

# Knowledge Sharing Among University Faculty Members

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## Abstract

Knowledge production is part of higher education institutions (HEIs) and knowledge sharing (KS) is extremely important in this regard. However, many higher education institutions have not embraced the need for knowledge sharing among their faculty members as an inevitable endeavor to succeed in providing knowledge to students and other individuals. This article highlights and discusses some effective ways of knowledge sharing among faculty members in higher education and emphasizes how these KS strategies help to promote quality teaching and research among faculty members to achieve the goal of higher education. Besides, it discusses the essence of KS, namely: it preserves knowledge; it is a necessary ingredient for personal growth; it makes learning accessible and convenient; it promotes unity and collaboration among faculty members; it identifies gaps and opportunities; it provides quality higher education and ensures better world. Further, the article underlines some challenges impeding KS ranging from individual to organization and technology, and provides appropriate remedies. Finally, the article highlights some effective ways of knowledge sharing encompassing speaking, writing and technology, which are crucial to assist university faculty members share knowledge among them.

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing, university faculty members, higher education

## 1. Introduction

Knowledge is today viewed as a factor of production together with land, labor and capital (Nassuora, 2011). It is of one of the innate inheritances endowed in every normal human being. Specifically, every individual has some level of knowledge. It is, however, a gift that differs from one person to the next, depending on the extent to which an individual has developed physically, socially and mentally, often based on what has been learned or experienced. From the time of birth to perhaps the time of demise, knowledge begins to be shared somehow from parents and people in the environment whether it is learning about a language or ways of doing things. Thus, one can certainly state that knowledge is a shared commodity of human kind.

As the world becomes more globalized, knowledge is at its center. In fact, one can argue that globalization itself is as a consequence of knowledge that has been translated into action. Accordingly, the term knowledge economy has come into the picture to demonstrate that world's growth and development is hinged on knowledge and information (Đonlagić, 2012). Hence, knowledge sharing is the most powerful tool that is propelling human development and societal progress.

Against this backdrop, knowledge sharing (KS) has become an extremely important phenomenon globally because knowledge is a determining factor for individual and social welfare (Kurtić & Đonlagić, 2012). Sohail and Daud (2009) define knowledge sharing as exchanging experience, events, thought or understanding with an expectation to gain more insights and comprehension about something for temporary curiosity. In the words of Maponya (2005), knowledge sharing relates to exchanging personal experiences, insights and knowledge with others and making knowledge readily accessible by creating linkages or networks between individuals or groups within a particular system, community or organization. This exemplifies the fact that knowledge sharing has the potential to advance the recipient and the sharer of knowledge, either directly or indirectly.

Based on its relevance, how knowledge is created, stored, managed or shared is vital for the society. Thus, Knowledge Management (KM) has now attained the status of a scientific discipline aimed at beguiling increased interest in research and practice (Fteimi & Lehner, 2016). Hence, many authors have acknowledged that knowledge sharing is academic institutions' natural activity (Hussein & Nassuora, 2011), as institutions are as a reservoir of KS. In other words, higher education institutions would cease to exist if they neglect this responsibility. Being fully aware of this role and ensuring its total fulfillment is vital to the higher education sub-sector. Already, higher education is viewed as very essential driver of socio-economic growth and sustainable development (Gbollie & David, 2014) and complete advantage (Kurtić & Đonlagić, 2012). Gbollie and David argued that human and societal progress highly rests on the administration of higher education due to its huge overarching impact, primarily on economic growth.

Higher education does not operate in isolation. To put it differently, it is not run by robots; higher education institutions are instituted, managed and run by human beings who themselves have been and are beneficiaries of knowledge sharing. But to carry out this echelon task of transforming others' minds, which is done through knowledge sharing, higher education faculty members too, need to be holistically prepared, ready and willing to disseminate knowledge sufficiently. How well these faculty members are capable, competent and proficient in

the performance of their duties is absolutely important not only to the institutions in which they work, but also to the global community. Simply put, the effective and proficient services of university faculty members serve as antecedents of a healthy and wholesome society. However, if faculty members do not perform accordingly, the image of the institution becomes tarnished. Hence, higher education institutions are ought to pull their resources in terms of human expertise, skills and competencies as a means of improving academic excellence, innovation in research and critical engagement with society. However, it is practically impossible to pull out what an individual does not possess as people can only give what they have.

