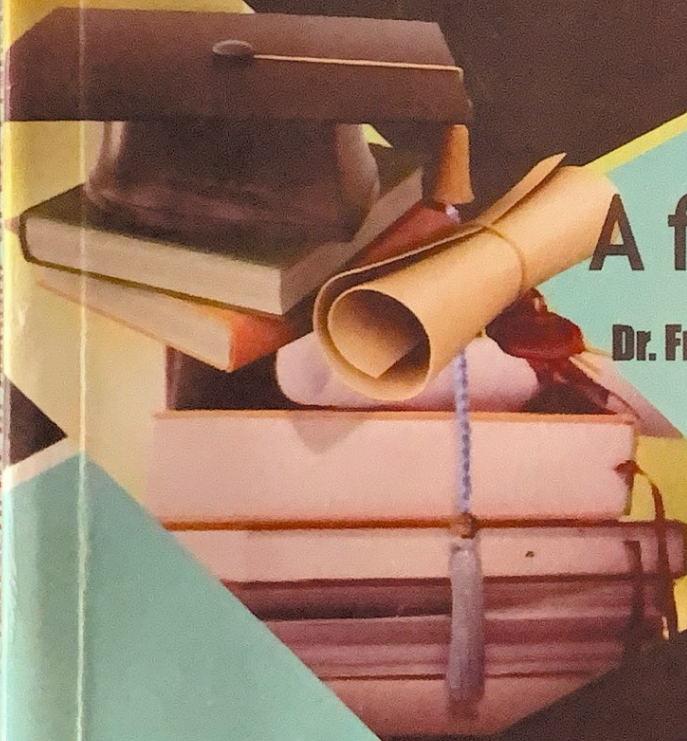


KNOWLEDGE SHARING MECHANISM AND SCHOLARSHIP CULTURE



A festschrift

in honour of
Dr. Francis Adesoji Fabunmi

Edited by
J. K. AJAYI, PhD

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Edited by

J. K. AJAYI, PhD
Library and Information Science
Ekiti State University, Ado- Ekiti
Nigeria

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3 Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring Practices As Impetus for Quality Academic Output among Library and Information Science Educators in Nigeria

S. A. OLARONGBE, P. A. JACOB, & S. O. MAHAMMUOD

Introduction

Many organizations, institutions and schools of today are becoming increasingly aware of the need to encourage knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among their members. Knowledge is a personal intellectual asset to which people hold on to unless they are encouraged to share. Knowledge is an intangible asset that constitutes a valuable resource for an organization in creating and sustaining competitive advantages and it is as well the key strategic resource for organizational survival, growth, stability, improvement and effectiveness (Lawal, Oriogu & Ogbuiyi, 2017). However, mentoring is also an invaluable tool for career development for library and information professionals. It's a well-known method of promoting learning in the workplace, and it's designed to use directed learning to acquire knowledge and skills needed for good performance. It may be used for professional development of librarians as well as a tool to improve the organization's goals or library workforce development initiatives.

Knowledge sharing and mentoring practices are all the actions intended at improving the internal flow and use of knowledge within an organization. They are considered as the most crucial and vital component in the structure of knowledge acquisition and improved job performance. Physical, social, intellectual, and mental training are all important in supporting not just the level of production, but also the development of personnel in any institution. Library and Information Science (LIS) educators are looking for a variety of proactive interventions to promote knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among their counterparts. These practices are usually encouraged with three aims in mind: acquiring knowledge, reusing knowledge, and developing new knowledge. However, the advancement in information and communication technology (ICT), which cut across the three defining parameters of computer

technology, internet technology and telecommunication, makes it conceivable to support the objectives of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices.

Therefore, the degree to which information is embedded in day-to-day activities is the most significant success element for knowledge sharing and mentoring practices. When knowledge sharing and mentoring practices become institutionalized, it implies that all people involved in the organization regard the practices as important component of their everyday job. At that point, the two practices become habits rather than a job. In the past, organizations used to depend on financial indicators to measure their success. Those traditional indicators are not good enough anymore. Among the recent indicators that added to the measurement of the success of organizations is individual performance. Individual performance is the output that an individual contributes to organization performance as a result of his activities and behaviour in academic environment. As a means of having quality academic output, knowledge sharing and mentoring practices are required. By adopting this approach in library schools, LIS educators might be able to grasp some skills and knowledge from other lecturers, which is capable to aid them in enhancing their academic output.

