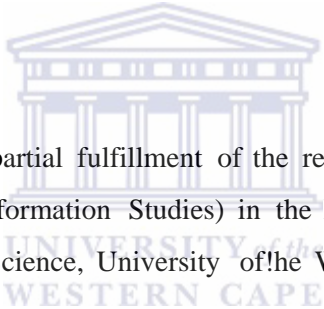


EXPLORING KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CREATION PRACTICES AMONG A
SELECTED OF LIBRARY STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN
CAPE

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A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Magister Bibliotecoliae (Information Studies) in the Department of Library and
Information Science, University of the Western Cape

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SUPERVISOR: DR. GAVIN DAVIS

DECLARATION

“I declare that **EXPLORING KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CREATION PRACTICES AMONG A SELECTION OF LIBRARY STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references”.

Signed:

Date:



DEDICATION

“I dedicate this study to my late parents James and Margaret Stripp, as well as my late sister Hildegard Elaine Ludick, who taught me to never give up, follow your dreams, pursue your goals and work hard”.



ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine whether or not knowledge was shared and created in the library of the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The study adopted the SECI model of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) as its theoretical framework.

The service delivery points at the UWC library are as follows:

- Circulation section, which deals with walk-in users. These are users who, on a daily basis borrow books from and return books to the library. This section normally deals with queries such as users whose library cards are blocked due to outstanding library fines. It comprises front - desk staff, shelf attendants and inter-library loan staff members.
- Staff members working in the information section (IS) are referred to as faculty librarians (FAC/L's), who are regarded as section heads and liaise with faculties on campus on a regular basis. The information section deals with walk-in users on a daily basis.
- The other sections, namely cataloguing, acquisition and periodicals, provide mostly 'behind the scenes' services, but their work is of such a nature that users have no access to their sections due to the strict policy with regard to areas of the library in which staff are working with new books and journals. Books and journals that are not on the cataloguing system are kept in the acquisitions and cataloguing section. This also has a significant impact on service delivery in the library. These sections have to ensure that books and journals are processed, in order for users to get access to these resources.

This study attempted to answer the following research questions

- Is there evidence of knowledge sharing and creation in the UWC library? If so, what practices currently exist?
- How do staff share and create knowledge for service delivery not with general library users, but within and between the acquisitions, cataloguing and information sections?

KEYWORDS

Knowledge	University of the Western Cape
Knowledge-Sharing	Tacit Knowledge
Knowledge Management	Explicit Knowledge
Libraries	SECI Model
Service Delivery	Library Services

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
FAC/L	Faculty Librarian
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IL	Information Literacy
IS	Information Section
IT	Information Technology
KS	Knowledge Sharing
RSS	Real Simple Syndication



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

In the past, knowledge was treated as something absolute, static and non-humanistic, something which had always existed and was taken for granted (Zack, 1999:45). However, Zack (1999:45) argues that this view has now changed. Knowledge is seen as one of the most important strategic resources, with the ability to create and maintain a competitive advantage (Zack, 1999:45).

The 21st century library has undergone a number of changes in terms of service delivery, as well as the roles played by library staff. The University of the Western Cape (UWC) library staff faces the challenge of being moved from one section to another in the library, which is commonly referred to as redeployment and is a result of right-sizing and rationalization. The reason for this redeployment is that more and more staff members obtain qualifications in the field of library and information science, hence the appointment of staff to more senior positions in other sections. Staff development is taking place, whereby staff members who have been employed for long periods and have gained extensive experience are likely to be moved to other sections to gain further knowledge.

The library's main responsibility or role is to serve the needs of a particular community, which may be local, as in the case of an academic library such as that of the UWC (Davids, 2000: 1). During the period of this study, the UWC library was busy with an "outreach" programme to its user community. The reason for this is that the faculty librarians (FAC/L's) have been given new portfolios, in terms of which one of their duties is to do outreach with their particular departments. Outreach implies taking the library to the faculties, in order to create an interest on the part of researchers and academics in the library.

The main aim of a university library such as the one of the UWC is to provide optimal services to its users. The library's focus is on promoting research and encouraging scholars to make their work available via open access systems such as the Institutional Repository which is relatively new at this institution and only been introduced since 2010. The way in which the different

sections in the library are working, primarily with the users, will determine how knowledge sharing (KS) and creation amongst staff members in the particular sections takes place.

The staff members of the library must therefore adapt to the ever-changing needs faced by the library.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- to determine what spaces and environment exist for the sharing of this knowledge; and
- to determine what impact the sharing and creation of knowledge has on a particular service delivery point.

The value of the research outcomes will be enhanced through the relationship between theory and practice. In addition, the results could be compared with local and international literature, and perhaps guide the way towards developing an improved library-based, KS model.

1.2 Problem statement

The sharing of knowledge and work experience among librarians has become increasingly important and necessary, hence the fact that the library is viewed today as a place for research and has the ability to create and transfer knowledge internally (Liu, Chang, & Hu: 2010: 455).

According to Huysman and de Wit (2002: 9), KS is about people working within organisations who share knowledge in order to learn from and with each other. According to Penzhorn and Pienaar (2009: 68), the ways in which people communicate, acquire and share knowledge will inevitably have an impact on the academic library. According to Penzhorn and Pienaar (2009: 68), if there is poor communication and a lack of KS amongst staff members in the library, this may lead to poor service delivery to users.

The library of the University of the Western Cape is regarded, according to the senior management, which are the director, deputy director and assistant director of the University of the Western Cape library, as a library that delivers excellent service to students and researchers. The library has always been seen as the “heart” of the campus community, which is today referred to as a learning community (Penzhorn and Pienaar, 2009:67). Penzhorn and Pienaar (2009:67) further state that, in order to stay abreast of new innovations and discoveries, and to

deliver optimal services to its community, the university library, which is represented by its staff, has to therefore embark on several practices to ensure better service delivery to meet the needs of the ever- changing university community. Two of the practices that should be investigated are knowledge sharing and knowledge creation within the sections of the library which is primarily responsible for the flow of service delivery.

An assumption can be made that there is some form of knowledge sharing in the UWC library based on the fact that the FAC/L's in the information section (IS) of the UWC library are regularly exposed to KS opportunities such as the sharing of new databases, attendance of colloquiums where research topics are discussed, new Real Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, and bilateral partnerships with other universities. FAC/L's attend colloquiums and database workshops. The researcher, who is currently employed in the library of the UWC, did not find the presence of KS in other sections of the library, namely circulation, acquisition, periodicals and cataloguing. In order to assist researchers, librarians must stay abreast of the current Web 2.0 applications being used in the library, while staff members working at the front desk must be able to assist users with finding books and journals in the library, and not necessarily refer the user to another staff member, unless the request is specifically related to a particular section.

