Knowledge Management Creativity Elements Expected of Academics in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract Knowledge management is one of the strategies designed to tackle various challenges which modern tertiary institutions are facing. Tertiary institutions are no longer expected to live and operate in isolation. This paper examined knowledge management and creativity elements expected of lecturers in Nigerian universities. A total of 200 lecturers from two government owned universities randomly drawn, participated in the study. Three research questions guided the study to reveal knowledge management creativity competencies of university lecturers in Anambra State of Nigeria. A four-point Likert type scale questionnaire of 34- items was used for data collection. Frequency distribution table and mean were used for analysis of the research questions. The instrument was validated by two experts in Education Management, while split-half reliability coefficient values of 0.85, 0.80 and 0.90 were determined. Findings revealed 13- knowledge management creativity elements expected of lecturers for successful performance of their duties; low level application of these knowledge management creativity elements and 13 strategies for effective possession and applications of the enumerated competencies. Recommendations included: Knowledge and Learning Managers should be made available to universities and lecturers by university stakeholders. This will provide tools for creativity competencies development, delivery, reporting and management of training/learning materials. Knowledge management creativity competence related workshops should be organized regularly for these lecturers to enable them develop these skills so as to inculcate same in their students (future organization managers).

Keywords: knowledge management, creativity elements, competencies, lecturers, university, Argot

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1. Introduction

Knowledge has been seen as one of the major essences of education in human life. In African and Nigeria context, parents always pray and work hard to ensure that their children become more knowledgeable and greater than they, the parents like King Solomon of the ancient Babylon believed that a wise man is mightier than a strong man; but a man with knowledge is more powerful than a strong man (Proverb 24: 5 in Verrn, 1998). The United Nations Declaration of Human rights of 1946 insisted that every citizen should be given opportunity to access education for knowledge empowerment. According to the Hornby (2000), knowledge is the sum of what is known, the body of faith, information and principles acquired by mankind. Denham, (2011) sees knowledge as full utilization of information and data, coupled with the potential of people"s skills and competencies. Knowledge is therefore the sum total of what is known, a body of truth, information, individual, or group of individuals or even skills acquired by an organization that must be applied and utilized for problem solving.

That could be the reason; Denham (2011) described knowledge, as value-added behaviour and activities.

Knowledge is therefore indispensable in today"s nations and global economy. Modebelu, Duvie, Kalu-Uche and Ike (2013) discovered that knowledge is power, people, money, leverage, learning, flexibility and most importantly competitive advantage. Knowledge has been identified by Alavi, (2007) to be present in ideas, judgments, talents, root- causes, relationships, perspectives and concepts. Knowledge generally is known to be stored in individuals" brain and also encoded in organizational process, documents, products, services, facilities and system (Oosterlinck 2011). When an individual dies or an organization collapses, the whole knowledge embedded in above seem to disappear. The issue is how could this knowledge in various shapes and forms be harnessed, and managed for future effectiveness and efficiency of the individual and the organization. This takes us to management of knowledge i.e. knowledge management.

Management according to Modebelu and Nwakpadolu (2013) is the process by which a cooperative group directs actions towards common goals. Onuka (2009) sees management as the ability to make right decisions in an uncertain condition that would work within some given constraints rather than seeking for the best in a particular

circumstance which may end up not producing any meaningful results.

Knowledge management according to Karl (1996) is the act of collection processes that govern the creation, dissemination and utilization of knowledge. Knowledge management therefore comprises of a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify and utilize knowledge. Murray (2006) defines knowledge management to be an audit of "Intellectual assets" that highlights unique sources, critical functions and potential bottleneck which hinder knowledge flow to the point of use. It protects intellectual assets from delay, seeks opportunities to enhance decisions, services and products through adding intelligences, increasing value and providing flexibility. At organization point of view, knowledge management consists of various activities focused on the organization gaining knowledge from its own experiences and from the experience of others, and on the judicious application of that knowledge to fulfill the mission of the organization (Wilson 2008. Activities are executed by marrying technology, organizational structures, and cognitive based strategies to raise the yield of the existing knowledge and produce new knowledge. The cognitive system which is human, organization, computer or joint human-computer system are very critical in acquiring, storing and utilization of knowledge for learning, problem-solving and decision-making. University and its lecturers have been identified by Denham (2001) as a valued cognitive system for achieving effective knowledge management.

