are important to protect the rights of those who participate in the research and are affected by it (Unisa, 2014; Yin, 2016). The rights of all persons were, therefore, recognised and their dignity respected through the application for access and consent attached as Appendix C

to conduct the study from the CEOs of the three metropolitan assemblies (Bos, 2020; Dodd, 2020; Mohd Arifin, 2018). In the correspondence, the background, aims, assurances and potential benefits of the study to the organisation were explained alongside issues of confidentiality and time requirements. Assurances in the form of emotional wellbeing, mental or physical health, or social or group cohesion were given. Also, assurances in the form of embarrassment, stress, discomfort, pain or conflict were included (Bos, 2020; Dodd, 2020; Mohd Arifin, 2018). Before these, ethical clearance was obtained from the UNISA HRM Ethics Review Committee attached as Appendix A before the start of the data collection process. Also, all ethical concerns relating to the study were cleared in accordance with Ghana's Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843) and the application for access and consent was also, approved attached as Appendix D from the CEOs of the metropolitan assemblies for the data collection (Babbie, 2013; Unisa, 2014).

5.9.2 Confidentiality

According to Bos (2020) and Dodd (2020), reliability of data will be enhanced where confidentiality and anonymity are assured. Confidentiality in a research project comes about when the researcher may identify a participant's responses, but promises not to do so publicly (Bos, 2020; Dodd, 2020). In this study, the researcher allayed the fears of the participants' uncertainties about confidentiality of information they provided during the interview. Hence, their names were not used during the interview but were only given filenames, which they wrote on the semi-structured interview schedule given to them and used for analysis. The participants' responses were also kept confidential and the findings of the study were not linked to any of them (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018).

5.9.3 Autonomy

Participants in a research are capable of controlling their own destiny and hence, must be treated as autonomous individuals who have the freedom to conduct their lives as they choose without any external control (Teh & Lek, 2018; Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). Those who took part in this study had the right to determine how

they wanted to participate in the data collection process. These include rights not to answer any question, or set of questions; not to provide any data requested; to modify the nature of their consent; to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty; and possibly to withdraw data they have provided (Cuik & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Roberts, 2017). Enough time, was, therefore, spent with the participants to brief and inform them about the purpose of the study, what was expected of them, the potential risks and the benefits for them before they were made to participate in the research (Smith, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Sufficient information and assurances about taking part was allowed for individuals to understand the implications of participation and to reach a fully informed, considered and freely given decision about whether or not to take part. Those who were willing to take part voluntarily filled and signed the ethical consent agreement form attached as Appendix F after the briefing (Cuik & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Roberts, 2017).

5.9.4 Anonymity

Research is designed to answer research questions but not to focus on those who provide the data to answer these questions (Smith & Osborn, 2015; Yin, 2016). Hence, individuals and organisations that took part in the research remained anonymous and the data they provided were also processed to make it non-attributable to any of the participants (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018). Anonymity in a research project is when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given participant. In this study, the participants were not required to provide their names on the semi-structured interview schedule but only wrote a unique filename that they were provided by the researcher during sampling (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018). The data were collected in the assembly's inner conference room, which was separate from the assembly's office premises, was quiet and also comfortable. The discussion was one-on-one and was opened with friendliness and opportunity was taken to re-establish to the participants their rights and anonymity. All this was done to assure the participants of their anonymity (Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Mohd Arifin, 2018).

5.9.5 Scientific integrity of the researcher

Researchers will present results and findings from the field, which sometimes form the basis of policy development and decisions of government. It was, therefore, important that this research was conducted with integrity and in accordance with high ethical standards as stated in the Unisa ethical clearance certificate (Cuik & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Unisa, 2014). The researcher maintained professional ethics and scientific conduct throughout the study hence, considered whether any type of harm could occur to the participants during the research process. Measures like referring any participant to a psychologist at the respective teaching hospital were established to prevent any potential psychological or physical harm (Cuik & Latusek, 2018; Fleming & Zegward, 2018; Roberts, 2017; Unisa, 2014).

5.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter was dedicated to the comprehensive discussion of the mechanics of the philosophical paradigm, the research approach and the consequential research design adopted by the researcher for the study. This helped to show the philosophical worldview and the research approach, together with the complementary assumptions adopted for the study. The chapter also focused on the discussion of the research design adopted, which was IPA and the main units of analysis together with the research settings. In the chapter, the researcher also discussed how the research was also designed as interactive, exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research. Though the research designed as explanatory, does not enjoy the same level of acceptance from the research community as other designs. The data collection instrument and method within this phenomenological study design was also discussed, followed by an explanation of how the data were analysed and integrated for the findings. Thereafter, issues relating to methods of ensuring data quality, data management, ethical considerations, the proposed conceptual framework and methods of validating the report of the findings were all discussed in this chapter. This helped to design the empirical phase of the study, guiding the data collection and analysis. This,

therefore, paved the way for the presentation of the interpretative findings in Chapter six of the study.

The sampling technique, which was heterogeneous purposive sampling, was used to select 18 participants for the study. The instrument used for the collection of the primary data, which was a semi-structured interview schedule and the data collection method, which was also semi-structured interviews were thoroughly discussed in this chapter. An IPA framework, which was a bottom-up approach, was used to analyse the data and how the data would be managed was also discussed. The model of the conceptual framework for the study was shown followed by issues of credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected as well as research ethics and data quality was addressed.

CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

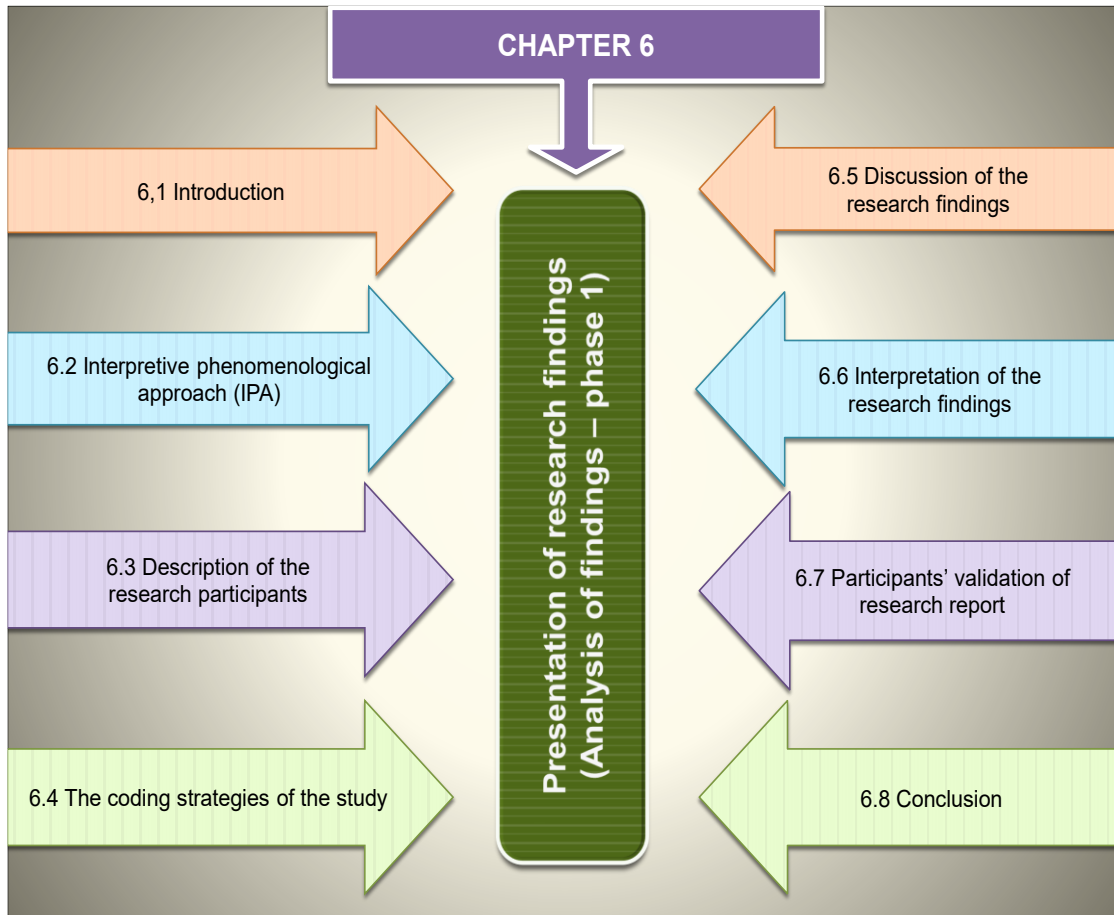


Figure 6.1: The structure of chapter six at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter five of the study, the presentation was focused on comprehensive information on the research paradigm, design and methodology followed to conduct the empirical aspect of the study, which has been presented in chapter six as the findings. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the presentation of a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the research findings, which

involved the presentation of the participants' background together with the narration of their beliefs and experiences on the phenomenon during the interviews. In line with the IPA tradition, the presentation of the research findings was done in two subcategories, focusing on an in-depth understanding of the participants' lived experiences and the meaning behind these experiences on KM practices in the organisation. The first subcategory is the phenomenological reduction category, which involved the process of reduction of the data into inferential codes, subordinate and superordinate themes. The second subcategory is the interpretive process, which involved the process of interpretation of the findings in the context of relevant literature control of the constructs.

The presentation of the second subcategory was, therefore, done in relation to the literature control to contextualise and authenticate the research findings. To this effect, the presentation of the research findings was focused on the discussions and interpretations based on the context of the individual interviews transcribed verbatim, the observational field notes that were taken and the reflexive research journal compiled during the interviews, which were systematically coded for the findings. These three sources of data collected from an IPA approach were used for the generation of inferential codes, development of subordinate and superordinate themes, which were all used for the presentation of the research findings (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016; Yin, 2016). Thereafter, a theory building compositional structure was chosen as the conceptual framework to help gain explanatory insights into improved KM practices and how it is used to guide employees for their performance effectiveness to end the empirical phase of the study (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020). The structure of this chapter at a glance has, therefore, been presented in Figure 6.1.

6.2 INTERPRETIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

IPA was used to offer a methodological direction which helped the researcher to understand the fundamental meanings employees of MMDAs in Ghana attached to the organisational life as they were involved in the organisation's everyday activities, to explain what went on with regards to the organisation's KM practices

(Larkin et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2022). This helped to explore and explain the understanding and interpretation of the meaning of experiences of the participants through searching for inferential codes and the development of subordinate and superordinate themes from the data. This involved a chain of connections of embodied experiences, talk about that experience and the participants making sense of it and their emotional reaction to that experience (Larkin et al., 2019; Miles et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022).

This was used to reveal and interpret the embedded beliefs and meanings in the participants' lived experience, which was about phenomenology and how the researcher made sense of this experience, which was about interpretation (Larkin et al., 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019). This means, it was through the participants' perceptions and reactions to the phenomenon that the researcher entered their contexts to interact with them to understand the meanings that they gave to their experiences with the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This IPA methodology, therefore, helped the researcher to look at what the participant said (the factors that influenced what he or she said) and what that participant thinks and feels about what he or she was talking about (the condition that affected their sense of identity) during the interactions with them (Noon, 2018; Peat et al., 2019; Rettie & Emiliussen, 2018).

The IPA methodology was, therefore, used to understand and explain specific issues on the organisation's KM practices holistically from the perspective of individual participants down to the group level (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017; Van Manen, 2016). This approach involved the use of a set of well-developed human experiences for the development of superordinate themes that were systematically linked through statements of relationship (Franzosi, 2016; Van Manen, 2016). In view of this, the analysis of the data involved the use of IPA framework shown in section 5.5.7, which was in two subcategories, namely, the phenomenological reduction category and the interpretive process category. The category of the phenomenological reduction was where the researcher made sense of the first-order meaning of the participants' understanding by reducing the content of the

transcripts into inferential codes to the superordinate themes using a six-step bottom-up approach shown in Figure 5.7 in section 5.5.7 of the study and shown in Table 6.3. On the other hand, the interpretive process category was where the researcher explains the findings in the context of relevant scholarly literature control. Hence, the final report on the findings was used to develop a coherent conceptual framework, which constitutes subordinate and superordinate themes derived from a detailed analytical interpretation of the data.

6.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Because of the methodology adopted, the researcher tried to make sense of the findings of the first subcategory from the participants, based on the advice of Fade (2011) and Finlay (2011), their background and emotional reactions to the interview context was first described. The participants for the study were made up of a sample size of 18 employees (12 males and six females) drawn from the Kumasi, Tamale and Tema metropolitan assemblies zoned as central, northern and southern zones respectively. They were purposively selected from a population of 900 employees and were based on their job level and geographical location. In selecting them, eligibility criteria, shown in section 5.5.3 were used because the intent was to explore both the real-life and retrospective experiences of the employees working together with shared values (Petitmengin et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2022; Somers et al., 2019).

In this view, this number of employees allowed for a richer depth of analysis that may have been inhibited with a larger sample size. This shows that six participants were selected from each of the three geographical zones for the interview. Such a few numbers of participants allowed each case to be explored with the necessary time, energy and rigour required in an IPA framework of data analysis (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017). In view of the job level and geographical location of the employees, a heterogeneous purposive sampling also, known as the maximum variation sampling technique as shown in Figure 5.6 in Chapter five of the study, was used for the final selection of the participants as shown in Table 5.2 in section 5.5.3 of the study (Creswell, 2016; Smith, 2017).

As it was important in an inductive study like this, the background and emotional reactions of each participant who took part in the study have been summarised in Table 6.1. This was because in an IPA study, these variables have a significant influence on the responses of participants that are interpreted by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Smith, 2017; Vagle, 2018). The 18 individual interviews begun in the northern zone, followed by the southern zone before the central zone and were all done at the assembly's inner conference room, which was detached from the assembly's office premises, was quiet and comfortable and precinct for the confidentiality of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Smith, 2017). These interviews were first audio-recorded for about 544.14 minutes in all, before they were transcribed verbatim in 434 pages for this analysis using filenames given to the participants during the process of sampling, shown in Table 5.3 in section 5.5.3 of the study to protect their anonymity. The filenames given to participants in this qualitative study was to ensure that all personal or identifiable information attributable to them were removed leaving their geographical zone and job levels, which cannot be linked to any of them (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017). The researcher also used observational field notes and a reflexive research journal to describe the context of each interview. The interview context of each participant has been described and presented in Table 6.1.

Filename of participant	Zone of participant	The job level of participant	Background and emotional reactions of participant to the interview context
TAS1	Northern	Senior	Was first to be interviewed, was male, 52 years old, had a first degree, had 16 years of working experience, ten years with metro assembly, had over 12 years of training, was friendly and calm, relaxed and confident, was open to any question, and was probed for further explanations.
TAS2	Northern	Senior	Was fourth to be interviewed, was male, 50 years old, had a second degree, had 16 years of working experience, nine

			years was with metro assembly, had about ten years of training, was well-balanced, confident, friendly, had strong loyalty to the organisation, and was extremely strong for any question.
TAM1	Northern	Middle	Was third to be interviewed, was female, 40 years old, had a first degree, had 12 years of working experience, about eight years with metro assembly, had about ten years of training, was joyful, friendly and relaxed, was confident for any question, and the conversation flowed naturally.
TAM2	Northern	Middle	Was second to be interviewed, was female, 43 years old, had a first degree, had 13 years of working experience, nine years with metro assembly, had over ten years of training, was prompt at the interview, was relaxed, strong, friendly, and was calm and confident in response.
TAJ1	Northern	Junior	Was fifth to be interviewed, was male, 42 years old, had a Higher National Diploma, had ten years of working experience with the metro assembly, had about eight years of training, was well-balanced, calm, relaxed, and very passionate about the interview.
TAJ2	Northern	Junior	Was sixth to be interviewed, was female, 45 years old, had a first degree, had ten years of working experience with the metro assembly, had over nine years of training, was passionate about her work, was casual in appearance but very relaxed, and was friendly and open.

TES1	Southern	Senior	Was first to be interviewed, was male, 50 years old, had a second degree, had 15 years of working experience, ten years with metro assembly, had about 12 years of training, was friendly, well-balanced, quite relaxed, was positive about the organisation, was ready for any question, and was probed further.
TES2	Southern	Senior	Was third to be interviewed, was male, 51 years old, had a second degree, had 16 years of working experience, nine years with metro assembly, had over nine years of training, was positive, was willing to elaborate on issues and feelings, was very friendly, was probed further, and was passive but confident in his response.
TEM1	Southern	Middle	Was second to be interviewed, was male, 52 years old, had a second degree, had 18 years of working experience, 12 years was with metro assembly, had about 14 years of training, was emotionally stable, so respectful, had a long conversation, was open to any question, and the feeling was mutual.
TEM2	Southern	Middle	Was fourth to be interviewed, was male, 48 years old, had a first degree, had 12 years of working experience with the metro assembly, had over ten years of training, was confident, a bit sentimental, positive, quite relaxed for any question, and gave very useful answers.
TEJ1	Southern	Junior	Was fifth to be interviewed, was male, 52 years old, had a first degree, had 16 years

			of working experience with metro assembly, had over ten years of training, was friendly, an excited person, confident, full of humour, and was even-handed during the interview.
TEJ2	Southern	Junior	Was sixth to be interviewed, was female, 45 years old, had a Higher National Diploma, had 12 years of working experience with the metro assembly, had about ten years of training, was quite excited and relaxed, was respectful in response, and answered the questions without much probing.
KUS1	Central	Senior	Was fourth to be interviewed, was male, 55 years old, had a second degree, had 19 years of working experience, 13 years was with metro assembly, had about 15 years of training, was extremely calm, relaxed and friendly, was even-handed and apt in his response, and provided insightful answers with probes.
KUS2	Central	Senior	Was third to be interviewed, was male, 50 years old, had a second degree, 16 years of working experience, eight years with metro assembly, had about ten years of training, was excited and friendly, contented and calm, was open to any question with further probes, and was so positive about the future.
KUM1	Central	Middle	Was first to be interviewed, was male, 49 years old, had a first degree, had 12 years of working experience with the metro assembly, had over ten years of training,

			was open and friendly, was even-handed, was relaxed and free, was confident, and was straightforward in response.
KUM2	Central	Middle	Was second to be interviewed, was female, 53 years old, had a second degree, had 17 years of working experience, eight years with the metro assembly, had about ten years of training, was calm, friendly, confident, and was straightforward, was apt in her response, and was probed further.
KUJ1	Central	Junior	Was fifth to be interviewed, was male, 52 years old, had a first degree, had 13 years of working experience, eight years with the metro assembly, had about nine years of training, was quite reserved but friendly, relaxed and confident, was open to any question, and provided very useful answers when probed.
KUJ2	Central	Junior	Was sixth to be interviewed, was female, 46 years old, had a first degree, had ten years of working experience with the metro assembly, had about nine years of training, was very free, friendly, calm and confident, was open in her response, and had very free conversation with her on the issues and her feelings.

Table 6.1 Background and emotional reactions of participants

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2019)

In addition to the detailed background and the participants' emotional reactions shown in Table 6.1, Table 6.2 also shows the referencing system used in reporting the filenames of the participants in Table 6.1. This referencing system was based

on the participants' geographical location and their job level, which was also thoroughly discussed in section 5.5.3 and shown in Table 5.3 in Chapter five.

Geographical zone	<p>KU - refers to Kumasi metro employees, from the central zone.</p> <p>TA - refers to Tamale metro employees, from the northern zone.</p> <p>TE - refers to Tema metro employees, from the southern zone.</p>
Job level	<p>S - refers to a senior-level employee in the organisation.</p> <p>M - refers to a middle-level employee in the organisation.</p> <p>J - refers to a junior-level employee in the organisation.</p>
Numbers	<p>1 - refers to the first participant from that job level.</p> <p>2 - refers to the second participant from that same job level.</p>
Example	<p>KUM2 - refers to a participant from the Kumasi Metro Assembly in the central zone, was a middle-level employee, and was the second participant from that same job level (middle) interviewed.</p>

Table 6.2: Referencing system used for the filename of participants

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2019)

6.4 THE CODING STRATEGIES OF THE STUDY

Based on the interpretive tradition, the researcher, as recommended by Smith (2017) and van Manen (2016) as shown in Figure 5.7 in Chapter five of the study, used the structural coding process where codes were associated with responses to the interview context questions. This was a bottom-up approach, which iteratively examined the unique and particular experiences of each verbatim transcribed interview, together with the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal, identified and generated the needed inferential codes leading to the development of the subordinate and superordinate themes as shown in Table 6.3. The structural coding process also known as an open or inductive coding approach, was where the researcher though, had a rough idea of what the codes will look like based on the literature reviewed, read through the texts iteratively for the participants to come out with the appropriate codes, which were related to general analytic themes of the research questions (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

In this coding process, some participants were termed “*power respondents*” who were vocal during the interview hence, their responses were first used to get the line of proposed inferential codes. This process also helped the researcher to understand the participants’ mental modules during the interviews. In addition, as recommended by Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) and O’Connor and Joffe (2020), the transcribed interviews were also coded and analysed by an independent co-coder concurrently to enhance the credibility of the interpretation of the findings. As discussed in section 5.5.7 in Chapter five of the study, the independent co-coder was from the ILGS in Tamale Campus, was an objective person who did not know about the phenomenon under investigation and did not also review the literature on which this study was grounded before coding the data. This process helped the co-coder to generate the codes independently, which the researcher finally used to compare and update his inferential codes, subordinate and superordinate themes developed (Marathe & Toyama, 2018; Silverman, 2020) as presented in Table 6.3.

Before this was done, a consensus meeting was held with the independent co-coder where the codes he developed were equated with that of the researcher before the development of the subordinate and superordinate themes needed for the study (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; O’Connor & Jeff, 2020). Each of the inferential codes was labelled with a unique identifier and put under a subordinate theme, which forms the first order meaning-making of the findings (Franzosi, 2016; Maxwell, 2016). This was done to assist readers to verify the evidence of the interpretations and transparencies regarding the research findings presented (Nizza et al., 2021; Shashi et al., 2022).

These subordinate themes together with the superordinate themes developed were also well labelled to assist readers to verify the needed relationships among them, which were finally used to develop a coherent conceptual framework (Nizza et al., 2021; Shashi et al., 2022). Here, the analysis and reporting of this qualitative data was carried out in the voice of the researcher (first person) as he was the primary research instrument in collecting and interpreting the data. This was

because IPA methodology helps researchers to find out qualitatively through “*how*” and “*why*” questions during the data collection (Franzosi, 2016; Smith, 2017). Hence, the discussion and interpretation of the findings were presented from a first-person’s viewpoint to assist the reader to gain an objective insider perspective (Franzosi, 2016; Smith, 2017). However, the third person voice was used in reporting the rest of the study to place the researcher in the background and to demonstrate the objectivity of the study (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019; O’Connor & Jeff, 2020).

In the process of a pattern of shared meaning and experience, 109 inferential codes were generated from the verbatim transcribed interviews, observational field notes and reflexive research journal as shown in Figure 6.2 and form the first subcategory of the findings (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017; van Manen, 2016). The inferential codes were used to develop 12 subordinate and six superordinate themes also shown in Table 6.3. These subordinate and superordinate themes were used for the interpretation of the research findings, which constitute the first order meaning-making as well as the second order meaning-making process of the second subcategory of findings. On the recommendation of Jeong and Othman (2016) and Maxwell (2016), these superordinate and subordinate themes were used for the development of a practicable conceptual framework for KM as shown in section 7.4 in chapter seven of the study.

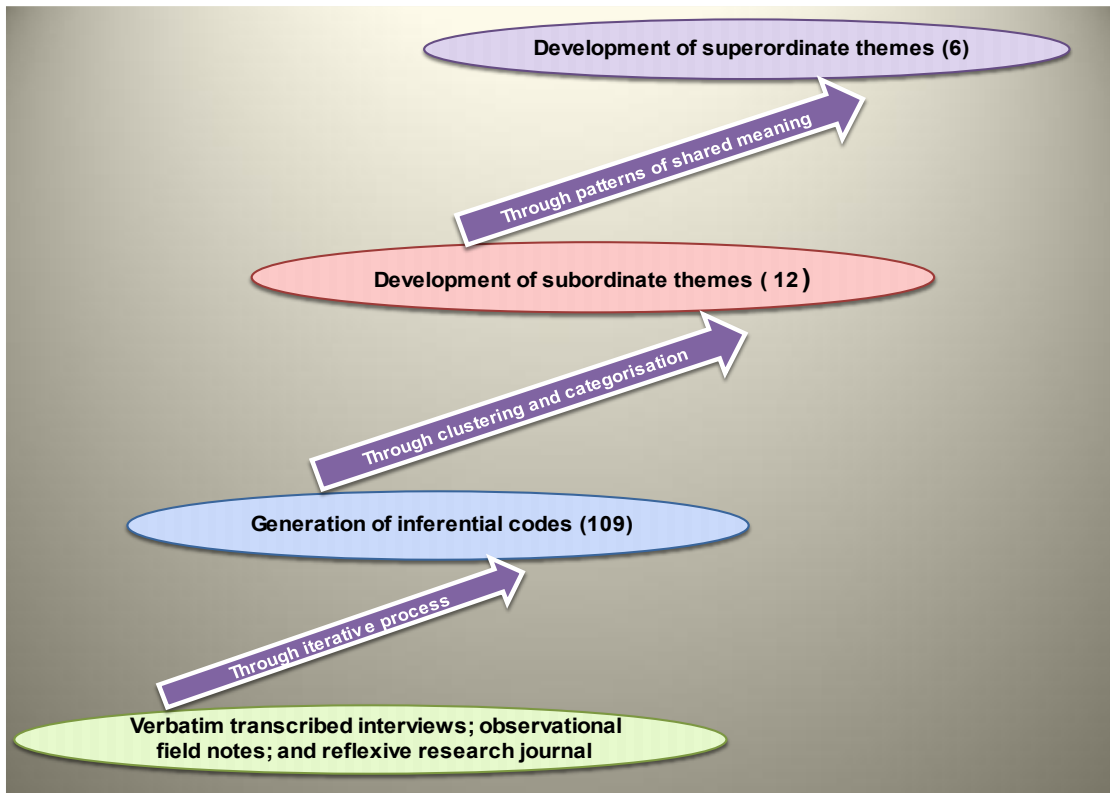


Figure 6.2: An illustration of the inductive coding approach for the study

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2019)

Superordinate theme 1:	
The types of OK	
Subordinate themes	Inferential codes
1.1 Tacit knowledge of employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills - Experience - Expertise - Abilities - Intelligence - Proficiencies - Ideas - Insights - Judgments - Attributes - Intuitions

<p>3.2 Internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactions - Dialogues - Briefings - Hands-on practice - Working in groups - Networking - Seminars - Workshops - Conferencing - Training - Orientation - Knowledge sourcing - Symposia - Video images
<p>Superordinate theme 4: The enhanced IOFs</p>	
<p>Subordinate theme</p>	<p>Inferential codes</p>
<p>4.1 Enhanced internal practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic internal strategy - Flexible organisational culture - Decentralised organisational structure - Flexible leadership styles - Efficient technological tools - Coordinated internal practices
<p>4.2 Enhanced internal strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good employee psychological attachment - Participatory work policies - Self-organised internal procedures - Self-directing internal guides - Flexible work rules - Flexible internal regulations - Flexible internal principles - Coordinated internal strategies

Superordinate theme 5:	
The improved KM practices	
Subordinate themes	Inferential codes
5.1 Improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having enough experienced workers - Formal methodology for sharing knowledge - Empowering experienced employees - Motivating employees to share knowledge - Building trust among employees - Effective links with experienced employees - Adopting best practices approach - Having different lines of work - Having collective incentives for employees
5.2 Improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having efficient institutional memory - Conducive organisational work environment - Managing well the needed knowledge - Encouraging employee collaborations - Encouraging teamwork among employees - Adopting effective knowledge sourcing - Having teams that are self-managed - Having participatory decision-making process - Having a high-involvement management style - Effective evaluation of knowledge asset
Superordinate theme 6:	
Relation of improved KM practices to performance	
Subordinate themes	Inferential codes
6.1 Relating improved KM practices to employees' performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring about more experienced employees - Build confidence among employees - Help to sustains life-long learning practices - Employees have control over how they work - Make employees creative and innovative - Free flow of knowledge among employees - Improve on organisational behaviour

<p>6.2 Relating the enhanced IOFs to employees' performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees effectively socialise and interact - Help to develop positive work group norms - Bring about more experienced employees - Make employees valuable, rare, not-imitable, and organisation specific - Lead to the harmonious relationship among employees - Lead to employee performance enhancement - Help to influence employees' interactions - Improve on knowledge sharing initiatives - Influence inner workings of employees - Coordinate employees' relationships - Connect people-to-people for discussions - Help to unite employees for cohesion - Improve knowledge planning and feedback - Help to promote communication - Improve on networking and teamwork - Bring about inter-employee cooperation - Help to develop positive workgroup norms - Improve on contextual performance
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Table 6.3: Inferential codes, subordinate and superordinate themes

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2019)

6.5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Prison (2017) and Smith (2017) recommended that the presentation of the discussion and interpretation of IPA research findings, commence with a concise summary of what was discovered during the data analysis while engaging with the data. Hence, the discussion of these research findings begun with a concise presentation of a narrative description of the central storyline of the study, which was also, based on the presentation of the inferential codes generated and subordinate themes as well the superordinate themes identified and developed. As

shown in Table 6.3, the subordinate and superordinate themes developed were thoroughly labelled with a unique identifier to assist readers to verify the needed relationships among them. Hence, this presentation of the discussion of the research findings portrays my second order meaning-making of the first subcategory of the findings. As indicated, the first order meaning-making of the findings in this IPA study, was where the researcher reduced the complexity of the three sources of data gathered, through the generation of inferential codes and the development of subordinate as well as the superordinate themes as shown in Table 6.3 (Micinally & Gray-Brunton, 2021; Nizza et al., 2021; Peat et al., 2019).

6.5.1 Description of the central storyline of the study

The presentation of the discussion of this research finding forms my second order meaning-making of the first subcategory of the findings which Prison (2017) and Smith (2017) recommended that it commences with a concise summary of what was discovered during the first order meaning-making process. It was discovered in the process that employees in the public sector organisations in Ghana do not appreciate KM practices, which was largely blamed on ineffective HR practices in the organisations (Asiedu, 2015; Maindze et al., 2017). These ineffective HR practices accounted for their continued ineffective performance and these were echoed by the participants during the semi-structured interviews. The participants revealed that their continued ineffective performance was largely blamed on ineffective HR practices and their lack of understanding of the implementation of the organisation's KM practices. It was, therefore, clear that the public sector organisations do not effectively manage their OK and this also contributes to them operating ineffectively, which in effect harms their operations and service delivery (Asiedu, 2015; Maindze et al., 2017; Omotayo, 2015).

This situation makes the MMDAs in Ghana ineffective in their service delivery to the local or district assemblies, hence, promises of development in the rural areas were not fulfilled, issues of poverty reduction and rural development were not met and these rural communities remain underdeveloped. This poor performance of the employees, in turn, affected the performance of the very important local

government structure in Ghana, which makes the organisation not being accountable, responsive, efficient, and effective for the promotion of the needed development of the rural communities and the development of the individual employees in such organisations (Anderson & La Trobe, 2018; Aziabah, 2018). The participants, however, made it clear that the LGSG had been struggling to ensure that they improve on their performance through training to improve on their SKAAs for their effective performance (CDD-Ghana, 2017; UNDP, 2018). This showed that the HR department of the LGSG had acknowledged the impact of the employees' ineffectiveness on the operations of the MMDAs and, therefore, took these pragmatic steps.

To this effect, one important performance approach that has a proven success record of solving and sustaining the ineffective performance of these employees was the understanding and implementation of KM practices in the organisation (Ali et al., 2019; Butt et al., 2019; Gao et al., 2018). However, it was observed from the literature that there were:

- Few studies on KM practices which were conducted on both public and private sector organisations in West African countries particularly, Ghana (Amaya, 2013; Dzato, 2015; Kommey, 2015);
- A few published empirical studies on the application of KM practices framework as a guide for the effective performance of employees of MMDAs in Ghana (Asiedu, 2015; Kommey, 2015); and
- A handful of the empirical cross-cultural KM practices studies used an IPA methodology, which provides rich descriptive and interpretive data for analysis and understanding (Grau & Moghaddassi, 2016; Ibrahim, 2017; Prison, 2017).

Consequently, this study on KM practices was to help explore how to improve on the linkages between public sector employees' KM practices using the IOFs, through an IPA methodology. The use of an IPA methodology was to systematically help to explore and explain this phenomenon of KM practices that were not fully understood by the employees of the public sector organisations

(Grau & Moghaddassi, 2016; Ibrahim, 2017; Prison, 2017). This will then help to show that KM practices can help to enforce and improve employees' performance through the linkages between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices. The improved practices on KM will serve as a guide to help improve on the employees' understanding of the OK and the IOFs and the organisation's KM practices which lead to employees' effective performance (Ha & Lo, 2018; Hislop et al., 2018).

As a result, this KM practices form the internal context of the study, which helps to show how to transform the tacit knowledge of individual employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the needed employees' effective performance (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). Many researchers also describe KM practices as a process established in an organisation, using the IOFs to ensure that best practices, skills, experiences, insights, and other forms of employees' knowledge are captured, codified, shared, and applied by all employees in an organisation (Ali et al., 2019: 1805; Singh et al., 2019: 903). Hence, the use of the IPA methodology was to help focus on detailed exploration and explanation of personal lived experiences of employees of the MMDAs in Ghana, the meaning of such experiences to them, and how they made sense of these experiences with regards to KM practices (Franzosi, 2016; Van Manen, 2016). This will help the HR department of the MMDAs to implement improved KM practices using IOFs that are enhanced to achieve the needed employees' performance effectiveness.

6.5.2 Contextual description of the superordinate themes

Another second order meaning-making of the first subcategory of the research findings was the contextual description of the superordinate themes developed for the study as shown in Table 6.3. This is to help readers to conceptualise these superordinate themes developed through their explanation contextually based on the study's theoretical frameworks (Jeong & Othman, 2016; Maxwell, 2016). Hence, based on the generation of the above inferential codes as well as the subordinate and superordinate themes developed, the analysis of the findings was presented based on the six superordinate themes. These superordinate themes

were supported with the 12 subordinate themes developed together with verbatim quotes from at least three of the participants. Also, for trustworthiness and construct consistency, the superordinate themes conceptualised were explained contextually based on the study's theoretical frameworks (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) as the participants' understanding of what constitutes:

- *Types of OK*: In the views of Grant (2013) and Zaman (2013), OK is the tacit knowledge of individual employees which through the processes of interactions and exchanges, is converted, coded and transported into explicit knowledge of the organisation. Bamel and Bamel (2018) added that over time, this OK when used constantly, culminates into experience, competencies and expertise, which help to increase employees' performance effectiveness;
- *Types of IOFs for KM*: In the views of Ali et al. (2019) and Sokoli et al. (2019), there are IOFs that are necessary for KM, which include the internal practices and internal strategies of the organisation. These internal practices and strategies are within the control of HR management, which they use to affect employees' interactions, communications, collaborations and networking for the success of KM. Internal practices are seen as the usual systems that support repeated ways of doing systematic exercises to influence employees' behaviour to become proficient while internal strategies are seen as the schemes that are adapted by the HR management to help improve and sustain employees' behaviour to serve an important function towards achieving a goal (Ali et al., 2019; Kazemi et al., 2021; Rezaei et al., 2020);
- *Organisation's KM practices*: According to Astor-Vargas et al. (2017) and Ha and Lo (2018), an organisation's KM practices are the systematic initiative, process, or activity established by the HR department to help transform individual employees' tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the benefit of all employees, using the IOFs. This initiative, process or activity, therefore, enables the HR department to effectively develop and sustain the codification, storing, sharing, and

application initiatives of the OK wherever it resides, internal or external of the organisation, to all employees to enhance their performance effectiveness (Bakator et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018);

- *Enhanced IOFs*: It was observed that enhanced IOFs are the adapted internal practices and strategies that are well improved to help motivate and sustain employees' levels of participation, interaction, collaboration, communication, and networking for their improved KM practices (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Gharamah et al., 2018). These improved internal practices and strategies assist employees to effectively adopt good organisational citizenship behaviour, which helps them to put their creative ideas into practice and encourages them to be professional in their KM practices (Alshaima et al., 2016; Mittal et al., 2018);
- *Organisation's improved KM practices*: In the scholarly views of Inayat and Khan (2021) and Saifulina et al. (2021), improved KM practices are any deliberate efforts established by the HR department to help develop and improve on the knowledge resource of its employees, which can be achieved directly or indirectly by improving on the internal practices and strategies adopted or the effective use of its ICT tools. Hence, improved KM practices are dependent on having effective and efficient socio-cultural practices and strategies that will help create and enhance mental, emotional and attitudinal states of employees, which will help to bring together their varied knowledge that HR management can tap into for them to be innovative and creative, have improved sense of duty and have hard work-spiritedness (Qureshi & Waseen, 2018; Santoro et al., 2018);
- *Relation of improved KM practices to the job performance of employees*: The general purpose of this research was to develop a descriptive understanding of KM practices for the effective performance of employees using enhanced IOFs. This is because it has been established that improved KM practices are embedded and inseparable from the IOFs, which help to facilitate and coordinate the flow of knowledge between employees and their overall performance effectiveness (Ali et al., 2019; Liu

et al., 2021). In view of this, the relation of improved KM practices to employees' job performance has become more important because what links people and their performance effectiveness are their internal engagement and how the OK is managed to ensure their performance effectiveness (Huselid, 2016; Latilla et al., 2018).

