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Sharing is caring: Knowledge sharing at the city of Johannesburg Library and Information Services

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Authors:
Lydia Nkomo[1,2]
Jan R. Maluleka[1]
Patrick Ngulube[3]

Affiliations:
[1]Department of Information Science, Faculty of Human Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

[2]Department of Information Services, City of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

[3]School of Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Studies, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

Corresponding author:
Jan Maluleka,
malulejr@unisa.ac.za

Background: The strength of an organisation lies in its ability to manage its human capital. Ideally, organisations that wish to remain service-oriented in this Fourth Industrial Revolution need to comprehend the importance of tacit knowledge and ensure its retention and sharing at all levels. Many organisations fail to capitalise on the value within their tacit knowledge reserves until when employees leave their jobs. Quite often, the importance of the lost knowledge will be felt when a new employee takes over.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to examine how tacit knowledge is shared at the city of Johannesburg Library and Information Services.

Method: This qualitative study employed the knowledge conversion theory to examine the management of tacit knowledge at the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services. A case study design was used, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Results: The key findings revealed that the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services does not have an effective strategy to manage tacit knowledge and does not utilise available knowledge management resources. Furthermore, knowledge sharing is very minimal.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services does not manage the tacit knowledge that is at their disposal, and knowledge sharing is also not encouraged. The study recommends that an effective community of practice for knowledge sharing and a policy for knowledge sharing should be established at the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services.

Keywords: knowledge management; knowledge sharing; tacit knowledge; City of Johannesburg; South Africa.

Introduction and background of the study

Knowledge sharing is a very important activity in any organisation on which the daily operations of organisations depend. This is because the organisational knowledge in the form of information, skills or know-how is exchanged amongst staff in the organisation during knowledge sharing. Sharing tacit knowledge is, however, different from sharing explicit or documented knowledge because of the nature in which we find this type of knowledge. Polanyi (1966:4) defines tacit knowledge as the 'unwritten, unspoken, and vast hidden storehouse of knowledge held by human beings, based on their emotions, experiences, insights, intuition, observations and internalised information'. Janus (2016) defines tacit knowledge as the knowledge that is stored in people's heads. For this study, tacit knowledge is defined as knowledge that resides in the minds of different individuals, which was not documented or captured in any way.

Tacit knowledge is personal, context specific and therefore hard to formalise and communicate. The management of tacit knowledge may contribute to an organisation's competitive advantage. This is because knowledge is key to organisational success; therefore, its management is too valuable to be left to chance. Manesh et al. (2020) highlight that because of increased competitive pressure, modern organisations tend to rely on knowledge and its exploitation to sustain a long-term advantage. Similarly, Farooq (2018) affirms that people rely on their intuition or tacit knowledge or on the written documents or explicit knowledge to increase their value creation and gain sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). Bolisani and Bratianu (2017) argue that knowledge as a strategic resource needs to be managed to promote the competitive performance of the organisation. Mahdi, Nassar and Almsafir (2019) support these sentiments by stating that in modern times, organisations realise that acquiring knowledge and using it effectively are the

only ways to have an SCA in the marketplace. On the same note, Schiuma, Carlucci and Lerro (2012) posit that organisations have realised that knowledge, its effective use and the fast acquisition and utilisation of new knowledge represent the only source of sustainable service orientation. Furthermore, Ranjbar and Amiri (2015) argue that knowledge has emerged as the primary strategic resource for firms in the 21st century, and researchers and practitioners strive for clues on how to accumulate and manage knowledge resources effectively for competitive advantage.

Ouakouak and Ouedraogo (2019) identify knowledge sharing as one of the most critical steps in the organisational leaning process that enables individual members to learn from others.

Polanyi (1966) broadly classifies knowledge into explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge by nature is difficult to express, measure or formally record (Whyte & Classen 2012). It comprises the 'unwritten, unspoken, and vast hidden storehouse of knowledge held by practically every normal human being, based on his or her emotions, experiences, insights, intuition, observations and internalised information' (Polanyi 1966:4).