Lecturers are group of individuals trained and employed in Universities and tertiary institutions in Nigerian to train and groom students through: intensifying and diversifying programme for the development of high level manpower, making professional course contents to reflect national requirements; making all students part of general programmes of all-round improvement in university education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism (FRN, 2004). To achieve the above goals required good knowledge management at the universities level that entails qualitative human resource management (Modebelu & Onyali, 2012). This entails that lecturers themselves should be epitome of knowledge. Ukeje (1986) made it very clean that nobody gives what he does not have. Lecturers must be knowledgeable enough to impart or transfer knowledge or create enabling environment for sourcing and developing knowledge. University lecturers should possess the creativity skills or elements that would enable them source knowledge, create knowledge, disseminate knowledge and utilize knowledge. They should also ensure that the knowledge they possess/acquire should not decay or end up with them by inculcating that into their students, university cognitive system. The same creativity elements would ensure sustainability of the nation"s development. FRN (2004) stipulated that University lecturers should regularly embark on researches that must be relevant to the nation"s development goals. In this regard the research results should be disseminated to both government and industries. Lecturers should seek to inculcate community spirit/aspiration in the students through projects and action research. Once lecturers are capable of implementing the above, they are already promoting knowledge management.

Murray (1996) identified and outlined various knowledge management creativity elements that exist in each of our jobs to include:

Argot: This is the vocabulary used by a particular group, usually an under-world group. Wikipedia free encyclopedia (2009) defines argot as a secret language used by various groups including, but not limited to, thieves and other criminals to prevent outsiders from understanding their conversations. The term argot is also used to refer to informal specialized vocabulary.

Cooperate Knowledge: This is the collective body of experiences and understanding both organizations" process for managing planned and unplanned situations.

Corporate Knowledge: This is the process whereby the knowledge seekers are linked with knowledge sources and knowledge is transferred.

Epistemology: This involves the study of nature and its foundations of knowledge.

Etymology: This involves the study of the history of change of a linguistic expression.

Knowledge: This is a set of models describing various properties and behavious within a domain.

Morphology: This is the study of patterns and structure of word formation in language.

Ontology: This is the study of relationship that give rise to meaning of expressions.

Taxonomy: This is a framework for classification and arrangement of objects (i.e. used to build a classification hierarchy.

Knowledge Server: These knowledge management creativity elements also serve as effective organizational management technique towards continuous renewal of organizational knowledge base. Examples Include:

creation of supportive organizational structures; facilitation of organizational members and putting information Technology (IT) instruments with emphasis on network and diffusion of knowledge into place. This can manifest inform of information planning an information Analysis.

1. Knowledge Analysis (KA) entails modeling a knowledge source in such a way that its usefulness, weakness and its appropriateness within the organization are determined.

2. Knowledge Planning (KP) occurs when an organization might have secured KA and then uses the analysis to plan for future. It helps in developing a multi-year knowledge plan; defining how to develop its knowledge sources, achieved through; training its human agents; developing knowledge-based systems to support human agents and develop other means of making the organization stay competitive.

3. Knowledge technology (KT) entails the application of techniques and methods from the field of knowledge-based-systems (expert systems and decision support systems).

4. Computer supported work system (CSWS) is a formal and informal human activity system in an organization, whereby the human agents are supported by computer systems. Computer Technology is very necessary for effective utilization

of CSWS (Denham, 2001). The university lecturers must be well groomed on these elements.

