Roles of Public Libraries towards Enhancing Effective Knowledge Management in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The paper discusses the Roles of Public Libraries towards Enhancing Effective Knowledge Management in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Development of Public Libraries in Nigeria started aggressively from its birth, and that effort gained the support of foreign agencies and organisations that provided grants at different periods, but the major impact was spearheaded by the regional leaders. Kaduna State is the successor to the old Northern Region of Nigeria. Knowledge Management (KM) is a crucial concept which aims, in any organization, at explaining and clearing how to transform both personal and organizational information into individual and collective knowledge and skills. Four main types of knowledge were highlighted and sequenced. The paper looked at some basic managerial functions and skills for enhancing Knowledge Management, such as interpersonal skills, information skills, and decision-making skills. It also highlighted the roles required or can be played by Public Libraries to improve effective Knowledge Management. Public Libraries need to upgrade their skills needed for technological advancement, scribd delivery, Web 2.0, social media, and electronic library automation. Some challenges were identified such as: Power failure, internet problems, lack of qualified staff and funding, etc. The paper concluded that Public Libraries in Kaduna State should ensure the optimal use of technology to enhance effective Knowledge Management. Therefore, way forward include among others, that Public Libraries in Kaduna State should provide support to supplement electricity in the event of a power outage such as provision of high-powered solar systems and generators that provide stable power. Specialized ICT personnel should be recruited to assist Kaduna State Public Libraries in enhancing effective knowledge management and proper funding should be provided to Public Libraries in Kaduna State for enhanced Knowledge Management.

Roles of Public Libraries towards Enhancing Effective Knowledge Management in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Introduction

Knowledge Management (KM) is a crucial concept which aims, in any organization, at explaining and clearing how to transform both personal and organizational information into individual and collective knowledge and skills. In this way, organizations are unable to continue, unless they select an appropriate strategy to present intellectual and knowledge-based capitals. In order to be successful in today's competitive market, organizations need to search for expert and experienced human resources or to educate them about the required skills. This is where Public Libraries come in handy because they are embodiment and closer to the individuals in a community. However, these are not enough, and it is necessary to consider the importance of Public Libraries in transfer of experience and knowledge from experts to beginners and those who need them. This is of so much importance that in ranking of any organizations, intellectual capital is deemed to be a key indicator. As an undeniable and crucial section in organizations' success, knowledge management covers a wide range of organizational ideas including strategic, economic, behavioral, and managerial strategies. Knowledge Management and management procedures has become essential to the continued existence of academic libraries (Gourlay, 2001; in Mir Hamid, Abdulkarim & Hussein, 2016). As a result, KM has gained popularity as a management tool during the last decade, this makes knowledge now known as the engine of production and economic growth, leading to a new hub on the role of technology and learning in economic performance. Therefore, it is very essential to educate people about the services provided by libraries to encourage their use (Bawa, Chukwuka & Fagbemi, 2017).

In Nigeria, library organization is no exception. This sector is mainly responsible for preserving, processing and disseminating information related to the cultural heritage of its community (Bawa, Chukwuka & Fagbemi, 2017). On the other hand, research in today's institution is the key to creating and disseminating knowledge. Institutions do not just make knowledge accessible to users, but manage and work with existing knowledge so that it can be used later. This makes foreign institutions today to adapt to their varying roles in a knowledge society (Singh, 2010 in Marjal, 2011).

A Public Library is seen, according to National Center for Education Statistics (1996), as an entity that is established under government enabling laws and regulations to serve the community, district, state, region or nation that provides at least the following:

- An organized collection of information resources, i.e. printed or non-printed materials, or a combination thereof;
- Paid staff; i.e. professionals and Para-professionals
- An established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the general public;
- The facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, schedule and services; and
- Is supported in whole or in part with public funds.

