

Assessment of Knowledge Management Strategies Adopted by Special Libraries in Kenya: A Survey of Trans -Nzoia County.

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is an idea that comprises a set of strategies and practices used to create, capture, store and spread knowledge and experience within the institution. Organisations should develop a culture that embraces learning and sharing in order to change and improve knowledge levels in an organization. Organizations should therefore come up with innovative ideas for sourcing and storing relevant information for retrieval and use in the future. The purpose of this paper study was to assess the extent of knowledge management sharing and knowledge management strategies used by special libraries in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a target population of 684 respondents. The study applied Cooper and Schindler recommendation formula of 10- 30% to obtain the sample size. The study chose to use 16% in order to get the right sample size, which was 129 respondents. Stratified random sampling was first applied to categorize special libraries in Trans-Nzoia County into different strata, thereafter simple random sampling was used to pick the respondents from each stratus. Purposive sampling was used to select the overall supervisors who were interviewed. Selected staff and users of special libraries responded by filling questionnaires. Qualitative data from the interview schedules was coded and analyzed thematically and the report presented in narrative form, while data from questionnaires was analyzed by the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in form of tables, bar graphs and percentages. Findings from the study reveal that though most special libraries have strategies in place that ensure knowledge inventories, few of them are willing to share these repositories.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge management, Special libraries, Information, Strategies

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I. Introduction

Knowledge has become a key resource in the present information and knowledge era; due to increased competition and ever changing environments, organizations are beginning to realize that there is a vast and largely untapped asset diffused around in the organization – knowledge (Gupta, Iyer & Aronson, 2000). Until recently, information specialists played the role of gatekeeper in handling organization documents and formal knowledge. Librarians' primary concerns were the management of book collections and journals (Cronin, 2012). Today librarians are transforming themselves and bracing for a more active and dynamic role as we move closer and closer to the information society.

In an information society, information specialists will encounter rapidly changing environments that require diverse skills, new thinking, and broadened perspectives. Information specialists must be prepared to develop innovative ideas, capture and source for information, process and disseminate information, and demonstrate good management practices (Smythe, 2013). In many organizations' archives lies a gold mine of data. If these data could be retrieved, analyzed and documented, it could steer such organizations to new competitive positions in their respective industries. The challenge is how to get all these vast amounts of data and information analyzed meaningfully to the advantage of the concerned organizations. This challenge ushered in the knowledge age. Knowledge discovery and data mining techniques are key to knowledge management (Todd, 2003).

In a competitive global world, the measurement of the worth of the organization lies not just in its material wealth but also in the intangible assets/intellectual capital. These are the procedures, know-how, experience and skills that propel the organization into its highest level of proficiency and efficiency. Tacit Knowledge is normally controlled and owned by the employees in the organization. Traditionally, an organization responds by predicting and reacting using pre-programmed heuristics measures. Today, the organization demands from employees to be proactive and respond to the faster cycle of knowledge-creation. Sharing insights and best practices is a behavior that is critical to the success of any knowledge management system, yet getting individuals to share their knowledge is counter to the culture found in most organizations and this the biggest obstacle to successful knowledge management.

Knowledge sharing, is about contribution, respect for others' opinions and views, as long as all stakeholders are able to visualize the positive influences of information and appreciate the best way to practice using information; information can be effectively and profitably Transferred into knowledge. Information centers and corporate libraries are normally given the task to collect organize and manage information within the organization. Managing knowledge (formal and informal) within the organization is a challenging task. Informal knowledge management is more complex and different form that of formal or explicit knowledge. It requires dealing with human elements and closely related to human resource management, appraisal system, organization's culture and business practices. As organizations become aware of the value of keeping knowledge within the organization, they will require knowledge managers to manage knowledge within the organization and prevent knowledge flow. Thus, knowledge management goes beyond information management to include capturing skills, experiences and other type of informal knowledge. The main question which rises is whether information specialists are ready to take on the role of knowledge managers and deal with formal as well as informal knowledge.

The function of a special library is to provide efficient and effective information services for a defined group of customers, selection of the best available print and electronic information resources as well as a commitment to putting knowledge to work. Or in other words, linking the information user with the right information resource at the right time and also identify, retrieve, organize, repackage and present information in an actionable form so that the potential for goal attainment is maximized. Current Awareness Service [CAS] and Selective Dissemination of Information [SDI] are very common. Special libraries may be called libraries, information centers, information resource collections, or other names, typically decided by the institution that the library is attached to, and may or may not have a generally trained and qualified librarian on staff.

1.1. Location of study: Trans Nzoia County

Trans-Nzoia County is a County in the former Rift Valley Province, Kenya, located between the Nzoia River and Mount Elgon with its centre at the town of Kitale which is the capital and largest town of the County, and 380 km North West of Nairobi. The County borders Bungoma to the west, Uasin Gishu and Kakamega to the south, Elgeyo Marakwet to the east, West Pokot to the north and the republic of Uganda to North West. Trans Nzoia covers an area of 2495.5 square kilometers. Historically the area has been inhabited by the Kalenjin and Bukusu people. The County is largely Agricultural with both large scale and small scale wheat, maize and dairy farming. The County is fondly referred to as the basket of Kenya for its role in food production in the country. There many special libraries in Trans-Nzoia County, special libraries often have a more specific clientele than libraries in traditional educational or public settings, and deal with more specialized kinds of information. They are developed to support the mission of their sponsoring organization and their collections and services are more targeted and specific to the needs of their clientele.

