



Managing Knowledge Symbiosis Among Lecturers For Sustainable Higher Education Delivery In South-South Nigerian Universities

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ABSTRACT

Today's world is evolving towards information and knowledge; economies of developed countries are now classified based on the creation, and distribution of knowledge and information. It is against this background that this study investigated knowledge symbiosis among lecturers for sustainable higher education delivery in South-South Nigerian Universities. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 288 Heads of Departments, some of which are acting Heads of department in 4 federally owned Universities in South-South Nigeria. 173 Heads of Departments, 58 of which are acting heads were selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. A self structured questionnaire tagged managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers for sustainable higher education delivery in South-South Nigerian Universities (MKSLSSNU) was used as the instrument for data collection which yielded a reliability index of 0.73. Mean and rank order scores were used to test the null hypothesis. The study revealed that knowledge symbiosis among lecturers will enhance efficient innovative ideas for higher education delivery. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that knowledge issues as it bothers on university education should be taken seriously in order churn out a higher level of manpower for economic growth and developments.

Keywords: Knowledge Symbiosis, education delivery, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Today's world is evolving towards information and knowledge; economies of developed countries are now classified as knowledge based economy due to the creation and distribution of knowledge and information. The world is experiencing a knowledge and information age that depends on knowledge and learning management. Managing knowledge symbiosis is central to education because it ensures that the roles of education are attained and it ensures that, citizens of all ages have knowledge, skills readiness, vision that enables the building of a sustainable, equitable future and commitment to ensure that educational goals are attained. Managing knowledge symbiosis calls for educational improvement and has a demanding role that requires sharing and exchanging knowledge. Armstrong (2009) posited that people working in an organisation have knowledge that may not be shared formally or even informally with their colleagues at work. Lecturers, who are knowledgeable in various fields of academic pursuit, may have a crucial knowledge to the interest of education and it may be lost if it remains locked up in the minds of these lecturers. One cannot overemphasize the importance of managing knowledge symbiosis. Knowledge that has been acquired through meaningful, constructive, functional and practical education will obviously become an expandable source of economic property and wealth. Knowledge symbiosis is meant to stimulate positive change among lecturers who should have the consciousness to search, store, and share information.

Education has been linked with several related concepts such as literacy, reform, economic security, development and knowledge. The product of education is abundance of knowledge. Knowledge management is concerned with a strong sharing of the wisdom, understanding and expertise accumulated in an organization about its processes, techniques and operations. Through education, knowledge and worthwhile values are transmitted from one person to the other. Often it is observed that scholars are confronted with information and conditions that make people think that the universities are not delivering good quality education to their clients and society Babalola (2009). Such information and conditions sometimes include the quality of manpower churned out from the university system. Such a low level manpower informs the value and worth of the knowledge workers whose statutory duty is teaching. Trends in the management of educational services at all levels of education show that the creation, dissemination, utilization and advancement of knowledge has become a crucial wealth generating resource in humans. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), encapsulated that the tertiary institutions have a duty to contribute to national development through high level manpower training, development of the intellectual capabilities of individuals. In furtherance of this, mention is also made of research and development, teaching, inter-institutional cooperation, generation and dissemination of knowledge as a way of generating a worthwhile educational output.

The name university as highlighted by Briggs (2013) stemmed from a Latin word *univeristas*, which at that time was not used for institutions of higher learning. Over the centuries, the word has evolved into its present usage – an institution incorporating the scholars, the teachers, the generality of subject taught and the physical location of the organization. The honest and relentless pursuit of truth for better understanding of the world is the supreme remit of all universities. To portray what a university is actually meant for, there is need for the lecturers to collaborate by engaging in scholarly activities which helps to expand the frontiers of knowledge and lead to innovations and discoveries. The university is laden with three basic activities which include: teaching, research, and development. A greater percentage of these tripartite functions bother on the lecturers.

Following the above, it becomes clear that handling the various variables presents so much demand on the lecturers, universities and the government. It is pertinent to inculcate practices that can enhance the knowledge output of lecturers in universities. Invariably, it seems no extensive work has been done on the management of knowledge in relation to lecturer's sustainable education delivery in South –South Nigerian Universities; therefore, it is against these backgrounds that the researcher conceived the idea to investigate into managing knowledge symbiosis for lecturers' sustainable education delivery in South – South Nigerian Universities.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past decades, as a result of a gradual exodus of our most talented faculty, Nigeria Universities have ceased to be a place for exciting search for innovation. There is gross inadequacy of incentives for research, development and innovations in tertiary institutions. There is need for Nigerian universities to join the global knowledge train for an enduring knowledge – driven economic development. There are a lot of issues which create problems that hinder academic work. The transfer of knowledge from one individual to the other, its storage and utilization by individuals has always been a concern to stakeholders of the education industry. Some lecturers who through their personal strife acquire knowledge tend not to share with their colleagues, especially the junior ones. This is detrimental to professional growth, efficient content delivery, quality of research works and innovative ideas by breaking new grounds in education delivery.

