

# Impact of Tacit Knowledge Sharing on Job Performance of Non-Academic Staff in Universities

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**Abstract:** The study examined the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and job performance of non-academic staff in Ekiti State Universities. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 2926 non-academic staff in the public Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 300 staff selected from two Universities in Ekiti State. The purpose of the random sampling technique was to select two public universities: one federal university and one state university. A proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 158 non-academic staff members from the state university and 142 non-academic staff members from the federal university. Two instruments, tagged “Tacit Knowledge Sharing Questionnaire” (TKSQ) and “Non-Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire” (NASJPQ), were used to collect data for the study. Face and content validity of the instruments were ensured by experts. The test-retest method of reliability was adopted to determine the reliability coefficient of 0.81 for TKSQ and 0.79 for NASJPQ. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significance in the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and non-academic staff job performance in Ekiti State universities. Based on these findings, it was recommended that there is a need for management of tertiary institutions to maximize organizational knowledge. This gives an edge in today’s competitive global marketplace and helps build robust knowledge management strategies that can add value to the job performance of staff and invariably impact school effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Higher learning; Job performance; Knowledge management; Knowledge sharing; Non-academic staff.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is widely known as a fundamental driver of societal development, which serves as an instrument for individual empowerment, economic growth, and national progress. The relevance of education to economic, industrial and technological development of Nigeria and other countries of the world cannot be overemphasized. Tertiary institutions have pre-determined goals and objectives they intend to achieve. The major determinant of universities is the presence of human resources with the appropriate skills to combine with organizational goals and objectives. The non-academic staff of universities are employed for the primary purpose, and they are expected to be well-equipped and to be more effective in carrying out their assignments. They are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the institution, and they provide advice and support for current and prospective students and academic staff in all matters relating to studying at the university institution such as administrative matters, finance and accounts, human resources, library services, IT support, maintenance of infrastructure, student services, and security services.

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Leaders of successful organizations are consistently looking for better ways to improve performance and results. Employee job performance is frequently interpreted as representative of the organization's performance and has a direct impact on the organization's image (Silitonga and Sadeli, 2020). Job performance is an aggregate of employee behaviours that have some expected value to organizations, either positive or negative. Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well. It has been observed by the researcher that poor performance among non-academic staff is exhibited through a high level of incompetence and lack of innovation among non-academic staff of university institutions. Customer dissatisfaction caused by the non-academic staff in the university due to their poor attitude to work has been observed by the researcher. This was aligned with the opinion of Forbes (2017) that knowledge sharing can effectively help organizations improve customer satisfaction and operations. This poor performance observed may be attributed to deterioration in individual employee performance due to inadequate knowledge management practices, most importantly, knowledge sharing in the university institutions.

Knowledge management (KM) is the process of capturing, distributing, and effectively utilizing knowledge within an organization. It involves creating systems and practices to collect both explicit and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge includes documents, reports, and databases, while tacit knowledge includes expertise, experience, and insights gained by individuals. This knowledge is expected to be shared, stored, and applied to improve decision-making, innovation, and performance. Several authors have contributed to the development and understanding of knowledge sharing over the years. According to Huie, Cassaberry, and Rivera (2020), Knowledge sharing has become one of the major components of knowledge management using information technology. It has become a critical issue because effective knowledge management is the basis for an organization to stay competitive. Knowledge management is the process by which communication and understanding occur between individuals. During this process, information and knowledge are created, shared, used, and managed. Knowledge sharing focuses on organizational objectives such as improved performance, competitive advantage, innovation, the sharing of lessons learned, integration and continuous improvement of the organization. (Hajric, 2010). Kridan and Goulding (2006) also pointed out that knowledge sharing is seen as a significant component of a business strategy that could provide an organization with opportunities to manage new market challenges. In essence, it is a process by which an organization creates, shares, and controls knowledge for specific business advantages. Therefore, understanding the various types of critical information can help businesses analyze and share that information most effectively.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) focused on the knowledge creation as the process of amplifying the knowledge assets of an organization by converting the tacit knowledge of individuals into explicit knowledge. Wiig (1997) also emphasizes knowledge management as the process of organizing, sharing, and utilizing knowledge to support organizational goals. The contribution of knowledge sharing to job performance has been well-documented in academic literature. Several researchers have explored how knowledge management practices influence job performance, highlighting various mechanisms like knowledge sharing, decision-making and organizational learning, among others. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) discussed how organizations can enhance job performance by creating and sharing knowledge effectively. They highlight how the dynamic process of knowledge sharing improves both individual and organizational performance by making tacit knowledge accessible and actionable.