Knowledge Sharing Behaviors Among LIS Educators

There are several factors that influence knowledge sharing behavior such as individual influence, motivation, reputation, self-efficacy, humility, and religiosity. Many studies have investigated the effect the individual's factors on knowledge sharing. The personal characteristics of employees may influence the extent to which they share knowledge for different purposes (Mohammed Ali, & Hemed, 2020). Using the notion of motivation as a major aspect in individual influence in knowledge sharing, Cebollero, 2014, explained that motivation comes from two places namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when motivation comes from "internal" factors to meet personal needs. Many people do things they do because they enjoy them, not because they have to do them. Intrinsic means internal or inside of yourself and that is why when you are intrinsically motivated, you enjoy a course of study or skill development solely for the fulfillment of education and having

fun. Examples include exploring opportunities for personal development for the satisfaction of being competent in a task, or setting the standards to become a role model or mentor. Whatever you take on, you do it for personal accomplishment and gratification.

However, extrinsic motivation is when motivation comes from "external" factors that are given or controlled by others. Salary or praises are good examples. This type of motivation is everywhere and frequently used within society. When you are motivated to perform, achieve, learn or do something based on a highly considered outcome, rather than for the fun, development or personal fulfillment, you are being extrinsically motivated. Another factor that influences knowledge sharing behavior is reputation. Reputation comes from the theory of social exchange of Blau. Social exchange theory is one of the major theories of social interaction in the social sciences. The theory holds that individuals engage in social engagement because they expect social benefits such as prestige, respect, and reputation. According to this argument, one of the variables that encourage information exchange among academic personnel is reputation (Ryan, & Deci, 2020).

Self-efficacy is another factor that influences knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among LIS educators. Self-efficacy is a person's conviction in his or her capacity to do a certain activity. Self-efficacy is a type of self-evaluation that influences one's decision on which behavior to utilize. In general, self-efficacy plays an important role in inspiring people's behavior. The next factor is humility and the theory of virtue of Aristotle focused on a person's good character and his traits that influenced attitude and beliefs. These affect the act and behavior of a person. It should be noted that character traits explain the way a person acts. Generally, humility is the lack of feeling of superiority, arrogance and haughtiness of a person towards other people. It is treating all people regardless of who they are, with respect, gentleness, kindness and forgiveness. Humility has been described from a positive aspect, i.e. with emphasis on strength rather than weakness. Dictionaries often give humility a negative meaning such as low self-esteem and negative self-views. In contrast, humility could be looked upon as a virtue and personal strength. The behavior of one who has high level of humility might serve as a

potential promotional basis for him/her to share knowledge with others.

Religiosity is the last of the factors affecting knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among LIS educators. The correlation between religiosity and behavior has received considerable attention. Religiosities have been found to be positive predictors of subjective well-being, even if results are not altogether consistent across studies (Villani, Sorgente, Iannello, & Antonietti, 2019). Individuals who are deeply religious and dedicated to their views are more likely to follow the rules and standards of their faith. The degree to which a person adheres to and employs religious principles, beliefs, and practices in daily life is referred to as religiosity. The assumption is that a very religious person will analyze the world via religious perspectives and, as a result, will integrate religion into much of his or her life.

Mentoring Practices Among LIS Educators

Mentoring is a tight and individualized interaction between senior LIS educators with professional experience and newly hired educators, with the goal of giving emotional and moral support, comments on particular task performance, knowledge, and challenges to newly hired lecturers. Generally, mentoring in higher institutions is to provide support for the professional development of academics in their careers and promote excellence in teaching and learning, research and academic leadership (Rosemary, Ekechukwu & Horsfall, 2015). In the same vein, Peretomode, and Ikoya (2019) noted that mentoring is more than giving advice on how to work more effectively or handle a specific problem. It involves the mentor taking personal interest in seeing that a mentee develops talent, skills, expertise and knowledge needed to succeed and have a successful career that contributes to the organization.

Mentorship among LIS educators, particularly in the university system, is aimed on the requirements of individual lecturers in order to support them in accomplishing the objectives of teaching, research, administration, and other tasks. This implies that mentoring includes giving new faculty members guidance, help, and support throughout their careers and beyond. The ultimate purpose

of mentoring is to guarantee that the proper ways of doing things are passed on to the next generation. There are many effective ways to practice effective mentoring such as communicate with each other; be a good example; offer problem-solving strategies; encourage excellence; listen and support; and Confront unprofessional behavior (Peretomode, 2019).