Even though there are various other definitions of tacit knowledge, they all emphasise the subjective and personal nature of tacit knowledge. However, there is a general agreement in the literature that the power and value of tacit knowledge for organisations lie in its context specificity (Janus 2016; Ranjbar & Amiri 2015). Many organisations are losing organisational knowledge in the form of tacit knowledge through staff turnover (Masenya, Ngoepe & Jiyane 2020). Similar observations were made in the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services (COJLIS).

Managers within the COJLIS must search for and share internal knowledge before it is lost to retirement, resignation or even death. Indeed, when employees leave a job, whether out of their own volition or not, employers lose the institutional knowledge or history that they take with them (Pena 2013). Most of these employees would have accumulated many years of experience and expertise, which leave with employees when they leave the organisation. The impact is usually felt by employees left behind who would usually struggle to fill the shoes of those who left (Bessick & Naicker 2013). Many organisations including COJLIS lack sufficient knowledge sharing programmes to stem the loss of tacit knowledge. Knowledge management is the icon of the current economy that should be taken as such by the COJLIS and many other similar organisations that wish to remain competitive. This study, therefore, aims to examine how tacit knowledge is shared at the COJLIS. The specific objectives of the study were to determine:

- tacit knowledge sharing practices at the COJLIS
- the role of technology in tacit knowledge sharing in COJLIS
- the role of management in tacit knowledge sharing in COJLIS
- barriers to tacit knowledge sharing in COJLIS.

Contextual setting

The City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality is in the Gauteng province of South Africa, which has a population of 4.9 million, and offers a variety of services, including the library and information services (LIS).

This study focused on COJLIS professional staff members who have more than 10 years of experience. The COJLIS has a variety of subsections, and regardless of all being one, employees do not seem to share their acquired knowledge.

This is based on the observation by the first author in the 12 years spent in COJLIS. The subsections include bibliographic and distribution services (BIDS), service extension and resource development (SERD), e-learning and library applications (ELA) and regional libraries. The City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality has a knowledge management department, known as Innovation and Knowledge Management (IKM), as a separate entity, but it deals with the 'City' at large, rarely coordinating with the Information Services Department and therefore underutilising the department's expertise. The bibliographic, ELA and SERD are situated in the same vicinity, whilst libraries are scattered throughout the city and are divided into regions – from Region A to Region G. Although history of COJLIS is vivid, there is no strategy in place for knowledge sharing.

Problem statement

The sharing of tacit knowledge in an organisation is important as it supports the organisation's competitive advantage in the knowledge economy. In the public sector, service delivery is of significant importance. The loss of tacit knowledge, therefore, presents organisations with significant challenges and affects their competitiveness.

Tacit knowledge is deeply engrained and connected to the day-to-day activities of organisations. This makes tacit knowledge a valuable resource if shared and channelled properly. This study, therefore, aims to examine how tacit knowledge is shared in the COJLIS.

Theoretical framework

This study was guided by the knowledge conversion theory, originally proposed by Nonaka (1991) and further developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). The knowledge conversion theory consists of four modes of knowledge conversion, that is, socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation (SECI). The modes of knowledge are famously known as the SECI model as introduced by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and have become the cornerstone of knowledge creation and transfer research. The SECI model highlights that knowledge creation begins when socialisation continues to be externalised, and is then combined with old knowledge before it can be internalised (see Figure 1). This model was adopted for this study because it rests on the assumption that knowledge is created through social interaction between tacit and explicit
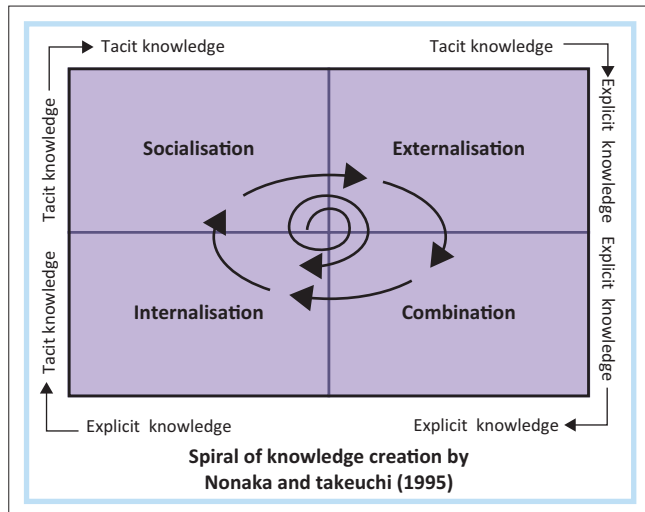
Source: Adapted from Nonaka, I. & Takeuchi, H., 1995, *The knowledge creating company: How Japanese companies create the dynamics of innovation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