Unfortunately, many higher education institutions have not embraced the need for knowledge sharing among its faculty members as an inevitable endeavor to their survivability. Suhaimee, Bakar and Alias (2006) found the existence of knowledge sharing culture in Malaysian higher education institutions was very low as only 29.4% of faculty members had this positive culture in their routine work. Maponya (2005) points out that in higher education; knowledge management has not been widely explored. As Bello and Oyekunle (2014) stressed, there is a need for higher institutions to strengthen organizational culture that promotes individuals to create, store and share knowledge. Bello and Oyekunle lamented that if academics are not willing to share knowledge across the institution, the effort of knowledge management will fail because knowledge sharing is more of a people-process practice than a technology-driven process. Omotayo (2015) argues that in order for organisations to manage knowledge efficiently, attention must be given to three key components - people, processes and technology. Omotayo adds that in essence, to ensure organization's success, emphasis should be to connect people, processes, and technology for the purpose of leveraging knowledge. The intensity of knowledge sharing behaviors has a positive influence on the innovative capabilities of a university (Iqbal, Rasli, Heng, Ali, Hassan, & Jolae, 2011).

Cultivating a culture of knowledge sharing that encompasses learning, innovation and creativity assists higher education institutions to respond to complex situations and solve difficult problems (Maponya, 2005). Consequently, it is extremely prudent to investigate how university faculty members participate in this knowledge sharing pursuit so that they would be in a better position to perform their functions remarkably well. This is critical because knowledge sharing is regarded as a fundamental means through which organizational competitive advantage can be reached as creating awareness about the relevance of sharing knowledge (Maponya, 2005).

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to highlight and discuss some effective ways of knowledge sharing among faculty members in higher education. Besides, this article draws from these ways of knowledge sharing and emphasizes how these KS strategies help to promote quality teaching and research among faculty members to achieve the goal of higher education. It is argued that knowledge sharing among university members is a recipe for any successful higher education institution and it must be prioritized by all. In view of its purpose, this article firstly highlights the essence of knowledge sharing among university faculty members and emphasizes its vital nature for more effective and functional tertiary education institutions. Afterwards, it pinpoints out some potential challenges impeding knowledge sharing efforts by university faculty members. Finally, the article identifies and discusses effective ways of knowledge sharing among faculty members as part of deriving a logical solution to knowledge sharing hindrances geared towards enabling higher education institutions to fulfill their goal of the providing quality tertiary education to the society.

## **2. Essence of knowledge sharing**

As emphasized previously, knowledge sharing is inevitable for institutional growth and society development. Hussein and Nassuora (2011) indicated that knowledge facilitates improved ability to develop new and market-focused strategic plans and competitiveness and responsiveness for research grants, contracts, and commercial opportunities. According to Hussein and Nassuora, knowledge management brings together three core organizational resources; people, processes and technologies to enable an organization to use and share information effectively. As the driver of knowledge sharing, higher education needs to be fully aware of the critical importance to enable its faculty members to perform more effectively. Hence, the following section provides justifications while knowledge sharing is essential for university faculty members.

*Knowledge sharing as core responsibility of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) faculty members:* It is obvious that knowledge sharing forms the innate basis for HEIs. Since faculty members constitute this formation, they are, with no doubt, drivers of this responsibility as they transmit knowledge to students and other individuals. In order to perform this function expeditiously, it is essential for faculty members to be fully equipped, getting up-to-date information and updating the old knowledge, which is important for this task. Because knowledge is not static, most of knowledge changes from time to time as a consequence of numerous reasons including evolution, technology, climate and innovation. Thus, higher education faculty members must share knowledge among themselves to be better prepared for onward transmission to students, community and the world as a whole. As a matter of fact, they share a common goal of knowledge in order for them to have a fulfilling professional life.

*Knowledge shared is knowledge preserved:* When one takes a retrospective look at the past, about a century ago, it can be noted that many have come and are gone. This is a characteristic of every living creature, to live and die. But though some individuals have disappeared from the surface of the earth, the knowledge they shared through discoveries, inventions, books, articles among others still exist and continue to impact the world up to the present. This goes without saying that it is very essential for knowledge to be preserved, particularly among university faculty members, who have the principal responsibility of knowledge sharing. This is evident by the fact that university faculty members create and share knowledge through teaching, research and publications.

Considering the fact that human circumstances dictate continual changes, creating new knowledge every time is not enough if there is no means to preserve it; there must be measures to ensure that knowledge does not extinct. For instance, in one academic year individuals in various departments write papers about new ideas or a contribution to the old knowledge to fulfill certain requirements. The biggest question is where are all these ideas kept; on papers, coded and kept in computers, shelved in department offices and library shelves? Faculty members must make effort to cultivate and preserve such knowledge for the betterment of the society before they are lost. This would ensure smooth continuity even in terms of retirement, resignation, or death of any of the faculty members.

