KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT UTILIZATION IN HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract
This study used a survey design to investigate the utilization of Knowledge Management (KM) in Human Capital Development (HCD) in Universities. A sample of 400 lecturers and 25-item instrument (KMUQ), were used for the study. Three research questions and one null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance, guided the study. The data were analysed using means, standard deviation and t-test. It was found that KM was poorly utilized in HCD in academic programmes and personnel management. Difficulties and inadequate facilities constitute problems to KM utilization. Exchange programmes and staff training in KM utilisation were recommended.

Background of the Problem
Knowledge is the most important factor of production, especially in the area of human capital development (HCD). The era of advanced technology has brought a new world where knowledge is not only power but also wealth. The most needed labour force today is those with appropriate knowledge and knowledge management skills.

Knowledge, being the key factor of production, has become the focus of today's economy because, as observed by Babalola (2008:42), the "provider of knowledge is an indispensable fuel for the

engine of development." This explains why the university is very significant in human capital development. Following the World Bank (2002) reactions and recommendations, it became clear that knowledge has placed universities at a strategic position in HCD.

Human capital development is the economic value of the knowledge, experience, skills and capabilities of effective workforce within an organization (Daft, 2003:750). In this paper, HCD refers to high level manpower production. It means the production of graduates and post graduates of various disciplines to man the national economy. HCD also implies manpower development. The three terms are interchangeably used in this paper.

Knowledge Management (KM) has various interpretations. Biriam (BO) (2008) perceives KM as a discipline that seeks to improve the performance of individuals and organizations by maintaining and leveraging the present and future value of knowledge assets. KM involves identification, creation, capture, representative, distribution use and reuse of knowledge (Onwurah and Chiaha, 2008:286). Petrides and Nodine (2003) identified KM as the practice that assists in data sharing and information. According to Friehs (2001), KM is the coordination and organization of personnel in an establishment in internal and external sharing of knowledge.

From the above deductions, it should be realized that KM is much more than data collection, processing, and exchange of information. It ties together activities connected to knowledge capital, knowledge economy, knowledge workers and learning (Onwurah and Chiaha, 2008:287). Basically, KM offers a framework for balancing a myriad of technologies and tying them into a whole, explained Birian (BO) (2008). Bleiklie (2005) noted that KM unites intellectual practices and cultivates channels for knowledge flow. The above suggest that the use of KM in universities is very apt in the production of the much needed skilled high level manpower.

HCD in Nigerian universities is governed by three basic ideologies identified by FME (2003), in Babalola (2008:8), as Idealism, Mechanistic Determinism and Voluntarism. Idealism considers universities as autonomous entities and so HCD is supply-

driven. The mechanistic determinism perceives universities as part of the overall society. Being a subsystem of the society, universities cannot effect necessary social changes without the society carrying them along. Voluntarism contends that universities produce manpower for national development and international competitions and so should respond to global changes and challenges.

The two groups of lecturers in Nigerian universities are the senior academicians comprising of Professors, associate Professors or Readers and Senior Lecturers. The other is the junior academics consisting of Lecturer I, Lecturer II, Assistant Lecturer and Graduate Assistant. These academics have the onerous task of producing the much needed high level manpower in the universities. The two major managerial issues in HCD in universities which form the basic ingredients for this study are the Academic Programme and Staff & Students Personnel Management. These are usually the major functions of the academics.

Statement of Problem

There have been serious complaints on the quality of Nigerian graduates. It is observed, that they cannot fit into the current labour market, such that despite acute shortage of skilled manpower, there is still very large-scale graduate unemployment in Nigeria. This situation seems to have worsened due to advanced technology which the current labour market demands. Consequently, a production conflict arose between Nigerian universities and the federal government, leading to the loss of millions of dollar credit facility from the World Bank in 1990.

While universities blame the government for lack of provision of adequate teaching and learning facilities in universities for HCD, resulting to a supply-driven manpower production, the federal government accuses universities of producing unemployable graduates. Universities in the South Eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria are worse hit in inadequate facilities and graduate unemployment, implying that the situation may be more precarious in the zone. This governs the choice of this zone for this study.

As the conflict between universities and federal government continues, graduate unemployment increases in the face of the numerous advantages of KM in HCD. One, therefore, wonders how universities in Nigeria are utilizing KM in their very essential role of high level manpower production. The problem of this study put in question form is, how are Nigerian universities utilizing KM in HCD?

