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SHARING OF TACIT KNOWLEDGE AMONG STAFF OF SELECTED FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The paper focused on sharing of tacit knowledge amongst staff of selected Federal University Libraries in North-East, Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was guided by three (3) objectives and three (3) research questions. Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The response rate for the senior staff indicated one hundred and four 104 representing (58%) while that of the junior staff is fifty eight 58 representing (33%). The overall response rate is one hundred and sixty two 162 representing (91%), while twelve 12 (7%) and four 4 (2%) totaling to sixteen 16 representing (9%) were the non-response rate. Therefore, the response rate of 162 (91%) is considered to be adequate enough for data analysis for the study. Data collected were presented in tables and frequency counts and percentage were used to analyzed the populations while mean score was used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study concluded that, the strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge as well as the level of tacit knowledge sharing amongst staff in the selected federal University libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria were strongly agreed by majority of the respondents with grand mean of 4.5 and 4.4 respectively and agreed by the respondents that, there are challenges associated with the sharing of tacit knowledge with grand mean of 4.0. The findings finally recommended that, the management of the university libraries and other stakeholders to formulate functional policy that will encourage librarians to share knowledge with their colleagues. They should also encourage their staff to attend workshops, conferences, in-house training, public lectures and inaugural lectures to acquire new knowledge and share with colleagues for better performance. Furthermore, the use of incentives should be introduced to motivate and encourage librarians in sharing their knowledge. Finally, trust should be built among colleagues to share the knowledge, employ competence senior staff and use their time judiciously to mentor the junior staff.

Keywords: Tacit Knowledge, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Management, Library Staff.

Introduction

In the present competitive world, we are in the knowledge and information economy which are based on creative thinking and sharing of ideas that would discourage the monopoly of knowledge. Sharing of tacit knowledge has become a key resources and very vital for the development and growth of any society or organization. It is important to note that, tacit knowledge is that type of knowledge which is difficult to visualize, write or transfer from one person to another. It is mostly shared through conversations, mentoring, storytelling, interaction, expertise and experiences accumulated over a long period of time. According to DIKW Pyramid, Wikipedia (2022) Tacit knowledge as a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, expert insight and grounded intuition that provides an environment and framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information for individual or organizational growth. Sharing of tacit knowledge can be achieved extensively through observation, personal contact, imitation or regular interaction over long period of time before it reflects on the individual or organizational development. Sharing of tacit knowledge is the process by which the knowledge possessed by individuals is converted in to a form that can be understood and used by other individuals, and which is beneficial for all (Wang & Now, 2010).

Sharing of tacit knowledge is the ultimate aim of knowledge management activity, because knowledge must be shared for the benefits of individuals or organizational growth. Ehijiagbone and Olatokun (2020) opine that for any organization or society to grow, knowledge (tacit and explicit) must be retained and shared because tacit knowledge in particular includes intangible products such as ideas and processes that are essential for sustainable competitive advantage. In this sense, knowledge management involved efficiently connecting those who know with those who need to know and converting their personal knowledge in to an organizational knowledge. Knowledge management is about bringing in to action the tacit knowledge of the entire personnel to achieve specific organizational objectives. Furthermore, Martelli, Bellin and Salvatori (2015) stated that knowledge management can either be explicit or tacit in dimension, where the explicit knowledge depicts the intangible, written or oral form and the tacit knowledge covers the employee's belief, values, know-how and experience to achieve individual or organizational objectives.

University libraries staff acquires professional skills, possess a wealth of institutional knowledge, provide essential resources and work alongside faculties and other University administrators in realizing the University visions and missions. University libraries staff comprises experienced and inexperienced staff and within these categories of staff, there exist stocks of knowledge that certainly vary from individuals to individuals. These necessitate the need to manage, articulate and share this knowledge. Akram, et al (2018) are of the view that many organizations have experienced an eye opener on the prominence of utilizing knowledge sharing in order to be competitive through a creative and innovative operation, and this has moved the emphasis of most organization to a knowledge based system.