*Knowledge sharing as a necessary ingredient for personal growth:* Individuals, who come to knowledge based organizations like higher education institutions, do possess some levels of knowledge. Though from different backgrounds and dissimilar capabilities, brought together under one purpose, it is absolutely vital for faculty members to share knowledge and experiences for their own good and the entity. Like banks and monetary organizations need investments to grow, university faculty members need to share knowledge with colleagues to grow as well. As it is often said, the best way to retain or accentuate an idea is to teach it, hence, investing or sharing knowledge is the way personal knowledge further develops. In other words, taking out what is in one's hand will help him/her to gather additional knowledge from different directions. For example, when one person saves money in a bank he /she gets interest. The interest comes after the bank uses the money for different investments; thus, the person who saved the money gets the share from the profit of the bank. In the same way, a person who shares knowledge either through research or other ways has the chance of getting additional ideas, which promotes personal growth. In short, faculty members of higher education entities are required to go beyond the sharing of knowledge with their own students and with their colleagues as well.

*Learning accessibility and convenience:* In order to ensure smooth knowledge sharing, university faculty members must avail themselves to share experiences and ways to effectively deliver collectively. This is appropriate to guarantee better working environment, making it much friendlier and enjoyable. In other words, faculty members will easily be able to count on each other and to benefit from available knowledge, thus promoting the vision of tertiary education. Obviously, making learning accessible and convenient to students must first begin within those who are going to do so because if they are not ready, students will not get the best from them.

*Promoting unity and collaboration among faculty members (speaking one language):* As it is often said 'in unity there is strength', united and collaborative university faculty members are capable of delivering better results. It is the various contributions and expertise that are brought on board that would help to create better universities and in return, result to better quality tertiary education for learners. If they are united and work together, there is a high possibility for them to speak one language, avoid inconsistencies in the knowledge sharing process to students and other individuals. After studying different master's theses in the same department of a particular university written over a 20 year period, Ngulube (2005) found that though the thesis writers were committed to high standard, they did not uniformly relate their research stories. Ngulube attributed the non-uniformity to lack of knowledge sharing among researchers and supervisors in the department. Unarguably, producing high quality research articles and publications is not only an achievement for one academic field, but also for the entity as a whole. Thus, it is expedient for experts to have common understanding and share knowledge about it.

It is clear that faculty members like any other individuals are not perfect; they have strengths and weaknesses in their own specializations in single or multiple fields. Unity and collaboration is powerful for mitigating the weaknesses and cultivating strengths. This can be promoted by their willingness and desire to share ideas and manuscripts among others. Definitely, research projects which are done collaboratively with different members are much better than a project done by single person as different thoughts are galvanized. This serves as one of the bases through which new knowledge is created and shared.

*Identifying gaps and opportunities:* In addition to previously mentioned points, knowledge sharing is a means to identify gaps and opportunities. It is through interactions with others that one truly understands himself and colleagues. Thus, as university faculty members avail themselves, the chances are high that they will grow better. Besides, it is through exchanges that faculty members deeply comprehend research areas that have not been investigated, where more work or novel ideas worth exploring is needed.

Further, the identification of gaps by university faculty members helps to avoid duplication of knowledge.

Dhamdhare (2015) asserts that it is not enough to only create knowledge, but rather it should be placed where it can be found. Dhamdhare believes this helps to curb duplication of knowledge as researchers would not have to waste their time on findings that have been reported. Duplication of knowledge has negative impact on the motivation of the person who spends his / her energy on conducting research as time and money of the researcher and the organization are often wasted. In other words, knowledge sharing avoids reinventing the wheel. On the other hand, duplication transcends beyond repeating the work or knowledge of others. Similarly, duplication relates to repetition of mistakes that have been made before. If there are no clear ways of finding out about past experiences, the next person is likely to go on the same road of the previous person. This can be avoided by sharing knowledge. Sharing knowledge and experiences help people plan better based on past experiences and enable them move further. The responsibility of higher education institutions is to establish knowledge sharing programs for different groups of people and for researchers in particular.

*Providing quality higher education and ensuring better world:* Higher education plays a significant role in balancing environmental, societal and economic development as well as improves quality of life (Ogbodo, Efang & Ikpe, 2013). Overall, the goal of every tertiary education institution is to provide quality education. What differs from one institution to the other is the strategy employed to accomplish this great task of offering quality education to the student population. It is contended that one of the best ways to ensure this is through effective knowledge sharing mechanisms among faculty members who are implementers of this goal. Dhamdhare (2015) suggests that knowledge sharing leads to better return on investment; better bibliographic control of tacit knowledge; better dissemination of organizational goals and practices; providing value added services; sharing valuable knowledge among different types of users and developing collaborative practices; solving problems using the literature; generating new knowledge and concept, and centralizing data. Based on the aforementioned, coupled with other clear available pieces of evidence, providing quality education is possible with organizations like higher education institutions that appreciate and take appropriate steps to promote KS among members, translating into more educated and productive graduates and in turn resulting into a better world.

