

# Knowledge Sharing Practices and Librarians' Performance in Academic Institutions: A Survey of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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## Abstract

*This study examines the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in academic institutions within Rivers State, Nigeria. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 147 librarians across seven tertiary institutions. The study investigated various dimensions of knowledge sharing including formal, informal, tacit, explicit, and technology-mediated approaches, and their influence on librarians' efficiency, productivity, and service quality. Findings reveal significant positive correlations between knowledge sharing practices and performance outcomes, with institutional and technological factors serving as critical moderators. The study recommends enhanced organizational support for knowledge sharing infrastructure, development of formal knowledge management policies, and investment in technological platforms to facilitate seamless information exchange among library professionals.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing, librarians' performance, academic libraries, tertiary institutions, Rivers State, knowledge management

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

In contemporary academic environments, libraries have evolved from traditional repositories of information to dynamic knowledge hubs that support teaching, learning, and research activities (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). This transformation demands that librarians possess not only technical competencies but also the ability to share and leverage collective knowledge to enhance service delivery. Knowledge sharing, defined as the process by which individuals exchange both tacit and explicit knowledge to create new understanding (Van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004), has become increasingly crucial in library operations. Librarians who actively engage in knowledge sharing are more likely to develop professionally, adopt emerging technologies, and improve service delivery standards. Conversely, a lack of knowledge sharing can lead to inefficiencies, service gaps, and a stagnation of professional growth (Ismail & Yusof, 2009).

In the context of tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria, where higher education is expanding and becoming increasingly competitive, there is a growing need to understand the dynamics of

knowledge sharing among academic librarians. Local challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, low motivation, and limited professional development opportunities may affect librarians' ability and willingness to share knowledge effectively (Anyaku, Ezeani & Baro, 2019). Moreover, organizational culture, leadership style, and the use of digital platforms may also influence knowledge-sharing behaviors and, ultimately, the performance of librarians.

In the contemporary knowledge-driven academic environment, the performance of librarians in tertiary institutions is increasingly tied to their ability to share and utilize institutional knowledge effectively. Knowledge sharing practices—defined as the process through which individuals exchange information, skills, and experiences to promote learning and improve work outcomes—are essential for organizational learning, innovation, and service efficiency in academic libraries (Wang & Noe, 2010). In academic institutions, particularly within Nigeria, librarians are strategically positioned to support research, teaching, and learning by facilitating access to and dissemination of knowledge. Their performance is thus significantly influenced by how effectively they engage in knowledge sharing practices with colleagues and stakeholders (Oladokun & Aina, 2011).

In tertiary institutions in Rivers State, librarians operate in a context shaped by institutional constraints, infrastructural challenges, and evolving user demands. Despite efforts to digitize library systems and encourage collaboration, many academic libraries still face issues such as inadequate ICT tools, poor knowledge management culture, and limited professional development opportunities, all of which hinder effective knowledge sharing (Baro, Eze & Igbo, 2013). The success of libraries in this region, therefore, depends largely on how well knowledge is shared among staff to enhance service quality, problem-solving, and the overall performance of librarians. Academic libraries in Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, face mounting pressures to improve service quality amidst limited resources, evolving user expectations, and rapid technological changes (Ifidon & Ifidon, 2007). Librarians must continuously update their skills and knowledge to remain relevant, making knowledge sharing practices essential for professional development and organizational effectiveness. The ability of library staff to share expertise, best practices, and innovative solutions directly impacts their individual performance and the overall quality of library services.

Despite the recognized importance of knowledge sharing in organizational performance, there remains limited empirical evidence on how specific knowledge sharing practices influence librarians' performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Rivers State, with its diverse range of academic institutions including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, provides an ideal context for investigating these relationships. Understanding the dynamics of knowledge sharing among librarians in this context can inform policy development and interventions to enhance library service delivery.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Academic libraries in tertiary institutions are expected to provide high-quality services that support the educational and research missions of their parent institutions. However, several challenges impede optimal librarian performance, including inadequate training opportunities, limited access to professional development resources, poor communication channels, and insufficient technological infrastructure (Ugwu & Ezema, 2010). These challenges are particularly acute in developing countries like Nigeria, where library budgets are often constrained and professional isolation is common.