Cultivating strong and authentic mentoring relationships can increase the likelihood that your mentee will be open and share accomplishments, challenges, or difficulties they are experiencing. Getting to know your mentee is devoting time to learning more about them via questions and active listening. Throughout the process, you will discover that each mentee offers unique values, views, experiences, and interests that may or may not be compatible with your own. Effective communication necessitates being upfront about what you can and cannot provide a mentee. Another way to practice effective mentoring is by being a good leader. One of the attributes of a mentor is to lead by example. This means that a mentor must demonstrate the excellence, professionalism, and work ethic to the mentee.

Offering of problem-solving strategies is another effective way of practicing mentorship. Every campus community has challenges to face, and it is inevitable that a mentee will encounter some problems. The measure of an effective mentor is to help some mentee address problems strategically and effectively. Experience with campus policy and processes may smooth the way around some problems, familiarity with common classroom issues may position the mentor to offer specific tools or techniques to resolve a conflict, or connections across campus may streamline a solution. Mentors should be ready to offer strategies they have used to solve similar problems. Furthermore, encouragement of excellence is another good way to practice mentorship. Many studies have indicated the importance of high expectations, and mentors are in the perfect position to set the bar high and encourage their mentees to rise to the occasion. New faculty members who exceed expectations have less difficulty navigating the tenure process, than those who just get by on the minimum required. Mentors who push the novices they work with to excel increase the competitiveness of their mentees.

Listen and support also is another way of mentoring effectively. There is no substitute for active listening, and mentors need to be particularly astute listeners. It is important to read between the lines and anticipate the stresses, doubts, and concerns mentees are struggling to cope with on a day to day basis. Rather than immediately interrupt with solutions, it is sometimes more effective to get all of the problems, issues and troubles out, and then help the mentee work through a process to come up with their own solutions. Patience, compassion and understanding are great skills for mentors to utilize. Finally, confronting unprofessional behavior is an effective of practicing mentorship among LIS educators. Mentors do not always have to provide support, and in a case where the mentee is exhibiting inappropriate or unprofessional behavior it is critical to step in and confront it. This does not necessitate confrontational behavior, but may be merely acknowledging and naming it or suggesting a pause for reflection. A mentor may say, "Here's what I hear you saying," and offer a mirror of the behavior back to the mentee, or suggest alternative behaviors that may be more effective.

Attitude And Perception of LIS Educators towards Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring Practices

Attitude towards knowledge sharing refers to the positive and negative feelings an individual have towards the intention to share knowledge. It is also defined as assessed beliefs, which influence an individual to respond in a preferential way. It is an inclination to act based on assumption, a state of eagerness to act based on past experience, or a predisposition to act based on evaluations. In the context of LIS educators, attitude towards knowledge sharing is taken in this study to mean the series of reactions to knowledge sharing as a result of assumptions, perceptions, beliefs and other people's opinions. However, perception on the other hand is the act of recognizing and interpreting information. One's perception can affect ones response to a concept. This thought was supported by the outcome of the research conducted by Islam, Nowrin and Mostofa, (2017) showed that the willingness to share knowledge depends upon that person's perception of information resources and the context of different knowledge rather than gaining any immediate reward or feedback.

Furthermore, individual's willingness or unwillingness to share knowledge is greatly influenced by his skill and attitude (Sajeva, 2014). Studies have shown that when it comes to sharing knowledge and intellectual resources among LIS educators; many of them usually embrace the mentality of hoarding knowledge with competitive advantage against another because they feel sharing is often unnatural and hoarding of knowledge seem the natural tendency; tendency of hoarding information and knowledge or feeling reluctant to share what they have with their colleagues, which defeats the spirit of sharing and mentoring (Ramayah, Yeap, & Ignatius 2014; Wang & Noe, 2010; Tohidinia & Mosakhani, 2010). Islam, Nowrin, & Mostofa (2017) in their study on knowledge sharing pattern in Dhaka revealed that users possessed positive perception and attitude towards the concept of knowledge sharing and they share knowledge that relate to current affairs, social, political and cultural affairs. Generally, people engage in knowledge sharing thorough collecting, organising, conversing, collaborating and distributing their intellectual capital with other colleagues in order to strengthen the advancement and assist learning via edification (Donate & Canales, 2012).