Consequently, there is urgent need to examine these issues and put them in proper perspectives with empirical explanations. This provoked the researcher's study on managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers for sustainable higher education delivery in South – South Nigerian Universities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers for sustainable higher education delivery in South – South Nigerian Universities. Specially, the objectives include to:

1. examine how managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers can enhance efficient innovative ideas in education delivery in South – South Nigerian Universities.
2. establish the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study

1. What are the ways of managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers to enhance efficient innovative ideas in education delivery in South – South Nigerian Universities?
2. What are the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers in South –South Nigerian Universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are postulated to guide the study

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Heads of Departments and Acting Heads of Departments on managing knowledge symbiosis for efficient innovative ideas in South –South Nigerian Universities.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Heads of Departments and Acting Heads of Departments on the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis in South- South Nigerian Universities.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design and the population comprised the four federally owned universities in South-South Nigeria. There are a total of 288 departments in these universities with 97 Acting Heads of Departments and 191 Heads of Department.

The sample consisted one hundred and seventy three (173) Acting Heads of Departments and Heads of Departments in the 4 federally owned universities. This was made up of 58 Acting Heads of Departments and 115 Heads of Departments. It was selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique and it represented 60% of the total population.

A questionnaire tagged, managing knowledge symbiosis among lecturers in South-South Nigerian Universities (MKSLSSNU) was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument comprised two sections (A & B), section A contained demographic information while section B comprised questionnaire items constructed based on the variables of the study. Using the test method, the reliability test yielded a reliability index of 0.74. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents. They were filled and returned for data analysis. Mean and rank order scores were used as statistical tools for data analysis, while z-test was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

What ways can the managing of knowledge symbiosis enhance efficient innovative ideas in higher education delivery?

Table 1: Mean scores of heads of department and acting heads of departments on ways of managing knowledge symbiosis can enhance efficient innovative ideas

S/N	Ways that managing knowledge symbiosis can enhance efficient innovative ideas include:	Heads of Department	Acting heads of department	\bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2	Rank Order
1.	Exposure to new innovative ways on knowledge exchange	3.08	3.10	3.09	4 th
2.	Complementary exchange of knowledge among lecturers	2.73	3.24	2.99	5 th
3.	Team work, for the achievement of a common goal	2.08	2.81	2.85	7 th
4.	Building confidence in one another	2.94	2.86	2.89	6 th
5.	Providing insights regarding methods of knowledge symbiosis	3.41	3.38	3.40	3 rd
6.	Commitment on the part of the lecturers	3.75	3.45	3.60	1 st
7.	Contributions to streamlining of ideas in educational institutions towards enhancing productivity.	3.67	3.17	3.42	2 nd
8.	Storing knowledge for future use	2.72	2.80	2.76	8 th
	Aggregate mean	3.14	3.10	3.22	

Data in table 1 showed the mean scores of heads of departments and acting heads of departments on ways that the managing of knowledge symbiosis can enhance efficient innovative ideas. Their mean response showed that they all agreed on the items in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean score of 2.5 following the rank of 1st to 8th. The aggregate mean scores of 3.14 for heads of departments and 3.10 for acting heads of departments are greater than the criterion mean 2.5. Therefore, ways of managing knowledge symbiosis for efficient innovative ideas include: exposure to new innovative ways on knowledge exchange, complementary exchange of knowledge among lecturers, team work, for the achievement of a common goal, building confidence in one another, providing insights regarding methods of knowledge symbiosis, commitment on the part of the lecturers, contributions to streamlining of ideas in educational institutions towards enhancing productivity and storing knowledge for future use.

Research Question 2

What are the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for higher education delivery?

Table 2: Mean scores of heads of department and acting heads of departments on the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for higher education delivery

S/N	Administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for a higher education delivery include:	Head of department	Acting heads of department	\bar{x}_1 \bar{x}_2	Rank Order
9.	Initiating capacity building programmes for lecturers	3.68	3.73	3.71	1 st
10.	Providing functional learning facilities	2.92	3.12	3.02	6 th
11.	Creating knowledge oriented plans for future	3.42	3.36	3.39	3 rd
12.	Creating proper communication channel or media for knowledge dissemination	3.28	3.06	3.17	5 th
13.	Ensuring that everyone has a role in promoting knowledge symbiosis	2.98	2.75	2.87	8 th
14.	Providing incentives for staff research	3.38	3.56	3.47	2 nd
15.	Supporting the identification of a research need	2.86	3.75	3.31	4 th
16.	Evaluating the continued effectiveness of implemented staff development strategies	3.00	2.99	3.00	7 th
	Aggregate mean	3.21	3.27	3.24	