While knowledge sharing has been identified as a potential solution to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance professional competence, many academic libraries lack structured mechanisms to facilitate effective knowledge exchange among staff. Librarians often work in silos, with limited opportunities to learn from colleagues' experiences or share their own expertise. The absence of formalized knowledge sharing practices may result in duplication of efforts, inconsistent service quality, and missed opportunities for innovation.

Furthermore, the factors that influence knowledge sharing behaviors among librarians remain poorly understood in the Nigerian context. Institutional culture, technological infrastructure, and individual motivations may all play roles in determining whether librarians actively participate in knowledge sharing activities. Without empirical evidence on these relationships, library administrators struggle to design interventions that effectively promote knowledge sharing and improve performance outcomes. This study addresses these gaps by systematically examining the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in Rivers State tertiary institutions, with particular attention to the institutional, technological, and individual factors that influence these relationships.

Existing literature on knowledge sharing has predominantly focused on corporate and business environments, with limited attention to academic libraries, particularly in developing countries (Jain, 2007; Wang & Noe, 2010). While some studies have explored knowledge management in academic institutions, few have specifically investigated the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance outcomes such as efficiency, productivity, and service quality.

Previous research has identified various types of knowledge sharing including formal and informal mechanisms, as well as tacit and explicit knowledge transfer (Nonaka, 1994; Polanyi, 1966). However, the relative effectiveness of these different approaches in library contexts remains underexplored. Additionally, while organizational culture, technology, and individual factors have been theorized as influencing knowledge sharing behaviors (Bock et al., 2005; Connelly & Kelloway, 2003), empirical validation of these relationships in Nigerian academic libraries is lacking.

Furthermore, most existing studies on knowledge sharing in libraries have been descriptive or qualitative in nature, with limited quantitative analysis of the relationships between knowledge sharing practices and performance metrics. This study fills these gaps by providing empirical evidence on the nature and strength of relationships between various dimensions of knowledge sharing and multiple aspects of librarian performance in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in academic institutions, with specific focus on tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the methods of knowledge sharing practices commonly used by librarians in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
2. To assess the relationship between knowledge sharing and librarians' performance within academic libraries in Rivers State.
3. To examine the influence of key factors (institutional, technological, and individual) on knowledge sharing among librarians in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
4. To evaluate the impact of knowledge sharing practices on the efficiency, productivity, and service quality of librarians in academic institutions.

## 1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Institutional factors do not have any significant relationship with librarians' performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Technological factors do not have any significant relationship with librarians' productivity in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Knowledge sharing practices do not have any significant relationship with librarians' efficiency and service quality in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

## 2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on two complementary theoretical frameworks: the Social Exchange Theory and the Knowledge-Based View of the firm.

**Social Exchange Theory (SET)**, proposed by Blau (1964) and Homans (1961), posits that social behavior is the result of an exchange process where individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs. Applied to knowledge sharing, SET suggests that librarians will engage in knowledge sharing when they perceive that the benefits (such as reciprocal knowledge, recognition, or enhanced relationships) outweigh the costs (such as time, effort, or loss of competitive advantage). This theory helps explain the motivational factors underlying knowledge sharing behaviors in academic libraries.

**The Knowledge-Based View (KBV)** extends the Resource-Based View of the firm by positioning knowledge as the most strategically important organizational resource (Grant, 1996). According to KBV, organizational performance is enhanced when knowledge is effectively created, shared, and applied. In the context of academic libraries, KBV suggests that librarians' performance is significantly influenced by their access to, and utilization of, collective organizational knowledge. The theory emphasizes the importance of organizational mechanisms that facilitate knowledge integration and application. These theoretical frameworks provide the lens through which the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance can be understood and analyzed.