FIGURE 1: Socialisation, externalisation, combination and internalisation model.

knowledge, which is central to this study. Moreover, the framework describes how explicit and tacit knowledge is generated, transferred and recreated in organisations. Most importantly, the framework was adopted by a number of studies dealing with the management of both explicit and tacit knowledge, including the studies by Chigada and Ngulube (2015), Zhou, Yan and Zhang (2017) and Maluleka and Ngoepe (2018).

Literature review: A brief overview

Literature is reviewed according to themes emanating from the objectives of the study.

Knowledge sharing

Employees often possess valuable organisational information. The growth of knowledge requires sharing within the organisation between management and staff (IT Knowledge Portal n.d.). Knowledge sharing is thus a very important knowledge management process within organisations. It is a process of interchanging knowledge, skills, information, expertise, experience, intelligence and understanding (Janus 2016; Wang & Noe 2010).

Knowledge sharing in an organisation is essential, as it creates awareness and acceptance of new ideas, increases coordination and improves response times (Amayah 2013; Bulchandani 2015; Sandhu & Goh 2015). The growth of knowledge, therefore, requires sharing within the organisation between management and staff (IT Knowledge Portal n.d.). The creation of this awareness requires socialisation (tacit-tacit) as put across by Davenport and Prusak (2000). According to these authors, it is important to consider informal networks as they involve the day to day interactions between people within work environments. Management should be in support of these networks by providing means of communication.

Bulchandani (2015) further states that no one enjoys being outdated, and without access to the latest information; therefore, employees should often find means to share related views and obtain proper guidance, new ideas and information. Knowledge sharing at the organisational level entails capturing, organising, reusing and transferring the experience-based knowledge, which resides within the organisation and making that knowledge available to all employees (Lin 2007). Thus, at the organisational level, knowledge sharing is designed to transform individual knowledge into organisational knowledge (Foss, Husted & Michailova 2010) and involves leveraging both personal and collective knowledge for the benefit of the organisation. Without knowledge sharing, employees tend to operate within rigid silo-like structures, with duplication of work, resource leaks and wastages and repetition of mistakes (Gaffoor & Cloete 2010). Consequently, in another study, Wang and Wang (2012) posited that tacit knowledge sharing has an impact on innovation quality and operational performance. Therefore, tacit knowledge sharing depends much on socialisation, externalisation, combination, internalisation and practice to support the transfer of tacit knowledge.

The role of technology in knowledge sharing

Technology can support interaction between people that are not in the same location, whilst some tools are designed to capture unstructured thoughts and ideas. The focus for the successful sharing of tacit knowledge must be on social interaction, problem-solving, mentoring and teaching, and these processes must be supported by information technology (IT) intelligently by means of Knowledge Management Tools (KMTs 2019). Knowledge mechanisms should be built following the employees' needs and organisational processes to make them effective (Cong & Pandya 2003; Haruyama 2009). Technology also provides a harbour for sharing tacit knowledge where individuals can anonymously share their thoughts, ideas and perspectives about work-related issues and in effect enable people to arrive at new interpretations and ideas that are used for innovation (Panahi, Watson & Partridge 2012). We can, thus, say that IT can be useful as a forum for externalisation of tacit knowledge. The role of IT for tacit knowledge sharing was summarised by KMTs (2019), as an expert finder, as a provision of support in the socialisation and externalisation of tacit knowledge.

