Knowledge Sharing Behaviour among Undergraduates in the Faculty of Law: a case study of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Law Students

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Abstract

Knowledge sharing is a process by which an individual imparts his or her expertise, insight, or understanding to another individual so that the recipient may potentially acquire and use the knowledge to perform his or her task(s). This study was therefore undertaken to find out the knowledge sharing behavior among undergraduates in the faculty of law: an experience of Usmanu Danfodiyo University (UDU) law students. The study adopted a descriptive survey design using stratified random sampling based on the population of 296 respondents. Data was collected using a self-constructed questionnaire. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents have positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. On the attitude of the respondents towards knowledge sharing, findings from this study shows that majority of the respondents agreed that they are always ready and willing to share their knowledge with course mates. Also, this study show that a large amount of the respondents agreed that they do share knowledge for improved performance in academic assignment, test or exams. It was recommended that Faculty of Law, UDU should sensitize the students on the benefits of knowledge sharing among others.

Keywords: Knowledge sharing, Behaviour, Law Students,

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Introduction

Knowledge management is defined as the process, by which knowledge needed for an organization to thrive is created, captured, shared and leveraged (Isika & Ismail, 2013). Mahmood, Dahlan and Ahmad (2016) described knowledge sharing as the process of exchanging knowledge between people, community, organization or groups. Knowledge can be in the forms of experience, skill and understanding. Knowledge shared among a group of members can improve problem solving since each individual may have different expertise or knowledge and by sharing their knowledge can help others. However, there are many issues that arise regarding the users behavior even though they are provided with such facilities of knowledge sharing system. One of the most recent discussed topics in knowledge sharing is related to knowledge sharing behavior. The examples of the behavior explained in previous research were trust, subjective norms, expected rewards, enjoyment in helping others and perceived behavioral control. The knowledge sharing behavior derived basically depends on the domains of the studies. There are various domains to be considered in the study of knowledge sharing behavior such as education, industrial firm, banking sector and many more. Knowledge sharing behavior itself is an individual's optional behavior, not directly recognized, and in the collective supports effective functioning of an organization's operations and performance (Bordia et al, 2004).

Chen (2011) proposed that knowledge sharing is a voluntary activity in which knowledge is transmitted and distributed from one individual to others. Knowledge sharing requires a long process of discovering and learning for individuals when colleagues come together and share their knowledge and generate new values (Jain, 2007). Sharing of knowledge has been shown to be the main prerequisite of new ideas and innovations (Kokavcova & Mala, 2009), and individuals who share their knowledge have been found to perform daily tasks better (Ling, Sandhu, & Jain, 2009). According to Cheng, Ho, and Lau, (2009), the impact of knowledge sharing in higher institutions could be larger than that created by business organizations. Successful collaborative learning relies greatly on knowledge sharing among students (Chiu, 2010), and knowledge sharing is considered a social phenomenon related to interpersonal relationships and social interactions (Lin, Wu, & Lu, 2012).

Students' ability to share knowledge is alongside with corporate world's interest in recruiting employees who possess diversified social communication skills and ability to share a message across to others clearly and unambiguously (Begona & Carmen, 2011). Behavioral example of knowledge sharing derived from the attitude towards positive and negative feelings an individual has towards the intention to share knowledge (Nava-Macali, 2017). When people are confident in their ability to share useful knowledge, they are highly motivated to do so (Cho, Li, & Su, 2007). The medium in which knowledge may be transferred to others include, for example, e-mail, video conferencing, chat, blogs, internet sites, seminar presentations, mentoring, and meetings (Peyman, Akbar & Gholamhossein, 2013).

Most of the studies on knowledge sharing behavior were in the field of business and in an organizational context. The educational sector was not really examined by most studies, those that examined the educational sector mostly focused on postgraduate students. Researches that studied knowledge sharing behavior among undergraduate students are few and most of them studied students in other countries. Not many studies on knowledge sharing behavior were carried out in Nigeria, and mostly in Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions of learning, knowledge sharing among undergraduate students has been the norm that becomes commonly practice among undergraduate students. It is expected that sharing knowledge among students be attain explicitly and literally for improving individual educational performance. This can be achieved using technology or otherwise depending on the individual needs towards information or research for academic purposes. It is on this note that this study seeks to investigate knowledge sharing behavior among undergraduate in the faculty of law: an experience of Usmanu Danfodiyo University law students.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to examine the knowledge sharing behavior among undergraduate in the faculty of law: an experience of Usmanu Danfodiyo University law students. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the attitude among law students towards knowledge sharing.
2. Examine the tools used by law students for knowledge sharing.
3. Determine motivating factors by law students for knowledge sharing.
4. Identify factors limiting law students towards knowledge sharing.

