

THE EFFECTS OF TRUST AND CONCERNED INTEREST AS FACTORS AFFECTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICE AMONG LIBRARIANS

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ABSTRACT

In Knowledge management, one of the key elements of Knowledge Management (KM) is Knowledge Sharing. Knowledge sharing is very essential in academic environments especially Universities. However, knowledge sharing practice are not up to expectation in some institution as a result of some factors in which Trust and Concerned Interest are part of it. This paper studied the Effects of Trust and Concerned Interest as Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing Practice among Librarians in the six Federal University Libraries in South-western, Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to know the types, and rates of knowledge sharing, as well as to determine the effect of trust and concerned interest in Knowledge Sharing practice. A total number of 200 librarians were selected from all the six South-West Federal University Libraries in Nigeria (FUNAB, FUTA, UI, OAU, FUYOYE and UNILAG). Out of this, a total number of 147 equivalent to 73.5% response rate were retrieved with the main instrument used. The main instrument used in data collection across the institution libraries is questionnaire. The data gathered was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, (SPSS) version 23. However, findings of the study show that all Knowledge Sharing types exist among the librarians but with varying degrees. Those that shared only indigenous knowledge were the lowest with 0.68%. The rate at which the librarians in the selected institutions share knowledge is considerably low. Also, trust and concerned interest have great effect in knowledge shared among the librarians but concerned-interest has a greater effect. Necessary recommendations were made base on the conclusion and findings of this study.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Sharing Types, Trust, Concerned-Interest, Librarians.

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Management, as described by O'Dell and Hubert (2011), represents adoption of collective knowledge in order to achieve organizations goals. In short, knowledge management is a systematic effort to enable information and knowledge to grow, flow and create value and has a role to ensure that people have right knowledge at the right place and at the right time. According to Fouche (2006), knowledge management can be seen as an integrated discipline that seeks to improve the performance of the individual and the organization by maintaining and leveraging the present and future value of knowledge assets. Jones (2003) articulated knowledge management (KM) as an integrated, systematic approach

to identify, manage, and share all of the department's information assets, including databases, documents, policies and procedures, as well as previously unidentified expertise and experience resident in individual officers/staffs (Akhavan, Mostafa & Mohammad, 2006).

Macintosh (1995) opined that the widest approach towards knowledge management concept is the unity of three components: people, processes and technology. He further pointed out that knowledge management (KM) passes through some stages which are knowledge creation, knowledge capture, knowledge storing, sharing of knowledge with the other people and knowledge application, thus forming its own life cycle. Angel *et al.* (2006) opined that Knowledge sharing requires that certain tools be available to carry out the exchanges and such tools and systems that facilitate knowledge sharing in organizations are usually known as knowledge management systems.

Practices enable reuse and regeneration of knowledge at individual and organizational level (Chaudhry, 2005). Furthermore, it's also clear that Knowledge Sharing [KS] has become an essential part of Knowledge Management [KM]. The effective use of knowledge is a key ingredient in all successful organizations, no matter what business they are doing, what services they may provide. Using knowledge correctly in an organization requires an understanding that the mere availability of simple, disconnected bits of information is not knowledge and can't adequately address these enterprise imperatives. While Knowledge Management must focus on supporting the sharing of knowledge between individuals, this can't be done in isolation. Knowledge Management System projects must therefore recognize the importance of providing effective platforms for this dissemination of knowledge (Ramesh, 2010).

Patrick and Dotsika (2007) view knowledge sharing as the social interaction that involves the sharing of both the goal and the favorable outcome centered on problem solving. Lee (2001) opined that levels of knowledge sharing are not discrete, but display the flows of interaction among members, subsets, and sets. Knowledge sharing is thus also viewed as activities of transferring or disseminating knowledge (embracing implicit and tacit knowledge) from one person, group or organization to another. Dixon (2000) however, pointed out that the so-called 'common knowledge' is the knowledge employees learn from doing the organizational tasks. After identifying the relationships between actions and outcomes, a state of common knowledge is gained by sharing the interpretations among members. He further indicated that both explicit and tacit knowledge require different processes for sharing. Furthermore, it is in the view of Nonaka and Konno (1998) that, through knowledge sharing practices, organizational knowledge bases are coordinated with workers' knowledge. Knowledge sharing also can activate the transformation of collective individual knowledge to organizational knowledge (Yang, 2006).