The role of management in knowledge sharing

According to Nonaka and Konno (1998), top management should come to the realisation that knowledge needs to be nurtured, supported, enhanced and cared for. Managers should act as knowledge brokers (advisors), contributing to the diffusion of knowledge across and between different groups or teams of employees of Community of practice (CoPs) (Irick 2007). This highlights that managers can facilitate the management of tacit knowledge by offering personnel training and exercises to allow individuals access to the knowledge realm of the entire organisation.

Managers should encourage referrals and internal recruitment within the organisation. One of the most effective ways of cushioning against the impacts of high staff turnover is recruiting replacements of those who would have left, from within the organisation (internal recruitment). In most cases, current employees would already be proven good fits for the organisation (Branham 2005). In addition, having current employees who offer referrals to potential employees they know outside the organisation can help minimise confusion of job expectations. Current employees can realistically describe a position and the working environment to an individual outside the organisation.

Coaching and feedback are important aspects in an organisation as such, and it is important for companies to develop and avail feedback mechanisms for employees in which both the organisation and the employee may provide each other with feedback and report-backs on activities carried out during the organisation's activities. This enables employees' effort to remain aligned with the organisation's goals, whilst the organisation is also able to respond to any concerns and issues raised by employees. According to Branham (2005), feedback mechanisms may be either formal or informal, or even a combination of both.

Barriers to knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing in any organisation will always face hindrances. Seba, Rowely and Delbridge (2012:134) reveal that the main barriers to knowledge sharing were the organisational culture, lack of knowledge sharing-conscious leadership as well as the absence of specific time and other resource allocation to knowledge sharing. It is thus clear that a knowledge sharing culture is of vital importance within any organisation, and its absence could lead to employees not taking any real interest in management's objectives. It is imperative that organisational employees share problems, experiences, insights, templates, tools and best practices with the management. Riege (2005) has summarised the barriers to tacit knowledge sharing (see Table 1).

Related studies

A number of studies have investigated the management of tacit knowledge in different environments. Rahman et al. (2018) investigated tacit knowledge-sharing behaviour amongst the academic staff of higher learning institutions and found that personality traits affect tacit knowledge-sharing behaviour amongst the academic staff of higher learning institutions, except for conscientiousness personality trait. Their study is almost similar to the current study, the difference being the context in which the two studies were conducted. The current study focuses more on public library setting and the users are the general public as compared to the higher learning institution where the main users are academic staff and students.

Castellani et al. (2019) also looked at tacit knowledge sharing in knowledge-intensive firms. Their study looked at tacit

TABLE 1: Summary of barriers to tacit knowledge sharing.

Participant	Response
Individual barriers	• General lack of time • The perceived or real risk to job security • Limited appreciation of the value of tacit knowledge • The dominance of explicit knowledge versus tacit knowledge • Use of strong hierarchy, position-based status and formal power ('pull rank') • Insufficient capture, evaluation, feedback, communication and tolerance of past mistakes that would enhance individual and organisational learning effects • Differences in age and gender as well as educational and experience levels • Poor verbal/written communication and interpersonal skills • Lack of trust • Cultural and ethnical differences
Organisational barriers	• Lack of clear integration of knowledge management strategies and policies into organisational management • No clear leadership or direction • Lack of facilities and resources that promote knowledge sharing • No transparency or clarity in how recognition and reward systems are implemented • An unsupportive corporate culture • Stiff competitiveness between individuals, business units or functional areas of the same organisation (e.g. not invented here syndrome) • Communication and knowledge flow channels restricted • The physical work environment restrictive
Technological barriers	• Lack of integration of IT systems and processes • Lack of technical support • Unrealistic expectations of employees as to what technology can do and cannot do • Lack of compatibility between diverse IT systems and processes • Reluctance to use IT systems because of the lack of familiarity and experience with them • Lack of training regarding employee familiarisation of new IT systems and processes • Lack of communication and demonstration of all the advantages of any new system over existing ones