Purpose of Study

This study attempted to investigate KM utilization in Human Capital Development in Nigerian universities. Specifically the study investigated KM utilization in:

1) Academic Programme Management;
2) Staff and Students Personnel Management and
3) The problems facing KM utilization in universities.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

1) How is KM utilized in Academic Programme Management?
2) How is KM utilized in staff and students Personnel Management?
3) What are the problems facing KM utilization in Human Capital Development (HCD) in Universities.

Hypothesis

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance as follows:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between senior and junior academics/lecturers as regards problems facing KM utilization in HCD in universities

Significance of the Study

The finding of this study will assist the universities in repositioning themselves appropriately in utilizing KM for academic programmes and personal management.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to utilization of KM in universities in Nigeria. It is concerned only with how KM is used in academic programme and personnel management, as well as the problems facing universities in KM utilization. The study is also limited to only federal universities in the South Eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Method

Design: The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

Population: The population comprises of all federal universities in the South East (SE) geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Sample: The sample consists of 400 (200 senior and 200 junior) academics/lecturers selected by multistage sampling from two (50%) federal universities in the SE, comprising of 200 (100 senior and 100 junior) academics/lecturers from each university.

Instrument: The instrument used for this study is a 23-item Knowledge Management Utilization Questionnaire (KMUQ), developed by the researcher. This consisted of three clusters, apart from section I, which was for demographic data. The items for the clusters on KM Utilization in Academic Programme and Personnel management were placed on a 4-point scale of *Highly Utilized (HU); Averagely Utilized (AU); Poorly Utilized (PU)* and *Very Poorly Utilized (VPU).* The items of the cluster on problems in KM utilization were placed on a 4-point scale of *Strongly Agreed (SA); Agreed (A); Disagreed (D); Strongly Disagreed (SD).*

The researcher and three research assistants properly trained by the researcher, administered the KMUQ. All the 400 (100%) instruments administered were returned. The instrument was face-validated by the experts – one in educational evaluation and two from educational administration. For internal validity and consistency the Chronbach Alpha was used to establish a reliability coefficient value of 0.87 after a pilot study, conducted in one federal university in the SW zone.

Data Analysis: The data were analysed using means, standard deviation and t-test for testing the null hypothesis. For clusters one and two on utilization of KM, the decision levels are as follows:

Means:	**Decision Level**
3.5 and above:	Highly Utilized (HU)
3.4 - 2.5:	Averagely Utilized (AU)
2.4 - 1.5:	Poorly Utilized (PU)
1.4 and below:	Very poorly Utilized (VPU)

The criterion mean of 2.50 was used in accepting and rejecting the items that constitute and did not constitute problems in KM utilization respectively.

Result

Table 4.1: ***Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Lecturers in Utilization in Academic Programme.***

S/No	**Questionnaire Items**	**Responses** $\overline{X}$	**N=400** SD	Decision
1.	Teaching student on-line	1.90	1.11	PU
2.	Organization of workshops/conferences	2.56	0.96	AU
3.	Research works	2.94	0.93	AU
4.	Dissemination of research findings	0.92	1.11	PU
5.	Supervising students research/projects	2.68	1.09	AU
6.	Networking with staff of other institutions	2.04	1.13	PU
7.	Student course work	2.50	0.97	AU
8.	Student seminars / project defence	2.00	1.12	PU
	CLUSTER	2.32	1.06	PU

Cluster mean decision level =2.32 = Poorly Utilized (PU)

Table 4.1 shows That KM is *Highly* and *Very Poorly Utilized* in none of the items but, *Averagely Utilized* in items 2,3,5, 6 and 8 while *Poorly Utilized* in items 1,4, and 7. The *Cluster Mean* is 2.32 and decision level shows that KM is Poorly Utilized in Academic Programme Management in HCD in universities.

Table 4.2: ***Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Lecturers in Utilization in Personnel Management.***

S/No	Questionnaire Items	Responses N=400		
		$\overline{X}$	SD	Decision
9.	Staff Recruitment	2.04	1.13	PU
10.	Staff Discipline	1.90	0.11	PU
11.	Students Admissions	2.62	1.02	AU
12.	Evaluation/Examination of Students	2.12	1.07	PU
13.	Release of Student result	2.08	0.98	PU
14.	Students Affairs Matters	2.04	1.13	PU
15.	Staff Development	3.10	0.87	AU
16.	Online Communications with Staff and Students	1.09	1.11	PU
	CLUSTER	2.20	0.93	PU

❖ **Cluster mean decision level =2.20 = Poorly Utilized (PU)**

Table 4.2 shows that KM is **Highly** and **Very Poorly Utilized** in **none** of the items but, **Averagely Utilized** in items 11 and 15 while **Poorly Utilized** in items 9, 10, 12,13,14, and16. The Cluster Mean is 2.20 showing a **decision level** that KM is **Poorly Utilized** in **Personnel Management** in HCD in universities.