Literature Review

Attitude determines the individual's intention to perform knowledge sharing behavior (Alajmi, 2010), and the more favorable the individual's attitude toward sharing knowledge, the stronger his/her intention to share knowledge (Othman & Skaik, 2014). According to Chennamaneni (2006), attitude towards knowledge sharing is formed from behavioral beliefs and refers to the degree of positive/negative feelings an individual has towards the intention to share knowledge with other members of the organization. It is not only being used by the working people but also there is heavy increase in the use of social media by the students or education society (Raut & Patil, 2016). According to Sudha and Kavitha (2016), social media are mostly used by students to communicate and exchange ideas with lecturers specifically in western contexts. They also stated that social network sites have attracted considerable attention among scholars and educators due to the increasing popularity among students and the potential effect on academic performance.

A combined study by Akanbiemu, Ajibare and Ogunwemimo (2021), revealed that resource utilization significantly influences tacit knowledge sharing and library use significantly influences explicit knowledge sharing. The study concluded that academic resources were useful in enhancing knowledge sharing among Babcock

University undergraduates and the University library administration should provide services that will encourage users to engage in knowledge sharing among undergraduates. To this end, Kim and Jarvenpaa (2008) highlighted the importance of technical aspects to enable knowledge-sharing activities in an institution. Relatively, Muhammad et al (2014) also found out that technological support, sharing information and degree of competition play significant roles in influencing knowledge-sharing behavior among university students.

Channels used in enhancing knowledge sharing are lectures, group discussion, seminars and presentation while tools used in enhancing knowledge sharing are e-mails, social network, drop box, SMS, student portal and video/audio sharing. According to Yaghi et al (2011), knowledge sharing can be done through different medium and tools that help in transmitting knowledge. Ideas and opinions from the experience or the lesson elsewhere need to be shared so that the knowledge would not be lost. There are a few medium and tools that are recently used among undergraduate students to share, store and transmit knowledge. The tools provide different frameworks to evaluate and monitor knowledge. However, in the process of gaining knowledge, there is the need to expand contact among colleagues, classmates and random one meets. According to Norhanim et al (2013), there are differences between tools and medium. Tools refer to instrument or apparatus which is in physical form and uses to achieve goal to transfer knowledge while medium can store or transmit data.

Mingle and Adams (2015) stated that there are some students experienced improvements in their reading skills as a consequence of participation involving social media. Also, respondents shared ideas, discussed and shared examination questions among themselves on social media. In contrast, Hubert and Lopez (2013) emphasized that there are hindrances to sharing knowledge among students because everyone brings their own beliefs, habits and values from diverse backgrounds. This will hinder the aim of sharing knowledge meant to solve problems. Chen et al. (2007) also reported that academic competition was associated with decreased knowledge sharing. Major barrier reported by Majid and Wey (2009) were competition among students to outperform their classmates and the lack of depth in relationship. Chiu (2010) also claimed that students were less likely to share as knowledge is considered critical to their academic performance.

According to Ong et al (2016), some of the limiting factors for knowledge sharing are; ICT problems, lack of self-confidence, external attributes, being self-centered and social attributes. ICT issues such as quality of the Internet connection, hardware and software problems and lack of time were the main barriers to information and knowledge sharing. Secondly, lack of self-confidence. For instance, due to language problems, shyness and being over concerned about providing others with wrong information (and the consequences) were also obstructions to knowledge sharing. Thirdly, the issues of sharing being perceived as a 'show-off' attitude, living far away from campus and not knowing well enough the person with whom sharing might be expected to take place were some of the external attributes found to have affected knowledge sharing. The major barriers to knowledge sharing reported by Yaghi et al.

(2011) were lack of a sharing culture, lack of interaction opportunities, and students believe that "knowledge is power" and it cannot be shared with others.