Source: Riege, A., 2005, 'Three dozen knowledge sharing barriers managers must consider', *Journal of Knowledge Management* 9(3), 18–35. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270510602746
IT, information technology.

knowledge sharing problems with particular reference to knowledge-intensive firms. The study findings suggest that there are efforts made for knowledge sharing by the employees despite low organisational investment in knowledge sharing tools, lack of time to devote to training and low involvement in strategic objectives by staff members.

Wright (2008) conducted a study named 'Tacit Knowledge and Pedagogy at UK Universities: Challenges for Effective Management'. In his study, he posits that more emphasis should be placed on tacit knowledge in management, which forms part of the core of the current research. Although he had the same emphasis, he did not incorporate the SECI model. The current research concurs with their idea that tacit knowledge should be the central activity in an organisation and every organisation should prioritise having a Ba (shared space for emerging relations). Whyte and Classen (2012) conducted a study on the use of storytelling as a technique for eliciting tacit knowledge from subject matter experts (SMEs). Their study indicated that even though it is difficult to extract tacit knowledge from these SMEs, the use of storytelling presents possible opportunities. This is plausible given the idea that the human brain is wired to organise information into stories easily.

In Africa, with its rich oral history tradition, storytelling comes naturally to people and is already a means of conveying indigenous knowledge. Therefore, this supports the idea of Whyte and Classen (2012) to use storytelling in the sharing of tacit knowledge. Holgersson (2013) conducted a study on tacit knowledge in which he mentioned the tools for knowledge sharing as mentoring, storytelling, communities of practice and web 2.0. Holgersson (2013) incorporated the use of the SECI model and Ba into his theoretical framework as in the current study. Mungai (2014) suggested the use of training programmes for employees to support tacit knowledge sharing and discourage individualism. The study adopted a qualitative research method. Interviews and observation were used as primary data collection methods. Makhubela (2017) conducted a study in which he examined knowledge retention at platinum mines of the North West province of South Africa. Research suggests that knowledge retention is key in combating institutional knowledge loss. The study highlights that many organisations are yet to find effective means to plug the losses occasioned by the retirement of employees, resigning, downsizing and attrition and so on. Still in South Africa, Dikotla (2019) conducted a study on knowledge sharing in selected municipalities of Limpopo province and reiterated that knowledge is regarded as an important resource for any organisation. Sharing of knowledge is crucial to the survival of an organisation, especially in municipalities which are required to deliver basic services to citizens.

Research methodology

This qualitative study employed a case study design using semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection tool. The study drew its population from employees having 10 to more than 20 years of experience within the COJLIS. These included three librarians, six senior librarians, three managers, three assistant directors, one senior library assistant and one director from a different directorate but were relevant for the study. Of the 17 participants, seven were men and 10 were women. The participants were purposively selected because of their characteristics, creativity and significance in the context of what the study was investigating.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to address the research questions.

The research was conducted in compliance with the University of South Africa (UNISA) research ethics. Data collection was done in an ethical manner, and all the participants were treated with respect. Informed consent was sought from respondents, particularly for recording of the interviews. Participation in the study was voluntary and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Respondents were given a full understanding of the research study before data were collected.

Results and discussions

The findings are presented as per the objectives of the study.

Tacit knowledge sharing practices at the City of Johannesburg Library and Information services

Inter-organisational and intra-organisational knowledge sharing systems are crucial for scientific, social and economic development, especially in knowledge-intensive sectors (Al-Busaidi & Olfman 2017). Tacit knowledge sharing can be achieved using the management practices such as mentoring, training, storytelling, after-action reviews, SMEs and community of practice. Sharing tacit knowledge in the SECI model happens during socialisation (tacit-tacit) as put across by Davenport and Prusak (2000). Socialisation involves the progression of sharing experiences, where employees learn from each other and knowledge is obtained directly from others through observation, imitation and practice.