Some of the functions of knowledge manage include: to improve organizational performance; to enhance its competitive advantage; to inject innovation; to encourage inter dependence/globalization to ensure continuous improvement; to encourage sharing of knowledge; to help serve customers well; to help organization, operate minimum fixed asset and over-head; to empower employees; deliver high quality products; to enhance flexibility/adaptation; to capture information and to create knowledge (Karl, 1996) and Wilson, 2008).). Ekpenweh (2014) emphasized the importance knowledge management as a tool for enhancing the existing knowledge, its networking and reuse, and also a means of promoting new knowledge and ability to innovate. This therefore, calls for needs of developing mechanisms of tapping into the collective intelligence and skills of employees in order to create greater organizational knowledge base.

Already existing forms of knowledge management were outlined to include :on-the- job discussion; formal apprenticeship; discussion forums; corporate libraries; professional training; mentoring programmes; expert systems; knowledge repositories; group decision support systems (GDSS); computer supported cooperative work; intranets and personal knowledge management (PKM) (Denham, 2001). Karl (1996) described two knowledge related aspects of knowledge management required by university lecturers in promoting viability and success at any level of education as knowledge-Asset" and „knowledge-Related-Process". Knowledge asset should be applied, exploited, nurtured, preserved and used to large extent by both individuals and organizations. Knowledge-related-process is designed to create, build, compile, organize, transform, transfer, pool, apply and safe-guard knowledge. This must be carefully and explicitly managed in all the affected areas. Knowledge and learning management systems are therefore very vital key themes in the evolution of technology especially as it pertains to pedagogy. Undie (2011) in line with above understanding, observed that modern organization such as institutions of higher learning ultimately engender a knowledge culture by grappling with information and knowledge management, developing expertise, understanding knowledge- concepts, providing technologically accessible systems along with its associated tools and resources.

The problem of the study is that University lecturers appear not to possess adequate skills and creativity elements required for effective knowledge management. The fear is that the knowledge of past and present experts available in various fields, may not be adequately harnessed, documented and made available for future use. So what are those knowledge management creativity elements required by University lecturers to facilitate knowledge management.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The study examined knowledge management creativity elements expected of university lecturers in Nigeria.

1.2. Research Questions

Four Research questions guided the study.
1. What is knowledge management creativity elements expected of university lecturers in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do lecturers apply knowledge management creativity elements (KMCE)?
3. What are the impediments to university lecturers effective application of the KMCE?
4. What are the strategies of facilitating university lecturers KMCE?

2. Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study covered all the senior academics in the five federal universities in south-east-geo-political zone of Nigeria. Two out of the five were purposively sampled for the study. The two universities were the oldest, fully developed, accredited and are currently serving as mentor-universities in the zone. They were deemed adequate for the purpose of this research. (i.e. University of Nigeria Nsukka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka). Two hundred (200) senior academics (100 from faculty of education of each of the two universities) were sampled by simple random sampling technique. Their characteristics vary in terms of age, sex, occupation, marital status and educational qualifications. A 52-itemed researchers" designed questionnaire structured on a 4-point Likert type scale and titled knowledge management creativity elements (KMCEQ) for lecturers was used for data collection. It was validated by experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Administration. The reliability was ascertained using the Kudder Richardson formula. The coefficient alpha values obtained were 0.85, 0.80, 0.90 and 0.79. The data collection was through the help of two trained research assistants. All the two hundred copies of the questionnaires administered were all returned (100%) and used for the analysis. The research questions were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. Mean score responses equal to and above 2.50 were considered positive and agreed to the items.

3. Results

Results in Table 1 reveals a grand mean 4.00 for the lecturers indicating Lecturers strong agreement that the thirteen items represent expected university lecturers creativity elements for effective facilitation and management of knowledge.

Result in Table 2 showed a ground mean of 2.46 which is below the weighted mean of 2.50. This indicates that Lecturers in Nigerian universities general disagreed that the 13 items are applied to a high extent. The implication is that Lecturers in Nigerian universities apply the expected KMCE to a low extent.