Xiao and Jane (2015) examined knowledge-sharing phenomena from the perspective of recipients' characteristics. The study examined the influence of knowledge recipients' competence, learning attitude and personal relationship with knowledge sharer on knowledge sharers' willingness to share. It was revealed that recipients' characteristics play different roles in different situations (responsive and proactive knowledge sharing) in triggering the knowledge sharers' motivation to share. In responsive knowledge sharing, a recipient's learning attitude and personal relationship with the knowledge sharer affected the sharer's willingness to share. In proactive knowledge sharing, a recipient's professional ability and personal relationship with the sharer significantly affected the sharer's willingness to share.

Channels of Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring Practices among LIS Educators

Knowledge sharing and mentoring practices channels refer to the means through which knowledge is shared and disseminated

appropriately. However, information and communication technology (ICT) has been identified to be a force to be reckoned with in the 21st Century because it has caused and continues to cause major changes in the way we live. As far as the digital age is concerned, the benefits accrue from ICT is enormous. It has altered the way people communicate and share information. Today, social media has been the main channel through which people communicate and share knowledge across the globe (Olarongbe, Akanbi, Rabi, & Akanbi-Ademolake, 2018). Social media refers to a group of internet based technologies that allows users to easily create, edit, evaluate, and/or link to content to other creator of content (Tella, Olarongbe, Akanbi-Ademolake, & Adisa, 2013). These new capabilities or innovation are currently woven into such technologies as micro-blogging (Twitter, WhatsApp) wikis, social tagging and electronic social networks. Technology can be considered to be an important contribution to connectivity since it enables long distance collaboration; technology also act as a facilitator to encourage and support knowledge sharing by making knowledge sharing easier and effective (Zaquout & Abbas, 2012; Wei, Choy, Chew & Yen, 2012). Information technology also supports knowledge sharing across time and distance. However, it has limited value because it ignores when and how the quality of knowledge sharing will be enhanced. The use of social media to facilitate knowledge sharing broadly throughout an organization is growing (Majchrzak, Faraj, Kane, and Azad, 2013; Treem and Leonardi, 2020). Some of these channels include but not limited to:

- i. **WhatsApp:** WhatsApp is a social network application that provides users with the opportunity of sending and receiving instant messages and feedback via the Internet (Deshen and Bouhnik, 2014). It is an online chat tool that offers real time text transmission over the Internet (Barhoumi, 2015). WhatsApp is one of the educational mobile tools for sharing knowledge with great potentials of helping students to construct their own knowledge while making use of the digital mobile devices to make learning interesting.
- ii. **Facebook:** Facebook is one of the most popular suitable channels for sharing information and knowledge worldwide. Students use Facebook to discuss different issues ranging from social, economic, religious and political matters (Leng & Goh 2011).

iii. **Blog:** Blogs are the site that captures particular views, idea or opinions overtime. Undergraduate students use blogs to share thoughts, idea and solicit feedback from their colleague (Mergel, 2016).

iv. **Twitter:** Twitter is an online communication channel known as micro-blogging, which allows students to engage and interact with a diverse audience through short messages. It enables students to post information and disseminate knowledge to their colleague.

v. **Mobile phone:** Mobile phone is a communicative channel for individual to share knowledge and information as it help students to stay connected (Benson, & Morgan, 2013). The emergence of mobile phones with Internet services has brought about a profound and diverse pool of knowledge (Mojaye, 2015). Students use their mobile phones for tagging location, status update, and broadcasting where they are and what they are not doing to all of their friends.

vi. **Flickr:** Flickr is an image and video hosting websites. It is a popular website for users to air and embed personal photographs. It is a powerful channel that provides networking options such as groups, communities, discussions and flickr blog for undergraduate students to collaborate, brainstorm, share and generate new innovations (Mergel, 2016). Flickr provides easy ways to find great images and use social tagging to manage your findings. It allows student to upload both candid and professional-grade shots.

vii. **E-mail:** According to Fariborzi and Zahedifard (2012), electronic mail is a common channel used to communicate, disseminate and exchange messages between people using electronic devices. It helps to promote knowledge sharing, communal relationship and loyalty among student.

