



Nexus between reward culture and knowledge creation in selected academic libraries in Uganda



Authors:

Namale E. Lwanga¹ 
Patrick Ngulube² 

Affiliations:

¹Library Services Department,
Uganda Institute of
Management, Kampala,
Uganda

²Department of
Interdisciplinary Research
and Postgraduate Studies,
University of South Africa,
Pretoria, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Patrick Ngulube,
ngulup@unisa.ac.za

Dates:

Received: 06 Aug. 2018
Accepted: 07 Mar. 2019
Published: 10 July 2019

How to cite this article:

Lwanga, N.E. & Ngulube, P.,
2019, 'Nexus between
reward culture and
knowledge creation in
selected academic libraries
in Uganda', *South African
Journal of Information
Management* 21(1), a1022.
[https://doi.org/10.4102/
sajim.v21i1.1022](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajim.v21i1.1022)

Copyright:

© 2019. The Authors.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work
is licensed under the
Creative Commons
Attribution License.

Background: Knowledge management has become increasingly significant in libraries because of rapid technological changes and the subsequent practices that have become enshrined in the way business is conducted. Knowledge creation as part of knowledge management is key to the sustainable survival of an organisation. The extant literature demonstrates that academic libraries have been engaged in knowledge creation in higher education institutions over the years. A number of studies have been undertaken in the field of knowledge management in Uganda; however, they all focused on knowledge management practices, such as creation, acquisition, documentation, application and sharing without adequately linking them to the reward culture. Consequently, little research has been conducted on the influence of reward culture on knowledge creation in academic libraries in Uganda. This gap in literature reinforces the need to closely examine reward culture in academic libraries in Uganda, as this will improve the understanding of some motivational factors in knowledge creation.

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between knowledge creation and reward culture in an academic library environment in Uganda.

Methods: A multi-method research strategy that involved the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods was adopted. Eighty staff members from three libraries participated in the survey, which employed a self-administered questionnaire to collect data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three heads of the libraries. Data pertaining to reward culture and knowledge creation were also collected from institutional documents. The data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Results: The major findings of the study are that the non-financial reward culture has more influence on knowledge creation as compared to the financial reward culture in academic libraries. Policies of the libraries are vague on whether there are financial or non-financial rewards attached to knowledge creation. However, both the non-financial and financial reward cultures influence knowledge creation in libraries to varying extents.

Conclusion: The results of these multiple case studies may not be generalised to many contexts, but the study illuminates the influence of the reward system on knowledge creation. The key finding of the study was that academic libraries' policies on knowledge creation did not come out clearly on whether there were financial or non-financial rewards attached to knowledge creation.

Keywords: Knowledge management; knowledge creation; reward culture; academic library; Uganda.

Introduction and background

The emergence of the knowledge-based economy dictates that organisations innovate, create, find and combine knowledge into new products and services, and improve distribution methods so as to have a competitive edge over their competitors (Amar & Hlupic 2016; Brem, Maier & Wimschneider 2016; Esternhuizen, Schutte & Du Toit 2012). Academic libraries, just like other organisations, are interested in knowledge management (KM) to boost the efficiency and quality of their processes and services and to increase productivity and create innovative solutions and products for their users (De Bem et al. 2016). The success of academic libraries depends on how well they use staff knowledge to improve services (Marouf 2017). Jantz (2012) succinctly urges librarians to think of and craft services to satisfy the current and future needs of users. This can be partially achieved through engaging staff and using their knowledge to reorganise library processes. The success of an organisation partly depends on its ability to create and use knowledge.

Challenges to managing knowledge include an absence of management support, being unclear of motivation frameworks that support knowledge holders and receivers, and an absence of a

Read online:



Scan this QR
code with your
smart phone or
mobile device
to read online.

knowledge-sharing culture and trust among staff (Chouikha 2016). To this end, institutions should build and establish norms and values that are supportive of knowledge management and rewards. It is surmised that when a culture that rewards staff co-exists with other factors such as policies and procedures, the performance of staff improves. Although several scholars, such as Ahmed, Sheikh and Akram (2018), Marouf (2017) and Daland (2016), have highlighted the importance of knowledge in organisations, currently there is limited evidence which shows that a reward culture has had an influence on the creation and sharing of knowledge in academic libraries in Uganda.

Knowledge creation has explicitly been conceived as the sum total of collaboration, communication, research and hiring of staff with a view to improving organisational performance (Brix 2017; Hubers 2016; Li, Liu & Zhou 2018). Knowledge creation largely depends on how staff relate to each other in terms of sharing what they know. Extant literature suggests that humans are selfish and sometimes only engage in activities that are beneficial to them (Menon & Pfeffer 2003), which could be a result of workplace ostracism, workplace political skill or even mere competition (Zhao & Xia 2017).

