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KNOWLEDGE SHARING PLATFORMS EMPLOYED BY ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN KADUNA STATE

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Abstract
Reliable knowledge sharing platforms plays an important role on simplifying knowledge sharing practices of organizations such as university libraries. Hence, it has been viewed as the main enabler of knowledge sharing due to the changing nature of the universe. However, this research sought answers to the following questions: To what extent do academic librarians share knowledge in the university libraries in Kaduna state, What are the knowledge sharing platforms employed by academic librarians in the university libraries under study and what are the inhibitors to employing knowledge sharing platforms among academic librarians in the university libraries under study ?. The study

adopted the quantitative research approach which emanates from the positivists school of thought. The target population of the study was focused on the entire population of 172 academic librarians of the four (4) university libraries in Kaduna state using the total enumeration sampling scale. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire and the data collected was analyzed using Statistical Product Service Solution (SPSS). However, the findings of the study revealed that: There is a high extent to which knowledge sharing is been practiced by the respondents, workshop, seminar, conferences, and on the job training were the major platforms employed by academic librarians for knowledge sharing and insufficient funds as the major inhibitor to employing reliable knowledge sharing platforms among academic librarians in the university libraries. Hence, it is concluded that a greater percentage of the respondents absolutely employ reliable platforms for knowledge sharing. Hence, the researcher recommends that the library management should be sending academic librarians to workshops, seminars and conferences on knowledge sharing topics as this would positively reshape their mindset which would in turn slice away so many inhibitors to employing reliable knowledge sharing platforms.

Keywords: *Knowledge sharing, Knowledge sharing platforms, Academic librarians, University libraries, Kaduna state.*

Introduction

Knowledge has become a competitive factor that provides an essential cause for both individual and organizational success. Moreover, in our today's rapidly dynamic global economy and society, adoption of sound platform for knowledge sharing has been viewed as a vibrant force and a critical source of success and value creation for organizations of all types that need to be managed diligently. Hence, knowledge sharing platforms refers to the medium or process of making knowledge available to others by exchanging it among organizational members in order for them to collaborate on organizational tasks, solve problems or implement ideas (Flinchbaugh and Chadwick, 2016). As such, academic librarians and information workers must maintain a smooth and reliable platform for knowledge sharing and information transfer in as much as they want to make impact profoundly on the mode of providing adequate and reliable information services to the clienteles.

Statement of the Problem

Sound and reliable knowledge sharing platforms are taken by many organizations to be a panacea for boosting innovation and improving productivity. It offers academic librarians the opportunity to learn and improve effectively, both for themselves and their parent institutions. As such, the inability

of organizations such as libraries to actively adopt sound and reliable knowledge sharing platforms has been identified as one of the critical contributing factor for sluggish service delivery within such organization. Due to this reason, preliminary investigations by the researcher (March, 2021) has shown that academic librarians in universities in Kaduna state are seems not actively adopting reliable knowledge sharing platforms thereby impeding knowledge innovation and technology diffusion for effective service delivery in the libraries. Hence, there is the need to study the knowledge sharing platforms adopted in organizations such as the library.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate the knowledge sharing platforms employed by academic librarians in university libraries in Kaduna state. While, the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the extent to which academic librarians share knowledge in the university libraries in Kaduna state.
2. To examine the knowledge sharing platforms employed by academic librarians in the university libraries in Kaduna state.
3. To identify the inhibitors to employing knowledge sharing platforms among academic librarians in the university libraries in Kaduna state.

Review of Related Literature

Knowledge Sharing Practices among Academic Librarians

Knowledge sharing is very crucial for the realization of organizational success. Al-Hawamdeh (2015) sees knowledge sharing practices in a broader perspective as the communication of all types of knowledge including explicit knowledge (information, know-how and know-who) and tacit knowledge (skills and competency). A study conducted by Islam (2018) established that, the capability of sharing knowledge among academic librarians enhances research work significantly; individuals are stimulated to share knowledge to enhance teaching and learning activities. Simply, knowledge sharing practices denotes to the exchange of knowledge between at least two parties in a reciprocal process allowing reshaping and sense-making of the knowledge in a new context. That is to say, it is the willingness of individuals (academic librarians) in an organization (academic libraries) to share whatever they have or have created for improving skills and knowledge which in turn increase their efficiency and productivity.