1.2 Study Objective

The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge management strategies used by special libraries in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Question

What are the knowledge management strategies used by special libraries in Trans Nzoia County?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Knowledge Management Strategies

The review was based on proposed knowledge management strategies by some of the scholars in knowledge management. The major difference between the various approaches is that they emphasize different aspects of knowledge management; some strategies focus on knowledge, others on the business processes/areas, and others on the end results.

2.2 Knowledge Classification: Nonaka & Takeuchi's Matrix of Knowledge Types

One of the most widely quoted approaches to classifying knowledge from a Knowledge management perspective is that of Nonaka & Takeuchi (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Nonaka & Takeuchi analysis in their

“knowledge spiral “For knowledge management state that some of the most influential and helpful classifications are based on a combination of knowledge accessibility (i.e. where is the knowledge stored or located and in what form?) and knowledge Transformation (i.e. the flow of knowledge from one place to another and from one form to another). This matrix classifies knowledge as either explicit or tacit, and either individual or collective. Nonaka & Takeuchi also propose corresponding knowledge processes that Transform knowledge from one form to socialization (from tacit to tacit, whereby an individual acquires tacit knowledge directly from others through shared experience, observation, imitation and so on); externalization (from tacit to explicit, through articulation of tacit knowledge into explicit concepts); combination (from explicit to explicit, through a systematization of concepts drawing on different bodies of explicit knowledge); and internalization (from explicit to tacit, through a process of "learning by doing" and through a Verbalization and documentation of experiences). Nonaka & Takeuchi model the process of "organizational knowledge creation" as a spiral in which knowledge is "amplified" through these four modes of knowledge conversion. It is also considered that the knowledge becomes "crystallized" within the organization at higher levels moving from the Individual through the group to organizational and even inter-organizational levels.

2.3 Classification by Business Process: APQC International

Karl Wiig and the APQC (American Productivity and Quality Center), identified six emerging KM strategies in a study of organizations considered to be leading the way in this area. The strategies reflect the different natures and strengths of the organizations involved states (Wiig, 1997), and (Manasco, 1996). These strategies entails: Knowledge Strategy as Business Strategy, Intellectual Asset Management Strategy, Personal Knowledge Asset Responsibility Strategy, Knowledge Creation Strategy, Knowledge Transfer Strategy, and Customer-Focused Knowledge Strategy

2.4. Classification by Business Process: McKinsey & Company

Day and Wendler of McKinsey & Company, identified five knowledge strategies employed by large corporations

i) Developing and Transferring Best Practices

Like the "Knowledge Transfer Strategy" identified by Wiig and the APQC above, this strategy focuses on identifying best practices within an organization and spreading them across a dispersed network of locations.

ii) Creating a New industry from Embedded Knowledge

This approach is to recognize that an organization may have knowledge which it can exploit in new ways. In particular, it may have built up knowledge about its customers which reveals a gap in the market for a new product.

iii) Shaping Corporate Strategy around Knowledge

This strategy was identified from the experiences of Monsanto, which encompassed two very different business groups: a chemicals group and a life sciences group. The chemicals group was focused on best practice while the life sciences group was an innovation based business. The knowledge strategies for these two groups were perceived to be so different that Monsanto decided to sell off the chemicals group and concentrate on the life sciences business. This is an interesting example of the tensions between two very different KM strategies.

iv) Fostering and Commercializing Innovation

Similar to the Knowledge Creation Strategy identified by Wiig and the APQC above, this strategy focuses on establishing a competitive position by increased technological innovation and reduced time to market.

v) Creating a Standard by Releasing Proprietary Knowledge

The example of Netscape can be cited where they responded to the rapid decline of its market share in the internet browser market by making its source code publicly available at no cost. The strategy is an example of the "Intellectual Asset Management Strategy" identified by Wiig and the APQC study. In this case, Netscape felt that it could capitalize on a key asset (its source code) by giving it away. In return, it hopes to establish its browser as a widely used standard (increased by the adaptation to new specialty areas) and gain indirectly, by securing its share of a complementary product, namely server software. (Day & Wendler, 1998).