According to Liu, Chang, and Hu (2010: 456), librarians are faced with various situations and problems in their different sections on a daily basis. They therefore need to acquire various types of knowledge, such as library database skills and exposure to colloquiums related to their specific domains.

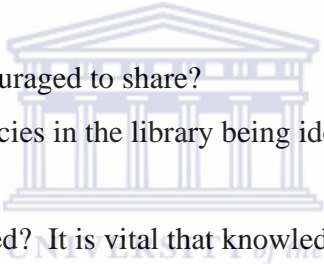
Is this knowledge of such a nature that new knowledge can be created? The “old” staff members in the different library sections are now faced with the challenge of establishing improved methods for exchange systems that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of access to library resources and their related applications.

This means that it is essential for library staff to be equipped to meet these various needs. Thus far, not much research has been conducted on how, in particular, conditions within the library's structures affect its staff, given that UWC is an institution that focuses on integrating teaching and learning in an ever- changing academic climate. In the Western Cape, where the UWC is

situated, there is no existing empirical research that deals with the same context of KS and knowledge creation.

The major contribution that the academic library can make to knowledge management is through its information skills, namely: information literacy instruction; creating new knowledge through the filtering, summarising and packaging of information; managing explicit internal and external knowledge; creating indices, taxonomies, thesauri and abstracts; establishing communities of practice; and the facilitation of knowledge-sharing (Sarrafzadeh, Martin and Hazeri, 2010: 203).

Academic libraries need to prepare themselves for using and sharing knowledge. To determine if there is any form of knowledge-sharing taking place, the questions we need to ask ourselves are as follows:

- 
- 1) Are academic libraries encouraged to share?
 - 2) Are the skills and competencies in the library being identified and shared?
 - 3) What is the sharing norm?
 - 4) How is the knowledge shared? It is vital that knowledge should be shared and distributed within an organisation, so that isolated information or experience can be used throughout the library (Maponya: 2004: 16).

The research problem in this study is to determine whether or not knowledge is shared in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the library, namely:

- the sharing of knowledge amongst fellow colleagues and the challenges facing them in their endeavour to create a KS culture.

1.3 Research questions

- What are the factors that can adversely impact on or significantly promote the process of developing knowledge sharing and creation in the library of the University of the Western Cape for better service delivery?

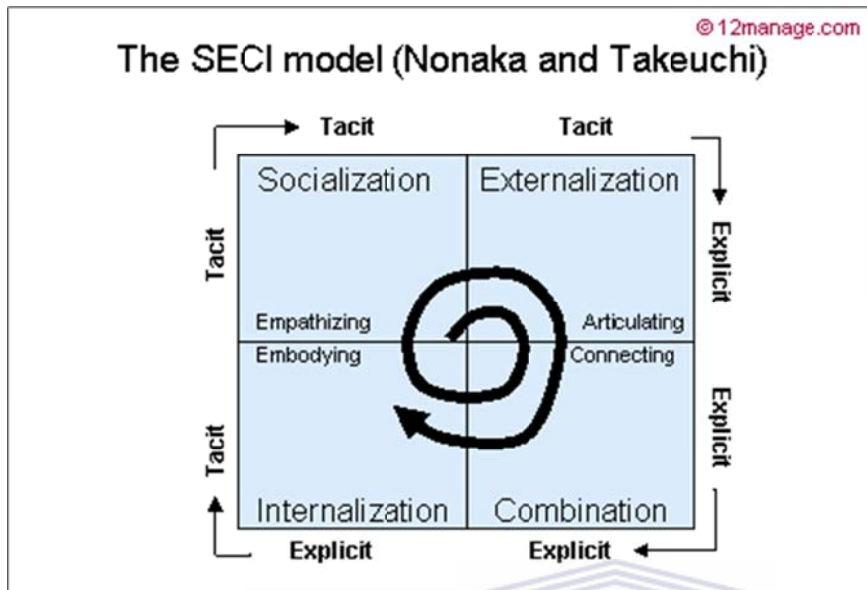
- Do the staff members in the cataloguing sections know the difference between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge, as well as how the two can be collectively utilised and synergised?
- What are the challenges facing the library staff with regard to knowledge sharing and creation?

1.4 Theoretical framework

The study is informed by Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995: 72) SECI model of the knowledge creating process, which depicts the dynamic nature of knowledge creation, and shows how to manage such a process effectively. There is a spiral of knowledge involved in their model, whereby explicit and tacit knowledge interact with each other in a continuous process. This process leads to the creation of new knowledge (O'Dubhchair, Scott and Johnson, 2001: 85). The central thought of the model is that knowledge held by individuals is shared with other individuals so that it leads to the creation of new knowledge. The spiral of knowledge or amount of knowledge grows continuously as more rounds are completed in the model. The following elements appear in the SECI model: Socialisation, Externalisation,

Knowledge created through the SECI process triggers a new spiral of knowledge creation, expanding horizontally and vertically as it transcends sectional, departmental, divisional and even organisational boundaries. As the spiral expands beyond organisational boundaries, knowledge created by universities, suppliers, customers, competitors, local communities, government, and others interacts with each other in amplifying the knowledge-creating process (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995:7)

The SECI Process



http://www.12manage.com/methods_nonaka_seci.html

1) *Socialisation (From tacit to explicit knowledge)*

This element refers to the sharing of tacit knowledge through face-to-face communication or shared experience. It includes informal social intercourse and teaching by means of practical examples. Examples of this are the following:

- apprenticeship;
- regular meetings; and
- problem-solving sessions.

A good example of socialisation is the master craftsman teaching his/her apprentices by letting them watch and help him work. Becoming a good mechanic takes years of practice, and much of the tacit knowledge in this profession can only be passed on through socialisation. It is extremely difficult to grasp and learn from someone else's thinking process if you do not share at least some of their experiences. Information that is transferred between people when separated from associated emotions and experiences often makes little sense to the receivers thereof (Harry, 2005: 32).

Socialisation is also the process of converting new knowledge through shared experiences. Another example is when learning takes place in a new environment. A son will learn a wood technique from the father by working with him, rather than gaining his knowledge from a book.

2) *Externalisation (From tacit to explicit knowledge)*

Externalisation refers to the conversion of knowledge from tacit to explicit knowledge by developing concepts and models. In this phase, tacit knowledge is converted to an understandable and interpretable form, so that it can also be used by others. Externalised and theoretical knowledge form the basis for creating new knowledge.