Methods

The study employed descriptive survey design. The population of this study is 1474 comprising of law students drawn from the faculty of law, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Slovene's formula was used to arrive at a sample size of 315 students representing 100% law students using questionnaire as a data collection instrument and was distributed to same 315 undergraduate's law students. The data gathered in the course of this study was analyzed using descriptive statistic. In other words, simple percentage will be used to analyze the data by presenting it through table, charts, and plots. Data collected were analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

This section of the research addressed the presentation and discussion of the research findings in line with the research questions that were raised in the study. This presented as follows:

Table 1: Demographics Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Department		
100 Level	88	29.7
200 Level	68	23.0
300 Level	68	23.0
400 Level	42	14.2
500 Level	30	10.1
Total	**296**	**100**
Gender		
Male	172	58.1
Female	124	41.9
Total	**296**	**100**
Age		
16-20 Years	136	45.9
21-25 Years	133	44.9
26-30 Years	27	9.1
Total	**296**	**100**

Table 1 shows that 88(29.7%) of the respondents were from 100 level, 68(23.0%) were from 200 level, 68(23.0%) were from 300 level, 42(14.2%) were 400 level while 30(10.1%) were from 500 level. Hence, majority of the respondents were in 100 level which shows 94(31.8%) of the respondents. The table further reveals that 172(58.1%) of the respondents were male while 124(41.9%) were female. Hence, majority of the respondents were male. Also, 136(45.9%) of the respondents were between 16-20

years old, 133(44.9%) were between 21-25 years old while 27(9.1%) were between 16-20 years old. Thus, majority of the respondents were between 16-20 years old.

Attitude	Strongly Agreed		Agreed		Neutral		Disagreed		Strongly Disagreed	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am always ready and willing to share my knowledge with course mates	207	69.9	60	20.3	16	5.4	4	1.4	9	3.0
I do not share my knowledge without expecting anything in return	57	19.3	99	33.4	8	2.7	70	23.6	62	20.9
I do share my knowledge with my colleagues only in times of academic challenge	85	28.7	73	24.7	44	14.9	61	20.6	33	11.1
I do share my knowledge with everyone I feel needs it	100	33.8	142	48.0	30	10.1	16	5.4	8	2.7
I wholeheartedly receive knowledge shared with me	79	26.7	113	38.2	68	23.0	30	10.1	6	2.0
I do not always support arrangements put in place by others to share knowledge	37	12.5	63	21.3	101	34.1	64	21.6	31	10.5
I use all available tools including technology to share knowledge	87	29.4	121	40.9	48	16.2	30	10.1	10	3.4
I do not believe that withholding knowledge is beneficial in any way	77	26.0	111	37.5	65	22.0	31	10.5	12	4.1
I do not believe knowledge sharing is a technical process	41	13.9	100	33.8	73	24.7	62	20.9	20	6.8
I do share my knowledge because it is a norm	47	15.9	78	26.4	56	18.9	69	23.3	46	15.5
I do share my knowledge only to someone I trust	49	16.6	67	22.6	44	14.9	84	28.4	52	17.6
I do share my knowledge because I derive satisfaction from it	57	19.3	101	34.1	66	22.3	44	14.9	28	9.5
I do share my knowledge with only those who collaborate	44	14.9	97	32.8	53	17.9	78	26.4	24	8.1
I do share my knowledge due to my level of experience	62	20.9	124	41.9	31	10.5	38	12.8	41	13.9

Table 2: Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing

Table 2 reveals that 267(90.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they are always ready and willing to share their knowledge with course mates, 16(5.4%) were neutral while 13(4.4%) disagreed; 156(52.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they do not share knowledge without expecting anything in return, 8(2.7%) were neutral while 132(44.5%) strongly disagreed; 158(53.4%) of the respondents agreed that they do share their knowledge with their colleagues only in times of academic challenge, 192(64.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they wholeheartedly

receive knowledge shared with them, 68(23.0%) were neutral while 36(12.1%) strongly disagreed.

Table 2 further shows that 209(70.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they use all available tools including technology to share knowledge, 48(16.2%) were neutral while 40(13.5%) disagreed; 188(63.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they do not believe that withholding knowledge is beneficial in any way, 65(22.0%) while 43(14.6%) strongly disagreed; 56(18.9%) were neutral while 115(38.8%) disagreed; 141(47.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they do share my knowledge with only those who collaborate, 53(17.9%) were neutral while 102(34.5%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 186(62.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they do share my knowledge due to my level of experience, 31(10.5%) were neutral while 79(26.7%) strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Table 3: Tools Used in Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge Sharing Tools	Yes		No	
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Face-to-face communication	276	93.2	20	6.8
WhatsApp	261	88.2	35	11.8
E-learning platforms	236	79.7	60	20.3
Group discussion	251	84.8	45	15.2
Open class discussion	251	84.8	45	15.2
Class presentations	235	79.4	61	20.6
Instagram	189	63.9	107	36.1
Twitter	187	63.2	109	36.8
E-mails	195	65.9	101	34.1
Press articles	172	58.1	124	41.9
Blogs	163	55.1	133	44.9