The changing library environment as reflected in transitory information needs requires libraries to have up-to-date information to keep up with the technological onslaught (Nakhoda & Tajik 2017). This situation requires staff who are motivated to engage in knowledge-creating situations, such as meetings, training and conferences. There is empirical evidence that knowledge is created through dialogues and continuous interactions which provide a basis for making new products, services or anything new geared towards the improvement of organisations (Suorsa 2014; Wu, Kao & Shih 2018). Dialogues are regarded as the mainstay of cross-team working, workshops and meetings, which are also the main components of knowledge creation (Majchrzak, More & Faraj 2010). Staff members are able to exchange task-specific knowledge during such dialogues (Chatterjee, Pereira & Sarkar 2018).

Furthermore, when staff members contribute what they know to central organisational databases, others can access this information and come up with new knowledge (Little & Deokar 2016). Raja, Ahmad and Sinha (2009) identified the use of information technology, sufficient funding, training and staff mobility as crucial components of knowledge creation. All these activities consume time, and for staff to effectively participate in dialogues and discussions there needs to be motivations, such as allowances, bonus, commendation letters, or even promises to attend training. There is a possibility that when staff members are rewarded for activities such as collaboration and sharing knowledge, organisational goals are achieved (Iqbal, Toulson & Tweed 2016).

It is apparent that staff members work better when rewards are commensurate to the effort they need to put in to accomplish the task. This stance exhibits the significance and centrality of staff in the functioning of an organisation, and in a bid to keep

the staff satisfied, organisations have 'suggested policies to increase employee motivation' (Belenzon & Schankerman 2015:795). A reward culture can play a significant role in motivating staff. The reward culture may constitute any values, norms and behavioural patterns that individual academic libraries have grown and developed over time, to guide the compensation and motivation of their staff towards the attainment of goals and targets. Rewards can be a combination of monetary and non-monetary benefits that accrue for work performed as required by the employer (Bussin & Diez 2017). Monetary or financial rewards include salaries, allowances and bonuses (Shields 2016). Financial rewards are associated with achievement, respect, freedom and power; these are social components which are crucial in human resource management (Perkins, White & Jones 2016). On the other hand, non-financial rewards comprise training and development (Brown 2014; Yang, Sanders & Bumatay 2012), promotions, appreciation and recognition (Thumbran 2010). In the study, based on the definitions by Perkins et al. (2016) and Shields (2016), rewards are considered as benefits that libraries have set aside to interest staff in what they do, as well as to push them to achieve organisational goals and mandates. These rewards may include pay, allowances, training (including seminars), attendance of conferences and commendation.

Reward systems in organisations determine how staff members relate to the organisation with regard to the exchange of resources, such as knowledge, money and time (Kerr & Slocum 2005). They also determine the way they solve problems and how they commit to organisational goals and achievements (Taba 2018). Rewards systems are hinged on two factors: performance and rewards (Martin-Perez & Martin-Cruz 2015). This essentially means that for each task accomplished, there is a reward for it. It is then probable that staff may accomplish tasks based on what is available to them in the form of rewards.

Gilley and Maycunich (2000) observe that organisations have failed to appreciate the value of compensating staff for their increased efforts, employee contribution and development. Yet scholars such as Drabe, Hauff and Ritcher (2015) and Yacoob (2009) argue that rewards can either foster or inhibit the accomplishment of organisational goals and activities. For instance, Drabe et al. (2015:784) maintain that factors such as 'recognition, promotion and growth are assumed to increase job satisfaction but do not diminish job dissatisfaction'. Staff may be satisfied if, for instance, they are recognised for their effort, but for as long as there are still factors such as absence of promotions and training opportunities, they will continue to be disgruntled. It is therefore a good practice to look out for those rewards that increase job satisfaction among staff in order to ensure that tasks that organisations, such as libraries, have set aside for staff are accomplished.

Rewards are considered motivators in organisations as they determine how staff members respond to certain stimuli (Martin-Perez & Martin-Cruz 2015). Literature has revealed

that there is a positive relationship between reward culture, performance and innovation (Durcikova et al. 2011). Although much of the literature reveals that knowledge is a driver of innovation, not much has been written about the importance of rewards as a catalyst for knowledge management practices, such as knowledge creation, in academic libraries in Uganda.

The study is underscored by Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory that opines that staff put in effort to do particular tasks when they are promised a reward, which can be financial or non-financial. However, it is not clear in the literature reviewed whether libraries have engaged their staff to find out what kind of rewards would motivate them to create knowledge. Martin-Perez and Martin-Cruz (2015) argue that when rewards are instituted, knowledge creation improves in organisations, and at the same time rewards act as a key motivator among academic staff (Cheng, Sze-Yin & Lau 2009).

Problem statement

Because of rewards potentially having an influence on knowledge creation, the significance of reward culture in academic libraries is taking centre stage as staff members decry dwindling budgets and expenditure. When libraries begin to pay attention to cost, they tend to compromise on management processes and practices that include the reward practices of the library and knowledge creation (Kont 2012). Although scholars, such as Hosoi (2005), argue that rewards should be linked to staff expectancies, this is not the case in most academic libraries, as expressed in the many complaints raised in the Librarianship Round Table Meeting (2015). Complaints about the disparity in pay and in other non-financial rewards such as promotions, recognition and training have been expressed. Several head librarians decried the way their universities were handling issues of rewards to their staff. Consequently, staff members were not performing as expected (Librarianship Round Table Meeting 2015). This has been further evidenced by the different levels of services offered in university libraries, with some having advanced services on offer and better staff academic profiles in comparison to others. Yet knowledge management practices such as the creation and sharing of knowledge are mainly anchored on how well staff members are motivated to work (Zhang & Jiang 2015). If academic libraries are to recognise the centrality of staff knowledge, it is critical that rewards, which include recognition, reassignments, promotions, training and pay, need to be streamlined in library policies. There appears to be a discrepancy between the reward and amount of staff effort expended while executing tasks and duties. It seems staff members are motivated to share knowledge and operate efficiently if they are rewarded accordingly.

