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The influence of knowledge sharing practices on job performance of library and information science educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of knowledge sharing practices on the job performance of LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria using the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA).This became eminent at the wake of low job performance recorded by LIS educators in teaching and research. A hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a survey research design and questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The population of the study comprised 480 Library and Information Science (LIS) Educators in six federal, nine state and thirty private universities in South-West, Nigeria. Total enumeration technique was used to obtain the sample size of 480 LIS educators. Four hundred and eighty copies of questionnaire were administered and 334 copies were filled and found usable for the study representing 69.5% response rate. The study showed that there was a positive significant relationship between knowledge sharing practices and job performance. The study recommended that university administrators should reduce administrative workload and implement knowledge sharing policies with the aim to improve job performance of LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Keywords: Higher education, Job performance, LIS educators, Job roles

INTRODUCTION

It is common practice across the higher education sector to conceptualise the job roles of Library and Information Science (LIS) Educators within three broad areas, namely, research, teaching, and community service. Hence, LIS Educators' job performance refers to the extent to which LIS Educators carry out teaching, research and participate in community service tasks (Victor et al., 2014). Universities employ academic staff to teach, conduct research, engage in community service, supervise students and perform any assigned duty relating to the university's mission (Norton, 2013). Studies have argued that academic staff, especially from developing countries, are struggling to get credible journals in which to publish their academic work amidst counterfeit, predatory journals, hence making publishing in renowned, high-impact journals a challenging task, characterised by delays and a high rate of rejection (Mc-Naught et al., 2015) (Pho et al., 2016).

Other challenges facing most African universities, especially public universities, are that most academic staff spends a lot of their time teaching part time in other universities (Mawoli et al., 2011) (Ologunde et al. 2013). In Nigeria, as in many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, academic staff does not seem to perform to the expected level, as observed by Peter (2014) that university lecturers spend their time moving from one university to another chasing part-time job. In that regard, despite the expansion of higher education in Nigeria, there is growing concern about deteriorating performance with regard to teaching and research (Abdul, 2011).

Scholars like Muchinsky and Culbertson (2013) described job performance as a set of workers' behavior that can be measured, monitored and assessed as an achievement at individual level. It consists of those behaviours that are perceived to be in agreement with the organisational goals. Job performance is of interest to the organisation because of the importance of high productivity in the workplace (Ofoegbu et al., 2013). To Bullock (2013) job performance is behavior or plainly stated what people do at work to get an expected value. In other words, an employer's behavior may be distinguished as helping or hindering an organisation, but the outcomes of employees' behavior are rarely measured so their value is merely expected. Thus, job performance is seen to express the extent to which an individual fulfills the responsibilities specified in the job description. This includes the fulfillment of the duties and delivery of the activities required by a job role.

The contribution of LIS educators to their disciplines, in forms of published articles, books, presentation of research findings, giving performances and exhibits, or disseminating their work to external audiences in other ways is the basis of their research performance. Additionally, rewards may also be based on LIS educator's success in securing funding from external public agencies or companies. The ability to conduct research is considered more important than teaching, and promotion and reward systems place more emphasis on research productivity (Ter-Bogt et al., 2012).

(Ugocha et al. 2018) define knowledge sharing as a process where individuals mutually exchange their (tacit and explicit) knowledge leading to the creation of new knowledge jointly. Knowledge sharing is all about individuals. It requires knowledge creation, knowledge mediation and knowledge application (Ogbodo et al., 2013). According to Nya-Lin Yan (2015), knowledge sharing is recognized as the willingness of a faculty member to engage in a strong relationship with his or her colleague that will further lead to the sharing of knowledge with those that he or she trusts. LIS Educators share knowledge through teaching, research and service. Adamseged et al. (2018) opine that knowledge is shared through writing and speaking and Information Technology. LIS Educators share spoken knowledge-sharing strategies through mentoring, collaboration, conferences, lectures and presentations, workshops, conversation sessions, and meetings. They also share knowledge through writing such as research publications and technical reports, hot briefs, book and book chapters, newsletters, media advisories and releases. Similarly, technology has enabled knowledge sharing through online channels such as social media, e-mails, websites, discussion forums, Wikis among others. In the past it was impossible to share knowledge or work collaboratively with colleagues around the globe but now, technology has made that possible.

Knowledge sharing practice is quite significant for individuals seeking to improve their performance and career as well as for organisations aiming to achieve their success and longevity. Knowledge sharing practice is manifested in the social interaction among LIS Educators to exchange information, knowledge, experiences, skills, concepts, thoughts, opinions, insights and ideas (Durmusoglu et al., 2014) (Ramlee, 2011).