### 2.2 Conceptual Review

#### 2.2.1 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing refers to the process by which individuals mutually exchange their knowledge and jointly create new knowledge (Van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004). It encompasses both the donation of one's knowledge to others and the collection of knowledge from others. In organizational contexts, knowledge sharing is recognized as a critical mechanism for converting individual knowledge into organizational knowledge, thereby enhancing collective capabilities and performance (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Davenport and Prusak (1998) distinguish between data, information, and knowledge, emphasizing that knowledge sharing involves the transfer of understanding, experience, and expertise rather than mere information exchange. Effective knowledge sharing requires not only the willingness of knowledge holders to share but also the capacity of recipients to absorb and apply the knowledge received (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). In academic libraries, knowledge sharing may involve librarians exchanging information about best practices in cataloguing, sharing expertise in

reference services, discussing solutions to technical problems, or collaborating on innovative service delivery approaches. The effectiveness of these sharing activities influences both individual professional development and organizational service quality. Dimensions of knowledge sharing are as follows:

### **Formal Knowledge Sharing**

Formal knowledge sharing refers to structured, officially sanctioned mechanisms for knowledge exchange within organizations (Chiu et al., 2006). These include training programs, workshops, seminars, documented procedures, mentoring arrangements, and formal communities of practice. Formal knowledge sharing is typically planned, scheduled, and often supported by organizational resources. In library contexts, formal knowledge sharing may take the form of staff development programs, professional conferences, structured mentoring for new librarians, regular staff meetings with knowledge sharing agendas, and documented standard operating procedures. These formal mechanisms provide systematic opportunities for knowledge transfer and help ensure that critical organizational knowledge is preserved and disseminated (Huysman & de Wit, 2002).

### **Informal Knowledge Sharing**

Informal knowledge sharing occurs through spontaneous, unstructured interactions among individuals (Gray & Meister, 2004). It includes casual conversations, impromptu problem-solving discussions, social gatherings, and voluntary peer-to-peer assistance. Unlike formal mechanisms, informal knowledge sharing is not officially organized or documented but emerges naturally from social relationships and daily work interactions. Research suggests that informal knowledge sharing may be particularly effective for transferring tacit knowledge and contextual understanding that is difficult to codify (Nonaka, 1994). In libraries, informal knowledge sharing occurs when librarians spontaneously discuss challenges with colleagues, share tips during breaks, or collaborate informally on projects. The social networks and trust relationships that facilitate informal sharing are crucial for organizational knowledge flows (Levin & Cross, 2004).

### **Tacit Knowledge Sharing**

Tacit knowledge, a concept introduced by Polanyi (1966), refers to knowledge that is difficult to articulate, formalize, or communicate explicitly. It includes personal insights, intuitions, hunches, and skills acquired through experience. Tacit knowledge is often described as "know-how" and is deeply embedded in individuals' experiences and actions. Sharing tacit knowledge requires intensive personal interaction, observation, and practice (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). In libraries, tacit knowledge might include a librarian's intuitive understanding of how to effectively conduct reference interviews, the "feel" for quality cataloguing, or accumulated wisdom about managing difficult patron situations. Effective tacit knowledge sharing often requires close collaboration, apprenticeship-style learning, and shared experiences.

### **Explicit Knowledge Sharing**

Explicit knowledge can be easily articulated, codified, and transmitted in formal, systematic language (Nonaka, 1994). It includes documented procedures, manuals, databases, reports, and other forms of recorded information. Explicit knowledge is relatively straightforward to share through documents, databases, and information systems. In academic libraries, explicit knowledge sharing occurs through written guidelines, cataloguing standards, procedural manuals, policy documents, and shared databases. While explicit knowledge is easier to transfer than tacit

knowledge, its effective application often requires contextual understanding that may itself be tacit (Grant, 1996).