On the tools used in knowledge sharing, 261(88.2%) uses WhatsApp, 189(63.9%) uses Instagram, 187(63.2%) uses Twitter, 163(55.1%) uses blogs, 195(65.9%) uses e-mails, 172(58.1%) uses press articles, 235(79.4%) uses class presentation, 251(84.8%) uses group discussions, 251(84.8%) uses open class contribution while 236(79.7%) uses e-learning platforms. This implies that face-to-face communication and WhatsApp are the most used tools in knowledge sharing.

Table 4: Motivating Factors for Knowledge Sharing

Purpose of Knowledge Sharing	Strongly Agreed		Agreed		Neutral		Disagreed		Strongly Disagreed	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I do share knowledge for improved performance in academic assignment, test or exams	201	67.9	69	23.3	18	6.1	2	0.7	6	2.0
I do not share knowledge for monetary reward/incentive	92	31.1	155	52.4	23	7.8	12	4.1	14	4.7
I do share knowledge for recognition amongst peers	63	21.3	45	15.2	113	38.2	53	17.9	22	7.4
I derive natural enjoyment in helping others thus, my reasons for sharing knowledge	119	40.2	97	32.8	44	14.9	30	10.1	6	2.0
I share knowledge because I want my peers to also be successful	95	32.1	127	42.9	40	13.5	20	6.8	14	4.7
I share my knowledge because the more I share, the more I know	111	37.5	89	30.1	38	12.8	48	16.2	10	3.4
I share my knowledge for future benefits	61	20.6	115	38.9	78	26.4	29	9.8	13	4.4
I share my knowledge to enhance my reputation	94	31.8	78	26.4	86	29.1	24	8.1	14	4.7
I share my knowledge because I am encouraged by lecturers	36	12.2	67	22.6	93	31.4	59	19.9	41	13.9
I share my knowledge only because of the knowledge sharing culture	58	19.6	33	11.1	120	40.5	49	16.6	36	12.2

Table 4 reveals that 270(91.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they do share knowledge for improved performance in academic assignment, test or exams, 18(6.1%) were neutral while 8(2.7%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 247(83.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they do not share knowledge for monetary reward/incentive, 23(7.8%) were neutral while 26(8.8%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 108(36.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that do share knowledge for recognition amongst peers, 113(38.2%) were neutral while 75(25.3%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 216(73.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they derive natural enjoyment in helping others thus, my reasons for sharing knowledge, 44(14.9%) were neutral while 36(12.1%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 222(75.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they share knowledge because they want my peers to also be successful, 40(13.5%) were neutral while 34(11.5%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 200(67.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they share their knowledge because the more I share, the more I know, 38(12.8%) were neutral while 58(19.6%) strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Moreso, Table 4 shows that 176(59.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they share their knowledge for future benefits, 78(26.4%) were neutral while 41(15.2%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 172(58.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they share my knowledge to enhance my reputation, 86(29.1%) were neutral while 38(12.8%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 103(34.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they share their knowledge because I am encouraged by lecturers, 93(31.4%) were neutral while 100(33.8%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 91(30.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they share my knowledge only because of the knowledge sharing culture, 120(40.5%) were neutral while 85(28.8%) strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Table 5: Factors Limiting Knowledge Sharing