2.5 Linking Knowledge and End Results: Zack's Knowledge Strategy

Another approach to identifying what KM strategy to take is proposed by Michael Zack. Zack (1999) proposes a framework which helps an organization make an explicit connection between its competitive situation and a knowledge management strategy to help the organization maintain or (re)establish its competitive advantage. He makes it clear that while each organization will find its own unique link between knowledge and strategy, any such competitive knowledge can be classified on a scale of innovation relative to the rest of the particular industry as: core, advanced or innovative. Core knowledge is a basic level of knowledge required by all members of a particular industry. It does not represent a competitive advantage, but is simply the knowledge needed to be able to function in that sector at all. Advanced knowledge gives an

organization a competitive edge. It is specific knowledge which differentiates an organization from its competitors, either by knowing more than a competitor or by applying knowledge in different ways. Innovative knowledge is that which enables a company to be a market leader. It allows an organization to change the way a sector works and represents a significant differentiating factor from other organizations. Having identified the organization's competitive knowledge position, Zack's approach is to use a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) to identify the strategic gaps in an organization's knowledge. This allows the organization to identify where it has knowledge which it can exploit and where it needs to develop knowledge to maintain or grow its competitive position. This is achieved by analyzing the organization's knowledge position along two dimensions:

a) **Exploration vs. Exploitation**

This is "the degree to which the organization needs to increase its knowledge in a particular area vs. the opportunity it may have to leverage existing but underexploited knowledge resources."

b) **Internal vs. External Knowledge**

This refers to whether the knowledge is primarily within the organization or outside. Some organizations are more externally-oriented, drawing on publications, universities, consultants, customers, etc. Others are more internally-oriented, building up unique knowledge and experience which is difficult for competitors to imitate. Putting these two dimensions together, Zack describes organizations which are more exploitative of internal knowledge as having a "Conservative" knowledge management Strategy while those that are more innovative (exploring external knowledge) have a more "Aggressive" knowledge management Strategy. However, he points out that a knowledge management Strategy cannot be made without reference to competitors. Thus, some industries (where knowledge is changing more rapidly) tend to be characterized by more aggressive firms, while other industries are generally more conservative.

III. METHODOLOGY

Methodology defines the premises under which research was carried out. It entails the methods, techniques and procedures by which data was generated. It is thus a guide of how the research was conducted. This section covers the research methodology of the entire paper. It describes the research design, the target population, sample size, sampling procedures and data generation and analysis strategies.

3.1 Research design

The paper adopted descriptive survey design to collect data relating to the knowledge management strategies adoption by special libraries in Kenya with specific reference to Trans-Nzoia County. The researcher embraced descriptive survey design because it aimed at giving fine details on the distribution of an occurrence in a population and therefore establishing the facts in form frequencies and percentages.

3.2 Target Population

The target population used in this study was 244 participants; these included, top managers, library staff and general library users of special libraries in Trans-Nzoia County. Table 1 shows the distribution of the target population.

Table 1 Target population

Categories	Target population
Top management	60
Library staff	60
General library staff	124
Total	244

3.3 Sample size and Sampling Procedure

The study adopted Cooper and Schinder (2006) recommendation formula which states that, 10-30% is enough to get a representative sample depending on the target population; therefore, the study adopted 30% as a percentage to be used to get the sample size. This is because this percentage gives enough sample size hence the correct data for the study. Table 2 shows the derived sample size.

Table 2. Sample Size

Categories	Target population	Frequency Sample Size
Top management	60	$60 \times 30/100 = 18$
Library staff	60	$60 \times 30/100 = 18$

General library staff	124	$124 \times 30 / 100 = 37$
Total	244	73

A total of 55 sampled respondents representing library staff and general library staff were issued with questionnaires while 18 members of top level management were interviewed. Random sampling techniques were used; random sampling was preferred because each member got equal chance to be selected for the study hence eliminated biasness during sampling process.

Table 3 shows the profile of top management staff who were interviewed during the study.

Table 3: Profile for the Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Marital Status
Nekesa /P1	27	Female	Single
Beatrice/P2	29	Female	Married
Nafula/P3	31	Male	Married
Wafula/P4	24	Male	Single
Obuya/P5	27	Male	Single
Abel/P6	36	Male	Married
Cele/P7	33	Female	Married
BirgenP8	32	Female	Married
Abere/P9	23	Male	Single
Caro/P10	39	Female	Married
Abert/P11	47	Male	Married
Daisy/P12	37	Female	Married
Abner/P13	40	Male	Married
Adrew/P14	53	Male	Married
Akama/P15	50	Male	Married
Ben/P16	24	Male	Single
Ester/P17	23	Female	Single
Euni/P18	27	Female	Married

3.4 Data collection and Data Analysis

The study used questionnaires and interview schedule to collect data, the questionnaires had both structured and unstructured questions which generated quantitative data. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data inform of frequencies, mean and percentages, which was then summarized and presented using tables. Qualitative data from interview schedule was analyzed thematically.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Libraries as learning institutions stimulate academic and research activities through the provision of access to information resources which are the basis for knowledge acquisition. The quality of knowledge acquired from the library depends on is measured by the tremendous technological transformation that a library has undergone. The results presented relate to the extent of knowledge management sharing and knowledge management strategies adopted in special Libraries.

4.1 Extent of Knowledge Management Sharing

Libraries play a major part in knowledge sharing as it supports knowledge exchange in organizations and assists in the achievement of organizational performance. The mandate of libraries is information exchanged between and among people. Workers of an organisation must be willing to seek out knowledge that would be of benefit to them. Information technology can be used as a tool to share knowledge among people and institutions dispersed over a wide area.