### **3. Ways of knowledge sharing**

Knowledge sharing is all about individuals. It requires knowledge creation, knowledge mediation and knowledge application (Ogbodo et al., 2013). Ways of knowledge sharing are mediators which facilitate a sharing of knowledge to be easier, faster, clearer and more detailed. In general, ways of knowledge sharing facilitate information to reach the target persons. This aspect is very crucial because it leads to the fulfillment of knowledge sharing endeavors. To figure out the effective ways of KS, the primary thing to consider is the type of organization because effective ways of knowledge sharing are dictated by the context of an organization. It may be different from organization to organization; but can be adopted according to the context.

In previous studies, different instruments and ways of knowledge sharing are mentioned (Xia, 2013; Hussein & Nassuora, 2011; Toro & Joshi, 2015). However, there is little or no knowledge about sharing toolkit for higher education institutions as other organizations. Preparing a toolkit is helpful to have a clear image of how to share knowledge in different ways and to clearly understand their strengths and weaknesses from higher education context. Based on available toolkit literature from other organizations, this article proposes effective ways of knowledge sharing in higher education for faculty members, which may be used for similar purposes in other requisite institutions.

To share knowledge properly applying different ways in one organization is very important. The reason for using different ways is to help every person share his or her knowledge according to one's needs. Individuals have preferences on how they share knowledge. Some people like to share knowledge through writing and others speaking. For example, a person who enjoys knowledge sharing through speaking could be given a chance in meetings and socialization events. On the other hand, a person who prefers writing to speaking could be given an opportunity to share their knowledge through writing. As an organization, higher education institutions should use every means to get the knowledge from their staff in different ways. If an organization uses a single or few ways of KS, it may ignore some people. In short, an organization that uses different ways of KS may be advantageous as it benefits from tacit and explicit knowledge of its employees.

It is noteworthy that there are different ways of knowledge sharing. Basically, the ways of knowledge sharing can be categorized into speaking, writing and information technology (Tsui, Chapman, Schnirer & Stewart, 2006). Although each way has its own advantages and disadvantages, an organization can use them simultaneously to stimulate holistic and effective ways of knowledge sharing. Notwithstanding, if one way is not effective in a particular situation, an individual has the opportunity to utilize other means to ensure the attainment of the desired knowledge. Figure 1 shows categories of knowledge sharing and some basic means used to communicate in each of the categories.

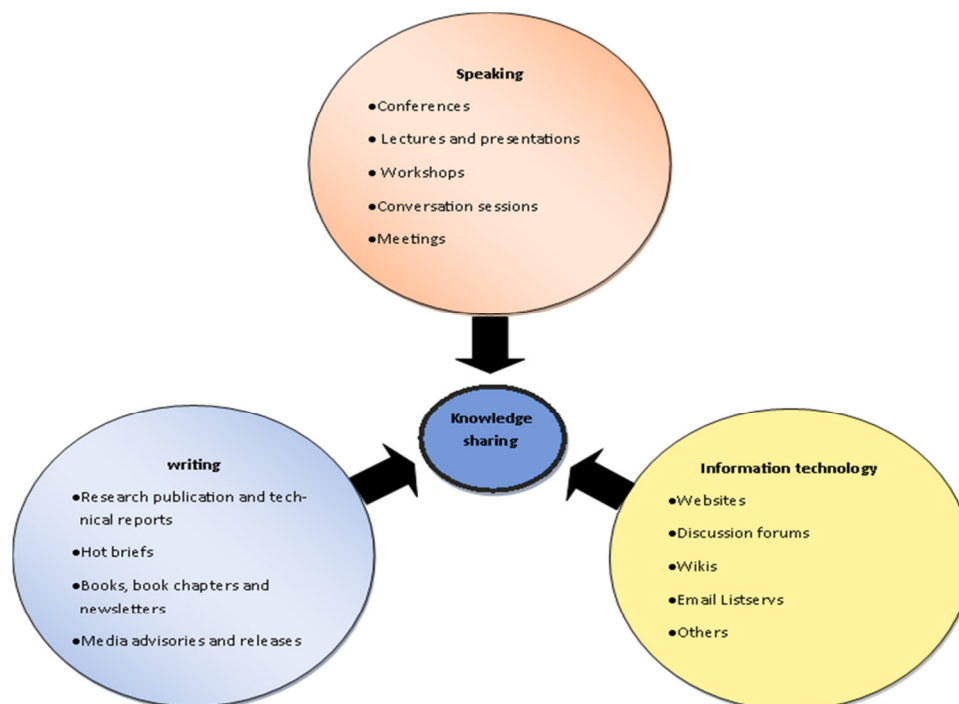


Figure 1: Three major ways of communication and their interrelationships  
*Speaking*

Face-to-face conversation is a natural way of communication. Speaking includes formal and informal conversations. Higher education faculty members communicate verbally in different situations, like informally asking for some information or formal presentation at seminars and meetings. In any of the cases, faculty members speak out about their thoughts and share knowledge with others. Some of the means through which spoken knowledge-sharing strategies are used include: conferences, lectures and presentations, workshops, conversation sessions, and meetings (Tsui et al., 2006). These strategies are elaborated in the section that follows.