Knowledge Sharing Platforms Employed by Academic Librarians

Today, academic libraries, especially in western countries are increasingly

adopting reliable knowledge management platforms to remain competitive in the knowledge based economy (KBE). A platform is a medium for transferring knowledge or information from one person to another for achieving organizational goals and objectives. Therefore, knowledge sharing platforms refers to the channels which need to be adopted for sharing knowledge from one unit to the other to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Holsapple and Joshi, 2015). However, the study of Awodoyin, Osisanwo, Adetoro and Adeyemo (2016) who investigate knowledge sharing behavior of librarians in selected academic libraries in Nigeria and their findings reveal that librarians share knowledge using face-to-face interaction, mobile phones, email and newsletters which enhances innovation, efficiency, effectiveness and emotional relief.

Moreover, the major purpose of academic libraries is to leverage the available knowledge more efficiently and effectively. In this case, implementing reliable KS platforms could assist in transforming university libraries into knowledge sharing organizations (Maponya, 2014).

Inhibitors to Employing Knowledge Sharing Platforms among Academic Librarians

Knowledge sharing may sometimes be difficult due to multiple challenging factors that influence individuals to share their knowledge. Dewah and Mutula (2018) in their study of knowledge retention strategies in public sector organization in sub-Saharan Africa, establish several inhibitors to managing knowledge assets that included lack of appropriate technology; limited shortage of skills; lack of incentives or rewards to share knowledge; and limited commitment from senior management. However, Conboy and Morgan (2015) posit that individual fears of exposing their weaknesses through meetings and publications make them feel afraid to share knowledge. Thus, Phung (2016) asserts that a lack of trust among team members is the biggest barrier impeding team members from sharing knowledge with each other. Basically, inhibitors to knowledge sharing arise from a combination of individual factors such as: personal gains, awareness, lack of time, knowledge hoarding, poor communication skills, lack of trust and poor personal relationships, organizational factors such as: poor organizational culture, poor organizational structure, lack of support from management, and lack of effective communication between staff and management and technological factors such as: Lack of skilled staff to use ICT facilities for knowledge sharing and lack of technological infrastructure (Assefa, 2016).

Research Methodology

This study adopted quantitative research approach which emanates from the positivist school of thought which emphasizes on quantification in the collection and analysis of data in which such data can be expressed in numbers, percentages and tables (Tracy and Schutt, 2017). The research setting for this study were Ahmadu Bello University library (ABU) Zaria, Nigerian Defense Academy library (NDA) Kaduna, The Air Force Institute of Technology library (AFIT) Kaduna also known as the Nigerian Air Force University, and Kaduna State University Library (KASU). The total enumeration sampling scale was adopted to administer questionnaires to 172 academic librarians and data collected was analyzed using Statistical Product Service Solution (SPSS).

Table 1.1 The population of the study is presented in the table below

Name of University	Expected Respondent (N=172)	Actual Respondents (N=144)	Percentages
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY (ABU), ZARIA	115	98	85.2%
NIGERIAN DEFENSE ACADEMY (NDA), KADUNA	8	5	62.5%
AIRFORCE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (AFIT), KADUNA	34	26	76.4%
KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY (KASU), KADUNA	15	15	100%
TOTAL	172	144	83.7%

Data Presentation and Interpretation

Extent of Knowledge Sharing Practice

The section sought to discover the knowledge sharing practice of the academic librarians by establishing the extent to which knowledge sharing is been practiced in the university libraries.

Table 1.2 Extent of Knowledge Sharing Practice.

S/N	Extent to which knowledge sharing is been practiced in the University Libraries	High	Low
15	Knowledge sharing practices	124 (86.1%)	87 (13.9%)

Table 1.2 depicts that 124 (86.1%) of the respondents agree that there is high extent

to which knowledge sharing is been practiced in the libraries while 87 (13.9%) of the respondents agree that there is low extent to which knowledge sharing is been practiced in the libraries.