6.6 INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section constitutes the second subcategory of the meaning-making of the study where the research findings concerning the context of the relevant literature control are presented. In this presentation, I tried to interpret the research findings by drawing mostly on the knowledge creation and management (SECI) theory conceptualised by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and supported by the integrated KM theory of Dalkir (2005) and the KM practices theory of Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) as shown in sections 2.9.1, 2.9.2 and 2.9.3 respectively, as well as other theories discussed in Chapter two of the study. The drawing mostly on these seminal and other theories was to help me gain a deeper understanding of the organisation's KM practices, which was centred on the process of transforming individual employees' tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation to improve all employees' performance effectiveness as the findings.

In support of the recommendations made by Creswell and Poth (2018) and Smith and Osborn (2015), this stage of the meaning-making was centred on the interpretation of the six superordinate themes developed and explained contextually. These are presented in the same order as they appeared in the first subcategory as shown in Table 6.3. However, for each of the superordinate themes presented, the interpretation commenced with my first order meaning-making process, which was centred on the beliefs and experiences of the participants during the interviews. This was then followed by the presentation of the subordinate themes developed and subsequently supported with at least three verbatim quotes from the semi-structured individual interviews. After this was the presentation of the second order of the meaning-making process, which was the interpretative part of the research findings.

This second order part of the meaning-making process also came with the integration of the theoretical frameworks on KM using these superordinate themes (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020). Once again, it is important to state here that KM practices are all about how an individual employees' tacit knowledge is captured and transformed into the organisation's explicit knowledge and shared for the general use of all employees for them to perform effectively (Butt et al., 2019; Gamble, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Again, for credibility and reliability of the research findings, the second order part of the second subcategory of the research findings commenced with the presentation on the findings of the research participants (Franzosi, 2016; Maxwell, 2016; Saldāna, 2016).

6.6.1 Presentation of the findings on the participants

As explained by Franzosi (2016), Maxwell (2016) and Saldāna (2016), the second order part of the second subcategory of this research finding commenced with the presentation of the findings to the participants. This was done because of the importance of the background and emotional reactions of the participants in an IPA study like this. In this section, therefore, the interpretation of the participants' experience on the organisation's KM practices was based on the participant's characteristics such as their personal and socio-cultural background, gender and employment experience as well as their emotional reactions during the interviews. This was consistent with the views that IPA researchers come out with the socio-cultural and experience background as well as other personal details of their participants to find out how these characteristics influence their responses for a credible and reliable data (Franzosi, 2016; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017). These views, however, contradict the views of the objective-based theorists who held that KM practices are distinct from the individual employees who own the knowledge and therefore, free from the individual's influence. To them, the knowledge the individual employee holds is independent of his or her socio-cultural background and personal characteristics (Liu et al., 2020; Park et al., 2021).

However, in this IPA methodology, the interpretation of the participants' experience of the phenomena contextually, was based on their personal characteristics and

their emotional reactions during the semi-structured interviews (as shown in Table 6.1). During the interviews, it was discovered that most of the participants were male, above 40 years, had higher educational qualification, and had working experience of at least ten years in the organisation (as shown in Table 6.1). In reality, the working experience, socio-cultural background, educational qualification, and emotional state of individual employees have a great influence on their effective interactions, discussions and knowledge sharing activities because these characteristics help in shaping the individual employee's orientation on KM practices (Borges et al., 2019; Delshab et al., 2019). This means these long years of working experience of the participants (at least ten years) culminates into their physical resources, competencies and commitments, which they used in solving the organisation's problems. In interpretation, the participants having more years of working experience means that the organisation has more knowledge workers who, based on the background of their working together, are ready and willing to effectively share as well as increase the knowledge resource of other employees (Borges et al., 2019; Grandos et al., 2017; Kero, 2016).

It is worth mentioning here that during the interviews, it was observed that most of the participants were emotionally confident, even-handed, straightforward, friendly, excited, stable, and very relaxed as shown in Table 6.1. These reactions, coupled with their higher educational qualification and long working experience, showed how confident they were in the responses they provided, which helped to provide rich and credible responses freely and voluntarily (Febrianti & Se, 2020; Sukhani & Jain, 2020). This means the employees having long years of working experience and flexible working conditions helped them to develop their knowledge and skills, which also motivated and encouraged them to share their tacit knowledge and experiences with other employees willingly (Sukhani & Jain, 2020; Wang et al., 2020). The participants' emotional reactions here corroborate the views of the practice-based theorists who termed this type of emotional reaction as knowledgeable activities (Al-Ahbabi et al., 2019; Clinton & Gamble, 2019). This means that the conditions of good emotional reactions of the participants helped to shape their orientation and understanding for rich and credible KM activities in the

organisation. Hence, the experiences on the organisation's KM practices the participants provided during the interviews were seen to be rich, which helped the researcher to easily resolve the issue of data saturation during the interviews (Anand et al., 2020; Gamble, 2020).

The reflection on the participants' characteristics and their provision of rich and credible responses during the interviews corresponded with the views that during semi-structured interviews, it is the researcher who makes sense or interprets the meaning the participants have about the phenomenon based on their personal life and working experience for a credible outcome (Palaganas et al., 2017; Tsiolis, 2018). The findings also revealed that the participants have worked together as a team for a long period which supports the views that a team's longevity helps them to perform effectively (Ji & Yan, 2020). This means the free and voluntary responses made by the participants during the interviews based on their group experience helped me to effectively compare the transcribed interviews with my observational field notes and reflexive research journal for the needed convergent and divergent views. This also helped me to come out with the necessary pattern of shared meanings for the generation of credible and reliable inferential codes, after a consensus meeting with the independent co-coder, which also helped me to develop credible and reliable subordinate and superordinate themes (Teh & Lek, 2018; Tuval-Mashiach, 2017; van Manen, 2016).

Furthermore, the participants' having long years of good working experience suggests that they had long years of good working relationship with the management of the MMDAs. This means the participants were motivated well enough to understand the practices and strategies involved for them to understand and accept the use of the IOFs that were necessary for their KM practices as suggested by soft approach (Shrestha, 2018; Vu et al., 2020), which help them to perform effectively. In reflection, many years of working experience the participants had within the organisation, agreed with the views that more years of working in an organisation is necessary to help develop, maintain and sustain the needed relationship between management and employees, which also help employees to

understand the IOFs necessary for their effective performance (Shrestha, 2020; Vu et al., 2020). This means more years of working experience the participants had helped me to come out with credible and reliable data that helped in the generation of the inferential codes and the development of the subordinate and superordinate themes necessary for these interpretative findings (Guillen, 2019; Prison, 2017; Stephenson et al., 2018).

6.6.2 Presentation of interpretative findings for the study

This section of the second order part of the second subcategory of this research finding is the comprehensive presentation of the interpretation of the participants' narrative account of the interviews based on the research objectives. On the recommendation of Franzosi (2016) and Smith (2017), I used the "how" question to examine the participants' views on the organisation's KM practices during the interviews. In this section, therefore, the experiences of the participants were described and interpreted, which helped to reveal the participants' thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and perceptions shared on the organisation's KM practices during the interviews, using the superordinate themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Once again, the superordinate themes, shown in Table 6.3 and described contextually in section 6.5.2 are types of OK; types of IOFs for KM; the organisation's KM practices; the enhanced IOFs; the organisation's improved KM practices; and the relation of improved KM practices to performance, which are all presented next.

This stage, therefore, constitutes the final stage of the meaning-making order of the findings where the responses on the participants' shared experience and understanding were based on these superordinate themes as well as the subordinate themes developed (shown in Table 6.3) and were evidenced with at least three salient verbatim quotes from the transcribed interviews. Based on the advice of Franzosi (2016) and Smith (2017), the presentations of these verbatim quotes were indented and were in inverted commas. This was followed by the presentation of the interpretation of the findings where drawings were first made based on the theoretical context to gain a deeper understanding of the employees'

KM practices. As indicated, the referencing system used to report the verbatim quotes supporting the findings (shown in Table 6.2), was created by the researcher. In presenting the verbatim quotes, some minor changes like word repetitions, minor hesitations and utterances such as “erm” and “aah” were removed to improve the quotes’ readability and easy presentation. In doing so, however, care was taken not to change the meaning of the quotes.

6.6.2.1 Types of organisational knowledge

The first superordinate theme of the study was how the participants understood the *types of OK* in the organisation. This was because of the important role knowledge plays in an organisation’s KM practices. This brought varied responses from the participants with regards to how they understood the *types of OK* during the interviews. From the interviews, their understanding and description were focused on the way the concept of competencies appeared to them based on their shared knowledge and shared experience working together in a group. To most of them, the OK constitutes workers’ competencies based on their practices which later, with deeper experience and documentation, are turned into organisational competencies in object form and used by all employees (Hislop et al., 2018; Wemer & Dickson, 2018). During the data analyses, the responses from the participants were split across *tacit knowledge of individual employees* and *explicit knowledge of the organisation*. Each of these subordinate themes has been comprehensively presented and explained in the next subsection.

6.6.2.1.1 The tacit knowledge of individual employees

Most of the participants gave positive feedback and expressed a firm belief that OK constitutes their competencies like their expertise, intelligence, skills, ideas, abilities, experience, and intuitions which they work with. These personal competencies are being stored in the brain of the individual employee and are deeply rooted in his or her experience, values and culture which help in their daily work. In their views, this knowledge can only be shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact based on the willingness of this individual employee

which is also, dependent on his or her relationship with other employees. The understanding of these participants was demonstrated in the following supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews. This understanding was also confirmed in the field notes where a participant further mentioned that the skills, ideas and experience were their personal property, which belongs to them but are used for productivity in the organisation (KUS1).

The following are the supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews:

“To me, OK is our expertise, experience, skills, and ideas that we workers have within the organisation, which serve as our competencies that allow us to function intelligently and effectively. This knowledge is in our head and we can only share it to other workers in the organisation through one-on-one meetings or interactions among us at our own will” (TAS1).

“I can say that OK is the know-how, skills, abilities and intelligence that make some workers competent to work in the organisation at anytime and anywhere. This knowledge is in the individual worker’s brain and can mostly be shared to other workers in the organisation through discussions and sharing of ideas but this depends on his or her willingness” (TEM2).

“OK is the resources, insights, abilities, intuitions, commitments, and proficiencies that we workers own that make us competent enough to work smoothly and effectively in all the MMDAs. This knowledge is limited to the individual worker who owns it and he or she can only share it to other workers through meetings and interactions at his or her own will” (KUJ1).

Responses from the participants (TAS1; TEM2; KUJ1) above were clear that their shared understanding and description of the OK was related to the tacit knowledge of individual employees, which is highly personalised. This knowledge is stored in an individual employee’s brain and is deeply rooted in his or her experience, values, competence, and culture, which can be shared mainly through direct person-to-person interaction in the organisation at his or her own will (Clinton & Gamble, 2019; Maravilhas & Martins, 2019). The participants’ understanding of the OK here as tacit knowledge of individual employees, confirms the views of Ali et al.

(2018) and Borges et al. (2019) who opined that OK refers to the skills, ideas, experiences, insights, intuitions, and commitments of the individual employee, which they use to work with and can, therefore, be shared to other employees through person-to-person contacts based on his or her willingness to do so. The understanding of these participants explains why Borges et al. (2019) and Clinton and Gamble (2019) indicated that tacit knowledge is imbedded, highly personalised and therefore, seen as the intellectual capital of the employees, which they acquired through formal and informal training and learning within the organisation that makes them to function intelligently.

6.6.2.1.2 The explicit knowledge of the organisation

A few of the participants, however, in their shared understanding and description of the OK, were of the view that this constitutes the organisational competencies, which they work with, in the organisation. To these participants, the organisational competencies constitute the organisation's tasks, processes, information, reports, data, and records that have been collected and documented by management and made available to all employees. The participants added that the process of making available the organisational competencies to all employees, are encouraged, facilitated and processed through management strategies such as training, workshops, orientation, and the use of ICT tools such as internet and intranet facilities (Ai & Tan, 2017; Werner & Dickson, 2018). The views of these participants were demonstrated in the supporting quotes below from the transcribed interviews. This understanding was also consistent with the field notes where one of the participants said that the organisational competencies are documented, stored in the institutional memory and shared through interactive platforms like training and workshops (KUS2).

The supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews are stated below:

“To my understanding of OK, it is the collection of the data, reports, information, and records of the organisation that are used by management as its competencies for workers' smooth operation. This knowledge is documented in various means by

management and is easily shared to workers who need it for their effective operation through orientations, seminars, internet, and intranet facilities” (KUM2).

“To me, OK is the information, reports and collection of ideas in the organisation that are already well known to us and are documented by management. This knowledge can easily be made available to all workers at any time using technologies like internet or through seminars, conferences, and symposia to enable us share the reports, information, references to enable us operate effectively and efficiently in the organisation” (TAJ1).

“I can say that OK is made up of the collection of data, intuitions, records, and reports in the organisation that are collected, documented and reuse by management as the institutional memory. This knowledge is easily transferred and made available to all workers in the organisation through training, networking and orientations. This helps us in the discharge of our duties effectively to achieve the organisation’s short-term and long-term term goals” (TEM1).

The supporting quotes (KUM2; TAJ1; TEM1) clarify these participants’ shared understanding and description of the OK as explicit knowledge of the organisation. To the participants, this knowledge has been collected, codified and documented by management and forms the institutional memory shared to all employees using some management strategies like workshops, seminars, orientation, and conferencing or the use of ICT tools such as the internet, intranet and webinar facilities. Hence, the acquisition and sharing of explicit knowledge by all employees has minimal interpersonal interaction (Hislop et al., 2018; Park et al., 2021). The description of OK here as explicit knowledge was consistent with that of Chaudhary and Batra (2018) and Ellis and Roever (2018) who opined that explicit knowledge is primarily the policies, practices, strategies, reports, and guides of the organisation that has been codified and used as explicit knowledge, which is easily shared to all employees for their smooth operations. This means explicit knowledge constitutes the organisation’s core policies, practices and strategies that have been codified and stored in the knowledge repository, and are easily communicated to all employees by management with little interpersonal

interactions for their performance effectiveness in the organisation (Chaudhary & Batra, 2018; Hislop et al., 2018).

The reflection on the supporting quotes and the field notes about the tacit and explicit knowledge the participants described above as OK, corroborate the views of Armstrong and Mahmud (2008) and Nonaka and Von Krogh (2009) who opined that OK is made up of tacit or explicit knowledge, which play very important roles in employees' performance effectiveness in an organisation. This means both the tacit and explicit knowledge in the organisation help to influence the participants' physical skills, intellectual activities, and experience based on their personal characteristics and knowledge experiences, which help them to effectively share their knowledge and to perform effectively (Limaye et al., 2017; Ngoc-Tan & Gregor, 2018). This suggests that the OK is made up of tacit and explicit knowledge, which when used constantly and over time, culminates into individual employees' experience, competence and expertise which help them to perform effectively (Abubakar et al., 2019; Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Centobelli et al., 2019).

It is also worth mentioning that the participants' understanding of the OK as the conversion of the tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, corroborate the views of Astorga-Vargas et al. (2017) and Dubricks and Gaile-Sakane (2017) who held that HR management effectively focuses on how the tacit knowledge of individual employees are converted and transported into explicit knowledge of the organisation through interactions, networking and collaborations for the benefit of all employees. This is where the propositional theorists like Durst and Bruns (2018) and Geiger et al. (2018) concluded that employees' true belief of the OK first stems from the processes of their interaction and collaboration with each other as well as where the person's tacit knowledge is derived from and influenced by the individual's characteristics and their knowledge experiences. This means the participants' recognition of OK contextually as either tacit or explicit knowledge then helps HR management to adopt various techniques to help employees share their tacit knowledge willingly, convert and enrich this knowledge, find a way of

documenting this knowledge resource, and have its full control for current as well as future use of employees (Borges et al., 2019; Rezaei et al., 2021).

6.6.2.2 Types of internal organisational factors for knowledge management

The participants' knowledge and understanding of what constitutes *IOFs necessary for KM* formed the second superordinate theme. HR managements use some IOFs to help facilitate employees' acquisition and sharing of the OK wherever it resides, for their employees' smooth operation. The participants were, therefore, asked to mention some IOFs and, which of these *IOFs were necessary for their KM practices* in the organisation. They expressed varied beliefs based on their knowledge and understanding where they mentioned that the IOFs were simple internal practices and strategies that HR management establishes. In their views, these simple internal practices and strategies were established to serve as guidelines to help them meet and share ideas, interact and communicate with each other, and network with different groups (Gholipour et al., 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019). In analysing the data, it became evident that the participants' understanding was related to two subordinate themes namely, *the organisation's internal practices* and *the organisation's internal strategies* necessary for KM.

6.6.2.2.1 Internal practices for knowledge management

With regards to this superordinate theme, most of the participants gave their shared knowledge and understanding as the internal practices management establishes to help guide and facilitate their interactions, networking and collaborations in the organisation. To them, these internal practices are related to the leadership styles in the organisation, the organisation's internal strategy, organisational culture, and structure as well as the technological tools, which help to provide them with the needed guidelines and directions as to how to relate with each other, interact freely, communicate effectively, have meetings, collaborate, network, and share experiences and ideas to improve on their knowledge and skills (Kazemi et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2020). The following supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews provided the participants' shared knowledge and

description of this understanding, which was also confirmed in the reflexive journal where some of the participants like TAS2 stated:

“I appreciate the way management draws internal strategies to help we the workers in the organisation to collaborate and go for outstation duties to help us gain more institutional memory to make us competent” (TAS2).

The supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews are presented as follows:

“To me, IOFs are the usual internal practices within the organisation like the leadership we have, organisational culture and structure, which are established by management. These internal practices are there to help shape the way we work through the ways we communicate, interact, network and relate, which help us share our skills, expertise and abilities with each other with friendliness and ease in the organisation” (TES1).

“I think that IOFs are the internal practices such as the organisational structure, leadership styles, technological tools available, and the strategies established by management in the organisation. These internal practices mentioned are necessary because they help to influence our work behaviour and work attitudes through outstation duties, collaborations with other MMDAs and networking among us to help position us in the sharing of our skills, knowledge and experience in the organisation” (TAM2).

“IOFs as I can say are the necessary internal practices such as the organisational strategy, structure and culture and leaderships in the organisation that are established by management. These internal practices help to shape the way we work and interact with other MMDA workers, the way we communicate with each other and the way we meet and network among ourselves, which help us to share and manage our skills, experience and knowledge effectively” (TEJ2).

The quotes from the participants (TES1; TAM2; TEJ2) above demonstrate their shared understanding and description of IOFs necessary for KM as internal practices management establishes to help with the guidelines and directions to influence their relationships and interactions with each other. These internal practices were related to the organisational culture and structure, technological

tools like computers and electronic databases, internal strategy, and the leadership style, which help them to effectively communicate and network for effective knowledge sharing experiences (Ali et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). These participants' understanding of IOFs was consistent with the views of authors like Mittal et al. (2018) and Sokoli et al. (2019) who explained that internal practices are the repeated processes management establishes to help build and sustain employees' relationships through systematic techniques like communication, interaction, networking, and discussion in an organisation to help share their knowledge, skills, and experiences in the organisation.

6.6.2.2 Internal strategies for knowledge management

Some of the participants expressed a firm belief that the IOFs necessary for KM were related to the internal strategies that management adapts to help improve and sustain their interactions, networking and communication in the organisation. To the participants, these internal strategies were related to the organisation's workplace policies, internal procedures, guides, regulations, and principles as well as work rules management adapts to motivate to help improve and sustain their acquisition and sharing of information, reports, tasks, and records in the organisation (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019). The following supporting quotes provided the participants' shared description of this understanding, which was also corroborated by the reflexive journal where during the further probe, a participant TAS1 said:

"Workplace policies like quarterly workshops for all workers that management adapts as its strategy, helped most of us to have effective interaction and collaboration, which helped us a lot to acquire and share information and reports of the organisation" (TAS1).

The following supporting quotes provided the participants' shared description of their understanding during the interviews:

"I can say that IOFs are the internal strategies like the internal principles, procedures, work rules, and guides that management adapts to help improve on

the way we communicate, interact and network within the organisation. To me, these internal strategies that help to improve our interactions and communication also help us to effectively acquire, share and transfer the necessary information, reports and records we have in the organisation” (TAJ2).

“What I can say is that IOFs are the internal strategies that are adapted by management to effectively help us interact and communicate for our knowledge acquisition, sharing and transfer initiatives in the organisation. To me, these internal strategies include the organisation’s internal procedures, guides and workplace policies like our quarterly workshops, help to improve and sustain on the way we meet, interact, relate and communicate for the needed information, reports, and data sharing” (TES2).

“To me, the internal strategies of the organisation like the internal procedures and policies, internal regulations, work rules and guides are the IOFs that help us to manage knowledge in the organisation effectively. These internal strategies are adapted by management to help workers improve and sustain in the way we interact, work in groups and network, which help us to share reports, information and records of the organisation effectively” (KUS1).

From these quotes (TAJ1; TES2; KUS1), it was clear that the participants’ shared understanding and description of IOFs was related to the internal strategies the organisation adapts. These internal strategies are the schemes like workplace policies, internal procedures, guides, regulations, and principles as well as work rules that management adapts to help improve and sustain their interactions and communication leading to their improved acquisition, sharing and transfer of information, reports and records in the organisation (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019). These participants’ understanding of IOFs corroborates the views of Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Sedighi et al. (2016) who opined that internal strategies constitute schemes that HR management adapts to help improve and sustain employees’ communication, interaction and networking in an organisation. The participants’ shared understanding of IOFs as related to the organisation’s internal strategies means that these are the important internal strategies HR

management adapts to help improve and sustain employees' interaction, communication and collaboration.

Reflecting on the participants' understanding of IOFs as relating to the organisations' internal practices and internal strategies management adapts, agreed with the views of Armstrong and Brown (2019) and Sokoliet al. (2019) who explained that management introduces internal practices and strategies to help empower, encourage and motivate employees to improve and sustain on their communication, interaction, collaboration, discussion, and networking for effective KM practices in an organisation. This suggests that the experiences and understanding of the participants were consistent with the views of Kaufman et al. (2021) and Van Buren (2022) who concluded that HR management adapts various approaches to implement effective internal practices and strategies to help address issues affecting the organisation and development of its employees. To this effect, different procedures such as the organisational support perspective (Gao & Yau, 2018), social exchange perspective (Mittonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018), job satisfaction perspective (Jalaqat, 2016), and employee family-needs support perspective (Wei & Mao, 2018), have been developed to guide HR management on how to use the IOFs for its employees.

In relation, Abubakar et al. (2019) and Latilla et al. (2018) explain that the internal practices and strategies that HR management implements, help to facilitate the employees' effective performance in knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge application initiatives. This means these internal practices and strategies have some inextricable link to employees' overall performance effectiveness because they help them with the necessary processes and procedures to interact, communicate, collaborate, and network (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Latilla et al., 2018). To this effect, Shrestha (2020) and Vu et al. (2020) suggest that HR managements need to establish effective strategies for employees to readily accept these internal practices and strategies in the organisation. The HR department, therefore, needs to develop and sustain an interactive platform so that the internal practices and strategies are used to help

focus and direct on transforming individual employees' tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for effective sharing and transfer by all the employees (Bakator et al., 2019; Ha & Lo, 2019).

6.6.2.3 *The organisation's knowledge management practices*

Many HR managers have found different ways of sharing OK to build on the existing experiences as a strategy to enhance their employees' performance effectiveness. To this effect, the participants' knowledge and understanding of what constitute *the organisation's KM practices* were very important. This was because this formed the internal context of the study, which according to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), KM is all about how HR management helps employees to be well equipped with the necessary tacit and explicit knowledge to enable them to perform their work effectively. In their understanding, most of the participants showed awareness and gave firm responses based on their shared knowledge and experience. They were of the view that KM is one of the functions of the HR department in which it uses its IOFs to help direct workers the way they are to acquire, share and apply the competencies within the organisation. To them, during the process of KM, HR management directs which IOFs are necessary for the sharing of individual employees' competencies and those that are needed for sharing the organisational competencies (Anand et al., 2020: 389; Kaira & Phiri, 2022: 553). In analysing the data, it was discovered that the participants' understanding here was related to two subordinate themes. These subordinate themes were *the internal practices necessary for sharing tacit knowledge* and *the internal strategies needed for sharing explicit knowledge*. Hence, each of these subordinate themes has been comprehensively explained in the next subsection.

6.6.2.3.1 *The internal practices necessary for sharing tacit knowledge*

Most of the participants here gave their shared experience and understanding of the organisation's KM practices as the use of IOFs by HR management to effectively help share individual employees' competencies to all employees. They added that the IOFs here were related to the HR management using its internal

practices to help influence them to have effective meetings and engage in mentoring and coaching, have effective discussions, and hands-on practice in the organisation (Berberglu, 2018: 399; Chen et al., 2018: 482). The use of these internal practices, therefore, helps them to effectively share their competencies such as their skills, ideas, knowledge, and insights which also help them to perform effectively. The following quotes provided these participants' shared description of this understanding during the interviews. This was also confirmed in the field note where a participant explained further that the friendly organisational culture they had, helped them to flexibly move to different units' heads during their mentoring period to become more competent in the discharge of their duties with the MMDAs (TEM2).

The following are the supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews:

"I will say that KM practices are the internal practices put in place by management so that individual employees' competencies like their ideas, experience and skills are easily coordinated and directed for sharing to all workers in the organisation. These internal practices mentioned above help us with the techniques such as mentoring, meetings, observations, and coaching, which are all put in place by management and are made formal to help us relate and interact effectively for the sharing of these ideas and skills" (TAS2).

"To me, KM practices are the internal practices I said earlier that management puts in place so that the competencies of some workers like their expertise, insights, ideas and skills are easily and effectively shared, transferred or made available to other workers. These internal practices are there to direct us with the way we have our meetings, the way we are mentored and coached, and the way we engage in our observations all of which help us to acquire and transfer these expertise and insights to work competently" (TEJ1).

"I can say that KM practices are the internal practices already put in place by management which help to encourage the sharing of some workers' knowledge, insights, experiences, expertise, and abilities to all workers in the organisation. Management uses these internal practices as techniques to direct and coordinate our face-to-face meetings, dialogues, hands-on practice and formal discussions to

help us to effectively study and observe senior and experienced workers for the sharing and transfer of these experiences and insights” (KUS2).

It was evident from the following quotes (TAS2; TEJ1; KUS2) that the participants’ shared understanding and description of the organisation’s KM practices were related to the internal practices that management puts in place to help direct and coordinate the employees’ sharing of tacit knowledge that belongs to some individual employees to all employees (Van Buren, 2022; Zheng et al., 2019). The internal practices were established by the HR management to help employees with the necessary processes and techniques to have meetings, engage in mentoring and coaching, have discussions, and have hands-on practice. These processes and techniques, therefore, help all employees to effectively acquire and share their experience, insights, knowledge, ideas, and expertise (Ali et al., 2018; Novak et al., 2020). These internal practices were, therefore, related to the organisational culture and structure, leadership styles and technological tools HR management uses to help direct employees for the necessary processes and techniques of sharing their tacit knowledge (Ali et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). This understanding of KM practices was consistent with that of Borges et al. (2019), Chen et al. (2018) and Muthuveloo et al. (2017) who concluded that tacit knowledge is highly personalised and deeply rooted in employee’s experiences, values and culture and is shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact initiatives established by HR management of the organisation.

6.6.2.3.2 The internal strategies needed for sharing explicit knowledge

Similarly, few of the participants referred to the organisation’s KM practices as relating to the internal strategies that the HR management adapts to help as guidelines needed for them to share the organisational competencies. They added that management adapts these internal strategies to help empower and motivate them to work in teams, in groups, network, attend workshops and training, and also engage in working in different assemblies, which eventually help them to effectively share and transfer the organisational competencies among themselves (Eliyana et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). To them, the HR management adapts

these internal strategies to help guide and direct them to acquire, share and transfer the needed organisational competencies for their effective performance. The following supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews provided the participants' shared description of this understanding. This understanding was also confirmed in the reflexive journal where TES1 stated:

“Some of us had the opportunity to work in different MMDAs in different regions because of effective workplace policies, which help me to source more knowledge. This internal strategy, therefore, helped me to acquire more knowledge on report writing and records keeping with the MMDAs in the country” (TES1).

Below are the supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews:

“What I can say is that KM practices are related to the internal strategies that management puts in place to guide us keep and share information, records and reports of the organisation through processes like workshops, training, orientation, and seminars. To my understanding, these internal strategies are there to help ensure that there are effective workplace policies and guides which encourage our training, workshops and orientation which also help us to network, communicate, interact, and collaborate effectively for us to have access to all the OK” (KUM1).

“To me, KM practices are the use of the internal strategies stated already like the work rules, guides, workplace policies, and regulations that management adapts to help us share reports, information and data of the organisation. To me, management adapts these internal strategies to help us with the techniques like orientation, workshops, training, and conferencing through which we interact, network and collaborate effectively to acquire and share the needed information, intuitions, reports, and data of the organisation” (TAM1).

“I will say that KM practices relate to the use of the mentioned internal strategies established by management to help us have access to the needed organisation's data, reports, intuitions, and records through processes like training, mentoring, workshops, and conferencing. As indicated, the internal strategies like the workplace policies, work rules, guides, and regulations, are adapted to help guide our training, workshops and conferences to enhance our collaboration, interaction

and communication to help us share the organisation's reports, intuitions, data, and records for our effective operations" (KUJ2).

Here, the quotes from the participants (KUM1; TAM1; KUJ2) above clarify their shared understanding and description of the organisation's KM practices as related to the internal strategies management adapts to help guide all employees to have access to explicit knowledge of the organisation. These internal strategies that HR management adapts help to empower and motivate them to work in teams, in groups, networks, attend workshops and training, and also engage in the sourcing of knowledge from other MMDAs, which help them to effectively share and transfer the organisational competencies among themselves (Almeida et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). To them, these internal strategies include workplace policies, procedures, guides, regulations, principles, and work rules that effectively help to bring them together to acquire, share and transfer the needed explicit knowledge of the organisation. This understanding was consistent with the views of Al-Ahbab et al. (2019) and Kaira and Phiri (2022) who opined that KM practices involve the use of internal strategies that HR management adapts to help employees have access to explicit knowledge that has been codified and documented for the use of all employees in the organisation for their effective performance.

Reflecting on the participants' shared knowledge and understanding of the organisation's KM practices, as the use of IOFs by HR management to help employees acquire and share the OK, relates to the views of Almahamid and Qasrawi (2017) and Byukusenge and Munene (2017) who posit that KM practices involve processes where OK (tacit and explicit) is well captured, shared and transferred to all individual employees for them to perform effectively, using the internal practices and strategies the organisation adapts. This means KM practices are situations where HR management uses its internal practices to help employees effectively share their tacit knowledge and the internal strategies to help them to effectively share the explicit knowledge through effective processes like mentoring, orientation and training and to also encourage interaction and collaboration among the employees in the organisation.

The lived experiences of the participants on the organisation's KM practices support the SECI theory of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), which explains a continuous interaction between employees' tacit knowledge and the organisation's explicit knowledge and a strategy through which this tacit and explicit knowledge can be managed effectively in the organisation. The SECI model uses the socialisation stage, which refers to an impulse which encourages a person to interact and communicate with other employees daily to share their tacit knowledge (Intezari et al., 2017; Spraggon & Bodolica, 2017). Through this, new employees acquire the tacit knowledge held by old employees through activities like coaching, mentoring and observation (Park & Kim, 2018). The next is the externalisation stage, which is used to transfer and transform the tacit knowledge belonging to employees into explicit knowledge for a group of employees through activities like group-work, networking, seminars, conferencing, and training (Ewolds et al., 2017).

The next stage is the combination stage, which is used to transfer the explicit knowledge from the group of employees' level to the organisational level and formalised it through internal procedures, work rules, internal regulations and guides. At this stage, employees have the advantage to share more explicit knowledge to/from other employees through various channels like networking, workshops, orientation, seminars, training, and conferencing (Falasca et al., 2017). The final stage is the internalisation stage, which is used to convert the organisation's explicit knowledge back to employees' tacit knowledge for them to become more experienced and competent (Gamble, 2020; Liu et al., 2020).

The four stages of the SECI model, therefore, constitute the interaction stage as explained by the social constructivist where employees create tacit knowledge and capture the explicit knowledge. The understanding of these stages paves the way for employees' understanding of the strategies involved in the organisation's management of this tacit and explicit knowledge (Cabrilo & Dahms, 2018; Gharamah et al., 2018). Hence, to achieve this, the educational qualification, socio-cultural background and experience of individual employees are taken into

consideration in all the stages because these have so much influence on their KM practices in an organisation (Delshab et al., 2019; Sukhani & Jain, 2020). These theoretical findings correlate with the empirical findings where the participants' educational and socio-cultural background, as well as their emotional reactions, reflected on the responses they provided on the organisation's KM practices.

This finding was an indication that in this knowledge-based economy, HR departments need to establish systematic processes to help direct employees' understanding of which knowledge to rely on and also make this knowledge readily available for them to perform effectively (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Yazdi & Soltanah, 2019). This means in KM practices, HR departments use the necessary internal practices and strategies to guide and direct employees how to readily convert tacit knowledge wherever it resides into explicit knowledge for the benefit of all employees in the organisation.

6.6.2.4 *The enhanced internal organisational factors*

In KM, the HR department must find effective ways of enhancing the IOFs to help employees to perform more effectively in their KM practices. This means the participants' understanding of what constitutes *the enhanced IOFs* was very important. Hence, they were asked to tell how they understood enhancing the IOFs and how these enhanced IOFs helped them to implement improved KM practices. In response, most of them expressed a firm belief that enhancing the IOFs means that management improves on the IOFs that help them in their KM practices (Bakator et al., 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). To them, improved IOFs related to improving on the internal practices and strategies that help to guide and direct their interaction, collaboration, networking, discussion, and communication in the organisation. During the analyses of the data it was, therefore, discovered that the participants' understanding of enhanced IOFs were related to two subordinate themes which were *the organisation's enhanced internal practices* and *its enhanced internal strategies*. These subordinate themes have been comprehensively presented and explained in the next subsections.

6.6.2.4.1 *The organisation's enhanced internal practices*

Several participants provided their shared experience and understanding of enhanced IOFs as the IOFs that are systematically improved by HR management to help in their KM practices. In their views, this is related to HR management improving on the internal practices of the organisation that help to improve on their KM practices. These enhanced internal practices help to improve the way they interact and relate with each other as well as the way they communicate and network, which also help them to effectively share individual's tacit knowledge to all employees in the organisation. The following supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews provided the participants' shared description of this understanding during the interviews:

"To me, it is when management establishes a well-coordinated internal practices, flexible leadership styles and flexible organisational culture and structure that I can say that the IOFs are enhanced. These enhanced internal practices help to encourage us to meet regularly, help us to relate very well, help us to interact frequently and also, help us to communicate effectively, which leads to our effective acquisition and sharing of knowledge and skill" (KUM2).