Table 2: The mean responses of the heads of departments and acting heads of department showed that they all agreed to items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 in the table with mean scores greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 following the rank order ranging from 1st to 8th. The aggregate mean scores of 3.21 and 3.27 from heads of department and acting heads of department respectively showed that the respondents agreed on all items in the table. Therefore, the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for higher education delivery include: initiating capacity building programmes for lecturers, providing functional learning facilities, creating knowledge oriented plans for future, creating proper communication channel or media for knowledge dissemination, ensuring that everyone has a role in promoting knowledge symbiosis, providing incentives for staff research, supporting the identification of a research need and evaluating the continued effectiveness of implemented staff development strategies.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of heads of department and acting heads of departments on the ways of managing knowledge symbiosis for efficient innovative ideas for higher education delivery

Table 3: z-test Analysis of the difference between the mean scores of heads of departments and acting heads of department on the ways of managing knowledge symbiosis for efficient innovative ideas for higher education delivery

Status	N	\bar{x}	S.D	df	Z-cal	Critical value	Decision
Heads of Department	115	3.14	1.26	1, 0985	1.62	± 1.96	Accepted
Acting Heads of Department	58	3.10	1.22				

Data in table 3 showed z-test analysis of the difference between the mean scores of heads of department and acting heads of department on the ways of managing knowledge symbiosis for efficient innovative ideas for higher delivery. The result shows that the z-calculated value of 1.62 is less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significant level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of heads of departments and acting heads of department on the ways managing knowledge symbiosis enhance efficient innovative ideas for higher education delivery.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Heads of Departments and Acting Heads of Departments on the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for higher education delivery

Table 4: z-test analysis of the difference between the mean scores of heads of department and acting heads of department on the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for sustainable higher education delivery

Status	N	\bar{x}	S.D	df	Z-cal	Critical value	Decision
Heads of Department	115	3.21	1.36	1, 0985	1.72	± 1.96	Accepted
Acting Heads of Department	58	3.27	1.41				

Data in table 4 showed the z-test analysis of the difference between the mean scores of heads of departments and acting heads of department on the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for a sustainable higher education delivery. The results show that the z-calculated value of 1.72 is less than the z-calculated value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 alpha significant level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of heads of departments and acting heads of department on the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for sustainable higher education delivery.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the ways of managing knowledge symbiosis for the enhancement of efficient innovative ideas include: exposure to new innovative ways on knowledge exchange, complementary exchange of knowledge among lecturers, team work, for the achievement of a common goal, building confidence in one another, providing insights regarding methods of knowledge symbiosis, commitment on the part of the lecturers, contributions to streamlining of ideas in educational institutions towards enhancing productivity and storing knowledge for future use. The findings are in line with UNESCO (2004) that knowledge economy is dependent on people’s ability to adapt to situations, update their knowledge, seek for knowledge and learn new knowledge. It is also in line with Sumi (2011), who sees knowledge symbiosis as a situation where different people with different complementary skills collaborate advantageously for a final outcome.

The findings also revealed that the administrative strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis for a sustainable higher education include: : initiating capacity building programmes for lecturers, providing functional learning facilities, creating knowledge oriented plans for future, creating proper communication channel or media for knowledge dissemination, ensuring that everyone has a role in promoting knowledge symbiosis, providing incentives for staff research, supporting the identification of a research need and evaluating the continued effectiveness of implemented staff development strategies. The afore enumeration is in line with Babalola (2007) that quality outcomes in education can basically be achieved through effective evaluation of inputs and processes in education. Therefore, the management of knowledge symbiosis is everyone's concern since resources are scarce and need to be maximally utilized. Nwabueze (2011), Umoren and Obong (2013) also support that, adequate and functional learning facilities in addition to the comfort they provide, they also enhance knowledge, as well as the desire to learn.

CONCLUSION

Managing knowledge symbiosis for a sustainable higher education delivery, exposes the lecturers to new innovative ways on knowledge exchange, complementary exchange of knowledge , team work for the achievement of a common goal, building confidence in one another, providing insights regarding methods of knowledge symbiosis, commitment on the part of the lecturers, contributions to streamlining of ideas in educational institutions towards enhancing productivity and storage of knowledge for future use. However, the strategies for managing knowledge symbiosis afford the mechanism of initiating capacity building programmes for lecturers, providing functional learning facilities, creating knowledge oriented plans for future, creating proper communication channel or media for knowledge dissemination, ensuring that everyone has a role in promoting knowledge symbiosis, providing incentives for staff research, supporting the identification of a research need and evaluating the continued effectiveness of implemented staff development strategies. To this end, education should be taken seriously, in order to churn out a higher level manpower for economic growth and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Lecturers should share knowledge with one another especially in the field of research in order to achieve professional growth which will in turn facilitate maximum educational goals
2. Government should establish good incentives as well as facilities for staff research development
3. University administrators should initiate capacity building programmes for lecturers.
4. The university administrators should provide a good knowledge storage base for future use.

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