It was against this background that this study investigated the connection between reward and knowledge creation in selected academic libraries in Uganda. The following research questions guided the study:

- To what extent do non-financial rewards influence knowledge creation in academic libraries?
- Can financial rewards influence knowledge creation in academic libraries?

Methodology

The aim of this research was to find out the nexus between reward culture and knowledge creation in selected academic libraries in Uganda. There were two objectives that structured the study, namely, the extent to which non-financial rewards influence knowledge creation and whether financial rewards influence knowledge creation in academic libraries. A post-positivist research paradigm guided the study. The philosophical assumption of this research was that a social phenomenon is complex and may be better understood by looking at it using multiple methods in the tradition of Campbell and Fiske (1959). A quantitative methodology using a survey approach, which triangulated research methods, was used for the study. Instruments for collecting data were validated through pretesting. The instruments were formulated and tested using subject specialists from Makerere University and a sample of librarians from two universities. Care was taken to ensure that only the questions that addressed the objectives were asked. The triangulation of methods also enhanced the validity of the data.

The population of the study consisted of three selected academic libraries that met the inclusion criteria. These were purposively selected out of 27 academic libraries that are fully registered with the Consortium of Uganda University Libraries (CUUL) (2018), which is the regulatory body in charge of the operations of all university libraries. To be selected, a university had to be in the CUUL register and should have existed for more than 30 years owing to the fact that the first private university in Uganda was established in 1988 (Uganda National Council for Higher Education 2017). When selecting libraries for the survey, a major concern was the amount of time the institution had existed because the assumption was that the older the institution, the older its culture and probability of its library having a more refined way of doing things. The inclusion criteria for the sample of the study are one of the limitations of this study. Only three libraries qualified to be included in the study. This has implications for the generalisability of the findings.

To be eligible to participate in the study, all the 80 staff members, including senior and junior staff, surveyed across the three selected libraries were supposed to have a library and information science qualification. Data were collected from lower-level staff through a self-administered questionnaire. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the heads of libraries of the three institutions selected. They were considered to be key respondents because of their participation in management and policy issues within their respective libraries.

Data from institutional documents such as annual reports, human resource manuals and policies, strategic plans, budgets, ministerial documents and library procedures and guidelines were triangulated with data from the questionnaires and interviews in order to enhance credibility and improve interpretation as suggested by Fusch, Fusch and Ness (2018). Data were then analysed quantitatively and

qualitatively. To analyse the quantitative data, SPSS 18.0 software was used to generate percentages, and Microsoft Excel was used to generate graphs. Thematic coding was used for qualitative data analysis.

Ethical consideration

The study was conducted after obtaining ethical clearance from the University of South Africa's Research Ethics Review Committee (Reference number: 2017_ENKLwanga_4992 1509_001).

Findings and discussion

Respondents comprised library staff from three universities in Uganda. Of the total 80 respondents, 70 completed the questionnaire, constituting a response rate of 87.5%. All the targeted three heads of libraries were interviewed. Data from the questionnaire and interviews were triangulated with data from documents such as departmental files, human resource manuals, strategic plans of 2013–2018/2019 and annual reports of 2015–2017. The process of knowledge creation in these universities is evident from the day-to-day activities that were carried out. The major findings of the study are presented according to the themes of the research questions.

Non-financial reward culture and knowledge creation

Eight questions were used to determine the non-financial reward culture in the libraries surveyed, and the responses are summarised in Table 1. Fullwood, Rowley and Delbridge (2013) and Ramjeawon and Rowley (2017) argue that rewards which include financial and non-financial are crucial for knowledge creation. A five-point Likert scale was used to solicit responses on non-financial rewards. The scale had strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree scoring points. For purposes of the discussion, the scales were merged into three scales to ease discussion, that is, strongly agree and agree were merged into agree, strongly disagree and disagree were merged into disagree and, lastly, not sure remained as is.

In order of priority, the existence of a reward policy that encourages staff to come up with new ideas was highly rated with a score of 80%, while 10% disagreed and 10% were not sure whether a policy existed. The qualitative data collected

from three heads of libraries did not corroborate the somewhat negative results of 20% of the respondents to the questionnaire. They all pointed out that rewards were reflected in the human resource policies of their institutions and were linked to the position one held within the organisation. The extant literature demonstrates that the reward culture is mainly driven by the policies of institutions (De-Gieter & Hofmans 2015; Yacoob 2009). A need in higher institutions for 'clear policy frameworks and reward mechanisms for knowledge creation' was underscored by Ramjeawon and Rowley (2017:375). Explicit reward policies are necessary because rewards can foster or inhibit staff performance (Drabe et al. 2015; Yacoob 2009). There is a need for explicit reward policies as they assist in determining what staff do and what they anticipate as a reward for creating knowledge. The policies should explicitly communicate the availability of rewards to both staff and clients.