Furthermore, knowledge is also made readily available through forums and group chats, chat-rooms; where people interact with each other. Other channels through which knowledge can be shared include: collaborative learning, face to face interactions, seminar and workshop, through the internet. Consequently, in the world of today, in which the day to day activities is usually done electronically,

in terms of social media tools, the most apparently important tool used in knowledge sharing is the WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Benefits of Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring Practices

The benefits of knowledge sharing and mentoring extend well beyond the mentee's personal growth, benefiting both the mentors and the organizations for which they serve. The benefits range from promoting inclusivity via exposure to fresh viewpoints to enhanced chances of advancement for both parties. Being a mentor goes far beyond the rewarding feeling of 'giving back'. There is a huge range of personal development benefits that mentors gain from the experience, these include:

- i. **Increased confidence:** Whether it's the ability to share ideas comfortably, or stand for yourself in a challenging situation, people with mentors benefit from higher confidence in themselves. Mentors also experience an increase in self-confidence, as their mentee's success reaffirms their abilities, resulting in a confidence boost.
- ii. **Higher self-awareness:** Working out your goals with someone you look up to requires serious self-analysis around strengths, weaknesses, and values. As a result, those who have mentoring are more self-aware than those who don't – and self-awareness is highly beneficial when it comes to career development.
- iii. **Exposure to new ways of thinking:** For both mentee and mentor, the mentoring process exposes new ideas and revelatory ways of thinking or problem solving. This can have long lasting effects on both people in the partnership, encouraging innovation.
- iv. **Giving and receiving feedback:** Feedback is something we should all want in order to improve, but probably don't ask for enough. Similarly, managers everywhere struggle with delivering feedback honestly and effectively. Mentoring helps people develop their relationship with feedback in a productive way.
- v. **Exposure to new and different perspectives:** Every conversation you have with someone who is from a different

background and has a different lived experience, teaches you something. Whether it's specifically about the business you're in or about society in general, having the chance to learn and share with someone else in a safe space can be hugely impactful for inclusion.

vi. Empathy, self-awareness, and cultural competency: If these conversations are happening at scale across your organization, there will be an increase in empathy; self-awareness and cultural competency which can help foster a more inclusive workplace.

Challenges of Knowledge Sharing and Mentoring Practices among LIS Educators

Today, knowledge sharing and mentoring practices are very crucial factors in maintaining a skilled, well-trained and productive workforce in any world's leading institution. This is the reason why many academic institutions have embraced knowledge sharing and investing hugely to sustain the practices (Spiro 2018). While there are clear benefits of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices, there are also many challenges that prevent effective knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among LIS educators:

i. Lack of trust among individuals is the biggest barrier that inhibits sharing of knowledge with others in the institution (Khalil, O. E., & Shea, 2012). Trust in knowledge sharing is the degree to be able to share the knowledge and it is related to a person's skill to communicate his or her social behavior. Trust acts as a substitute for the capacity to monitor or verify information. It plays numerous roles in information sharing, both as a prerequisite and as a result of knowledge sharing. It works to enhance the connection inside the context of a relationship, and the relationship, in turn, gives additional reasons to trust. Trust can influence knowledge sharing both directly, as well as indirectly through relationships and culture (McNeish & Mann, 2010). It is critical for a lecturer to have trust in the people with whom he is imparting his expertise. Knowledge is a valuable treasure that cannot be given or shared with just any random lecturer. Lack of trust is a significant barrier to knowledge sharing. Some researchers linked trust to outcome as knowledge sharing improves group performance and increases revenue. Others

have remarked that the direct behavioural linkages are weak, with the link being between trust and the length and quality of the relationship.

ii. Incentives and rewards systems can also hinder knowledge sharing and transfer. Motivation plays an important role for the knowledge sharer (Boyes, 2016). Ibrar and Khan (2015) argued that financial and non-financial rewards and benefits are highly related to lecturer performance in sharing of knowledge. Knowledge is a dependent variable on reward systems that is applied by the institution. Rewards increases performance and performance increases sharing satisfaction. The satisfaction of sharer leads to success and feelings of achievement during the sharing process. This leads to a great impact on the institution academic performance.

iii. Time and Workload is another major challenge of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices. When there is lack of time and workload is heavy, sharing and transfer of knowledge become difficult. Researchers have identified heavy workload as the major reason for having limited or no time for knowledge sharing (Boyes, 2016). This is one of the biggest challenges of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices. Many researches have confirmed this claim. Qureshi and Evans, (2015) are of the view that time pressure acts as a deterrent to knowledge sharing. Due to increased competition, work pressure has also increased, which makes it difficult for the individuals to allocate time to get engaged in knowledge-sharing activities. Heavy workload acts as a barrier to knowledge sharing and transfer.