"I can say that the dictates of enhanced IOFs are when management of our organisation establishes improved techniques like having enough and efficient technological tools, having flexible leaders as well as flexible organisational culture and structure. In my view, these IOFs when improved like this help to improve and sustain on our meetings, boost our morale for effective interactions, and help to stimulate our collaborative efforts, which will help us to effectively share our experiences and skills" (TAS2).

"As I said, the internal practices of the organisation such as the organisational leadership, structure, culture and the internal strategy established by management are enhanced when they are improved for our effective performance. To me, these internal practices when enhanced help to improve on the way we communicate and interact, the way we discuss and network, and the way we trust and relate with each other, which eventually leads to effective sharing of our knowledge, skills and experience in the organisation" (TEJ2).

These supporting quotes from the participants (KUM2; TAS2; TEJ2) were clear that their shared understanding and description of enhanced IOFs were related to the IOFs that are improved or enhanced. These improved or enhanced IOFs in their views were related to management establishing improved internal practices of the organisation that help to improve on their KM practices (Islam et al., 2015; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014). To these participants, the enhanced internal practices help to improve their interaction, communication, discussion, and networking in the organisation. This also helps them to effectively share the individual's tacit knowledge among themselves in the organisation (Almeida et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). This means management having technological tools that are efficient and effective, and having a strategic internal strategy (Santoro & Usai, 2018; Ulrich & Yeung, 2019) as well as having contingent leadership styles, establishing flexible organisational culture, and having an organic structure (Afshari et al., 2020; Mitinga-Monga & Hoole, 2018). These improved internal practices help all employees to improve on the techniques they used to acquire and share their knowledge, skills, expertise, insights, ideas and experience to all employees to work within the organisation (Centobelli et al., 2019; Manaf et al., 2018).

6.6.2.4.2 The organisation's enhanced internal strategies

Similarly, several of the participants expressed a firm belief that their shared experience and understanding of enhanced IOFs were related to HR management improving on the IOFs necessary for KM. In their views, enhancing the IOFs related to HR management improving on the organisation's internal strategies that provide them with the guidelines for their KM practices. These enhanced internal strategies help to improve and sustain their communication, networking, discussion, and collaboration. To them, this also helps them to effectively share the organisational competencies. The following supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews provided the participants' shared description of this understanding:

"I will say that when management adapts enhanced IOFs is when the internal strategies in the organisation like the internal procedures, regulations and work

rules are made effective, participatory and self-organising. These improved internal strategies help to motivate us to communicate effectively, strive to work in teams, and network well for us to freely and willingly work together to have access and share information and reports of the organisation” (TAJ1).

“To me, the IOFs are enhanced when management adapts internal strategies that are improved in the form of having flexible work rules and regulations, self-directing internal guides and having work policies that are participatory in the organisation. These improved internal strategies help to improve on our psychological attachments in the organisation, which help to open all of us up for effective interactions, networking and communication for effective transfer of the organisation’s records and information” (TES1).

“What I can say is that when management adapts IOFs that are enhanced means that they make the internal strategies like internal principles, work rules, workplace policies, and regulations participatory, flexible, and self-organised. To me, when these internal strategies are well improved, they help us to effectively communicate, relate well and network effectively for us to open up for the acquisition and sharing of knowledge and information” (KUJ1).

From the participants’ supporting quotes (TAJ1; TES1; KUJ1), it was evident that their shared understanding and description of enhanced IOFs were related to improving the organisation’s internal strategies that help in KM practices. To these participants, improving on the organisation’s internal strategies was related to HR management adapting workplace policies and principles that are participatory to them, internal work rules and regulations that are flexible and self-organised, having in place self-directing internal guides and procedures, as well as well-coordinated internal strategies (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019). These internal strategies help to improve and sustain the way they relate to each other, the way they communicate and work in groups as well as network and collaborate. This helps them to effectively acquire and share the organisation’s explicit knowledge such as records, reports, information, and data for their effective performance (Olaisen & Revange, 2018; Werner & Dickson, 2018).

Reflecting on the participants' quotes revealed that their shared experience and understanding was consistent with the views of Abuaddous et al. (2018) and Gharamah et al. (2018) who assert that HR management needs to establish enhanced IOFs to comprehensively help employees improve on their KM practices in an organisation. This suggests that when the IOFs necessary for KM practices are enhanced by the HR management, it helps in building on the organisation's successes through vibrant and productive knowledge exchanges among its employees. This makes it possible for the employees' effective understanding and implementation of improved KM practices in the organisation (Islam et al., 2015; Sedighi et al., 2016). This means that when the internal practices used in KM practices and the internal strategies adapted to improve and sustain KM practices are enhanced, they help employees to effectively learn to acquire, share and transfer the necessary OK for their improved practices of KM in the organisation (Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019).

In effect, the participants' understanding of enhanced IOFs correlates with the views of Abuaddous et al. (2018) and Gharamah et al. (2018) who concluded that enhancing the IOFs means effectively helping the knowledge worker to perform work that involves the generation of constructive information and knowledge and effectively accessing organisational data, personal knowledge, external knowledge and other OK. This suggests that enhancing the IOFs are related to having flexible organisational culture, structure and leadership, efficient technological tools, and strategic internal strategy (Ji & Yan, 2020; Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021) as well as having flexible work rules, internal regulations and principles, participatory work policies, and coordinated internal strategies in the organisation (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Saifulina et al., 2021). This means enhancing the IOFs have a direct and positive relationship with the organisation's improved KM practices, which help employees to put their creative ideas into practice and make them more innovative and encourage them to be more professional in their knowledge acquisition and sharing initiatives (Delbash et al., 2018; Park et al., 2021).

6.6.2.5 The organisation's improved knowledge management practices

Another facet of KM is the implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation, which Archer-Brown and Kietzmann (2018: 1292) described as an umbrella term, which refers to any deliberate efforts by the HR department to update on the acquisition, sharing and transferring initiatives of the OK for its employees. Improved KM practices were, therefore, very important. Hence, the participants were asked to tell how they understood improved KM practices and the contingencies of these improved KM practices. In their response, most of the participants expressed firm belief that their experience and understanding of improved KM practices were related to the HR department improving on the processes they used to share their competencies as well as the organisational competencies. In their views, when these processes are updated or improved by the HR management, it helps to improve on the internal practices that help them to acquire and share their competencies and on the internal strategies that help them to acquire and share the organisational competencies (Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019). During the data analysis, it was discovered that the participants' understanding of improved KM practices were related to two subordinate themes, which were *improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge* and *improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge*. These subordinate themes have been comprehensively presented and explained in the next subsection.

6.6.2.5.1 Improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge

Most of the participants in their response provided their shared understanding and description of the organisation's improved KM practices as related to updating or improving on the internal practices that help them in acquiring and sharing employees' competencies in the organisation. In their views, these improved internal practices were established by the HR management so that the workers can take advantage of them to help improve on their acquisition and sharing initiatives of their competencies. The improvement of these internal practices helps them to improve their KM practices in the organisation. The following quotes provided the participants' shared experience and understanding of improved KM practices during the interview. These supporting quotes from the transcribed

interviews were also confirmed by the reflexive journal where during the further probe, some of the participants like KUS1 said:

“Let me add that management establishing improved KM practices in the organisation means some or all the internal practices mentioned above have been updated. These updated internal practices will help us have trust and open us up for effective interaction, discussion and communication leading to improved practices for acquisition and sharing of knowledge and skills” (KUS1).

The following are the supporting quotes from the participants:

“To me, having improved KM practices in the organisation means management devising ways to improve on the internal practices that help us to effectively share our knowledge, experience and expertise among ourselves. To me, management can do this by motivating workers who are experienced and are prepared to share their experience and knowledge by giving them incentives in the form of rewards or bonuses or adopt effective internal strategies that can help us have outstation duties to help us gain more knowledge and experience. Doing this can effectively help us to communicate, discuss and interact to help us improve on our knowledge management practices.” (TES2).

“I will say that improved KM practices in the organisation are where management establishes formal and improved internal practices that help to build trust among us and also, adopt improved strategies that help us to have links with some experienced workers outside this assembly. These improved internal practices will help open us up for effective interaction, discussion, communication, and meeting for effective acquisition, sharing and transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise in the organisation” (TAM1).

“In my view, improved KM practices in the organisation involves management updating or putting in place improved internal practices like having in place, a formal and systematic way of sharing our knowledge and experience, empowering and motivating experienced workers to share their knowledge and experiences willingly, and adopting internal strategies to help workers move to other assemblies to work there for some time. These improved internal practices will help us to

effectively acquire, share and transfer knowledge, experience, skills, and expertise that will be limited to few individuals” (KUJ2).

The foregoing quotes from the participants (TES2; TAM1; KUJ2) were very clear that their shared understanding and description of the organisation’s improved KM practices were related to updating or improving on the internal practices that help them in sharing employees’ tacit knowledge in the organisation. In their views, these improved internal practices were related to the organisation having enough experienced workers and having a formal way of knowledge sharing activities (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018), empowering and motivating experienced workers to share their knowledge as well as adopting the best ways to encourage knowledge-sharing (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Charband & Navimipour, 2018) and having a system where workers can move to other units for easy knowledge transfers as well as having laid down incentives for workers who share their knowledge willingly (Iheukwumere-Esotu & Yamusa-Kaltungo, 2021; Singh et al., 2021). The participants’ understanding correlates with the views of Latilla et al. (2018) and Manaf et al. (2018) who opine that implementing improved KM practices in an organisation means HR management having in place improved internal practices that effectively help employees to acquire and share tacit knowledge of the organisation willingly.

6.6.2.5.2 Improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge

Similarly, some of the participants indicated their shared understanding and description of the organisation’s improved KM practices as related to improving on the internal strategies that help them to acquire and share the organisational competencies. To the participants, these improved internal strategies were adapted by the HR management to help promote and sustain their acquisition and sharing of the organisational competencies. In relation, the improvement in the internal strategies helps to improve on their KM practices in the organisation. The following quotes demonstrate the participants’ shared experience and understanding of the organisation’s improved KM practices during the interview.

These supporting quotes from the transcribed interviews were also confirmed by the reflexive journal where during the further probe, TES1 stated:

“I want to add that when management adapts improved internal strategies in the organisation, then the KM practices can be improved. To me, these improved internal strategies include having efficient institutional memory in the organisation, management encouraging teamwork and collaboration, and management putting in place effective ways of sourcing other workers’ experiences. All these improved internal strategies can help us to interact effectively for the sharing of the organisation’s competencies” (TES1).

Below are the supporting quotes from the participants:

“I think to have improved KM practices in the organisation means that management has to adapt updated or improved internal strategies like having working environment that is very conducive and having a participatory decision-making process in the organisation. I think these improved internal strategies help to promote and sustain our interaction, communication, networking, conferencing, and collaboration, which will effectively help us to share and transfer information, data and reports which are necessary for our effective performance” (TEM1).

“I can say that improved KM practices in the organisation have to do with management implementing updated or improved internal strategies to help us perform more effectively by helping us share all the organisation’s competencies. To me, this can effectively be done through management adapting to a system where unit heads are self-managed and having a participatory decision-making process in the organisation. These improved internal strategies will help us to have effective team working and networking initiative, which will help us to share and transfer the competencies effectively” (KUS1).

“I will say that improved KM practices in the organisation are where management adapts good or improved internal strategies that help us to effectively interact, communicate and network for the sharing of the organisation’s competencies. To me, these improved internal strategies include management establishing effective and efficient institutional memory, encouraging teamwork and collaboration among

us and having effective ways of knowledge exchanges among us in the organisation” (TAJ2).

The above quotes from the participants (TEM1; KUS1; TAJ2) indicate that their shared understanding and description of the organisation’s improved KM practices were related to updating or improving on the internal strategies that help them in the acquisition and sharing of the organisation’s explicit knowledge. To them, improving on the organisation’s internal strategies were related to management adapting to a conducive work environment in the organisation and having efficient institutional memory (Kuenzi et al., 2020), encouraging collaboration as well as teamwork among employees and adopting effective strategies of sourcing experiences (Saifulina et al., 2021) and having a participatory decision-making process as well as having unit heads managing their teams in the organisation (López-Cabarcos & Quiñoá-Piñeiro, 2022). The understanding here was that these improved internal strategies were adapted by the HR management to help promote and sustain their improved knowledge acquisition and sharing initiatives. This understanding here of improved KM practices corroborate the views of Delshab et al. (2021) and Yazdi and Soltanah (2019) who explained that improved KM practices in an organisation come with HR management enhancing the adapted internal strategies, which help employees to effectively acquire, share and transfer the explicit knowledge through having more experienced employees.

In reflection on the above quotes and reflexive journal, the participants’ understanding of the organisation’s improved KM practices agreed with the views of scholars like Al-Shraah et al. (2021) and Kaira and Phiri (2022) who advised that HR management needs to update the internal practices and internal strategies that help employees’ in their KM for the necessary improved KM practices. This suggests that to implement improved KM practices effectively, HR management needs to improve on the internal practices as well as the internal strategies, which help the employees to effectively acquire, share and transfer the needed tacit and explicit knowledge (Olaisen & Revange, 2018; Waheed & Muhammad, 2020). This is so because the main objective of improving an organisation’s KM practices, is

trying to capture the embedded tacit knowledge that is in employees' heads as it were, and that has never been explicitly coded using the enhanced IOFs and, therefore, make this available so that it can effectively be reused by all employees for their effective performance (Barad, 2018; Hui et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2020).

In effect, the participants' effective performance using the organisation's improved KM practices was consistent with the TQM theory of Deming (1986), which depicts success in continuous achievement of the improved quality level of employees and improved management level in an organisation. Here, HR management uses improved KM practices to improve employees' effectiveness and efficiency to maximise productivity in the organisation (Abdul, 2018; Farish et al., 2017; Zaidi & Ahmed, 2020). This situation, therefore, provides the opportunity for management to measure employees' performance about KM practices in the organisation (Almahamid & Qasrani, 2017; Keiman & Kurugu, 2018). This suggests that for successful improved KM practices in the organisation, HR management needs to establish effective, formal, collective, and improved internal practices as well as internal strategies for effective acquisition and sharing of the tacit knowledge of individual employees and the explicit knowledge of the organisation respectively by all employees (Qureshi & Waseem, 2018; Zenglin et al., 2020).

This shows a comprehensive understanding of the organisation's improved KM practices using enhanced IOFs. In the views of social constructivist theorists like Dalkir (2005); Grant (2013) and Nonaka and Takeuch (1995), OK is effectively created through social interactions by employees. This means for employees' effective understanding of improved KM practices in an organisation, the structure of KM framework as shown in figure 7.3 in Chapter seven of the study, has been used to show the influence of these impinging constructs (types of OK and IOFs). In effect, to have improved KM practices means having experienced workers and incentives for them (Maravilhas & Martins, 2019), empowering and motivating them to share their knowledge willingly (Chmielewska et al., 2020), having a formal methodology for sharing OK as well as having conducive work environment

(Zhang & Pan, 2022), encouraging collaborations and teamwork (Ji & Yan, 2020), and having efficient institutional memory (Antunes & Pinheiro, 2020).

6.6.2.6 Relating improved KM practices to performance

Al-Shraab et al. (2021) and Farish et al. (2017) emphasised that employees' performance effectiveness has so much to do with the quality, quantity and timeliness of output. Hence, the relationship that exists between the organisation's improved KM practices leading to the employees' performance effectiveness was explored because of the importance of its results. The participants were, therefore, asked to tell how the *organisation's improved KM practices related to their performance effectiveness*. In giving their response, most of the participants were of the view that their performance effectiveness was dependent on the organisation's improved KM practices whilst a few of them indicated that it was dependent on the enhanced IOFs. Hence, during the data analysis, it was deduced that the participants' understanding of this relationship was related to two subordinate themes. These subordinate themes were *relating improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness* and *relating the enhanced IOFs to their performance effectiveness*. Hence, each of these subordinate themes has been comprehensively presented and explained in the next subsections.

6.6.2.6.1 Relating improved KM practices to performance

Nearly all the participants indicated that their shared understanding of their performance effectiveness was related to improved KM practices in the organisation. They were of the view that their effective performance was related to the organisation's improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge and improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge. These improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge and improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge, help to bring in more experienced workers together, help to make them more creative and innovative and help the free flow of both tacit and explicit knowledge in the organisation, which leads to their effective performance (Abubakar et al., 2019; Gharamah et al., 2018). The following quotes

from the transcribed interviews provided the participants' shared understanding, which was also confirmed in the reflexive journal where during further probe, TAS1 stated:

“What I am saying here is that our performance effectiveness in this organisation can effectively be related to the situation where management puts in improved ways of acquiring and sharing our competencies as well as the organisation’s total competencies. This helps to build confidence and sustain the way we learn leading to more experienced workers, which makes it fast and easy for our improved KM practices in the organisation” (TAS1).

The following are the quotes of the participants from the semi-structured interviews:

“I will say that the organisation’s improved KM practices have everything to do with my performance effectiveness in the organisation because when management establishes efficient institutional memory, conducive work environment and effective management of our core competencies, it helps us to work effectively. These improved practices and strategies by management if effectively done, will help to connect us together to discuss, communicate well, network and interact freely, which help us to perform effectively” (KUM1).

“To me, we can effectively relate our improved KM practices in the organisation to our performance effectiveness because if management consciously adapts improved practices and strategies such as having effective links with and collective incentives for all employees, encouraging collaboration and teamwork and having a conducive work environment, will help us to relate effectively. These improved practices and strategies will help us to have more experienced employees, help to sustain our life-long learning practices and help to make us more creative and innovative for performance effectiveness” (TAM2).

“I can say that it is improved KM practices of the organisation that can be related to our performance effectiveness because when management establishes, improved practices like having formal ways of sharing our knowledge, having collective incentive packages for experienced workers and having improved strategies like encouraging teamwork, collaboration and participatory decision-making process all

of, which will help us to effectively communicate, interact and discuss. These improved practices and strategies from management can help to build confidence among us, make us have control over how we work, help us to effectively interact and socialise, and make us innovative for our performance effectiveness” (TEJ1).

The supporting quotes from the participants (KUM1; TAM2; TEJ1) were clear that their shared understanding of their performance effectiveness was related to the organisation’s improved KM practices. In their views, these improved KM practices were related to improving on the internal practices helping them to acquire and share tacit knowledge and the internal strategies helping them to acquire and share explicit knowledge in the organisation (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Manaf et al., 2018). They added that these improved internal practices and internal strategies help them to effectively acquire and share the needed tacit and explicit knowledge in the organisation, leading to their improved KM practices. This means improved internal practices as well as improved internal strategies help to bring about more creative and experienced employees and help to create a harmonious relationship among them (Limaye et al., 2017; Shujhat et al., 2019), help in the free flow of knowledge among employees, help them to socialise effectively, help to develop positive workgroups, and make them innovative (Mardani et al., 2018) and help in employee performance enhancement (Lattilla et al., 2018; Orenge-Roglā & Chalmetra, 2019) leading to their effective performance.

6.6.2.6.2 Relating enhanced IOFs to performance

Similarly, a few of the participants gave their shared understanding of their performance effectiveness in the organisation as relating to enhancing the IOFs. These participants were of the view that the linkage between the organisation’s improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness was related to management establishing enhanced IOFs in the organisation. They were of the view that these enhanced IOFs help to improve on their communication and interaction strategies, which lead to their improved KM practices leading to their performance effectiveness. The supporting quotes below provided the participants’

shared description of this understanding during the interviews. This was also, confirmed in the reflexive journal where during further probe TES2 stated:

“I can confidently add that the situations where management establishes effective internal practices and strategies to help improve on our interactions and the way we relate with each other, can be related to helping us develop a very positive way of working together, which directly help us in our quest for improved KM practices in the organisation” (TES2).

Below are the quotes of the participants from the semi-structured interviews:

“To me, our improved KM practices in the organisation can effectively be related to the situations where management adapts flexible organisational culture and structure as well as flexible internal regulations and work rules in the organisation. These flexible internal practices and strategies will help to influence our interactions and discussions freely to improve on our networking and teamwork strategies for our effective transfer of information, knowledge and experience leading to our effective performance” (TAS1).

“I can say that our improved KM practices have to do with management establishing enhanced internal practices and strategies that encourage effective interaction, communication and networking among us in the organisation. All these enhanced internal practices and strategies encouraged us to work in teams, encouraged our collaborations and helped to promote effective communication among us for effective knowledge acquisition and transfer leading to our effective performance” (TEM2).

“Relating the organisation’s improved KM practices to our performance effectiveness can be related to management establishing flexible leadership styles, flexible organisational structure and culture and having efficient technological tools. These enhanced internal practices and strategies helped to influence our effective interactions and teamwork and promoted communication and collaboration effectively among us leading to effective acquisition and sharing of knowledge and information leading to our effective performance” (KUS2).

The above-supporting quotes from the participants (TAS1; TEM2; KUS2), clarified these participants' shared understanding of the relationship between improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness. In their views, their performance effectiveness was related to enhance IOFs management establishes in the organisation. To the participants, this was related to management enhancing the organisation's internal practices necessary for sharing tacit knowledge and the internal strategies needed for sharing explicit knowledge. Enhancing these internal practices and strategies in their views, help to influence their interactions, inner workings, communication, networking, and teamwork (Limaye et al., 2017; Yusuf & Wanjau, 2014), which help to bring about their cooperation and unity for cohesion (Shahzad et al., 2020) and help to coordinate their relationships and help to improve on their knowledge-sharing initiatives (Build et al., 2019; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2019) all of which lead to their performance effectiveness.

It was observed that the participants' understanding of the relationship between the organisation's improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness was consistent with the views of Kaira and Phiri (2022) and Shashi et al. (2022) who assert that when HR management consciously improves on the organisation's KM practices and strategies, they help to facilitate employees' effective networking, communication, interaction, and collaboration, which lead to their improved KM practices necessary for their performance effectiveness. In relation, the participants' understanding was consistent with the views of Butt et al. (2019) and Mardani et al. (2018) who explained that improved KM practices in an organisation help HR management to effectively tap the innovative creativity, improved sense of duty and hard work spiritedness of their employees.

In reflection, improved KM practices are embedded and inseparable from enhanced IOFs, which help to facilitate and coordinate the flow of knowledge between employees and their overall performance effectiveness. This means what links employees and their effective performance in an organisation are how the employees are well managed using the enhanced internal practices and strategies and how the OK (tacit or explicit) is also well managed to ensure the needed

performance effectiveness (Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019; Kaufman et al., 2021). HR management, therefore, needs to direct enough resources and efforts to help create and enhance mental, emotional and attitudinal states of the employees to help bring together the varied knowledge of individual employees to help implement the needed improved KM practices (Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2017; Gao et al., 2018). To this effect, Kaira and Phiri (2022) and Nabawanuka and Ekmekcioglu (2022) advised that in this era of knowledge-based economy, HR management must invest a significant resource in employees' well-being because of increased demand for more highly skilled and knowledge-workers who also enjoy high wages to popularise KM practices.

6.6.2.7 Relationships between the superordinate themes

There exist relationships between the superordinate themes which offered clues for the development of a conceptual framework for KM shown in Figure 7.3 in Chapter seven of the study. As discussed in Chapter five of the study, though the study was designed as descriptive (section 5.4.4), it has also been classified as explanatory (section 5.4.5) to help explore the interrelationships that exist between these superordinate themes. This classification was consistent with the views of Chivanga and Mongai (2021) and Maxwell (2020) who assert that qualitative research usually designed as descriptive can also be classified as explanatory to help explore and explain the presumed relationships between the constructs of the study. This was done to find out from the participants how the relationships among the enhanced IOFs, the organisation's improved KM practices and the employees' performance effectiveness could be used to develop a guideline for employee performance effectiveness.

The participants gave varied answers and were of the view that their performance effectiveness was related to the organisation's improved KM practices. Meaning their effective performance was linked to enhancing the IOFs leading to the organisation's improved KM practices. Hence, during the data analysis, it was discovered that the participants' understanding of these relationships stemmed from their shared understanding of enhanced IOFs and their improved KM

practices leading to their performance effectiveness. Two relationships among the superordinate themes were, therefore, discovered and were *enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices* and *improved KM practices and performance effectiveness*. In effect each of these relationships has been comprehensively presented and explained below.

6.6.2.7.1 Relationship between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices

Most of the participants shared their understanding of the relationship between enhanced IOFs and their improved KM practices, which leads to their performance effectiveness. They were of the view that the development of a KM framework can effectively be related to the links between enhanced IOFs and their improved KM practices. This means the organisation's improved KM practices were dependent on HR management establishing enhanced IOFs in the organisation. In effect, the enhanced IOFs have a direct and positive relationship with the organisation's improved KM practices, which leads to their performance effectiveness. The supporting quotes below from the transcribed interviews provided the participants' shared description of this understanding:

"I can say that this is when management of the organisation establishes enhanced IOFs like having flexible organisational culture and structure, contingent leadership and efficient technological tools as well as having flexible rules, regulations and principles, participatory policies and self-organised procedures. These enhanced IOFs help to influence workers' inner workings and interactions, help to improve networking and teamwork and help to promote communication and discussions among employees, which are all necessary for our improved KM practices in the organisation" (TAS2).

"To me, when management establishes IOFs that are enhanced such as having flexible internal work-rules, regulations and principles, good psychological attachments, and well-coordinated internal strategies as well as well-coordinated internal practices, contingent leadership and efficient technological tools in the organisation, help to improve on our interactions, networking, meetings, discussions and collaboration. These enhanced IOFs help to influence our

interactions and inner workings, improve on our discussion and collaboration and teamwork and interaction, which lead to our performance effectiveness” (TES1).

“What I can say is that when management establishes enhanced internal practices like efficient technological tools, flexible leadership, organisational culture and structure as well as adapts enhanced internal strategies like having self-organised internal procedures, flexible internal rules and flexible principles and regulations help to bring us together for effective discussion, interaction, networking, and working as a team. These enhanced internal practices and strategies help to create a harmonious relationship among us needed for our improved KM practices in the organisation” (KUJ1).

The quotes from the participants (TAS2; TES2; KUJ1) clarified their shared understanding of enhanced IOFs relating to improved KM practices, which leads to their performance effectiveness. In their views, the organisation’s enhanced IOFs were related to HR management having internal practices and strategies being enhanced. This was consistent with HR management establishing a flexible organisational culture and structure, contingent leadership, efficient technological tools, strategic internal strategy, and well-coordinated internal practices (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019).

On the other hand, enhanced internal strategies were consistent with HR management adapting flexible internal work rules, regulations and principles, participatory work policies, self-directing internal procedures and guides, good employee psychological attachment, and well-coordinated internal strategies (Gholipour et al., 2018; Saifulina et al., 2021). This shows that these enhanced internal practices and strategies have a direct and positive relationship with the employees’ improved KM practices leading to their performance effectiveness. The participants’ understanding of this relationship corroborates the views of Almeida et al. (2019) and Mittal et al. (2018) who explained that the understanding and use of enhanced IOFs help employees to facilitate the implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation. This shows that the focal point in improved KM practices is the effective use of enhanced internal practices and strategies, which shows a direct and positive relationship between them.

6.6.2.7.2 Relationship between improved KM practices and performance

Several of the participants also gave positive feedback and were unanimous in their shared understanding of the relationship between the organisation's improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness. In their views the development of a KM framework can be related to the organisation's improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness in the organisation. This means the employees' effective performance was dependent on the organisation's improved KM practices, which constitute improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge, and improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge. This in the view of Liu (2018) and Liu et al. (2020), helps to prevent the loss of critical OK. The supporting quotes below provided the participants' shared description of this understanding during the interviews:

"I can say that the relation of the improved KM practices to my performance effectiveness has to do with management adapting to improved internal strategies to help build confidence among us, ensure free flow of knowledge and information and having effective means for our socialisation and interaction. These improved internal strategies help to bring about improved knowledge acquisition, sharing, transfer and application initiatives among us, leading to our effective performance in the organisation" (TEM2).

"To me, we can effectively relate improved KM practices in the organisation to our performance effectiveness because when management creates conducive working environment, encourages collaboration and teamwork and establishes participatory decision-making process, it helps us to communicate, interact and discuss effectively. These help us to effectively interact and socialise, make us have control over the way we work and help build confidence among us for our improved sharing and transfer of our expertise and knowledge leading to our performance effectiveness in the organisation" (TAM2).

"I can say that the organisation's improved KM practices can be related to our performance effectiveness because when management establishes improved internal practices like motivating and empowering experienced workers, having cross-functional lines of work and having effective links with experienced workers

as well as adapting to improved internal strategies like having efficient knowledge repository, encouraging collaborations and teamwork and having efficient knowledge sourcing strategies, all help us to effectively communicate, interact and discuss for our performance effectiveness in the organisation” (TEJ1).

The above quotes from the participants (TEM2; TAM2; TEJ1) were clear about their shared understanding of the linkage between the organisation’s improved KM practices leading to their performance effectiveness. The participants related their effective performance to the organisation’s improved KM practices, which has to do with improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge and improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge. This shows that the participants were of the view that their performance effectiveness was influenced by the organisation's improved practices for sharing tacit knowledge of employees and improved strategies for sharing explicit knowledge of the organisation. In their views, these improved internal practices were related to empowering and motivating experienced employees and adopting best practices approach (Febrianti & Se, 2020) and having cross-functional lines of work and collective incentives for experienced employees (Moodley & Jore, 2018). Improved internal strategies were also related to having an efficient knowledge repository and a conducive organisational work environment (Saifulina et al., 2021) and having self-managed teams, a participatory decision-making process, effective knowledge sourcing strategies, and high-involvement management style (Wang et al., 2021).

In reflection, the participants’ understanding of this relationship agreed with the views of Buttler and Muskwe (2021) and Clinton and Gamble (2019) who opined that improved KM practices have become more important because what links people and performance effectiveness are employees' engagement and how the OK is managed to ensure employees overall performance effectiveness. It was, therefore, evident that the participants’ experience and understanding of the linkage between the organisation’s improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness were related to the relationship between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices and the relationship between the improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness.

The participants' shared understanding of these relationships was consistent with the views of Omotayo (2015), Serrat (2017) and Zaim et al. (2019) who asserted that employees' understanding of the relationship between the organisation's improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness help to encourage unity, minimise risks and remove employee prejudices, which help in effective knowledge creation, sharing and application initiatives among employees. Maxwell (2020) and Miles et al. (2020) explained that the understanding of such a relationship helps to identify and understand a phenomenon better by investigating the process or mechanism at play in causal outcomes within a specific context inductively in a qualitative study like this.

Hence, the participants' understanding of these relationships helped to offer a credible and powerful causal explanation based on their narrations, which allowed the researcher to decipher meanings for credible and reliable findings. This helps in the development of a coherent and comprehensive conceptual framework for KM as shown in Figure 7.3 in Chapter seven of the study. This framework shows that when employees understand an organisation's enhanced IOFs, it helps them to derive improved KM practices, which eventually make them to perform effectively (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020).

6.7 PARTICIPANTS' VALIDATION OF RESEARCH REPORT

This research report was validated by the participants to ensure that the framework and its concepts developed from the report make sense not only to the researcher but also, to other scholars, practitioners and the participants. The validation process started first with the triangulation process before the participants' validation process. As the first method of validating the research report, the triangulation process adopted was where the transcribed interviews were thoroughly cross-checked with the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal to ensure that the information in the report were accurate (Jae-Nam & Young-Gun, 2015). From the interpretation of the findings, some of the participants' quotes from the transcribed interviews were confirmed with the information in the field notes and the reflexive journal. This process was then

followed by the participants' validation, which was also done to effectively solicit quality feedback from the participants (Birt et al., 2016; Slettebø, 2020; Yin, 2016). To this effect, three zonal meetings were held with the participants where the research report was returned to them at the various zones to cross-check if the information in it reflected on their lived experience and understanding of the phenomenon and if it was correctly interpreted and analysed. These three zonal meetings afforded the participants with the opportunity to make the necessary corrections with regards to their answers and the interpretations made (Birt et al., 2016; Slettebø, 2020; Yin, 2016).

In an IPA study, the understanding of the phenomenon comes from the perspective of the participant's lived experience and understanding, which also recognises the interpretive work by the researcher who makes sense of what the participants said. This means the researcher may go to the field with pre-conceived attitudes, beliefs or opinions that may taint the data collected and analysed (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In effect, to make sense in reflecting on the participants' experience and understanding, adequate mental preparations were established for the participants to understand the validation process. These mental preparations were directed towards the perspective of the participants' understanding and reflection on enhanced IOFs and the organisation's improved KM practices (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020). The researcher, therefore, explored the participants' personal experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and meanings they attached to enhanced IOFs and the organisation's improved KM practices in real life and retrospective experiences (Guillen, 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019).

6.7.1 Validation from enhanced internal organisational factors perspective

In line with the participants' shared experience, perceptions, beliefs, and understanding they attached to the validation of this report, the validation process was first directed towards the perspectives of enhanced IOFs. This validation process was, therefore, based on the participants' understanding and description of enhanced IOFs necessary for improved KM practices. Here, several of the

participants were unanimous and positive with regards to the information they provided in the report which was based on their lived knowledge and understanding from the perspective of IOFs up to enhanced IOFs. In response, several of the participants were satisfied with the information in the report as it represents the data collected during the semi-structured interviews. The verbatim quote from TAS2 on behalf of the participants provided the feedback from the three zonal meetings for this validation:

“I suggest on behalf of my colleagues that now that the information presented in the report are correct and reflected what we have all stated during the one-on-one interviews, wish to state that the report of the study is duly validated. However, the use of practices and strategies in the report is a little confusing and must be looked at to give us a clearer meaning in the final report” (TAS2).

6.7.2 Validation from the perspective of the organisation’s improved KM practices

Here, the participants’ shared experience, perceptions, beliefs, and understanding they attached to the validation of the report were based on their understanding and reflection on the perspective of the organisation’s improved KM practices. At the three zonal meetings, it was revealed that the participant's understanding of the validation process was again based on their understanding and description of the organisation’s improved KM practices that were necessary for their performance effectiveness. This perspective was based on their understanding of the OK, the organisation’s KM practices and the organisations’ improved KM practices. The participants were unanimously satisfied with the information in the report as it represents the data collected at the semi-structured interviews. The verbatim quote below from TEM2 on behalf of the participants provided the feedback from the three zonal meetings for this validation:

“I support my colleagues that all the information presented in the report are correct except, that I want you to take out ‘facts of workers’ attributed to me as an OK necessary for KM practices under superordinate theme 1 subordinate theme 1.2 in the report” (TEM2).

The above quotes from the participants (TAS2 & TEM2) were evident that the research report was validated by the participants eventually, of the research process. This was done through the participants' experience and reflection on enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices. The validation process started from the triangulation process to the participants' validation process, which was done with three zonal meetings. This was consistent with what Birt et al. (2016) and Slettebø (2020) outlined that the validation process starts with study participants or outsiders through a conference, a seminar or some other type of academic framework that provides good feedback. During the participants' validation process, the report was returned to them to cross-check on their lived experience and understanding of the phenomenon. This was consistent with the IPA methodology, which recognises that the understanding of the phenomenon comes from the perspective of the participant's lived experience and from the interpretive work by the researcher (Noon, 2017; Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017).

This validation process, therefore, helped to address the issue of bracketing which was very important during the study process. This was done through mental preparations of the participants directed towards exploring their personal experiences and meanings they attached to enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices in the organisation. Hence, during the interviews, it was observed that the majority of the participants were confident, candid, relaxed, passionate, and friendly, which helped them to provide a rich and credible response. Doing so helped me to address the issue of bracketing which is associated with an IPA study. This process used was consistent with the views of Dörfler and Stierand (2020) and Weatherford and Maitra (2019) who opined that in IPA methodology, practical strategies like adequate mental preparation of study participants as well as effective interactions with them help to address the issue of bracketing associated with the study.