In second position with a score of 71.7% were respondents who reported that recognition encouraged staff to undertake research, which may be considered a mode of knowledge creation. On the other hand, 13.3% disagreed while 15% were not sure whether staff members were encouraged to undertake research. Two questions scored 70%, putting them in the third position. The majority agreed that promotions encouraged staff to come up with new ideas that lead to new services and to explore new ways of doing things, 16.7% disagreed that new ideas may emanate from promotions, while 13.3% were not sure about this. In contrast, 15% disagreed while 15% were not sure that promotions can contribute to exploring new ways of doing things. This finding indicated that expectancy of promotion encourages staff to create knowledge as envisaged in Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom 1964), which is explained later.

In fourth position with a score of 63.3% were three questions: firstly, staff agreed that recognition encourages staff to participate in multi-disciplinary projects that lead to knowledge creation, 10.7% disagreed, while 26% were not sure about this. In the same position was the fact that promotions encouraged staff to discuss challenges and come up with solutions, with 63.3% agreeing, 20% disagreeing and 16.7% not being sure. Lastly, on the question whether staff members were recognised for disseminating knowledge at seminars, 36.6% agreed, 26.6% disagreed and 36.6% were not sure about this. The departmental files analysed had documents that indicated that research and the dissemination

TABLE 1: Percentages for non-financial reward culture and knowledge creation.

Type of culture	Statement	Disagree (%)	Not sure (%)	Agree	
				%	Position
Number of financial rewards culture	Existence of reward policy encourages staff to come up with new ideas	10	10	80	1st
	Recognition encourages staff to undertake research	13.3	15	71.7	2nd
	Promotions encourage staff to come up with new ideas that lead to new services	16.7	13.3	70	3rd
	Promotions encourage staff to explore new ways of doing things	15	15	70	3rd
	Recognition for outstanding knowledge creation forces me to come up with new ideas	20	11.6	68.3	4th
	Promotions encourage staff to discuss challenges and come up with solutions	20	16.7	63.3	4th
	Recognition encourages staff to participate in multi-disciplinary projects	10.7	26	63.3	4th
	Members are recognised for disseminating findings at seminars	26.6	36.7	36.6	5th

of findings had taken place. Additionally, there were reports from staff members who have attended workshops, seminars and conferences and departmental minutes of meetings that related to the daily operations of the library for 2014–2015 and 2016–2017 for all three universities. Meetings and seminars provide a useful platform for knowledge sharing and creation (Chatterjee et al. 2018; Majchrzak, More & Faraj 2010).

All the responses to the eight statements in the questionnaire confirmed that a presence of reward policies, recognition and promotions have a positive bearing on knowledge creation in academic libraries. All the reward systems were rated as above the average score in the data, indicating that recognition is rated highly by those who participated in the study. This was in agreement with the findings of Thani and Mirkamali (2018), who argued that recognition plays an important role in motivating staff to participate in the activities of the organisation. This finding also corroborated that of Schlechter, Thompson and Bussin (2015), who averred that employees value non-financial rewards. Human resource manuals that encapsulate the policies that govern the different processes in the entire university also articulated the non-financial rewards.

However, the three interview participants reported that there were no clear rewards that were specifically linked to knowledge creation per se. Nonetheless, they reported that there were rewards of some sort linked to training, the attendance of meetings, mentoring and coaching. One participant said:

‘There is no specific reward for creating knowledge per se but when the university sponsors someone to carry out research and present findings it is a reward in itself. My staff want to see itemised rewards set out for all the knowledge management practices but as it is now... it is hard to understand what one is working for.’ (A, female, library head)

Another participant said that:

‘There are no straightforward rewards for the creation of knowledge but if one carries out research and funds are available, staff [member] is fully facilitated with tuition, accommodation, travel funds, insurance, [and a] visa, which are rewards in their own right.’ (B, female, library head)

A third participant said:

‘You know people who work in academic environments have an attachment to titles more than the financial rewards. Monetary reward is good but it is important to mix monetary and non-monetary [rewards] since staff have different psychologies and hence different attractions.’ (C, male, library head)

From the interview data, several strategies regarding knowledge creation emerged with matching reward cultures (see Table 2).

Case 1 considered research, training, staff meetings and collection of library statistics as sources of knowledge creation. This could indicate that staff members are considered as important components of knowledge creation. While financial facilitation was indicated as important, recognition of staff was also indicated as equally important. It is possible that Case 1 had a policy that was clear about what one gets if one engages in knowledge, and also that one had several strategies through which knowledge was created, as indicated in Table 2. On the other hand, Case 2 had training, engagement in research, meetings and mentoring and coaching. Mentoring and coaching set Case 2 apart from Case 1 and Case 3, indicating that senior staff members are considered reservoirs of knowledge and are therefore encouraged to mentor and coach junior staff until they acquire job-related knowledge.