According to Harry (2005: 33), we often have to use the tools mentioned in order to solidify our abstract and liquid thoughts about a situation into a clear verbal format, so that the listener can understand, as well as describe a situation in order to make the listener interested. The author further states that creating new conceptual models in a new product development environment is an example of this conversion process.

3) *Combination (From explicit to explicit knowledge)*

This involves distributing externalised explicit knowledge to broader entities and concept systems. When knowledge is in an explicit form, it can be combined with the knowledge that has been acquired earlier. In this phase, knowledge is also analysed and organised.

Different sets of explicit knowledge are combined into new knowledge. For example, the combination of knowledge could take place in meetings, telephonically, through the exchange of documents, or as communication through electronic networks (Harry, 2005: 33).

At the top management level of an organisation, the combination mode is realised when mid-range concepts such as product concepts are combined with and integrated into broad concepts such as organisational goals, vision and strategy (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 68). An example of combination is when the financial section in an organisation collects all the financial reports from the other sections and integrates them into one consolidated report to be distributed amongst the entire staff of the organisation.

4) Internalisation (From explicit to tacit knowledge)

Internalisation means understanding explicit knowledge. It happens when explicit knowledge is transformed into tacit knowledge and becomes part of an individual's basic information store. The cycle then continues in the spiral of new knowledge back to socialisation when an individual shares his/her tacit knowledge. This is how the amount of knowledge grows and how previous conceptions might change.

Explicit knowledge can also be included in experiments that encourage learning-by-doing. This can be a very valuable asset if knowledge is internalised to become part of an individual's tacit knowledge (Harry, 2005: 34). For explicit knowledge to become tacit, it helps if the knowledge is verbalised or represented in the form of documents, manuals or oral stories (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 69). The authors further state that documentation helps individuals to internalise what they experienced, thus enriching their tacit knowledge. People are generally leaving an organisation with all their knowledge.

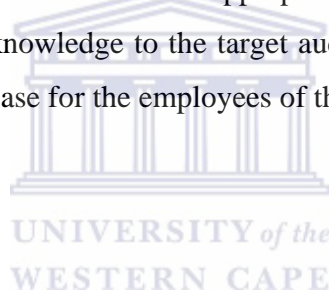
People are usually happy if knowledge-sharing takes place, especially when new colleagues join an organisation. The creation of knowledge is a continuous process of dynamic interactions between tacit and explicit knowledge. The four modes of knowledge conversion interact in the spiral of knowledge creation. The spiral becomes larger in scale as it moves up through organisational levels, and can trigger new spirals of knowledge creation (Nonaka and Teece, 2001: 16). According to Andreeva and Ikhilchik (2006: 4) Nonaka and Takeuchi's model stress that employees must simply be willing to share knowledge to make socialisation happen effectively. Secondly Nonaka and Takeuchi stresses that an organisation can be efficient in knowledge creation only if all four knowledge modes are well performed. The authors further states that the features of the model are usually claimed to be Japanese. Thus their argument that socialisation mode of knowledge conversion is itself a deeply Japanese process.

1.5 Tacit knowledge versus explicit knowledge

The typical textbook definition of knowledge is as follows: "Familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1992:2). Often, knowledge is embedded in individuals and this knowledge must be transferred from one

individual or group to another. Knowledge philosophers have distinguished between different types of knowledge (Polanyi, 1958: 50). Tacit knowledge is embedded in an individual or group and cannot be easily explained or transferred because it depends on 'the observance of a set of rules which are not known as such to the person following them' (Polanyi, 1958: 11). Tacit knowledge is hard to communicate and is deeply rooted in action, involvement and commitment within a specific context (Cummings, 2003: 20). According to Nonaka (1994), as cited in Cummings (2003: 20), tacit knowledge is a continuous activity of knowing.

Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, according to Cummings (2003: 21), must be tacitly understood and applied. Harry (2005: 24) clarifies this further by stating that this part of knowledge can be communicated as information to others, which can be arranged in a fixed structure for different information technology solutions. In other words, knowledge is easily obtained and an individual knows how to use the appropriate technology to capture, catalogue and disseminate information and knowledge to the target audience, and knows how to translate that knowledge into a central database for the employees of the organisation to access (Maponya, 2004: 18).



1.6 Research methodology

The Qualitative Inquiry Method

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005: 268) observed that qualitative researchers attempt to develop their own designs within their field of study. In the interviewing process, the emphasis is placed on obtaining details of individuals and in-depth information, and the qualitative, rather than quantitative, elements of the information are important. Interviews allow adult participants ample time to consider their responses and provide them with a sense of privacy and confidentiality.

In qualitative research, data are often derived from one or two cases. It is thus most unlikely that these cases are randomly selected (De Vos *et al.* 2005: 327).

This study adopted the qualitative inquiry method, since it was important to acquire in-depth information on participants' interactions with fellow staff members.

Two participants from the cataloguing section were interviewed in order to determine the extent to which knowledge sharing and creation play a role in their service delivery to FAC/L's. In addition to interviewing cataloguing staff, 8 FAC/L's were also interviewed to corroborate the findings of the former group. The cataloguing department was purposively selected for this study because of its submission of books and uploading of catalogue records onto the library catalogue. 7 staff members of the acquisition sections were interviewed, because the staff in this section, as well as the FAC/L's are responsible for ensuring that all new orders received from the departments are made available. The interviews were based on the SECI model, as well as the literature review.

1.7 Research design

The aim of this study was to determine how knowledge-sharing is taking place and if there is a particular system for knowledge-sharing between the acquisitions and cataloguing sections in the UWC library, in order to provide a service to the IS section within the library. At the end of the analysis, the results gathered from the interviews conducted with participants are used to make recommendations regarding how to improve services through knowledge-sharing in the UWC library.

The aim of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the initial research question (De Vaus, 2001: 9).

A research design, according to Babbie and Mouton (2010:117), is a process of focusing the researcher's perspective for the purpose of a particular study.

The research design includes the following:

- An introduction;
- Purpose of the research;
- Explanation of the research;
- Sufficient causes;
- Units of analysis; and
- The time dimension.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This study focused on how knowledge sharing took place amongst staff members in the cataloguing and acquisition section of the UWC library, and how this impacted on service delivery to FAC/L's. This study did not include the general users of the library.

Detailed information regarding the study's objectives and participation requirements was distributed amongst potential respondents. The individuals who participated in the individual interview sessions were identified based on the following criteria

- The staff members had to volunteer to participate in the study.
- Participants had to be employed in the main library of UWC in order to participate in this study.