Statement of the Problem

Regardless of the numerous advantages of sharing tacit knowledge among University libraries staff which includes; addressing knowledge gap for more productivity, help them to learn how to communicate effectively, assist them in valuing other people's opinions or perspectives and improving employees understanding on how to respond to their clients need appropriately. Susan (2015) concluded that many people (employees) are not familiar with tacit knowledge sharing and worst still they do not even understand the concept. She further stated that, although sharing of tacit knowledge plays a more crucial role in organizational performance than explicit knowledge, yet people pay little attention to it. For that reason, University Libraries staff in some selected Federal Universities in North-Eastern Nigeria seems not exploiting this relevance in order to improve their performances in their work place, this, therefore, become the major reason why the researcher intended to find out about sharing of tacit knowledge amongst staff in some selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge amongst staff in the selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria?
2. What are the extents of sharing tacit knowledge amongst staff in the selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges associated with the sharing of tacit knowledge amongst staff in the selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

The major objective of University organization is to impart knowledge through teaching, learning and research with the aid of University staff (University libraries staff); hence implementing knowledge sharing strategies could assist the University staff in proper utilization of the existing knowledge and also creating new knowledge which can improve and change individual performances and achieve the organizational competitiveness. Abbas (2015) in his study titled "Knowledge Management strategies and practices in Nigerian Agricultural research institute", revealed that the strategies used by the respondent with community of practice. 134(62.6%) was available, while 80(37.4%) was not available; personal network 128(59.8%) said it was available, and 86(40.2%) claimed it was not available; document management system 162(75.7%) believed was available, while 52(24.3%) said it was available; expert system 130(60.7%) said it was available; 84(39.3%) said it was not available; organizational practice and routine 167(78.0%) agreed was available, while 47(22.0%) said was not available. The findings further shows that, training 197(92.1%) of the respondent believed was available, 17(7.9%) had the option that it was not available; informal network 128(59.8%) claimed was available, while 86(40.2%) said it was not available; groupware 53(24.8%) acknowledge was available, while 161(75.2%) believed was not available; internet and magazines 166(77.6%) claimed was available, while 48(22.4%) stated it was not available in their

institution.

Many scholars have stressed the value and importance of sharing tacit knowledge in an organization despite clear evidence that employees who are opportune to have acquired different on the job training and experiences from their senior colleagues produce higher quality services to meet their organizational objectives. Cyr and choo (2010) agreed that sharing of tacit knowledge among employees create many benefits for an organization and some of them are; allowing the organization to build on previous knowledge and experience, responding to problem more quickly, developing new ideas, fostering innovation, understanding students need, and building competencies among the staff. Tacit knowledge is on the job experiences, skills, expertise, best practices, values and traditions acquired or captured from experienced colleagues in order to meet or improve organizational objectives. Accordingly, Mohajan (2016) affirmed that tacit knowledge (TK) is a dynamic process as it depends on individuals' attributes and social relationships as experiences, expertise and values captured on the job over a period of time and seems more appropriate for improving organizational mission. Therefore, Sharing and transferring of tacit knowledge is essential for the local and global economic development of an organization. He further stated that, in the 21st century, sharing of tacit knowledge becomes an important asset and should be emphasized for achieving organizational objectives.

Furthermore, there are also other strategies through which sharing of tacit knowledge can take place among the University libraries staff which include; education, mentorship, employees storytelling, apprenticeship, innovations, meetings, Job rotation, on the job training, observation and imitation which make the staff to acquire new skills, experiences and expertise for achieving organizational competitions. According to Caulier (2020) organizations can provide critical sharing of tacit knowledge through innovation, good leadership, intuition, body language, capturing employees stories and encouraging social interaction which will ultimately improves personal expertise and experiences, increase employees productivity, competitive advantages, increase knowledge capital and improved internal communication for achieving organizational objectives.