iv. Technology is another big issue that affects level of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices. Lack of technology hinders the successful sharing and transfer of knowledge, which confirms it as a barrier. Ranjbarfard, Aghdasi, López-Sáez, & López, (2014) in their research findings declared lack of technical support as a barrier to knowledge generation, storage, distribution, and application along with organizational learning. The expensive cost of knowledge sharing, along with IT limitations, has proven to be a disincentive to knowledge sharing in the company. Despite the

barriers to knowledge sharing, there is a desire in individuals to share knowledge and learn from each other (Qureshi & Evans, 2015). Due to technological advancements, the role of information technology in knowledge exchange and transmission has grown more significant throughout time. So many knowledge-sharing channels associated with the use of information technology, such as intranet, emails, databases, websites, bulletin boards, and electronic forums that efficiently promote knowledge exchange and transfer within and beyond the company in the years afterwards.

- v. Insufficient support of top management and the presence of poor leadership hinder the successful sharing and transfer of knowledge in an organization (Boyes, 2016). Top management support has been identified as a critical facilitator of knowledge sharing. Researchers have extensively researched this characteristic related to information sharing in the context of knowledge sharing. The publications regarding knowledge sharing and transfer are scrutinized, it can be inferred that top management support has been studied and identified as a motivator of knowledge sharing (Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015). Support of the top management is found to have a strong effect on the behaviours of knowledge collecting and donating.
- vi. Organizational Structure is another major challenge of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices. The transfer of tacit knowledge in an organization is influenced by organizational structure. If the professional connection network is structured to help individuals find those who know what, then knowledge transfer throughout the business becomes simple. Even if the organization's structure is hierarchical, but it allows workers to reach each other when they need required expertise, the hierarchical structure does not impede knowledge transfer. The importance of organizational structure in successful knowledge transfer may be described by the fact that recent research on knowledge sharing and transfer has stressed organizational structure as an essential component that supports or impedes knowledge transfer in the organization.
- vii. Culture has been identified as one of the most important factor that enables or impedes knowledge sharing and transfer

(Asrar-ul-Haq, & Anwar, 2016). Culture as a significant determinant has been examined extensively in the last five years in connection to knowledge sharing and transfer. Clan culture has been proven to have a favorable effect on individuals' tacit knowledge-sharing behavior. Culture acts as an antecedent to knowledge sharing, for example, innovative, community, and bureaucratic cultures tend to have a positive effect on the knowledge-sharing behaviors (Cavaliere & Lombardi, 2015). Innovative culture fosters lecturers' creativity, allowing them to produce solutions and share knowledge about those ideas with others. Bureaucratic culture, which emphasizes rigorous adherence to rules and processes, has been proven to have a favorable relationship with lecturers' knowledge-sharing behavior.

viii. **Absorptive capacity** Lack of absorptive capacity has been identified as a barrier to knowledge sharing and transfer. Absorptive capacity can be defined as the ability of an individual to exploit external sources of knowledge (Boyes, 2016). Absorptive capacity depends, in a great deal, on the previous related knowledge. Absorptive capacity is related to the receiver of the knowledge the relation of absorptive capacity with the use of ICT.

ix. **Other identified barriers** include: change in technology, lack of discussion boards, lack of resources; uniqueness of knowledge, which has been studied as a significant related variable of partial knowledge sharing; lack of appropriate systems and an absence of coordination; lack of attention and appreciation, and fear of being foolish; ambiguity in the content and context of knowledge.

Conclusion

The review has been able to establish that knowledge sharing and mentoring practices have not increased the quality of academic output of LIS educators in Nigerian. This is directly connected to the fact that knowledge sharing and mentoring practices is still very low among LIS educators due to factors such as lack of trust among LIS educators, lack of incentives and motivation, time and workload of the educators, lack of appropriate technological devices to share knowledge, organizational structure and lack of management support among others. However, failure of LIS educators to effectively engage in knowledge sharing and mentoring practices

among their colleagues will continue to render them ineffective in terms of quality academic output and by extension, it may also render many Nigerian library schools ineffective in terms of training of LIS students.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it is therefore recommended that the management of individual library school in Nigeria should strive to ensure greater improvement in terms of knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among LIS educators. Appropriate use of mechanism and strategy to promote knowledge sharing and mentoring practices among LIS educators will be a better option. Putting appropriate policy in place and use of appropriate motivational strategy to encourage knowledge sharing practices among LIS educators are also recommended.

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