The interview data showed that training was widely espoused as a conduit for knowledge creation through the attendance of conferences, seminars, workshops and meetings. This indicates the high regard that libraries attach to the creation of knowledge. The aforementioned components of training suggest that knowledge creation occurs in a social setting such as a library. This is in line with Parirokh, Daneshgar and Fattahi’s (2006) findings, which conclude that interaction among staff and other stakeholders is important for activities such as knowledge creation and overall performance improvement. Thus, under such interactions, knowledge is generated and subsequently supports continuous learning (Hsiao 2017). Training staff in all aspects of work was also discussed by Wilhelm (2016) and Massis (2018), who concurred that training equips librarians with new skills and allows them to work better.

Financial reward culture and knowledge creation

It was important to find out whether the financial reward culture influences knowledge creation. Fullwood et al. (2013) pointed out that financial rewards were as important as non-financial ones when it comes to knowledge creation by employees. Table 3 summarises the results related to financial rewards.

A total of 28.3% of respondents agreed, 43.3% disagreed and 28.3% were not sure if the reward policy was clear on how much they got paid for creating knowledge. The low

TABLE 2: Reward culture and knowledge creation strategies.

Construct	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Strategies	Research Training Staff meetings Library statistics	Research Training Mentoring and coaching Staff meetings	Research Training Staff meetings -
Reward culture	Financial facilitation, recognition	Financial facilitation, refreshments, recognition	Promotions, recognition, financial facilitation

percentage could point to an absence of a clear policy regarding the financial reward culture in relation to knowledge creation. An absence of policy on financial rewards in relation to knowledge creation could be affecting knowledge creation in libraries. Ramjeawon and Rowley (2017) confirmed the need for clear reward policies. The negative association between financial reward culture and knowledge creation may give credence to the argument that financial rewards have a short life span in connection with knowledge creation (Schlechter et al. 2015), resulting in many people having a low regard for financial rewards.

Thus, 75% of respondents agreed that allowances that include transport refund and lunch allowance encouraged them to carry out research that contributed to knowledge creation. On the other hand, 11.6% disagreed while 13.3% were not sure about this. This could indicate that allowances were a motivator for knowledge creation. The promise of financial gain motivated 65% of respondents to attend seminars that led to knowledge creation, and only 15% disagreed while 20% were not sure about this. Furthermore, allowances motivated the participants to create new knowledge, with 58.3% agreeing, 25.1% disagreeing and 16.6% not being sure.

Only 28.3% agreed that money determined what challenges they solved in the libraries, with 58.3% disagreeing and 18.3% not being sure. As libraries are service centres, and library staff spend the majority of their time serving users, it is probable that staff derived satisfaction from making library users happy rather than having monetary gains. Indeed, this was revealed in the discussion with the interview participants who reported that library staff members were more inclined to the need for psychological satisfaction in comparison to the other types of rewards. This was confirmed by Schlechter et al. (2015), who concluded that employees value non-financial rewards more than the financial ones.

Lastly, 18.3% of respondents agreed, 56.6% disagreed and 25% were not sure that they got paid for being members of multi-disciplinary project teams. Multi-disciplinary teams may be a source of knowledge creation in academic libraries. Membership of such project teams accords one the chance to learn new things and interact with knowledgeable people with diverse skills (Igbinoova 2017; Ma et al. 2014). Given these benefits, it was expected that the respondents surveyed would want to attach much psychological importance to this kind of membership, more so than monetary gain.

The results from interviews depicted in Table 2 show that all cases considered financial facilitation and recognition as

critical to knowledge creation. However, Case 2 also considered refreshments as a kind of reward culture, while Case 3 considered promotions as very important in relation to knowledge creation. Apparently, this could point to the fact that in Case 3, research that is considered as a mode of knowledge creation determines who got promoted and vice versa. Table 2 shows strategies and attendant reward cultures that each case experienced. Library annual reports for all the cases indicated that staff members were engaged in research, which shows that the creation of knowledge was key in the management of academic libraries. In the cases investigated, the different university libraries had human resource manuals that guided their reward culture. The two public academic libraries observed had slightly different reward cultures, indicating that reward culture differs from institution to institution despite the fact that they belong to the same sector.

Implications of research findings on Vroom's expectancy theory

The findings of the study have implications for Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom 1964) in relation to knowledge creation in academic libraries. The three tenets of the theory are expectancy, instrumentality and valence. Hosoi (2005) argues that rewards should be linked to staff expectancies. Under expectancy, staff joined the academic libraries, expecting to be rewarded for activities carried out, for example, research, training, allowances and attendance at conferences. However, it has emerged in this study that the reward policies were not explicit regarding both financial and non-financial reward cultures; therefore, staff members were not clear on what to work hard for. Universities in Uganda need to revisit their reward policies and provide clarity to their staff members through communication and policy training.

Instrumentality purports that there is a need for staff to understand that when they perform they earn a reward (Shao, Li & Mawritz 2017; Wang & Krumhuber 2017). Instrumentality can therefore be achieved through the following:

- clarity on the expectation of staff members to be rewarded
- transparency in reward management
- linking performance with the reward system
- rewards that are symbolic and can be used to motivate staff, especially considering budget cuts.