*Conferences:* Conferences are gatherings of different researchers, higher education administrators, lecturers and policy-makers from different geographical areas and backgrounds to discuss and present their findings as well as explore new ideas in a target area. Although conferences are considered a traditional way of KS (Tsui, Chapman, Schnirer & Stewart, 2006), they give opportunity to those concerned to discuss and share their knowledge with others. Although conferences require some resources, they have the tendency to instill dynamism and creativity in faculty members to perform better and be more desirous of growing professionally.

*Lectures and presentations:* Lectures and presentations are the other ways to share knowledge. The main idea behind this, which makes it different from conferences, is that it requires inviting a speaker internally or externally. Normally, the presenter makes a presentation on a particular topic or idea. Even if participants are not active, they are likely to acquire some knowledge shared by the presenter.

*Workshops and seminars:* Workshops and seminars are training gatherings. With varying time and number of people, they are more participatory and collaborative. During the process, participants actively engage the problem at hand and discuss until they find a solution or reach a common understanding.

*Conversation sessions:* Though less popular than workshops, lectures, and presentations, conversation sessions (also known as consultation sessions) (see Tsui, 2006), are gradually gaining relevance, particularly at meetings/conferences. Through this medium, knowledge may be effectively shared as it can create a very good impression.

*Meetings:* As an organization, higher education institutions have their own divisions. Each division has small and large meetings regularly to disseminate most recent issues related to their departments or to report their current state of affairs. This is one of the most active ways knowledge could be shared with the team.

#### *Writing*

Two-way, face-to-face communication is an ideal way to share knowledge. However, it is not always possible to get people to talk face-to-face (Tsui et al., 2006) as it takes time and effort. Higher education institutions are growing rapidly in number and size. This means, knowledge is somehow scattered in different places and to make face-to-face communication may seem quite difficult. The best option is through the use of written communication. According to Tsui (2006), writing is one of the permanent ways of knowledge sharing, as storing and keeping the information/knowledge is absolutely important. Obviously, the writing process may seem quite slow but it is extremely rewarding because after it is written, it is likely to remain accessible,

especially published work, for use at any time by a person in need.

Written documents need prior planning; organizing of ideas the way they make sense to the reader is crucial because the chance to explain or clarify them is often limited. Thus, the writer should be clear as much as possible. Written documents do have limitations. Once documents are published, they may become outdated and may not be applicable to current realities. However, they are a good start for the expansion of knowledge. In knowledge based organizations, particularly higher education institutions there are a lot of written documents with vast knowledge. Some of these written documents include research publications and technical reports, hot briefs, book and book chapters, newsletters, media advisories and releases (Tsui et al., 2006).

*Research Publications and Technical Reports:* Research publications and technical reports are the basic ways of communication in knowledge based organizations like higher education institutions. These ways appear to be the oldest and most used ways of communication (Tsui et al., 2006). However, their ways of writing are only understood by people who have research knowledge in that area because technical terms used are discipline based. In addition to this, it is often difficult to get all publications because some are not freely accessible or sometimes are limited hardcopies.

*Hot Briefs:* Hot briefs constitute an easy way to access articles as they often provide one page summaries of research articles in a simple language. Easily understanding necessary information contained in the hot briefs prevents readers from reading big research papers.

*Books, book chapters and newsletters:* Books and book chapters have bigger volume than journal articles. They can be subject specific or general. Because of their volume there is an opportunity for them to explain broader knowledge towards the topic raised. Researchers, policymakers and educators can use them for detail information. On the other hand, newsletters are also helpful knowledge sharing means in that there are a collection of articles from one organization or higher education. The audience can easily find many articles together in one newsletter. Newsletters can be available in print and electronic versions. In addition to articles, newsletters raise awareness on new ideas and innovations. Although they have limited length, they are also good ways of knowledge sharing.

*Media advisories and releases:* Higher education institutions are of critical importance to the society. Therefore, the society should know what is going on within higher education for better understanding and quality assurance. Media advisories are written documents sent to the media to get press coverage; this is one of the finest means to share knowledge by telling new stories and providing much needed information to the public.

*Technology as key medium of KS*

The progress being made in the area of knowledge sharing can largely be attributed to technological advancement. Both spoken and written means of communication can be achieved through the use of technology. People can easily talk with one another from any part of the world at any time as well as share written documents in split seconds. Tsui et al. (2006) stressed that technology plays a crucial transformational role and it is a key part of changing the corporate culture to knowledge sharing. In many ways, it is technology that has made knowledge sharing a reality – in the past it was impossible to share knowledge or work collaboratively with co-workers around the globe. Thus, the reason for not sharing knowledge due to limited space is gradually diminishing, particularly in developed countries. Although internet challenge still remains a key obstacle in many societies, means of knowledge sharing are fast becoming prominent. A number of information technology mechanisms to facilitate smooth knowledge sharing has been discussed. The four different online channels are websites, discussion forums, Wikis and email listservs (Tsui et al., 2006).

