



Full Length Research Paper

Some demographic variables and knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers in Universities in South-east zone, Nigeria

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Accepted 10 April, 2019

The researcher examined some lecturers' demographic variables and their knowledge sharing behaviour among Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted survey research design of the inferential type. Two instruments: inventory and rating scale, were used for the study. The sample size for the study was 350 lecturers in Southeast Universities. The stratified disproportionate and simple random sampling techniques were employed in selecting this sample size. The reliability index of the instrument was found to be 0.86 computed using Cronbach alpha technique. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). While hypotheses one was tested using independent sample z-test, hypothesis two was tested using ANOVA F-test at 0.05 level of significance. Some of the findings of the study are: that gender had a significant influence on the knowledge sharing behaviours of lecturers; and there was a significant influence of academic rank on knowledge sharing of the university lecturers. Based on these findings, the researcher made some recommendations which include that the university management should create massive campaign about the need for university lecturers to embrace knowledge sharing among themselves and others.

Keywords: knowledge-sharing behaviour, lecturers, South-east zone

INTRODUCTION

University education is the focal point of higher education. It is the type of education given to individuals after secondary level of education and consists of conventional universities offering courses in sciences and humanity and special universities for sciences, agriculture and engineering etc. Based on the preceding discussions, World Bank (2008) opined that from a global perspective, university education is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations. One of the means of achieving the above expectations is through knowledge acquisition and dissemination.

Knowledge is important to all organizations (education inclusive) and should be properly managed. It is a critical and strategic resource that leads to new ideas and spurs innovation. Knowledge management includes acquiring, sharing, and storing knowledge and it needs to be orchestrated that the most crucial activity of all is knowledge sharing. Most knowledge is held in the heads of the people but sharing helps to disseminate it to others. However, many barriers hinder knowledge sharing in organizations. Therefore, focusing on increased knowledge sharing behaviour will give education as an organization a competitive advantage.

Knowledge sharing contributes to improvement in employees' performance and supports innovation. Behaviour

is the interaction between man and his environment. Human behaviour is determined by biological, psychological, social and cultural factors (Howell & Annansingh, 2012). These behaviours can be observed among lecturers in universities. Knowledge-sharing behaviour is viewed from an educational context as a social interaction culture that ensures best practices and profound sustainability. It is primarily related to activities of exchanging both existing and new knowledge, contributing research and teaching experiences and a myriad of skills among academics for succeeding in educational competitiveness. Knowledge sharing behaviour is defined by Hsiu-Fen (2007) as a deliberate act that enables other people to reuse knowledge through a transfer of wisdom and skills. It involves exchanging ideas and experiences to create new knowledge. With this, universities are aiming to help and assist their academics in generating new ideas by encouraging them to work together to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and to further enhance the institutional learning competency and ability of its faculty members, particularly in achieving institutional goals (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000).

Likewise, universities are making sure that their faculty members not only continue to generate new knowledge, but should at the same time have the intention to share their existing knowledge with others. As a consequence they should be able to achieve long-term institutional success and increase competitiveness and responsiveness in attaining greater university standards and excellence (Howell & Annansingh, 2012). Indeed, the sharing of knowledge is recognized as a main and vital component of knowledge management, which requires academics' willingness to exchange and disseminate knowledge, consequently ensuring knowledge becomes available and is made known to academics (Sohail & Daud, 2009). Once begun, educators' and researchers' intention to share their knowledge would be further intensified to boost academic and research excellence.

It is not a gain saying that academic staff plays an important role in higher education particularly in the area of research, publishing teaching, providing consultation and other professional activities. The role of knowledge sharing in Nigerian universities cannot be over emphasized as knowledge sharing has increasingly become an invaluable asset in education, research, teaching and learning. Its roles in information dissemination cannot be over emphasized because it has transformed the conduct of research and teaching institutions by allowing academic staff a wide range of opportunities for accessing accurate and timely information as well as providing a medium for communication of their research findings. Since knowledge sharing is a part of knowledge management, universities are eager to carry out knowledge sharing practices to improve the quality of knowledge in each of

their institutional settings in order to improve competitiveness.

So far, however, there has been little discussion about the underlying factors influencing/determining knowledge-sharing behaviours of lecturers in universities. Demography is the statistical dynamic information of a population over a given period of time. Demographic variables/factors are studies of a population based on factors such as age, race, gender, educational qualification, academic rank, economic, status, level of education, income level etc (Lee & Hong, 2014). They are personal characteristics used to collect and evaluate data on people in a given population. According to Shi-Jer, Yun-Shiue, Ru-Chu and Kuo-Hung (2007) socio demographic factors have showed significant difference regarding the knowledge sharing behaviour of management instructors. In this study, the researcher examines if demographic variables of gender and academic rank influence knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers in South East States of Nigeria.