Public Libraries in Nigeria and Kaduna State

Development of Public Libraries in Nigeria started aggressively from its birth, and that effort gained the support of foreign agencies and organisations that provided grants at different periods, but the major impact was spearheaded by the regional leaders. A document that rightly mirrored the use of books and libraries in pre-colonial Nigeria was one by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which was among the papers presented at the two-week regional seminal organized by same UNESCO between the 10th to 22nd September 1962 held at Enugu, Eastern region of Nigeria entitled, "Present Situation of Public Library Development in the English Speaking African Countries." On

Nigeria, the document stressed that each region was responsible for the establishment and management of its public libraries and it compared their activities in the then three regions.

Kaduna State is the successor to the old Northern Region of Nigeria, which had its capital in Kaduna. In 1967 the region was split into six States, one was the North-Central State whose name was changed to Kaduna State in 1976. The State is divided into twenty-three (23) local government areas. Kaduna State Library Board was established in accordance with the Library Decree of 1970 which authorize the expansion of National Library Board to all States of the Federation. It has a Central Library as the headquarters in Kaduna, the State capital and 9 divisional branches across the State Local Government Areas and Wards.

Librarians of all backgrounds need to ensure that users have the right knowledge anytime, anywhere to enhance their learning. These roles must be performed very well to ensure that knowledge does not remain in the library without proper use. These tasks can be performed by a Public Library Librarian who has a deep knowledge of the services and resources available to the users to ensure that the knowledge is properly managed. It should be well-known that Public Libraries, realizing the significant consequence of KM, assign knowledge managers to create, disseminate, and use knowledge to create systems of KM. An effective mechanism which will help the library to improve performance in the design and implementation of KM systems. Such a system permits precise definition of knowledge and knowledge exchange, thus improving the performance of library staff.
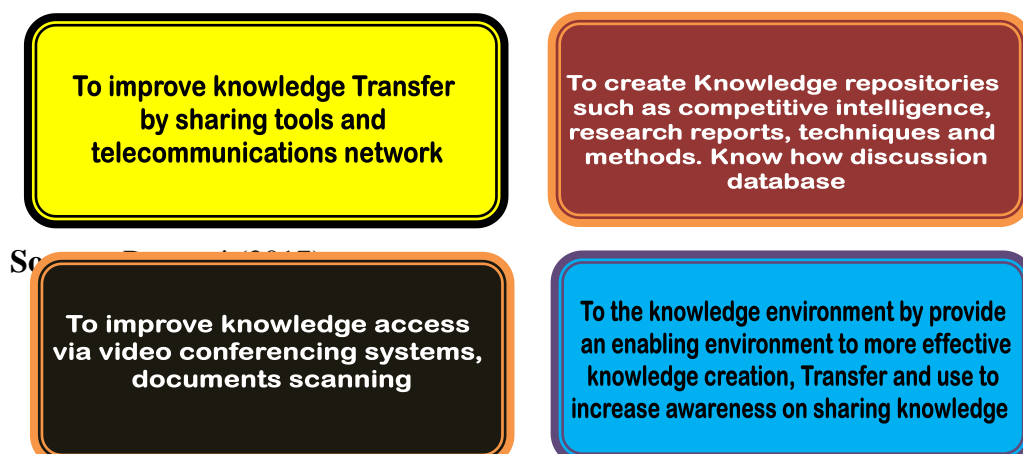
However, the argument over the position of KM in libraries, Public Libraries inclusive, has turn out to be more compound over the past years, as the type of knowledge that is used and consumed daily in a particular library is also complicated by the continuous advances in technology and invention. Its complexity has become an impact on the academic libraries (Ciborra & Andreu, 2001; Dutta, 1997; Gottschalk, 2000 in Mir Hamid, Abdulkarim, & Hussein, 2016).
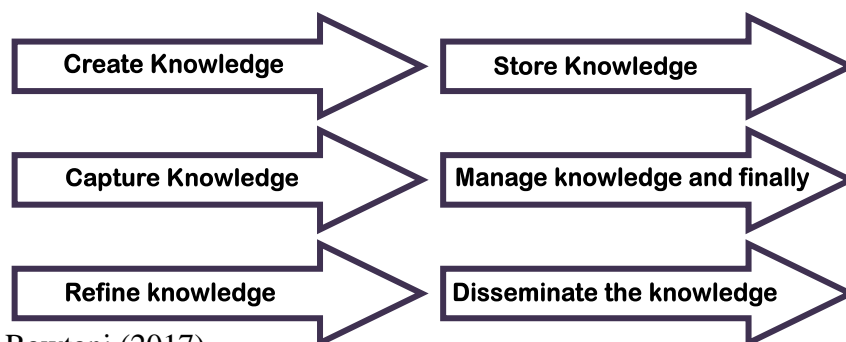
Concepts of Knowledge Management