4.2 Knowledge sharing in special libraries

The study sought to find out the frequency of knowledge sharing in special libraries. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: Frequency of knowledge sharing in special libraries

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	19	31
As need arises	25	41

Periodically	11	18
Others	06	10
Total	63	100

As can be seen from the table above 31% of the respondents share knowledge every day, 41% share knowledge as a need rises and 18% share knowledge periodically while only 10% did not have a specific time of sharing knowledge. Cumulatively from the findings, it's clear that knowledge is being shared in special libraries. However, it is important to point out that sharing knowledge on a needs basis is the most common. Therefore, the practice of knowledge sharing has an impact in transforming organisations.

Concerning knowledge sharing, nine respondents (Nekesa/P1, Daisy/P2, Wafula/P4, Cele/P7, Birgen/P8, Abert/P11, Abner/P13, Adrew/P14 & Moti/P19) said:

“The absence of knowledge based culture in organization, more so in special libraries is a key challenge to the management and sharing of knowledge, hence an impediment to organizational performance, therefore organizational culture and policy is only effective if put into practice, but if left on the paper, it is as good as nothing, in our case here, policies are there, but not implemented”

This confirms that there's high need for the documentation of knowledge management strategies, policies and procedures which provide guidelines for the generation, source, storage and dissemination in special libraries. Additionally, knowledge management strategies are beneficial to the special libraries by increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the use of library resources, while improving the working relationship among customers. These institutions use several ways to acquire and capture knowledge in these special libraries that include workshops and seminars which generate the knowledge bases through interactions and disseminations of information. Knowledge in these institutions is shared through written and verbal communication. Other means and ways that facilitate knowledge exchange and management are electronic format; electronic mails, video sharing and web services.

4.3 Knowledge Management Strategies adopted in Special Libraries

There are various ways in which knowledge management may be practiced in organisations; these include apprenticeships, employee rotation across areas, conferences, brainstorming retreats, cooperative projects across departments and initiation processes for new employees. This ensures that vital knowledge within an organisation is appropriately secured. The study sought to establish the extent to which knowledge management is practiced in special libraries in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. Therefore, it was important to establish whether the staff from various special libraries are involved in knowledge management within their organisations.

Table 5 shows responses from the questionnaire the results of knowledge management practices within organisations.

Table 5: Results of staff involved in knowledge management

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	79
No	13	21
Total	61	100

From the table, 79% of the respondents acknowledged their involvement in knowledge management at their various organisations while 21% of the respondents said they were not involved. This therefore indicates that a majority of the participants thus acknowledged their involvement in knowledge management within the organization therefore they have realized its importance.

Employees in special libraries create new knowledge and insights from trainings, further learning and symposia outside their work environment. In this regard experience and skills are key to effective knowledge management in special libraries. Most staff can improve their efficacy by sharing their experiences with each other at forums organized by their organizations.

Organizations with special libraries employ various technologies to manage information in order to increase management efficiency. The complexity or simplicity of the strategy dependent on the size of the organization and the nature knowledge they need to manage.

Table 6 shows the various knowledge management strategies adopted by special libraries in Trans Nzoia county.

Table 6: Knowledge management strategies adopted in special libraries

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Knowledge	21	34
Business process	23	38
End results	14	23
Others	03	05
Total	61	100

From the table, 34% of the respondents used knowledge strategies, 38% used business process strategies while 23% used end results strategies 5% used other strategies. The results point to a confirmation that there are various strategies for knowledge management within the special libraries. Knowledge management practises enhance transforms within organizations by impacting on individual behaviours and promoting collaborative knowledge sharing. These practises are dynamic and continuous within organisations therefore employees of special libraries are involved in creation, organization, acquisition, storage and sharing of the acquired information to improve organizational performance.

The findings from the interview about knowledge management tools used in the library, the respondents indicated that worldwide web, wikis and blogs as an information searching tool were mostly used in special libraries. Particularly 5 of the supervisors (Nafula /P3, Abel/P6, Abere /P9, Daisy/P12 & Ben/P16) said:

“In our library, mostly worldwide web and blogs were majorly used to communicate and pass information....”

Hence thematic analysis from the interviews indicated that the library staff used several knowledge management tools which include; blogs, worldwide web and wikis. These forms of knowledge management tools are dynamic and generate lots of information that is readily available and easier to use.

4.3.1 Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge management activities ensure that the available knowledge is placed to proper use. Knowledge management being a dynamic and continuous social process, there are various activities that are involved in its management. The sampled participants Strongly Agreed(SA), Agreed(A), Undecided(U), Disagreed(D) or Strongly Disagreed(SD). Table 7 shows the percentage responses from various participants in regard to the knowledge management activities.