6.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter was focused on the discussion and interpretation of the research findings, which involved the participants' narration of their shared experience and

understanding of the processes of KM practices. This was done based on the context of the individual interviews transcribed verbatim together with the observational field notes and reflexive research journal and in relation to the literature control. An IPA methodology was used to offer clues to understand and explain specific issues on the well-developed experiences of the participants for the generation of inferential codes and development of subordinate and superordinate themes that were used for this analysis. In the findings, it was revealed that nearly all the participants had working experience of at least ten years, which formed the physical resource, competence and commitments of the individual employees. It was also revealed that the participants had long years of working experience and working with different managements. This means they had deeper shared knowledge and experience on the processes involved in the organisation's KM practices. In the end, the report was validated and the process started with the triangulation process before the participants' validation process. This validated report was used to develop a conceptual framework for KM and has been presented in detail in section 7.4 in Chapter seven of the study. This conceptual framework for KM serves as the solution to this research problem and also serves as a guide for effective performance for public sector employees in the Ghanaian context.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRESENTATION OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

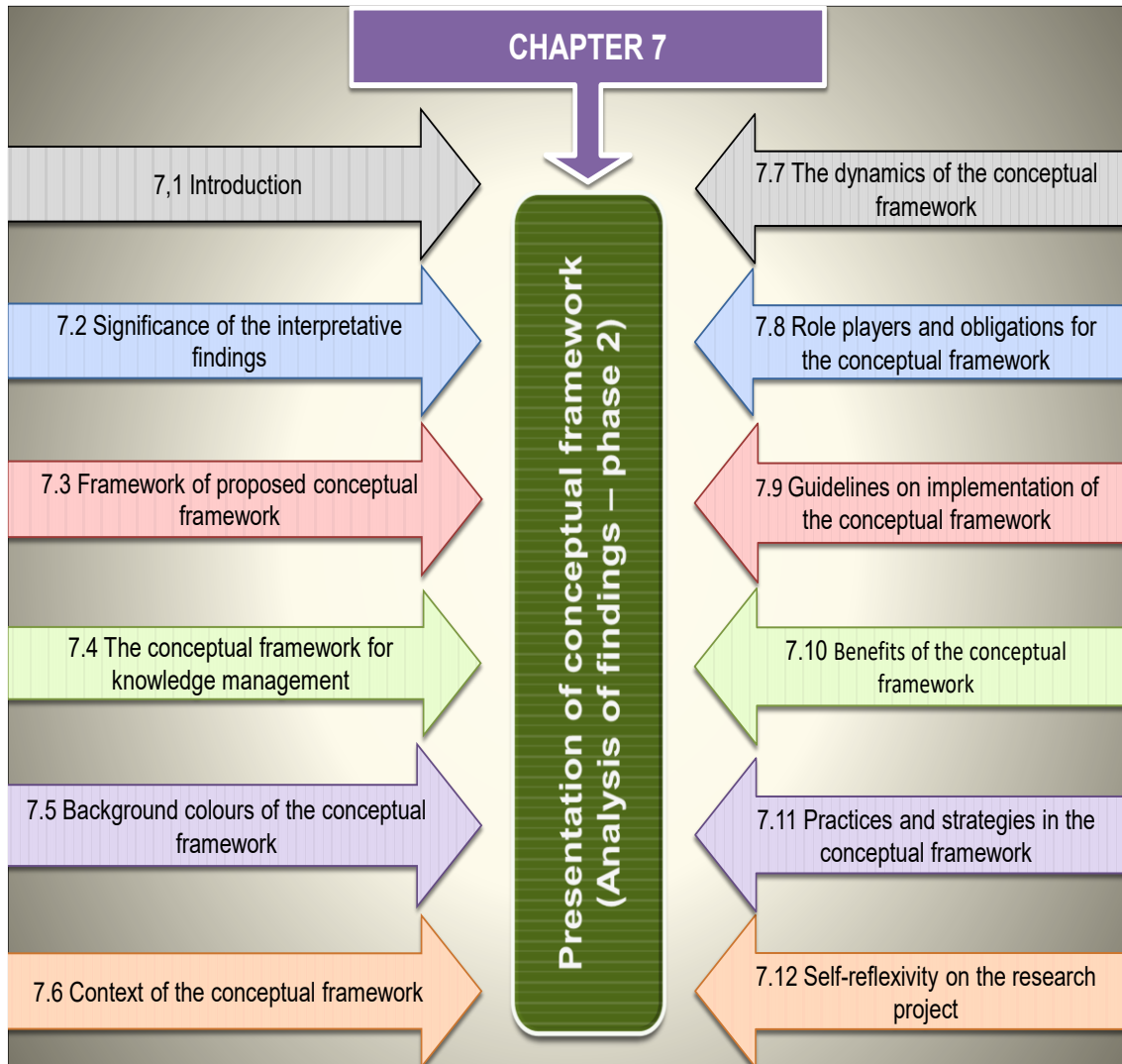


Figure 7.1: The structure of chapter seven at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2020)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter six of the study, which represents the first phase of the analysis of the findings, was focused on the discussion and interpretation of the research findings.

This analysis involved the presentation of the background of the participants and the narration of their unanimous shared understanding of the processes of the organisation's KM practices. The findings revealed that the majority of the participants had many years of working experience which contributed to the competency and commitment of the individual employees, which they used in solving the organisation's problems. It was also revealed that the participants were aware and had deep shared knowledge and understanding of the processes involved in the organisation's KM practices. This report of the findings was used to develop a conceptual framework for KM, which is presented in chapter seven as the second phase of the analysis of the findings. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the presentation of a practicable conceptual framework for KM developed as a guide for effective performance for public sector employees in Ghana. It also serves as a guide for any future research in this area hence, it presents the new theoretical as well as practical contributions of this study to the field of human resource management graphically.

This conceptual framework was developed using the guidance on developing conceptual frameworks of Huberman and Miles (1984). According to Handzic (2011) and Hislop (2013), the development of a KM framework is dependent on three conditions namely, understanding the concepts of KM, KM practices in the organisation and the factors that influence KM practices in the organisation. These conditions help to cover and effectively and systematically apply to the people, process, technology, and content of the target domain of knowledge to help improve performance (Barad, 2018; Dalkir, 2017). In the literature, the conceptual framework of Huberman and Miles (1984) satisfies these conditions hence, was used to serve as the proposed framework to guide the research towards addressing the problem and also to guide future researchers. Hence, it was used to help individual public sector employees to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes involved in an organisation's improved KM practices using the organisation's enhanced IOFs.

To this effect, the presentation of this chapter commenced with a discussion of the significance of the interpretative research findings. This was followed by the framework of the proposed conceptual framework, followed by the conceptual framework for KM and then followed by the background colours, the context and the dynamics of the conceptual framework. Also discussed were the role players and their obligations, guidelines for practical implementation of the conceptual framework and the benefits of the conceptual framework. The internal practices and strategies that are necessary for the conceptual framework, the effective ways to implement and employee acceptance of these internal practices and internal strategies were all discussed in this chapter. Finally, the self-reflexivity, which is a personal reflection on the research, was also discussed as shown in Figure 7.1.

7.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INTERPRETATIVE FINDINGS

The presentation of the conceptual framework in this chapter comes with the reflection on the discussion and interpretation of the research findings presented in sections 6.5 and 6.6 respectively. This was done because an IPA study also designed as interactive research, provides the necessary strategies that help to effectively and holistically explore, describe and explain the experience and understanding of what a given experience is and how someone made sense of this experience in a holistic and balanced manner (Patton, 2019; Petitmengin et al., 2019). The discussion and interpretation of these research findings in Chapter six, therefore, constituted the description of the participants' background and an in-depth understanding of their lived experiences on the KM practices of the organisation. The sources of data for the findings were based on the context of the interviews transcribed verbatim, the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal, which were used for the development of the inferential codes as well as the subordinate and superordinate themes used for the findings (Bazeley, 2020; Neale, 2018). Based on the advice of Finlay (2011) and Handzic (2011), the interpretative findings were used in the development of this coherent conceptual framework, which intends to make a significant difference in the way KM is practised in public sector organisations, especially in Ghana.

In the development of this conceptual framework, the discussion and interpretation of the theoretical and empirical findings add broader significance by providing insights into the understanding of the processes relating to improved KM practices and how this ensures the effective performance of employees in the Ghanaian context (Barad, 2018; Gao et al., 2018). The internal context of this KM study was, therefore, centred on the principles and processes for the transformation of tacit knowledge of individual employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation, which is then made available to all employees for their effective performance (Gamble, 2020; Iheukwumere-Esotu & Yunusa-Kaltungo, 2021). This shows that KM practices are an HR management function that has to find ways of using the OK in association with the IOFs to arrest employees' ineffective performance (Kaira & Phiri, 2022; Latilla et al., 2018). This process, therefore, formed the domain for the development of this practicable conceptual framework for KM. In the study, this was done by considering the background of the participants and using the interpretative findings based on the six superordinate themes developed, which are presented in the following subsections.

7.2.1 Findings on the participants

Nearly all the participants had working experience of at least ten years in the organisation contributing to their physical resources, competence, knowledge, and commitments, which they used in solving the organisation's problems. In KM practices, individual employees' characteristics such as their years of working experience, socio-cultural background and educational qualification have a great influence on their effective interactions, networking, communication, and knowledge sharing activities (Borges et al., 2019; Delshab et al., 2019). These characteristics were thoroughly discussed in sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 under the epistemologies of knowledge, which are the objective-based, practice-based and propositional perspectives respectively in Chapter two.

Practice-based and Propostional theorists explained that the socio-cultural, educational qualification and experiential background of an individual employee have so much influence on his or her KM practices (Al-Ahbabi et al., 2019; Clinton

& Gamble, 2019). These perspectives support the view of Hoarau (2016) who opined that knowledge acquisition and sharing is broad and people centred and that of Hislop et al. (2018) who were of the view that knowledge acquisition and sharing is socially constructed. These views make this improved KM practices cultural and context dependent. This, therefore, contradicts the objective-based theorists like Sergeeva and Andreeva (2016) who opined that KM practices are universalistic and a-contextual making them independent of all subjective and contextual elements of the individual employees.

Having more experienced participants in the organisation suggests that the organisation has many knowledge workers who are ready to effectively increase the knowledge resource of other employees in the organisation through activities such as training, orientation, mentoring, and coaching (Butt et al., 2019; Gagné et al., 2019). In addition, the participants having long years of good working experience indicates that they have long years of good working relationships with the metropolitan assemblies. This was an indication that they were motivated well enough to understand the principles involved for them to understand and accept the use of the IOFs that were necessary for KM practices as suggested by the soft approach theorist like Shrestha (2020) and Vu et al. (2020). This means that the participants had a pattern of shared experience on the OK, the IOFs and the KM practices of the organisation, which made them confident and straightforward in their responses. This helped me to collect credible and reliable data that helped me to generate the needed inferential codes and the development of the subordinate and superordinate themes used for the development of this conceptual framework (Guillen, 2019; Kaira & Phiri, 2022; Shashi et al., 2022).

7.2.2 Types of organisational knowledge

The interpretative findings revealed that the participants showed awareness and were unanimous in their shared understanding of OK, which they described as the tacit knowledge of individual employees or explicit knowledge of the organisation. The tacit knowledge is practice-based, is stored in the brain of the individual employee, is deeply rooted in his or her experience, values and culture, and is

shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact (Borges et al., 2019). On the other hand, the explicit knowledge is made up of individuals' tacit knowledge that has been converted, collected and documented by management. This is objective-based and is shared mainly through strategies such as orientation, training and workshops (Park et al., 2017). Both tacit and explicit knowledge are important in an organisation because they serve as its underlying resource and competencies (Abubakar et al., 2019; Centobelli et al., 2019). The classification of OK as either tacit or explicit helps the HR management to establish effective IOFs to help employees interact, communicate, network, and collaborate effectively to increase and develop these knowledge resources (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Dubricks & Gaile-Sakane, 2017).

Furthermore, the participants' classification of OK as either tacit or explicit knowledge helps the HR management with the need to focus on how the tacit knowledge of individual employees can be converted and transported into explicit knowledge of the organisation as suggested by the practice-based and propositional perspectives through effective interactions and networking (Durst & Bruns, 2018; Geiger et al., 2018). This classification, therefore, helps the HR management to easily identify and classify its OK as either a practice (tacit knowledge) that must be created, transferred and applied or as an object (explicit knowledge) that must be captured, organised, documented, and transferred for reuse. In effect, this helps HR managers to have full control over the OK that can be used for the benefit of all employees (Basit & Medase, 2019; Borges et al., 2019). This helps to prevent knowledge hoarding and hiding (Garg & Anan, 2020) and hence, serves as one of the impinging constructs in the conceptual framework.

7.2.3 Types of internal organisational factors

The participants share a common understanding of IOFs, which they related to as internal practices and internal strategies that are used to help them in their KM practices. The internal practices were referred to as skills improvement factors and were related to the organisation's leadership, technological tools available, the organisational structure, culture and internal strategy (Ali et al., 2019; Fernandes,

2018). On the other hand, the internal strategies were referred to as motivating enhancing factors and were related to the organisation's workplace policies, internal procedures, guides, regulations, and principles as well as work rules (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019). These internal practices and strategies are established by the HR management to help guide, facilitate and sustain employees' effective interactions, networking and communication in the organisation (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019).

These internal practices and strategies are there to help influence employees' behaviour for their effective knowledge acquisition, sharing and application initiatives. This means the employees' pragmatic understanding of these IOFs in this new world of work helps to put the organisation in a very good position to ensure that there is timely identification of organisational problems for quick solutions (Gagné et al., 2020; Qiant et al., 2020). This is so because these IOFs have been identified to have an inextricable link to employees' perception of the organisation's support for them to work effectively (Gao & Yan, 2018) and for their well-being (Wei & Mao, 2018). Hence, the IOFs are established by the HR management to help individual employees focus on transforming their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for their overall performance effectiveness (Ha & Lo, 2018; Kazemi et al., 2020), which therefore, serve as the other impinging construct in the conceptual framework of the study.

7.2.4 Organisation's knowledge management practices

In the views of the participants, KM practices are all about how the HR management helps them to be well equipped with the necessary tacit and explicit knowledge to enable them to perform their work effectively. This understanding stemmed from their awareness and shared classification of OK as either tacit or explicit knowledge which the HR department helps them to convert and disseminate into OK for the use of all (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Dubricks & Gaile-Sakane, 2017). This means KM practices are concerned with the use of the organisation's internal practices for the creation and sharing of new or tacit knowledge (Borges et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018) and the use of the

organisation's internal strategies for the capturing and sharing of existing or explicit knowledge (Hislop et al., 2018; Lui et al., 2020) by employees who have a common vision and culture in the organisation. This shows that IOFs are necessary as they help individual employees to effectively share their tacit knowledge, which is later converted into explicit or OK.

Furthermore, KM practices were seen as a systematic process that HR management puts in place to help direct which tacit knowledge employees should create and capture into explicit knowledge for the benefit of all employees. This created and captured explicit knowledge is then codified, documented and transferred for the employees to rely on for their effective performance (Cabrillo & Dahms, 2018; Gharamah et al., 2018). This means HR management adapts effective employees' management strategies in this knowledge-based economy, which has been characterised by increased demand for highly skilled knowledge workers who will also popularise KM practices for innovation and retain them (Al-Abbadie et al., 2020; Kaira & Phiri, 2019). In effect, these workers help to develop, improve and sustain the continuous interaction between their tacit knowledge and the organisation's explicit knowledge, which leads to their effective understanding of KM practices of the organisation (Al-Iqbal et al., 2019; Yazdi & Soltanali, 2019). Hence, these KM practices formed the central theme of this conceptual framework.

7.2.5 Enhanced internal organisational factors

Enhanced internal practices and enhanced internal strategies termed as enhanced IOFs are established by the HR management to help employees improve on their acquisition, creation, processing, transferring, and sharing skills of the OK (Bakator et al., 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). To this effect, the enhanced IOFs have a direct and positive relationship with the organisation's improvement of KM practices, which help the participants to put their creative ideas into practice and make them more innovative (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018). Eventually, this helps to encourage them to be more experiential and professional in their knowledge creation, acquisition, and sharing initiatives in the organisation (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Byukusenge & Munene, 2017).

Hence, these enhanced IOFs were related to having flexible, efficient and effective internal practices (Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021) as well as having decentralised, participatory and self-centred internal strategies (Saifulina et al., 2021). These helped them both internally and externally to comprehensively improve on their techniques and procedures of knowledge acquisition, creation, transferring, and sharing initiatives in the organisation (Maravilhas & Martins, 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). This means that employees' understanding of these enhanced IOFs help them to improve on their psychological attachment (Clinton & Gamble, 2019) and help them to put their creative ideas into practice and encourage them to be professional (Gharamah et al., 2018), which lead to their implementation of improved KM practices. These enhanced IOFs, therefore, help them to acquire, share and transfer the OK wherever it resides, for their improved KM practices in the organisation (Al-Qatawneh et al., 2019; Gulshan et al., 2021). This forms the first part of the decision adoption stage of relationship needed for the improved KM practices in the organisation.

7.2.6 Organisation's improved knowledge management practices

In improved KM practices, the improved internal practices help to improve on the participants' acquisition and sharing initiatives of the tacit knowledge (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017) whilst the improved internal strategies help to improve on their acquisition and sharing initiatives of the explicit knowledge (Hislop et al., 2018). These mean that the organisation's improved KM practices are possible only when the internal practices and strategies are well enhanced by the HR management to effectively help to capture, convert and share the embedded tacit knowledge of employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation for their effective performance (Abuaddous et al., 2018; Gulshan et al., 2021). This shows a continues achievement of improved quality level of employees' performance as well as improved KM level in the organisation, which provides the opportunity for HR management to measure employees' performance about KM practices in the organisation (Almahamid & Qasrani, 2017).

In their views, the improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge relate to the organisation having enough knowledge workers and a formal knowledge sharing methodology (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018) and empowering and motivating experienced employees and adopting best practices approach for knowledge sharing (Bamel & Bamel, 2018). On the other hand, the improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge relate to the organisation having a conducive work environment (Kuenzi et al., 2020) and encouraging teamwork, collaboration and having effective and efficient knowledge sourcing strategies (Saifulina et al., 2021). These means that for improved KM practices to take place, the HR department needs to establish the necessary efforts such as introducing effective socio-cultural systems to improve on the OK through enhancing the IOFs (Waheed & Muhammad, 2020). This improved KM practices form the second part of the decision adoption stage in the conceptual framework, which also has a relationship with enhanced IOFs.

7.2.7 Relation of improved improved knowledge practices to performance

It was evident that there exists a relationship between the organisation's improved KM practices and employees' performance effectiveness, which leads to the quality, quantity and timeliness of output in the organisation (Al-Shraab et al., 2021; Farish et al., 2017). This means the employees' effective performance was dependent on the organisation's improved KM practices as well as the enhanced IOFs. In their views, the improved KM practices were related to improving on the internal practices, which help them to acquire and share their tacit knowledge (Abuaddous et al., 2018) and the internal strategies, which help them to acquire and share explicit knowledge of the organisation (Sokoli et al., 2019). These improved internal practices and strategies, therefore, help them to effectively acquire and share the needed tacit and explicit knowledge (Gulshen et al., 2021), help to bring together more creative and experienced employees (Limaye et al., 2017), help them to have a harmonious relationship with each other (Shujhat et al., 2019), help in the free flow of knowledge among them (Werner & Dickson, 2018), help them to effectively socialise (Zhang, 2018), and help them to develop positive

workgroups to become innovative (Mardani et al., 2018) all of which help them to perform effectively in the organisation.

The performance effectiveness of the employees was also related to enhance IOFs management established. This was related to management enhancing the organisation's internal practices necessary for sharing tacit knowledge (Latilla et al., 2018) as well as the internal strategies needed for sharing explicit knowledge (Sokoli et al., 2019). Enhancing these internal practices and strategies help to influence their interactions and inner workings (Kaira & Phiri, 2022), help in their communication, networking and teamwork (Shashi et al., 2022), help to bring about their cooperation and unity for cohesion (Shahzad et al., 2020), help to coordinate their relationships (Build et al., 2019), and help to improve on their knowledge-sharing initiatives (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2019) all of which lead to their performance effectiveness in the organisation.

This means improved KM practices are embedded and inseparable from enhanced IOFs, which help to facilitate and coordinate the flow of knowledge between employees and their overall performance effectiveness (Imran et al., 2016; Mittal et al., 2018). This means what links employees and their effective performance in an organisation are how the employees are well managed using the enhanced internal practices and strategies (Gağne et al., 2020) and how the OK (tacit or explicit) is also well managed to ensure the needed performance effectiveness (Abubakar et al., 2019). HR management, therefore, needs to direct enough resources and efforts to help create and enhance mental, emotional and attitudinal states of the employees to help bring together the varied knowledge of individual employees to implement the needed improved KM practices (Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2017; Manaf et al., 2018). These established relationships between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices are then transformed into the outcome of performance effectiveness (Razzaq et al., 2019; Soto-Acosta et al., 2018), which are necessary in the coherent conceptual framework.

7.2.8 Validation of research report

Eventually, of the interpretative findings, this research report was validated and the process started first with the triangulation process before the participants' validation process. During the interpretation of the findings, some of the participants' quotes from the transcribed interviews were confirmed with the information in the observational field note and the research reflexive journal, which helped in the triangulation process (Jae-Nam & Young-Gun, 2015). This process was then followed by the participants' validation, which was also done to effectively solicit quality feedback from the participants. At the three zonal meetings, the participants were given the opportunity to cross-check and make the necessary corrections with regards to their answers and the interpretations made (Birt et al., 2016; Slettebø, 2020). To this effect, their mental preparations were directed towards the perspective of their understanding and reflection on enhanced IOFs and the organisation's improved KM practices in their real life and retrospective experiences (Guillen, 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019). The participants were unanimously satisfied and positive with regards to the information they provided in the report based on their lived knowledge and understanding from the perspective of enhanced IOFs and the organisation's improved KM practices (Birt et al., 2016; Giorgi, 2017; Slettebø, 2020).

This validation process, therefore, helped to address the issue of bracketing, which was very important during the study process. This was done through mental preparations of the participants directed towards exploring their personal experiences and meanings they attached to enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices in the organisation (Gullen, 2019; Petitmengin et al., 2019). During the interviews, it was observed that the majority of the participants were confident, candid, relaxed, passionate, and friendly, which helped them to provide a rich and credible response. Doing so helped me to address the issue of bracketing, which is associated with an IPA study (Dörfler & Stierand, 2020; Weatherford & Maitra, 2019). The validated report helped to bring about trustworthiness of the data as well as the interpretative findings. This report was used to develop the confirmatory conceptual framework for KM, which serves as the solution to this research

problem and also serves as a guide to effective performance for public sector employees (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020).

7.3 FRAMEWORK OF PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The presentation of the significance of the interpretative findings provided an insight into the understanding of the processes and procedures involved in the development of this confirmatory conceptual framework using the superordinate themes developed together with their relationships. The development of this conceptual framework followed the principles and guidelines underpinning the framework of Huberman and Miles (1984), which follows the quality driven design approach as suggested by Finlay (2011) and Handzic (2011). This approach is where the KM framework developed helps to step-by-step map out how the OK can be created, documented and disseminated to all employees through the adopted practices and strategies and the understanding of the knowledge content (Barad, 2018; Hoarau, 2016; Shashi et al., 2022). This approach is termed an integrated KM framework approach, which helps in assessing all the superordinate themes developed and used in designing this comprehensive and integrated framework. In this framework, Huberman and Miles (1984) explored and established various constructs and their presumed interrelationships. These relations are the impinging constructs - the internal context as host - the adoption of decision stage - cycle of transformations stage—the outcome stage as shown in Figure 7.2.

In this study, the proposed framework of KM is a generic one tailored towards employees' performance effectiveness. This framework of KM is however, built based on the existing KM models in the literature and enhanced theoretical findings. As suggested by Finlay (2011), Grant (2013) and Handzic (2011), the framework is also based on the understanding of the concept of KM, KM practices and the factors influencing KM practices in the organisation. These help to make this KM framework comprehensive, integrated, broad and holistic, which therefore, follows the qualitative driven design approach relating to the integrated KM models of the SECI, KM practices and integrated KM practices. These factors help to bring together the processes involved in this KM framework, which helps to bring out the

understanding of the purpose and context of the study (Barad, 2018; Dalkir, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017).

In addition, the framework of Huberman and Miles (1984) was adapted because it is a hybrid type, which takes into consideration the type of relationships shown in Figure 7.2, where the impinging constructs are first related to the internal context of the study, which serves as the host, then goes through to the stage of adoption of the decision, then the process goes through a cycle of transformation for the needed outcome (Maxwell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). In their views, a conceptual framework is a product of a qualitative process of theorisation that explains either graphical form (Miles et al., 2014; Robson & McCartan, 2016), or narrative form (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), the main things that were studied, which are the constructs and the presumed interrelationship among them (Maxwell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). Hence, this conceptual framework is developed by the researcher at the beginning of the study as exploratory and employed as an aid to offer a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Maxwell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014).

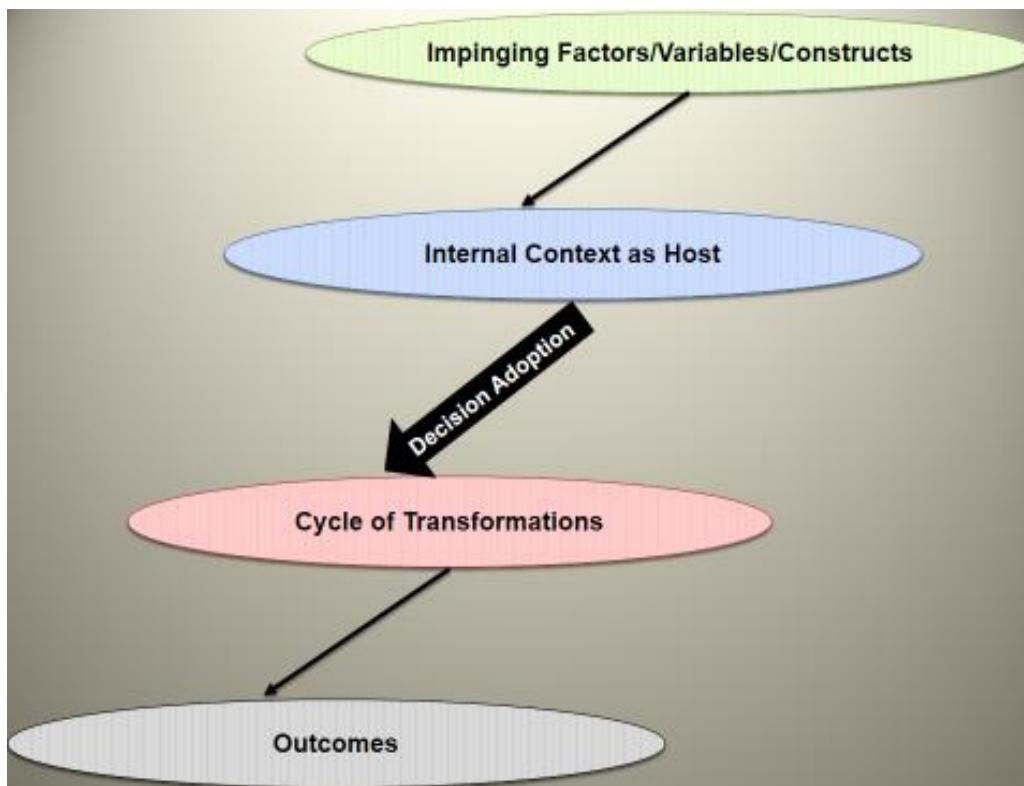


Figure 7.2: Conceptual framework for a multicase field study

Source: Huberman and Miles (1984)

The conceptual framework is then evolved as the study progresses and was confirmed by the field study in an inductive approach where in the context, the impinging constructs are employees' understanding of the types of OK and IOFs (Leeming, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). The internal context is KM, which was also related to the adoption of decisions for the understanding of the stages of the organisation's KM practices. The employees' understanding of these KM practices also went through a cycle of transformation for their understanding of enhanced IOFs leading to their improved KM practices in the organisation (Barad, 2018; Baskerville & Dulipovici, 2017). This means the understanding of enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices enable employees to relate them to the outcome of the study, which is their performance effectiveness. Hence, in the framework, the impinging constructs support and interact with each other and within the internal context the employees understand the enhanced IOFs and the improved KM practices, which help them to focus on how to effectively transport individual employees' tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the use of all employees. The employees understanding of these help them to effectively communicate, collaborate, interact, and network among themselves for the needed improved KM practices for their effective performance (Dalkir, 2017; Gao et al., 2018; Ha & Lo, 2018).

7.4 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The framework of Huberman and Miles (1984) was adapted because in the views of Maxwell (2016) and Miles et al. (2014), a researcher can either develop his or her conceptual framework or use an existing theory and adapt it to suit the needs of his or her current research study. Hence, this framework was adapted and used as the aid employed to explain the superordinate themes in the KM framework and the relationships among them. The adaption of this type of framework was also because it is a hybride type (Gao et al., 2018), which allowed the researcher to

select important superordinate themes and their meaningful relationships for the needed transformations (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2022), which results in the expected outcome of the study as shown in Figure 7.3.

The superordinate themes developed and analysed interpretatively for the findings were used for the development of this conceptual framework. The framework though inductively developed established relationships between these important superordinate themes as shown by the arrows in Figure 7.3. However, these relationships cannot be used to offer any analytical explanation or cause and effect relationships between them, but are used to generalise to the theoretical proposition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020). Hence, to enhance the practicability of the conceptual framework, the researcher provided the following areas with regards to its implementation: the purpose and objectives, the assumptions and the structure and description. In addition, the following areas were covered: the meaning of the background colours, the context and dynamics, the role players and obligations, guidelines for its implementation, the benefits, and the internal practices and internal strategies needed.

7.4.1 The purpose and objectives of the conceptual framework

The presentation of this conceptual framework for KM was the proposed solution to the research problem, which aims to promote theory development and practical relevance to HR management practices. The purpose was to explore and make sense of KM processes as a guide for effective performance for employees in public sector organisations in the Ghanaian context. In this regard, its objectives are to promote theory development, which may have a positive impact on management practices on KM. It also serves as a conceptual framework for HR Management in the implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation. This means in this knowledge-based economy, implementing the improved type of KM practices is very vital for the organisation to take full advantage of the value of its OK (Barad, 2018; Kinghorn, 2017; Stamou, 2017). This KM framework, therefore, serves as a guide for practical and theoretical understanding and

implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation, which serves as a prerequisite for employees' improved performance and higher productivity.

7.4.2 The assumptions of the conceptual framework

In addition to the purpose and objectives of this conceptual framework, the assumptions underpinning this framework were derived from the descriptive and interpretive responses of the participants to the context of the interview questions. The assumptions were also derived from the conceptual lens from which the researcher looked at the theoretical and methodological dimensions of the study, as well as the literature reviewed on the phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (2017) and Miles et al. (2014) explained that assumptions are said to be the startling axioms, postulates or statements that are not scientifically proven but yield testable implications, which are believed to be true in the face of the theoretical standpoint. The development of this conceptual framework for KM was, therefore, based contextually on the general assumptions that:

- To have improved KM practices in an organisation, HR management should enhance the IOFs.
- There is an understanding of the meaningful relationship between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices.
- There is an understanding of the meaningful relationship between employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness.
- There is an understanding that what will improve on an employee's KM practices will increase the understanding of what will make the employee perform effectively in the organisation.
- To develop this conceptual framework as a guide, there exist meaningful relationships among the superordinate themes developed contextually.
- The outcome, which is employees' performance effectiveness is relevant to guide HR management to practically implement this conceptual framework.

7.4.3 The structure of the conceptual framework

In the light of the above assumptions underpinning this conceptual framework, the development of the framework commenced with the identification and development of the superordinate themes together with the presumed relationships between them as shown in Table 7.1. This shows that the visual presentation of the conceptual framework was developed as a result of a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the superordinate themes analysed interpretatively for the findings. The report of these findings was validated and was, therefore, used as the reference for deriving the constructs and their relationships in the conceptual framework. Using the adapted and modified framework of Huberman and Miles (1984), this conceptual framework establishes five key areas of relationships needed to logically explain the course of action as a guide for it to be functional as shown in Table 7.1 and Figure 7.3.

In Table 7.1 (narrative form) and Figure 7.3 (graphical form), the impinging constructs are the types of OK as well as the types of IOFs; the internal context was the organisation's KM practices; the decision adoption stage was the understanding of the transformations where the decisions adopted were the employees' understanding of enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices; the cycle of transformations was where the employees' related the enhanced IOFs and the improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness; and the outcome of the study being employees' performance effectiveness.

Presumed relations	Related superordinate themes
Impinging constructs	Types of OK and IOFs for KM
Internal context (Host)	The organisation's KM practices
<i>Decision adoption</i>	<i>Understanding the dictates for transformations</i>
The decision adopted	For enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices
The cycle of transformations	Relation of enhanced IOFs to performance and relation of improved KM practices to performance
Outcome	Employees' performance effectiveness

Table 7.1: Presumed relations with related superordinate theme (own compilation)

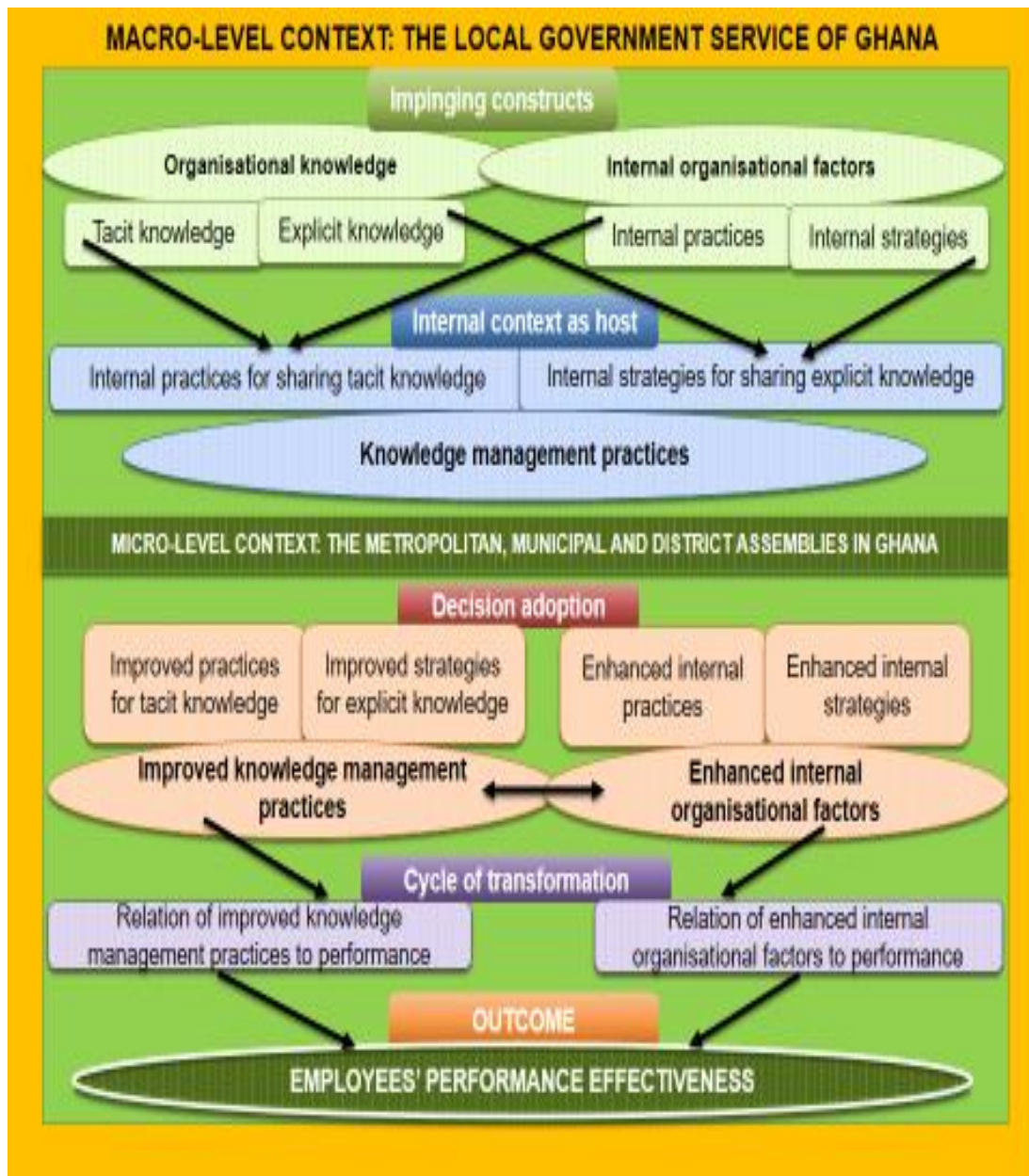


Figure 7.3: The structure of KM framework for performance (own compilation)

7.4.4 The description of the conceptual framework

Relating to the structure of the conceptual framework for KM as shown in Figure 7.3, the fundamental assumption underpinning its development was that the understanding of what will improve an individual employee's KM practices will improve on his or her performance. In this regard, in the conceptual framework, the impinging constructs constitute employees' understanding of the types of OK,

which is made up of tacit knowledge of individual employees and explicit knowledge of the organisation as well as the types of IOFs necessary for KM, which are made up of the internal practices and strategies of the organisation that help to influence employees' KM practices. The impinging constructs are then related to the internal context of the study, KM using the SECI theory by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and the KM theory by Dalkir (2005).