Problem Statement

It is generally acceptable that Knowledge is Power. The custodians of knowledge, especially librarians know and value the importance of Knowledge. By implication, Librarians also understand and value efficacy of Knowledge Sharing. However, there is no single literature that adjudged the fact that all the librarians in any institution share knowledge from time to time. The reason for not having a very high number of University Librarians that share knowledge is as a result of some factors with Trust and Concerned interest being the most common and important factor. Hence, this study focus on the Effects of Trust and Concerned

Interest as Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing Practice Among Librarians in some selected Federal University Libraries in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. determine the knowledge types that exists among Librarians in all the South-Western Federal University
- ii. know the rates at which Librarians in all the South-Western Federal University Libraries share knowledge
- iii. determine the effect of Trust as one of the factors influencing Knowledge sharing among the Librarians
- iv. determine the effect of concerned-interest as one of the factors influencing Knowledge sharing among the Librarians

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Miller and Shamsie (1999), knowledge constitutes a valuable intangible asset for creating and sustaining competitive advantages and that Knowledge sharing activities are generally supported by knowledge management systems. From the views of authors like, Ciborra and Patriota (1999), Bock, and Kim (2002) the sharing of knowledge constitutes a major challenge in the field of knowledge management because some employees tend to resist sharing their knowledge with the rest of the organization. While the difficulty faced during knowledge sharing is in transferring knowledge from one entity to another (Fan, 1998). However, Hendricks' (1999) approach to concept of knowledge sharing remains one of the most widely accepted by scholars and professionals as a balanced approach. This is because of the two divided approach of associating, as well as comparing and contrasting knowledge-sharing with communication and information distribution. He attempts to differentiate knowledge sharing from the general communication concept. He also differentiates knowledge-sharing from information distribution which may not necessarily connote knowledge exchange. This is because knowledge sharing implies collaboration for mutual benefits. This approach to knowledge-sharing aligned with the librarianship view point of knowledge-sharing captured by (Guzman, 2007) which associates knowledge-sharing with collaboration and communication. The professional concept of knowledge sharing is a collaborative communication for professional gains different from information distribution and selective dissemination of information (SDI) which are information services. It is mainly for professional gains geared towards enhanced knowledge, skill and competencies, professional self-improvement and may result in enhanced services (Boer, 2005) cited in (Anasi *et al.*, 2014).

Milne (2001) posited that knowledge sharing is at the heart of the concept of KM and it is all about sharing knowledge and not owning or hoarding it. Theodore (2006) further defines knowledge sharing as an activity about working together, helping each other and collaboration. Grey (1996) explains that knowledge sharing is a commitment to inform, translate and educate others especially peers. It involves active listening and learning. The information shared involves visions, aims, supports, feelings, opinion and questions besides work aspects that will increase job performance and quality of work in the department.

Chowdhury (2006) posited that, most KM models are formed in the context of a western framework in which freedom of expression and individualism are both accepted social norms.

This is generally not the case in many of the libraries in Nigeria. According to (Sodiya *et al.*, 2006), the issue of brain drain, which started far back in the 1980s, where many professionals left the country due to the devaluation of the Naira and inflation, has led to exit of tacit knowledge from many organizations including libraries.

Sun and Scott (2005) posited that KM initiatives involve taking account of the socio-cultural factors which inhibit people's willingness to share knowledge, such as conflict, trust, time or concerns about loss of power/status cited in (Omotayo, 2015). Even though there are many efforts to encourage the sharing of knowledge, many employees may not welcome knowledge sharing because they may want to hoard knowledge in order to protect career opportunities, save time and may not have the resources needed to share knowledge and may want to avoid negative exposure especially when knowledge in question is tacit in nature (John and Joseph, 2014). Corroborating this view is the work of Okonedo and Popoola (2012) which stated that there are natural tendency of employees in almost every organization to hoard knowledge. Using Library sector as a case study, this attitude of knowledge hoarding among librarians however can affect research and productivity in general. Onifade (2015) posited that librarians in the Federal University libraries in Nigeria have positive perception about knowledge sharing but averagely share and that the level at which they share knowledge was low. The author carried out her research on 18 federal university libraries in Nigeria using 412 librarians as the sample size and the results showed that librarians in federal university libraries in Nigeria slightly share knowledge with one another, despite, the fact that they understand the importance and concepts of knowledge sharing.