Given that times have changed, there is a need to revisit the reward culture through engaging staff and users by way of surveys and face-to-face discussions on what could motivate

TABLE 3: Percentages for financial reward culture and knowledge creation.

Type of culture	Statement	Disagree (%)	Not sure (%)	Agree (%)
Financial reward culture	Reward policy is clear on how much I get paid for creating knowledge	43.3	28.3	28.3
	Allowances encourage staff to carry out research	11.6	13.3	75
	Money determines what challenge I solve in the library	58.3	18.3	28.3
	Allowances motivate me to create new knowledge	25.1	16.6	58.3
	Promise of financial gain can motivate me to attend seminars	15	20	65
	In my library we get paid for being members of multi-disciplinary project teams	56.6	25	18.3

them to work. Academic libraries could come up with a list of rewards that staff members can pick from to inform their reward culture. This would ensure that the rewards available to staff members have a positive valence and instrumentality that can entice the staff members to achieve what is expected. This was consistent with Ashtalkosi and Ashtalkosha's (2012) finding, which asserted that supervisors must endeavour to understand and appreciate what specifically motivates their staff members.

Conclusion

This study investigated the connection between reward culture and knowledge creation in selected academic libraries in Uganda. It adds to the existing understanding of some of the motivational factors in knowledge creation. The results support Vroom's expectancy theory in explaining the expectation of both non-financial and financial rewards in varying degrees. Although these are multiple case studies whose results may not be generalised to many contexts, the study illuminates the influence of the reward system on knowledge creation. The key finding of the study was that academic libraries' policies on knowledge creation did not come out clearly on whether there were financial or non-financial rewards attached to knowledge creation.

Other key findings were as follows: Firstly, the research showed that reward policies were available in all the three universities; however, the point of departure is that there are no specific rewards linked to knowledge creation. This could mean that policies were not designed with knowledge management practices in mind. Interview informants proposed that in future such policies should be designed with these practices in mind so as to come up with a detailed, well-informed policy. Secondly, although financial reward culture was reported to be present, staff preferred promotions and recognition to money as these promised better benefits. What became apparent was the need and reliance on psychological satisfaction as a reward, which was largely appreciated by the staff surveyed.

The study revealed that non-financial rewards positively influenced knowledge creation. Owing to the ambiguity of the reward policies in relation to knowledge creation, a financial reward did not seem to be a major factor for knowledge creation. The reward policies were not clear on how much one would be paid to create knowledge. Because of this, staff members were not willing to base their actions on monetary rewards.

Considering the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- There is a need to have clear guidelines regarding knowledge creation in all the cases investigated.
- There is a need to make the reward policy clear on how financial rewards are related to knowledge creation so that staff members understand exactly what is expected when they create knowledge.
- Multi-disciplinary teams are a key component of the knowledge creation cycle; therefore, staff members

should be encouraged to belong to them, and the rewards related to such teams should have the propensity to attract staff to belong to the teams and create knowledge.

- Being aware that training is a pivotal part of the strategy that forms the knowledge creation cycle, there is a need for academic libraries to continuously carry out staff competence surveys to identify appropriate training needs.

The limited results from the questionnaire, documents and interview on the various knowledge creation strategies and non-financial rewards linked to them suggest a need for academic libraries to carefully embark on a fact-finding investigation regarding their reward culture and knowledge creation. The sample used in the study was small; hence, the researchers recommend that a baseline survey should be carried out to collect the views of staff in many libraries pertaining to the reward culture in their individual institutions. Then the data should be collated to determine which rewards are important for library staff at different levels of seniority.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the contribution made to this article by two anonymous reviewers.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

N.E.L. is a PhD student, and this article is part of her study. P.N. is the project supervisor.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement

Data are available from the first author upon request.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

References

- Ahmed, S., Sheikh, A. & Akram, M., 2018, 'Implementing knowledge management in university libraries of Punjab, Pakistan', *Information Discovery and Delivery* 46(2), 83–94. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IDD-08-2017-0065>
- Amar, A.D. & Hlupic, V.H., 2016, 'Leadership for knowledge organisations', *European Journal of Innovation Management* 19(2), 239–260. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-12-2014-0120>
- Ashtalkosi, S. & Ashtalkosha, I., 2012, 'Frustration of working as a problem of human resources management', *UTMS Journal of Economics* 3(2), 193–198.
- Belenzon, S. & Schankerman, M., 2015, 'Motivating and sorting of human capital in open innovation', *Strategic Management Journal* 36(6), 795–956. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.2284>