*Websites:* Websites appear to be the least interactive of the four online strategies, but enhancements in website design and online technologies are resulting in increased website interactivity. Contents of websites are typically authored by one or several individuals, sometimes representing an organization, and may leave users with little input as to the content available online. This medium can also be utilized by faculty members to share their lectures and presentations online with people around the world.

*Discussion Forums:* Online discussion forums, also otherwise termed as message boards, internet forums, and bulletin boards are web-based applications that may be meaningful for knowledge sharing among faculty members. This can create a good opportunity to promote discussions on issues of interest with some level of moderation.

*Wikis:* Another means of knowledge sharing is wiki, a type of website that is editable by online visitors, allowing for collective creation of content (Kosonen, 2008). According to Kosonen, wikis represent an open source technology for information content, focusing on incremental creation and enhancement by a variety of contributors. In particular, wikis allow people to engage in the processes of exchange through collaborative editing (Kosonen, 2008). Because contributed contents are always subject to editing and discussion by other users, wikis may offer a way to share knowledge that allows stakeholders to contribute as equals, rather than having experts disseminate knowledge to non-experts.

*Email Listservs:* Email listservs, or electronic mailing lists, are a special use of e-mail that facilitates the distribution of information to numerous users. Listservs are typically organized around a shared interest of some

sort and have a list “owner,” who is responsible for setting guidelines around acceptable content and behavior of subscribers. A number of mailing list software programs make mailing-list management accessible to anyone who is moderately web-savvy, which are relatively accessible to huge numbers of people. For a listserv, more obligation may be placed on the administrator when the use of the mailing list is inappropriate.

*Others: Interview and video:* Part of getting knowledge shared is through interview and video. For instance, a good interview of a knowledgeable person helps to obtain a complete and honest information that may be helpful to someone in need. On the other hand, the use of video has been embedded into knowledge management. Communicating knowledge via video requires recording an individual during an interviewing or discussion. His or her story can be transferred to different channels for further use.

#### **4. Potential challenges to knowledge sharing**

The previous part of this article points out and discusses the essence of knowledge sharing and how beneficial it is to university faculty members and the operation of higher education institutions in general. From the dissect of the significance of KS, one may tend to wonder why knowledge sharing is not considered very paramount by individuals and institutions. With this in mind, it is necessary to highlight some of the potential challenges to knowledge sharing and how they can be mitigated. Previously, several studies have been conducted to find out some of the barriers that hinder the tasks of knowledge sharing (Riege, 2005; Sohail & Daud, 2009). From the literature, these barriers have been categorized into groups: individual, organization, and technological (Sohai & Daud, 2009).

##### *Individual challenges*

Knowledge sharing is directly related to human beings. Because of human differences, there are a number of KS hindrances among individuals. In the first place, knowledge sharing entails that an individual either serves as a sharer or a receiver of knowledge. In any of the two cases, the person is participating in knowledge sharing. Individual based problems can be divided into two sub-groups: knowingly and unknowingly. Knowingly individual barriers are when a person purposely become unwilling to share his knowledge, while the unwillingness comes because of different reasons. Unknowingly individual barriers are when a person fails to share knowledge because he/she does not know whether someone is in need or does not know how to go about it. The following points further discuss the knowingly challenges.

*Self-interest/personal interest:* One of the biggest hindrances to KS is personal interest, which sometimes translate into selfishness. In the field of academia, selfishness impedes the progress of oneself, colleagues, students and the institution in general. This is done if the person knows the benefits of sharing knowledge, but fails or feels reluctant to participate in the sharing process. Self-seeking makes one to think only about himself/herself rather than the bigger picture. The ripple effect of this is that performance is thwarted.

*Fear of losing power/control:* In higher education some faculty members, especially those in management level positions fear losing their positions if they share their knowledge. Thus, from knowledge-is-power perspective, some individuals tend to construe it to mean that knowledge sharing with colleagues or subordinates is one way of losing power. In other words, giving important information of what one knows makes the person less powerful. However, in most cases this is not true because when one stops sharing knowledge there is a high possibility for the person’s knowledge to diminish.

*Fear of idea/knowledge being snatched/taken without attribution:* Another hindrance to KS among faculty members is the perception that their shared ideas or knowledge may be snatched by their colleagues without any form of recognition or attribution. As a result, some faculty members tend to hide their knowledge, which is not beneficial to the entity and the world in general. This is because the knowledge bearer may have some control over knowledge for a moment, but he/she does not have control over unforeseen circumstances including forgetfulness and death.