The employees' understanding of this KM practice, therefore, relates to the internal practices management puts in place to help them share their tacit knowledge as well as the internal strategies management adapts to help guide them share explicit knowledge of the organisation. These lead to a decision adoption for their understanding of the enhanced IOFs, which also comes with improved KM practices. This understanding then goes through a cycle of transformation using the KM practices theory by Yusuf and Wanjau (2014). This then leads to the employees' understanding of how to relate their improved KM practices from the enhanced IOFs to their performance effectiveness, which is the outcome of the study. Hence, this process of understanding the organisation's improved KM practices through the enhanced IOFs provides the initial understanding and explanation of the nature, context and dynamics of the phenomenon as presented in the conceptual framework in Figure 7.3.

As stated earlier, the nature of the phenomenon is about the transformation of individual employee's tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation, using the IOFs and the necessary KM theories within the internal context of the study (Barad, 2018; Dalkir, 2017; Ibrahim, 2017). The conceptual framework in Figure 7.3, therefore, shows how individual employees can effectively acquire and transfer their tacit knowledge using the influence of the organisation's internal practices, which are related to the leadership style, organisational strategy, culture and structure and the technological tools available. It also shows how the employees can effectively be guided to acquire and share the organisation's explicit knowledge using the influence of the organisation's internal strategies, which are related to the organisation's work-rules, work-policies and principles and

the internal procedures, guides and regulations. In effect, these internal practices and strategies are used to help promote the employees' discussions, observations, mentoring, and interactions using the socialisation stage of the SECI theory, which helps to help them create and acquire the tacit knowledge of the organisation (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009).

The next process is where more of the employees create and acquire the needed tacit knowledge and also capture and acquire explicit knowledge of the organisation using the externalisation stage of the SECI theory and the integrated KM theory. Here, the created tacit knowledge and the captured explicit knowledge is then codified into the OK using the combination stage of the SECI theory and the integrated KM theory before it is stored in the knowledge repository and other databases in the organisation. The final stage is where the employees reinforce their understanding of the explicit or the OK to become more tacit to them by using the internalisation stage of the SECI theory and the integrated KM theory. This OK is then transferred and shared to all employees as the operational systems using the KM practices theory (Butt et al., 2019; Dalkir, 2017; Hislop et al., 2018).

The process of transferring, sharing and application of the operational systems of the organisation, shows where employees understand the principles, processes and procedures of the organisation's KM practices. This is where the HR management enhances the internal practices for sharing the tacit knowledge and the internal strategies for sharing the explicit knowledge in the organisation. To this effect, the enhanced internal practices and strategies then help the employees to fully understand the dictates that help to derive the needed improved KM practices in the organisation (Al-Abbadie et al., 2020; Kaira & Phiri, 2022). This related process is where the HR management puts in place effective ways of interaction, networking, communication, collaboration, and discussion among employees to achieve this improved KM practices, which leads to their performance effectiveness which forms the outcome of the study (Rezaei et al., 2021; Shashi et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2021).

7.5 BACKGROUND COLOURS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To provide a quick insight into the understanding of all issues in the conceptual framework in Figure 7.3, colours are used for the background to quickly attract the attention of readers because of the meaning it carries. Many researchers have explained that colour is used to express a broad range of communication and psychological outcomes, which plays a very important role in influencing viewer's moods, emotional responses, experiences and feelings to this visual stimulus although, this happens to be an unconscious process (Cherry, 2020; Ferreira, 2019; Peng, Jinbei & Xujung, 2018). In their views, Elliot (2018) and Kuo, Chang and Lai (2021) added that colour is a significant element in our daily life however, its symbolic meaning to a person is not static and like most factors, all colours carry positive as well as negative meanings to people. Hence, such positive or negative associations are not right or wrong but merely a reflection of the subjective interpretation of colour from which no person is excluded (Kuo et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2018). This means there are many variables in reaction to colours from one person to another which means it is not possible to use a single specific colour to have the same effect on mood or behaviour for all people (Ferreira, 2019; Peng et al., 2018; Roohi & Forouzandeh, 2019). Some researchers have however, established that what has a definite influence on people's conscious or unconscious colour perception is their socio-cultural background, traditional beliefs, political connotations, value orientations, and religious beliefs (Ferreira, 2019; Peng et al., 2018).

This means colours evoke different feelings from one person to another, however, in Ghana there are national colours comprised of the Pan-African colours of red, gold, green, and black. These colours have significant meanings and play very important roles in the socio-cultural, traditional and political settings of Ghanaians (Kuo et al., 2021; Roohi & Forouzandeh, 2019). In the conceptual framework, therefore, background colours were chosen to quickly attract the attention of readers of the framework. These background colours are gold and green for the macro-level and micro-level contexts respectively because of their significance in the nation's history (Macdonald, 2016a; Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018). In this context, the colour gold represents the nation's minerals wealth, which is made up of

natural resources and other non-natural resources and forms the bigger set which is, therefore, associated with the macro-level context. On the other hand, the colour green represents the nation's natural resources including the people and forms a subset of colour gold, which is also associated with the micro-level context as shown in Figure 7.3 (Macdonald, 2016b; Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018). Hence, the colour gold was used for the macro-level context, which represents the LGSG whilst the colour green was used for the micro-level context which represents the MMDAs under the LGSG.

The symbolic meaning and how each of the background colours relates very well with the context as well as functioning of the organisation as depicted in the conceptual framework are so important. This is because it provides a quick insight into the understanding of all issues in the framework. This means choosing the appropriate colour for users of this framework, helps to present the necessary information to help persuade them to care and take action (Fish, 2021; Kuo et al., 2021; Yang, Liu & Zeng, 2018). This suggests that to connect users' moods, emotions, experiences, and feelings to the framework, these colours are chosen for the background to quickly attract their attention. Hence, the colour combination of gold and green that were chosen for the macro-level and micro-level contexts respectively in the framework, provides the needed principles of observation, attraction, interpretation, and feeling elements of a brand that is required in packaging (Fish, 2021; Kuo et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2018). This means the colour combination helps to carry out the discussion of the organisational context of the framework in section 7.6.

7.6 THE CONTEXT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The organisational context for the conceptual framework presented and described above, is a public sector organisation namely, the LGSG comprising the MMDAs. The context here refers to the setting or the external environment in which the study of the improved KM practices was conducted, which was on employees of the MMDAs in Ghana. The study was, therefore, focused on developing an understanding of improved KM practices for public sector employees' performance

effectiveness using the enhanced IOFs. This was to help ensure that HR managers of the public sector organisations use this conceptual framework to guide their employees to understand and implement improved type of KM practices (Al-Abbadie et al., 2020; Kaira & Phiri, 2022). This will eventually help employees of MMDAs under the LGSG to perform effectively in the implementation of government policy decisions, programmes and projects at the local or district level for the needed socio-economic and political development in the areas.

In this study, an organisation denotes a social entity formed by a group of people and comprised of basic components like vision, mission, values, the people, culture, structure, technology, and external environment, which are interrelated. Organisations are, therefore, typified in terms of two key parameters namely capital ownership (private or public) and their orientation (profit or welfare). Whereas public organisations are owned by the state which seeks the welfare of the people through the provision of services, private organisations are owned by private individuals and are for business purposes and for-profit (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Thomas, 2017). This means in general terms, public organisations consist of government and all publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises and other entities that deliver public programmes, goods or services (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Thomas, 2017). Public organisations, therefore, include departments, ministries and branches of the government that are integral parts of the structure and are funded and accountable to the central authority. There are also agencies that are part of the government and are funded to deliver public goods or services but they exist as separate organisations and finally, there are public enterprises that deliver goods or services but they operate independently of government funding (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Thomas, 2017).

In Ghana, the LGSG operates as part of the core governing body established under the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act, 462) and amended as the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act, 936) to provide local governance following the 1992 Constitution by establishing the MMDAs with the primary aim of development at

the grassroots level, promoting good governance, transparency and accountability, and ensuring peace and security at the district or local level. In terms of HR management, the MMDAs operate on two management structures namely a four-tier management structure, which is operated by the metropolitan assemblies and a three-tier management structure, which is operated by the municipal and district assemblies (Chachu, 2021; MLG & RD, 2019; UNDP, 2019). Hence, the study explored KM practices of employees within the external environment of MMDAs, which operate as a public sector organisation. It was also within the internal environment (employees) where the empirical study was conducted with the evidence that the employees were aware of KM practices and that improved KM practices are inextricably linked to their effective performance as shown empirically in Chapter 6 and conceptually in Chapter 7 of the study.

The external environment or context of this study has, therefore, been structured into two interconnected settings which include the macro-level and the micro-level within the public sector organisation. The macro-level context (depicted with colour gold) refers to the LGSG, which represents the core government agency and the micro-level context (depicted with colour green) refers to the MMDAs, which operate under the regulations and control of the LGSG. These two institutions represent the research context and the understanding of the conceptual framework at the macro-level context influences the micro-level context. This holistic view of the conceptual framework demonstrates that the two different subdivisions of the context are interrelated and accordingly, contribute to the lived experiences of the participants in this study (Maxwell, 2020; Miles et al., 2020). This was done because the biggest challenge facing public sector organisations in Ghana today is how to nurture efficient and effective employees who will implement government policy decisions, programmes and projects effectively from the macro-level to the micro-level of the organisation.

The research findings as shown in Chapter six of the study indicated that the current research on the processes of KM practices is complicated and concerning for public sector employees in Ghana. This was because the responses of the

participants during the interviews revealed that the organisation's KM practices mirror the larger or macro setting of employees working at the LGSG and the micro setting of employees working with the MMDAs in Ghana. Hence, the participants believed that for employees to engage in improved KM practices, the HR department of the LGSG should do everything possible to support and enhance the employees' understanding of the constructs and their interrelationships within the macro-level context as well as the micro-level context of the organisation. This was in support of the views of Shrestha (2020) and Vu et al. (2020) who explained that using the soft approach to manage the employees, helps to enhance their interaction, networking and collaboration for any improved KM practices at both the macro-level and micro-level contexts.

This explains why based on the advice of Kuo et al. (2021), the national colours of gold and green are used to depict the macro-level and micro-level contexts respectively to attract the quick attention of the readers. This means that the HR department of the LGSG has a vital role to play in the understanding of these improved KM practices to all employees. This understanding helps to provide in detail, the dynamics of the conceptual framework, which helps to show a pattern of change relating to employees' performance effectiveness. This also brought to bear management's general approach to relationship building with the employees. When employees' relationship with their work colleagues and management are stronger, they turn to learn fast and adjust to their work. This situation then encourages them to remain in the organisation due to their attachment to the internal practices and strategies (Alqudah & Ruzo-Sanmartin, 2022; Nabawanuka & Ekmekcioglu, 2022).

7.7 THE DYNAMICS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As indicated in this conceptual framework, the SECI and KM practices theories, which serve as the dynamics for this conceptual framework, are used as the selected energy source to support and facilitate improved KM practices in an organisation. The SECI and KM practices theories are used for the understanding of types of OK and types of IOFs, which are the main constructs that fuel the

continuous interactions between the tacit and explicit knowledge of employees (KM practices) in an organisation. This leads to the understanding of enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices, which transform to the understanding of employees' performance effectiveness, as shown in Figure 7.3 and indicated by the arrows which explain to employees the established relationships (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Butt et al., 2019; Dubricks & Gaile-Sakane, 2017).

This means the effective implementation of improved KM practices has more to do with HR management establishing dynamics like having an organic culture, strong platform for networking and interaction, conducive work environment, having the availability of knowledge workers and technology all of which help employees to interact, network and collaborate effectively. These factors help to facilitate or promote effective capturing of individual employees embedded tacit knowledge to make it explicit and easily accessible to all employees (Hui et al., 2018; Iheukwumere-Esotu & Yunusa-Kaltungo, 2021). This means one of the dynamics in the understanding of this conceptual framework is having an organic organisational culture, which refers to the assumptions, beliefs, values, and attitudes which bind employees together for their effective knowledge creation, transfer and application initiatives. This means that HR management needs to evaluate the organisational culture by making it open, flexible and strong (organic) such that it will value the trust and stimulate employees' interaction and integration for successful improved KM practices, which will lead to their performance effectiveness (Afshari et al., 2020; Fernandes, 2018; Kinghorn, 2017).

Other dynamics in the understanding of this conceptual framework is a strong platform conducive enough for integration, interaction, networking, and collaboration of employees to make their knowledge actionable. This is because there have been several studies that revealed that the effective use of OK has been the basis of the effective performance of employees in the organisation. Hence, investments in strategies like training and provision of modern technology help to enhance knowledge transfer and address most concerns of employees to improve on their performance effectiveness (Aboyassin & Sultan, 2017; Halawi &

Haydar, 2018). Strategies like these should, however, be focused on management and leadership of the organisation (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2019) as well as policies that will focus on the short-term and long-term results of the organisation (Jilani et al., 2020). These strategies should also follow the principles of an ideal successful organisation, which include the structure of employment, job stability, employment outcome, quality of the relationship, and work-life balance (Back et al., 2019; Bakator et al., 2019; Noe et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the dynamics in the understanding of this conceptual framework is the availability of employees within the organisation who have the required OK or those who can acquire that knowledge. In situations where this is lacking, external knowledge sources can be identified for mining for the current as well as future knowledge needs of the organisation (Akaegbu & Usoro, 2017; Henry, 2018). These external knowledge sources should, however, be analysed first concerning their ability to support the objectives of the organisation. Papadakis (2016) explained that this analysis can be done effectively by performing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the objectives of the organisation. Hence, the availability of such employees with the OK means that the organisation has sufficient OK in its repository for improved KM practices needed for the employees' effective performance in the organisation (Butt et al., 2019; Kinghorn, 2017).

Again, the dynamics in the understanding of this conceptual framework requires a conducive work environment in an organisation. A conducive work environment is one of the most important factors organisations look at for the effective performance of their employees. This is because they encourage effective communication, interaction and involvement of employees, which help to address issues relating to all forms of discrimination among employees (Kuenzi et al., 2020; Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020). This means the nature and characteristics of the organisation's work environment play a major role in improved KM practices in the organisation. The work environment in big and multinational organisations, for example, is more likely to give employees who come from different socio-cultural

backgrounds challenges with regards to their effective knowledge sharing initiatives than an organisation that is local or small with few employees (Park & Lee, 2020; Vivek, 2018; Vu et al., 2020).

Finally, the dynamics of this conceptual framework requires the availability of technology and employees who can effectively use this technology. The technology of, which ICT is part, plays a key role in the trend towards KM practices because in today's business environment, ICTs support knowledge transfer and broad sharing of information, which are good examples of effective KM tools. Hence, when facilitating knowledge transfer initiatives in an organisation, ICT tools such as telephone, fax, teleconferencing, chat rooms, automatic routing, intranets, internets, webinars, and zooms are utilised to establish virtual meeting places where employees can engage in dialogue, network and collaboration (Lee et al., 2019; Santoro et al., 2018; Soto-Acosta et al., 2018). It is also important to add that KM activities such as knowledge creation and capture, knowledge transfer and sharing and knowledge application and acquisition can successfully be performed using these ICT tools but must have employees who can communicate with these ICT tools effectively in the organisation (Charband & Navimipour, 2018; Geiger et al., 2018; Keikha, 2018).

7.8 ROLE PLAYERS AND OBLIGATIONS FOR THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

After a careful look at the dynamics in implementing this conceptual framework, attention was paid during its development to assigning specific roles to the players and their obligation in the organisation. It has been established that improved KM practices of employees are embedded and inseparable from the enhanced IOFs established by the HR management. These enhanced IOFs help the HR management to effectively facilitate and coordinate the flow of employees' SKAAs and their overall performance effectiveness. This facilitation and coordination by the HR management become necessary because what links employees and their performance effectiveness are their engagements, interactions and discussions

within the organisation and how the OK is managed for them to perform effectively (Shrestha, 2020; Vu et al., 2020).

To this effect, in trying to link the IOFs and employees' performance effectively, organisations need to follow the suggestions made by Porter (2018) and Zhang (2018) who opined that employees' readily acceptance of the IOFs are significantly associated with their perceptions and attitude towards the organisation's support and their social expectations. In view of this, careful attention was paid during the development of this conceptual framework, in assigning specific roles to the players in the organisation. These role players who form part of the KM process include HR management, knowledge workers and the general employees with their obligations to facilitate the enhanced IOFs for this improved KM practices.

7.8.1 Human resource management

KM practices were seen as a systematic process that allows the HR management to equip itself with strengths in some IOFs to help employees to create, acquire, codify, store, share, and apply tacit knowledge of employees as well as the explicit knowledge of the organisation to all employees to enhance their performance effectiveness. This process allows concrete indicators of employees' performance effectiveness to be identified, pursued and measured through the employees' interactions, observations, networking, discussions, and group-work (Chen et al., 2018; Gagné et al., 2019). The new world of work has also come with an increased need for employees' performance effectiveness hence, HR management needs to develop and use enhanced IOFs to put the organisation in a good position for timely identification of problems for quick solutions (Rezezi et al., 2021; Sahibzada et al., 2020b; Wang et al., 2021).

The role of HR management in this KM practice is, therefore, to devise and use the enhanced IOFs to connect people to people activities and information using the conceptual framework. The enhanced IOFs are there to help employees to improve on their knowledge acquisition, creation, sharing and application initiatives in the organisation. This helps the HR management to effectively relate

employees' performance to KM practices that are improved because one of the key drivers to employees' performance effectiveness is the implementation of improved KM practices in the organisation (Al-Abbadie et al., 2020; Razezi et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). In this regard, the conceptual framework helps management to guide its employees on how to effectively understand the constructs and their relationships. This helps the organisation to have an improved approach to managing employees' performance effectiveness, which comes with benefits like unity in diversity among employees (Inayat et al., 2021), having more experienced workers (Huselid, 2018) and improved productivity and enhanced performance (Mardani et al., 2018).

7.8.2 Knowledge workers

In the basic form, KM is about any deliberate efforts by the HR management to convert skills and competencies employees have into OK and place it in a repository for the benefit of current as well as future use of all employees to enhance their performance effectiveness and increase productivity. This shows that experienced employees termed knowledge workers play significant roles in promoting effective capturing of the embedded employees' tacit knowledge and transforming it into explicit knowledge before placing it into its repository to make it readily accessible to all employees (Butt et al., 2019; Werner & Dickson, 2018). A knowledge worker is a person whose work is primarily intellectual, creative, non-routine, and involves the use of some reasonable amount of tacit, contextual and conceptual knowledge, which makes him or her function effectively. Knowledge workers are usually unit or departmental heads who promote organisational learning and have the requisite expertise of the organisation which they acquired from training, conferencing, workshops, and experience (Antunes et al., 2020; Butt et al., 2019). To this effect, knowledge workers help to effectively share the OK with all employees and they also help to make better and faster decisions in solving complex organisational problems.

This conceptual framework guides the HR management to establish effective strategies like KM methodology, which are necessary to help create effective,

efficient and enhanced mental, emotional and attitudinal state of the employees, which helps to promote knowledge workers in the organisation (Antunes et al., 2020; Werner & Dickson, 2018). The role of a knowledge worker is, therefore, to help identify and capture the OK that requires attention, continuation, nurturing and promotion by assisting other employees to deliver value to the organisation. They also engage in knowledge sourcing where value-added knowledge is effectively retrieved, coded and speedily transferred or disseminated to all employees (Razzaq et al., 2019; Werner & Dickson, 2018). The knowledge worker, therefore, helps the HR management to establish effective internal practices and strategies that value sharing and reusing of the OK (Shrestha, 2020), helps to have processes in place that can efficiently gather, evaluate and distribute the OK (Zhang & He, 2016), have competent employees who effectively understand the OK (Zhang, 2018), helps to have efficient and effective ICT tools that can enhance the initiatives of sharing the OK (Santoro & Usai, 2018), and help to have incentives in place to encourage these knowledge workers share their knowledge willingly (Chen et al., 2018; Werner & Dickson, 2018).

7.8.3 General employees

Employees' performance effectiveness relates to how effective and efficient an employee is in the discharge of his or her duty. Hence, HR management uses its IOFs such as its internal practices and strategies to help get the necessary knowledge and skills from individual employees who have it to those who need it to improve on the general performance effectiveness of all employees (Razzaq et al., 2019; Zhang & He, 2016). This is because it is these employees who make the organisation function intelligently through the knowledge they acquired in the process of their social interactions, discussion, conferencing, group-work, and networking, which connects them with other colleagues and are influenced due to their socio-cultural background (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Keikha, 2018). The HR management, therefore, puts in place strategies like motivation to induce employees' acceptance of these IOFs (Moodley & Hore, 2020) or during the recruitment process they select employees who have the requisite qualification

(Skhani & Jain, 2020) and experience (Zhuang & Pan, 2022) to easily accept and use the IOFs in the organisation.

Because of this, the conceptual framework provides an effective employee management strategy, which guides all employees with insights into the understanding of issues relating to enhanced IOFs as well as improved KM practices and how these ensure their performance effectiveness (Shrestha, 2020; Vu et al., 2020). Hence, employees need to develop their unique capabilities by focusing on how to accept the IOFs to help facilitate their interactions, discussions, networking, and collaborations. These strategies help employees to achieve the understanding of the organisation's improved practices of KM (Muthuvelo et al., 2017), encourage them to adopt a higher level of responsibility for their career (Hussinki et al., 2017), help to empower and enhance their skills level (Mittal et al., 2018), help to motivate them to be more committed to their work (Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021), and help them to get more involved in the achievement of the organisation's objectives (Latilla et al., 2018). This shows that in these modern and global markets, employees need to be flexible, effective and have the capacity to learn and transfer knowledge (Hislop et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019) and adapt to new situations and be able to avoid the issue of bounded rationality leading to unwanted turnover (Delshab et al., 2019; Han et al., 2020).

7.9 GUIDELINES ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework was developed to have a broader practical significance by providing employees with insights into the understanding of all issues relating to improved KM practices and how this ensures their effective performance. In the conceptual framework, therefore, arrows are used to provide guidelines on how to understand the relationships among the constructs of the types of OK, the types of IOFs necessary for KM and how to implement the improved KM practices so that the organisation can take full advantage of the value of knowledge of its employees for their performance effectiveness (Omotayo, 2015; Wang et al., 2021; Zaim et al., 2019). The presentation of the guidelines for its implementation has

been simplified for management and employees' understanding of the various constructs used in the conceptual framework, beginning with the impinging constructs.

7.9.1 Organisational knowledge

The different types of OK are one of the impinging constructs of the study as shown in the conceptual framework. OK is the underlying resource that makes an employee function intelligently. This knowledge has been classified as tacit knowledge, which belongs to individual employees and later converted into explicit knowledge, which is coded and documented and belongs to the organisation (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009). This is where the HR management effectively focuses on helping employees to convert their tacit knowledge and transport it into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the benefit of all employees. This process of knowledge conversion helps the employees to share their knowledge willingly, helps them to develop and enrich their knowledge and helps them to find a way of documenting and storing this knowledge as explicit knowledge for current as well as future use of all employees (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Gamble, 2020). It means HR management needs to establish effective IOFs to help employees effectively exchange and disseminate their tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge to become the OK.

7.9.2 Internal organisational factors

The different type of IOFs necessary to support KM is another impinging construct in the conceptual framework. IOFs are established by the HR department to help employees create and acquire their tacit knowledge and help convert and codify the same into explicit knowledge of the organisation. These IOFs are related to the internal practices and strategies HR management uses to help employees focus on effective interaction, communication, collaboration, discussions, and networking referred to as social interactions (Ali et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). This means that the HR department needs to adopt a coherent approach to employee management to help empower, motivate and encourage employees to understand

and implement these IOFs. This helps HR management to best manage its employees and value them as assets, which help to bring out the varied individual's tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation for their benefit (Gagne et al., 2020; Vu et al., 2020).

7.9.3 Knowledge management practices

The organisation's KM practices in this conceptual framework are all about how HR management uses the IOFs to help employees focus on transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge for all employees to rely on for their effective operation. This is where capturing and sharing of the tacit knowledge is done through processes like mentoring, coaching, face-to-face meetings, observations, and dialogues using internal practices (Borges et al, 2019; Chen et al., 2018). On the other hand, capturing and sharing of the explicit knowledge is also done through processes like networking, workshops, conferences, seminars, training, and working in groups using the internal strategies (Ellis & Roever, 2018; Ewolds et al., 2017; Hui et al., 2018). This means the HR management needs to use its internal practices and strategies to help employees create and acquire the OK, have this knowledge in its knowledge repository, regularly develop and improve this knowledge, have efficient and effective technological tools to share and transfer this knowledge, help to enhance these IOFs, have conducive organisational environment for reuse of this knowledge by all employees, and help to manage this OK effectively as an asset in the organisation (Mardani et al., 2018; Shujhat et al., 2019).

However, for employees to effectively understand this social interaction process of KM, scholars like Franzosi (2016), Kinghorn (2017) and Saldña (2016) advised that HR management needs to take into consideration the employees' necessary characteristics such as their beliefs, norms, socio-cultural background, and working experience, which have so much influence on their behaviours, which play a critical role in any successful KM practices in an organisation.

7.9.4 Enhanced internal organisational factors

Enhancing the IOFs means in contemporary HR management, the IOFs are used with more focus on employees' activities. This is where HR management improves on the quality of the internal practices as well as the internal strategies of the organisation to help improve on the quality of employees' interaction, networking, meeting, discussion, communication, and collaboration (Bakator et al., 2019; Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Huselid, 2018). This means HR Management improves on the quality of its internal practices by making them flexible, organic and contingent (Almeida et al., 2019; Mittal et al., 2018) as well as improves on the quality of its internal strategies by making them participatory, self-directing and flexible (Alshaima et al., 2016; Gholipour et al., 2018). When the IOFs are well enhanced, it makes it possible for employees to effectively acquire, share and transfer the needed OK to help improve on their KM practices, which comes with creativity and innovation (Shahzad et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2021).

7.9.5 Improved knowledge management practices

Improved KM practices have an interdependent relationship with the enhanced IOFs. This refers to any deliberate efforts by the HR department to develop and improve on the embedded tacit knowledge that is in employees' heads as it were, and that has never been explicitly coded and, therefore, make this knowledge available using the organisation's ICT tools or effective HR management strategies so that it can be used effectively by all employees (Lei et al., 2021; Park et al., 2021). This means that HR management needs to adopt improved internal practices to help all employees effectively capture and share the tacit knowledge and improve internal strategies to help them to effectively capture and share the explicit knowledge in the organisation. Consequently, improved KM practices are related to having experienced workers and having incentives for them, empowering and motivating workers to share their knowledge willingly, having a formal methodology for sharing knowledge, having a conducive work environment, encouraging collaborations and teamwork, and having efficient institutional memory. These help to create and enhance employees' mental, emotional and attitudinal states, thereby, helping the HR management to have full control of the

OK through varied knowledge of its employees (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019; Ali et al, 2019; Novak et al., 2020).

7.9.6 Relating improved knowledge management practices to performance

Employees' relation of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness is where this performance effectiveness is measured as a function of their declarative and procedural knowledge, expertise and skills and the HR management's employee management strategies. This is where the enhanced IOFs are combined with the OK to bring about improved KM practices (Ali et al., 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). This means that employees' performance effectiveness was dependent on the organisation's enhanced IOFs and the organisation's improved KM practices. Here, HR management needs to adopt effective employee management strategies like teamwork and networking for their employees, improve on its knowledge-sharing initiatives, help to connect employees for meetings and discussions, help to develop positive work norms for employees, and help to promote communication among employees, which motivates them to perform effectively (Limaye et al., 2017; Mardani et al., 2018; Zhang, 2018). Again, through these strategies, HR management also needs to build confidence among employees, help them to have control over how they work, help in sustaining their life-long learning practices, help them to be innovative and creative, help to ensure flow of knowledge among them, and help them to socialise and interact effectively for a harmonious relationship, which comes with improved KM practices necessary for their effective performance (Razzaq et al., 2019; Sahibzada et al., 2020b).

7.10 BENEFITS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It was stated in the literature that employees of the public sector organisations in Ghana lacked effective understanding of KM practices in the organisations. Armah-Attah (2015) and Asiedu (2015) attributed the lack of implementation of KM practices in the public sector organisations to employees' lacking an understanding of the organisation's KM practices. To this effect, this conceptual framework for KM has been graphically and narratively designed as a guide to help employees focus

on the descriptive understanding of the OK, IOFs as well as the KM practices. This is in the end transformed into their understanding of the organisation's improved KM practices leading to their effective performance (Barad, 2018; Gharamah et al., 2018). The conceptual framework, therefore, takes HR management as well as employees through the understanding of all the constructs leading to employees' performance effectiveness. This, therefore, comes with the following benefits to the public sector organisations, HR management as well as the employees in general.

7.10.1 Benefits of the conceptual framework to public sector organisations

In this modern economy, knowledge becomes the competencies of the organisation and, therefore, its competitive advantage realised through full utilisation of its OK. In this conceptual framework, employees are guided to understand that their tacit knowledge as well as the explicit knowledge are the underlying resource that is produced through their interactions, teamwork, seminars, meetings and networking, which help them to function intelligently for the benefit of the organisation (Butt et al., 2019; Gamble, 2020). In this process, the employees' tacit knowledge is combined with the organisation's internal practices to help convert the tacit knowledge of individual employees and transport it into explicit knowledge using the organisation's internal strategies for all employees to have the required knowledge, the unique skills and capabilities and the required expertise and experiences for their smooth operations. In the end, these practices come with increased productivity, creativity and innovation (Gulshan et al., 2021; Lattila et al., 2018; Manaf et al., 2018).

The conceptual framework guides the organisation on how to facilitate enhanced internal practices such as having a decentralised organisational structure, a participatory culture, flexible leadership, strategic internal strategy, and efficient technological tools, which come with an effective flow of knowledge, expertise, skills, experience, and ideas. Also, the conceptual framework guides the organisation on how to establish enhanced internal strategies such as having participatory workplace policies, self-organised internal procedures, flexible work rules and regulations as well as internal principles, which help to take care of its

reports, records, intuitions, processes, and intranets. These help to encourage effective decentralisation of the decision-making process, encourage flexible management system, effective interaction and communication, and effective employees' involvement in the organisation (Huselid, 2018; Mazhar & Akhtar, 2018). Hence, these help to address issues relating to all forms of discrimination among employees, help to unite employees in the organisation and have the benefit of consolidation of best practices and strategies through coding and documentation. These also allow regular evaluation of the best practices and strategies through trademarks, copyrights and patent rights to survive and improve on its competencies for higher productivity and innovation in the organisations (Gulshan et al., 2021; Ngoc-Tan & Gregar, 2018).

7.10.2 Benefits of the conceptual framework to human resource management

Human resources are the set of individuals who make up the workforce of an organisation and are typically referred to as the SKAAs the individuals embody that is used to contribute to the organisation's performance effectiveness. HR management establishes the IOFs that help the organisation to focus on management and provision of directions for this workforce effectively. These IOFs help the HR management to have a secure and well maintained workforce, which is important for the organisation's short-term and long-term operations (Rafique et al., 2018; Razezi et al., 2021). Given this, the understanding of the IOFs help to guide employees on how to interact, communicate, collaborate, and network to effectively acquire the needed OK.

The HR management, therefore, needs to develop these IOFs necessary for KM practices as shown in the conceptual framework through effective employee management strategies. This will help to best manage and value employees as assets for them to effectively implement improved KM practices (Almeida et al., 2019; Delshab et al., 2019). The conceptual framework, therefore, tries to guide the HR management on how to effectively identify, capture, acquire, share, adapt, and update the OK, have this knowledge in its repository, regularly develop and improve this OK, have an efficient and effective mechanism to share this

knowledge, help to develop professional code of ethics, and have a conducive organisational work environment for the present and future use of this knowledge by all employees (Delshab et al., 2019; Mohajan, 2019; Shahzad et al., 2020).

In effect, this conceptual framework guides the HR management on how to have easy ways or means of helping employees to access and exploit the appropriate OK through building vibrant and productive knowledge exchange strategies, which also help them to foster a relationship between employees and management. These strategies help the HR management to support individual employees with hands-on effective and efficient techniques for problem-solving, efficient and dynamic learning strategies, have strategic planning techniques, and help to harmonise the various employees' cultures, which to a large extent influence their behaviour, help to bring and unite all employees and help to formalise the knowledge sharing and application strategies (Marques et al., 2019; Sahibzada et al., 2020b; Singh et al., 2021).

7.10.3 Benefits of the conceptual framework to employees

In a knowledge-based economy, organisations establish IOFs that are enhanced to be in a good position to allow employees to create, acquire, share, and transfer the OK for them to perform effectively. These IOFs are established by the HR management to help ensure timely identification of problems for quick solutions by employees (Akkaya, 2020; Butler & Muskwe, 2021). To this end, this conceptual framework tries to guide employees on how to implement improved KM practices, which helps them to have full control of OK and helps to foster unity among them.

This means the conceptual framework through socialisation and interactions, helps to bring about cohesiveness, which helps to build and sustain the needed interpersonal trust among employees (Mitonga-Monga et al., 2019), helps them to effectively integrate and to have a positive orientation by making them intellectually curious (Hussinki et al., 2017), and makes them willing and free to explore to become more open-minded (Sun, 2017; Zheng & Hu, 2018). The conceptual framework also helps employees to develop quick problem-solving techniques and

innovation (Natalicchio et al., 2017) and eventually helps them to be effective in their performance (Ali et al., 2019). These benefits lead to improvement in employees' quality of work, which in the views of Agyeman-Duah et al.(2018), Aziabah (2018) and Chachu (2021), leads to the development of rural communities, improvement in their security, improvement in their standard of education, improvement in their health condition and improvement in the employees' personal growth and development.

7.11 PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES IN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this conceptual framework, internal practices and strategies play very important roles in the success of an organisation's KM practices. These internal practices and strategies have been comprehensively discussed in section 3.3 and enhanced internal practices and strategies in section 3.9 in Chapter three of the study. In KM, one of the functions of HR manager is to establish the necessary IOFs that will help the organisation to focus on the provision of reliable directions for effective management of its employees (Ali et al., 2019; Fu et al., 2019). This helps the HR management to secure, maintain and utilise an effective employee, which every organisation requires for its effective operations. The IOFs here are related to the internal practices and strategies that the HR management uses to help employees to engage in KM practices. The sections below outline the internal practices and strategies that are needed for KM practices, the measures used by the HR management to effectively implement these internal practices and strategies and the measures used by the HR management for employees' effective acceptance to use these internal practices and strategies.