A crucial gap has been identified by Ojo (2016) in knowledge management processes at tertiary institutions and emphasizing the need for strategic implementation to achieve competitive advantage and enhance performance and innovation. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) introduced the concept of knowledge management and outlined a framework known as the SECI Model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization), which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge. Some individuals use tactical knowledge which is the kind of knowledge that is not written and used only by verbalizing the knowledge. This can lead to difficulties in acceptance for other people, because no written information can be used or read over for a long time; only the person who knows about the knowledge can keep it, but it will remain in the mind. It is gained through personal experience. Explicit knowledge is formalized, codified, and easily communicated in the form of documents, databases, and manuals.

Knowledge sharing as an aspect of knowledge management was perceived as necessary to contribute to the improvement of non-academic staff performance. It is an activity through which knowledge is exchanged among people, colleagues, peers, communities, family or within an organization (Paulin and Suneson, 2011). It was observed that some non-academic staff prefer to hoard knowledge gained; they are not willing to share their skills, ideas and experience with others to benefit

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from it through teamwork, or face-to-face interaction. However, the practice of knowledge sharing is often hindered by challenges stemming from the fear among employees of becoming redundant, where individuals refrain from sharing their unique expertise or insights with others, under the belief that their value to the organization diminishes if their knowledge becomes widespread.

Marouf and Agarwal (2016) pointed out that a conducive environment for knowledge sharing allows for easier enquiry and learning, which in turn supports the fulfilment of institutional objectives. The mindset of knowledge hoarding could have negative effects on the performance of non-academic staff in the universities. When knowledge is withheld in an organization, it becomes underutilized or completely inaccessible to others who might need it for effective job performance and thereby negatively impacting the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees and consequently affecting the organization's productivity. Sharing with the workforce is by conducting regular corporate training sessions to standardize learning and ensure the team has the information they need to succeed.

Knowledge sharing is a costly intangible resource that makes an organization more competitive in the market (Huie, Cassaberry & Rivera, 2020). Studies have shown that many job performance deficiencies are due to a lack of communicated knowledge (Peroune, 2007; Akdere & Schmidt, 2007; Kridan & Goulding, 2006). It has been concluded by Chow (2012) that knowledge sharing is a readiness to learn from others which is accepted as having a considerable impact on job performance. However, most of the knowledge that is required to sustain corporate competitiveness is tacit in nature meaning it is entrenched in people and is not obvious to others. Tacit knowledge is unspoken knowledge; it cannot be easily codified and is not readily transferable from one person to another. However, studies have indicated that the sharing of tacit knowledge is an important attribute for team-based learning organizations. Organisation that engages in continuous learning are more likely to achieve superior performance on their job. Tacit knowledge sharing is believed to be one factor that distinguishes successful managers from others (Randeree, 2006). It has been observed that a lack of knowledge in terms of the effect of tacit knowledge could have a negative effect on job performance.

In agreement, Peroune (2007) maintained that much of the knowledge on which real-world setting is based is tacit knowledge. She further asserted that ninety percent of the knowledge in any organization is entrenched in and synthesized in people's heads. Therefore, a trusting environment must be established to obtain knowledge. Since the success or failure of an organization's knowledge management system is dependent on its ability to manage and motivate its employees, trust and collaboration are critical factors (Wang, Ashleigh & Meyers, 2006). In view of the above, there is a need to find out the impact of tacit knowledge sharing on the job performance of non-academic staff in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Organizational objectives are achieved by making effective use of knowledge that would improve productivity. Hence, it is necessary for organizations to concentrate more on the encouragement of the sharing of tacit knowledge.

**Statement of the problem**

The continuous discouraging job performance of non-academic staff of universities has been a major concern in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The administration of the tertiary institutions is the power that should facilitate the smooth running of the entire system. It was observed by some stakeholders, vis-à-vis students, academic staff, head of units, old students and parents that some non-academic staff appear not to be adequately committed to their duties. The delivery service at the non-academic disposal seems not to be effectively and efficiently handled. Both students and staff records appear to be improperly handled or kept by the non-academic staff in the universities. The long period attached to response given to any written letters to the departments or central administration is equally observed. Poor filing and retrieval of documents is nothing to write home about. Loss of important information on transit was observed. Records seem not kept in a timely manner. Poor and delays in processing or retrieving information could impact customer service negatively. Issues seem not to be attended to as and when due and this has subsequently reduced the number of new intakes, most especially at the postgraduate level. Vital information is mismanaged and gets lost in transit, because of the poor attitude to work. It appears that the observed low job performance of non-academic staff could be linked with an inability to involvement in knowledge management which seems to be reflection of tacit knowledge sharing which in turn seems to affect the performance in the entire university system.