There are two types of KM, which are: the type of knowledge that is reflected in the inner state of a person, as well as the ability of the person himself to act, and the type that is frequently expressed and recorded (Piyush & Bhubanaswar, 2002). Knowledge Management is seen as the process of converting information and intellect into sustainable worth. This allows users to know how to act whilst they require to (Kidwell et al. in Marjal, 2011). KM is about making the correct knowledge obtainable to the exact processor, i.e. human or a computer, at the exact time in the exact appearance at the right rate (Holsapple & Joshi, 1999; Aranganathan & Lakshmi, 2010 in Marjal, 2011). KM refers to the steps that are thoroughly taken to create, organize and make available the intellectual wealth of an organization. As well as to strengthen the system of teaching and lifelong (Sharifuddin & Rowland, 2004; in Seyeed & Batool, (2011)

Types of Knowledge Viewpoint

Davenport et al. divided knowledge into four main types:

To improve knowledge Transfer by sharing tools and telecommunications network	**To create Knowledge repositories such as competitive intelligence, research reports, techniques and methods. Know how discussion database**
To improve knowledge access via video conferencing systems, documents scanning	**To the knowledge environment by provide an enabling environment to more effective knowledge creation, Transfer and use to increase awareness on sharing knowledge**

Source: Davenport (2017)

In addition, Knowledge Management has a sequence that follows six steps:

Create Knowledge	Store Knowledge
Capture Knowledge	Manage knowledge and finally
Refine knowledge	Disseminate the knowledge

Source: Rawtani (2017)

Knowledge Management in Public Libraries

KM and Public Libraries are natural partners, librarians have strong ties with the broader information science field and as such have encountered principles of KM throughout their training and career. KM encompasses five core principles: Knowledge acquisition, Knowledge organization, Knowledge retention, Knowledge sharing and Knowledge generation (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Jashapara, 2004). It becomes clear that all the five are areas that Public Libraries have an involvement in; this is particularly true for explicit KM activities related to the organization of information, data and knowledge, and increasingly for tacit KM activities, acknowledged as early as 1993 by Florance and Matheson (1993). Specific activities, such as organizing workshops and other educational activities at the point of need, facilitating exchange between stakeholders through displays and conferences and the organization of digital literacy (Public and School Libraries) and scholarship (Academic and Legal Libraries) programs have become more prominent in library science over the past two decades.

The following section highlights activities taking place in each of the five core principles of KM:

Knowledge acquisition: Public Libraries are by default responsible for gathering valuable resources to enable knowledge acquisition by its key stakeholders. Researchers rely on libraries to find the latest information on their subject areas and apply this information in their development of new knowledge, libraries play an important part in supporting these activities (Hoffman, 2016). Public Libraries are also responsible for identifying shifts in the relevance of resources for example by keeping track of performance indexes of journals or by signposting relevant online material, which aids appropriate acquisition of knowledge.

Knowledge organization: The acquired resources have to be organized in a manner that enables retrieval by stakeholders. In this process Public Library is responsible for appropriate storage, providing access to resources, ensuring fair distribution of resources and developing new methods for retrieval. It is (often) also responsible for creating awareness of new resources and organizing the promotion of knowledge created within the organization, for example by recommending optimal journals for publication impact or by organizing and publishing newsletters and updates within the organization.