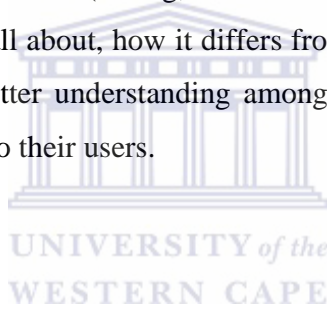
The main challenge that the researcher encountered in this study was the fact that she is currently a staff member of the UWC library, and is more especially an employee working in one of the sections being investigated in terms of knowledge sharing in this study. Therefore, it was difficult for the researcher's colleagues to openly share their views with her. Some participants were scared of being exposed, although they felt at ease when the researcher explained that their anonymity would be ensured during this study. The researcher had to explain to some participants what knowledge sharing and knowledge management implied in an academic context before the interviews could proceed. The researcher was also questioned by some participants and had no choice but to answer these questions, fearing that these participants would, at any time, decide not to continue with the interview.

Another limitation was that the researcher was not initially well understood by participants as to why the specific institution and sections were chosen for this study. This almost led to some participants not wanting to be interviewed. The researcher had to send emails and ask specific participants on several occasions to proceed with the interviews.

1.9 Significance of the study

Although there has been a lot of research done in the mechanism of KS in an academic library, this study speaks for itself and cannot therefore be accountable for similar studies. This study provides a good point of reference, and is unique in the field of an academic library, since it shows how KS affects the workflow of particular sections in terms of service delivery.

Previous research at a Malaysian Academic Library has placed emphasis on the creation of new knowledge and the attitude of librarians when sharing knowledge, especially within a particular section of the library. This study has therefore contributed to a wide range of knowledge with regard to this phenomenon, by revealing how staff members experience KS in their particular sections and how KS has impacted on the workflow in these sections, as well as whether or not it should take place in a specific format (Cheng, Ho and Lau, 2009:313). This study clearly explains to the reader what KS is all about, how it differs from information-sharing, and the role that KS can play in creating a better understanding amongst staff members who must play a proactive research role in relation to their users.



1.10 Ethics statement

Harm to participants

De Vos *et al.* (2005: 289) argue that as a researcher, one needs to be sensitive enough to avoid asking questions which are very personal when conducting research which is mainly of an emotional nature. Participants in this study were adult library employees who possessed the necessary skills to decide whether or not they wished to participate in the study. Furthermore, participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

Informed consent

Obtaining informed consent implies that all possible information regarding the objectives of the study and procedures that will be followed during the research, as well as the possible advantages, disadvantages and risks to which participants may be exposed, together with the credibility of the researcher, is communicated to participants (De Vos *et al.* 2005: 284).

Participants were provided with accurate and complete information in the form of a consent form which outlined the nature and objectives of the study, and this hopefully enabled them to make informed decisions with regard to their participation in the study.

Violation of privacy/confidentiality

The identities of the participants were not required for the research process. Therefore, anonymity in terms of the data, once in text form, was maintained, as the data were filed numerically.

Approval of Research

The management of the UWC library approved the research to be conducted on knowledge sharing and creation in the UWC library.

1.11 Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Introduction; provides the thesis and chapter organisation. It includes a discussion of themes. This chapter aims to identify the Theoretical framework.

Chapter 2: Literature review; provides a review of existing literature on the topic in question. It includes a discussion of themes and definitions.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology; outlines the methodology used to generate, understand and interpret the data. Qualitative research is discussed, specifically in relation to thematic analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 4: Presentation and interpretation of results; illustrates the process of data analysis and interpretation. The transcribed interview data are collated into various themes and sub themes which are outlined.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion and recommendations; provides a summary of the thematic findings, outlining the impact the results have on future research and current study.

Recommendations for future research are provided.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, some of the case studies of other academic libraries used throughout this study are discussed in terms of knowledge sharing and creation. The theoretical framework for knowledge sharing and creation developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995: 5), which is used in this study, is presented in this chapter.

2.2 Knowledge creation and knowledge sharing in an academic library

According to Liu, Chang and Hu (2010: 455), since the emergence of the Internet, the library has become the hub for knowledge resources. As knowledge workers, librarians are expected to be able to answer questions on information retrieval. The above authors suggest that knowledge sharing will be useful to librarians when attempting to answer these questions. Their study gives a clear indication regarding how tasks can be shared and how librarians can become familiar with other sections' operational tasks, such as the development of the web environment. Liu, Chang and Hu (2010: 456) state that effective knowledge sharing has played a particularly important role in providing insights into the library environment. These authors (Liu, Chang and Hu, 2010: 456) also state that numerous studies have emphasised the importance of organisational identification and individual attitudes as factors contributing towards knowledge sharing in their sections. However, this remains a neglected research area.

Some scholars in the library profession have attempted to identify the requirements for promoting knowledge sharing among librarians in their everyday activities. However, the approaches that deal with these issues are relatively new to the profession (Parirokh, Daneshgar and Fattahi, 2008: 108). Parirokh, Daneshgar and Fattahi (2008: 108) point out that library staff can create their own knowledge by sharing and managing the creation of their document information resources.

Knowledge management is defined as the process of identifying, organising and managing knowledge resources (Ismail and Yusof, 2010: 2). It involves creating, generating, capturing storing, sharing and using knowledge to support and improve individual performance (Kinney, 1998: 122). Knowledge management is a broad concept that can be interpreted in many different ways (Huysman and De Wit, 2002: 19). These authors further state that some people view knowledge management as being mainly about controlling and channeling knowledge flows within the company, assuming that these can be codified. Knowledge management involves gathering all the codified knowledge together into a single repository and then structuring it in a systematic way, in order to make it easily accessible to others (Hislop, 2005: 28).

According to Huysman and De Wit (2002: 2), KS is all about support and guidance in terms of acquiring knowledge, exchanging knowledge and using knowledge to support business processes within an organisation. Hislop (2005) states that knowledge is shared by means of the transfer of explicit, codified knowledge from a sender to a receiver. Van den Hooff, Elving, Meeuwse and Dumoulin (2003) state that through KS, individuals could perhaps exchange tacit or explicit knowledge, creating new knowledge in the process. The core strength of knowledge management lies in KS that leads to innovation, change and improvement (Hayes and Kent, 2010: 39). Moll and Kleinveldt (2008: 8) suggest that KS is about transferring the dispersed know-how of organisational members more effectively. It reduces the duplication of efforts and forms the basis for problem-solving and decision-making.