Aswath and Gupta (2009) and Kumaresan (2010) studies revealed that a large portion of staff knowledge is tacit which are rooted in individual experience, judgment and intuition and is like a trade secret that any employee will like to hold back. However, the author was of the view that if incentives are given to librarians, it can motivate them, to improve knowledge sharing among them, mentoring and community of practice should be encouraged in sharing knowledge among the librarians, Knowledge sharing policy should be made which will make knowledge sharing compulsory among librarians, Librarians should be encouraged to join platforms such as librarians' forum and other networking sites to exchange knowledge and interact with colleagues internally and externally. Findings from studies conducted by Holste and Fields (2010), Wang and Noe (2010) identified lack of trust among individuals as the biggest barrier that inhibits sharing of knowledge with others in the organization.

Knowledge sharing among Librarians in the six Federal Universities in South-West

Unfortunately, there is paucity of data concerning knowledge sharing among librarians in these public universities. However, Onifade (2015) in the study of 412 librarians from 18 Nigeria federal universities reported that there is a positive perception of knowledge sharing though on average basis. The study may have been inconclusive as the study failed to bring out the possible cause/causes of poor attitude towards knowledge sharing among the librarians in spite of their understanding of the concepts and benefits of knowledge sharing.

Importance of knowledge management

In the study carried out by Jelenic (2010), the author views knowledge management as an important managerial tool which promotes the creation of new knowledge and its sharing through the corporate values. He further postulated that the use of knowledge management process enhances the effectiveness of decision making process as well as the level of operational efficiency, flexibility, commitment and the involvement of the employees. The author stressed that knowledge is considered a strategic organizational resource, which is the source of competitive advantage and business success. Zhuge (2002) cited in Tuan (2013) notes that knowledge management plays a key role in "upgrading the competitiveness of a

team” because it is concerned with “innovating, spreading, sharing, and using of knowledge”. Based on the review of extant literature, knowledge management has been viewed as the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual capital and knowledge-based assets. More often than not, the value is obtained by finding what employees, colleagues and users know, and sharing information with employees, departments and even with other organizations, in order to find best practices. Laudon and Laudon (2012) was of the view that KM practices help organizations to refocus on using knowledge that exists already by ‘... creating an environment for innovation rather than limiting themselves to best practice solutions only’.

According to Krstic (2007) cited in Jelenic(2010), knowledge management is not only associated with managing knowledge as a resource, but also to manage business processes that take place using that resource. It should involve the analysis of existing knowledge as a resource, as well as defining the objectives regarding the generation, protection and application of new knowledge, which can lead to transfer, exchange and dissemination of knowledge, for effective use of knowledge and performance measurement of the organization. Providing an appropriate infrastructure and sufficient resources to facilitate sharing practices within and between functional areas is the basis of a successful KM programme (Coleman, 1999; Riege, 2005; Schlegelmilch and Chini, 2003) in Chong *et al.* (2014).

However, Tisen *et al.* (2006) in Jelenic (2010), views knowledge management process as aims to support innovation and encourage the free flow of ideas through the company/organizations. He further reiterated that the process increases the time that employees spend in the company/organization, because their knowledge and efforts are valued by the system through rewards, thus this process increases the value of the company and its competitiveness as a whole, as it increases the efficiency and effectiveness, and the relationship of all resources and innovation. Zahra and George (2002) in Danijela (2010) highlighted that there are four main abilities in the knowledge management process that refer to skills acquisition, assimilation and transformation of knowledge, and ability to use and exploit knowledge. Shanhong (2000) tried to define the role of KM in libraries, and according to him, human resource management is the core of knowledge management in libraries; the objectives of knowledge management in libraries is to promote knowledge innovation; information technology is a tool for knowledge management in libraries and KM helps to improve customer services and efficiency by streamlining the response time. In a related study, KM has been viewed as providing benefits in a three-tiered way; that is benefits to the individuals’ employees in the organization, the community the organization is serving as well as the organization itself (Lesser and Prusak, 2001) in Dalkir (2005) forwarded by Liebowitz (2011).

Challenges of Knowledge Sharing among Librarians

According to Koina (2003), today’s librarians and information professionals need to transform themselves into value-adding knowledge professionals so as to meet up with current wave of advanced technologies in place & meet the demand of numerous users. Wah (2000) in Yang (2006) postulated that a major blockage to KM is the tendency of people to hoard knowledge. However, hoarding knowledge does seem to be natural, particularly under conditions of economic competition where “knowledge is power”. The author pointed out that removing hoarding behavior therefore seems to be difficult but by inspiring individuals to share becomes crucial, and organizations have to create a healthy climate based on collaboration.