### **Technology-Mediated Knowledge Sharing**

Technology-mediated knowledge sharing involves the use of information and communication technologies to facilitate knowledge exchange (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). This includes email, intranets, knowledge repositories, social media platforms, video conferencing, collaborative software, and specialized knowledge management systems. Technology can overcome barriers of time and space, enabling librarians in different locations or working different shifts to share knowledge asynchronously. However, the effectiveness of technology-mediated sharing depends on user acceptance, ease of use, and integration with work processes (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In academic libraries, technology platforms such as shared drives, library management systems, professional networking sites, and internal communication tools play increasingly important roles in facilitating knowledge exchange.

### **2.2.3 Librarians' Performance**

Librarians' performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency with which library professionals execute their duties and contribute to organizational objectives (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Performance can be assessed across multiple dimensions including task performance (the core technical activities required by the job), contextual performance (behaviors that support the organizational, social, and psychological environment), and adaptive performance (the ability to respond to changing demands). In academic library contexts, performance encompasses various aspects including:

**Efficiency:** The ability to accomplish tasks with optimal use of resources, including time, effort, and materials. Efficient librarians complete their work accurately and promptly, minimizing waste and redundancy (Campbell et al., 1993).

**Productivity:** The volume and quality of output produced within a given time frame. For librarians, productivity may be measured by the number of patrons served, materials processed, reference questions answered, or programs delivered (Koopmans et al., 2011).

**Service Quality:** The degree to which library services meet or exceed user expectations. This includes dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as outlined in the SERVQUAL framework (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Additional performance indicators relevant to librarians include innovation in service delivery, collaboration with colleagues and faculty, professional development activities, and contributions to the profession through research and publication (Jantz, 2012).

### **2.2.4 Relationship Between Knowledge Sharing Practices and Librarians' Performance**

The relationship between knowledge sharing and performance has been explored in various organizational contexts, with generally positive findings. Knowledge sharing enables employees to learn from others' experiences, access specialized expertise, avoid repeating mistakes, and develop innovative solutions to problems (Cummings, 2004).

Several mechanisms explain how knowledge sharing enhances performance. First, knowledge sharing reduces learning curves by allowing individuals to benefit from others' experiences rather than learning solely through trial and error (Argote et al., 2000). Second, it facilitates problem-solving by providing access to diverse perspectives and expertise (Grant, 1996). Third, knowledge sharing promotes innovation by enabling the recombination of existing knowledge in novel ways

(Kogut & Zander, 1992). Fourth, it enhances coordination and reduces duplication of effort by ensuring that all team members have access to necessary information (Tsai, 2001).

In library contexts, when librarians actively share knowledge about effective reference techniques, cataloguing practices, patron engagement strategies, or technology troubleshooting, their colleagues can immediately apply this knowledge to improve their own work. This collective learning enhances both individual performance and overall service quality (Jain, 2007).

Empirical studies in various organizational settings have documented positive relationships between knowledge sharing and performance outcomes including productivity (Lin, 2007), innovation (Soo et al., 2002), and service quality (Hsu, 2008). However, the strength and nature of these relationships may be moderated by organizational culture, leadership support, technological infrastructure, and individual characteristics (Wang & Noe, 2010).

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

Several empirical studies have examined various aspects of knowledge sharing in organizational contexts, including some focused on libraries and information services.

Jain (2007) conducted a study on knowledge management in academic libraries and found that while librarians recognized the importance of knowledge sharing, actual practices were often informal and unsystematic. The study identified organizational culture and lack of formal knowledge management systems as significant barriers to effective knowledge sharing.

Ugwu and Ezema (2010) investigated challenges facing library staff in Nigerian universities and found that limited training opportunities, poor communication infrastructure, and inadequate technological resources hindered professional development and knowledge exchange among librarians. Their study highlighted the need for institutional support to facilitate knowledge sharing.

Jantz (2012) examined innovation in academic libraries and found that knowledge sharing among staff was a significant predictor of innovative service delivery. Libraries with stronger cultures of collaboration and knowledge exchange were more likely to implement innovative programs and services.

In a study of Malaysian academic libraries, Jan and Anwar (2019) found significant positive correlations between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance. They identified organizational climate, management support, and information technology as key enablers of knowledge sharing.