The overall goal of libraries throughout the world is to best satisfy their users by providing relevant and up-to-date information. Librarians should be dedicated to ensuring that information is always available, in retrievable formats and can be readily disseminated on request for efficient service delivery (Kinengyere and Tumuhairwe, 2009: 1). As South African society becomes more knowledge-based, the role of institutions of higher learning has been primarily concerned with building fields of knowledge that deepen scholarly and public understanding of the human condition in relation to effective management, in order to improve the quality of human life in all spheres (Kinengyere and Tumuhairwe, 2009: 3). Thus, the main emphases in universities are based on three areas: teaching, research and consultancy.

A study conducted at the Malaysian Public Library found that at the level of the individual, KS provides the opportunity for workers to enhance their skills by working together and improving their own performance Ismail and Yusof, (2009: 40). These authors further state that effective KS amongst employees is a significant management challenge with regard to the delivery of quality services to the public at all levels.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995: 5), knowledge is only created by the individual, and not by organisations. Maponya (2004: 12) further describes knowledge creation as the development of new skills and products, better ideas and more efficient processes. Moll and Kleinveldt (2008:3) state that academic libraries need to support and encourage knowledge creating activities of individuals through dialogue, discussion, experience sharing and communities of practice. Knowledge creation in an academic library can be seen in terms of an increasing amount of information being stored in databases, knowledge-embedded processes and documentation, as well as the explicit knowledge of workers.

Librarians have developed and applied many knowledge management principles in order to provide academic library services. In certain sections of a library, such as the reference and cataloguing sections among others, library services are designed to encourage the use of scholarly information, which will in turn increase the amount of academic knowledge used in higher education (Townsend, 2001: 45). However, this author further argues that libraries have done little to use organisational information in order to create new academic knowledge that can be used to improve the service level and functionality of the library. In this way, organisational effectiveness, as well as efficiency, will improve if KS takes place amongst staff members in the acquisitions, cataloguing and information sections in order to create a service for optimal workflow.

The work of an academic librarian in a higher education organisation is to provide post-secondary education, as well as student learning (Morrow, 2008: 2). Morrow investigated the process of knowledge creation at the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) library through a lens provided by Japanese business expert Ikujiro Nonaka, in order to shed some new light on the role of the GVSU's library and its contribution to knowledge creation and dissemination. The creation of knowledge drives civilisation when knowledge is shared or disseminated in such a

manner that people work together, share ideas, hold brown-bag sessions during lunch time, or work in other departments.

The above also includes reviewing of tasks, capturing records at a later date, taking direction or inspiration from what was shared by another group. Such new information can develop into new knowledge. The library has to be in a position of learning and know how to stay relevant in the current information environment. By staying relevant, Morrow (2008: 4) is referring to the needs and strategies of the library that are more closely related to the business competitive advantage than to the pure scholarship of the university's regular faculty. At the GVSU library, the views of the librarians were aligned with the library's goals. They supported the university's educational goals, mission and learning outcomes, and looked at how they could improve on these goals. Morrow (2008: 4) used the following building blocks of knowledge creation, which were drawn from Ikujiro Nonaka's model of organisational theory:

Concept 1: Acquisition and transfer of knowledge, and modification of behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights.

Concept 2: In Nonaka's view, organisational knowledge includes the following types of knowledge: knowledge conversions, organisational structure and the facilitation of the knowledge-creating environment. The university acknowledged that Nonaka's conceptualisation divided knowledge into two categories, namely: explicit and tacit knowledge. Nonaka builds a consistent model of a repetitive and spiralling knowledge creation process based on the four knowledge conversion modes that are outlined in the theoretical framework of this study (Morrow, 2008: 6).

The productive use of knowledge in itself can encourage the creation of new knowledge. One of the essential requirements of knowledge creation is constant learning. This is particularly important for librarians, who in an ever-changing academic environment, have to face the challenge of being a librarian. According to Daneshgar and Parioikh (2007: 23), the library can be regarded as a system of integrated activities and business processes that work together to achieve overall organisational goals. The above authors further state that librarians should not

only gather, store and disseminate knowledge, but also create it. The creation of knowledge by librarians should include the following activities:

- Content management;
- Organisation of knowledge; and
- Evaluation of the validity and reliability of information obtained from unfamiliar sources.

In a library organisation, librarians who are able to conceptually value the creation of knowledge and learning as a useful approach for their personal and institutional development will succeed in changing their way of thinking (Daneshgar and Parirokh, 2007: 23).

Library work is by nature a social affair. Librarians deal with users, information sources and colleagues in the process of performing their daily activities. On this basis, the exchange of information takes place. Daneshgar and Parirokh (2007: 24) state that the exchange of information can only be useful if librarians understand how to analyse, evaluate and validate the information they encounter by using various personal and organisational knowledge repositories.

Knowledge creation is typically the outcome of an interactive process that involves a number of individuals working together in a project team or some other type of collaborative arrangement (Maponya, 2004: 13). The author further states that knowledge creation is essential for academic libraries in order to develop new skills and products, as well as better ideas and more efficient processes.

At the MJL Oliver Library (Wellington Campus) of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), knowledge creation takes place with regard to both internal and external processes. The internal processes entail discussing matters with colleagues through a round-table open forum in order to get everybody's input on ideas and solutions to problems, as well as to facilitate innovative and creative thinking. External processes are achieved through staff training, which is dedicated to the creation of knowledge that is useful to the library. The three categories of training are:

- Short courses for first aid;
- Study assistance for four staff members who are enrolled for a degree in Library and Information Science; and
- Conference attendance and participation e.g. annual LIASA conference (Moll and Kleinveldt, 2008: 2).

According to Liu, Chang and Hu (2010: 455), since the emergence of the Internet, libraries have become hotspots for knowledge resources. As knowledge workers, librarians are called upon to answer questions related to information retrieval. The authors' view in this regard is that knowledge sharing will be helpful when the librarian needs to provide an answer to a user's question. The above authors clearly indicate how tasks can be shared and how librarians can become familiar with the operational tasks of other sections, such as the development of the web environment. According to Liu, Chang and Hu (2010: 456), effective knowledge sharing makes a significant contribution towards providing insights into how a library functions. Despite these views, the above authors suggest that numerous studies have shown that organisational identification and individual attitudes are important factors in knowledge sharing in their particular work environment. However, this remains a neglected research area.