Table 7: Knowledge Management Activities

Activities	SA	A	U	D	SD
Written KM policy in organizations	(38%)	(22%)	(27%)	(10%)	(2%)
KM importance in planning	(66%)	(8%)	(22%)	(4%)	
KM importance in talent management	(44%)	(11%)	(38%)	(3%)	(3%)
Importance of ICTs in KM	(88%)		(10%)		
KM and creativity and innovation	(93%)		(7%)		
Importance of collaboration to KM	(60%)	(12%)	(22%)	(3%)	(2%)

These results showed that a number of activities have aided the knowledge integration within these libraries and these included the use of ICT, talent management, policy and planning. Maier & Hadrlich, (2011) indicated that organizational ICT infrastructure facilitates the knowledge management processes in various ways such as information processing, storage and dissemination. Other significant activities that ICT can perform include: Records and content management systems, classification and categorization schemes, taxonomies, thesauri, abstracting and indexing databases, citation indexes, ontologies, institutional and subject repositories (Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, 2011). It is only when knowledge has been captured and codified that it can be shared and disseminated throughout the organization (Dalkir, 2013).

According to Rusuli *et al*, (2013), knowledge management begins and ends with the creation of new insights or knowledge. New knowledge is processed and stored for use later with ICTs being currently harnessed to facilitate these transactions and actions (indicated by 90% of the responses generated). On the other hand, complex operations involved in the analysis of the increasing volumes of data, knowledge management continuously generated encourages innovation and creativity resulting in better policies, systems and structures that benefit an organization’s overall effectiveness (93%). However, information also indicates that knowledge management effectiveness is reduced, because of the isolated development that characterizes organizational landscape currently (73%). Many respondents argued that the gains can increase significantly, if more

companies are open to sharing resources and collaborating on the advancement of new modes of thinking and doing business (according to 60 % of the responses). They further argue that organizations can improve their internal ability and capacity by encouraging the free sharing of knowledge by their employees regardless of their rank or class (represented by 67% of the total resources). It should also result in better cohesion among employees and encourage the development of mentoring programs.

It is inferred that knowledge integration and management occurs when the knowledge, experiences, best practices, lessons learned and so on go through the conversion processes of socialization, externalization and combination into tacit knowledge (Dalkir, 2013). For instance, KM aids the organization in knowledge transfer in two forms: knowledge-based services and products which include e-mail, electronic publications, presentations, websites, online discussion forums, video-conferencing and collaboration tools (Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, 2011).

While knowledge integration only occurs when new knowledge is broadly diffused in the organization, in instances where infusion practice occurs in a wide scale, then the diffusion process is marked by organizational learning (McElroy, 2010), knowledge management forms the deliberate and systematic coordination of an organization's people, technology, processes, and organizational structure in order to add value through reuse and innovation (Dalkir, 2013). However, for the KM to be effective, knowledge must be managed as both object and as a process (Evans, Dalkir & Bidian, 2014).

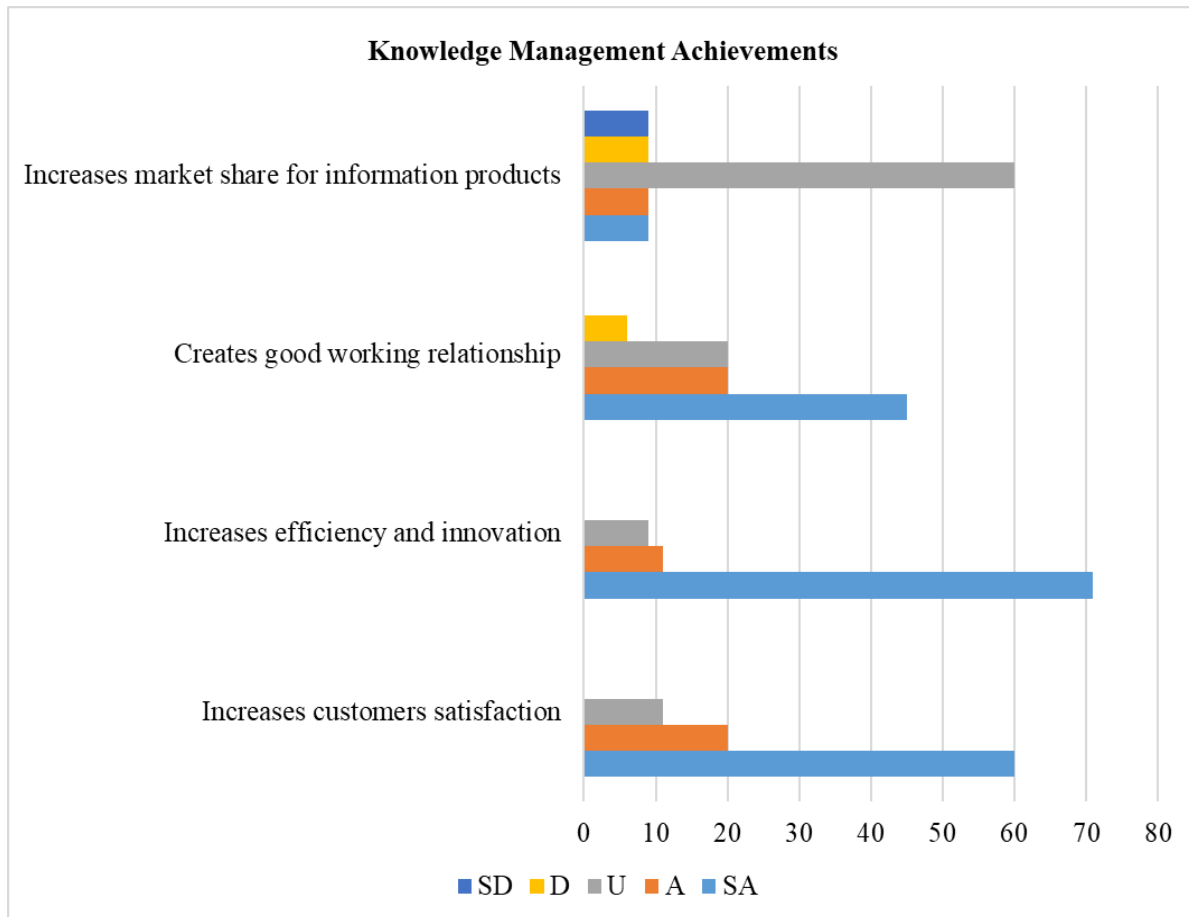
The study managed to delineate the practises and activities that are relevant for the integration and management of the knowledge in special libraries in Trans Nzoia. Some of these processes can be stated to comprise six steps: Discovery, acquisition, creation, storage and organization, sharing, use and application of knowledge (Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, 2011). Significantly knowledge focuses on the handling and management of explicit, documented knowledge, and tacit, subjective knowledge (Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, 2011). These systems are used to create and maintain knowledge repositories.