Observation showed that most of the non-academic staff has remained stagnant in the system because of lack of effective knowledge sharing. It seems the university management did not cultivate the enabling environment where knowledge management could be encouraged. Most of the problems associated with knowledge sharing could include lack of

collaboration, inadequate training, resistance to change, time and resource constraints, inadequate technology, quality control, cognitive biases, intellectual property concerns, knowledge retention among others. From the foregoing, one could realize that knowledge management practices play a crucial role in the job performance of non-academic staff. It has become necessary to find out the influence of knowledge sharing on the job performance of non-academic staff of the universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

**Research Questions:**

The following research questions were raised for the study

1. What is the level of non-academic staff job performance in Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of tacit knowledge sharing in Ekiti State Universities?

**Research Hypotheses:**

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between knowledge management and non-academic staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and non-academic staff job performance.

**2. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population consisted of 5,328 non-academic staff in the public universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 480 non-academic staff including heads of departments selected from two universities in Ekiti State. Purposive random sampling was used to select two public universities, one Federal and one state university. A proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 158 non-academic staff members from State University and 142 from Federal University. Two instruments, tagged “Tacit Knowledge Sharing Questionnaire” (TKSQ) and “Non-Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire” (NASJPQ), were used to collect data for the study. Face and content validity of the instruments were ensured by experts. The test-retest method of reliability was adopted to determine the reliability coefficient of 0.83 for TKSQ and 0.79 for NASJPQ. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**3. RESULT**

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of non-academic staff job performance in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Descriptive analysis of non-academic staff job performance in Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria (N = 300)**

S/N	Items	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Punctuality at work	24(8)	149(49.3)	102(34)	18(6)	5(2.6)	3.66	0.68	High
2	Approach to work	16(5.2)	159(52.9)	116(39.1)	6(2.1)	3(0.7)	3.60	0.65	High
3	Attention to Instruction	10(3.5)	128(42.5)	146(48.8)	13(4.5)	3(0.7)	3.44	0.67	High
4	Completion of assignment on time	7(2.3)	122(40.8)	158(52.7)	11(3.7)	2(0.5)	3.41	0.63	High
5	Relationship with colleagues	43(14.2)	20(30.5)	157(52.3)	6(2.1)	6(0.9)	3.55	0.9	High
6	Mode of Communication	0(0.0)	138(46.0)	15(50.9)	9(3.1)	0(0.0)	3.43	0.55	High
7	Record Keeping	38(12.8)	103(34.4)	149(49.9)	5(1.8)	3(1.1)	3.56	0.78	High

**International Journal of Novel Research in Interdisciplinary Studies**

Vol. 13, Issue 2, pp: (1-8), Month: March – April 2026, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

8	Maintenance of discipline	0(0.0)	138(45.9)	155(51.8)	4(1.2)	3(1.0)	3.43	0.58	High
9	Confidentiality in official matters	11(3.5)	78(25.9)	201(67.0)	9(3.1)	2(0.5)	3.29	0.61	High
10	Good mastery of on-the-job skills	0(0.0)	136(45.2)	156(52.2)	7(2.4)	1(0.2)	3.42	0.55	High
11	Good sense of observation	7(2.3)	88(29.3)	189(63.1)	11(3.6)	5(1.7)	3.27	0.65	High
12	Contribution to the various processes within the system	2(0.8)	96(32.0)	172(57.2)	7(2.4)	1(0.3)	3.45	0.69	High
<b>Average Mean</b>							<b>3.46</b>		

**Mean Cut-Off:3.00**

Table 1 shows the item analysis of non-academic staff job performance in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Based on the mean cut-off mark of 3.00, all 12 items were accepted. This implies that the level of non-academic job performance in universities in Ekiti State was high.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of tacit knowledge sharing in universities in Ekiti State?