- Brem, A., Maier, M. & Wimschneider, C., 2016, 'Competitive advantage through innovation: The case of Nespresso', *European Journal of Innovation Management* 19(1), 133–148. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-05-2014-0055>
- Brix, J., 2017, 'Exploring knowledge creation processes as a source of organisational learning: A longitudinal case study of a public innovation project', *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 33(2), 113–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2017.05.001>
- Brown, D., 2014, 'The future of reward management: From total reward strategies to smart rewards', *Compensation and Benefits Review* 46(3), 147–151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886368714549303>
- Bussin, M. & Diez, F., 2017, *The remuneration handbook: A practical and informative handbook for managing reward and recognition*, KR Publishing, Randburg.
- Campbell, D.T. & Fiske, D.W., 1959, 'Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix', *Psychological Bulletin* 56(2), 81–105. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046016>
- Chatterjee, A., Pereira, A. & Sarkar, B., 2018, 'Learning transfer system inventory (LTSI) and knowledge creation in organisations', *The Learning Organisation* 25(5), 305–319. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-06-2016-0039>
- Cheng, M.Y., Sze-Yin, J. & Lau, P.M., 2009, 'Knowledge sharing in academic institutions: A study of the Multimedia University Malaysia', *Electronic Journal of Knowledge Management* 7(3), 313–324.
- Choukha, M.B., 2016, *Organisational design for knowledge management*, John Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.
- Daland, H., 2016, 'Managing knowledge in academic libraries. Are we? Should we?', *Liber Quarterly* 26(1), 28–41. <https://doi.org/10.18352/lq.10154>
- De Bem, R.M., Coelho, C.C., de Souza, R. & Dandolini, G.A., 2016, 'Knowledge management framework to the university libraries', *Library Management* 37(4/5), 221–236. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-01-2016-0005>
- De-Gieter, S. & Hofmans, J., 2015, 'How reward satisfaction affects employees' turnover intentions', *Human Resource Management Journal* 25(2), 200–216. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12072>
- Drabe, D., Hauff, S. & Ritcher, N.F., 2015, 'Job satisfaction in aging workforces: An analysis of the USA, Japan and Germany', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 26(6), 783–805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.939101>
- Durcikova, A., Fadel, K., Butler, B. & Galleta, D., 2011, 'Knowledge exploration and exploitation: The impacts of psychological climate and knowledge management systems access', *Information Systems Research* 22(4), 855–866. <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1100.0286>
- Esterhuizen, O., Schutte, C.S.L. & Du Toit, A.S.A., 2012, 'Knowledge creation processes as critical enablers for innovation', *International Journal of Information Management* 32(4), 354–364. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2011.11.013>
- Fullwood, R., Rowley, J. & Delbridge, R., 2013, 'Knowledge sharing among academics in UK universities', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 17(1), 123–136. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13673271311300831>
- Fusch, P., Fusch, G.E. & Ness, L., 2018, 'Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research', *Journal of Social Change* 10(1), 19–32.
- Gilley, J.W. & Maycunich, A., 2000, *Beyond the learning organisation: Creating a culture of continuous growth and development through state of the art human resource practices*, Perseus Books, New York.
- Hosoi, M., 2005, 'Motivating employees in academic libraries in tough times', Association of College Research Libraries Twelfth National Conference, Minneapolis, MN, April 7–10, viewed 23 June 2018, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/pdf/hosoi05.pdf>.
- Hsiao, J.-M., 2017, 'Knowledge creation and virtual knowledge ba: A case of car dealer in Taiwan', *American Journal of Applied Science* 14(10), 974–982. <https://doi.org/10.3844/ajassp.2017.974.982>
- Hubers, M.D., 2016, 'Opening the black box: Knowledge creation in data terms', *Journal of Professional Capital and Community* 1(1), 41–68. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPC-07-2015-0003>
- Igbino, M.O., 2017, 'Librarians' involvement in cross-disciplinary research and its implication for sustainable development goals (SDGs): The Nigerian experience', *Library Review* 66(4/5), 251–265. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LR-09-2016-0078>
- Iqbal, S., Toulson, P. & Tweed, D., 2016, 'HRM practices and knowledge sharing behaviour: Lessons from Pakistani knowledge intensive firms', in Information Resources Management Association (ed.), *Business intelligence: Concepts, methodologies, tools and applications*, pp. 1507–1523, IGI Global, Hershey, PA.
- Jantz, R.C., 2012, 'Innovation in academic libraries: An analysis of university librarians' perspectives', *Library and Information Science Research* 34(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.07.008>
- Kerr, J. & Slocum, W., 2005, 'Managing corporate culture through reward systems', *Academy of Management Executive* 19(4), 130–138.
- Kont, K.R., 2012, 'New cost accounting models in measuring of library employees' performance', *Library Management* 33(1/2), 50–65. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01435121211203310>
- Li, M., Liu, H. & Zhou, J., 2018, 'G-SECI model based knowledge creation for CoPs innovation: The role of grey knowledge', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 22(4), 887–911.
- Librarianship Round Table Meeting, 2015, 'Item 3.2: Structures and rewards in academic libraries', Minutes of Head Librarians Round Table, 13th March 2015, Emerald Hotel, Kampala.
- Little, T.A. & Deokar, A.V., 2016, 'Understanding knowledge creation in the context of knowledge-intensive business processes', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 20(5), 858–879. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-11-2015-0443>