4.3.2 Knowledge Management Practices on Library Performance

The study sought to investigate the contribution of knowledge management strategies towards library performance in Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya. The performance improvement strategies ranged from increase market share for information products, create good working relationship, increase efficiency and innovation and increase customer satisfaction. The participants were categorised into those Strongly Agreed(SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed(D), Undecided(U) and Strongly Disagreed(SD)

Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the respondents.

Figure 1: Knowledge Management Achievements



According to the information generated from the study, knowledge management can improve customer satisfaction (88% of responses), increase organizational efficiency and innovation (78% of responses), improve the working relationship and conditions among employees (71% of the responses representing 45 respondents who strongly agreed and 20 who disagreed), although most respondents were not in a position to comment on its effect on the market share of the company with regards to information products (88% of total responses were undecided). The results are supported by Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, (2011), who indicated that a well structure KM activity can help promote efficient and effective library practices. On the other hand, Dalkir (2013) affirmed that knowledge contributes to the organization’s intellectual capital through production of ontologies, identification of core competencies, knowledge and knowhow that may be lost through human capital attrition. Other significant benefits included: Improved access to information and knowledge, promote knowledge sharing, networking and developing local content in local languages.

From the interviews conducted, the findings indicated that a majority of the respondents affirmed that application of knowledge management improves efficiencies in any working institutions. Six respondents (Wafula/P4, Abel/P6, Birgen/P8, Caro/P10, Daisy/P12 & Adrew/P14) indicated that:

“Knowledge management in organization improved performance on various aspects such as knowledge management process, organisation functional process and customer satisfaction.”

On the effects of knowledge management strategies on organizational performance, all the participants said that knowledge management and strategies have a positive effect on organizational performance from the interview conducted on the seven respondents noted that the most knowledge management strategies used by the organization was knowledge Nonaka. Business Classification APC.

These are some of the sentiments:

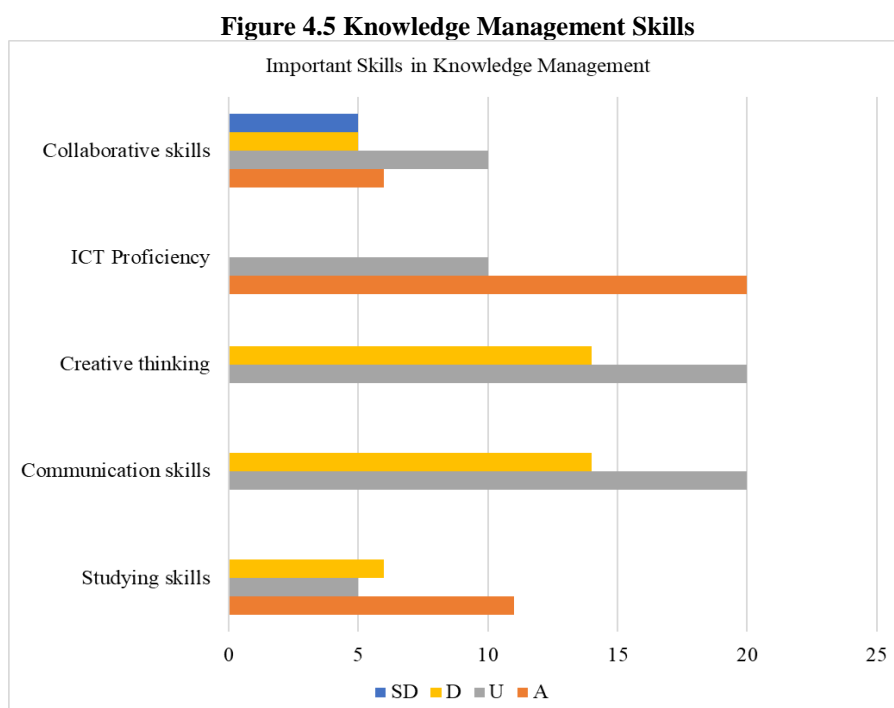
“knowledge type and business type strategies can enable the organization to adapt new technologies of knowledge management. Nonaka & Takeuchi is that the process of growing and developing knowledge assets within organizations is always changing; this is because of the fact that organizations are living organisms that must constantly adapt to their environment.”

