

MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING OF LIBRARIANS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-WEST ZONE OF NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study examined the motivating factors for knowledge sharing of librarians in the university libraries in the South West zone of Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted using questionnaire as a method of data collection. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 202 respondents drawn from a population of 254 librarians from the public and private university libraries located in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The data were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD). The major findings of the study revealed that face-to-face interactions, use of technologies, language of communication and adequate knowledge of sharing culture motivated librarians to share knowledge in the university libraries in the South-West zone of Nigeria. Based on the above findings, it was recommended that: the need for orientation and training is required to improve and promote knowledge sharing in the university libraries. The need to promote the use of forum, networking in knowledge should be emphasized among librarians in the South West Zone.

Key Words: Motivations, Knowledge sharing, Librarians, Universities, Nigeria

Introduction

The motivation for knowledge sharing among librarians is the intention to learn from each other, followed by the desire to help others. The generation of knowledge occurs when people participate in problem solving.

A study of various factors that motivated librarians to share knowledge is very important. Some writers while addressing this issue, suggested several factors that could motivate knowledge sharing among workers. Such factors include providing incentive schemes for knowledge sharing, providing role and cultivating the practice of knowledge sharing. The motivation of knowledge sharing among workers could also be inspired by care and generosity. Interpersonal trust is also believed to have a strong influence over knowledge sharing (Yuen & Majid, 2007). One other way to help workers share knowledge is to allow them talk about their experiences and exchange their knowledge while working on specific problems (Chua, 2003).

The issue of gender and working experience analysis are useful in understanding to what extent men and women share their knowledge and to what extent working experience affect knowledge sharing (Daly, 2003). The gender and working experience issues provide an opportunity to further one's own influence, and respect in the library organization. The study therefore uses gender and working experience to bring out the outcome of the motivating factors and knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing is taking a centre stage in the information/ library profession. It is becoming one of the hottest topics in information technology and management literature (Aranda & Fernandez, 2002). Knowledge Sharing is an activity through which knowledge i.e. information, skills and expertise is exchanged among people or organizations (Wikipedia, 2009). Omotayo, (2015) emphasized further that we are in a global world characterized by the use of the internet with a resulting consequence of when knowledge sharing is put in place to improve organizational effectiveness. Organizations no longer compete on financial strength (Sun & Scott, 2005). Epetimehin & Ekundayo (2011); (Omotayo 2015) added that with the advancement in information and communication technology, knowledge sharing can be attained through technology. A study of factors that motivated librarians to share knowledge is very important. Studies on the factors that motivate librarians to share knowledge in the South West Zone of Nigeria are quite scanty. This research will therefore fill the gap.

By applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs model, people can be inspired in their knowledge sharing with "oneness" need (Wig, 1999). Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that human needs can be classified into five categories. They include: physiology, security, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization (Griffin, 2002). As Griffin added, an employee may not be satisfied with only salary and benefits but also need challenging opportunity to experience self-growth. Hunter, Beaumont and Lee (2002) stated further that, special rewards and incentive methods can act as motivation for employees willing to share knowledge. Organizations are successful with the provision of personal recognition and reputation when people have contributed to knowledge database or actively participated in knowledge sharing.

Some examples for direct rewards and how to provide chances to build reputation and fame include creating annual award. For example, Buckman organizations that conduct business in many countries of the world including Europe, Canada, South Africa, Brazil, Australia among others rewards the top one hundred and fifty "knowledge sharers" with a laptop, an incentive trip to a resort, honours with a bronze and regularly publishes a top ten list of most frequency used contributions.

Most Australian firms also encourage its consultants to make explicit and sharable what they have learned from their latest engagements. For example, an Austrian firm honoured individuals who have contributed the most, by having a star named after them (Robert & Barbara, 2002).