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The researcher gathered data using online self-designed questionnaire from the selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria namely. Results were presented in tables and frequency counts and percentage were used to analyzed the populations while mean score was used to answer the research questions.

Table 1: Distribution of the Target Population in the University Libraries

S/N	Name of University Libraries	Designation		
		Senior Staff	**Junior Staff**	**Total**
1	Federal University Gashua Library, Yobe State	26	17	43
2	Federal University Kashere Library, Gombe State	30	38	68
3	Professor Abubakar Adamu Rasheed Library, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State	30	4	34
4	Nigerian Army University Library Biu, Borno State	30	3	33
Total:		**116**	**62**	**178**

Sources: Staff list of the Federal University Libraries, 2024

Table 1 show the target population for this study that senior staff with a total of one hundred and sixteen (116) respondents while the junior staff has a total of sixty two (62) respondent, all together totaling to one hundred and seventy eight (178).

Results, Data Analysis and Interpretation

The response rate for the senior staff indicated one hundred and four 104 representing (58%) while that of the junior staff is fifty eight 58 representing (33%). The overall response rate is one hundred and sixty two 162 representing (91%), while twelve 12 (7%) and four 4 (2%) totaling to sixteen 16 representing (9%) were the non-response rate. Therefore, the response rate of 162 (91%) is considered to be adequate enough for data analysis for the study.

Table 2: Distribution of Demographic Information of the Respondents

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Male	151	93
Female	11	7
Total	**162**	**100**
Highest Qualification		
SSCE/Diploma	43	27%
HND/ND	18	11%
Degree	78	48%
Master	21	13%
Ph.D	2	1%
Total	**162**	**100%**
Years of working experience		
1-10	128	79%
11-20	23	14%
21-30	11	7%
31-40	-	-
41-Above	-	-
Total	**162**	**100**

Table 2 shows the gender, years of working experience and highest qualification of the respondents. The table reveals that male respondents were 151 (93%) and female are 11 (7%), this means male respondent has the highest number with 151 (93%) compared to that of female. The highest qualification of the respondents revealed that SSCE/Diploma has 43 (27%), HND/ND 18 (11%), Degree 79 (48%), Master 21 (13%) and Ph.D with 2 (1%), finally, respondents with Degree 79 (48%) has the highest number. Furthermore, the years of working experience of the respondents revealed that 1-10 has 128 (79%), 11-20 has 23 (14%) and 21-30 has 11 (7%), therefore, the years of working experience of 1-10 has 128 (79%) has the highest number.

Table 3: Strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge among staff in the selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge	N	SA	A	SD	D	NU	Mean
1	Job Rotation	162	109(67%)	48(30%)	-	-	5(3%)	5.0
2	Leveraging Retires		86(53%)	63(39%)	5(3%)	6(4%)	2(1%)	4.4
3	Face to Face Meeting		119(73%)	43(27%)	-	-	-	5.0
4	Mentoring		104(64%)	47(29%)	-	-	11(7%)	4.4
5	Social Media Groups		134(83%)	28(17%)	-	-	-	5.0
6	Phone Calls		148(91%)	14(9%)	-	-	-	5.0
7	Story Telling		53(33%)	88(54%)	7(4%)	14(9%)	-	4.1
8	Workshops		106(65%)	56(35%)	-	-	-	5.0
9	In-House Training		62(38%)	83(51%)	9(6%)	8(5%)	-	4.2
10	Public Lectures		43(26%)	113(70%)	-	-	6(4%)	4.2
11	Inaugural Lectures		31(19%)	117(72%)	6(4%)	5(3%)	3(2%)	4.0
12	Paper Presentations		42(26%)	103(63%)	3(2%)	6(4%)	8(5%)	4.0
Grand Mean:					**4.5**			

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, SD - Strongly Disagree, D - Disagree, NU - Not Utilize

From table 3, the **strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge** as listed in the table and those that identified job rotation, face to face meeting, social media groups, phone calls and workshops had mean scores of 5.0. Leveraging retires and mentoring had mean scores of 4.4. Also, story-telling had a mean score 4.1. Furthermore, in-House training and public lectures had mean scores of 4.2 while inaugural lectures and paper presentations had mean scores of 4.0 as identified by the respondents. Conclusively, the grand mean of 4.5 shows that the strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge amongst staff in the selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria as strongly agreed by majority of the respondents.