Knowledge retention: Most Public Libraries have different types of archival support available. Online repositories are an important part of developing access to knowledge and information created throughout the organization (Bangani, 2018; Arlitsch & Grant, 2018). Increasingly libraries are also involved with large scale research data storage and retrieval projects (Cox et al., 2017) and traditionally have facilitated access to data and information in expired formats, such as microfiche or cassettes.

Knowledge sharing: Open Access is pushing the agenda for accessible research output and this has a major impact on the role of libraries in sharing knowledge to a far greater audience (Farida et al., 2015). To aid with the sharing of research output, libraries utilize the

aforementioned online repositories, provide advice and guidance on Open Access Journals and other means of open access publication (Sabharwal & Natal, 2017) and increasingly, through the provision of scholarly communication departments, provide training and development opportunities to researchers in achieving more success in getting their research output published, either through traditional channels, or by facilitating access to appropriate media and events.

Knowledge generation: Through scholarly communication and digital scholarship services, as well as more traditional support, libraries are increasingly involved as key stakeholders for researchers within their host institutions (Hoffman, 2016). Public Libraries facilitate multi-disciplinary events and act as a link between researchers and library users who might not be aware of each other's existence but encounter each other through, for example, the online repository of the host institution, or through scholarly communication training events. Subject and legal librarians are traditionally involved with research projects to aid access to appropriate resources and in some cases help develop the research by (co--) conducting literature reviews and analysis.

All these activities demonstrate that Public Libraries are already contributing to core KM activities in organizations, and, as Florance and Matheson (1993) stated; library staff are knowledge workers that play an important role in the development of KM activities. It is therefore important that KM plays a part in the education of future librarians.

Roles of Public Libraries towards Enhancing Knowledge Management

In light of current developments, some prospective areas of Public Library activity require the use of modern administrative techniques and methods. The important point is that, Public Library administrators and staff should develop an attitude and approach towards inculcating a culture necessary for good library management.

Library information management is carried out through a set of essential administrative skills and functions. This includes:

1. Interpersonal skills
2. Information skills
3. Decisions skills

Nevertheless, Public Library professionals need a different mix of managerial skills to properly manage information. These skills are:

a. Technical skills used in the knowledge, methods, processes, and practice techniques specific to performing a job.
b. Human skills used to successfully interact with others.
c. Conceptual skills that deals with abstract ideas and relationships. It is a mental capacity to understand abstract or general ideas and apply them to a specific situation (Pradhan & Jena, 2013).

In addition, Knowledge Management is vital to the development of the entire community. Public Libraries must be provided with the following to further enhance effective knowledge management:

1. Public Libraries need to update their skills related to technological advancement. They must have the skills to do their daily work. Therefore, efforts must be made to improve Public Libraries through the acquisition of additional skills that will play an important role between technology and physical materials, given that they are from time to time overwhelmed by overwork and other tasks (Sura, 2017).
2. Public Libraries are expected to provide Library 2.0 to improve knowledge management by creating a meeting place online or in the physical world where the needs of library users are met through information and communication (Pandey, 2017).

3. Another way to improve knowledge management is implementing Scribd. Scribd is a new development technology in Silicon Valley that makes it easy to share documents online. Scribd is a great online library where the library can publish their original content. The idea is that in the library there are many documents on their computer that can only they be read by them.

4. Web 2.0 technologies should be used by Public Libraries to provide services, transfer information, interrelate with users, and communicate with age group on a global scale. Boateng, Mbetika and Thomas (2010) in Junaid (2017) put forward that Web 2.0 is a series of trend and tools for Internet use. They further stated that these social and technological innovations allowed for interaction and knowledge gathering through experience and practice on a global scale. Collaboration, social media, and ease of use of this app have dramatically changed the way knowledge is managed.

5. RSS, also known as Rich Site Summary, is the most accepted and simple tool among Web 2.0 technologies. In essence, RSS is XML encoding that allows users to receive website updates without visiting the website. It is an effortless tool used by Public Libraries to manage knowledge by sharing the latest stories and updates from newsgroups, magazines, newspapers, journals etc. (Junaid, 2017).