Gender differences have been an issue in the forefront of public discussion in all spheres of life. In the educational parlance, gender difference has been recorded in terms of skills acquisition, information literacy, classroom interaction, reading habits, professional development. Lin (2007) found demographic variable of gender to be critical in knowledge sharing. He found a significant correlation between instrumental ties and knowledge sharing among women as compared to men. Also in the knowledge sharing context, studies have found that academic rank of lecturers' intention significantly affects knowledge sharing behaviour (Alajmi, 2011; Minbaeva & Pedersen, 2010). Moreover, studies have found that attitude, subjective norms, and self-efficacy of the different ranks of lecturers significantly affect intention.

Empirically, Lawal, Oriogu and Ogbuyi (2017) found that gender is a significant factor of knowledge sharing though of researchers. Also, Grubic-Nesic, Matic and Mitrovic (2014) revealed that gender and levels of education have significant impact on knowledge sharing. However, the findings of the work of Grubic-Nesic, Matic and Mitrovic show that male academic staff are more inclined to sharing knowledge than their female counterparts in the institutions studied. Ismail and Yusof (2009) and Mogotsi, Boon and Fletcher (2011) found that the ranks of academic staff had no impact on their knowledge sharing behaviour. However, the finding of the study of Lawal, Oriogu and Ogbuyi (2017) shows that academic rank correlates significantly with the knowledge sharing of the lecturers in the Universities studied.

Despite the importance of the role of individual knowledge and the need for this knowledge to be shared effectively, relatively little empirical research sheds light on the nature of individual knowledge in Nigerian universities and how academics in their work settings share

this knowledge. In line with these trends, knowledge sharing among academics in Nigeria universities has been severely hampered due to inadequate awareness about the importance of knowledge sharing in academic community and poor attitude of academic staff to the ideal of sharing knowledge with one another. Despite the annual conference awareness, the menace still persists. Could it be that demographic variables influence their level of knowledge sharing behaviour? This study posed as a question is: what is the influence of some demographic variables on lecturers' knowledge sharing behaviour in Universities in South-East, Nigeria? Hence, this study was carried out to bring to the fore the actual problem.

The main purpose of this study was to examine some demographic variables and lecturers' knowledge sharing behaviour in State Universities in South-east geo-political zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the:-

- 1.mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviours of male and female lecturers in Universities in South-east geo-political zone, and
- 2.mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers of various ranks in universities in South-east geo-political zone.

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- 1.What are the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviours of male and female lecturers in Universities in South-east geo-political zone?
- 2.What are the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers of various ranks in universities in South-east geo-political zone?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: The mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviours of male and female lecturers in Universities in South-east geo-political zone do not differ significantly ($p < 0.05$).

Ho₂: There is no significant difference among the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers of various ranks in universities in South-east geo-political zone ($p < 0.05$).

METHOD

The research design that was adopted for this study is a survey research design of the inferential type. The population of the study was made up of 2810 academic staff (lecturers) from the 5 state owned universities in South-east geo-political zone of Nigeria. A sample of 350 lecturers was used for the study, representing about 12.5% of the population. The researcher used a cluster cum stratified disproportionate random sampling techniques to sample the lecturers. The instruments for this study are: a demographic information inventory format and a rating scale. The demographic information inventory format instrument is titled Lecturers' Demographic Information Inventory Format (LDIIF) while the rating scale is titled Lecturers' Knowledge sharing behaviour Scale (LKSBS). The content and face validity of the instruments employed for this study was done by 5 experts; two from Measurement and Evaluation while three are from Sociology of Education. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to ascertain the reliability of LKSBS with a coefficient of 0.86. Mean score and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions. Hypothesis one was tested using independent sample z-test while hypotheses two was tested using analysis of covariance (ANOVA) F-test at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What are the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviours of male and female lecturers in Universities in South-east geo-political zone?

Hypothesis One

The mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviours of male and female lecturers in Universities in South-east geo-political zone do not differ significantly.

Table 1: Gender and Knowledge sharing behaviour of Lecturers

Gender	n	\bar{X}	S	df	z_{Cal}	z_{tab}	Decision
Male	278	118.36	11.23	348	2.507	1.960	Reject H_{01}
Female	72	121.40	8.58				

Table 1 presented the results of analysis on gender and knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers in universities in South East Geo-Political zone. The mean scores of

male and female lecturers are 118.36 and 121.40 respectively. The calculated z (z_{Cal}) is 2.507 while the tabulated z (z_{Crit}) is 1.960 and the degree of freedom is 348.

Since the z_{cal} of 2.507 (two-tailed) is greater than the z_{crit} of 1.960, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the researcher concluded that the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of male and female lecturers in Universities in South-east geo-political zone differ significantly. The mean response scores of female lecturers is more than that of their male counterparts showing that the female lecturers share information more than the male. The standard deviations of the male and female scores are respectively 11.23 and 8.58 which shows that the respective scores of the male lecturers have a greater spread than that of the female lecturers.