In a study conducted by Anna and Puspitasari (2013) on knowledge sharing in

libraries: A case study of knowledge sharing strategies in Indonesian University Libraries is in agreement with the above research that revealed the largest proportion of the respondents 140 (38.6%) indicated that they share knowledge through verbal discussions. 90 (24.9%) respondents pointed out that they share knowledge during staff meetings while 85(23.5) indicated that they share knowledge in seminars and workshops. Mentoring was used by 37(10.1%) of the respondents to share knowledge. However, the least used method was the community of practice as it was only used by 10 (2.8%) respondents while story telling was not used at all.

Furthermore, Oluwatoyin, Charity and John (2021) conducted a study on knowledge sharing attitudes of library and information science professionals in Nigeria on the avenue through which LIS professionals in Nigeria shared knowledge agreed with the above research that 69(73.4%) of the respondents used conferences/Seminars, Face-to-face 66(70.2%), social Media avenue 64 (68.1%), Workshops 64(60.6%). Fewer persons used avenues such as Collaborative research 3(3.2%) and Departmental Meetings 2(2.1%).

Table 4: The Level of Tacit Knowledge Sharing Amongst Staff in the Selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Level of Tacit Knowledge Sharing	N	VH	H	M	VL	L	Mea
1	I share knowledge about librarianship		128(79%)	34(21%)	-	-	-	5.0
2	I share knowledge about Library users		136(84%)	17(10%)	-	-	9(6%)	5.0
3	I share knowledge about reference services		97(60%)	43(27%)	-		17(10%)	4.2
4	I share knowledge about serials usage		64(39%)	92(57%)	-	-	6(4%)	4.3
5	I share knowledge on library automation		36(22%)	87(54%)	-	7(4%)	32(20%)	4.0
6	I share knowledge on user education		143(88%)	16(10%)	-	-	3(2%)	5.0
7	I share knowledge on library marketing through social media	162	66(41%)	94(58%)	-	-	2(1%)	4.4
8	I share knowledge on Current awareness services		113(70%)	49(30%)	-	-		5.0
9	I share knowledge on Selective dissemination of information		48(30%)	93(57%)	-	-	21(13%)	4.0
10	I share knowledge on Acquisition of library materials		124(76%)	21(13%)	14(9%)	-	3(2%)	5.0
11	I share knowledge about classification and cataloguing of library materials		32(20%)	69(43%)	36(22%)	9(5%)	16(10%)	4.0
12	I share knowledge on Interlibrary loan services		18(11%)	36(22%)	21(13%)	-	87(54%)	2.4
Grand Mean:					**4.4**			

Key: VH - Very High, H - High, M - Moderate, VL - Very Low, L – Low

Table 4 shows the level of tacit knowledge sharing amongst staff with **and responses** as; i share knowledge about librarianship, i share knowledge about Library users, i share knowledge on user education, i share knowledge on Current awareness services and i share knowledge on Acquisition of library materials with means scores of 5.0. I share knowledge about reference services with a mean score of 4.2. I share knowledge about serials usage with a mean score of 4.3. I share knowledge on library marketing through social media with a mean score of 4.4. Furthermore, other respondents maintained that they share knowledge on library automation, knowledge on Selective dissemination of information and also share knowledge about classification and cataloguing of library materials with means scores of 4.0 and finally some respondents share knowledge on Interlibrary loan services with a mean score of 2.4. Generally, the grand mean of 4.4 implies that the level of tacit knowledge sharing amongst staff in the selected federal University libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria as strongly agreed by majority of the respondents.