6. The digital library provides a variety of electronic resources and related technical functions for creating, searching and using information. This knowledge can be accessed by electronic means to provide users with the greatest possible benefit in terms of accessibility and accuracy for many at the same time, in the shortest possible time. With the digital library, users can access it quickly and easily, enhance information sharing, save storage space, and support multimedia content etc. (Babita, 2017).

7. Automation of Public Libraries helps improve Knowledge Management by using computer technology to collect, organize and share information quickly and accurately as possible using databases and library software such as KOHA, VTLIS, ALICE for Windows, AGORA, HINARI, GREENSTONE, TEEAL, SOUL, etc. These programs and databases help spread knowledge to users and the wider community, for example, around the world (Suleiman, 2017). Networks achieve optimum results with minimal effort. Networking is unavoidable in all academic libraries because users can find resources from other libraries (Mamta, 2017).

8. Social media is used to describe the innovative educational program curricula and display it in many Public Libraries, in order to improve their services. For example, Public Libraries take advantage of the opportunities provided by these social media tools to spread information, promote new publications, through Facebook, Twitter, Academia.edu. , Youtube, Flick, researchgate e.t.c. (Shweta, Jaya & Verma 2016; in Suleiman 2018).

Challenges Faced by Public Library towards Enhancing Knowledge Management

Some of the issues hindering enhancing KM in Public Libraries were highlighted as follows:

1. Blackouts: Power cuts or failures are a major challenge for Public Libraries in Kaduna State. Most Public Libraries rely solely on electricity to provide their services, especially when using technology to share or transfer knowledge to users around the world, and because of the corruption the industry faces. The country's electricity has not been friendly to Public Libraries for users to use.

2. Lack of experienced personnel: The shortage of qualified personnel to manage technology that would improve KM is a major problem. Some of these technologies have made their way into the Public Library in Kaduna State, but the right people to administer

these technologies are not there because they lack experienced personnel or they do not want to pass their knowledge on to others so that they can't benefit from it.

3. Network problems: Most network installations are weak. Bandwidth is low in terms of speed, which makes it particularly difficult to use and to properly transfer large amounts of knowledge to users of Public Libraries in Kaduna State.

4. Funding: Finance is a very important issue, especially in the context of funding Public Libraries to improve knowledge management. The funds for most Public Libraries in Kaduna State are small, so using this money to cover their expenses is a big problem. Sometimes, this money is not sufficient to add the latest technology to the library or to subscribe to resources that would improve KM.

5. Inadequate Staff Training: Staff should be trained in the latest technologies used to improve KM in Public Libraries of Kaduna State. However, inadequate training of these staff from time to time hinders the library's performance towards improving KM.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is pertinent to know that KM is a significant factor in Kaduna State Public Libraries, as the knowledge accumulated in the libraries cannot be considered useful until the end user effectively uses it to meet their needs, and this can be only done through appropriate implementation of KM.

Therefore, Public Libraries in Kaduna State must ensure that technology is optimally used to improve effective Knowledge Management. Finally, the management of Kaduna State Library Board are expected to assist Public Libraries in promoting and improving Knowledge Management to assist them in their daily activities.

Way Forward

1. Public Libraries should provide a backup to replenish energy in the event of a power outage. In addition, they should to provide high-precision solar systems and generators that provide stable power.

2. Expert in Information and Communication Technology personnel should be recruited to assist public Libraries in the effective management of information.

3. A fast, high-bandwidth network should be provided in Public Libraries to ensuring rapid knowledge transfer to users in Kaduna State.

4. Government and management of Kaduna State Public Libraries should endeavor to allocate or provide adequate funds to Public Libraries to effectively improve KM. Public Libraries should also look inside to see how they can generate money for the library, whether through solicitations from highly placed members of the society who are library enthusiasts, provision of photocopying machines, binding and printing services for commercial purpose.

5. Staff of Public Libraries in Kaduna State should receive regular training from time to time through workshops, in-service training, seminars, conferences, etc. This would give them the opportunity to be well equipped with advanced technology that matches world standards.

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