

Determinant of Knowledge Sharing Behaviour Among Private University Academics in Kwara State

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Abstract

The study investigated the determinant of knowledge sharing behaviour among private university academics in Kwara State. The study respondents comprise of academics in all the private universities in Kwara State with a total population of 431 and a sample size of 207. A total of 117 participants completed the survey questionnaire giving a response rate of 57%. A stratified and simple random sampling techniques and a descriptive research design was adopted. The study reveals that availability of time has an influence on their knowledge sharing behaviour. In addition, the findings reveal that male lecturers are more willing to share knowledge more than their female counterparts. The study recommends that a practical knowledge sharing culture, platforms and facilities should be established by the university management in order to facilitate knowledge sharing among academics.

Keywords: *Academics, Information, Knowledge, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing behaviour,*

Introduction

Universities are the pinnacle of knowledge development and management. Knowledge is an intangible asset that can help an organization to create and maintain competitive advantages. Knowledge is the understanding gained through studies / experiences and it has a powerful influence which can lead to the prosperity of countries, organisations and institutions (Brouwer & Jansen, 2019). Knowledge management allows the use, creation, sharing and the managements of an organization's information and knowledge (Girard & Girard, 2015). Razak, Pangil, Zin, Yunus and Asnawi (2016) define Knowledge Sharing (KS) as a strategic approach for business to acquire competitive advantages. Based on this, knowledge as a major process of organizations must be shared within and across the

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organization, so as to be used efficiently and effectively as a competitive tool. Knowledge sharing is a set of individual behaviour involving sharing one's work-related knowledge and expertise with other members within an organization / institution (Ramayah, Yeap & Ignatius, 2014). It involves the exchange of personal experiences, expertise, ideas, perspectives and information with others and making information easily available by establishing connections or networks between lecturers/institutions/organization within a specific scheme or community (Adamseged & Hong, 2018).

An appropriate workplace can aid academics in the improvement of dedication to the organization, facilitating academics to predict the achievement of their needs, desires and expectations as interactions that develop between academics often times results from shared contact as well as an appropriate workplace that assist members to use their abilities, skills, efforts and experiences. Likewise, members may cultivate positive attitudes and behaviours when need for specific action is understood by them and also if desires and needs are likely to be accomplished, then members may be much eager and ready to accept goals and values of the firm. Hence, researchers and experts are concerned with ascertaining factors that determine academics knowledge sharing behaviour (Henttonen, Kianto & Ritala, 2016).

A review of the literature indicates that there is a deficiency of research ascertaining factors that influence knowledge sharing behaviour among academics in tertiary institutions, especially in private universities in Kwara State. Given the contextual nature of knowledge management strategies, future research is needed to understand knowledge sharing behaviour among academics in private universities in Kwara State and the factors that affect their willingness to share knowledge (Fullwood & Rowley, 2017).

Syed, Gul, Khan, Danish, Ui Haq, Sarwar, Azhar and Ahmed (2021) reported how knowledge management has an impact on the teacher's Knowledge sharing intention. The study concluded that Higher education institutions' learning environments provide an educational environment in which teachers learn and become more willing to share their knowledge with their colleagues and students. The organizational learning environments also provide a forum for employees to share their knowledge and experience. This research has clearly identified that there is a lack of empirical research that look into the relationships between knowledge sharing behaviour and knowledge sharing and particularly in private universities within Kwara State. In order to fill in this gap, this research has drawn up some objectives and it has the possibility to add up to the existing literature through evidence to be provided in this context. The results obtained from this study will make impact in addressing a major literature gap on the topic of knowledge

management practices in tertiary institutions and in particular private universities in Kwara State, as well as the knowledge sharing behaviour among academics in these institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the investigation of this research:

1. How do academics in private universities in Kwara State share knowledge?
2. What types of knowledge are shared among academics in private universities in Kwara State?
3. What are the motives private universities academics in Kwara State have for sharing knowledge?
4. What are the constraints to knowledge sharing among private universities academics in Kwara State?

Literature Review

In this age, knowledge is considered as one of the major resources of organizations together with land, labour and capital as it allows businesses to have competitive advantage (Fullwood, Rowley & Delbridge, 2013). Organizations acknowledge knowledge power and how effective knowledge management benefits organizations in many ways, including organization sustainability, improving performance and increasing productivity (Vanhala & Ritala, 2017). Knowledge can be found in different sources and it is also available in various forms such as documents, books, search engines, databases, repositories and people's mind. However, what is embedded in people's mind can also be seen through their behaviours, while actions is thought to be the most critical source of knowledge of them all. Although, knowledge is considered as an important resource for organizations, knowledge researchers e.g. academics in particular are the most important imparter of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge (Adriaenssen, Johannessen & Johannessen, 2016). A review of literature in knowledge management and information systems field shows the existence of many other definitions and viewpoints of knowledge. A popularly held view in information studies is one that uses the order of data, information and knowledge to describe knowledge characteristics (Alavi & Leidner, 2021).