*Self-pride:* As explained earlier, for knowledge sharing to take place, there must be both the sharer and the receiver; and also both must be willing and ready to participate in the KS process. When pride is possessed by any of them, it is practically impossible for effective knowledge sharing to take place. The main challenge is when both the anticipated knowledge sharer and the potential recipient have contrasting prides. The person who knows it may think it is belittling to condescend potential recipient, while the potential recipient has fear of losing face (or being humiliated) by asking for certain knowledge. This attitude according to Davison (n.d), is different contextually, but for the society with collective culture, losing face is very humiliating as low self-esteem to ask for help or to share one own knowledge for the person who is higher than him or her.

*Poor verbal and non-verbal communication:* In order for knowledge to be shared, communication is a matter of must. Hence, higher education faculty members, like any other human beings, have their personal limitations, inclusive of poor verbal and non-verbal communication. As a result, some faculty members avoid opportunities to share their knowledge with colleagues. It is noteworthy that mastery of every task or skill comes from practice, hence, willingness to take the challenge can go a long way in making one much better and professional.

*Lack of social networks or platforms for KS:* Although some strides have been made to create KS platforms like seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings among others, equal chances are not being provided to all faculty members as some people tend to dominate the show.

*Lack of time:* One of the much talked about have-nots of faculty members, is time. It is not always enough for everyone. Thus, depending on the responsibility and the load of a person, he or she may be unwilling to take extra burden to participate in knowledge sharing.

*Unknowingly not sharing knowledge:* On the other hand, people unknowingly cannot share their knowledge. Reasons for this may range from low awareness of the value of sharing one's own knowledge, unawareness of whom is in need of help and lack of social network to share knowledge. Under the circumstance of low awareness of the value of sharing, this does not relate to selfishness, but the individual may be unaware about who is in need of assistance. This may happen as a result of none active participation in an organization or lack of a platform to do so. However, in some instances, there may exist networks, but because of one's personality, the person may not be fully involved. Thus, the individual may not be readily available to share knowledge or experience with others.

#### *Organizational challenges*

Organizations like higher education institutions have different systems and policies. These systems and policies have direct or indirect impact on knowledge sharing activities within an organization. Sohail and Daud (2009) discloses that at organizational level, the barriers are related to factors such as lack of infrastructure and resources, the accessibility of formal and informal meeting spaces and the physical environment. According to Sohail and Daud, organizational dimensions such as organizational structure, organizational culture and reward systems are among enablers that facilitate organizations to maximize their knowledge sharing. Some of them relate to managerial problems like poor leadership skills and not knowing how to create a vibrant knowledge sharing culture; unavailability of events which encourages formal and informal knowledge sharing, strict one way hierarchical knowledge flow (from top to down approach every aspect of KS); and limited necessary infrastructure, which facilitates easy knowledge sharing such as no enough space for meetings, computers and internet access for technological knowledge sharing.

Another challenge an organization may create that hampers knowledge sharing is lack of reward/motivation/recognition for would-be knowledge sharers. It is true that some individuals are intrinsically motivated to share knowledge, others need to be motivated to share knowledge. If there are no available means through which higher education institutions can reward or recognize faculty members who are active participants in KS, efforts to promote knowledge with everyone in need would be hindered.

#### *Technological challenges*

Technology is among key contributing factors for the increased globalization and advancement of the society. The current level of technological advancement had made life much easier and more convenient. However, in many settings, this awesome opportunity is underutilized. Riege (2005) thinks that at technological level, hindrances to KS are correlated to factors such as unwillingness to use application, unrealistic expectations of IT systems, and difficulties in building, integrating and modifying technology-based systems. According to (Ogbodo et al., 2013), getting policy makers and practitioners to use new knowledge as evidence is not always easy. For instance, if a particular university creates new application to enable its faculty members to interact and share knowledge, some members may not be interested in the technology, but rather want to follow the conventional or old ways of knowledge sharing. This impedes the process.

## **5. Possible remedies to KS challenges**

Based on the aforementioned challenges, it is important to provide some possible solutions. Hence, this paper wishes to proffer the following remedies, which are tailored to individual, organizational and technological:

### *Individual*

*Avoiding individualism:* It is essential for every faculty member to think that whatever he/she owns mentally is owned by his colleagues and the institution as a whole. In other words, it is advisable for faculty members to think that their successes are successes of colleagues and failures likewise. Further discussion on specific suggestions to reduce individualism follows:

*Trust and reliance of each other:* In order to promote better working relationship, trust is very critical. It is only through trust that an individual would be confident to share knowledge with others in different ways. This helps to increase the likelihood of knowledge sharing and avoid extinction of knowledge. Hence, it is appropriate for faculty members to build trust and alliances as well as be open and free to share knowledge with one another as they strive to make a positive impact to the society.