The researchers asked about the management practices that the COJLIS was aware of. The participants were asked to select which practices are often practised at the COJLIS (see Figure 2).

Knowledge sharing is important in organisations. An assertion from Ngulube (2012) suggests that the true value of knowledge is often realised when it is shared with those who can potentially make use of it. Ngulube (2012:69) further emphasises the two-way process for knowledge sharing, which provides direction, information, ideas and advice to another who in turn learns from the former by observing, listening as well as asking. Having noted the above, the participants were asked to indicate how they shared knowledge in their organisation. This was aimed at finding ways in which tacit knowledge was shared at the COJLIS (see Table 2).

The role of information technology in tacit knowledge sharing

The review of the literature suggests that IT is a critical enabler and foundational element of a knowledge management plan, and with the advances in information and communication technologies, knowledge management can be attained through technological solutions. Chennamaneni and Teng (2011) conceded that IT can contribute to tacit knowledge sharing, although this may not be as rich as face-to-face tacit knowledge sharing. Ehijiagbone, Olatokun and
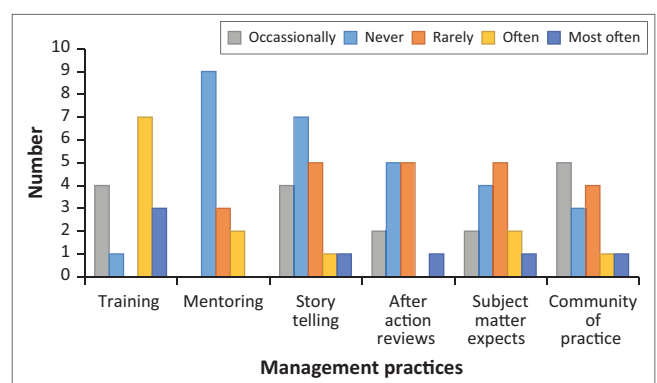
FIGURE 2: Management practices for tacit knowledge sharing.

TABLE 2: Knowledge sharing in City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services.

Participant	Response
Participant A Gender: Female Age: 62 years	What has been more of a culture is to ensure that we do internal training and also what we call each one teach one. Storytelling is also used. Yesteryear, what we had was a group of employees developing a training manual. In a nutshell, these are individual efforts, but … so far I haven't seen anything that we can say we have a unit or structure it is haphazard.
Participant B Gender: Female Age: 42 years	You know we have got the library page…but don't know how much knowledge is shared on the intranet. Sometimes knowledge is shared through formal meetings. Only representatives from different sections attend these meetings and give feedback. No one follows up whether feedback was given with these representatives.
Participant C Gender: Female Age: 38 years	You search for yourself; truthfully, there is no baby sitter here. You must go to the intranet that is where you find most of the stuff or you ask. If you don't have the Internet, you will see how to go through whatever it is.
Participant D Gender: Female Age: 40 years	We request training in an area of interest. For example, MANCO meeting, tackle one chapter, share your views, and provide feedback to your staff after the meeting.
Participant E Gender: Male Age: 36 years	Staff meetings and workshops at all levels are the core ways for knowledge sharing. In addition, informally staff consult each other when in need of certain knowledge.
Participant F Gender: Male Age: 40 years	Nothing, no mechanisms – passing information is not easy. No – newsletter you only approach one when the need arises. Trying to organise a share point, but there are challenges.
Participant G Gender: Male Age: 42 years	We use what we call electronic repository, which is on the Jozinet website on the library page, where you can access the manuals. We also identify some experts within, such as from HR, finance and other sections which support library institutions to do presentations.
Participant H Gender: Female Age: 46 years	One-on-one meetings/discussions. Direct shadowing, handover meetings, written reports. Printed and electronic documentation. Meetings – though, there is not much internal training. Systems management/specifically to sharing of experiences.
Participant I Gender: Male Age: 63 years	Peer learning conversations. We track study tours. Share it through focus groups. Exchange within provinces.