Knowledge sharing, which is also known as knowledge transfer is the process of disseminating knowledge and this can be between persons, groups or organizations, using various communication mediums (Alavi & Leidner, 2021). KM processes are usually well explained as actions associated with knowledge creation, that improve organizational competitiveness (Sahibzada et al., 2020).

Despite the significance of the function of individual knowledge and the need for this knowledge to be shared successfully, relatively little empirical study explains the nature of individual knowledge in Nigerian universities and how academics in their work environment share their knowledge. In line with these developments, knowledge sharing among academics in Nigeria universities has been adversely hindered due to insufficient awareness about the significance of knowledge sharing in academic institutions and the lackadaisical attitude of some academics to the value of sharing knowledge with other academics (Lawal, Agboola, Aderibigbe, Owolabi & Bakare, 2014).

Connelly and Kelloway (2019) have identified some factors that influence individual's perception on knowledge sharing. These factors can be classified into two broad groups: the organizational factors and the individual factors. Organizational factors encompass individual's opinions about management support for knowledge sharing. Their views regarding organization's size, positive social interaction culture and technology that can enable knowledge sharing. Individual factors on the other hand include gender, age and organizational tenure. Management support for knowledge sharing and opinions of a positive social interaction culture were factors suggested by the research finding as the major predictors of a positive knowledge sharing culture. Positive knowledge sharing culture is negatively linked to organizational size because smaller organizations are more related with positive knowledge sharing culture.

Methodology

The research design used to carry out this research is the descriptive survey. This is considered applicable and appropriate as the research examined determinant of knowledge sharing behaviour among private university academics in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population for this study comprises of all academic staff including lecturers, professors, senior lecturers, assistant lecturers, researchers, graduate assistants and associates, who are currently working full time in Private Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The stratified sampling techniques was adopted in the selection of the four private universities used for this study, where each university represents a stratum while simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the academic staff. Slovin's Formula was used to determine the sample size. The formula is given below: $n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$; $n = 431 \div (1 + 431 * 0.05 * 0.05) = 207$; Therefore, the sample size for this study is 207 (Approximately). The instrument used for collecting data is questionnaire and it was administered to respondents in the four private universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The Instrument was validated and, the overall reliability

correlation coefficient was $r=0.69$, indicating that the instrument is quite dependable for collecting data in the study. The collected data was compiled and subjected to a thorough data analysis and Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) software version 23 as used for analyzing the data. Percentages and frequency counts were included in the descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Population and Sample

S/N	NAME OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES	POPULATION	SAMPLE
1	Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Kwara State	233	111
2	Al-Hikmah University, Adeta, Ilorin, Kwara State	150	72
3	Crown Hill University, Eyenkorin, Ilorin, Kwara State	30	15
4	Summit University, Offa, Kwara State	18	9
	TOTAL	431	207

Data Analysis

Demographic Information of Respondents

University distribution of respondents shows that 58 (49.6%) are from Landmark University, 38 (32.5%) are from Al-Hikmah University, 12 (10.3%) are from Crown-Hill University while 9 (7.7%) are from Summit University. Hence, majority of the respondents are from Landmark University. Gender distribution of respondents shows that 74 (63.2%) of the respondents are male while 43 (36.8%) are female. Thus, majority of the respondents are male. Also, none of the respondents is less than 24 years old. While 18 (15.4%) of the respondents are between 25-30 years old, 42 (35.9%) are between 31-40 years old, 35 (29.9%) are between 41-50 years old, 18 (15.4%) are between 51-60 years old, and 4 (3.4%) are between 61 and above. Hence, majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31-40 years old. Position distribution of respondents further reveals that 12 (10.3%) were professors, 4 (3.4%) are associate professors, 17 (14.5%) were senior lecturers, 26 (22.2%) are lecturers 1, 32 (27.4%) are lecturers 2, 19 (16.2%) are assistant lecturers, 6 (5.1%) are graduate assistants while 1 (0.9%) comprised of others. Thus, majority of the respondents are lecturers 2. Also, 61 (52.1%) had doctorate degrees 46 (39.3%) had masters, while 10 (8.5%) BA, BAED, or BSC bachelor degrees. Hence, majority of the respondents are PhD academics. Distribution of respondents years of working also shows that 10 (8.5%) have been working in the institution for less than a year, 44 (37.6%) have been working in the institution for 1-5 years, 44 (37.6%) have also been working in the institution for 6-10 years, 11 (9.4%) have been working in the institution for 11-15 years, 4 (3.4%) have been working in the institution for 16-20 years, 2 (1.7%) have been working in the institution for 21-25 years, 1 (0.9%) have been working in the institution for 26-30 years, while 1 (0.9%) have been working in

the institution for 30 years and above. Thus, majority of the respondents have been working in their various institutions for more than 5 years.