Wang and Noe (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of knowledge sharing literature and identified several consistent predictors of knowledge sharing behavior including organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, individual motivations, and technological systems. Their findings suggested that both organizational and individual factors must be addressed to promote effective knowledge sharing.

Connelly and Kelloway (2003) found that trust, perceived organizational support, and self-efficacy were significant predictors of knowledge sharing intentions among employees. Their study highlighted the importance of psychological factors in knowledge sharing decisions.

Bock et al. (2005) investigated the influence of organizational climate on knowledge sharing and found that expected rewards, organizational climate, and sense of self-worth significantly influenced knowledge sharing intentions. Their findings suggested that organizations must create supportive environments that recognize and value knowledge sharing contributions.

These studies collectively suggest that knowledge sharing is influenced by multiple factors operating at institutional, technological, and individual levels, and that effective knowledge

sharing can enhance various aspects of employee performance. However, gaps remain in understanding these relationships specifically within the context of Nigerian academic libraries, which this current study addresses.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. This implies that all measurements for the sample members were obtained at a single point in time. The survey design was used to explain, explore, and describe the variables and the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in academic institutions using data collected from a field survey. The method was expected to obtain information about people's opinions, attitudes, and experiences that are difficult to observe directly.

The target population of the study consisted of the employees of seven (7) accessible academic institutions in Rivers State. Simple random sampling method was used in the administration of the questionnaire that covered both senior and junior staff from the institutions' libraries under study. It has been stated that the reason behind simple random sampling is to remove bias from the procedure of selection and results, and also to allow every member of the population to have an equal chance or probability of being selected for the sample (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011).

The total population of the study was one hundred and forty-seven (147) staff of the library units in the institutions. Due to the manageable size of the population, a census study was used to enable the researchers to study the entire population, which also served as the sample size in the study. This sample size was used in order to generate valid data from the population. A total of one hundred and forty-seven (147) questionnaires were distributed to both junior and senior staff of the institutions' libraries, and the data collected were subjected to analysis.

The primary data were collected through questionnaire administration. The secondary data were obtained from journals, textbooks, and the internet. To ascertain the validity of the instrument, content validity was adopted. Content validity in most cases is measured by relying on the knowledge of people who are conversant with the concept being measured (Drost, 2011). Face validity was premised on adequate review and consultation from researchers and experts in the field of Library Information Science and Business Administration from the Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas Bonny and Rivers State University, Rivers State, respectively. The questionnaire was developed in line with the objectives of the study and recommendations by the experts.

Reliability is fundamentally concerned with issues of consistency of measures. For the purpose of the study, the researcher employed Cronbach's alpha to verify the internal consistency of each construct in order to achieve reliability. Cronbach's alpha assesses the consistency of the entire scale and indicates how well the items correlate positively to one another. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 standing for a completely unreliable test, and higher values closer to 1 indicating higher internal reliability, with 1 standing for a completely reliable test. A reliability coefficient (alpha) of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics, percentages, tables, and figures. The Pearson correlation was used to test the relationships hypothesized in the study, while descriptive statistics provided insights into the characteristics of knowledge sharing practices and performance levels among the librarians studied.

## 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

**Table 4.1 Questionnaire Distribution**

| Questionnaires | Frequency of Questionnaire Administered | Percentage of Questionnaires Administered (%) |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Returned       | 138                                     | 93.9%                                         |
| Unreturned     | 09                                      | 6.1%                                          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>147</b>                              | <b>100%</b>                                   |

**Source: Field Survey, 2025.**

Out of 147 questionnaires distributed, 138 were returned and found usable for analysis, representing a response rate of 93.9%. This high response rate enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

| Characteristic            | Category          | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender                    | Male              | 76        | 55.1       |
|                           | Female            | 62        | 44.9       |
| Age                       | 25-35 years       | 48        | 34.8       |
|                           | 36-45 years       | 52        | 37.7       |
|                           | 46-55 years       | 28        | 20.3       |
|                           | Above 55 years    | 10        | 7.2        |
| Work Experience           | 1-5 years         | 42        | 30.4       |
|                           | 6-10 years        | 46        | 33.3       |
|                           | 11-15 years       | 32        | 23.2       |
|                           | Above 15 years    | 18        | 13.0       |
| Educational Qualification | Bachelor's degree | 38        | 27.5       |
|                           | Master's degree   | 86        | 62.3       |
|                           | PhD               | 14        | 10.1       |