Research Question Two

What are the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers of various ranks in universities in South-east geo-political zone?

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference among the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers of various ranks in universities in South-east geo-political zone.

Table 2: Academic Rank and Knowledge sharing behaviours of Lecturers

Academic rank	n	\bar{X}	S
Professor	35	114.80	10.734
Reader	36	115.83	12.127
Senior Lecturer	91	121.20	8.182
Lecturer I	54	123.13	10.572
Lecturer II	54	120.16	13.874
Assistant Lecturer	45	113.27	8.889
Graduate Assistant	35	119.83	7.898

One Way ANOVA Table

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F_{cal}	F_{tab}	Decision
Between group	3910.901	6	651.817			
Within group	36812.996	343	107.327	6.073	2.10	Reject Ho₂
Total	40723.897	349				

Table 2 presented data on the academic rank and knowledge sharing behaviour on university lecturers. From the table, the mean ratings of the lecturers on the influence of academic rank on their knowledge sharing behaviours according to rank, from highest to the lowest are 114.80, 115.83, 121.20, 123.13, 120.16, 113.27, 119.83 respectively. Similarly, their standard deviations in the same order are 10.73, 12.13, 8.18, 10.57, 13.87, 8.89, and 7.90. The results of analysis in the table revealed that the F_{cal} (calculated F) is 6.073, the F_{crit} (tabulated F) is 2.10 and the degree of freedom for the numerator is 6, while that of the denominator is 343. Since, the F_{cal} is greater than the F_{crit} , the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the researcher concluded that there was a significant difference between the mean scores on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers of

various ranks in universities in South-east geo-political zone.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study on the influence of gender on knowledge sharing behaviours of university lecturers revealed that gender of the lecturer has influence over his/her knowledge sharing behaviour. The inference revealed that the influence of gender on knowledge sharing behaviour of lecturers is significant. The finding shows that female lecturers have more knowledge sharing behaviours than their male counterparts. This implies that female lecturers share knowledge more than the male lecturers. This can also be as a result of the liberal

and accommodating nature of women as they partake in disseminating information in their various institutions. This finding is in line with findings of Lawal, Oriogu and Ogbuiyi (2017) that gender is a significant factor of knowledge sharing though of researchers. The finding is also in line with the findings of Grubic-Nesic, Matic and Mitrovic (2014) that gender and levels of education have significant impact on knowledge sharing. However, the findings of the work of Grubic-Nesic, Matic and Mitrovic show that male academic staff are more inclined to sharing knowledge than their female counterparts in the institutions studied. It is clear that the similarities in the findings could be attributed to the nature of information shared in the universities. The difference between the result of the Grubic-Nesic et al and the present study could be attributed to the culture of the people from the area of this study (South-East Nigeria) which allows women to freely interact among themselves without inhibition.

The findings of the study on the influence of academic rank of lecturers on their knowledge sharing behaviours revealed that among the factors that influences knowledge sharing of lecturers is their academic rank. The study shows that the lecturers in the middle of the rank (lecturer I, senior lecturer, and lecturer II) had more knowledge sharing behaviours than those at the top of the rank (professors and readers). This implies that some lecturers in the middle echelon of academic rank, share their knowledge more than the other counterparts in the university. At this rank bracket (Lecturer II – Senior Lecturers) these lecturers are very conscious about their promotions, attend conferences more and share knowledge gained among themselves more. They infact devote more time to enhancing their knowledge to aid them in their work as lecturers and personal needs. Whereas those at the highest echelon devote more time to knowledge dissemination for public lectures series than knowledge sharing among themselves, the younger lecturer are more naïve and have not acquired as much knowledge to share rather they are more devoted to knowledge gaining. The inference revealed that the influence of academic rank on knowledge sharing behaviours of lecturers is significant. This finding is contrary to the findings of Ismail and Yusof (2009) and Mogotsi, Boon and Fletcher (2011) that the ranks of academic staff had no impact on their knowledge sharing behaviour. However, the finding of the study is in line with the findings of Lawal, Oriogu and Ogbuiyi (2017) that academic rank correlates significantly with the knowledge sharing of the lecturers in the Universities studied. The differences in the findings could be attributed to the type of population used by the studies of Ismail & Yusof and Mogosti et al. whereas the present study used lecturers who are conscious of promotion at given levels that ie (do not publish and perish syndrome). The proceeding

studies used government officials and secondary school teachers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The researcher concluded based on the findings of this study that demographic variables such alecturers gender and academic rank have significant influence on knowledge sharing behaviours of university lecturers. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1.The university management should create massive campaign about the need for university lecturers to embrace knowledge sharing among themselves and others. This can be done through training, conferences, and seminars on the need for knowledge sharing among lecturers.
- 2.University lecturers should be encouraged to publish their research findings in the institution's repository in order for others to have access to them.

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