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This study is based on Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory of socialisation (from tacit to explicit knowledge) Some researchers in the library profession have attempted to identify the criteria by means of which libraries can promote knowledge sharing among librarians in their everyday activities. However, the approaches that deal with these issues are relatively new to the profession (Parirokh, Daneshgar and Fattahi, 2008: 108). Parirokh, Daneshgar and Fattahi (2008: 108) point out that library staff can create their own knowledge by sharing and managing the creation of their document information resources.

Librarians at the MJL Oliver Library (Wellington Campus) of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) have created a community of practice. They hold informal round-table discussions where everybody participates in sharing their work experiences, knowledge and ideas during tea breaks (Moll and Kleinveldt, 2008: 9). These authors further state that knowledge sharing involves transferring the dispersed know-how of the organisational members more effectively. It reduces the duplication of efforts and forms the basis for problem-solving

and decision-making. At the MJL Oliver Library, knowledge sharing is based on a community of practice. A community of practice is when individuals with the same interests form a group in which ideas are shared. For example, the MJL Oliver Library proposed the use of the home library's address on overdue letters that are sent out to users. This idea was shared in the circulation meeting and everybody agreed that it could be implemented. Knowledge sharing in this instance is a means of resolving problems and making decisions. The challenges at the MJL University Oliver Library occur because only a part of the knowledge is internalised by the organisation, while the remainder is internalised by individuals (Moll and Kleinveldt, 2008: 2).

The abovementioned study can be linked to Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory of knowledge conversion, namely socialisation (from tacit to explicit knowledge). This process involves sharing experiences and creating tacit knowledge, which is based on the community of practice referred to in the abovementioned study. Another example is participation in the sharing of experiences by holding informal round-table discussions. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995:63), socialisation comes from the Japanese company Honda, which established "brainstorming camps" - informal meetings to solve difficult problems occurring in development projects.

South African libraries are faced with unprecedented challenges in the 21st century. Whereas libraries used to be seen as human organisations, the ever-changing academic environment has impacted on the library and demands new competencies from academic librarians (Maponya, 2004:9). Hayes and Kent (2010) concede that libraries and technology have changed significantly since the early 1990's. The question which is raised by these authors is the following: "Have libraries and technology delivered as expected against the knowledge management agenda?" Maponya (2004: 11) further states that academic librarians need to liaise with library users, faculties and colleagues in other sections of the library, in order to support effective teaching and learning in a research environment. The basic goal of knowledge management within libraries is to leverage the available knowledge that will help academic librarians to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently. Knowledge management can help to transform the library into a more efficient knowledge-sharing organisation (Maponya, 2004:5).

In a survey conducted by Roknuzzamam and Umemoto (2009: 5), library practitioners state that knowledge management can also be seen as a challenge for academic library professionals to survive in a competitive and complex academic environment. The authors also argue (2009: 6) that the library world often claims ownership of knowledge management. In practice, the adoption of knowledge management is as pervasive as in the business sector. They further argue that knowledge management in non-profit organisations can improve communication among staff and top management, and can promote a culture of sharing. Through the effective creation and transfer of knowledge, organisations will be able to gain a competitive advantage and achieve superior performance (Ismail and Yusof, 2010: 1). The promotion of the culture of knowledge sharing within sections of libraries is an example of externalisation (from tacit to explicit knowledge). This is the process whereby tacit knowledge is made explicit. An example of knowledge becomes clearer and can therefore be shared with others on the basis that it becomes new knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 64).

In a study conducted at Makerere University in Uganda, it was found that the overall goal of libraries throughout the world is to best satisfy their users by providing relevant and up-to-date information. Librarians should be dedicated to ensuring that information is always available in retrievable formats and can be readily disseminated on request for efficient service delivery (Kinengyere and Tumuhairwe, 2009: 1). As South African society becomes more knowledge-based, the role of institutions of higher learning has been mainly concerned with building fields of knowledge that deepen scholarly and public understanding of the human condition in relation to effective management for the betterment of humankind in all spheres of life (Kinengyere and Tumuhairwe, 2009: 3). Thus, the main emphasis in universities is on three areas:

- teaching;
- research; and
- consultancy.

University libraries have undergone significant changes over the past years, as indicated by Musoke (2007: 2). At the Makerere University in Uganda, traditional manual services such as current awareness and selective dissemination of information are now provided electronically. Librarians have embraced the new developments/advances in information and communications technology (ICT). Many have been trained and re-trained in order to update their knowledge and

skills. They have been empowered to train other librarians, especially new recruits, academic and administrative staff, students, and external library users such as students and staff from other universities (Kinengyere and Tumuhairwe, 2009: 4). This has led to increased demands for library and information resources. Internationally, both the methods of conducting research and paradigms have kept on changing, and new modes keep on being introduced (Musoke, 2007: 2).

According to Harry (2005: 35), knowledge becomes a valuable asset when it is internalised to become part of individuals' tacit knowledge in the form of shared mental models or technical know-how. Such accumulated knowledge at an individual level can then lead to a new spiral of knowledge creation, when it is shared with others through the process of socialisation.

A study conducted at the Malaysian Public Library found that individual knowledge sharing provides the opportunity for workers to enhance their skills by working together and improving their own performance (Ismail and Yusof, 2009: 40). This study also indicated that effective knowledge sharing amongst employees is a significant management challenge in terms of providing excellent services to the public at all levels.

Another study, which was conducted at the Multimedia University in Malaysia, concluded that the effective sharing of knowledge is not only to create new knowledge, but also involves acquiring and applying knowledge quickly. Knowledge sharing is envisaged as a natural activity of academic institutions, as the number of seminars, conferences and publications attended and produced by academics far exceeds any other profession, which is an indication of the eagerness of academics to share (Cheng, Ho and Lau, 2009: 313). The authors further argue that the general sharing of knowledge focuses on communicating knowledge within a group of people. The group may consist of members engaged in a formal institution for instance, among colleagues in a workplace or among friends. This interaction may occur between two or more individuals. The underlying purpose is to utilise available knowledge to improve the group's performance.

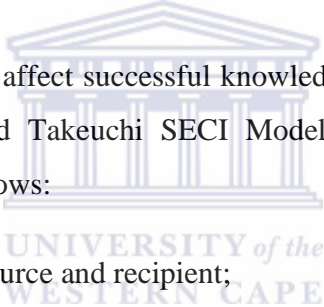
The study conducted at the Malaysian Public Library is an ideal example of socialisation. Interaction with each other in the workplace in order to learn, observe and put knowledge into practice will lead to a better understanding when sharing information regarding the library's

services with users. Socialisation is about people who meet and learn together. It is the process whereby new tacit knowledge is converted through shared experiences into explicit knowledge. (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 64).