Table 3 with a grand mean of 2.90 indicated that lecturers generally agreed that the thirteen items enumerated above are some of the impediments to university lecturers" effective application of KMCE.

Table 4 showed a grand mean of 4.00 indicating lecturers strong agreement that the thirteen items listed can serve as strategies for facilitating lecturers" KMCE in Nigerian universities.

Table 1. Mean responses of lecturers on KMCE creativity elements expected of lecturers in Nigeria universities. N=200

S/N	Knowledge management Creativity elements expected of university lecturers in Nigeria	$\bar{x}$	Decision
1	Ability to source knowledge through action research.	4.00	agreed
2	Ability to Create knowledge	4.00	agreed
3	Ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge	4.00	agreed
4	Ability to maintain Strongly agreed repositories	4.00	agreed
6	Ability to disseminate knowledge	4.00	agreed
7	Ability to influence the culture of an organization	4.00	agreed
8	Ability to re-use knowledge	4.00	agreed
9	Ability to be innovative	4.00	agreed
10	Ability to utilize knowledge	4.00	agreed
11	Ability to intensifying and diversifying programmes for developing high level manpower within context of need	4.00	agreed
12	Ability to make students part of a general programme of all-round improvement in university education	4.00	agreed
13	Ability reflect the national requirements	4.00	agreed
	Grand mean	4.00	agreed

Table 2. Mean responses lecturers on extent of application of the expected KMCE?

S/N	Extent of lecturers possession of expected KMCE.	$\bar{x}$	Decision
14	Ability to source knowledge through action research.	2.00	Low Extent
15	Ability to Create knowledge	2.00	Low Extent
16	Ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge	2.50	Low Extent
17	Ability to maintain Strongly agreed repositories	2.50	Low Extent
18	Ability to disseminate knowledge	2.50	Low Extent
19	Ability to influence the culture of an organization	2.50	Low Extent
20	Ability to re-use knowledge	4.00	High extent
21	Ability to be innovative	3.00	High Extent
22	Ability to utilize knowledge	1.0	Low Extent
23	Ability to source knowledge through action research.	2.00	Low Extent
24	Ability to intensifying and diversifying programmes for developing high level manpower within context of need	2.00	Low Extent
25	Ability to make students part of a general programme of all-round improvement in university education	2.00	Low Extent
26	Ability reflect the national requirements	3.00	Low extent
	Grand mean	2.46	Low Extent

Table 3. Mean responses of lecturers on the impediments for lecturers effective application of KMCE in Nigerian universities

S/N	Impediments to university lecturers effective application of KMCE in Nigerian Universities	$\bar{x}$	Decision
27	Inadequate KMCE	4.00	Strongly agreed
28	Inadequate knowledge of sources of knowledge	2.00	Disagreed
29	Inability to create knowledge	3.00	Agreed
30	Inadequate supportive organizational structures	4.00	Strongly agreed
31	Inadequate programmes to facilitate organizational members	2.00	Disagreed
32	Inadequate skill on knowledge analysis	3.00	Agreed
33	Inadequate skill on knowledge planning	3.00	Agreed
34	Inadequate information technology instruments	3.00	Agreed
35	Inadequate skill on knowledge technology	3.00	Agreed
36	Inadequate knowledge-based system	3.00	Agreed
37	Inadequate Knowledge of Importance of knowledge management	2.00	Disagreed
38	Inadequate Knowledge of forms of knowledge	2.50	Agreed
39	Inadequate opportunities for knowledge sharing	3.50	Agreed
	Grand mean	2.90	Agreed

Table 4. Mean responses of university lecturers on strategies of facilitating lecturers KMCE.