Table 1.3 Knowledge Sharing Platforms

S/N	Knowledge Sharing Platforms Employed by Academic Librarians in the University Libraries	Agree	Disagree
1	Story telling	40 (28.5%)	100 (71.5%)
2	Social networks	123 (86.5%)	19 (13.5%)
3	Job rotation	122 (86.5%)	19 (13.5%)
4	Knowledge repositories	118 (82.6%)	25 (17.5%)
5	Communities of practice	101 (71.9%)	39 (28.1%)
6	Staff training/Human resources development	118 (85.2%)	21 (14.8%)
7	Performance evaluation and/ Appraisal strategy	138 (83.3%)	24 (16.7%)
8	Mentorship programs	133 (92.3%)	11 (7.7%)
9	Succession planning	109 (77.2%)	32 (22.8%)
10	Workshop, seminar, conferences, and on the job training	139 (96.5%)	5 (3.5%)

Table 1.3 shows the platforms used for knowledge sharing by the respondents. As indicated in the table, 40 (28.5%), 123 (86.6%), 122 (86.5%), 118 (82.6%), 101 (71.9%), 118 (85.2%), 138 (83.3%), 133 (92.3%), 109 (77.2%) and 139 (96.5%) of the respondents agree that they share knowledge through storytelling, social networks, job rotation, knowledge repositories, communities of practice, s*taff training/human resources development,* p**erformance evaluation and/ appraisal strategy, m***entorship programs,* s*uccession planning, workshop, seminar, conferences, and on the job training. While,* 100 (71.5%), 19 (13.5%), 19 (13.5%), 25 (17.5%), 39 (28.1%), 21 (14.8%), 24 (16.7%), 11 (7.7%), 32 (22.8%), and 5 (3.5%) of the respondents disagree that they share knowledge through that they share knowledge through storytelling, social networks, job rotation, knowledge repositories, communities of practice, s*taff training/human resources development,* p**erformance evaluation and/ appraisal strategy, m***entorship programs,* s*uccession planning, workshop, seminar, conferences, and on the job training.*

Inhibitors to Employing Knowledge Sharing Platforms among Academic Librarians in the University Libraries

This section identified the inhibitors to knowledge sharing among

librarians in Universities in Kaduna State, as encapsulated in the Table below:

Table 1.4: Inhibitors to Employing Knowledge Sharing Platforms

S/N	Inhibitors to Employing Knowledge Sharing Platforms among Academic Librarians in the University Libraries	Agree	Disagree
1	Insufficient funds	115 (79.55%)	29 (20.45%)
2	Personal gains	93 (60.25%)	51 (35.35%)
3	Lack of trust	96 (66.4%)	48 (24.3%)
4	Knowledge hoarding	89 (61.5%)	55 (38.5%)
5	Poor personal relationships	102 (71.05%)	41 (29.5%)
6	Lack of time	80 (55.2%)	64 (47.15%)
7	Poor communication skills	86 (60.2%)	57 (39.9%)
8	Lack of awareness to share knowledge	83 (57.75%)	61 (42.35%)
9	Lack of skilled staff to use ICT facilities for knowledge sharing	91 (62.8%)	53 (37.2%)
10	Lack of technological infrastructure	94 (65.35%)	50 (34.75%)
11	Lack of motivation/support from management	106 (74.65%)	36 (25.45%)
12	Poor organizational culture	99 (68.75%)	45 (31.25%)
13	Poor organization structure	90 (62.2%)	54 (37.9%)
14	Lack of effective communication between staff and management	108 (75.05%)	36 (24.95%)

Table 1.4 shows the inhibitors to employing knowledge sharing platforms among academic librarians. As indicated in the table, 115 (79.55%), 93 (60.25%), 96 (66.4%), 89 (61.5%), 102 (71.05%), 80 (55.2%), 86 (60.2%), 83 (57.75%), 91 (62.8%), 94 (65.35%), 106 (74.65%), 99 (68.75%), 90 (62.2%) and 108 (75.05%). Majority of the respondents agree that knowledge sharing is inhibited by insufficient funds, personal gains, lack of trust, knowledge hoarding, poor personal relationships, lack of time, poor communication skills, lack of awareness to share knowledge, lack of skilled staff to use ICT facilities for knowledge sharing, by lack of technological infrastructure, lack of motivation/support from management, poor organizational culture, poor organization structure and lack of effective communication between staff and management. While 29 (20.45%), 51 (35.35%),

48 (24.3%), 55 (38.5%), 41 (29.5%), 64 (47.15%), 57 (39.9%), 61 (42.35%), 53 (37.2%), 50 (34.75%), 36 (25.45%), 45 (31.25%), 54 (37.9%) and 36 (24.95%) of the respondents disagree that employing knowledge sharing platform is inhibited by insufficient funds, personal gains, lack of trust, knowledge hoarding, poor personal relationships, lack of time, poor communication skills, lack of awareness to share knowledge, lack of skilled staff to use ICT facilities for knowledge sharing, by lack of technological infrastructure, lack of motivation/support from management, poor organizational culture, poor organization structure and lack of effective communication between staff and management.