MANCO, Management Committee; HR, Human Resources.

Michael (2020) revealed that tacit knowledge has a high degree of complexity and requires sophisticated channel features for its transfer. Ehijiagbone et al. (2020) further indicated that the use of ICT gadgets in the presentation of seminars is an indirect method of sharing tacit knowledge. Lopez-Nicolas and Soto-Acosta (2010) also found that ICT can influence all knowledge-creation processes identified in the SECI model. Their study shows that ICTs can affect the socialisation of knowledge by facilitating interactions amongst individuals. Therefore, it is imperative to understand that technology plays a major role in knowledge sharing. In this light, the study sought to understand the role of technology in tacit knowledge sharing. Table 3 shows the responses regarding the role of technology in enabling tacit knowledge sharing.

The role of management in tacit knowledge sharing

Effective knowledge sharing has many dependents with the involvement of management. Smith and Schurink (2005) highlighted that successful knowledge management (KM) is reliant on senior management's understanding of the benefits of internal knowledge and how they see it unfold in the organisation. Management is required to promote a knowledge-sharing culture, manage infrastructure and more. It is the role of management to ensure that the organisation stays ahead of a changing world, otherwise as speculated by

TABLE 3: How technology enables tacit knowledge sharing at the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services.

Participant	Response
Participants A Gender: Male Age: 63 years	Documents and messages are shared on emails. Information about events and other information relevant to the particular group is shared on WhatsApp groups. Jozinet (intranet) has information which is relevant to LIS about things like projects, policies and procedures and statistics. Information is uploaded on a shared [platform], which is accessible to all employees. We have an electronic repository on Jozinet.
Participants B Gender: Female Age: 40 years	Through WhatsApp's, emails, intranet.
Participant C Gender: Female Age: 46 years	Technology is the best these days; we are not based in one building; we are spread across. At the same time through the use of emails, we use our work email channel. We have a centralised shared server (Jozinet) where we share information on the intranet, which is accessible to all City of Johannesburg staff members. The City of Johannesburg has created the knowledge management system, but COJ LIS has not started using the Joburg Insider platform. It is quite structured; we can create more folders and files and create a link for only intended recipients. Documents are edited on this Joburg Insider; in fact, you can see who made changes. This helps to avoid duplication because it keeps tracks of changes.
Participant D Gender: Male Age: 63 years	We are in the information business, but our transfers are not very effective; if you can think about how information is lost when someone leaves, it is pathetic. Training sessions from Innovation and Knowledge management should be implemented.
Participant C Gender: Male Age: 43 years	Use emails, request slots in regional meetings and do a PowerPoint presentation.

LIS, library and information services; COJ, City of Johannesburg.

TABLE 4: The role of management in tacit knowledge sharing at the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services.

Participant	Response
Participant A Gender: Female Age: 62 years	Coaching, mentoring and reviewing. On-the-job training. Provide feedback from meetings. Workshops or during the induction period. Training newly appointed junior staff as well as mentoring them. Having informal sessions with other colleagues about any knowledge gap.
Participant B Gender: Male Age: 54 years	Engagement shares interesting articles with others and conversation with key city initiatives.
Participant C Gender: Male Age: 43 years	Training for e-resources. Public awareness sessions/ongoing as and when. Presentations that are done to supplement. Provide documentation.
Participant D Gender: Male Age: 51 years	'Management should create a platform.'
Participant E Gender: Female Age: 46 years	Management should create an environment that is enabled. Should create platforms for knowledge sharing. Ensure to have a functional CoP and make sure it is effective. Management should ensure there is succession planning. Should encourage people to learn. The city shouldn't be in a crisis because someone is retiring. Without all these, I feel there is nothing that can work.

CoP, Community of Practice.

Peterson (2016), an organisation can become extinct as in the case of dinosaurs, which failed to adapt quickly enough to change. The principal researcher wanted to know the role of management in tacit knowledge sharing (see Table 4).