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), developed by Ajzen et al. (1975) has been recognised as one of the most influential theories of human behavior. According to their theory, human behavior is influenced by the intention to execute that particular behaviour, and the intention forms under the impact of attitude toward the behaviour, that is, evaluation of the behaviour itself as being favourable or unfavourable, The attitude of LIS Educators' towards knowledge sharing refers to the degree to which they have a positive or negative perception or appraisal towards knowledge sharing. Theory of Reasoned Action assumes the human being to be rationale and explains that the human behaviour is the determinant of three elements: (1) attitude toward the behaviour, (2) subjective norms, and (3) behaviour intention.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that there have been more establishments of both public and private universities in Nigeria, there is a growing concern about the deteriorating performance of educators with regard to teaching and research. This implies that they are at the center of knowledge gathering and knowledge sharing hubs which should be harnessed to their competitive advantage. The low job performance may be due to refusal of the LIS educators to share their knowledge with other members within the organisation which can affect job performance negatively. It is against this backdrop that this study sets to examine the influence of knowledge sharing practices on LIS educators' job performance in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study examined the relationship between knowledge sharing practices, and job performance of Library and Information Science Educators in South-West Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the level of job performance of LIS Educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria

2. Examine the knowledge sharing practices of LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria

Research Questions

1. What is the level of job performance of LIS Educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria?

2. What are the knowledge sharing practices of LIS Educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria?

Hypothesis: H1-There is no significant relationship between knowledge management practices and job performance of Library and Information Science Educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kuzu et al. (2014) probed into the knowledge sharing and employee performance using the views of the 5-star hotel employees in Antalya, Turkey. Their study reported a correlation between knowledge sharing and employee performance. Aksoy et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee performance by using models. Their findings confirm that intra-organisational knowledge sharing positively affects the employee performance.

Zahari et al. (2014) have ascertained that individual job performance is a prerequisite for organisational behaviour. They explored the influence of knowledge sharing on organisational performance among insurance companies in Malaysia and found a positive correlation between knowledge sharing and organisational performance. They concluded their report by claiming that most organisations acknowledge that the sharing of knowledge among employees can enhance organisational performance. In as much as the main objective of knowledge sharing is the acquisition, sharing and transferring of individual knowledge and experience into the organisational experience.

Similar studies can be found in Africa such as knowledge sharing behaviors on postgraduate students in Nigeria (Opeke et al., 2014), Knowledge sharing strategies on traditional vegetables in Tanzania (Chipungahelo, 2015) and Knowledge sharing practices among academics in Zimbabwe (Chikono, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using descriptive survey design, the population comprised 487 Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in six federal, nine state and thirty private universities in South-west, Nigeria. The total population covered the academic librarians and academic staff of Library and Information Science Departments in universities in South-West Nigeria. Library and Information Science Educators refer to lecturers/educators in universities responsible for the training of library personnel and also professionals working in academic libraries responsible for teaching LIS related courses in universities. Total enumeration technique was used to obtain the sample size of 480 LIS educators. The instrument used used for data collection was questionnaire. Four hundred and eighty copies of questionnaire were administered and 334 copies were filled and found usable for the study representing 69.5% response rate. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation for inferential statistics (Rosaline et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first section of the research instrument required the respondents to provide personal information such as gender, age, academic qualification and years of working experience. The demographic information of the respondents was carefully analyzed and the results of their demographic characteristics are as presented: (Table 1).

The results showed that 153 of the respondents (45.8%) were male while 181 respondents (54.2%) were female. This implied that there was a higher proportion of female Library and Information Science Educators than their male counterparts. The age of the respondents showed that 63 (18.9%) were within ages 21-30,102 (30.5%) were within ages 31-40, 103 respondents (30.8%) were within ages 41-50, 58 (17.4%) were within ages 51-60 while 8 (2.4%) were above 61 years of age. One may imply that a high percentage of the active working age made up the majority of the respondents. The table showed the respondents to be 3 (0.9%) Professors, 3 (0.9%) Associate Professors, 23 (6.9%) Senior Lecturers, 14 (4.2%) lecturer I, 22 (6.6%) Lecturer II, 12 (3.6%) Assistant Lecturers, 21 (6.3%) Graduate Assistants, 11 (3.3%) University Librarians, 5 (1.5%) Deputy Librarians, 26 (7.8%) Principal Librarians, 40 (12.0%) Senior Librarians, 43 (12.9%) in the position of Librarian I, 33 (9.9%) in the position of Librarian II and 78 (23%) Assistant Librarians. One may imply that there exist a higher percentage of educators in academic libraries than their counterparts in library schools. The table showed the academic qualification of the respondents as 60 (18%) Ph.D degree holders, 168 (50%) Master's degree holders, 85(25.4%) degree holders while 21 (6.3%) possess other degree education qualifications. One may imply that the highest percentage of the respondents possess MLIS degrees, while a lower percentage are Ph.D degree holders. The table showed the number of years working in higher education of the respondents as 96 (28.7%) within the range of 1-5 years, 88 (26.3%) within the range of 6-10 years, 87 (26%) within the range of 11-15 years, 34 (10.2%) within the range of 16-20 years, 18 (5.4%) within the range of 21-25 years and 11(3.3%) above 26 years. This may imply that a higher percentage of respondents are just starting their careers as LIS educators (Table 2).