Research question 1: *How do academics in private universities in Kwara State share knowledge?*

Table 2: How Academics Share Knowledge

How academics share knowledge	SA		A		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I use e-mail to share knowledge with my co-lecturer	49	41.9	54	46.2	7	6.0	7	6.0
I use discussion forum (using tools like electronic bulletin board, chat room etc.) to share knowledge with my co- lecturer	24	20.5	51	43.6	31	26.5	11	9.4
I use tools such as net meeting, instant messaging, etc. to share knowledge with my co-lecturer	43	36.8	52	44.4	19	16.2	3	2.6
I share knowledge by inputting it into institutional repository databases	29	24.8	47	40.2	31	26.5	10	8.5
I use intranet (including corporate portal) to share knowledge with my co-lecturer	21	17.9	39	33.3	39	33.3	18	15.4
I use computerized directory on experts with specific knowledge to locate the expertise that my co-lecturers need	22	18	52	44.4	26	22.2	17	14.5
I use videoconferencing to share knowledge with my co-lecturer	23	19.7	42	35.9	39	33.3	13	11.1
I use teleconferencing to share knowledge with my co-workers	22	18.8	35	29.9	45	38.5	15	12.8
I share knowledge through face-to-face discussions with my co-lecturer	89	76.1	25	21.4	2	1.7	1	0.9

(Field Survey, 2021)

The result in Table 2 shows that 49 (41.9%) of the respondent have strongly agreed that they use email to share knowledge with their co-lecturers, 54 (46.2%) have agreed, 7 (6.0%) have disagreed, while 7 (6.0%) have strongly disagreed. In addition, 24 (20.5%) of the respondents have strongly agreed that they use discussion forum to share knowledge with their co-lecturers, 51 (43.6%) have agreed, 31 (26.5%) have disagreed, while 11 (9.4%) have strongly disagreed. Also, 46 (36.8%) have strongly agreed in using tools such as net meeting and instant messaging to share knowledge with their co-lecturers, 52 (44.4%) have agreed, 19 (16.2%) have disagreed, while 3 (2.6%) have strongly disagreed. Table 2 further reveals that 29 (24.8%) have strongly agreed that they share their knowledge by

inputting it into the institution repository database, 47 (40.2%) have agreed, 31 (26.5%) have disagreed, while 10 (8.5%) have strongly disagreed. More so, 23 (19.7%) of the respondents have strongly agreed in using video conferencing to share knowledge, 42 (35.9%) have agreed, 39 (33.3%) have disagreed, while 13 (11.1%) have strongly disagreed. Table 2 also shows that 89 (76.1%) of the respondents have strongly agreed to share their knowledge through face-to-face discussion, 25 (21.4%) have agreed, 2 (1.7%) have disagreed, while 1 (0.9%) have strongly disagreed.

Research question 2: *What types of knowledge are shared among academics in private universities in Kwara State?*

Table 3:Types of Knowledge Shared

Types of Knowledge shared	SA		A		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Research information and activities	66	56.4	47	40.2	4	3.4	0	
Teaching and learning resources	49	41.9	66	56.4	2	1.7	0	
University processes and procedures	31	26.5	79	67.5	7	6.0	0	
Social and work news	29	24.8	55	47.0	22	18.8	119.4	
Business knowledge	22	18.8	47	40.2	31	26.5	1714.5	
Internal reports and official documents	30	25.6	59	50.4	15	12.8	13	11.1
Expertise on education and trainings	48	41.0	59	50.4	10	8.5	0	
Religion and beliefs	31	26.5	58	49.6	16	13.7	12	10.3
Seminars and workshops	57	48.7	52	45.3	6	5.1	1	0.9

(Field Survey, 2021)