However, Mime (2001) stated that rewards are being implemented with the basic assumption that they encourage employee loyalty, foster teamwork and ultimately facilitate the development of the desired culture based on knowledge sharing. The researcher pointed out that people tend to focus on their own targets and see competition with others. The author explained that when an employer offers reward for performance, it is suggested that employees begin to perform the task for the external reward rather than for intrinsic reasons. Therefore, the employee, more likely will be striving for the reward for herself rather than sharing her best knowledge among her colleagues.

Many organizations incorporate issues of knowledge sharing into their compensation plans and promotion policies. The big consulting and accounting firms commonly based their personal evaluations partly on how many contributions are made to knowledge databases, how many new employees people have tutored, and how many training courses have been designed (Quinn, Anderson & Finkestein, 1996). At the end of bigger projects and transactions, time and effort for debriefing should be provided to learn systematically by experiences. The lessons learned could be systematically analyzed and stored for access by other employees. In other actions, it can help to use knowledge and experience gained in projects (Disterer, 2000). Wikert & Herschel (2001) stated that such activities through extensive personal contacts including social networking, mentorship, joint event; outings and any kind of face-to-face interactions can also be emphasized for guiding knowledge sharing among librarians.

Through these social interactions, with the provision of more opportunities for participants to interact and communicate with each other, librarians mutually share with one another. "Knowledge cafes," where people are gathered to discuss topics of common interest, is one type of network application (Wig, 1999). These informal networks can enable librarians to come together with their subordinates and build up their strong interpersonal relationships. We know that people are not all alike. We see the world in a way that makes the most sense to each of us as individuals. Knowledge needs to be "nurtured, supported, enhanced, and cared for" (Nonaka & Konno, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

Knowledge has become a key concern because of its growing importance and value to individual and organizations. Knowledge can be regarded as the only unique resources that grows when shared (Han & Anantatmula, 2007). Through this sharing of knowledge, librarians are able to learn from one another. Despite the growing importance of knowledge sharing, librarians knowledge sharing practice is very low. Available literature on Knowledge sharing showed that literature on knowledge sharing among librarians are quite scanty. Literature on knowledge sharing is only being carried out in other organizations.

From the foregoing, this study seeks to study issues of motivating factors of knowledge sharing of librarians in university libraries in the South-West Zone of Nigeria. This paper, therefore, attempted to answer the following questions.

1. What are the factors that motivate librarians to share knowledge in the university libraries by gender?
2. What are the factors that motivate librarians to share their knowledge by years of experience?

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted as research design. This was necessary to elicit information on the aspect which dealt with the factors that motivate librarians to share knowledge in university libraries. The instrument used in this study is the questionnaire administered to librarians in the south west geo-political zone. The data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Population

The population for this study consisted of two hundred and fifty four (254) librarians of some selected libraries from the twenty-six public and private university libraries located in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria. Of the two hundred and fifty four (254) questionnaire administered, two hundred and two (202) were completely filled and returned. It is this two-hundred and two (202) that were used for the study.

The results of the study are presented based on the research questions.

Research Question One

What are the factors that motivate librarians to share knowledge in the university libraries by gender?

Table 1 Motivation for Knowledge Sharing of Librarians by Gender.

Motivation	No	Gender	X	SD
Rewards/incentives	98	M	2.98	.81
	104	F	2.89	.80
Environment /setting	98	M	3.02	.61
	104	F	3.20	.51
Organization design	98	M	3.02	.55
	104	F	3.09	.66
Use of technologies	98	M	3.02	.56
	104	F	3.13	.61
Language of communication	98	M	3.30	.60
	104	F	3.44	.64
Face-to-face interactions	98	M	3.51	.61
	104	F	3.54	.56
Adequate knowledge sharing culture	98	M	3.27	.55
	104	F	3.27	.60

From Table 1, females were higher in knowledge motivation on face-to-face interactions (3.54), language of communication (3.44), environment/setting (3.20), use of technologies (3.13), organization design (3.02) while males were higher in rewards/incentives (2.98). Females and males tied in adequate knowledge of sharing culture (3.27).