Discussion of Study Findings

Extent to which Academic Librarians Practice Knowledge Sharing in the University Libraries

Data collected on the extent to which academic librarians practice knowledge sharing in the university libraries under study using descriptive statistics shows that majority of the respondents' have high level of knowledge sharing practice. Hence, this study findings also confirm the study on knowledge sharing among librarians in university libraries in Tanzania by Cecelia (2015) who found out that knowledge sharing is been practiced at a an average level due to the librarians positive perception towards knowledge sharing. Similarly, the current study confirms the findings of Chia (2018) on KM practices among academic staff in National Tsing Hua university in Taiwan who reveals that there is high level of KM practices among academic staff due to sound organizational structure and adequate ICT facilities for knowledge sharing.

Knowledge Sharing Platforms Employed by Academic Librarians in the University Libraries

Data collected on knowledge sharing platforms employed by academic librarians in the university libraries under study using descriptive statistics show that *workshop, seminar, conferences, and on the job training,* **performance evaluation and/ appraisal strategy**, *mentorship programs and social networks* were the major platforms used for knowledge sharing among the respondents. Hence, the findings of this study correspond to the study of Abbas (2017) who investigate the phenomenon of knowledge sharing among academic staff in four Nigerian universities using quantitative approach and reveals the evidence of knowledge sharing among academics in the four universities through workshops, seminars and conferences. Similarly, this study findings corresponds with the study of Lee (2017) in China who found that in the 21st century, university libraries around the world are putting in place knowledge sharing approaches, such as social

gathering places like coffee shops, computer labs and Web 2.0 technologies, to complement their services, to support and build a more relaxed atmosphere which encourages employees to exchange and share knowledge among their peers.

Inhibitors to Employing Knowledge Sharing Platforms among Academic Librarians in the University Libraries

Findings from the inhibitors to employing knowledge sharing platforms among academic librarians show that insufficient funds, lack of effective communication between staff and management and lack of motivation/support from management are the major inhibitors to employing knowledge sharing platforms. Hence, the findings of this study collaborate with the study of Wamundila and Ngulube (2015) on enhancing knowledge retention in higher education in Zambia who found that a number of gaps existed in the current knowledge sharing practices at the University of Zambia (UNZA), they discovered that knowledge loss arising from individual, organizational and technological factors such as retirements and resignations, lack of trust, poor organizational structure, lack of technological infrastructure and lack of effective communication between staff and management would possibly be a risk to university operations. Similarly, the findings of this study collaborate with the study of Mushi (2019) who investigated factors hindering knowledge sharing in public university libraries in Tanzania and found that the factors include inflexible organizational structures, lack of knowledge sharing culture and strategies and individual and technological factors.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that greater percentage of the respondents employ various platforms for knowledge sharing practices. It was also concluded that the study respondents highly practice knowledge sharing and finally, it was concluded that all the inhibitors to knowledge sharing highlighted by the researcher were agreed on. However, despite the positive outcome of the study, there is the need to further motivate academic librarians to explore modern platforms for knowledge sharing practices as this would motivate and enhance their performance for effective service delivery which is the primary objective of librarianship.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions the following recommendations are made:-

1. The study recommends that there should be well packaged incentives to

academic librarians to motivate them on employing modern knowledge sharing platforms so as to enhance their delivery of high quality services.

2. The study recommends that the library management should create a more conducive atmosphere that would encourage smooth mutual relationship among academic librarians as this would enhance their knowledge sharing practice.
3. The study recommends that the library management should be sending academic librarians to workshops, seminars and conferences on knowledge sharing topics as this would positively reshape their mindset which would in turn slice away so many inhibitors to employing reliable knowledge sharing platforms.

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