METHOD

This study is a survey research design while the technique used in data collection is stratified sampling techniques in which only professional librarians are selected for this study. The research design and data collection techniques complemented each other in making it possible to identify and describe the Effects of Trust and Concerned Interest as Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing Practice among Librarians in the six Federal university libraries in South-western, Nigeria. The Six Federal universities in South west zone of the country are FUNAB, FUTA, UI, OAU, FUYOYE and UNILAG.

Data Analysis Technique

The main instrument for data collection in this study was a questionnaire and the analysis was essentially quantitative. The self-administered questionnaires, after the collection of completed questionnaires, data were checked for completeness, comprehensibility, consistency and reliability, a step referred to as cleaning the data.

The researcher used descriptive statistics from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, to analyze data. The analysis helped in obtaining vital information on the profile of the participants; as well as necessary variables needed for this study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Out of the total expected respondents from all the selected universities (i.e. 200), a total of 147 which is equivalent to 73.5% of the total respondents was recorded as the return rate of the administered questionnaire. A 100% return rate was not recorded as a result of the problems encountered on the field (as stated in the methodology); as well as a few of the returned questionnaire (7.5%) that the respondents found invalid for the study owing to excessive filling in some responses that needed just one answer from the available options provided. However, the return rate of 73.5% cut across all the selected universities from which FUNAB has 21.1% out of the total return rate, FUTA has 12.9%; UI has 28.6%; OAU has 16.3%; UNILAG has 17.0% while FUYOYE has 4.1%. This is represented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Response rate from the selected universities

S N	Name Of University	Location	Expected Respondents	Total Respondents/ response rate (%)	% Total Respondents
1	Federal University of Agriculture (FUNAB),	Abeokuta, Ogun state	38	31 (15.5%)	21.1%
2	Federal University of Technology, (FUTA)	Akure, Ondo State	25	19 (9.5%)	12.9%
3	University of Ibadan (UI)	Ibadan, Oyo State	55	42 (21.0%)	28.6%
4	ObafemiAwolowo, University (OAU)	Ile-Ife, Osun State	35	24 (12.0%)	16.3%
5	University of Lagos (UNILAG)	Akoka, Lagos State	35	25 (12.5%)	17.0%

6	Federal Univeristy of OyeEkiti (FUOYE)	Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State	12	6 (3.0%)	4.1%
TOTAL			200	147 (73.5%)	100%

Source: Field Work, 2017

RO1: Types of Knowledge shared by respective Librarians

It was revealed that a considerably high number of respondents (66.7%) equally shared Tacit, Explicit and Indigenous Knowledge. Meanwhile 21 (14.3%) of them shared Explicit and Tacit knowledge only; 12 (8.2%) shared Explicit and Indigenous Knowledge only; 9 (6.1%) shared Tacit and Indigenous only; 6 (4.1%) shared Tacit knowledge only while only one of the respondents covering 0.7% shared “Indigenous Knowledge only”. Figure 4 below also show a graphical representation of the knowledge sharing type that exist among librarians as indicated in Figure 1 below:

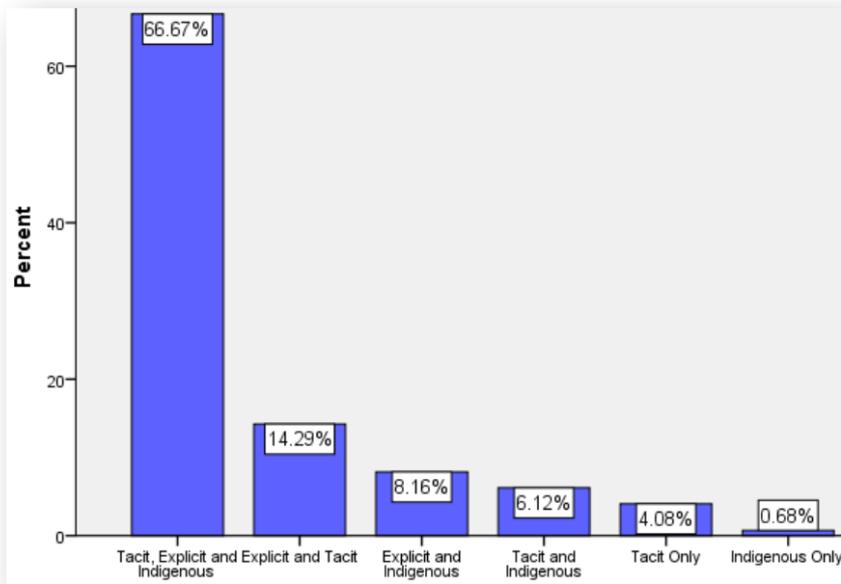


Figure 1: Types of Knowledge shared by Librarians in the selected institutions

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RO2: The rates at which Librarians in all the South-Western Federal University Libraries share knowledge