Eight of the respondents noted that knowledge management strategies led to the improved competitive advantage of the organization in the region. Six of the participants said that knowledge management strategies led to increased efficiency and effectiveness. Five of the respondents indicated that knowledge management strategies led to improved organizational performance and three participants confirmed that they led improved quality of services and increased productivity of members of staff.

Three of the respondents noted that knowledge management and strategies led to acquisition of new knowledge by members of staff and the university and acquisition of resources and finances by the university. One of the participants indicated that knowledge management and strategies led to generation of new knowledge, faster problem solving, and increased reference.

4.3.3 Competencies of Library Staff in Knowledge Management

The study intended to establish the competencies of library staff in knowledge management in special libraries in Trans Nzoia County, Kenya and the responses are indicated in Figure 2 below.



According to the information generated in Figure 4.5 above, 88% of respondents indicated that studying skills are important for knowledge management, while 5% were undecided and only 7% disagreed. Further, 63% agreed on the importance of communication skills and creative thinking in KM with the number of those undecided and those in disagreement being 22% and 15% respectively. The importance of ICT complaints stands at 89% with 11% being undecided. Collaboration also featured highly on the skills necessary for the success of KM with 79% affirming its importance (71% respondents who strongly agreed and 8% who agreed). Eleven percent were undecided and those in disagreement were also 11% (with 5% representing respondents who disagreed and 6% representing respondents who strongly disagreed).

The results showed that most respondents affirmed that studying and collaboration skills are necessary skills required for the management of intellectual assets in the organization. Proficiency in ICT is also critical as it serves as a foundation for the sharing of knowledge within organizations. In organizations setting all the personnel are considered to possess an intellectual asset which is used to power the organization into higher productivity and thus KM attempts to combine internal and external information, but also coordinate, monitor and consolidate information and formal information (Roknuzzaman & Umemoto, 2011). However, Maier & Hadrich (2011) note that knowledge integration activity can only be realized through the use of a specialist and/or professional. These mechanisms are characterized by high or a low degree of involvement with commensurate both merits and demerits.

The findings from the interview also indicated that knowledge management skills were very critical in handling information related activities such as creation, storage, classification, cataloguing and indexing of the information materials in libraries for easy retrieval and accessibility. This sentiment was echoed by a majority of those interviewed. For instance, fifteen respondents (Nafula/P3, Wafula/P4, Obuya/P5, Abel/P6, Cele/P7,

Birgen/P8, Abere/P9, Caro/P10, Abert/P11, Daisy/P12, Abner/P13, Adrew/P14, Akama/P15, Ben /P16 & Ester/P17) maintained that:

“Acting in a professional way ensures that all standards and procedures are followed, professionalism is applied in large perspective and information professional is not excluded.”

The findings therefore confirm that the human skills are required for the effective deployment of knowledge within the special libraries. The individuals within these libraries could discern the critical skills that will promote the integration of knowledge within the organization and thus can be said to be informed of the usefulness of the skills in knowledge management.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This section provides the discussion and conclusion to the study.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Knowledge Management Strategies used by Special Libraries

According to the findings of this study, most special libraries have strategies in place that ensure presence of knowledge inventories, but few are willing to share these repositories. According to the study 80% of the respondents, many companies compartmentalize their information even from some levels of their employees, regardless of the nature of the information in question. The study also established that all organizations that have special libraries, have invested in some form of ICT technologies to enhance the management of their KM processes as indicated by 93% of the respondents. It was also noted that the level of investment in these tools is dependent on organizational size and the type of data they use, because of the types of insights that they have to decipher and the kind of feedback they generate (93%). However, despite the advancements in data collection and analysis, few firms actually understand how they can manipulate and employ the insights they can gather from the volumes of data they possess. The study also found out that although customer feedback was high, organization rarely used them, when developing insights and strategies opting to rely on more traditional sources such as formal documents (82%). The role of knowledge acquisition, classification and authentication of what makes new knowledge and what does not (82%) which means that firms' ability and capacity is limited by that of their top management. The study also established that library personnel are often not involved in the knowledge development process which not only denies them opportunities to improve their skills, but also reduces the reliability and validity of the knowledge their organizations create (89%). This practice also denies companies a window to improve their knowledge retention through proper succession planning (93%) and increasing their overall talent management overheads. As a result, few companies encourage innovation and creativity in KM and analysis, therefore losing a lot of time in discovering changes in their environment and their implications on their systems, processes and structures (indicated by all respondents).