Limiting Factors	Strongly Agreed		Agreed				Disagreed		Strongly Disagreed	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor level of interaction hinders communication among course mates	159	53.7	83	28.0	26	8.8	18	6.1	10	3.4
Lack of cooperation from course mates	72	24.3	164	55.4	37	12.5	8	2.7	15	5.1
Lack of trust by colleagues	74	25.0	110	37.2	94	31.8	16	5.4	2	0.7
Self-centeredness on the part of my colleagues	68	23.0	119	40.2	33	11.1	61	20.6	15	5.1
Dissimilarities in ideas with certain colleagues	54	18.2	111	37.5	72	24.3	39	13.2	20	6.8
Funds to subscribe to the internet to share knowledge	33	11.1	79	26.7	76	25.7	43	14.5	65	22.0
Absence of knowledge sharing platforms designed by the school or department	50	16.9	83	28.0	78	26.4	52	17.6	33	11.1
Lack of encouraging incentives or comments (money, good marks, gifts, etc.)	45	15.2	47	15.9	78	26.4	92	31.1	34	11.5
Low or poor self-esteem amongst my colleagues or fellow students	50	16.9	85	28.7	81	27.4	54	18.2	26	8.8
Low level of knowledge on particular subject of discussion	74	25.0	103	34.8	64	21.6	29	9.8	26	8.8
Loss of knowledge power	51	17.2	59	19.9	83	28.0	83	28.0	20	6.8
Poor internet condition	76	25.7	67	22.6	78	26.4	41	13.9	34	11.5
Lack of time	57	19.3	93	31.4	86	29.1	31	10.5	29	9.8
Academic competition among colleagues	48	16.2	95	32.1	68	23.0	62	20.9	23	7.8
Lack of knowledge sharing culture	47	15.9	69	23.3	67	22.6	73	24.7	40	13.5

Table 5 shows that 242(81.7%) of the respondents agreed that poor level of interaction hinders communication among course mates, 26(8.8%) were neutral while 28(9.5%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 165(55.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that dissimilarities in ideas with certain colleagues, 72(24.3%) were neutral while 59(20.0%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 112(37.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that funds to subscribe to the internet to share knowledge, 76(25.7%) were neutral while 108 (36.5%) strongly disagreed and disagreed. 135(45.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that low or poor self-esteem amongst my colleagues or fellow students, 81(27.4%) were neutral while 80(27.0%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 177(59.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that low level of knowledge on particular subject of discussion, 64(21.6%) were neutral while 55(18.6%) strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Table 5 further reveals that 110(37.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that loss of knowledge power, 83(28.0%) were neutral while 103(34.8%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 143(48.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that poor internet condition, 78(26.4%) were neutral while 75(25.4%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 150(50.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that lack of time, 86(29.1%) were neutral while 60(20.3%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 143(48.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that academic competition among colleagues, 68(23.0%) were neutral while 85(28.7%) strongly disagreed and disagreed; 116(48.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that lack of knowledge sharing culture, 67(22.6%) were neutral while 103(38.2%) strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

On the attitude of the respondents towards knowledge sharing, findings from this study shows that majority of the respondents agreed that they are always ready and willing to share their knowledge with course mates. It can be concluded that majority of the respondents have positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. This finding is similar to Yuen and Majid (2007) who reported that students in Singapore had a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing but were less inclined to share their knowledge for academic activities that were graded. Finding from this study shows that majority of the respondents agreed that face-to-face communication and WhatsApp are the most used tools in knowledge sharing. This finding is in consonance with Majid and Chitra (2014) where majority of the students of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore attested that they frequently use face-to-face interaction and short messaging service (SMS) to share knowledge.

Finding from this study show that majority of the respondents agreed that they do share knowledge for improved performance in academic assignment, test or exams. This finding contradicts Yuen and Majid (2007) who reported that students in Singapore are less inclined to share their knowledge for academic activities that were graded. However, majority of the respondents attested that they do not share knowledge for

monetary incentive; rather, they share knowledge because they want their peers to also be successful. Lastly, lack of trust by colleagues; lack of cooperation from course mates and poor level of interaction to enable communication are the major factors limiting knowledge sharing among majority of the respondents. This finding is similar to Yaghi et al. (2011) where it was reported that lack of a sharing culture and lack of interaction opportunity.

Conclusion

Knowledge sharing has been described as the process of exchanging knowledge between people, community, organization or groups, knowledge can be in the forms of experience, skill and understanding. Knowledge sharing is a beneficiary process to the parties involved since each individual may have different expertise or knowledge and by sharing their knowledge can help others. However, factors such as attitude towards behavior, social norm, perceived usefulness, trust tendencies, experience level, satisfaction and reward/motivation system collaboration are major facilitators of knowledge sharing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:
1. The university management should provide facilities and platforms that would enhance knowledge sharing among undergraduate students.
2. Faculty of law should sensitize the students on the benefits of knowledge sharing.
3. Students should embrace the use of social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, etc., for sharing information that would be more beneficial to their academics.
4. Students should be willing and ready to share knowledge without monetary inducement.
5. The university management should improve on the level of interaction to enable communication among course mates and collaborators of knowledge sharing should be sincere so that issue of related to lack of trust can be curbed.

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