Table 4.3: ***Mean Rating and Standard Deviation of Problems Facing KM Utilization in Universities.***

S/No	Questionnaire Items	Responses $\overline{X}$	N=400 SD	Decision
17.	No Idea what KM is all about	2.12	1.07	Reject
18.	KM is too costly for me	2.84	1.05	Accept
19.	There are inadequate facilities for KM	3.32	1.01	Accept
20.	I like to keep my research word confidential	2.66	0.95	Accept
21.	I don't like to share my discovers with others	2.14	1.02	Reject
22.	I need further training before I can use KM	2.84	1.05	Accept
23.	KM is difficult to use in Human Capital Development	3.38	1.00	Accept

❖ **Decision Level: Items with $\overline{X} \geq 2.50$ are problems**

Table 4.3 indicates that items 18,19,20,22,and 23 have their means greater than 2.50 and are therefore **considered problems facing KM utilization** while items 17, and 21 have their means belows the criterion mean of 2.50 and therfore **Not considered problems.**

Table 4.4: t-Test Analysis on the Significant Difference between the Mean Rating of Senior and Junior Lectures with regard to Problems Facing KM Utilization in Universities.

S/No	Questionnaire Items	t-test for Equality of Means		
		t-Cal	t-tab	Decision
17.	No Idea what KM is all about	1.86	1.96	NS
18.	KM is too costly for me	0.29	1.96	NS
19.	There are inadequate facilities for KM	0.00	1.96	NS
20.	I like to keep my research word confidential	2.40	1.96	S
21.	I don't like to share my discovers with others	2.14	1.96	S
22.	I need further training before I can use KM	1.44	1.96	NS
23.	KM is difficult to use in Human Capital Development	1.73	1.96	NS
	CLUSTER (Accept)	1.41		NS

❖ **P < 0.05; df=398; NS= Not Significant; S = Significant**

Table 4.4 shows that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of the Senior and junior lecturers in items 20 and 21 but that there is no significant difference between their means in items 17, 18, 19, 22, and 23, The Cluster mean shows that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the senior and junior lectures with regards to problems facing KM utilization in universities. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that KM is *Poorly Utilized* in both Academic Programme (Table 1) and personnel management in HCD in universities. This finding seems to justify the observations that Nigerian graduates are not adequately prepared for national development. As the human capital of high level manpower and future

leaders, it is very crucial that universities should gear up the use of KM in their human capital formation. Nigerians need research -oriented leaders and entrepreneurs, so universities must endeavour to use technological means especially KM, in the production of high level manpower.

Further findings, (Table 3) show that the following constitute problems to KM utilization, costly nature of KM; inadequate facilities for KM; keeping research works confidential; further training in KM; and difficulty of using KM in HCD.

The costly nature of KM may not be unconnected with inadequacy of facilities which also may be the cause of the lecturers' difficulty in the use of KM in HCD as shown by this study. It is likely that some lecturers might want to guard their research works jealously due to the problems they face in making research discoveries and conducting empirical studies. In the face of several difficulties including lack of necessary facilities in addition to lack of appreciation and motivation, researchers are usually compelled to conserve their technical know-how, thus lack of sharing of knowledge occurs. However, the level of KM initiatives as observed by *http://www.emeraldinsight.com* is fundamentally predicted when workers are prepared to share their knowledge. This, therefore, implies that lecturers with relevant knowledge should be adequately motivated.

The finding that there is no significant difference between senior and junior academics suggests that all lecturers share the same view that KM utilization in HCD in universities is saddled with problems, which must be solved if the production conflict between the universities and the federal government must be resolved.

Implications and Recommendations

The poor utilization of knowledge management has serious implications because knowledge gets lost when it is not adequately utilized and more knowledge is gained when it is properly utilized. Consequently, Nigerian universities cannot afford to lag behind in this era of knowledge boom in HCD. The study therefore recommends that:

(1) The University staff should be highly motivated to utilize KM in HCD.
(2) Universities should train and retrain their staff to be abreast with the KM practices and initiatives.
(3) Government should try and ensure that KM facilities are available and affordable for university staff and students.
(4) University staff, especially lecturers, should be encouraged to share their knowledge through available technological means.
(5) Exchange programmers should be encouraged with advanced countries that utilize KM in their universities for HCD.

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