7.11.1 Internal practices of the organisation

In the conceptual framework, there are key internal practices of the organisation that help in KM practices and when enhanced, leading to improved KM practices. Contextually, these internal practices are referred to as skills improvement factors and are said to be the usual or repeated ways of doing systematic exercises to influence employees' behaviour to become proficient. These key internal practices

are related to the organisation's leadership, strategies, organisational culture and structure as well as the technological tools (Fernandes, 2018; Islam et al, 2015; Mittal et al., 2018). Enhancing these internal practices are also related to having flexible and decentralised organisational culture, structure and leadership, efficient technological tools and strategic strategy (Jamshed & Majeed, 2019; Marques et al., 2019). These internal practices are established by the HR management to help employees effectively communicate, discuss, interact, and network to improve on their skills for the needed KM practices. This means enhancing these internal practices is very necessary because it leads to employees' improved KM practices (Febrianti & Se, 2020; Oyemomi et al., 2019).

7.11.2 Internal strategies of the organisation

In the conceptual framework, there are also key internal strategies of the organisation that are necessary for KM, which when enhanced, also leads to improved KM practices. Contextually, these internal strategies are referred to as motivating enhancing factors and are said to be the schemes that HR management adapts to help influence employees' behaviour to serve an important function of the implementation of KM practices. These key internal strategies are related to the organisation's workplace policies, internal procedures, guides and regulations as well as work rules (Ali et al., 2019; Sokoli et al., 2019). Enhancing these internal strategies are also related to having self-organised internal procedures, guides, regulations, and work rules and participatory internal principles and policies (Gholipour et al., 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019). These internal strategies are established by the HR management to help sustain employees focus on their communication, interaction and networking for the needed KM practices. This means when the internal strategies are enhanced, it effectively helps employees to implement improved KM practices as they have an inextricable link to their overall performance effectiveness (Park et al., 2020; Zhang, 2018).

7.11.3 Internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge

In this conceptual framework, the internal practices of the organisation are used to help facilitate the sharing of tacit knowledge belonging to individual employees to all employees. These internal practices are, therefore, the deliberate efforts the HR management makes to help develop and improve on the sharing of tacit knowledge belonging to individual employees to all employees for their effective performance. These internal practices have been related to formal practices that help in mentoring, coaching, observation, face-to-face meetings, discussions, and dialogues in the organisation. HR management, therefore, establishes these formal practices to effectively help employees to interact, collaborate, network, and communicate for any improved tacit knowledge acquisition and sharing (KM practices) in the organisation (Muthuveloo et al., 2017; Olaisan & Revange, 2018).

7.11.4 Internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge

The internal strategies of the organisation are used to help facilitate the sharing of explicit knowledge of the organisation. These internal strategies are adapted by the HR management to help improve and sustain on the sharing of the organisation's explicit knowledge to all employees. These internal strategies are related to formal strategies that help employees to engage in activities such as networking, training, orientation, workshops, seminars, and conferencing in the organisation. This means it is these internal strategies that HR management uses to help improve and sustain employees' collaboration, networking, communication, and interaction for any improved sharing of explicit knowledge (KM practices) in the organisation (Ewolds et al., 2017; Park et al., 2021).

7.11.5 Implementation of the internal practices and strategies

There are a variety of approaches that an organisation can adopt to implement its internal practices and strategies for employees to effectively accept and use them. The yardstick for measuring the effectiveness of any of these approaches (as discussed in section 3.3 of the study), is dependent on the organisation's best management strategies (Eliyana et al., 2019; Olaisan & Revange, 2018). To Choi et al. (2018), internal practices and strategies are implemented to help develop,

maintain and sustain mutual trust and relationships between management and employees. However, Cropanzano et al. (2017) believed that internal practices and strategies are implemented for employees' performance to derive certain social benefits from management. This means the attitude and behaviours of employees in their acceptance and use of an organisation's internal practices and strategies reflect their perceptions of potential social benefits they are going to derive from management. This means effective implementation of internal practices and strategies by the HR department is significantly associated with employees' perceptions and attitudes towards having the benefit of a congenial relationship with management (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Porter, 2018).

Another approach for effective implementation of internal practices and strategies is how the employees' family needs will be satisfied by the HR management. This is the support management gives towards employees' family needs in exchange for their acceptance and use of the internal practices and strategies. This means an organisation that is interested in helping employees' family needs to achieve a true work-life balance, affect the employees' acceptance and use of the organisation's internal practices or strategies towards their effective performance (Choi et al., 2018; French et al., 2018). This means an organisation that is committed to providing family-needs support systems together with the organisational support for the individual employees' personal life, can have a strong and positive influence on the level of the employee's acceptance and use of the organisation's internal practices and strategies. In this approach, Prison (2017) and Schulz-Knappe and Hoeven (2020) advised that one of the most effective ways HR managers can use to implement its internal practices and strategies is by establishing a flexible working schedule for the employees. This makes them feel that the organisation is in a position to effectively support them in their difficult times of integrating work-life responsibilities with these flexible working schedules.

The final approach used by management to effectively implement its internal practices and strategies is to see to its employees' job satisfaction. Job satisfaction in the views of Nabawanuka and Ekenekcioglu (2020) and Wang (2018),

constitutes an individual's cognitive, affective and evaluative approach to his or her work. This means that the satisfaction an employee derives from his or her job is mostly dependent on the way and manner in which the person perceives that management will meet his or her needs. This means the significance of an organisation's ability to increase the job satisfaction of its employees, is largely dependent on the way they implement the organisation's internal practices and strategies based on which, the employees will also accept and use them for their effective performance. This suggests that effective implementation of internal practices and strategies have a direct influence on the employees' acceptance and its use for their job satisfaction, which also helps to promote their effective performance. To this end, Inayat and Khan (2021) and Kitsios and Kamariotou (2021) explained that in all these approaches, it is important for HR management to understand that internal practices and strategies are so distinct in usage but are tangible activities that have a direct influence on employees' effective acceptance for their effective performance done through effective motivation.

7.11.6 Effective acceptance of the internal practices and strategies

After looking at effective approaches for the implementation of the internal practices and strategies by the HR department, equally important are the processes for employees' effective acceptance of these internal practices and strategies. HR management needs to adopt effective approaches for employees to effectively accept the use of these internal practices and strategies. These approaches help to promote and improve employees' level of participation, interaction, collaboration, communication, and networking for the needed KM processes (Asbari et al., 2021). Here, two broad HR management approaches are leading to employees' effective acceptance to use the internal practices and strategies, which are termed as a hard or soft approach (as discussed in section 3.6) of the study (Kaufman et al., 2021; Shrestha, 2018). Between these two approaches, management sees the soft approach as a measure that helps employees to completely evaluate their effective acceptance of the internal practices and strategies, which also aim at both the satisfaction of the concerns of

management as well as the acceptance of employees. The soft approach, therefore, makes management to treat employees as an essential resource with potentials that must be nurtured and developed for effective performance measurement in the organisation (Kaufman et al., 2021; Shrestha, 2018).

In the soft approach, one of the effective measures for employees' acceptance of the internal practices and strategies is changes in the organisation's work environment. Organisations' work environment has so much influence on employees' motivation and commitment to accept its internal practices and strategies. Changes in the organisation's work environment can be from the organisation's structure, employer and employee relationships, formal and informal contracts of employment, and relationships among employees (Edem et al., 2017; Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020). This means positive and successful adjustment to an organisation's work environment has a positive influence on employees' effective acceptance and use of the internal practices and strategies (Olusengu & Olusoji, 2020; Saifulina et al., 2019). It means enhancing the internal strategies such as effective internal policies, regulations, guides, procedures, and recruitment process (Gholipour, 2018; Sokoli et al., 2019) as well as opportunities for career progression, rewards systems, compensations and benefits, and training and development (Schleicher et al., 2019; Shrestha, 2020), all have a positive influence on employees' acceptance of the organisation's improved KM practices. This is because all these structures most often, strengthen employees' commitment to accept and use the internal practices and strategies.

Another effective measure under the soft approach is having effective employees' management structure. These modern and global markets help to provide the best conditions necessary to ensure that employees' management and retention do not pose any challenges to the organisation. Because of this the risk of developing and managing an employee's SKAAs without looking at his or her retention is necessary. But much also depends on his or her sustained acceptance and use of the internal practices and strategies, which makes him or her more competitive (Majovski & Daritkovska, 2018; Zhuang et al., 2022). This makes management's

investments in training and development schemes for employees becoming increasingly acknowledged as vital elements for effective employees' management. This is because opportunities for training and development for employees increases their acceptance and use of the internal practices and strategies for their effective performance. It means appropriate training and development makes employees to better understand the internal practices and strategies for the needed KM practices (Long et al., 2016; Mdhalose, 2020).

The final effective measure under the soft approach is management's general approach to relationship building with employees. It has been established that employees are more likely to stay in an organisation when their relationships with their work colleagues and management are stronger. This means employees who work together as a team are more likely to feel an increased use of the internal practices and strategies and are committed to their work unit. This situation encourages them to remain in the organisation where they have established a strong teamwork relationship at the workplace due to their attachment to the internal practices and strategies (Alqudah et al., 2022; Nabawanuka et al., 2022).

Also, an organisation's retention of knowledge workers has become increasingly important for management because of periodic labour shortages that reduce the availability of experienced and high performing employees. To this end, management takes steps to retain knowledge workers who are used to their internal practices and strategies to avoid unwanted turnover due to ineffective HR management practices. These measures including employee compensation (Fritoli et al., 2021), training and development (Long et al., 2016) and a conducive work environment (Edem et al., 2017), help to retain talented employees who are used to the internal practices and strategies.

7.12 SELF-REFLEXIVITY ON THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Reflecting on the whole research project, it was observed that academic life is dynamic and ever-changing especially with regards to a qualitative study like this, which in the views of Creswell and Poth (2018), portrays a world in which reality is

socially constructed, complex and ever-changing. This is because in most situations, the method used in conducting the fieldwork in a qualitative study in many ways, changes the researcher as well as the research process. In this study, what the researcher learnt about the phenomenon came from the participants of the study by asking them relevant questions and using the relevant methodological choices (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Tsiolis, 2018). This was done due to the perseverance and the passion to learn new research methods. Hence, I used a qualitative research methodology, which is associated with an IPA research strategy. This stemmed from the fact that I had earlier on undertaken two main research studies during my postgraduate diploma in public administration and master's in human resource development studies on the MMDAs, using case-study research strategy and mixed-method research methodology in both studies. To this effect, my choice of this research methodology was because this method appears to be more exploratory and descriptive.

In the course of the previous studies, I realised that rural communities in Ghana are still underdeveloped despite the interventions given to the MMDAs by the LGSG (Anderson & La Trobe, 2018; Aziabah, 2018; UNDP, 2018). I also read from the literature that in recent times, issues about KM are becoming interesting in HR management practice, hence, became the area to be researched when I had the opportunity to start this doctoral study with the MMDAs as my research objects. What also informed my decision was when I read the works of Hoarau (2016) and Omotayo (2015) who explained that the understanding and application of OK by employees in an organisation, has been widely recognised by the HR departments as the foundation of industrial economies in this globalised world. Hence, I tried to research knowledge and KM and make this more relevant to public sector employees in Ghana in this contemporary society by making the findings more credible and reliable. This, therefore, inspired me to adopt effective, pragmatic and holistic practices and strategies to improve public sector employees' understanding of this KM process using the conceptual framework developed and also to ensure its practical implementation and relevance to HR management.

This study was, therefore, designed to critically explore and describe the perspectives of the employees of MMDAs in Ghana and to develop answers to important research questions with regards to their performance effectiveness in the discharge of their duties (Gray, 2018; Tracy, 2020). To this effect, the study adopted an IPA research methodology to explore the real-life and retrospective experiences of the employees working together. A qualitative study like this that used an IPA methodology, was contextual because the study occurred within a specific time and specific places (Kumasi, Tamale and Tema metropolitan assemblies), which may have a change on the research results if carried out at a different time and place (Tuffour, 2017; Vagle, 2018). In acknowledging this change to increase the credibility and reliability of the findings, I evaluated the study through self-reflexivity on four areas of the research dimensions (shown in Figure 7.4), which have all touched and possibly transformed me as a person, an HR practitioner and as a researcher because not everything went on well as planned in this research process (Dodgson, 2019; Fleming, 2018; Gough, 2016).

Furthermore, this qualitative study was also designed as inductive and interactive and, therefore, needed to be effectively evaluated for lessons about these four research dimensions namely, ontological, axiological, epistemological, and methodological as has been shown in Figure 7.4. Scholars like Gough (2016) and Palaganas (2017) were of the view that reflexivity is about giving a full and honest account of the research process as possible, in particular, explicating the position of the researcher in relation to the effects of the research process. In view of this, the self-reflexivity of the study has been comprehensively explained in the sections below, using the four research dimensions in Figure 7.4.

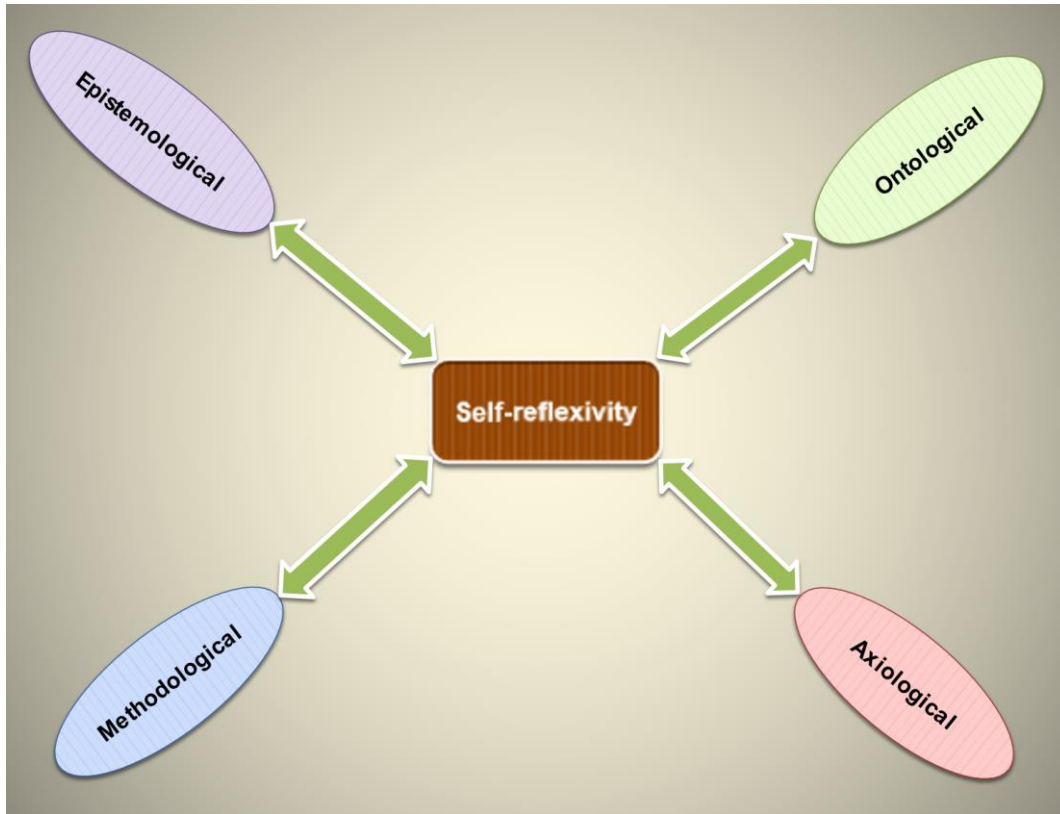


Figure 7.4: Self-reflexivity of the research dimensions

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2021)

7.12.1 Epistemological reflexivity

The concept of reflexivity has a serious epistemological implication in a qualitative study like this, as it challenges the assumption that there can be a privileged position where the researcher can study social reality objectively, that is, independent from it through value-free enquiry. Objectivity is achieved by adopting the appropriate methodological tools and techniques in qualitative research hence, Barrett et al. (2020) and Fleming (2018) advised researchers to take seriously, the commitments to reflexivity through context reflections and review of theoretical approaches and perspectives. This situation helps to show the difference between research participants and the researcher during and after the research process. This means a researcher who is seen as the research instrument should be a passive observer but not an active participant who tries to look for a solution to the

problem, as being an active participant affects the research process once the researcher cannot be neutral (Barrett et al., 2020; Fleming, 2018). Objectivity in this research was a duty but not a virtue because a qualitative study like this cannot be entirely value-free. Hence, my duty as the researcher bothered mostly on the ethical considerations methods used to ensure data quality and the socio-cultural contexts of the participants. These were the issues I tried to address that enabled me to achieve objectivity which helped me to shape the research process.

Again, the epistemological reflexivity of this study bothered on my reflections upon the various theoretical assumptions and perspectives, which helped me to select the right calibre of employees as the participants. This was done because the beliefs of the employees as humans are socially constructed and are informed by certain values they hold in the various zones at that time. In view of this, a vigorous selection criterion was used because the source of knowledge in the study was revealed by the researcher by asking the participants critical questions about the phenomenon. The epistemological reflexivity also helped me to be critical about what I heard from the participants, what I wrote down and interpreted in my reflexive journal and how far I went on to interpret the participants' lived experiences and understanding. In this process, I was so cautious in listening to the participants in the way they understood their everyday processes in their KM practices and the way I translated them. In the research process as demanded by the IPA methodology, more voice was given to the participants to enable me get closer to what they were saying and the representation about themselves (Noon, 2017; Roberts, 2017).

7.12.2 Ontological reflexivity

The concept of ontological reflexivity was also very important in qualitative research like this because the knowledge for the study was revealed from the point of view of the participants but was unveiled by the researcher. Hence, using an IPA methodology in this study helped me to devise a very rich and resourceful method of an interview to gather the necessary and relevant data from the participants for analyses (De La Croix et al., 2018; Wilhelmy et al., 2016). The

semi-structured interview method helped to reveal and interpret the embedded beliefs and meanings in lived experience of the employees, which was carefully audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, analysed, and interpreted for the findings. The analysis of the data first started at an individual level before proceeding to the group level analysis for finding inferential codes using the three data sources. During the data analyses, the iterative process for finding the inferential codes and the development of subordinate and superordinate themes from the data was tedious and laborious but this showed me the value of being patient, concise and accurate in identifying categories of inferential codes in the three sources of data (Linneberg et al., 2019; Saldāna, 2016).

Again, within the ontological reflexivity, I was mindful of trying to detach my interpretations to the superordinate themes developed during the data analyses. This also taught me how to be discriminating in selecting core and fundamental data from those that were non-essential. This in the end guided me to select important subordinate and superordinate themes from the three sources of data derived from the participants for the analyses. Also, during the protocol stages before the data collection process, gaining access to the employees from the CEOs was difficult and time consuming as they were always out of office for other official duties. However, I have learnt that with patience and perseverance, one can achieve what he or she wants as I achieved in this study. Again, in the data collection process, the participants in responding also said much about how management blamed them for their poor performance but not much was done to help them. They also asked how the study could help improve their performance as it has been a bother to them. This question was so emotional because it was observed that the participants longed for improvement in their SKAAs for effective performance. However, I told them that one of the relevance of this research was to provide some suggestions regarding their performance improvement. I only hoped that management of the LGSG will do its best to implement the suggestions I made to impact the employees' performance after submitting a copy of the report.

7.12.3 Axiological reflexivity

In the views of Barrett et al. (2020) and Buetow (2019), axiological reflexivity is used as a strategy to help address the issue of subjectivity of the researcher. This, therefore, helped to enhance the researcher's ability and understanding of how his position and interest as a researcher affects all the stages of the research process. In this IPA study, therefore, I considered myself very well as the research instrument who, had to enter the participants contextually through interactions with them to understand the meanings that they gave to their experience in the KM practices (Fleming & Zagwaard, 2018; Wilhelmy et al., 2016). In such situations, I may go to the field with pre-conceived attitudes, beliefs or opinions that may taint the credibility of the research process. Based on this and on the advice of Gough (2016) and Grove (2017), I kept a reflexive research journal, which was used to record the immediate observations, some interpretations and thoughts about the study. This helped me to also bracket my aspirations, experiences, values, and beliefs, which eventually helped me to shape the research project.

Furthermore, during the data collection process, the participants made several complaints which included inadequate material resources, logistics and knowledge advancement in the organisation. I tried to be mindful of my objective and, therefore, told them that there was nothing I could do but rather, I only empathised with them and assured them that I will put their complaints as one of my recommendations to management to help change the situation. The use of an IPA methodology also helped me to sharpen my hands-on experience and skills on research through the interactions with the participants, which I realised I was not only challenged to develop but even the basic virtues as an individual. This situation always prompted me to use the correct frame of questions and even my posture to make sense to the participants for them to give appropriate responses to draw the essential data that comprises and supports the research objectives (De La Criox, 2018; Wilhelmy et al., 2016). This was done because in the views of Creswell (2016) and Smith (2017), IPA research design is prone to a degree of subjectivity since the collection and interpretation of the data from the participants is always influenced by the values, beliefs, experience, and interest of the

researcher. This made me to strictly follow the methodological strategies established to achieve the needed objectivity.

7.12.4 Methodological reflexivity

In this study, the methodological reflexivity was all about following the standardised procedures laid down in IPA methodology during the conduct of the research process. These laid down procedures were there to help me to identify and follow the ethical, social and political considerations that govern the field of enquiry. Researchers explain that in a qualitative study, researchers probe into the experiences of their participants and try to abstract and theorise inductively to reveal valuable insights that can be interpreted and applied to other cases. These processes influence not only the research participants but also the researchers because it is the participants with poignant information in the data collected that are phenomenologically and hermeneutically rich for analyses (Gough, 2016; Palaganas et al., 2017). Given this, the data collection process of the study was effectively done through the application for access from the CEOs, application for consent and confidentiality from the participants and using pre-action, in-action and on-action bracketing strategies during the interviews for rich and quality data contextually (Wilhelmy et al., 2016).

Although my topic for research was not a sensitive area in nature, I approached it with the necessary caution, care and professionalism. This was done to ensure confidentiality and maintain the balance between my personal beliefs and that of the participants, taking into consideration, the organisation's code of conduct. Based on this, I followed the necessary protocols to gain access as well as the participants' consent for the data collection and analyses (Manti & Licari, 2018). In this process, I recollect how I had to subdue my personal feelings, attitudes and perceptions about the study to give the participants the opportunities to freely narrate their perception and experience of the phenomenon. An introductory letter given to me by my supervisor attached as Appendix B, introducing me as a PhD researcher made it easy for me in assuring the participants of their anonymity and confidentiality, which helped to relax them. Showing this introductory letter to them

also made it easy for me to have an effective conversation and unpredicted probes in areas that were not very clear, which the participants responded properly and appropriately (Tuffour, 2017; Smith, 2017).

Furthermore, during the participants' validation process, some of the participants who took part in the study were transferred from the metropolitan assembly where they were interviewed to other assemblies that were not part of the study area. To make things worse for me, some of the participants were sent across the regions, which were far apart and made the validation process cumbersome and confusing. However, to make the participants' validation process relevant and effective, with permission from the CEOs, I transported these transferred employees back to the assembly where they were interviewed to make them take part in the validation process (Birt et al., 2016; Slettebø, 2020). The whole process was so expensive and very challenging but I realised that I needed to make some personal sacrifices by spending an additional amount of money and days at the various zones for a successful outcome. In view of this, I applied for an overdraft from my bankers and also took a month off duty from my work schedule for two consecutive years to enable me to concentrate first on the data gathering process and second on the validation process. This made me incur additional costs and also delayed the validation process for about six months due to these challenges that were not anticipated at the beginning.

However, these interventions established helped me to have adequate time and resources, which made the data gathering, analyses and validation processes successful. This situation, therefore, allowed me to learn how not have a restricted budget for a research project like this and how to have a flexible itinerary of an action plan for a research project like this. In addition, in the process of validating the interpretative report, the participants re-echoed their sentiments about their challenges of inadequate materials and logistics, I only listened to them because I was conscious not to dwell on them to fall into the trap of emotionally propelled discussion with them (Busetto et al., 2020; Slettebø, 2020). It is worth noting that during the research process, this self-reflexivity on the research project contributed

to making the research process open and transparent. This was where it consciously helped me to separate the research participants from myself during the data collection, which also helped to make the research report and the coherent conceptual framework developed credible and reliable as demanded in an IPA study (Micinally & Gray-Brunton, 2021; Nizza et al., 2021).

7.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter formed the second phase of the analysis of the research findings after chapter six of the study. The aim was, therefore, to present a practicable conceptual framework developed for HR management to facilitate the implementation of improved KM practices in public sector organisations in Ghana. This conceptual framework was developed using the principles and guidelines under the conceptual framework of Huberman and Miles (1984) where the researchers explored and developed presumed interrelationships between the constructs. This was to help HR managers have an in-depth understanding of the processes involved in an organisation's improved KM practices using the enhanced IOFs for implementation.

Hence, the presentation of the conceptual framework commenced with the discussion of the significance of the interpretative research findings; followed by the purpose, objectives and assumptions of the conceptual framework and then followed by a comprehensive structure and description of the conceptual framework. This was then followed by the background colour, context and dynamics; followed by role players and their obligations; followed by guidelines for practical implementation of the conceptual framework; then followed by the benefits of the conceptual framework; and finally, the internal practices and strategies that are needed in the conceptual framework as well as the self-reflexivity of the study. This paves the way for the final chapter of this thesis, which is Chapter 8, where the summary, contributions and conclusions drawn from the study as well as the recommendations for future research were all presented.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

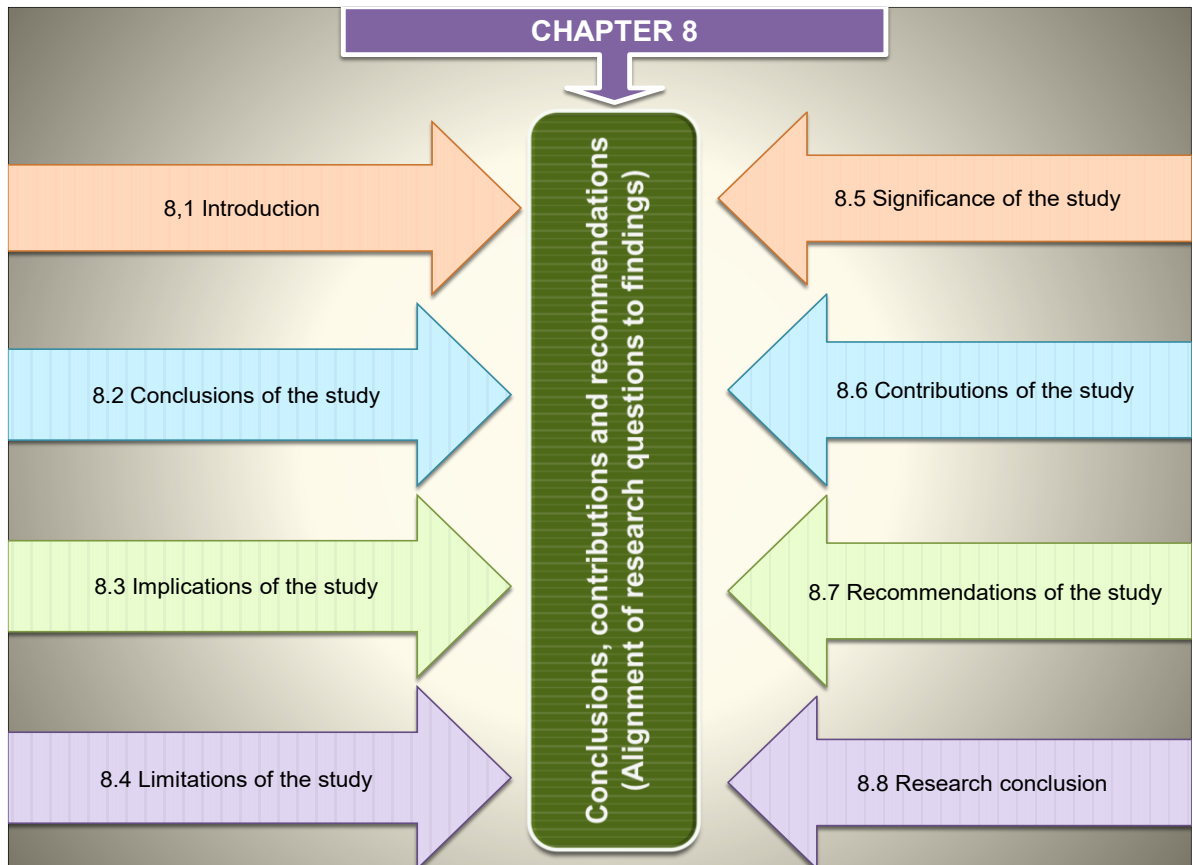


Figure 8.1: The structure of chapter eight at a glance

Source: Own compilation (Abiru, 2021)

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to explore the understanding and interpretation of KM practices, which was best done through the shared knowledge and experience of employees of MMDAs in Ghana. This was concluded from Chapters 2, 3 and 4, where many scholars explained that the world has changed and, therefore, the need to exploit knowledge in this knowledge-based economy, which comes with the need for change in employee management. This situation is characterised by increased

demand for highly skilled knowledge workers who would enjoy high wage premiums and also popularise KM practices in the organisation (Kaufman, 2019).

IPA methodology was, therefore, used to understand the fundamental meanings these employees attached to KM practices, which helped to answer the research questions as shown in Chapter 5. This means IPA was used to help explore and explain the understanding and interpretation of the meaning of the experiences of the participants in addressing all the research questions, which set out to expand the body of knowledge in HR management. Chapter 6 discussed the data analyses and interpretation of the research findings, which ended with a theory building structure and the development of a coherent and practicable KM framework for performance for employees in the public sector organisations in the Ghanaian context in Chapter 7. The final chapter, Chapter 8, presents the conclusions of the study, which tried to align the research objectives to the theoretical, empirical and conceptual findings. The chapter also explains the implications and limitations of the study, the contributions, significance and recommendations of the study before the research conclusion as shown in in Figure 8.1 as the structure of the chapter.

8.2 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to develop and validate a KM framework to be used as a guide for public sector employees' performance effectiveness. This was because knowledge workers have skills and knowledge that are not available to all employees in the organisation and the skills and knowledge of these employees tend to diminish very fast over some time owing to retirement and staff attrition (Butt et al., 2019; Latillaet al., 2019). This KM framework was, therefore, developed as a guide for practical understanding and implementation of improved KM practices by employees in an organisation. From the theoretical findings, improved KM practices aspect of KM help to enforce and improve the linkages between an organisation's enhanced internal practices and strategies and its improved KM practices (Lei et al., 2021; Liv et al., 2021). It is through these enhanced internal practices and strategies that KM practices go through effective transformations for improved information and communication (Saifulina et al.,

2021) and learning accessible and sustaining learning for the needed improved KM practices (Wang et al., 2021), which lead to the needed employees' effective performance (Lei et al., 2021; Liv et al., 2021; Ogbomaya & Valizade, 2018).

To effectively achieve the purpose set out for the study, the thesis was presented into eight consecutive chapters, which were further divided into three main sequential but interrelated research finding phases. Each was aligned to a specific set of research objectives articulated for the study and the conclusions arrived at with these objectives are presented. In Chapter 1, the background to, as well as rationale for the study leading to the problem statement were stated. The problem statement that informed all the research questions, the general as well as specific objectives of the study were also stated. Also in this chapter, the presuppositions, assumptions, significance, and delimitations of the study were explained. Brief interpretivist paradigm perspectives as well as the epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions followed for this study were also offered in this chapter.

In the study, Chapter 5 also explained the rationale for the choice of a qualitative method, the use of an inductive approach as the appropriate method of reasoning towards the development of theory and the use of hermeneutic approach as the research design. Also in Chapter 5, the study was designed as exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and interactive to help explore a holistic finding for the three research phases. Chapter 5 also explains the methods used to collect, analyse and interpret the qualitative data for the interpretation of the research findings. In addition, the measures used to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of the interpretative research findings as well as the ethical considerations for the study were all focused on in this chapter.

8.2.1 Findings of research phase one

The purpose of research phase one (theoretical phase) was to explore and obtain a deeper understanding of how KM practices can help to enforce and improve on employees' performance effectiveness as explained in Chapter 4 of the study, through the linkages between the understanding of OK explained in Chapter 2, the

IOFs explained in Chapter 3, and KM practices in an organisation also explained in Chapter 2 of the study. This was the theoretical finding phase and was, therefore, supported by a narrative analysis of scholarly literature in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in relation to the four specific set of the research objectives of the study as stated in the next sections.

Objective one of research phase one

Research objective one of phase one of the study was to help obtain an overview of KM practices from different theoretical perspectives and to select the best to inform the development of a conceptual framework for KM for public sector employees in Ghana, through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature. In view of this, focused was made on an overview of the concept of knowledge, types of knowledge, how to increase this knowledge resource of employees, and the different selected epistemological perspectives of knowledge. Hence, research objective one of phase one on OK was realised in sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.4 respectively in Chapter 2 of the study, where OK constitutes the tacit knowledge of individual employees as well as explicit knowledge of the organisation.

Secondly, focus was made on the overview of the concept of KM, description and development of KM, different theoretical perspectives of KM selected, and the challenges of KM practices. This second part of research objective one of phase one on KM practices was realised in sections 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10 respectively in Chapter 2 of the study, where KM practices were related to HR management helping employees to create and share their tacit knowledge as well as the explicit knowledge of the organisation.

Objective two of research phase one

The second objective of the study was to help explore and obtain a deeper understanding of IOFs and how HR managers use these IOFs to help employees to implement the needed KM practices in an organisation. This was achieved through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature focusing on HR management of the public sector organisations. This second objective was, therefore, focused on

the concept of IOFs, description and development of IOFs, and the different selected epistemological perspectives of IOFs. Hence, research objective two of phase one on the understanding of IOFs was realised in sections 3.3, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 respectively in Chapter 3 of the study, where the IOFs were related to simple internal practices and strategies that HR management establishes to help employees to meet, share ideas, interact, network, discuss, and communicate, which help to facilitate their KM practices.

Secondly, focus was made on the influence of the IOFs on KM and the best strategies and challenges of these IOFs. This second part of research objective two was on how HR managers use these IOFs to help employees in their KM practices, was realised in sections 3.4, 3.8 and 3.10 respectively in Chapter 3 of the study. Here, the internal practices were referred to as skills improvement factors and were related to the organisation's leadership styles, technological tools, organisational structure, culture, and the internal strategy, which help to acquire and share their tacit knowledge whilst the internal strategies were also referred to as motivating enhancing factors and were related to the organisation's guides, workplace policies, internal procedures, regulations, principles, and work rules, which help to share explicit knowledge of the organisation.

Objective three of research phase one

Research objective three of the study was to help the researcher explore and obtain a deeper understanding of the dictates of how HR management enhances the IOFs and improved KM practices through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature. In view of this, focus was made on enhanced IOFs and contingencies of IOFs in the study. Hence, research objective three of phase one on enhanced IOFs was realised in sections 3.9 and 3.11 respectively in Chapter 3 of the study, where enhanced IOFs were related to HR management improving on the internal practices and strategies used in KM practices.

Secondly, focus was made on the contingencies, best strategies and benefits of improved KM practices for the second part of research objective three. This

second part of research objective three of phase one on how KM practices in an organisation were enhanced was realised in sections 2.11, 2.12 and 2.13 respectively in Chapter 2 of the study. Here, the improved KM practices were related to improving on the internal practices that help employees to create and share their tacit knowledge and the internal strategies that help them to capture and share the explicit knowledge in the organisation.

Objective four of research phase one

The fourth objective of the study was to help the researcher explore and obtain a deeper understanding of how to relate employees' improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness in an organisation through a narrative analysis of scholarly literature. This fourth objective was, therefore, focused on the relationships between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices and between improved KM practices and employees' performance effectiveness. Hence, research objective four of phase one was first focused on the analysis of employees' performance effectiveness, the selected conceptual models of employees' performance effectiveness, contingencies of employees' performance effectiveness, and the connections between the enhanced IOFs and employees' improved KM practices and between employees' improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness. Hence, research objective four of phase one of the study was realised in sections 4.3, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.9 respectively in Chapter 4 of the study, where employees' performance effectiveness was related to enhancing the internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge and the internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge in the organisation.