5.1.2 Extent to which Knowledge Management is Practiced in Special Libraries

According to the study findings, most library staff (60%) must invest in their skills and knowledge development personally, because their organizations have not considered such investments meaningful. In addition, they have learnt to rely on their combined expertise to learn new techniques and identify and solve problems and challenges by relying on social gatherings such as symposia and networks such as Face book and WhatsApp (66%). As a result, despite the stringent confidentiality policies most employees are under, they still find ways of sharing information and insights into how to improve KM (65 respondents). However, they have to keep the source of their insights and any new information they develop secret to avoid the repercussions of breaking privacy laws which could also potentially explain the convergence of some knowledge across companies (84%). Many respondents were of the opinion that enhanced sharing policies could potentially improve both the career development of library staff and the quality of knowledge that organizations create.

5.1.3 Relationship between Knowledge Management Strategies and Special Libraries Performance

According to the information generated by the study, policy development is an integral part of ensuring proper KM and improving the policies themselves (60%). Not only do they set the tone how the entire process of KM is handled, but they also increase the validity and reliability of the resulting knowledge. They manage this by reducing any ambiguity and uncertainties in the stages of KM therefore improving the efficiency of analysis (74%) by ensuring that all the preceding processes are compliant with KM principles (60 respondents). The study also established that the resulting knowledge was instrumental in improving planning both in the library department and the entire organization if done right (63%). Proper planning is a consequence of and a contributor to the growth of organizational culture making them more resilient to changing environmental

conditions especially with regard to major functions such as staffing (55%). On the other hand, it has highlighted opportunities for companies to leverage their capital to improve their effectiveness in managing the large volumes of data their processes generate by incorporating technology (90%). The high analytical power these tools add to firms further propels their growth across all measures of performance resulting in higher efficiency. The study also found out that companies stand to increase their KM effectiveness if they can adopt models that encourage the development of knowledge from all levels and facilitate sharing of information (73%).

5.1.4. Competencies of Library Staff in Knowledge Management in Special Libraries

The study established that although teamwork (88%), creative thinking (63%), communication skills (63%), ICT compliance (89%) were integral elements in KM, poor sharing mechanisms inherent in most organizations reduced the gains possible from the process. As a result, libraries often only had the benefit of internal validity checks on their information which increased the likelihood for skewedness and bias which affected the overall learning skills (88%) of the KM practitioners and their firms.

5.2 Conclusion

This study sought to assess knowledge management strategies adopted by special libraries. The study revealed that Knowledge Management has a positive impact on library performance. It is therefore important for an organization to generate the necessary recommendations to enhance improved performance in Knowledge Management. This was clearly depicted from the findings whereby, 33% of the respondent used knowledge management strategies, 41% used business process strategies and 26% used end results strategies and on the effects of knowledge management strategies on organizational performance, all the participants said that knowledge management and strategies have a positive effect on organizational performance.

The impact of knowledge management occurs either directly at organizations or indirectly through organizational performance at different levels that is: People, processes, products and the overall performance. It creates knowledge which then contributes to improved performance of organizations in the four levels. Secondly, knowledge management processes directly cause improvements in the four levels. Thirdly, knowledge management enhances employee's learning and exposure to the latest knowledge in their fields which providing solutions to organizational problems. KM improves organizational functional processes of marketing, public relations, accounting and other by improving the effectiveness, efficiency and degree of innovation of the processes in those processes (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2014). Other direct impacts of knowledge management is through innovative products and services or strategy alignment and/or indirect impacts through knowledge sharing systems which improve the use of organizational intellectual assets to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organizational output (McElroy, 2010).

The most important contribution of the study to the knowledge management is the determination of the impacts of knowledge integration in the organizational processes. Evidently, knowledge management has both direct and indirect impacts by directly impacting on the processes, people and structure, while improving the intellectual assets of the organization. Improvements of intellectual assets would confer the organization with the appropriate competencies that are requiring in the operating environment.

Therefore, having KM policies is important in enhancing the integrity of the entire process leading up to the addition of new knowledge in an organization's inventory. It does this by reducing any risk of uncertainties and ambiguities that might arise during the process and reduce the validity and reliability of findings. Such policies also play an instrumental role in helping to scale the KM functions and operations in a special library.

KM has the potential of revolutionizing how organizations carry out their business if it is given the importance and seriousness it deserves. As a cause of result of change, knowledge is an important part of a firm's growth and evolution especially with regard to culture. As such, organizations that encourage knowledge development at all levels increase their flexibility to respond to changes in their environment and adapt to new modes of operation.

Enhancing communication channels within an organization and encouraging the sharing of information and insights improves an organization including special libraries ability and capacity to institute robust succession strategies. As a result, they can cut their talent management costs significantly because of the resulting increased knowledge, experience and skills retention.

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