A study conducted by Abuakar and Kabir (2022)on knowledge sharing practices and service delivery by professional librarians in Ahmadu Bello University Library, ZARIA confirmed with the above research that sharing of knowledge on database search (Mean=4.49, SD=.803), cataloguing/classification (Mean=4.32, SD=.889), reference services (Mean=4.31, SD=.940), user education (Mean=4.30, SD=.885), library marketing through social media (Mean=4.26, SD=1.067), current awareness services (Mean=4.21, SD=.913), library automation (Mean=4.21, SD=.972) and reader services (Mean=4.15, SD=1.018), followed by librarians who agreed that they use seminars/workshops (Mean=4.27, SD=.943), mentoring (Mean=3.66, SD=1.064) and staff meeting (Mean=3.53, SD=1.257) as knowledge sharing methods.

Furthermore, Muchaonyerwa and Mutula (2017) conducted a similar study on knowledge-sharing strategies among library staff at selected university libraries s in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Which concur with the above findings and that 31 (33.3%) of respondents revealed they shared codified knowledge of classification and cataloguing skills about library materials with colleagues. Overall, the survey findings revealed that library staff at university libraries surveyed were unwilling to share their skills and expertise, as reflected by 40 (40.0%) of the respondents who disagreed that they share knowledge and expertise using online databases with a mean score of 2.93. The findings revealed mean score values on the types of knowledge shared ranging from 2.57 to 3, indicating unwillingness of staff to share their knowledge. Nevertheless, other responses revealed that the highest percentage, 48 (47.1%), of the respondents acquired and shared new knowledge through seminars, workshops, conferences and networking. However, the information obtained from both the survey questionnaire and the interview seemed not to agree that knowledge that was acquired was subsequently shared among staff. A total of 44 (44.4%) of the respondents either agreed or disagreed that knowledge acquired was subsequently shared. Fewer than half of the respondents, 37 (37.4%), with an average mean score of 3.23, were positive that the knowledge generated and acquired within their organization was shared amongst staff.

Table 5: The Challenges Associated with the Sharing of Tacit Knowledge among Staff in the Selected Federal University Libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria

S/N	Challenges Associated with The Sharing of Tacit Knowledge	N	SA	A	SD	D	NU	Mean
1	Lack of interaction among the staff		106(65%	43(27%)	-	13(8%)	-	4.5
2	Lack of formal/informal activities to share the knowledge		47(29%)	104(64%)	-	11(7%)		4.2
3	Lack of motivation to share the knowledge		94(58%)	38(23%)	14(9%)	16(10 %)		4.3
4	General lack of trust among colleagues to sha re the knowledge		21(13%)	27(17%)	43(26 %)	71(44 %)		3.0
5	Retirement of highly skilled workers		126(78%	32(20%)		4(2%)		5.0
6	Lack of interest among the Staff		107(66%	33(20%)	13(8%)	9(6%)		4.5
7	Lack of competence of the senior staff	162	24(15%)	36(22%)	41(25 %)	55(34 %)	6(4%	3.1
8	Time factor		31(19%)	53(33%)	16(10 %)	62(38 %)		3.3
9	Lack of commitment among the staff		37(23%)	106(65%		17(12 %)		4.0
10	Lack of ICT facilities to share the knowledge		43(26%)	81(50%)	6(4%)	32(20 %)		4.0
11	Personal attitude of the educators		36(22%)	92(57%)	34(21 %)			4.0
12	Inability to connect with other staff		54(33%)	86(53%)		22(14 %)		4.1
Grand Mean:				**4.0**				

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, SD - Strongly Disagree, D - Disagree, NU - Not Utilize