8.2.2 Conclusions on findings of research phase one

To meet the four objectives set out for research finding phase one which is the theoretical findings phase of the study, narrative literature analysis was employed to explore and obtain a deeper understanding of how KM practices can help to enforce and improve on employees' performance effectiveness through the linkages between the understanding of OK, IOFs and KM practices in an

organisation. These theoretical findings as explained in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the study, helped to achieve these research objectives of phase one of the study through the analysis of the scholarly literature from journal articles, books, organisation news bulletins, newspapers, general reports of NGOs and CSOs, internet publications, conference proceedings, and theses.

Conclusion one of research phase one

As a result, the first conclusion for phase one of the study was the various methodological approaches used in conducting the literature analyses for the study. These approaches reviewed include theoretical as explained in SECI in section 2.9.1, integrated KM in section 2.9.2 and KM practices in section 2.9.3; exploratory as explained in section 5.4.2; descriptive in section 5.4.3; explanatory in section 5.4.4; and interactive in section 5.4.5 of the study. These processes of methodological descriptions were supported by the appropriate method of reasoning, which was an inductive approach. In this inductive approach to reasoning, the aim of literature analysis was to investigate the reviews based on a set of specific discoveries made on the theories and well-defined concepts. These led to the discovery and understanding of a pattern that represented some degree of order in the given event used to answer specific research questions for the generation of theory from the study findings (Agwu & Bwalya, 2017; Rettie & Emiliussen, 2018). Also, the use of the hermeneutic approach in the narrative literature analysis, which helped to explain the personal understanding, experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and meanings held for the phenomenon, helped to obtain the needed initial impression of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2016; Roberts, 2017).

Also, in line with the aim of a narrative literature analysis, this phase helped to evaluate different perspectives of OK as explained in sections 2.2 - 2.5, KM theories as explained in sections 2.6 - 2.10, IOFs as explained in sections 3.3 and 3.5 - 3.8, employees' performance effectiveness as explained in sections 4.3 - 4.7, and the connection of employees' improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness as explained in section 4.9. Also, a narrative literature analysis of the

dictates of enhanced IOFs as explained in sections 3.9 - 3.11 and the dictates of improved KM practices as explained in sections 2.11 - 2.13 were all effectively evaluated. Finally, the development of the IPA as the appropriate research design was used for the selection of the sample size for the study as explained in section 5.5.3, for the method used for data collection as explained in section 5.5.6 and the method used for the data analysis as explained in section 5.5.7 of the study. Hence, in line with the purpose of the study, it can be concluded that the narrative literature analysis or the theoretical finding was the most appropriate approach used to successfully achieve phase one of the study.

Conclusion two of research phase one

The second conclusion made in phase one of the study was that although the phenomenon of KM practices was new and not very clear to public sector employees in Ghana, it is clear that employees' understanding of improved KM practices is important to the success of public sector organisations as explained in section 2.13. Here, KM practices were differentiated from improved KM practices necessary for employees' performance effectiveness. As explained by Centobri et al. (2019), this is where the organisation's KM practices go through the needed transformations based on the enhanced IOFs, which help to achieve the needed employees' performance effectiveness. Based on the IPA methodology adopted, educational qualification, socio-cultural background, years of working experience, and emotional reaction of the participants were recognised in the study. These variables have a significant influence on the responses of the participants that were interpreted by the researcher (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017).

After careful consideration and analysis of the different seminal and other theories to understand the concept of KM, the SECI, integrated KM and KM practices theories were finally chosen as the most appropriate theories to help explore the improved KM practices in the context of this study as explained in section 2.9 of the study. To give credence to the understanding of these theories, the classification of knowledge as either tacit or explicit helped in the dynamics of how tacit knowledge of individual employee is converted and transported into explicit

knowledge of the organisation for the use of all employees as explained in section 2.4 of the study. In all the scholarly works, the SECI theory was uniquely mentioned in KM practices, hence, stands out as the most outstanding theory of KM in this knowledge-based economy (Hislop et al., 2018). It is, therefore, concluded that the choice of the SECI theory as the internal context (host) of the study was the most appropriate central theme used to guide the interpretative research findings as explained in Chapter 6, which serves as phase two of the study and the development of a conceptual framework for KM as explained in Chapter 7, which also serves as phase three of the study.

Conclusion three of research phase one

The third conclusion made in phase one of the study concerning the narrative literature analysis was that in the implementation of KM practices, HR managers need to support employees for them to accept and use the IOFs. In view of this, there were various epistemologies as explained in section 3.7 with regards to how HR managers can help influence employees' acceptance of these IOFs. This means organisational goals and employee needs are equally important in an organisation. Hence, the needs of one should not be reached at the expense of the other. This is because in this knowledge-based economy, employees' knowledge is seen by the HR management as a significant resource for production and an important factor for an employee's well-being (Abubakar et al., 2019). This means organisational outcomes should not be taken precedence over employees' performance as employees' performance effectiveness in an organisation is highly dependent on their ability and the organisation's motivation and opportunities offered to them as explained in section 4.2 of the study.

This understanding emphasised the importance of how HR managers carry the responsibility of supporting employees' performance effectiveness to increase the organisational effectiveness. In view of this, the assumptions underpinning this conceptual framework were derived from the descriptive and interpretive responses of the participants to the context of the interview questions. The assumptions were also derived from the conceptual lens from which the

researcher looked at the theoretical and methodological dimensions of the study as well as the literature reviewed on the phenomenon. These assumptions are the startling axioms or statements made in the literature that are not scientifically proven but yield testable implications, which are believed to be true in the face of the theoretical standpoint as explained in section 7.4.2 (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

Conclusion four of research phase one

The fourth conclusion made with regards to phase one of the study was that the narrative literature analysis revealed that there were many variables that help employees in their social interaction for effective exchange of their OK, according to the SECI theory. It is the employees who create and share knowledge through their interactions and communication, which is in line with the social constructivist view of KM who argued that knowledge is created through social interaction of employees (Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008; Nonaka & Von Krogh, 2009).

These views provide a very important dimension necessary in KM practices, which in the narrative literature analysis revealed that HR managers need to understand that KM practices are experiential, subjective, cultural, and context dependent in an organisation. This means there is a significant correlation between KM practices and the socio-cultural and personal characteristics of the individual employees in an organisation as explained in section 2.9.1, 2.9.2 and 2.9.3 by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), Dalkir (2005) and Yusuf and Wanjau (2014) respectively. This means KM practices are an HR management function that has to find ways of using the OK in association with the IOFs to arrest employees' ineffective performance as explained in section 4.6 (Inayat & Khan, 2020; Keith et al., 2020). In light of these insights, it is concluded that public sector organisations see KM practices as employee-centred and, therefore, mobilise resources both human (qualified employees), technological (effective ICT tools) and effective employee management strategies to engage in this coherent KM practices (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Hislop et al., 2018).

Conclusion five of research phase one

The fifth conclusion made for phase one of this study was related to the ineffective performance of public sector employees in the organisations as well as where this study was conducted. As mentioned in the background and rationale for this study, this was attributed to the employees' lack of understanding of OK, IOFs and the implementation of KM practices in these organisations (Asiedu, 2015; Omoyayo, 2015). In the narrative literature analysis, it was revealed that there were efforts made by LGSG to enhance the SKAAs of these employees, hence, measures like the introduction of the DAPAT performance assessment tools and the establishments of ILGS to train the employees of the MMDAs were all introduced to help improve on their performance effectiveness. These strategies enabled the HR management to help these employees to understand OK because this knowledge is seen as a valuable resource that helps employees to deliver quality services when properly managed owing to its opportunities of continues learning.

This view became evident in the narrative literature analysis but a general concern voiced repetitively was the belief that these measures were not adequate enough to improve on employees' SKAAs in these organisations (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). This was because the structure of the organisation's employment, job stability, employment outcome, quality of the employment relationship, and the work-life balance all play very important role in employee's KM practices as explained in the SECI theory (Gamble, 2020; Liu et al., 2020). It is, therefore, concluded that HR managers need to establish best practices as explained by Inayat and Khan (2021) and Keith et al. (2020) in section 4.6 of the study as contingencies of employees' performance effectiveness to help bring together varied knowledge of the individual employees for the needed improved KM practices as explained in section 2.12 of the study. This also helps to create and enhance mental, emotional and attitudinal state of all employees for the needed TQM of the employees leading to their performance effectiveness as explained by Deming (2018) and Farish et al. (2017) in section 4.5.1 of the study.

8.2.3 Findings of research phase two

The purpose of research findings of phase two (empirical phase) was to explore and obtain a better understanding of how employees' of MMDAs in Ghana understand KM practices and IOFs leading to their performance effectiveness. This was best done through the selection of the study participants as explained in section 5.5.3, engagement with the study participants through semi-structured interviews as explained in section 5.5.6 and analysing the qualitative data collected for interpretative findings as explained in sections 5.5.7 and 6.4 of the study. Hence, the purpose of research findings phase two was fulfilled through the realisation of the four research objectives identified for the purpose of this empirical phase stated next as explained in Chapter 6.

Objective one of research phase two

The first objective was to explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand OK as well as KM practices in the organisation. This objective was, therefore, achieved in section 6.6.2.1 where the OK constitutes workers' competencies as well as organisational competencies and in section 6.6.2.3 where KM practices were viewed as HR management using its IOFs to help workers acquire, share and apply the competencies within the organisation.

Objective two of research phase two

The second objective was to explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand IOFs and how these factors do help them to implement KM practices in the organisation. This second objective was, therefore, realised in section 6.6.2.2 in Chapter 6 of the study, where IOFs were referred to as simple internal practices and strategies established by the HR management as guidelines for KM practices.

Objective three of research phase two

The third objective was to explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana understand the dictates of enhanced IOFs and that of improved KM practices in the organisation. This objective was also realised in section 6.6.2.4 where enhanced IOFs means HR management improving on the internal practices and strategies

that help in KM practices. In section 6.6.2.5, improved KM practices were related to HR management improving on the processes used to help workers share the competencies in the organisation.

Objective four of research phase two

The fourth objective was to explore how employees of MMDAs in Ghana relate their understanding of improved KM practices to their performance effectiveness. This fourth objective was, therefore, realised in section 6.6.2.6 in Chapter 6 of the study where employees' performance effectiveness was related to the enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices of the organisation.

8.2.4 Conclusions on findings of research phase two

To fulfil the objectives set out for research findings phase two of the study, the appropriate research participants were first selected using a non-probability sampling technique of heterogeneous purposive sampling. This was because in an IPA methodology like this, a small sample of participants who have shared experience of the phenomenon but were with sufficiently diverse characteristics as explained in section 5.5.3 were eligible for selection. These participants were engaged with the data collection method of semi-structured interview as explained in section 5.5.6 for the collection of the qualitative data. Data were analysed using the IPA framework approach for the interpretative findings as explained in sections 5.5.7 and 6.4 of the study. In all, 18 informed participants voluntarily consented to the participation in the study after going through the eligibility criteria of working with the metro assembly for at least five continued years, sent to at least three times on the job training within the last five years and were interested and willing to take part in the study voluntarily.

Conclusion one of research phase two

The first conclusion for phase two of the study was achieved through the recognition of the participants' characteristics such as their personal and socio-cultural background, educational qualification and employment experience as well

as their emotional reactions in the study. As explained in section 6.6.1, nearly all the participants had working experience of at least ten years with the MMDAs, which formed their physical resources, experience, commitments, knowledge, and competence which they used in solving the organisation's problems. Here, individual employees' characteristics such as their years of working experience, socio-cultural background as well as educational qualification had a great influence on the participants' effective interaction, communication, networking, discussion, and knowledge sharing activities. Hence, several of the participants having many years of good working experience suggests that the organisation has more knowledge workers who were ready to effectively increase the knowledge resource of other employees in the organisation through activities such as training, orientation and mentoring (Butt et al., 2019; Gagné et al., 2019).

Most of the participants having many years of good working experience with the MMDAs also means that they had long years of good working relations with management. This means they were motivated well enough to understand the principles and processes involved for them to understand and use the IOFs, which were very necessary for their KM practices (Shrestha, 2020; Vu et al., 2020). It is, therefore, concluded that the participants had a good pattern of shared experience on the OK, the IOFs and the organisation's KM practices, which made them confident in their responses during the data collection process (Guillen, 2019; Stephenson et al., 2018).

Conclusion two of research phase two

The second conclusion made under phase two of the study was that the participants were unanimous in their shared knowledge and understanding of the OK as practice-based (tacit knowledge) that belongs to individual employees or objective-based (explicit knowledge) of the organisation, which influenced the employees' understanding of KM practices. This tacit knowledge was stored in the brain of the individual employee and deeply rooted in their experience, values and culture and was shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact. The explicit knowledge was also made up of individuals' tacit knowledge that have

been converted, collected and documented by management and was also shared mainly through orientation, training and workshops as provided in section 6.6.2.1. Both the tacit and explicit knowledge served as the underlying resource of these competencies of the employees. Hence, this classification helps the HR management to effectively focus on how the tacit knowledge can be converted and transported into explicit knowledge through effective social interaction strategies (Borges et al., 2019; Hislop et al., 2018). In conclusion, this classification of knowledge affords HR management with the need to focus on how the tacit knowledge of individual employees can be converted and transported into explicit knowledge of the organisation through effective social interaction strategies such as seminars, workshops, orientation, training, mentoring, coaching, interactions, and discussions, which enable the organisation to have a full control of its OK.

Also, the next conclusion made was that the participants unanimously understood and described KM practices as using the organisation's internal practices such as the organisation's strategy, culture, structure, leadership, and technology as explained in section 6.6.2.2, for the creation and sharing of tacit knowledge (Gholipour et al., 2018) and using the organisation's internal strategies such as work-rules, principles, policies, procedures, guides, and regulations as explained in section 6.6.2.2, for the capturing and sharing of explicit knowledge (Rezaei et al., 2021) by employees who have a common vision and culture in the organisation. This means the HR management needs to establish systematic processes to help direct which tacit knowledge the employees are to create and capture into explicit knowledge that will be documented for the benefit of all employees. This created and captured explicit knowledge is then codified, documented and transferred for the employees to rely on for their effective performance as explained in section 6.6.2.3 (Anand et al., 2020; Hislop et al., 2018). Hence, to retain and sustain knowledge workers in an organisation, effective employee management strategies need to be adopted to help develop, improve and sustain a continuous interaction, discussion and communication among employees.

Conclusion three of research phase two

A significant discovery made with the interpretation of the research findings of phase two was the views of the participants who understood IOFs as simple internal practices and strategies of the organisation that are used to influence their KM practices in the organisation. As explained in section 6.6.2.2, it was evident that the internal practices were referred to as skills improvement factors and were related to the organisation's leadership, technological tools available, organisational structure, culture and internal strategy as provided in section 6.6.2.2.1, which helped them to share their tacit knowledge (Kordab et al., 2020; Novak et al., 2020). The internal strategies were also referred to as motivating enhancing factors and were related to the organisation's workplace policies, internal procedures, guides, regulations, and principles as well as work rules as provided in section 6.6.2.2.2, which helped them to share explicit knowledge (Almeida et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). In conclusion, both the internal practices and internal strategies were devised by the HR management to help coordinate, facilitate and sustain the needed employees' effective interactions, networking and communication for effective KM practices in the organisation.

Additionally, KM is fundamentally about converting tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge and placing the same for the benefit of all employees using the internal practices and strategies established by the HR management through social interaction activities. Hence, through this, the skills improvement factors helped them to create and share their tacit knowledge through interactions like face-to-face meetings, mentoring and coaching, observations and discussions, briefings, and hands-on-practice (Kordab et al., 2020; Novak et al., 2020). On the other hand, the motivation enhancing factors helped them to capture and share the organisation's explicit knowledge through interactions like group-working, networking, workshops, conferences, orientation, seminars, knowledge sourcing, and symposia (Almeida et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). In effect, these were effectively done because the organisation's work environment was flexible, they had effective internal structures, training and development programmes were effective, and employees and management relationships were apt in the organisation (Shrestha, 2020; Vu et al., 2020).

Conclusion four of research phase two

The research findings indicate that the understanding of enhanced IOFs was related to the HR management improving on the internal practices and strategies that are used to help in KM practices. This means enhancing these internal practices and strategies helped to improve and sustain the way the employees interacted, related with each other and the way they communicated and networked, which helped them to effectively acquire and share both the tacit knowledge and the explicit knowledge (Almeida et al., 2019; Gholipour et al., 2018). Hence, the enhanced internal practices were related to management having technological tools that are efficient and effective and having a strategic internal strategy (Ulrich & Yeung, 2019), having contingent leadership styles (Annan, 2021) and establishing flexible organisational culture and structure (Fernandes, 2018; Huselid, 2018) as explained in section 6.6.2.4.1. The enhanced internal strategies were also related to management establishing workplace policies and principles that are participatory, internal work rules and regulations that are flexible and self-organised, having in place self-directing internal guides and procedures, and a well-coordinated internal strategy (Rezaei et al., 2021; Sokoli et al., 2019) as explained in section 6.6.2.4.2 of the study.

In conclusion, the enhanced IOFs have a direct and positive relationship with the organisation's improved KM practices, which help employees to put their creative ideas into practice and make them more innovative as explained in section 6.6.2.5. Hence, the participants understood the organisation's improved KM practices as the HR management improving on the internal practices that helped them to create and share the tacit knowledge and the internal strategies that helped them to capture and share the explicit knowledge. As explained in section 6.6.2.5.1 of the study, this means improved internal practices were related to the organisation having enough knowledge workers and a formal knowledge sharing methodology (Archer-Brown & Kietzmann, 2018) and motivating and empowering experienced employees and adopting best practices approach for knowledge sharing (Iheukwumere-Esotu & Yunusa-Kaltungo, 2021). Also, as explained in section

6.6.2.5.2 of the study, this means improved internal strategies were related to the organisation having a conducive work environment and efficient institutional memory (Kuenzi et al., 2020), encouraging collaborations as well as teamwork (Saifulina et al., 2021) and having a participatory decision-making process, having a self-managed team and having unit heads managing these teams (López-Cabarcos & Quiñoá-Piñeiro, 2022). This encourages employees to be more professional in their knowledge creation and sharing initiatives in an organisation.

Conclusion five of research phase two

The findings revealed that there was a unanimous understanding as explained in section 6.6.2.6 that the participants related their performance effectiveness to the improved KM practices in the organisation. This was because improved KM practices were embedded and inseparable from the enhanced IOFs, which help to facilitate, coordinate and sustain the flow of the OK for their overall performance effectiveness (Lei et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021). This suggests that what linked their performance effectiveness was how they were managed using the enhanced IOFs as explained in section 6.6.2.4 (Kaufman et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2019) and how the OK was also effectively managed as explained in 6.6.2.5 (Abuaddous et al, 2018; Gharamah et al., 2018) of the study. In conclusion, the enhanced IOFs of the organisation and the organisation's improved KM practices helped in the employees' performance effectiveness.

These enhanced IOFs were used to help influence employees' effective interactions and inner workings, to help improve on their knowledge-sharing initiatives and to help improve on their knowledge planning and feedback (Ali et al, 2019; Asrar-UI-Haq & Anwar, 2016). Also, the enhanced IOFs were used to help promote employees' communication, networking and teamwork and used to help promote their inter-cooperation (Abubakar et al., 2019; Chaudhry & Batra, 2018) as explained in section 6.6.2.6.1. This leads to improved KM practices, which helped to bring experience employees together and helped to create more knowledge workers (Charband & Navimipour, 2018; Kinghorn, 2017), helped to build confidence in them, make them creative and innovative and helped them to

socialise and interact effectively (Rahman et al, 2018; Sergeeva & Andreeva, 2016), helped them to sustain their life-long learning practices, have control over the way they worked and helped to make them valuable, rare, not-imitable, and the organisation specific (Bakator et al., 2019; Ha & Lo, 2018) as explained in section 6.6.2.6.2 of the study. In conclusion, when HR management enhances the IOFs, it helps to motivate and empower employees to have improved KM practices, which is a fundamental factor to their organisational behaviour leading to their effective performance in the organisation.

8.2.5 Findings of research phase three

The purpose of research phase three (conceptual phase) of the study was to help develop a conceptual framework for KM as a guide for public sector employees' performance effectiveness. This was, therefore, done through the development and validation of a conceptual framework for KM during the process. To achieve this phase, the following two research objectives were identified.

Objective one of research phase three

The first objective under phase three of the study was to explore how a KM framework can be developed as a guide for employees of MMDAs in Ghana for their performance effectiveness. This first objective of phase three was, therefore, realised in sections 7.4.3 in Chapter 7 of the study, which shows the narrative as well as graphical presentation of the conceptual framework developed and in section 7.4.4, which shows the description of the conceptual framework.

Objective two of research phase three

The second objective under phase three of the study was to explore how the KM framework developed as a guide for employees of MMDAs in Ghana can be validated. This second research objective of phase three was also realised in sections 6.7.1 where validation was done from the perspective of the enhanced IOFs and in section 6.7.2 where validation was done from the perspective of the organisation's improved KM practices.

8.2.6 Conclusions on findings of research phase three

To fulfil the purpose of research phase three which is the conceptual phase of the study, the principles and guidelines underpinning the framework of Huberman and Miles (1984), which follows the qualitative driven design approach as suggested by Finlay (2011) and Handzic (2011), was adopted and used to develop this preferred conceptual framework for KM. This approach helped to assess the superordinate themes developed and validated from the research questions and were, therefore, used to design this comprehensive and integrated KM framework as explained in sections 5.6 and 7.3 of the study. The sequence of the research questions was followed as it allowed the researcher to select the important superordinate themes and the meaningful relationships for the needed transformations, which helped to satisfy the conditions that will make the developed KM framework functional and practicable. The interpretive findings as explained from sections 6.6.2 to 6.7.1 of the study, helped to effectively achieve the two research objectives of phase three.

Conclusion one of research phase three

To fulfil the first research objective set out for phase three of the study, the comprehensive interpretative findings presented in Chapter 6 of the study was used to develop this KM framework, which has been presented in Chapter 7. This conceptual framework is a product of the qualitative process of theorisation that explains either graphically (Robson & McCarten, 2016) or narratively (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017), the main things studied, which are the constructs and the identified interrelationships among them. This means that at the end of the empirical findings, a confirmatory and coherent conceptual framework for KM was developed and used as a guide for employees' performance effectiveness in an organisation (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Miles et al., 2020).

As explained in section 6.6.2.7, this was effectively done as a result of the relationship between the enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices, which leads to the outcome of performance effectiveness as shown in Figure 7.3 in Chapter 7. In conclusion, this conceptual framework represents a refined version of the one

developed at the beginning, which was exploratory and evolved as the study progressed empirically to this confirmatory one. This means the interpretative findings were aligned closely to the literature reviewed which inductively supported the findings of previous studies on KM and improved KM practices.

Conclusion two of research phase three

In addition, in the interpretative findings, each of the participants expressed their own experiences as employees of the MMDAs. Hence, the developed superordinate themes emerged based on the similarities between their different experiences. These superordinate themes developed were, therefore, used to develop this KM framework that will be functional and have an industry-wide adoption. This means that the development of this KM framework was effectively done based on the participants' understanding of enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices of the organisation, which leads to their performance effectiveness as explained in section 6.6.2.6 of the study (Al-Shraab et al., 2021; Sahibzada et al., 2020b). This means as provided in section 6.6.2.7, the enhanced IOFs have a direct and positive relationship with improved KM practices, which lead to the performance effectiveness of employees.

The enhanced IOFs were related to the HR management enhancing the internal practices and strategies while the improved KM practices were also related to improving the internal practices for sharing the tacit knowledge and the internal strategies for sharing the explicit knowledge. These relationships between the enhanced IOFs and the improved KM practices and between the improved KM practices and their performance effectiveness, helped to offer a credible and causal relationship that helped to the development of this conceptual framework for KM as the outcome of this study.

Conclusion three of research phase three

In the study, the research report was validated first with the triangulation process followed by the participants' validation process as discussed in section 6.7, to ensure that the framework and its concepts developed made sense to the

researcher, the participants, other scholars, and practitioners. Firstly, the triangulation process was where the transcribed interviews were thoroughly cross-checked and confirmed with the observational field notes and the reflexive research journal (Jae-Nam & Young-Gun, 2015). Secondly, the participants' validation process was where feedback was solicited from the participants (Birt et al., 2016; Slettebø, 2020) through three zonal meetings. This was where the research report was returned to them to cross-check if the information in it reflected on their lived experience and understanding of the phenomenon and if it was correctly interpreted and analysed (Birt et al., 2016; Slettebø, 2020). This was done because in the IPA methodology used, the understanding of the phenomenon came from the perspective of the participants' lived experience, which also recognises the interpretive work by the researcher who made sense of what the participants said during the interviews (Maxwell, 2020; Smith et al., 2022).

In addition, the researcher who was the major research instrument may go to the field with pre-conceived attitudes, beliefs or opinions, which may taint the data collected and analysed (Roberts, 2017; Smith, 2017). Hence, as provided in section 6.7.1 in the participants' validation process, their mental preparations were directed towards their beliefs, personal experiences, perceptions, and meanings they attached to the enhanced IOFs, which starts from the IOFs to the enhanced IOFs. Also, as provided in section 6.7.2 of the study, their mental preparations were directed towards their personal experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and meanings they attached to improved KM practices, which starts from the OK to improved KM practices of the organisation.

The participants indicated that they were unanimously satisfied with the information provided in the report from the IOFs to enhanced IOFs as well as from the OK to improved KM practices as they represented the data collected (Guillen, 2019; Neubauer et al., 2019). The participants' confidence, candidness, relaxed state, passion, friendliness, and excitement during the interviews made them to provide these rich and credible responses (Guillen, 2019; Larkin et al., 2019). This also helped the researcher to come out with credible and reliable data, helped to

generate the needed inferential codes, helped to develop the needed subordinate and superordinate themes, and helped to effectively analyse the data for the interpretative findings (Micinally & Gray-Brunton, 2021).

Conclusion four of research phase three

This functional and practicable conceptual framework for KM was developed to promote theory development and practical relevance to HR management practices. In this regard, its objectives are to promote theory development which may have a positive impact on management practices on KM. It also serves as a conceptual framework for HR management in the implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation. This means in this knowledge-based economy, implementing the improved type of KM practices is very vital for the organisation to take full advantage of the value of its OK (Kinghorn, 2017; Omotayo, 2015). This conceptual framework, therefore, serves as a guide for practical and theoretical implementation of improved KM practices in an organisation, which serves as a prerequisite for employees' improved performance and higher productivity.

To this effect, this conceptual framework established five key areas of relationships needed to logically explain the course of action as a guide for it to be functional. These are the understanding of:

1. the impinging constructs (types of OK and IOFs);
2. the internal context (the organisation's KM practices);
3. the decision adoption stage (understanding of enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices);
4. the cycle of transformations (relating the enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices to performance); and
5. the employees' performance effectiveness as the outcome of the study.

Conclusion five of research phase three

The context of the study refers to the setting or the external environment in which the study of the improved KM practices was conducted, which was on employees

of the MMDAs in Ghana. This was to help ensure that HR managers of the public sector organisations use this conceptual framework to guide their employees to understand and implement improved KM practices. This will eventually help employees of MMDAs under the LGSG to perform effectively in the implementation of government policy decisions, programmes and projects at the local or district level for the needed social, economic and political development in the areas (Gumah & Aziabah, 2020; Ohemeng & Kanga, 2020). The context of the study has, therefore, been structured into two interconnected settings, which include the macro-level and the micro-level within the public sector organisation. The macro-level context refers to the LGSG, which represents the core government agency and the micro-level context refers to the MMDAs, which operate under the regulations and control of the LGSG. These two institutions represent the research context and the understanding of the conceptual framework at the macro-level context influences the micro-level context.

This holistic view of the conceptual framework demonstrates that the two different subdivisions of the context are interrelated and accordingly, contribute to the lived experiences of the participants in this study (Miles et al., 2014; Noon, 2017). This was done because the biggest challenge facing public sector organisations in Ghana today is how to nurture efficient and effective employees who will implement government policy decisions, programmes and projects effectively from the macro-level to the micro-level of the organisations. In conclusion, the responses of the participants during the interviews revealed that the organisation's KM practices mirror the larger or macro-level setting of employees working at the LGSG and the micro-level setting of employees working with the MMDAs in Ghana. This means for employees to engage in improved KM practices, the HR department should do everything possible to support and enhance the employees' understanding of the constructs and their interrelationships within the macro-level as well as the micro-level contexts.

Hence, to provide a quick insight into the understanding of all issues in the conceptual framework, background colours were chosen to quickly attract the

attention of readers of the framework. These background colours are gold for the macro-level and green for the micro-level contexts respectively, because of the significance of colour gold and green in the history of Ghana (Macdonald, 2016a; Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018). In this context as shown in Figure 7.3, the colour gold represents the nation's wealth, which is made up of natural resources and other non-natural resources, forms the bigger set and is, therefore, associated with the LGSG. On the other hand, the colour green represents the nation's natural resources including the people, forms a subset of colour gold and is also associated with the MMDAs as shown in Figure 7.3 (Macdonald, 2016b; Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018). In conclusion, the colours were chosen to help provide readers with the needed principles of attraction, interpretation, and feeling elements of a brand that is required in package to help provide the necessary information to persuade all employees to care and take action (Fish, 2021; Kuo et al., 2021).

8.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite the limitations stated next and the measures established to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, the analysis of the transcribed interviews, observational field notes and the reflexive research journal suggest several theoretical and practical implications of the study to HR management in the Ghanaian context. These can, however, be achieved through careful understanding and implementation of the KM framework developed. The research findings, therefore, point to several significant implications for employees' understanding of the various constructs of the conceptual framework, which leads to their performance effectiveness. This was where the research tried to focus on developing a descriptive understanding of an organisation's improved KM practices for the effective performance of its employees, using the enhanced IOFs.

This KM framework guides the HR management of an organisation on how to identify, create and capture the OK (tacit and explicit knowledge) and identify and understand the IOFs (internal practices and strategies) necessary for KM, which then leads to its employees' understanding of the organisation's KM practices. When the internal practices and strategies are enhanced, this leads to the

employees' implementation of improved KM practices, which also leads to their performance effectiveness. In the long-run, this performance effectiveness comes with improved productivity and enhanced organisational performance as it is linked to the improvement of employees' SKAAs. This is where the HR management uses the given inputs to help make the organisation flexible to maintain values and beliefs to be able to adjust with the outputs. The conceptual framework, therefore, provides employees with the necessary insights into the understanding of issues relating to improved KM practices and how these ensure their performance effectiveness in an organisation.

Again, the conceptual framework helps the organisation to take full advantage of the value of knowledge of its employees through enhanced IOFs leading to improved KM practices. This helps the HR department to focus on building organisational capacity in ways that allow concrete social interaction indicators like effective interactions, communication and networking of employees to be identified, pursued, enforced and experienced. This helps to improve individual, group and organisation's performance effectiveness by leveraging the present and the future value of the OK.

Again, the conceptual framework recognises the importance of key employees' parameters. These include employees' socio-cultural background, educational qualification and years of work experience. It also helps the organisation to identify and create an effective knowledge repository, regularly develop and improve on the OK, have an efficient and effective mechanism to share the knowledge, and have a conducive organisational environment for reuse of the knowledge by all employees.

The conceptual framework also helps employees to understand what it means to have enhanced IOFs, which means that the internal practices and strategies are implemented with more involvement of employees and have a more direct relationship with the organisation's internal practices as well as strategies. Enhancing these internal practices and strategies help in building organisational successes, through vibrant and productive knowledge exchanges among

employees. This helps to establish effective socio-cultural systems that make it possible for HR management to tap into employees' innovative creativity, their improved sense of duty and hard work-spiritedness to maximise productivity at a reduced cost. This helps to measure employees' performance effectiveness as a function of their procedural knowledge and skills and management's motivation and opportunities offered. Hence, organisational strategies like empowerment, motivation and welfare have a significant and positive impact on the employees' performance effectiveness in the organisation.

Again, these internal practices and strategies help to facilitate and coordinate the flow of knowledge between employees and their overall performance effectiveness. This means organisations have to adopt enhanced internal practices and strategies as a means towards effective and efficient knowledge sharing and application initiatives. This helps the HR managers to effectively establish internal practices and strategies, which help to optimise the effectiveness of its employees. These include having control of OK, improvement in their performance, sustaining life-long learning, availability of knowledge workers, a competitive and innovative organisation, and sustaining employees' performance.

Finally, the internal practices and strategies help HR managers to easily access and exploit the appropriate OK and help build on vibrant knowledge exchange strategies. This helps the HR management to foster relationships between management and employees through in-depth planning, requesting feedback, thinking as a group and using tools to measure to minimise risks, remove employee prejudices and encourage unity, which help to improve on knowledge creation, capturing, sharing and application initiatives among employees in the organisation for a sustained performance effectiveness.

8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the study, care and considerations were adhered to in the employment of the necessary research procedures to ensure the needed scientific rigour and integrity for quality research outcomes. This was because in a qualitative study like this

which used an IPA methodology, there were certain limitations in the area of methodological, theoretical and contextual that were encountered during the research process. These limitations were encountered but addressed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the interpretative research findings.

8.4.1 Theoretical limitations

The study was designed as qualitative and, therefore, inductive which also has its limitations in terms of the research process. This process assumes that the researcher can study social reality objectively, that is, independent from it through true value-free enquiry. This theoretical limitation was, however, solved by explicating the position of the researcher as the major research instrument by being a passive observer from the research participants who were active participants during the interviews.

Again, the knowledge of the study was revealed from the point of view of the research participants whose beliefs and experiences are embedded in their socio-cultural background, which is prone to a degree of subjectivity. This knowledge was also unveiled by the researcher through interpretation who also has his interpretation based on his values, beliefs, experience, and interest. To address these limitations, rich and resourceful methods were established to gather the necessary and relevant data from the participants and the researcher also detached his personal beliefs and values by being neutral during the data collection and analyses.

Finally, the study adopted the conceptual framework of Huberman and Miles (1984) to guide the development of this KM framework from the constructs and their interrelationships for the study outcome (shown in Figure 7.3 in Chapter 7). This was, therefore, used as an aid employed to offer an understanding of the solutions to the research problem and also to offer as a guide for future research in a similar area. However, the process and outcome of the study could be different from this if a different conceptual framework or a model has been used.

8.4.2 Contextual limitations

The qualitative study used an IPA research methodology, which is contextual because the study occurred within a specific time and specific places during the research process. This was a limitation contextually because there may be a change in the research result if the study was carried out at a different time and in a different place. However, in acknowledging this change to increase the credibility and reliability of the findings, the study was evaluated through self-reflexivity.

Another contextual limitation was that the study focused on the shared experiences and beliefs of employees of three metropolitan assemblies out of 260 MMDAs in Ghana as the research objects. The study was, therefore, limited to the context of 18 employees as the research participants during the study. Consequently, the findings of the research report may have been different if employees of other MMDAs had been included and the sample size increased above the 18 participants.

8.4.3 Methodological limitations

Methodologically, this was a qualitative study and was aligned with an IPA research design, which was employed to explore the experiences of the employees of MMDAs. It was, however, acknowledged that the use of a quantitative research approach as an alternative research design may lead to findings that may differ from these qualitative findings of the study.

Again, during sampling, a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the research participants based on predetermined selection criteria as well as the researcher's judgment of participants who would yield relevant and rich data for the study. Hence, the choice of this heterogeneous purposive sampling technique limits the number of participants involved in the IPA study as recommended by Smith (2017). Consequently, the experiences of the research participants may not be representative of all employees of MMDAs in Ghana. For this reason, the findings may not apply to other employees and MMDAs other than the MMDAs included in this study.