- Ma, Y., Pang, C., Chen, H., Chi, N. & Li, Y., 2014, 'Interdisciplinary cooperation and knowledge creation quality: A perspective of recombinatory search', *Systems Research and Behavioural Sciences* 31(1), 115–126. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.2163>
- Majchrzak, A., More, P.H.B. & Faraj, S., 2010, 'Transcending knowledge differences in cross-functional teams', *Organisation Science* 23(4), 951–970. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1110.0677>
- Marouf, L., 2017, 'Are academic libraries ready for knowledge management?', *The Electronic Library* 35(1), 137–151. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EL-01-2016-0008>
- Martin-Perez, V. & Martin-Cruz, N., 2015, 'The mediating role of affective commitment in the rewards- knowledge transfer relation', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 19(6), 1167–1185. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-03-2015-0114>
- Massis, B., 2018, 'Academic libraries breakdown silos', *Information and Learning Science* 119(1/2), 135–138. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ILS-11-2017-0111>
- Menon, T. & Pfeffer, J., 2003, 'Valuing internal vs. external knowledge: Explaining the preference for outsiders', *Management Science* 49(4), 497–513. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.49.4.497.14422>
- Nakhoda, M. & Tajik, A., 2017, 'A survey of the factors influencing the resistance of the employees of the university libraries to technological changes: Study of libraries of Tehran University', *Library Management* 38(8/9), 528–546. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-02-2017-0025>
- Parirokh, M., Daneshgar, F. & Fattahi, R., 2006, 'Knowledge sharing capabilities in today's university libraries: A proposed model for evaluation', Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 70th World Library and Information Conference (IFLA), Seoul, South Korea, August 20–24, viewed 23 July 2018, from <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/index.htm>.
- Perkins, S.J., White, G. & Jones, S., 2016, *Reward Management: Alternatives, consequences and contexts*, Kogan Page, London.
- Raja, W., Ahmad, Z. & Sinha, A.K., 2009, 'Knowledge management and academic libraries in IT era problems and positions', in *International Conference on Academic Libraries 2009*, pp. 701–704, viewed 10 January 2018, from http://crl.du.ac.in/ical09/papers/index_files/ical_124_198_418_2_RV.pdf.
- Ramjeawon, P.V. & Rowley, J., 2017, 'Knowledge management in higher education institutions: Enablers and barriers in Mauritius', *The Learning Organisation* 24(5), 366–377. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-03-2017-0030>
- Schlechter, A., Thompson, N.C. & Bussin, M., 2015, 'Attractiveness of non-financial rewards for prospective knowledge workers: An experimental investigation', *Employee Relations* 37(3), 274–295. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-06-2014-0077>
- Shao, P., Li, P. & Mawritz, M., 2017, 'Self-protective reactions to peer abusive supervision: The moderating role of prevention focus and the mediating role of performance instrumentality', *Journal of Organisational Behaviour* 39(1), 12–25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2206>
- Shields, J., 2016, *Managing employee performance and reward: Concepts, practices, strategies*, 2nd edn., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Suorsa, A.R., 2014, 'Knowledge creation and play - A phenomenological approach', *Journal of Documentation* 71(3), 503–525. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-11-2013-0152>
- Taba, M.I., 2018, 'Mediating effect of work performance and organisational commitment in the relationship between reward systems and employees' work satisfaction', *Journal of Management Development* 37(1), 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-11-2016-0256>
- Thani, F.N. & Mirkamali, S.M., 2018, 'Factors that enable knowledge creation in higher education: A structural model', *Data Technologies and Application* 52(3), 424–444. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DTA-10-2016-0068>
- Thumbran, R.S., 2010, 'Utilising non-financial rewards as a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining employees', Master of Business Administration (MBA) dissertation, Gordon Institute of Business, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.
- Vroom, V.H., 1964, *Work and motivation*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ.
- Uganda National Council for Higher Education, 2017, *Private tertiary institutions*, viewed 10 January 2017, from <http://www.unche.or.ug/institutions/private-tertiary-institutions/page/4>
- Wang, X. & Krumhuber, E.G., 2017, 'The love of money results in objectification', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 56(2), 354–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12158>
- Wilhelm, C., 2016, 'Reinventing our work: New and emerging roles for academic librarians', *Journal of Library Administration* 48(2), 157–177.
- Wu, C.H., Kao, S.-C. & Shih, C.-H., 2018, 'Task-technology fit in knowledge creation: The moderating role of cognitive style', *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems* 48(1), 83–102. <https://doi.org/10.1108/VJIKMS-01-2017-0005>
- Yacoub, Z., 2009, 'The effect of reward systems on the implementation of cost savings strategies in local authorities', *Labuan-e-Journal of Muamalat and Society* 3, 9–24.
- Yang, H., Sanders, K. & Bumatay, C.P., 2012, 'Linking perception of training with organisational commitment: The moderating role of self-construals', *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology* 21(1), 125–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2010.546948>
- Zhang, X. & Jiang, J.Y., 2015, 'With whom shall I share my knowledge?: A recipient perspective of knowledge sharing', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 19(2), 277–295. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-05-2014-0184>
- Zhao, H. & Xia, Q., 2017, 'An examination of the curvilinear relationship between workplace ostracism and knowledge hoarding', *Management Decision* 55(2), 331–346.