S/N	The following skills/activities serve as strategies for facilitating lecturers KMCE	$\bar{x}$	Decision
40	Accessibility to Knowledge Management Argot (KMA)	4.00	agreed
41	Adequate knowledge of Knowledge Planning (KP)	4.00	agreed
42	Adequate knowledge of Knowledge Technology (KT)	4.00	agreed
43	Adequate knowledge of Computer Supported Work System (CSWS)	4.00	agreed
44	Adequate knowledge of Knowledge Assets (KA)	4.00	agreed
45	Adequate knowledge of Knowledge-related process (KRP)	4.00	agreed
46	Adequate knowledge of Business Perspective (BP)	4.00	agreed
47	Adequate Management Perspective (MP)	4.00	agreed
48	Adequate knowledge of Hands-On-Operational Perspective (HOOP)	4.00	agreed
49	Adequate knowledge of Management of Information M	4.00	agreed
50	Adequate knowledge of Management of People (MP)	4.00	agreed
51	Adequate knowledge of Individual Perspective (IP)	4.00	agreed
52	Adequate knowledge of Organization Perspective	4.00	agreed
	Grand mean	4.00	agreed

4. Discussion

The findings in Table 1 revealed that university lecturers are expected to possess the thirteen of the enumerated knowledge management creativity elements (KMCE). This is in line with Wikipedia (2009) and Karl (1996) that opined that university curriculum should encourage creativity and innovation in the students. This also agrees with the findings of Murray (1996), that lecturers should facilitate students effectively to become creative as well as possessing the creative skills. This is not surprise, since the role of lecturers today has moved

from being subject matter expert to being facilitators of knowledge in the knowledge society.

The findings in Table 2 revealed that the lecturers apply the knowledge management creativity elements (KMCE) to a low extent. This buttresses the idea that the implementation of KMCE greatly requires special sacrifice by the lecturers and the university organization (i.e. cognitive system structure). This could have been the reason Wilson (2008) decried that inadequate instructional materials for teachers" preparation and students" grooming resulted in majority of students/graduates inability to demonstrate adequate knowledge and application of creative thinking; inability to source or access and even disseminate knowledge for knowledge management.

Findings in Table 3 showed that all the thirteen items enumerated tend to serve as impediments to university lecturers effective application of knowledge management creativity elements. This is in line with works of Oosterlinck (2011) which identified some of these items as an imperative for knowledge management in tertiary institutions. Wikipedia (2004) reported that inadequate and lack of versatile skills portfolio and collaborative technology debar lecturers from applying the knowledge management creativity elements to promote quality learning. This could be one of the reasons why present university products seem to be unemployable.

Findings in Table 4 identified thirteen items that could serve as strategies for facilitating university lecturers" possession and application of knowledge management creativity elements. In confirmation of this Murray (1996) and Denham (2001) recommended lecturers access to knowledge management argot, exposure to knowledge planning, knowledge technology computed supported work system etc. This will go a long way to equip these lecturers with knowledge management creativity skills imperative for university productivity.

5. Conclusion

The study examined the concept of knowledge, knowledge management and lecturers knowledge management creativity elements (KMCE). It also investigated sources of knowledge and management creativity element. It assessed level of knowledge management creativity element expected of lecturers, extent of possession, application and strategies that could be used to overcome the impediments. In conclusion, thirteen items were identified as the expected KMCE. It was also found that lecturers apply these skills to a low extent. Strategies for promoting lecturers KMCE were identified as shown in Table 4.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers are recommending that:

Knowledge and Learning Managers should be made available to universities and lecturers by university stakeholders. This will provide tools for creativity competencies development, delivery, reporting and management of training/learning materials.

Knowledge management creativity competence related workshops should be organized regularly for these lecturers to enable them develop these skills so as to inculcate same in their students (future organization managers).

Lecturers and students should also be exposed to those sources of KMCE such as argot, corporate knowledge, ontology; taxonomy etc. through seminars, workshops and research.

And adequate funding of scientific research should be encouraged by the university structure. This will help greatly to enrich lecturers" knowledge for knowledge management.

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