Barriers of tacit knowledge sharing

A review of the literature showed that there are barriers to knowledge sharing. Barriers are factors that obstruct the sharing of tacit knowledge. These can be IT-related (technology), organisational and/or individual. Knowledge sharing is hindered by many attributes when it comes to its

TABLE 5: Barriers to tacit knowledge sharing.

Participant	Response
Participant A Gender: Female Age: 42 years	I do not trust the system that is why I keep my knowledge to myself.
Participant B Gender: Female Age: 41 years	As I mentioned before, I was left alone to swim in a sea, so why would I share. Individual learning, according to me is the best.
Participant C Gender: Male Age:42 years	No intranet, no network and I am from the old school and trust the old methods, not technology.
Participant D Gender: Female Age: 58 years	No space or time is given for sharing the knowledge.
Participant E Gender: Male Age: 62 years	Ignorance, I would say, majority of employees within the libraries have no idea as to what this animal (called knowledge sharing) is.
Participant F Gender: Female Age: 43 years	There are no satisfying rewards in this organisation.

sharing. Table 5 presents barriers to tacit knowledge sharing from the respondents.

Conclusion and recommendations

There was no evidence of formal knowledge sharing practices within COJLIS. The majority of the respondents indicated that there were no formal mentorship programmes; after action reviews, SMEs were rarely invited, however, training was often organised. The results suggest that knowledge is mainly shared during meeting and workshops but most of the time knowledge sharing happens informally at individual level. Studies have shown that IT can contribute to tacit knowledge sharing. For COJLIS, IT was the main driving force to knowledge sharing. Employees mainly share knowledge through WhatsApp, Jozinet and through emails. It is the duty of management to promote a knowledge-sharing culture; however, there was no clear evidence of what management was doing to support knowledge sharing within COJLIS. The results suggest that new employees were inducted and on-the-job training was encouraged. The findings also suggest that there were regular presentations by management as well as informal discussions when it comes to knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing can be hindered by a number of factors ranging from technology to organisational culture, and at times it happens at individual level. A number of barriers emerged when it comes to knowledge sharing within COJLIS. There is some level of reluctance from the employees when it comes to sharing. Employees feel that because they were not fully supported when joining the company, they do not see the need to share with others. They also do not see the benefits of knowledge sharing at COJLIS.

The study recommends that knowledge sharing should be formalised at COJLIS so that the benefits of this practice can be clear to everyone. The SECI model promotes self-sufficiency at every level of the company by removing information hierarchies and allowing everyone to access the same knowledge, irrespective of their department or role.

It is also important to have the necessary tools to encourage knowledge sharing; therefore, the study recommends that

COJLIS should put in place the right tools and technology for effective knowledge sharing. Furthermore, COJLIS management need to put in place policies that will guide knowledge sharing at the COJLIS to minimise the loss of accumulated knowledge (see Appendix 1).

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.

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Appendix 1

Interview questions

Tacit knowledge sharing at the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services, South Africa

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Age: 30–40 [ ]   40–50 [ ]   50–60 [ ]   60+ [ ]

3. Highest academic qualification:
Matric [ ] Diploma [ ] Bachelor's degree [ ] Honours [ ] Masters [ ] Postgraduate [ ]

4. Section:
[ ] E-learning library applications
[ ] Bibliographic and distribution services
[ ] Service extension and resource development
[ ] Regional libraries

5. Position:
[ ] Senior library assistant
[ ] Librarian
[ ] Senior librarian
[ ] Manager
[ ] Assistant director
[ ] Director

6. How long have you worked for the organisation (COJLIS)? (in years)
[ ] 10–14
[ ] 15–19
[ ] 20–25
[ ] Over 25

7. How is tacit knowledge shared at COJLIS?

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8. How does technology enable tacit knowledge sharing at COJLIS?

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9. How does management assist in tacit knowledge sharing at COJLIS?

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10. What are the challenges of tacit knowledge sharing at COJLIS?

Thank you for your participation!
COJLIS, City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services.