In other words, individuals will share what they have learnt and on this basis, the organisation can benefit from groups being proactive, and the users will benefit from groups coming together to share their knowledge with each other in the workplace.

Cummings (2003: 1) states that knowledge-sharing is the means whereby an organisation such as an academic library obtains access to its own organisation and, in the case of the library, to its own sections' knowledge, such as technology transfers and innovation. He further states that knowledge-sharing involves extended learning processes, rather than a simple communication process.

The five primary contexts that can affect successful knowledge-sharing implementations, which is also based on the Nonaka and Takeuchi SECI Model, as mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study, are as follows:

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- a) Relationship between the source and recipient;
 - b) The form and location of the knowledge;
 - c) The recipient's learning predisposition;
 - d) The source's knowledge-sharing capability; and
 - e) The broader environment in which the knowledge occurs (Cummings, 2003: 1).

When a case study was done on knowledge-sharing in East and Southern African libraries, which included Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa (SA), Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, only 50% of all the respondents acknowledged that their library staff had a strong culture of knowledge-sharing. They believed that through professional discussion and other exchange programmes, they could share their knowledge internally, regionally and globally, hence facilitating better service delivery to their customers (Jain, 2007: 385). These authors further state that knowledge management practices will fail if there is no knowledge-

sharing taking place within a library. Knowledge-sharing is extremely important, because once a person leaves an organisation, he or she takes this acquired knowledge with him or her. The libraries in this study all agreed that knowledge-sharing can take place through e-mails, intranets and meetings. Although the libraries did not really make use of Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory, the SECI model is indeed applicable. This was done through the distribution of externalised explicit knowledge as well as exchange programmes to the broader organisation. A strong partnership with other libraries and the sharing of knowledge with each other was found to exist at these East and Southern African libraries.

A study was conducted at 17 Malaysian public university libraries, which found that knowledge-sharing was still very low (Ahmad, 2011: 2), and that the staff in these libraries were more interested in their day-to-day work activities. The following reasons could be identified as to why knowledge-sharing is a barrier for the abovementioned universities:

- Information & communication technology (ICT) for knowledge-sharing can only be fully understood if it is related to the motivation for knowledge-sharing, as the technology alone may not effectively encourage knowledge-sharing; and
- The lack of an organisational reward when it comes to deciding whether or not to share knowledge remains a key factor.

2.3 Service delivery in terms of workflow between sections

Service delivery remains an essential part of any library. In an academic library, the librarians serve the entire community of the educational institution. The users are students, academic staff, administrative staff and researchers. The conventional function of academic libraries is to collect, process, disseminate, store and utilise information, in order to provide services to the university community (Maponya, 2004: 1). Libraries have undergone changes due to the ever-changing environment of the institutions that they serve. They have to adapt to these changes in order to be able to serve their users with the application of the latest search strategies, as well as assist academic departments in their teaching and learning.

Maponya (2004: 2) states that the success of academic libraries depends on their ability to utilise the information and knowledge of their staff to better meet the needs of the academic

community. He further states that academic libraries should rethink and explore ways in which to improve their services and become learning organisations, by determining how to capture and share tacit and explicit knowledge within their organisations.

With library services that include skills such as referencing and accumulating library materials, research support to researchers and Post-Graduate students is an important function, with the ultimate goal being that of delivering quality services to users. In this regard, knowledge-sharing plays an important role (Ismail and Yusof, 2009: 37). The authors state that since knowledge-sharing is a human behaviour, it has to be studied in the context of human performance, whereby people are the most important components of knowledge management, since managing knowledge depends on people's willingness to share and reuse knowledge. Cheng, Ho, and Lau (2009: 798) state that knowledge management allows hidden knowledge within an individual to be transferred to other members of the organisation in order to make it possible for them to share, utilise and convert it into knowledge that is available to the entire organisation. In so doing, and by viewing employees as the organisation's most important knowledge resource, services rendered to the public and, in the case of an academic institution, its campus-wide users, will be delivered effectively and be of a high standard.

Viehland (2005: 443) states that in order to keep workers motivated and proud to share their knowledge with others, knowledge-sharing needs to be rewarded. The incentives for knowledge-sharing should entail the following:

- Duty or need - appropriate frame of reference;
- A sense of give-and-take - you scratch my back, and I will scratch yours;
- Feedback mechanisms for letting knowledge sharers know that their knowledge was put to good use, and the pleasure of helping someone to achieve their goals.

The following obstacles, which can hinder knowledge-sharing from taking place in the sections of a library, were identified in the study conducted by Viehland (2005: 443):

- People might be too busy- workers do not have the capacity or mechanisms to share knowledge; and

- Workers might not have the right technologies to support knowledge-sharing.

Maponya (2004: 2) states that knowledge management is an important means by which academic libraries can improve their services. This can be achieved through creating an organisational culture of sharing knowledge and expertise within the library, but the challenge lies in how to nurture and manage knowledge.

The intensity and effectiveness of knowledge-sharing through the open network largely depends on the user-friendliness of the information technology (IT) system that has been created, the incentive system, as well as the organisational culture of the institution (Cheng, Ho and Lau, 2009: 314). These authors further state that the role of ICT in knowledge-sharing can only be fully understood if it is related to the motivation for knowledge-sharing.

It is interesting to note that according to Jantz (2001: 33), a study conducted at the New Brunswick Campus Libraries of Rutgers University referred to knowledge management practices for knowledge-sharing as informal knowledge. This study aimed to determine how information sharing processes are only shared in one section, and not in the others. The following objectives as related to the abovementioned study found:

- The acquisition and sharing of informal knowledge in order to improve service delivery; and
- To facilitate, through improved communications, the organisational goal of becoming an effective and efficient library system..
- During the course of the study, different forms of informal knowledge were identified which were only aimed at a specific group, namely the reference librarians:
- Websites: Reference librarians would produce a research guide in their specific subject area in order to meet their needs.
- Special guide: Reference librarians would create a document of “how to” information for this group of librarians.
- E-mail: Reference librarians would alert their colleagues about specific reference issues that they may encounter at the reference desk. One example of this is when reference librarians receive government documents from a different library, but only shares this

information with other reference librarians. This is a problem, because librarians working at the reference desk who are not reference librarians might be asked a question and be unable to answer it, since this information was only provided to reference librarians.