Table 3 shows that 66 (56.4%) of the respondents have strongly agreed to share knowledge on research information and activities, 47 (40.2%) have agreed, while 4 (3.4%) have disagreed. Also, 49 (41.9%) have strongly agreed to share knowledge on teaching and learning resources. 66 (56.4%) have agreed, while 2 (1.7%) have disagreed. More so, 31 (26.5%) have strongly agreed to share knowledge on university processes and procedures, 79 (67.5%) have agreed, while 7 (6.0%) have disagreed. Table 3 further reveals that 30 (25.6%) of the respondents have strongly agreed to share their knowledge on internal reports and documents, 59 (50.4%) have agreed, 15 (12.8%) have disagreed, while 13 (11.1%) have strongly disagreed. Table 3 also shows that 48 (41.0%) have strongly agreed that they share knowledge on expertise on education and trainings, 59 (50.4%) have agreed, while

10 (8.5%) have disagreed. 31 (26.5%) of the respondents have strongly agreed to share their knowledge on religion and beliefs, 58 (49.6%) have agreed, 16 (13.7%) have disagreed, while 12 (10.3%) have strongly disagreed. And lastly, 57 (48.7%) of the respondents have strongly agreed to share their knowledge on seminars and workshops, 53 (45.3%) have agreed, while 6 (5.1%) have disagreed.

Research question 3: *What are the motives private universities academics in Kwara State have for sharing knowledge?*

Table 4: Motives for Sharing Knowledge

Motives for sharing knowledge	SA		A		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
My knowledge will increase if I share knowledge with others	61	52.1	40	34.2	13	11.1	3	2.6
I receive monetary rewards in return for my knowledge sharing	17	14.5	27	23.1	44	37.6	29	24.8
My knowledge sharing activities improve my sense of self-worth	34	29.1	67	57.3	16	13.7	0	0
Sharing my knowledge would create new research opportunities with my colleagues	42	35.9	64	54.7	9	7.7	2	1.7
I share my knowledge with others for future benefits	38	32.5	54	46.2	17	14.5	8	6.8
My knowledge sharing would strengthen ties between existing academics and myself	43	36.8	63	53.8	10	8.5	1	0.9
My knowledge sharing would get me well acquainted with new academics	49	41.9	59	50.4	7	6.0	21	17.7
I share my knowledge only because of the knowledge sharing culture in my institution	6	5.1	48	41.0	35	29.9	28	23.9
I derive enjoyment in sharing my knowledge with others	39	33.3	63	53.8	14	12.0	1	0.9

(Field Survey, 2021)

Table 4 reveals that 61 (52.1%) have strongly agreed that their knowledge will increase if they share it with others, 40 (34.2%) have agreed, 13 (11.1%) have disagreed, while 3 (2.6%) have strongly disagreed. 34 (29.1%) of the respondents have strongly agreed that their knowledge sharing activities will improve their sense of self-worth, 67 (57.3%) have agreed, while 16 (13.7%) have disagreed. Table 4 also shows that 42 (35.9%) have strongly agreed that sharing their knowledge will create new research opportunities with their colleagues, 64 (54.7%) have agreed, 9 (7.7%) have disagreed, while 2 (1.7%) have strongly disagreed. Also, 38 (32.5%) of the

respondents have strongly agreed that they share their knowledge for future benefits, 54 (46.2%) have agreed, 17 (14.5%) have disagreed, while 8 (6.8%) have strongly disagreed. 43 (36.8%) have strongly agreed that their knowledge sharing will strengthen ties with their colleagues, 63 (53.8%) have agreed, 10 (8.5%) have disagreed, while 1 (0.9%) have strongly disagreed. Table 4 further reveals that 49 (41.9%) of the respondents have strongly agreed that their knowledge sharing will get them well acquainted with their colleagues, 59 (50.4%) have agreed, 7 (6.0%) have disagreed, while, 2 (1.7%) have strongly disagreed. More so, 28 (23.9%) have strongly disagreed. And finally, 39 (33.3%) have strongly agreed that they derive enjoyment in sharing their knowledge, 63 (53.8%) have agreed, 14 (12.0%), while 1 (0.9%) have strongly disagreed.

Research question 4: *What are the constraints to knowledge sharing among private universities academics in Kwara State?*

Table 5: Constraints to Knowledge Sharing

Constraints to Knowledge Sharing	SA		A		D		SD	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Lack of time to share knowledge with others	12	10.3	26	22.2	50	42.7	29	24.8
Fear of sharing knowledge	3	2.6	10	8.5	59	50.4	45	38.5
Competition among academics	7	6.0	23	19.7	44	37.6	43	36.8
Age difference	4	3.4	17	14.5	58	49.6	38	32.5
Gender difference	4	3.4	19	16.2	60	51.3	34	29.1
Difference in the level of education	3	2.6	31	26.5	48	41.0	35	29.9
Poor level of interaction among academics	8	6.8	26	22.2	50	42.7	33	28.2
Lack of trust	3	2.6	36	30.8	36	30.8	42	35.9
Lack of reward and incentives	5	4.3	31	26.5	43	36.8	38	32.5
Poor internet service	14	12.0	27	23.1	30	25.6	46	39.3
Lack of cooperation among academics	7	6.0	26	22.2	38	32.5	40	34.2
Lack of tools and technologies needed to share knowledge	12	10.3	35	29.9	30	25.6	40	34.2
Loss of knowledge power	4	3.4	23	19.7	42	35.9	48	41.0
Unwillingness to share knowledge	3	2.6	32	27.4	36	30.8	46	39.3