The Table 2 and Figure 2 shows the rates at which librarians in the selected universities share knowledge. As contained in the table, 12 of the respondents equivalent to 8.2% indicated that the rate of sharing knowledge is “extremely low”, 60 (40.8%) indicated that its “low”, 45(30.6%) for “moderate”, 17(11.6%) for “high”, and 13(8.8%) for Extremely high. This has a mean value of 2.7, and standard deviation of 1.06. On average, the rate at which knowledge sharing exist among librarians in the selected university libraries is considerably low.

Table 2: Rates of sharing knowledge by Librarians in the selected Nigerian Federal Universities

Rates of Sharing Knowledge			
	Freq	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent
Extremely Low	12	8.2	8.2
Low	60	40.8	40.8
Moderate	45	30.6	79.6
High	17	11.6	91.2
Extremely High	13	8.8	100
Total	147	100.0	

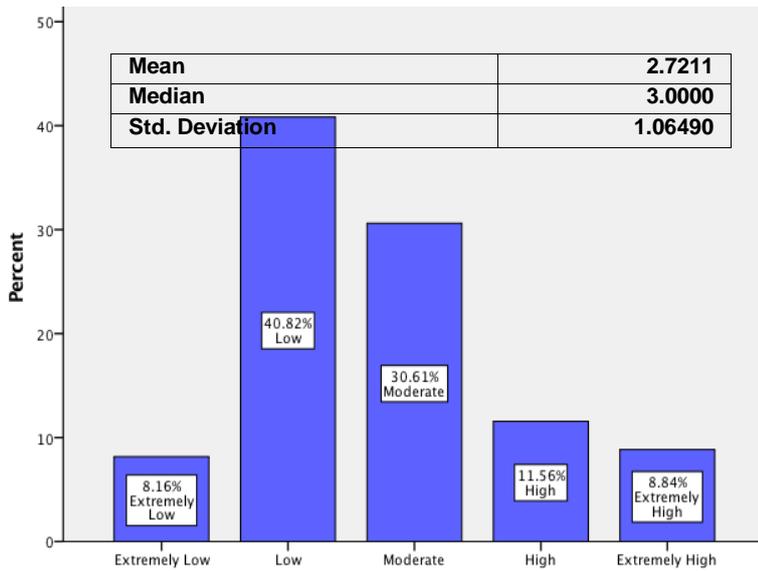


Figure 2: Rates of Sharing Knowledge

RO3: Trust and Knowledge Sharing

From Table 3, 87.7% of the respondents having mean value of 4.06 stated that their colleagues are trustworthy, 82.3% of them having mean value of 3.99 stated that they are considerate of one another's feelings; while 77.5% of them having mean value of 3.76 believed that they can rely on those whom they worked with in their respective libraries.

Table 3: Responses on Trust and Knowledge Sharing

ITEMS	N=147 (100%)					Mean
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
The staff in my library are very trustworthy	40 (27.2%)	89 (60.5%)	3 (2.0%)	8 (5.4%)	7 (4.8%)	4.06
We are usually considerate of one another's feelings in the library	46 (31.3%)	75 (51.0%)	7 (4.8%)	12 (8.2%)	7 (4.8%)	
I can rely on those with whom I worked with in the library	35 (23.8%)	79 (53.7%)	15 (10.2%)	10 (6.8%)	8 (5.4%)	3.76

Source: Field Work 2017

RO4: determine the effect of concerned-interest as one of the factors influencing Knowledge sharing among the Librarians

Someone has to have interest in something before engaging in it. Some people know the huge benefit of Knowledge sharing but might not engage in it owing to their lack of interest in sharing knowledge. From Table 4 below, 95.3% of the respondents with 4.43 mean value stated that they have interest in frequent sharing of their ideas; 92.5% of them with 4.39 mean value indicated that they always share their "know-how" on request; while exact 96.0% of them with 4.48 mean value stated that they share their expertise gotten from education or training with their colleague in an effective way.