Finally, some of the participants may have had a perception that this type of research interview, where their educational qualifications and years of working experience are required as a concealed way of gathering information. This would be used during formal appraisal interviews to evaluate their performance for their demotion or transfer to remote districts. Hence, they may not be willing to provide the needed rich and credible information. This was seen as a limitation from the response bias that may affect the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected. However, with the knowledge about the context of the organisation and the participants to be interviewed, enough briefing about the research was given to them to disabuse their minds and also ensure their confidentiality in participation voluntarily.

8.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As indicated, the rationale for this study was to explore how the HR department of the LGSG made employees of MMDAs perform effectively in implementation of government policy decisions, programmes and projects and resource allocations at the local or district level, using the improved KM practices. This stemmed from the fact that one of the biggest challenges facing public sector organisations in Ghana today is how to nurture efficient and effective employees who will implement government policy decisions, programmes and projects and manage resources allocated to them prudently. In the process, it was discovered that not many studies on KM practices were conducted on both public and private sector organisations in West African countries particularly, Ghana (Amaya, 2013; Dzato, 2015; Kommey, 2015). There were a few published empirical studies of application of KM practices framework as a guide for the effective performance of employees of MMDAs in Ghana (Asiedu, 2015; Kommey, 2015). There were a handful of empirical cross-cultural KM practices studies that used an IPA methodology, which helps to provide rich descriptive and interpretive data for analysis and understanding (Grau & Moghaddassi, 2016; Shephard et al., 2018).

As a result, employees in the public sector organisations in Ghana do not appreciate KM practices, which in the views of Armah-Attoh (2015) and Asiedu

(2015) were largely blamed on ineffective HR practices accounting for their continued ineffective performance. This situation, therefore, makes the MMDAs in Ghana ineffective in their service delivery to the local or district assemblies. Hence, promises of development in the rural areas were not fulfilled and most of these rural communities remain underdeveloped. (Ali et al., 2019; Butt et al., 2019). This study on KM practices, therefore, helped to explore and improve on the linkages between public sector employees' understanding of KM practices and the IOFs through an IPA methodology. This outcome helped to show that KM practices can help to enforce and improve on employees' performance effectiveness through the linkages between enhanced IOFs and improved KM practices.

The KM framework helps to show these public sector organisations how to transform the tacit knowledge of individual employees into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the needed employees' effective performance. This is where HR managers help to establish effective ways of communication, interaction, collaboration, and networking among employees to achieve improved KM practices. This helps the organisations to ensure that best practices, insights, skills, experiences, intelligence, and other forms of employees' knowledge are well captured, codified, shared, and applied by all employees. This also helps the HR department of the public sector organisations to implement improved KM practices, which is prerequisite for higher productivity and innovation in an organisation (Bamel & Bamel, 2018). This means implementing improved KM practices is very vital for public sector organisations to have control of the OK, help to improve and sustain on employees' SKAAs, help to enhance and sustain life-long learning practices of employees, help to have an availability of knowledge workers, and make employees more creative.

8.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

In this knowledge-based economy, this conceptual framework takes the HR management as well as employees through the understanding of all the constructs to effectively facilitate and coordinate the flow of employees' SKAAs for their overall performance effectiveness in the Ghanaian context. Hence, various

contributions were made to the body of knowledge with regards to KM within an interpretivist paradigm, focusing on improved KM practices within the context of public sector organisations. These contributions are situated within the areas of theoretical, methodological and practical relevance, which help to address ineffective performance challenges of both public and private sector employees.

8.6.1 Theoretical contributions

The study's theoretical contributions include the expansion of the existing body of knowledge on public sector employees' understanding of the organisation's improved KM practices. This was where the study helped to shift focus from KM practices to improved KM practices by developing a new model (as shown in Figure 7.3 in section 7.4.3 of Chapter 7) to help guide the public sector employees for their performance effectiveness.

In addition, the research topic was new and responding to the call for more interdisciplinary studies to enhance public sector employees' understanding of this improved KM practices. Moreover, the study provided an in-depth exploration and explanation into how to follow the laid down standardised procedures on the beliefs and experiences of the employees of the MMDAs. This helps to understand why the employees lacked the understanding of the implementation of KM practices, which was abstracted and theorised inductively to reveal valuable insights for practical understanding and application by HR managers and employees.

Again, beliefs and experiences of the employees as humans, are socially constructed and are informed by certain values and beliefs they held in their geographical location at that particular time. Hence, based on the theoretical assumptions and perspective of the study, the researcher was able to develop a selection criterion for the selection of the right calibre of employees as the study participants for the interview during the process.

8.6.2 Methodological contributions

The nature of empirical cross-cultural research on KM practices in most West African countries has been limited primarily to the testing of perceptions through surveys or questionnaires using basic statistical means to quantify the research results (Asiedu, 2015; Kommey, 2015; Omotayo, 2015). However, many scholars have called for a move away from this mainstream research on human resource to a more interpretative research methodology that provides rich descriptive and interpretive data (Palangenas et al., 2017; Shephard et al., 2018). Hence, this study contributed on a methodological level by moving away from the tradition of a quantitative research methodology, which is more statistical to an interpretive, explorative and descriptive research approach using an IPA research design. This helped to effectively explore, explain and interpret the experiences of employees of the public sector organisations in Ghana on KM practices that they did not fully understand (Shephard, 2018; Stephenson et al., 2018).

The study was also designed by using an IPA methodology, which critically helped to explore, describe and explain the perspectives of the employees of MMDAs in Ghana. This was used to develop answers to the research questions with regards to their performance effectiveness in the discharge of their duties (Guillen, 2019; Larkin et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2022).

8.6.3 Practical contributions

Issues about KM practices have now been widely recognised by the HR departments as the foundation of industrial economies in this globalised world (Omotayo, 2015; Stamou, 2017). Hence, the choice of this topic was to help improve public sector employees' understanding of this KM practice to ensure its practical relevance to HR management in contemporary Ghana. The study, therefore, identified key superordinate themes that were necessary to help the employees' understanding of these improved KM practices, which in the end, will lead to their performance effectiveness.

In addition, the findings could facilitate the drive by the government to promote public sector reforms in the management of public sector employees in that, the

study identified potential barriers to the employees' performance effectiveness in Ghana. The study could, therefore, assist the Ghanaian government as well as the private sector employers in their attempts to address these barriers. This will help to facilitate the rapid acceleration of the diversity transformation process and to survive in today's dynamic and competitive marketplace in both public and private organisations.

Finally, the findings on improved KM practices in the study will help to enhance and sustain continuous learning practices of employees in the organisations and during retirement and mobility of workforce. More importantly, the organisations will still have employees who have the OK to work within the organisation. These will eventually help these public sector organisations to be creative and innovate, thereby, differentiating themselves from other organisations.

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

In addressing the research questions of the study through the interpretative findings and based on the summary made and conclusions drawn, the study revealed various lapses as a result of which KM is not effectively implemented by employees of the public sector organisations in Ghana. These recommendations are, therefore, made for human resource practice, government policies and further research areas.

8.7.1 Recommendations for human resource practice

In the beginning, it was stated in the study that there was an ineffective performance of employees of the public sector organisations in Ghana. This was largely blamed on ineffective KM practices by employees in these organisations. It was, therefore, attributed to the lack of implementation of KM practices in these public sector organisations because the employees lacked the understanding of KM practices (Asiedu, 2015; Omotayo, 2015). This conceptual framework was, therefore, developed to have a broader practical significance by providing employees with insights into the understanding of all issues relating to improved KM practices and how this ensures their effective performance (Jilani et al., 2020;

Liu et al., 2021). Hence, the conceptual framework takes HR management as well as employees through the understanding of all the relationships among the constructs on how to implement the improved KM practices so that the organisation can take full advantage of the value of knowledge of its employees (Maxwell, 2020, Miles et al., 2020). It is, therefore, recommended that the HR management follows the necessary guidelines for its implementation for employees' effective understanding of the various constructs and the relationships in the conceptual framework.

Also, the nature of the conceptual framework is about the transformation of individual employees' tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge of the organisation, using the IOFs for the necessary KM practices (Butt et al., 2019; Gamble, 2020). The conceptual framework, therefore, shows how employees can effectively acquire and transfer both the tacit knowledge and the explicit knowledge using the organisation's internal practices as well as the internal strategies to help promote their discussions, observations, mentoring, coaching, and interactions (Hislop et al., 2018; Werner & Dickson, 2018). It is, therefore, recommended that the HR management of the MMDAs puts in place effective ways of employees' social interaction activities like workshops, teamwork, seminars, orientation, picnics, and coaching to promote their interactions and discussions to achieve the desired improved KM practices necessary for their performance effectiveness.

The improved KM practices help employees to put their creative ideas into practice, make them more innovative, encourage them to be professional and enhance their KM practices (Marques et al., 2019; Ngoc-Tan & Gregor, 2018). This is because the enhanced IOFs help employees to effectively learn to acquire, share and transfer the OK wherever it resides, for their improved KM practices. Hence, it is recommended that the HR department establishes IOFs that are enhanced to have effective employee management strategies to help the organisation have a secured, well maintained and well-utilised workforce, which is important for the organisation's short-term and long-term operations (Armstrong & Brown, 2019; Mardani et al., 2018). This also helps to bring about cohesiveness,

which helps to build and sustain the needed interpersonal trust among employees, helps them to effectively integrate, helps them to have a positive orientation by making them intellectually curious, willing and free to explore and become open-minded, and helps employees to develop quick problem-solving techniques.

8.7.2 Recommendations for policy

It was observed that effective implementation of improved KM practices in a public sector organisation requires consistent efforts to empower and motivate individual employees to engage in knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge application initiatives in the organisation (Kitsios & kamariotou, 2021; Moodley & Hore, 2018). This enables the individual employees to readily accept to convert their tacit knowledge wherever it resides into explicit knowledge of the organisation for the benefit of all employees (Manaf et al., 2018; Petrus, 2018). It is, therefore, recommended that the MLG & RD and the LGSG adopt a holistic means of ensuring that there are adequate resources (financial and technological) for motivation of individual employees in the organisation to engage them effectively in any KM activities to improve on their SKAAs.

Antunes and Pinheiro (2020) were of the view that it is very important when implementing effective improved KM practices in an organisation to have an adequate database and formal knowledge sharing methodology for the organisation. These help the employees to have a comprehensive source and understanding of the organisation's improved KM practices, which lead to their effective performance and maximisation of productivity (Antunes & Pinheiro, 2020; Sahibzada et al., 2020). It is, therefore, recommended that the MLG & RD in conjunction with the LGSG helps HR departments of the MMDAs to acquire the necessary technologies to have a database of the OK and also have a formal way of sharing this OK for the benefit of all employees. It should also provide effective measures to make it easy for the employees to have access to the organisation's database (Bamel & Bamel, 2018; Cabrilo & Dahms, 2018). However, Adobor et al. (2019) recommended that this database must be constantly monitored and updated to avoid the data being pilfered and being obsolete.

To have a broader practical significance, the conceptual framework was developed to provide employees with the necessary insights into the understanding of all issues relating to improved KM practices and how this will ensure their effective performance (Charband & Navimipour, 2018; Kordab et al., 2020). Arrows have, therefore, been used to offer these directions to provide guidelines on their understanding of the relationships among the constructs during its implementation. Hence, for the organisation to take full advantage of the value of its OK for the employees to perform effectively, it has been recommended that the MLG & RD in collaboration with the LGSG provides the needed logistics and support to make it possible for the LGSG and the MMDAs to implement the framework to help guide the employees of the MMDAs to enhance their performance effectiveness.

Many organisations have found different ways of sharing their OK to build on the existing experiences as a strategy to enhance the employee's performance effectiveness. This means, during KM practices, the HR management directs which OK is necessary for the employees to acquire and share for their effective performance (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Ha & Lo, 2018). This process is, therefore, where the OK is well captured, shared and transferred to all individual employees to enable them to perform effectively (Astorga-Vargas et al., 2017; Hislop et al., 2018). It is recommended that the HR management of the MMDAs establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to help monitor and evaluate employees' KM practices. This will help to identify their strengths and weaknesses for the necessary training to bridge any performance gap identified.

8.7.3 Recommendations for further research

In addressing the research questions of the study, potential future research areas were identified in the research process. As already indicated, the research investigated the employees' KM practices in the organisation based on their lived experiences. Hence, further studies will provide more building blocks in enhancing the use and implementation of the conceptual framework developed that was based on human interactions.

In the first place, the KM framework for employees' performance effectiveness was developed based on the interpretative findings emanating from the participants using a qualitative research methodology aligned to IPA design. In the views of Larkin et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2022), these findings from the participants' KM practices were based on the individuals' socio-cultural background, working experience and educational qualification, which influenced their responses. To this effect, an area for future research is recommended for the validation and refining of this KM framework developed as a guide, using an alternative research methodology like a quantitative research methodology.

In their study, Olusengu and Olusoji (2020) suggested that employees' perception of the organisation supporting their work-life responsibilities with flexible working schedules have a significant implication on their acceptance and use of the IOFs. Employees' acceptance and use of the IOFs are equally very important in the KM practices of an organisation (Porter, 2018; Shrestha, 2020). Given this, a potential area for future research may be to identify these organisational supports that are necessary for employees and explore them so that the MMDAs could align with them to help retain its knowledge workers. Alternatively, an analysis of the personality profiles of these employees may also be important to provide insights into the type of personality traits that are important to easily help employees to accept and use its IOFs.

Based on the design and methodology adopted (IPA), the study was conducted only on the employees of the metropolitan assemblies in Ghana leaving those of the municipal and district assemblies. Hence, the recommended sample size of 18 participants used may not also be representative enough of the population of all the employees of MMDAs in Ghana. However, Larkin et al. (2019) and Smith et al. (2022) disagreed with such views and explained that such a small number of participants is allowed for a richer depth of analysis based on their geographical location, socio-cultural beliefs, experiences, and shared values. Again, the findings of the study were deduced through an inductive approach and, therefore, may or may not be used to generalise to similar situations. However, Maxwell (2020) and

Miles et al. (2020) were also of the view that such findings though inductive, could be used for analytical generalisation as the study was designed as explanatory to establish causal relationships between the constructs. Hence, to give credence to these findings, it is recommended that an area for further research may be to explore the experiences of employees of either the municipal or district assemblies in Ghana to see if the findings there will confirm this result. This could be done quantitatively and deductively, using a larger sample size of the participants.

8.8 RESEARCH CONCLUSION

In conclusion from the theoretical, empirical and conceptual finding phases of the study, this research on improved KM practices was to make the study more relevant to public sector employees in Ghana in this contemporary society using the conceptual framework developed. This led to the review of the SECI theory as well as the integrated KM and KM practices theories used as the internal context specifically to help the understanding and explanation of improved KM practices observed empirically. This context relates to where the MMDA employees' tacit knowledge stored in their brains and rooted in their experience, values, and culture was effectively converted and transformed into the organisation's explicit knowledge well organised and documented in the organisation's knowledge repository as confirmed in the study. This is to ensure that the tacit knowledge is well retained within the organisation as a result of retirement, resignation or death of skilled and experienced workers.

It was also confirmed that tacit knowledge was shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact using the organisation's internal practices while explicit knowledge was shared mainly through strategies like orientation, training and workshops using the organisation's internal strategies. This was where the beliefs, experience, socio-cultural background and educational qualification of an employee influence his or her knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, and dissemination activities in an organisation. Hence, internal practices termed as skills improvement factors as well as internal strategies termed as motivation enhancing factors were used to develop and guide employees in their improved

KM practices contextually. This helps all employees to effectively have access to the OK ubiquitously for their continuous effective performance in the organisation.

As recommended by Yusuf and Wanjau (2014), to improve on KM practices through enhancing the organisational factors, this was done where the work environment was made flexible, the internal structures were made effective, training and development programmes were effective, and the relationship between employees and management and with colleagues were apt. These helped to improve on employees' interaction, discussion, networking, and communication, which helped them to effectively acquire and share both the tacit and explicit knowledge. It was confirmed that enhanced internal practices were related to having technological tools that are efficient and effective, having a strategic internal strategy, having contingent leadership styles, and establishing flexible organisational culture and structure in the organisation. On the other hand, enhanced internal strategies were related to establishing workplace policies and principles that are participatory, internal work rules and regulations that are flexible and self-organised, having in place self-directing internal guides and procedures, and a well-coordinated internal strategy in the organisation.

In the study, therefore, improved internal practices for sharing tacit knowledge were related to the organisation having enough knowledge workers, having a formal knowledge sharing methodology, motivating employees who were experienced to share their knowledge, and adopting best practices approach for knowledge creation and sharing. On the contrary, improved internal strategies for sharing explicit knowledge were related to the organisation having a conducive work environment, efficient institutional memory, encouraging collaborations and teamwork, having effective and efficient knowledge sourcing strategies, having a participatory decision-making process, and having unit heads managing their teams. These situations help to facilitate improved practices type of KM and good onboarding, which also comes with higher employee engagement, healthier work-life balance and greater retention rates in the organisation.

As concluded by Sergeeva and Andreeva (2016) that existing KM frameworks are universalistic and a-contextual in practice (reductionist approach), these improved KM practices helped: to influence employees' effective interactions and inner workings; to improve on their knowledge-sharing initiatives; to improve on the organisation's knowledge planning and feedback; to promote employees' communication and teamwork; to promote employees' experience and socio-cultural background, and to promote employees' inter-cooperation. These strategies eventually helped: to create more knowledgeable workers; to bring experience employees together; to build more confidence in employees; to make employees creative and innovative; employees to effectively socialise and interact; employees to sustain their life-long learning practices; them to have control over the way they worked; and to make them valuable, rare, inimitable and the organisation specific. These strategies help to make this KM framework experiential, subjective, cultural, and context dependent (coherent approach), which effectively leads to employees' performance effectiveness.

This means this proposed KM framework hopes to enrich the theory of KM practices as it serves as a model, which provides public sector organisations with a methodology for improved KM practices contextually. This is because the study revealed that sharing of tacit knowledge is significantly bounded by the geographical location of employees while sharing of explicit knowledge is less bounded by geographical location because of its form. In conclusion, this practicable conceptual framework for KM as recommended by Ohemeng and Akonnor (2022) for public sector organisations in Ghana to chart new paths to address their performance challenges helps to bring to bear the study's fundamental assumptions that the understanding of what improves on individual employee's KM practices, helps him or her to perform effectively in the organisation. This makes these organisations to be more productive, efficient and effective by delivering world-class services to the general public and ensuring sustained national development.

In effect, these research findings, conclusions and recommendations would be regarded as positive contributions to the field of HR management in KM practices within the Ghanaian context. This also means that the outcomes of this research study will provide insight into how improved KM practices help to improve on employees' performance effectiveness in public sector organisations. Hence, HR managers in the public sector organisations particularly MMDAs in Ghana, are appealed to effectively utilise this newfound knowledge to improve on the shared lived experiences of their employees. This stemmed from the fact that during the data collection process, the participants said much about how management blamed them for their poor performance but not much was done to help them. To this effect, they asked how the study could help improve their understanding and performance in the organisation. It is also hoped that the research findings can serve as a new path to address shortcomings of the public sector employees as recommended by Essuman-Mensah (2019) in this contemporary Ghanaian society for them to perform effectively.

I, therefore, end this research project with the following two quotes by Nonaka (1991) from his seminal research work *"The knowledge-creating company"*, to the role players in the organisations:

1. *"In an economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge"* (Nonaka, 1991: 162).
2. *"When markets shift, technologies proliferate, competitors multiply, and products become obsolete almost overnight, successful companies are those that consistently create new knowledge, disseminate it widely throughout the organisation, and quickly embody it in new technologies and products. These activities define the Knowledge-creating Company whose sole business is continues innovation"* (Nonaka, 1991: 162).

Pondering deeply on these two quotes, my sincerest hope is that when the role players of the public sector organisations are called to explore and understand this KM framework, they will use their influencing factors known as the IOFs as well as

the dynamics of the conceptual framework for the needed engagements and interactions for dissemination of its created OK.

This work will be done with painstaking excellence to provide quick insights for employees' effective creation and understanding of the needed new knowledge through improved KM practices. It is hoped that this will help influence the employees' effective interaction, inner workings and teamwork, inter-cooperation, knowledge-creating, and knowledge-sharing initiatives. These in the end, help in the organisation's knowledge planning, implementation, measurement, and feedback, which eventually help the organisation to remain creative, innovative, productive, and competitive.

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APPENDIX A: Unisa ethics approval certificate (2017_HRM_012)



UNISA HRM ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 25 August 2017

Dear Mr S.T Abiru

Decision: Ethics Approval from August 2017 to December 2019

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)

ERC Reference # :
2017_HRM_012

Name : S.T Abiru

Student: #58529284

Researcher(s): Name Mr S.T Abiru

E-mail address, telephone # 58529284@mylife.unisa.ac.za, (233) 244850330

Supervisor (s): Name Prof A Bezuidenhout

E-mail address, telephone # bezuia@unisa.ac.za, 012 429 3941

Working title of research:

Knowledge management framework for performance in a public sector organisation in Ghana

Qualification: MCom

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa HRM Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for Mr S.T Abiru for 3 years.

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the HRM Ethics Review Committee on 17 August 2017 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

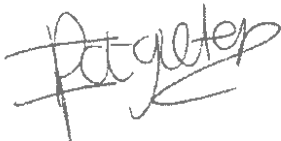
1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the HRM Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date December 2019. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2017_HRM_012 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Signature

Chair of DREC : Prof IL Potgieter

E-mail: visseil@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-3723



Signature

Executive Dean : Prof MT Mogale

E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (012) 429-4805

APPENDIX B: Introductory letter from supervisor



To: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FROM: Prof A. Bezuidenhout

Date: 27th April 2018

INTRODUCTION OF PHD STUDENT: SHAIBU TERNNI ABIRU (58529284)

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to introduce to you the above PhD student of the University of South Africa, who is applying for access and consent to conduct research on the employees in your organisation.

He is pursuing his PhD in Human Resource Management at the Faculty of Economic and Management Studies. He commenced with his studies in the 2016/2017 academic year. His research topic is: *A Knowledge Management Framework for Performance in a Public Sector Organisation in Ghana, specifically the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)*.

His research is qualitative in nature and he will use one-on-one interviews, using a semi-structured interview schedule to collect data. His sample is employees (six participants each) of the Kumasi, Tamale and Tema Metropolitan Assemblies zone, representing northern, central and southern zones respectively. Your assistance in this regard will be much appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Adèle Bezuidenhout (Professor: Department of H.R.M/ Supervisor)



APPENDIX C: Application for access and consent to CEOs

Friends of the Earth-Ghana

P. O. Box TL1419

Tamale, N/R

30th April, 2018

The Metropolitan Chief Executive

Tema Metropolitan Assembly

P. O. Box CO 301

Tema, GA/R

Dear Sir,

APPLICATION FOR ACCESS AND CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I humbly wish to apply for access and consent to conduct research on the employees of the Tema Metropolitan Assembly from Tuesday 26th to Thursday 28th June, 2018. The title of the research project is "A Knowledge Management Framework for Performance in a Public Sector Organisation in Ghana". This project is for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) in Human Resource Management at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa, with Ethics Approval Certificate No. 2017_HRM_012, which was started in 2016/2017 academic year.

The purpose of this research is to develop and validate a knowledge management practices framework as a guide for effective performance of employees of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), which are one of the most important public sector organisations under the Local Government Service in Ghana. Hence, data will be collected from a population of employees of Kumasi, Tamale and Tema Metropolitan Assemblies zone as central, northern and

southern zones respectively, focusing on the employees' meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The motivation for this research, stems from the fact that one of the biggest challenges facing public sector organisations today is how to nurture efficient and effective employees who will implement government policy decisions and programmes effectively at the local or district level. This ineffective performance has a devastating effect on the district or local level's ability to make progress in socio-economic and political development due to the decentralisation programme.

The study is qualitative and specifically interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA). Hence, the data collection method is one-on-one interview, using a semi-structured interview schedule. For effective participation, it is anticipated that approximately one hour maximum may be required for the one-on-one interview for each participant and at least two participants for a day. The interview will take place during working days in working hours during the period and will be held at the district assembly's conference room which is quiet, comfortable and convenient.

A sample size of six employees have been purposively selected for the interview and are stratified under senior level, middle level and junior level. The purposively selected and stratified employees are: the Budget and Planning Officers as the senior level employees; the HR and Administrative Officers as the middle level employees; and finally an Executive Officer and a Revenue Officer as the junior level employees. The rights of these participants and the organisation will be ensured as well as their confidentiality and anonymity. There will be no foreseeable risks, but should there be any, measures have been put in place for remedy.

I wish to state that copies of the findings and recommendations of the research report will be made available to the participants, management of the Metropolitan Assembly and the Local Government Service. In this case, the participants will have access to the benefits of the knowledge management framework that will be

implemented in the organisation. This will enable the participants take full advantage of the value of the organisational knowledge.

I hope my application for access and consent will be acceded to.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Shaibu Ternni Abiru', written in a cursive style.

Shaibu Ternni Abiru (ID No 58529284; Tel. No 0244850330)

cc: The Chief Director, Local Government Service of Ghana, Accra.

APPENDIX D: Approval for access and consent from CEOs



TEMA METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY

P. O. Box 301, Tema-Ghana Tel: 030-3202827, 030-3202828
Fax: +233-30-3208011



Our Ref: CZ.1/12/01
Your Ref:

Date: 24/5/2018

~~PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON EMPLOYEE OF TEMA~~ ~~METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY~~

Reference to your letter dated 27th April, 2018 introducing Mr. shaibu Ternni Abiru, a P.HD student with ID No. 5852984 to our Assembly for access and consent to conduct research on the employees of the Tema Metropolitan Assembly relating to knowledge management framework for performance in public sector organizations in Ghana.

I have been directed to inform you that permission has been granted to Mr. Abiru to obtain necessary data for his academic research from selected employees of the Assembly.

The Assembly would be glad to know the outcome of the research to help improve on our performance.

Thank you.

IDDRISU MUMUNI
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER
for: METROPOLITAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PROF.A. BEZUIDENHOUT
UNIVEFSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

Cc: Mr. Shaibu Ternni Abiru
P.o. Box TL 419
Tamale, NR. Ghana.

APPENDIX E: Participant research information sheet

1. The title of this research project is: Knowledge management framework for performance in a public sector organisation in Ghana.
2. This research project is for academic purpose and the researcher is a PhD student in Human Resource Management at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, who has the Ethics Approval Certificate No. 2017_HRM_012, issued by the University for the research.
3. The motivation for this research is to help nurture efficient and effective employees of the MMDAs in Ghana who by the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act, 936), implement government policy decisions and programmes at the district or local level, leading to the people's socio-economic and political development.
4. The research is, therefore, to develop and validate a knowledge management practices framework as a guide, to help address this performance challenge of employees of the MMDAs. Hence, data will be collected from a population of employees of Kumasi, Tamale and Tema metropolitan assemblies, zoned as the central, northern and southern zones respectively focusing on the meaning they have about knowledge management practices.
5. This research is qualitative, with interpretive phenomenology as the research design. Hence, the researcher aims to explore the interpretation of the phenomenon, which is best done through shared experience of the employees working together in a group with shared values. Therefore, to understand this shared experience with commonalities from the employees, a heterogeneous purposive sampling technique will be used to select a sample size of 18 participants from this population. This means, a sample size of six employees will be purposively selected for a one-on-one interview from each zone, but will be stratified under senior level, middle level, and junior level employees.

6. The stratification is as follows: the Budget and Planning Officers as the senior level; the Human Resource and Administrative Officers as the middle level; and an Executive Officer and a Revenue Officer as the junior level. The selection criteria is that these employees should work with the assembly continuously for at least three years, are fluent in the English language and are willing to participate in the study. The researcher will, therefore, meet these selected employees face-to-face and explain to them the nature and aim of the research; inform them about the research's ethical considerations and about their voluntary consent for participation and withdrawal at any time without any obligation.

7. The research has no foreseeable risk involved for participation; its outcome will not cause any physical or psychological pain; no any side-effects, stigmatisation, persecution, discomfort or negative labeling. However, in the unlikely event that there is an adverse event that there is a slight possibility of emotional or psychological discomfort, this can be mitigated by referring the participant to a clinical psychologist (on standby) in the teaching hospital.

8. The participants will be given the central interview questions to study as well as the process to be followed during the one-on-one interviews. At the end of this, the participants will be given an ethical consent form to read through and sign. The potential benefit of the study is to strengthen the management of organisational knowledge of MMDAs through improved knowledge management practices. This will help to improve on the employees' performance leading to their sustained life-long learning practices and innovation.

9. The data will, therefore, be collected by the researcher and a research assistant and will bother on the participant's personal information such as the age, highest educational qualification, number of years of employment, and interview on the phenomenon based on the central interview questions. The district assembly's conference room will be used for the one-on-one interview. However, should any participant prefers, it can be collected at any quiet, comfortable and convenient place of his or her choice. It is anticipated that approximately one hour may be required for the one-no-one interview for each participant and a maximum of three

participants for a day. The interview will take place during working days in working hours and will be audio recorded and notes will be taken in a notebook.

10. The tentative dates for the interviews are: Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly - Tuesday 5th to Thursday 7th June, 2018; Tema Metropolitan Assembly - Tuesday 26th to Thursday 28th June, 2018; and Tamale Metropolitan Assembly - Tuesday 24th to Thursday 27th July, 2018 at 10am each day. The audio recorded data will be transcribed verbatim and will be combined with the field notes and reflexive journal for analysis. This data will be stored in Microsoft Word on a computer with a backup data stored on a memory stick and password protected.

11. To ensure that this research is ethically sound, issues relating to rights, confidentiality and anonymity are considered. Your participation is completely voluntary and, therefore, have the right to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. You also have the right to contact any appropriate administrative body if you have any question about the conduct of the researcher or the study procedures. For confidentiality and anonymity, your name and any identifying information will not be revealed in any discussion, description or publications. References of your information will only include a filename given to you based on your geographic location and job level in the organisation.

12. At the end of the interviews, the researcher will validate the result of the study by returning it to you the study participants to cross-check. This will help you to ascertain if your answers to any question need to be rectified and to ensure that the researcher has not misinterpreted the data. If the University accepts the findings and recommendations of this research, copies of the report will be made available to you the participants, management and the organisation. In this case, you the participants will have access to the benefits of the knowledge management framework that will be implemented in the organisation. This will enable you the participants to take full advantage of the value of the organisational knowledge. You have the opportunity to ask any questions for clarifications.

APPENDIX F: Ethical consent agreement with participants

Title of research project: Knowledge management framework for performance in a public sector organisation in Ghana (Ethics Approval Certificate No. 2017_HRM_012)

Name and ID of Researcher: Shaibu Ternni Abiru and 58529284

Personal E-mail: shaibuabiru@yahoo.co.uk and 58529284@mylife.unisa.ac.za

I, (Name of participant), the undersigned is an employee of the Kumasi/Tamale/Tema Metropolitan Assembly hereby confirm as follows:

1. I was approached and invited to participate in an interview on the above research project by the researcher, who is a student at the University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa;
2. I was made to read and understand the research information sheet in which the motivation, aim and benefits of the research and the ethics approval certificate have been explained to me and I had the opportunity to ask questions for clarifications;
3. It was explained to me why I in particular was eventually chosen, that my participation is completely voluntary, and I am free to terminate or withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons;
4. I was informed how the information shared by me during the interview will be recorded (audio recorded and notebook) and how the information will be made public. I also agree to the use of filename given to me and used in all publications;
5. I was informed of my rights as participant to contact the appropriate administrative body if I have any questions about the conduct of the researcher or the study procedures;
6. I was informed of no foreseeable risks, but should there be any, I was told of measures that have been put in place for remedy;

7. I was also told that my identity will not be revealed in any discussion or description or scientific publications by the researcher;

8. I was told that any new information or benefit that develops during the course of the study will be shared with me;

9. All the information above was explained to me by the researcher in English language and I am in command of this language. I was also given the opportunity to ask questions, which were answered to me satisfactorily. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participate and made to understand that I may withdraw at any stage without any penalty.

I, hereby consent voluntarily to participate in the research

(Participant's Signature)

Signature of researcher:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sik' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(22nd May, 2018).

APPENDIX G: Semi-structured interview schedule

1. Please can you briefly tell me about your personal details?
2. Please tell me about your understanding of knowledge and knowledge management practices in the organisation?
3. Can you please tell me what you understanding by internal organisational factors in the organisation?
4. In your view, which of these internal organisational factors help you in your knowledge management practices in the organisation?
5. Please tell me what you think are the contingencies that help to enhance these internal organisational factors?
6. Please tell me what you also think are the contingencies that help to improve on your knowledge management practices?
7. Can you please tell me how you think these enhanced internal organisational factors help you to implement these improved knowledge management practices?
8. In your view, how do these improved knowledge management practices relate to your performance effectiveness?
9. In your view, how do you think a knowledge management practices framework can be developed as a guide for employees' effective performance?
10. In your view, how do you also think this knowledge management practices framework developed as a guide for employees' effective performance can be validated?

APPENDIX H: Research assistant's confidentiality agreement

Title of Research Project: Knowledge management framework for performance in a public sector organisation in Ghana.

Name and ID of Researcher: Shaibu Ternni Abiru and 58529284

Personal E-mail: shaibuabiru@yahoo.co.uk and 58529284@mylife.unisa.ac.za

I, Joseph Kwame Kumah, the undersigned, is a Master of Arts in Public Administration student at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), Tamale Campus, has been recruited as a research assistant and hereby confirm an agreement with the researcher on the above research project as follows:

1. I have been given a day's training on the objectives, methodology, how the research will be carried out, my role as research assistant, how to assist in using the audiotape recorder during the interview and how to write notes in the notebook during the interview by the researcher;
2. I have also agreed on the following:
 - i. Not to share the raw data of the interview with anyone;
 - ii. Not to present the raw data as it may be recognised or identified by anyone;
 - iii. To protect the confidentiality of the participants and organisation and maintain their anonymity;
 - iv. To respect the time and convenience of the participants;
 - v. Not to reveal the identity of participants publicly after the interview; and
 - vi. To use filenames given instead of names of participants during the interview.

I hereby, consent to this confidentiality agreement between me and the researcher.

Signature of research assistant:  Date: 15th May, 2018

Signature of researcher:  Date: 15th May, 2018

APPENDIX I: Co-coder's confidentiality agreement

Title of Research Project: Knowledge management framework for performance in a public sector organisation in Ghana.

Name and ID of Researcher: Shaibu Ternni Abiru and 58529284

Personal E-mail: shaibuabiru@yahoo.co.uk and 58529284@mylife.unisa.ac.za

I, Mohammed Yaw Swalisu, the undersigned, is a Teaching and Research Assistant at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), Tamale Campus, who has been contracted by the researcher to co-code the interview transcripts on the above research project. I hereby confirm an agreement with the researcher on the project as follows:

1. I have been given a day's training on the objectives and methodology of the research, how the research will be carried out, my role as a co-coder, and how to assist in co-coding the interview transcripts;
2. I have also agreed with the researcher on the following:
 - i. Not to share the raw data of the transcribed interviews co-coded with anyone;
 - ii. To protect the confidentiality of the participants and organisation and maintain their anonymity;
 - iii. Not to reveal the identity of participants publicly even if they are identifiable; and
 - vi. To maintain the filenames given to the participants instead of using their names during the co-coding period.

I hereby, consent to this confidentiality agreement between me and the researcher.

Signature of co-coder:



Date: 15th May, 2018

Signature of researcher:



Date: 15th May, 2018

APPENDIX J: Turnitin digital receipt

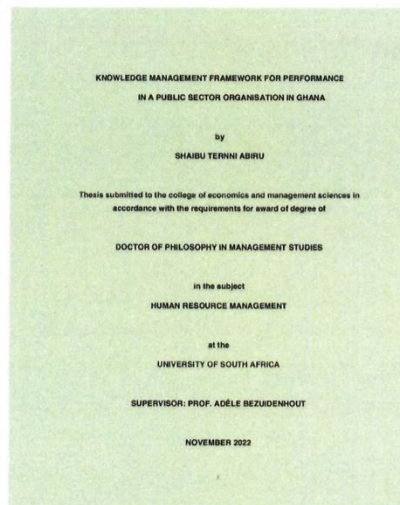


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