Source: Researcher

The results of the level of job performance are presented in Table 2. Consequently, in order to determine the level of job performance of Library and Information Science Educators, they were asked to react to issues concerning their technical performance which included teaching, research and community service. Respondents noted that they do prior planning for each lecture they deliver to students ranked the highest $\bar{x}$ =3.50, δ=0.579). Respondents also noted that they actively look for ways to improve their performance at work and work at keeping their work skills up-to-date which both have mean values of 3.49 respectively. While the lowest mean value ($\bar{x}$=2.89, δ=0.829) was recorded on how happy respondents were with the number of textbooks they have authored. Respondents expressed satisfaction with the papers presented at conferences ($\bar{x}$=2.98, δ=0.575) On community service, negotiation with companies by LIS Educators to provide internship to their students and developing applications to solve societal problems both have low mean values ($\bar{x}$=2.99, δ=0.751, δ=0.761) (Tan, 2016).

Discussion of findings: The findings of this study showed that Library and Information Science Educators have higher level of teaching performance than research performance and community service. This is because they do prior planning for each lecture they deliver to students. As in other studies (Mawoli et al., 2011) (Ologunde et al., 2013) that show low level of teaching performance among academic staff in universities, on the contrary, this study has found a high teaching performance among LIS educators and this may be because academic librarians (which made up a large percentage of respondents for this study) cannot migrate to other universities like their academic staff in other disciplines to engage in teaching engagements except the ones allocated to them at their primary places of assignment. However, low level of performance was recorded in their research performance because they are not contented with the number of books they have authored likewise the number of papers they have presented at conferences. This is in tandem with similar studies which opined that academic staff, especially from developing countries, are struggling to get credible journals in which to publish their academic work amidst counterfeit, predatory journals, hence making publishing in renowned, high-impact journals a challenging task, characterised by delays and a high rate of rejection (Mc-Naught et al., 2015) (Pho et al., 2016). On community service, involvement in projects in which they share their expertise with community is marginal; there is also low level of performance in developing practical applications to solve societal problems which is the backbone of community service.

On knowledge sharing practices, the highest mean value showed that respondents discussed about new knowledge formally with fellow colleagues $\bar{x}$=3.36, δ=0.592) This is followed closely by item on respondents sharing new knowledge with other colleagues *via* the internet ($\bar{x}$=3.32 , δ=0.651). However, the lowest mean recorded is distribution of printed copies of new knowledge to colleagues ($\bar{x}$=3.18, δ=0.720). This finding is in tandem with similar studies which opined that knowledge sharing practice is manifested in social interaction among individuals by the exchange of information, knowledge, experiences, skills, concepts, thoughts, opinions, insights, and ideas (Durmusoglu et al., 2014) (Ramlee, 2011). Knowledge sharing practice is quite significant for individuals seeking to improve their performance and career as well as for organisations aiming to achieve success and longevity.

Hypothesis: H1-There is no significant relationship between knowledge management practices and job performance of Library and Information Science Educators in universities in South-West Nigeria (Table 3).

Table 1: Demographic data of the respondents.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Male	153	45.8
Female	181	54.2
Total	334	100
Age-range		
21 - 30	63	18.9
31 - 40	102	30.5
41 - 50	103	30.8
51 - 60	58	17.4
61+	8	2.4
Total	334	100
Academic position		NS
		NS

Professor	3	0.9
Associate Professor	3	0.9
Senior Lecturer	23	6.9
Lecturer I	14	4.2
Lecturer II	22	6.6
Assistant Lecturer	12	3.6
Graduate Assistant	21	6.3
University Librarian	11	3.3
Deputy University Librarian	5	1.5
Principal Librarian	26	7.8
Senior Librarian	40	12
Librarian I	43	12.9
Librarian II	33	9.9
Assistant Librarian	78	23.4
Total	334	100

Table 2: Job performance and knowledge sharing practices of Library and Information Science Educators in Universities in South-West, Nigeria.