*Humility and willingness to solicit or receive KS:* It is often said, no individual has monopoly over knowledge. This means everyone in one way or the other has limitations and strengths when it comes to knowledge; hence, each individual stands the chance of benefiting from knowledge sharing. Accordingly, it is suggested that both the sharer and the receiver of knowledge exercises humility, focusing on the benefits they



may accrue from the sharing of knowledge.

*Strengthening verbal and non-verbal communication skills:* Communication is a powerful tool in life. In the area of knowledge, it is even more powerful. Consequently, it is suggested that university faculty members strengthen their communication skills to objective the desired goal of KS. It is noteworthy that mastery of every task or skill comes from practice, hence, willingness to take the challenge can go a long way in making one much better and professional.

*Creating social networks or platforms for KS:* The mediums to share knowledge are very essential to get information shared. Thus, more innovative ways must be created and promoted to foster knowledge sharing among university faculty members. Emphasis should be placed on getting individuals involved based on the fact that every person has something to offer.

*Incorporating KS time in daily routines:* It is important for every faculty member to see knowledge sharing as part of their responsibilities for their personal growth and the growth of others. Therefore, time to share knowledge with others must highly be considered and made part of daily routines.

*Organizational (vibrant knowledge culture):*

Ensuring a smooth platform for knowledge sharing in an organization requires a number of things. Some of these things include: infrastructure and resources, the accessibility of formal and informal meeting spaces and the physical environment. Additionally, Sohail and Daud (2009) name organizational dimensions such as organizational structure, organizational culture and reward systems as stimulants that expedite organizations to maximize their knowledge sharing. Riege (2005), stresses that the allocation of human or process-oriented resources such as skilled personnel, finance, and information and communication technology, can have an impact on creating an effective knowledge-sharing environment. It is, therefore, suggested that organizations like higher education institutions work to create such enabling environment to easy and smooth means of knowledge sharing. Leadership of an institution plays an important role in creating necessary conditions for favorable or unfavorable environment including knowledge sharing knowledge. According to Wang and Noe (2009), management and supervisor support is critical for the success of KM and knowledge sharing initiatives. Wang and Noe indicate that organizations should require and reward managers for providing the support necessary for encouraging knowledge sharing among employees. For instance, if higher education leadership has reward/motivation/recognition for would-be knowledge sharers, faculty members could be motivated to act in this direction. Therefore, there is need for available means through which higher education institutions can reward or recognize faculty members who are active participants in KS to promote their knowledge efforts. In short, knowledge sharing should be incorporated in the goals of higher institutions like training. Wang and Noe (2009), argues that knowledge sharing can be enhanced by increasing employees' self-efficacy through training.

*Technological*

Technology has become a powerful medium for societal progress, and taking advantage of it can make knowledge sharing even better. According to Riege (2005), there is little doubt that technology can serve as a facilitator to boost and support knowledge sharing processes by making knowledge sharing easier and more effective. Similarly, knowledge sharing is a people and organisational issue; hence, hybrid solutions, which entail necessary interactions between people and technology to facilitate sharing practices are recommended (Davenport, 1996 as cited in Riege, 2005). To maximize its benefits, leaderships of the higher education institutions must foster technology in their systems and encourage faculty to show willingness to use application, have realistic expectations of IT systems, while continuously building, integrating and modifying technology-based systems. In short, technology is multi-faceted; hence it is necessary for an organisation to integrate an infrastructure that supports various types of communication (Riege, 2005).

## 6. Conclusion

From all indications, knowledge sharing is absolutely vital for human kind due to our interdependence and interconnectedness. Knowledge shared with one individual in one environment could impact the entire globe and lead to the betterment of the society. Thus, higher education institutions as the primary knowledge management organization, which operations rely on faculty members, must fully be cognizant of the critical role of knowledge sharing. KS among faculty members lays the basis for them to be able to meticulously fulfill their tasks of transforming the minds of people and they can only do that if they possess such knowledge. As higher education has been described as the foremost critical sub-sector for societal transformation (see Gbollie & David, 2014), it is important to dissect knowledge sharing among university faculty members. The article has highlighted and discussed some effective ways of knowledge sharing among faculty members in higher education and emphasized how these KS mechanisms help to promote quality teaching and research among faculty members to achieve the goal of higher education. In addition, it has discussed the essence of knowledge sharing: it preserves knowledge; it is a necessary ingredient for personal growth; it makes learning accessible and convenient; it promotes unity and collaboration among faculty members (speaking one language); it identifies gaps and opportunities; it provides quality higher education and ensures better world. Further, the

article highlighted some challenges impeded KS ranging from individual to organization and environmental (technological) and provided mitigation strategies. Finally, the paper has highlighted some effective ways of knowledge sharing encompassing speaking, writing and technology. In a nutshell, knowledge sharing is all about people interaction and it is imperative for a more transformed world.

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