The demographic profile shows a fairly balanced gender distribution with a slight male majority. Most respondents (72.5%) were between 25 and 45 years of age, suggesting a relatively young and potentially dynamic workforce. The majority (62.3%) held master's degrees, indicating a well-educated professional community. Work experience was distributed across categories, with most librarians having 6-10 years of experience.

## 4.2 Data Analysis

### 4.2.1 Objective One: Methods of Knowledge Sharing Practices Commonly Used

Respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of engagement with various knowledge sharing methods on a five-point Likert scale. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Knowledge Sharing Methods and Frequency of Use**

| Knowledge Sharing Method               | Mean | SD   | Rank |
|----------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Informal conversations with colleagues | 4.23 | 0.78 | 1    |
| Staff meetings and discussions         | 3.87 | 0.92 | 2    |
| Email communication                    | 3.76 | 0.88 | 3    |
| Professional training and workshops    | 3.54 | 1.02 | 4    |
| Mentoring programs                     | 3.42 | 1.15 | 5    |
| Shared digital platforms/repositories  | 3.28 | 1.08 | 6    |
| Formal documentation and manuals       | 3.15 | 0.95 | 7    |
| Social media groups                    | 2.98 | 1.22 | 8    |

The findings reveal that informal conversations with colleagues (M=4.23, SD=0.78) was the most frequently used knowledge sharing method, followed by staff meetings (M=3.87, SD=0.92) and email communication (M=3.76, SD=0.88). Technology-mediated formal sharing through digital platforms and social media ranked lower, suggesting that personal, face-to-face interactions remain the preferred mode of knowledge exchange among librarians in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

#### 4.2.2 Reliability Analysis

**Table 4.4: Reliability Statistics**

| Construct                   | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Knowledge Sharing Practices | 0.856            | 15              |
| Institutional Factors       | 0.823            | 8               |
| Technological Factors       | 0.798            | 7               |
| Librarians' Efficiency      | 0.841            | 6               |
| Librarians' Productivity    | 0.867            | 6               |
| Service Quality             | 0.852            | 8               |

All constructs demonstrated acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978), ranging from 0.798 to 0.867. This indicates good internal consistency of the measurement instruments.

#### 4.2.3 Testing of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Table 4.4: Correlation between Knowledge Sharing Practices and Overall Performance**

|                             |                     | Knowledge Sharing Practices | librarians' performance |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Knowledge Sharing Practices | Pearson Correlation | 1                           | . 0.687**               |
|                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                             | .000                    |
|                             | N                   | 138                         | 138                     |
| librarians' performance     | Pearson Correlation | .687**                      | 1                       |
|                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                        |                         |
|                             | N                   | 138                         | 138                     |

**Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive significant relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' overall performance ( $r = 0.687$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This indicates that as knowledge sharing practices increase, librarians' performance also improves significantly. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, confirming that there is indeed a significant relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in Rivers State tertiary institutions.

**Hypothesis Two:** Institutional factors do not have any significant relationship with librarians' performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Table 4.5: Correlation between Institutional Factors and Performance**

|                         |                     | Institutional Factors | librarians' performance |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Institutional Factors   | Pearson Correlation | 1                     | . 0.592**               |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                       | .000                    |
|                         | N                   | 138                   | 138                     |
| librarians' performance | Pearson Correlation | .592**                | 1                       |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                  |                         |
|                         | N                   | 138                   | 138                     |

**Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The analysis shows a moderate to strong positive significant relationship between institutional factors and librarians' performance ( $r = 0.592$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that favorable institutional

factors such as organizational culture, management support, and formal knowledge sharing policies significantly enhance librarians' performance. The null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis Three:** Technological factors do not have any significant relationship with librarians' productivity in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