N	Technical performance	VH	H	L	VL	Mean	SD
1	I do prior planning for each lecture I deliver to students	180(53.9%)	140(41.9%)	14(4.2%)	-	3.5	0.579
2	I submit students' examination marks for grading in time	172(51.5%)	150(44.9%)	11(3.3%)	1(0.3%)	3.48	0.578
3	I set exams for students at the end of every semester	172(51.5%)	149(44.6%)	12(3.6%)	1(0.3%)	3.47	0.583
4	I ensure that each lecture's objectives are achieved	166(49.7%)	160(47.9%)	8(2.4%)	-	3.47	0.546
5	Before teaching any lecture, I update its subject matter	162(48.5%)	163(48.8%)	9(2.7%)	-	3.46	0.55
6	I teach all the lectures allocated to me in every semester	165(49.4%)	156(46.7%)	12(3.6%)	1(0.3%)	3.45	0.582
7	I submit students' coursework marks for grading in time	160(47.9%)	164(49.1%)	9(2.7%)	1(0.3%)	3.45	0.566
8	I mark the exams I administer to students in time	160(47.9%)	160(47.9%)	14(4.2%)	-	3.44	0.575
9	I am involved in projects in which I share my expertise with community actors	104(31.1%)	192(57.5%)	32(9.6%)	6(1.8%)	3.18	0.669
10	I am contented with the research have conducted so far	100(29.9%)	186(55.7%)	38(11.4%)	10(3.0%)	3.13	0.72
11	I conduct research in which the community is beneficially included	96(28.7%)	194(58.1%)	35(10.5%)	9(2.7%)	3.13	0.696
12	I communicate with the general public about issues of public interest	87(26.0%)	210(62.9%)	28(8.4%)	9(2.7%)	3.12	0.662
13	I collaborate with community groups in mutually beneficial projects	85(25.4%)	205(61.4%)	35(10.5%)	9(2.7%)	3.1	0.678
14	I participate in debates on solutions to issues of public interest	84(25.1%)	201(60.2%)	39(11.7%)	10(3.0%)	3.07	0.696
15	I negotiate with companies to provide internship to my students	84(25.1%)	174(52.1%)	65(19.5%)	11(3.3%)	2.99	0.761
16	I have developed applications to solve societal problems	82(24.6%)	179(5.6%)	62(18.6%)	11(3.3%)	2.99	0.751
17	I am satisfied with the papers I have presented at conferences	80(24.0%)	179(53.6%)	63(18.9%)	12(3.6%)	2.98	0.757
18	I am happy with the number of textbooks I have authored Knowledge sharing practice	19(5.7%)	78(23.4%)	158(47.3%)	79(23.7%)	2.89	0.829

19	I discuss about new knowledge formally with fellow colleagues	142(42.5%)	183(54.8%)	6(1.8%)	3(0.9%)	3.36	.592
20	I share new knowledge informally with others	133(39.8%)	185(55.4%)	15(4.5%)	1(0.3%)	3.35	.579
21	I share new knowledge with other colleagues *via* the internet	139(41.6%)	167(50.0%)	25(7.5%)	3(0.9%)	3.32	.651
22	I share new knowledge through the social media	122(36.5%)	187(56.0%)	23(6.9%)	2(0.6%)	3.28	.615
23	I distribute printed copies of new knowledge to other colleagues	114(34.1%)	172(51.5%)	41(12.3%)	7(2.1%)	3.18	.720

Table 3: Correlations between knowledge sharing practices and job performance.

	Knowledge sharing practices		**Job performance**
Knowledge sharing practices	Pearson correlation	1	.418**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	334	334
Job performance	Pearson correlation	.418**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	334	334

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Decision

Since p-value=0.000 <0.05, the Ho is hereby rejected.

Discussion of findings: Pearson Product Moment correlation statistic was used to test the hypothesis. The result revealed a significant linear relationship between the variables of knowledge sharing practices and job performance. Table 3 shows that knowledge management practices has significant and positive relationship with job performance (r=0.418, p<0.05); which means that a unit increase in knowledge management practices increases job performance. The findings of this study is supported by Kuzu et al. (2014); Aksoy et al. (2016); Zahari et al. (2014) which also revealed that knowledge sharing practices have significant and positive relationship with job performance (zakaria,2004).

CONCLUSION

The study found out a high level of teaching performance among LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria but low levels of research performance and community service performance. It was also established in the study that LIS educators shared knowledge formally and informally with colleagues and *via* the Internet. There was also a positive and significant correlation between knowledge sharing practices and job performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. University management should reduce the administrative workload of LIS educators in order to create more time for them to devote to both their research and community service job tasks.

2. The staff development units of universities should increase the quota for local and international training funds so that there will be increased knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing practices among budding LIS educators in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

3. National Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) as a professional body should encourage mentee-mentor policy among LIS educators; this will foster relationships that will increase knowledge sharing practices.

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