Table 5 discusses challenges associated with sharing of tacit knowledge amongst staff with the following responses; lack of interaction among the staff and lack of interest among the Staff with means scores of 4.5 while lack of formal/informal activities to share the knowledge with a mean score of 4.2. Other respondents affirmed lack of motivation to share the knowledge with a mean score of 4.3. General lack of trust among colleagues to share the knowledge is another challenge and was rated the lowest with a mean score of 3.0. Retirement of highly skilled workers was rated highest challenge in regards to sharing of tacit knowledge amongst the staff with a mean score of 5.0. Another challenge was lack of competence of the senior staff with a mean score of 3.1 and Time factor with a mean score of 3.3. Furthermore, some respondents also identified lack of commitment among the staff, lack of ICT facilities to share the knowledge and personal attitude of the educators with means scores of 4.0 and finally inability to connect with other staff with a mean score of 4.1. Therefore, the grand mean of 4.0 agreed by majority of the respondents that, there are challenges associated with the sharing of tacit knowledge amongst staff in the selected federal University libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria.

A similar research conducted by Quadri and Adegbore (2023) on "factors hindering knowledge sharing practices among librarians in Nigerian federal university libraries: a study of UTAUT". Affirmed the above study that respondents' highest ranked factor that affects knowledge sharing is organizational factors with highest mean of 21.8 while individual factor yielded the mean of 18.97 and technological factors yielded 14.94. The implication of this is that organizational factors should be focused in order to further have the issues surrounding it improved. The study further explained that these three factors were identified to hinder knowledge sharing practices among the librarians in South-West federal university libraries and all of them were found to have positive influence on knowledge sharing practices. The study concluded that of all the identified factors responsible for knowledge sharing practices among librarians, organizational factor received the highest ranked. The qualitative also compliment the quantitative data by confirming that factors such as inadequate funding, motivation and incentives, reward system, trust and willingness factor, effective commitment as well as awareness were identified as factors influencing knowledge sharing practices among the librarians in Southwest Nigeria.

This research is closely related to that of Okoye et al. (2022) on relevance and strategies for knowledge sharing and growth among library and information sciences educators: A case of Selected institutions in South-East Nigeria which highlight the challenges encountered in knowledge sharing among the educators and identified funds as one of the major problem with a mean score 3.2. "Lack of interest among educators" and "Lack of competence" had mean scores of 2.6 and 2.7 respectively. The educators that stated lack of sponsorship and lack of internet connectivity had mean score of 3.6 each. Those that are of the opinion that time factor and inability to connect and network with other educators has mean score of 3.0 each. "Lack of commitment among the educators" "Poor power supply" and lack of support from parent institution and stakeholders had mean scores of 2.3, 3.1 & 2.8 respectively. Some educators pointed ICT incompetence

among the challenges with a mean score of 2.6 and some stated lack of ICT facilities to share knowledge (3.9) and also personal attitude has been identified (2.9) as a challenge to knowledge sharing among the library and Information science educators. The grand total score of the challenges on knowledge sharing is 3.0 meaning that their responses are in agreement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study confirmed that, the strategies adopted for sharing tacit knowledge as well as the level of tacit knowledge sharing amongst staff were strongly agreed by majority of the respondents with grand mean of 4.5 and 4.4 respectively and agreed by the respondents that, there are challenges associated with the sharing of tacit knowledge with grand mean of 4.0 in the selected federal University libraries in North-Eastern Nigeria.

The study recommended that the libraries management and other stakeholders should formulate functional policy that will encourage librarians to share t knowledge with their colleagues. The study finds it worthy that the management of the University libraries should encourage their staff to attend workshops, conferences, in-house training, public lectures and inaugural lectures to acquire new knowledge to share with colleagues for better performance. Furthermore, the use of incentives should be introduced to motivate librarians in sharing their knowledge. Finally, libraries management should build trust among colleagues to share the knowledge, employ competence senior staff and use their time judiciously to mentor the junior staff.

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