Research Question Two

What are the factors that motivate librarians to share knowledge by years of experience?

Table 2: Motivations of Knowledge Sharing of Librarians by Working Experience

Motivation	No	Working Experience	X	SD
Rewards/incentives	80	1-10 years	2.88	.87
	122	11 yrs and above	2.97	.76
Environment /setting	80	1-10 years	3.08	.63
	122	11 yrs and above	3.12	.52
Organizational design	80	1-10 years	3.06	.68
	122	11 yrs and above	3.07	.56
Use of technologies	80	1-10 years	3.44	.58
	122	11 yrs and above	3.32	.60
Language of communication	80	1-10 years	3.08	.67
	122	11 yrs and above	3.12	.58
Face-to-face interactions	80	1-10 years	3.50	.58
	122	11 yrs and above	3.47	.60
Adequate knowledge sharing culture	80	1-10 years	3.36	.63
	122	11 yrs and above	3.30	.54

Table 2 above reveals that librarians with 1-10 years working experience were higher in use of technologies (3.44%), face-to-face interactions (3.50%) and adequate knowledge of sharing culture (3.36%) while librarians with 11 years and above working experience were higher in language of communication (3.12%), environment/setting(3.12%) , organization design (3.07%) and rewards/incentives (2.97%).

Discussion of Finding

The finding of the study showed that what motivated librarians to share knowledge are face-to-face interactions. Table 1 testified to this assertion as knowledge sharing motivation on face-to-face interactions is higher, 3.50. This is followed by language of communication and use of technologies. The study is in line with (Peariasamy, 2009) who stated that such factors as face-to-face interactions can motivate librarians to share knowledge with their colleagues with the intention of improving his/her job in the university libraries. The study agreed with Epetimehin & Ekundayo (2011) & Omotayo (2015) that the advancement of Information and communication technology, knowledge sharing can be attained through technology. The finding of the study agreed also with Hansen, Nohria and Tierny (1999) that knowledge is tied to the person who developed it and is shared mainly through direct person-to-person contact. The finding of the study disagreed with Hunter, Beaumont and Lee (2002) who stated that special rewards and incentive methods can act as motivation for employees willing to share knowledge. Griffin (2002) however stated that, an employee may not be satisfied with only salary and benefits but also need challenging opportunities.

Rewards and incentives alone cannot promote knowledge sharing.

Table 1, agreed to the above assertions as males were higher in rewards and incentive methods, 2.98. Milne (2002) disagreed with the above assertion that when an employer offers reward for performance, it is suggested that employees begin to perform the task for the external reward rather than for intrinsic reasons. Therefore, the employee, more likely will be striving for the reward for her rather than sharing her best knowledge among her colleagues.

On the other hand, the finding of the study also showed that librarians of 1-10 years preferred to share knowledge with the use of technologies than librarians of 11 years and above working experience. Table II testified to this assertion with (3.32). From the study, the younger librarians are motivated to share knowledge more than their older counterparts.

Conclusion

The researcher gathered from the study that the reason for low level of knowledge sharing among librarians was due to a lack of number of factors that could motivate librarians to share knowledge in the university libraries in the South West Zone. From the study, it is clear that librarians in the university libraries in the South West Zone like to share knowledge through face-to-face interactions. The study revealed face-to-face interactions as the factors that can motivate librarians to share knowledge more to bring the library organization's success. This is followed by clear language of communication and the use of technologies.

The factors that will motivate librarians to share knowledge are pivot in library organization's success. It has been brought out from this study that factors as the use of technologies, rewards and incentives alone cannot motivate librarians to share knowledge.

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations were made:

1. The need for orientation and training is required to improve and promote knowledge sharing among librarians in the university libraries.
2. The need to promote the use of forum, networking in knowledge sharing should be emphasized among librarians in the South West Zone.

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