**Table 4.6: Correlation between Technological Factors and Productivity**

|                       |                     | Technological Factors | Productivity |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Technological Factors | Pearson Correlation | 1                     | . 0.548**    |
|                       | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                       | .000         |
|                       | N                   | 138                   | 138          |
| Productivity          | Pearson Correlation | .548**                | 1            |
|                       | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                  |              |
|                       | N                   | 138                   | 138          |

**Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results indicate a moderate positive significant relationship between technological factors and librarians' productivity ( $r = 0.548$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This demonstrates that access to and utilization of technology for knowledge sharing purposes significantly enhances productivity levels among librarians. The null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis Four:** Knowledge sharing practices do not have any significant relationship with librarians' efficiency and service quality in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Table 4.7: Correlation between Knowledge Sharing, Efficiency, and Service Quality**

| Variables                           | Correlation Coefficient (r) | Sig. (2-tailed) | N   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----|
| Knowledge Sharing & Efficiency      | 0.643**                     | 0.000           | 138 |
| Knowledge Sharing & Service Quality | 0.671**                     | 0.000           | 138 |

**Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The analysis reveals strong positive significant relationships between knowledge sharing practices and both efficiency ( $r = 0.643$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and service quality ( $r = 0.671$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings indicate that effective knowledge sharing practices substantially improve both the efficiency with which librarians perform their duties and the quality of services they provide to library users. The null hypothesis is rejected.

## Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the positive relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in Rivers State tertiary institutions. The strong correlation ( $r = 0.687$ ) between knowledge sharing and overall performance aligns with previous research by Wang and Noe (2010) and Jain (2007), who found that knowledge sharing enhances employee performance across various organizational contexts. The predominance of informal knowledge sharing methods, particularly face-to-face conversations, is consistent with findings by Gray and Meister (2004), who noted that informal interactions remain crucial for knowledge exchange despite technological advances. This may reflect the tacit nature of much professional library knowledge, which is best transferred through personal interaction and observation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). However, the relatively lower utilization of technology-mediated platforms suggests an area for improvement, particularly given the potential of technology to overcome temporal and spatial constraints in knowledge sharing.

The significant relationship between institutional factors and performance ( $r = 0.592$ ) underscores the importance of organizational support for knowledge sharing. This finding resonates with Bock et al. (2005), who emphasized the role of organizational climate in facilitating knowledge sharing behaviors. Libraries in Rivers State should consider developing formal knowledge management policies, creating time and space for knowledge sharing activities, and recognizing employees who actively contribute to collective learning.

The positive correlation between technological factors and productivity ( $r = 0.548$ ) highlights the enabling role of technology in knowledge sharing, consistent with Alavi and Leidner's (2001) work on technology-mediated knowledge management. However, the moderate strength of this relationship suggests that technology alone is insufficient; its effectiveness depends on integration with work processes, user acceptance, and complementary organizational factors.

The strong relationships between knowledge sharing and both efficiency ( $r = 0.643$ ) and service quality ( $r = 0.671$ ) have important practical implications. These findings suggest that investments in knowledge sharing infrastructure and practices can yield tangible benefits in terms of operational efficiency and user satisfaction. When librarians have ready access to colleagues' expertise and best practices, they can resolve problems more quickly, avoid errors, and deliver higher quality services to patrons.

## Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' performance in seven tertiary institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. Using a census approach, data were collected from 138 librarians through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation statistics. The following are the key finds of the study:

1. Informal conversations with colleagues constitute the most frequently used knowledge sharing method among librarians, followed by staff meetings and email communication.
2. There is a strong positive significant relationship between knowledge sharing practices and librarians' overall performance ( $r = 0.687$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
3. Institutional factors demonstrate a moderate to strong positive relationship with librarians' performance ( $r = 0.592$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
4. Technological factors show a moderate positive relationship with librarians' productivity ( $r = 0.548$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
5. Knowledge sharing practices have strong positive relationships with both efficiency ( $r = 0.643$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and service quality ( $r = 0.671$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). All null hypotheses were rejected,

confirming the significant relationships between knowledge sharing practices, enabling factors, and various dimensions of librarians' performance.