(Field Survey, 2021)

Table 5 shows that 12 (10.3%) of the respondents have strongly agreed that they lack the time to share knowledge with others, 26 (22.2%) have agreed, 50 (42.7%) have disagreed, while 29 (24.8%) have strongly disagreed. 7 (6.0%) have strongly agreed that competition among academics restrain their knowledge sharing, 23 (19.7%) have agreed, 44 (37.6%) have disagreed, while 43 (36.8%) have strongly disagreed. Table 5 further reveals that 8 (6.8%) of the respondents have strongly agreed that one of the constraints to their knowledge sharing is poor level of interaction among academics, 26 (22.2%) have agreed, 50 (42.7%) have disagreed, while 33 (28.2%) have strongly disagreed. 5 (4.3%) have strongly agreed that lack of reward and incentives constrains their knowledge sharing, 31 (26.5%) have agreed, 43 (36.8%) have disagreed, while 38 (32.5%) have strongly disagreed. 14 (12.0%) have strongly agreed that poor internet service restrains their knowledge sharing, 27 (23.1%) have agreed, 30 (25.6%) have disagreed, while 46 (39.3%) have strongly disagreed. Table 5 also shows that 7 (6.0%) of the respondents have strongly agreed that lack of cooperation among academics constrains their knowledge sharing, 26 (22.2%) have agreed, 38 (32.5%) have disagreed, while 46 (39.3%) have strongly disagreed. 12 (10.3%) have strongly agreed that lack of tools and technologies needed to share knowledge restrains their knowledge sharing, 35 (29.9%) have agreed, 30 (25.6%) have disagreed, while 40 (34.2%) have strongly disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the research on the availability of time to share knowledge by academics reveal that the availability of time has an influence on their knowledge sharing behaviour. The finding also reveals that male lecturers are more willing to share knowledge much more than their female counterparts. This implies that male lecturers share knowledge more than the female lecturers. The findings of the study also reveal that academics, between the ages of 31-50 years old share their knowledge about research and trainings, teaching and learning resources, religion, beliefs, seminars and workshop and university procedures. The findings of the study have also revealed that among the factors that determine lecturers' knowledge sharing behaviour is their academic position. The study shows that the academics in lecturer 1, lecturer 2 and senior lecturer have more knowledge sharing behaviour than the other ranks combined. This implies that some academics in the middle level share their knowledge more than their other counterparts in the university. More so, these academics are very conscious about their academic, they attend conferences and workshops more than the other ranks and they equally share knowledge among themselves much more than the other lecturers either. They dedicate more time to enhancing their knowledge and to aid them in their academic duties and personal

needs. This finding is contrary to the findings of Mogotsi et al. (2011) that academic position has no influence on their knowledge sharing behaviour.

Conclusion

Knowledge sharing is the process of exchanging knowledge between people, community, organization or groups. Knowledge sharing behaviour is described as the intention, attitude and willingness of individuals towards communicating and exchanging knowledge. Knowledge can be in the form of experience, skill and understanding. Knowledge sharing behaviour is an obvious activity in academic environment and knowledge sharing is a beneficiary process to the parties involved, since each individual may have different expertise on knowledge and by sharing their knowledge it can help others. Hence, academics should be encouraged to engage in knowledge sharing activities more than ever, as this would facilitate their knowledge sharing skills, improve their confidence and self-esteem. Thus, it could be concluded that how academics share knowledge, the knowledge types and motives for sharing knowledge influenced positively and considerably the knowledge sharing behaviour of private university academics in Kwara State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. academics should be ready and willing to share their knowledge even without monetary reward.
2. the university management should create immense enlightenment and campaign about the need for university lecturers to embrace knowledge sharing among themselves and others.
3. there is the need for private universities management to create conducive environment such that will enhance knowledge sharing behaviour among academics.
4. knowledge sharing activities like workshops, trainings and seminars should be incorporated into the university processes in order to give room for knowledge sharing among academics.
5. private university academics should be encouraged to publish their research findings in the institution's knowledge repository for the purpose of research outputs visibility.

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