**Table 2: Descriptive analysis of tacit knowledge sharing in universities in Ekiti State**

S/N	Items: My university	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	provides training and development programmes for staff that make them feel more competent and willing to share knowledge	98	162	29	11	2.72	1.3	Good
2	has the means of technology to disseminate the knowledge acquired among the staff	83	193	9	15	2.92	1.97	Good
3	encourages open knowledge sharing among staff	101	118	40	21	2.89	1.89	Good
4	gives personal satisfaction and recognition that encourages knowledge sharing	31	26	187	56	2.23	2.46	Poor
5	provides platforms like intranets, emails, and staff meetings to promote knowledge sharing	212	82	3	3	3.05	2.91	Good
6	contributes to hoarding new ideas acquired by staff, due to a lack of reward and recognition	34	28	182	56	2.25	2.35	poor
7	In my university, confidence in one’s ability encourages the sharing of relevant and useful knowledge	215	79	2	4	3.12	1.45	Good
8	heavy workload and time constraints reduce the willingness to share knowledge	126	98	38	38	2.33	2.28	Poor
<b>Average Mean:</b>						<b>2.58</b>		

**Cut-Off mean:2.50**

Table 2 shows the item analysis of knowledge sharing in universities, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Based on the cut-off mean mark of 2.50, training and development programmes has mean value of 2.72, means of technology has 2.92, open knowledge sharing has 2.89, personal satisfaction and recognition has 2.29, platform to promote knowledge sharing has 3.05, hoarding new ideas has 2.25, confidence in one’s ability has 3.12, while heavy workload and time constraint has mean value of 2.33. Among the key aspects, confidence in one’s ability stands out as relatively strong. However, the findings suggest significant

room for improvement in personal satisfaction, hoarding new ideas and heavy workload and time constraints. Both of which scored below the mean cut-off of 2.50, categorizing them as “poor.” This indicates potential challenges in transforming knowledge sharing into a usable format and fostering effective knowledge sharing among non-academic staff in the universities.

**Testing of Hypotheses:**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between knowledge management and job performance of non-academic staff of tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used. The result is presented in Table 1.

**Table 3: Relationship between knowledge management and job performance of non-academic staff**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	P-value
Knowledge Management	300	3.68	0.17	0.144*	0.02
Non-academic staff job performance	300	9.64	1.48		

**\*P<0.05**

Table 3 showed that the r-cal value of 0.144 is significant at 0.05 level of significance, because the P-value (0.02) < 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between knowledge management and non-academic staff job performance.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and non-academic staff job performance

**Table 4: Relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and non-academic staff job performance**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	P-value
Knowledge Sharing	480	17.27	1.72	0.121*	0.000
Non-academic staff job performance	480	94.95	5.85		

**\*P<0.05**

Table 4 showed that the r-cal value of 0.121 was significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there was a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and non-academic staff job performance.

**4. DISCUSSION**

The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between knowledge management and non-academic staff job performance in universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It could be inferred from the findings that the effective management of knowledge resources within these institutions plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of non-academic staff. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Razzaq et al (2019) on public sector employees that knowledge management had a positive and significant impact on employee job performance. The finding is also in line with the findings of Leviadi et al (2024) on research conducted in the public sector, which stated that knowledge management has a positive and significant relationship with employee performance.

The study further revealed the significant relationship between knowledge sharing and non-academic staff job performance. It could be inferred from the finding that a proper sharing of knowledge could influence the job performance of non-academic staff. This finding agreed with the findings of Engidaw et al (2023), who concluded that knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of employee engagement. The study is also in consonance with Pakpahan et al (2022), who found the moderating of knowledge sharing on job performance.

**International Journal of Novel Research in Interdisciplinary Studies**

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**5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that knowledge sharing displays potent roles in influencing non-academic job performance in the universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Hence, it could be concluded that the knowledge sharing examined is what the employee needs to interact with to promote non-academic staff job performance in universities.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

- Management of tertiary institutions needs to maximize organizational knowledge to gain an edge in today's competitive global marketplace and build robust knowledge management strategies that can add value to the job performance of staff and invariably impact school effectiveness.
- Managers must devote efforts and time to improve knowledge sharing practices by reinforcing the socialisation, externalisation, and internalisation processes
- Informatics training is required to equip non-academic staff with the skills needed to share knowledge and this could be organized through conferences and workshops.
- Knowledge sharing should be encouraged through teamwork to improve non-academic job performance and invariably impact school effectiveness.

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