Conclusively, this study provides empirical evidence that knowledge sharing practices significantly enhance librarians' performance in Rivers State tertiary institutions. The findings demonstrate that when librarians actively exchange knowledge—whether through formal or informal mechanisms—they perform more efficiently, achieve higher productivity, and deliver better quality services to library users. The predominance of informal, face-to-face knowledge sharing suggests that personal relationships and social networks remain central to professional learning among librarians. However, the study also reveals that institutional support and technological infrastructure play important enabling roles in facilitating knowledge exchange and enhancing its impact on performance. The strong correlations observed between knowledge sharing and multiple performance dimensions underscore the strategic importance of knowledge management in academic libraries. In resource-constrained environments like Nigerian tertiary institutions, leveraging collective knowledge through systematic sharing practices offers a cost-effective means of enhancing organizational capabilities and service delivery.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Institutional Policy Development:** Library management and university administrators should develop formal knowledge management policies that explicitly recognize, support, and reward knowledge sharing activities among librarians. These policies should allocate time and resources for knowledge sharing activities within regular work schedules.
2. **Technology Infrastructure Investment:** Tertiary institutions should invest in user-friendly technology platforms that facilitate knowledge sharing, including shared digital repositories, collaborative software, and communication tools. However, technology implementation should be accompanied by adequate training and change management to ensure adoption.
3. **Formalization of Informal Practices:** While informal knowledge sharing is prevalent and valuable, libraries should create structured opportunities for informal interactions, such as regular communities of practice, peer learning groups, and cross-functional project teams. This can systematize the benefits of informal exchange while preserving its spontaneous, social nature.
4. **Mentoring Programs:** Libraries should establish formal mentoring programs that pair experienced librarians with newer staff members. This facilitates tacit knowledge transfer and professional socialization while building the social relationships that support ongoing informal knowledge sharing.
5. **Training and Development:** Regular training programs should focus not only on technical library skills but also on knowledge sharing competencies, including effective communication, collaboration, and use of knowledge management technologies. Librarians should be equipped with skills to both share and seek knowledge effectively.
6. **Recognition and Reward Systems:** Institutions should develop recognition systems that acknowledge and reward librarians who actively contribute to knowledge sharing. This could include performance evaluation criteria that assess knowledge sharing behaviors, awards for outstanding knowledge contributors, or career advancement opportunities linked to collaborative practices.

7. **Creation of Physical and Virtual Spaces:** Libraries should designate physical spaces (e.g., staff lounges, collaborative workrooms) and virtual spaces (e.g., discussion forums, internal social networks) specifically designed to facilitate spontaneous and planned knowledge sharing interactions among staff.
8. **Inter-Institutional Knowledge Networks:** Rivers State tertiary institutions should establish consortia or networks that enable knowledge sharing across institutional boundaries. This could include joint training programs, shared digital platforms, inter-library staff exchanges, and collaborative professional development initiatives.

### Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged:

1. The study was limited to tertiary institutions in Rivers State, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other geographical contexts or types of libraries.
2. The cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of relationships at one point in time but does not allow for causal inferences or examination of how knowledge sharing practices and performance evolve over time.
3. The study relied primarily on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to social desirability bias or common method variance.
4. While the study examined relationships between variables, it did not explore the specific mechanisms or processes through which knowledge sharing influences performance outcomes.

### Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the following areas are recommended for future research:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track the evolution of knowledge sharing practices and their impact on performance over time, enabling stronger causal inferences.
2. **Qualitative Exploration:** In-depth qualitative studies using interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observation could provide richer insights into the processes, barriers, and facilitators of knowledge sharing in academic libraries.
3. **Comparative Studies:** Research comparing knowledge sharing practices and performance relationships across different types of libraries (academic, public, special) or different geographical regions could illuminate contextual factors that influence these relationships.

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