Table 4: Responses on Interest and Concern in Knowledge Sharing

ITEMS	N=147 (100%)					Mean
	SA	A	N	D	SD	
I have interest in frequent sharing my ideas with other staff	78 (53.1%)	62 (42.2%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)	4 (2.7%)	4.43
I always share my "know-how" on request from other library staff	79 (53.7%)	57 (38.8%)	3 (2.0%)	4 (2.7%)	4 (2.7%)	
I try to share my expertise from my education or training with colleagues in an effective way	83 (56.5%)	58 (39.5%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)	3 (2.0%)	4.48

Source: Field Work 2017

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Base on the findings of this study, one can say that hoarding of knowledge is not well pronounced among Librarians in the areas of study. This is because there was no record of

any of them not sharing Tacit, Explicit and/or Indigenous Knowledge among their colleagues. As contained in Figure 1, a very high number of respondents shared combination of Tacit, Explicit and Indigenous Knowledge. Perhaps all the librarians sampled were aware of the assertion of Tan *et al.* (2010) as cited in Okonedo&Popoola (2012) that knowledge sharing is of central importance to librarians in federal universities in Nigeria. Nove and Dyah (2013) observed that among many libraries that are still oriented to traditional concepts, there are some libraries that already have more advanced vision by applying knowledge sharing with various purposes, especially enhancing knowledge creation among staff in order to be able to produce both products and services innovation in the libraries. Among the “many libraries” that fits in for the assertion of Nove and Dyah (2013) in the foregoing are all the selected University Libraries (FUNAB, FUTA, UI, OAU, UNILAG and FUOYE) for this study. Apart from the foregoing findings, it was gathered that the rate at which indigenous knowledge are being shared is very low (see Figure 1).

It was also gathered from the librarians in the selected institutions that the rates at which they share knowledge is considerably low. Despite the fact that the respondents have some trusts in among themselves, only a few of them indicated that the rate at which they share knowledge is high.

Many don't feel motivated in sharing knowledge because of the existence of unguaranteed trust. As noted by Riege (2005), one of the barriers to Knowledge sharing is lack of trust in people because they may misuse knowledge or take unjust credit for it; among others. The situation is different from the data gathered from the respondents in the selected institutions (see Table 3). It was recorded that a level of trust exist among the librarians in the selected institutions.

Clark (2000) in Wabwezi (2011) stated that information becomes knowledge when it becomes of interest to potential users at a particular time. The same way is Knowledge sharing will become a practice if librarians develop interest in it. The strongest interest of Librarians in the selected areas is to share their expertise from education or training with colleagues in an effective way (see Table 4).

CONCLUSION

This study focused on Effects of Trust and Concerned Interest as Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing Practice among Librarians in the six Federal university libraries in South-western, Nigeria. The study was undertaken under four major objectives which was later achieved and analyzed. Trust and Concerned interest go a long way in affecting Knowledge sharing practice among librarians in the selected Federal University libraries in South west geopolitical zones in Nigeria. However, among these librarians, concerned interest has greater effect than trust in knowledge sharing practice.

In the areas studied, some problems have been identified in which solution needs to be proffered. Based on the findings and conclusions, it is recommend that: (1) There is need for more enlightenment on the need for sharing indigenous and tacit knowledge because the rate at which these two knowledge types are being shared is low. One should not forget that statement of Zachary and Masheka (2010) that “when an old man dies, the entire library is burnt”. Therefore, sharing indigenous knowledge, as well as tacit knowledge, can keep the library alive. A number of the librarians are not aware of the fact to this extent, (2) focus should be on the benefits of knowledge sharing and NOT on Trust issues. The benefits of sharing all knowledge types outweigh the complaints and effects of “Trust issues” stated by the librarians as one of the factors preventing them from sharing knowledge. It is a known fact that almost anything that has advantage will surely have disadvantage, librarians in the

areas of study should take note of this because it will go a long way in encouraging them to share knowledge amongst themselves and (3) knowledge Sharing should not be seen as something that should come once in a while but should be seen as daily routine. Sharing knowledge, as it is being practiced among librarians in the selected institution libraries, should not be an activity of “once in a while” but it should be perceived as a necessary routine to grow themselves, as well as the organization they work for (i.e. library and its parents’ institutions).

This same study should be carried out in the other five (5) geopolitical zones in Nigeria in order to know if the outcome of this study can be generalized across other geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Moreover, the fact that knowledge sharing is beneficial doesn’t mean that every knowledge-shared recipient will utilize the knowledge as expected. Therefore, there is a need to carry out an assessment on the nature of knowledge sharing by its beneficiaries.

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