At the University of Australia Library, there are models for best practices, which vary among the different sections of the library. The cataloguing section has to be clear and well documented. Although the cataloguing and technical services sections work closely together, they are different sections and must have a clear understanding of what they are expected to achieve. Without a clear understanding of what is required, the cataloguing section will not be able to achieve what is expected of their section by the rest of the sections within the library. An understanding of the workflow between the cataloguing and acquisition sections helps to ensure that these sections remain vital and relevant (Libraries Australia, 2002: 4).

According to Libraries Australia (2002: 4), all libraries can have workflows characterised by extensive customisation and deviation from standard practice. This source further states that small to medium libraries have a more integrated approach towards technical services than large libraries, and cataloguing staff are often involved in other aspects of library operations.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of the literature on the value of knowledge-sharing and creation in an academic library. The literature review made specific reference to some case studies on knowledge-sharing and creation in several academic libraries, particularly in terms of how the libraries responded to knowledge management practices, namely knowledge-sharing and knowledge creation. This literature review also mentioned the SECI model with reference to the case studies, and looked at whether or not the libraries in question used this model. It is interesting to note what challenges academic libraries are faced with, especially when knowledge management practices are present. The discussions taking place throughout the literature show that there are great benefits for the library and information science (LIS) profession. This is especially the case with regard to the academic library, although many challenges exist in terms of knowledge-sharing, due to the lack of understanding regarding how, whom and what is involved in sharing knowledge within an organisation. Service delivery and the ICT structures

were also discussed in this chapter, as well as exploring how they fit in with knowledge-sharing. The literature review showed that knowledge-sharing is a concept that still needs to be explored, especially with regard to academic libraries in South Africa.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study was conducted according to four distinct steps. The first step involved identifying and selecting the group of participants who were interviewed. The second step was to determine how knowledge-sharing is taking place within the specific sections of the library in which participants are working. The third step involved the collection of the data needed for this study, and the fourth step entailed the analysis and interpretation of the data that were collected.

According to Creswell (2009: 16), qualitative researchers ask at least one central question and several sub-questions. The author further states that these researchers pose questions containing words such as 'how' or 'what' and use exploratory verbs, such as 'explore' or 'describe'. According to Gillham (2000: 11), qualitative methods enable the researcher to do the following:

- To investigate situations where little is known about what is there or what is going on;
- To explore complexities that are beyond the scope of more controlled approaches;
- To get under the skin of a group of organisations to find out what really happens there;
- To view the case from the inside out, in order to see it from the perspective of those involved; and
- To enable the researcher to conduct research into the process leading to results.

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that used in this study.

3.2 Selection of research methods

Prior to the commencement of this study, the researcher explored the literature to determine what has been done in the field of knowledge-sharing in an academic library, and what methodology has been used. The nature of this study prompted the researcher to adopt a qualitative approach.

The researcher was more interested in the processes relating knowledge-sharing among the various sections and not mere statistics.

3.3 Participants

All the participants were chosen since the acquisitions and the cataloguing staff members are not directly involved with providing services to the users. However, they have to deliver a service in order for the FAC/L's to be able to ensure that all the necessary materials purchased by the acquisitions staff and the uploading of the books onto the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) system are done correctly. The participants from the IS section deal directly, on a daily basis, with the staff members in the acquisitions and cataloguing sections. Information needs to be made available from the three sections in order for services to be delivered by each section.

Two participants from the cataloguing and seven from the acquisitions section were interviewed to determine to what extent KS and knowledge creation played a role in service delivery to FAC/L's. Interviews were conducted with not only the cataloguing and acquisitions staff, but also the FAC/L's, in order to corroborate the findings obtained from the aforementioned participants. Staff members from the acquisitions and cataloguing sections were purposively selected because of their direct association with the ordering and submission of books and uploading of catalogue records. The interviews were based on the SECI model and literature review. The study was conducted in 3 phases, namely:

Phase 1

- Interviews were conducted with section heads of cataloguing and acquisitions separately.

Phase 2

- The remaining 1 staff member in the cataloguing section was interviewed during this phase.
- The remaining 6 staff members in the acquisitions section were interviewed during this phase.

Phase 3

- Finally, interviews were conducted with the 8 FAC/L's who receive library books from the cataloguing and acquisitions sections for the printed and online sources that were ordered.

3.4 Research strategy

Qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. In qualitative research, data are often derived from one or two cases. It is thus most unlikely that these cases are selected randomly (De Vos, *et al.* 2005: 327). The characteristics of qualitative research, according to Creswell (2003: 179), are as follows:

- Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting;
- Qualitative research uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic;
- Qualitative research is emergent rather than tightly prefigured;
- Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative;
- The qualitative researcher views social phenomena holistically;
- The qualitative researcher systematically reflects on who he or she is in relation to the inquiry, and is sensitive to his or her personal biography and how it shapes the study;
- The qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning that is multi-faceted, interactive and simultaneous; and
- The qualitative researcher adopts one or more strategies of inquiry as a guide for procedures that are used in the qualitative study.

There are strengths and weaknesses to qualitative research. The advantage of conducting this type of research is the flexibility of this method, as the research can be modified at any given time. As a researcher, it is always advisable to be prepared to engage in the research whenever the occasion should arise. The disadvantage is that qualitative research can be expensive, especially when conducting field research (Babbie and Mouton, 2010: 326).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2010: 400), the key process in the analysis of qualitative social research data is coding. Coding has an even more important purpose, namely to relate concepts which are central to the process in order to create a more refined system.

The proposed format for qualitative research can be selected from the following methods: ethnography, phenomenology and case study research. It is important to note that there are no specific methods associated with these research designs. One could study all of the above, but the important distinction is what data means, regardless of how it was collected (Babbie and Mouton, 2010: 303).

A case study approach was viewed as most appropriate for this study, in which questions are being posed. Harry (2005: 80) states that when case studies are being conducted, the researcher has little control over events, and the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

The author further states that a case study approach is particularly useful because it enables the collection and presentation of more detailed and softer data. In a case study, the researcher embarks upon an investigation to answer specific research questions and employs a range of evidentiary methods (Gillham, 2000: 1). Case studies are often seen as prime examples of qualitative research, which adopts an interpretative approach to data, studies phenomena within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people attach to a situation (De Vaus, 2001: 9).

3.5 Procedures

Permission to conduct this study was requested from the Director of the library at the UWC. The researcher met with the heads of the cataloguing and acquisitions sections, and this particular interview is presented later on in this study. An explanation of the study was provided to the abovementioned section heads. Appendices containing the permission letters appear at the end of this study.

3.6 Data collection procedures

According to Creswell (2009: 178), the aim of qualitative research is to purposefully select specific participants or sections within an organisation which will assist the researcher in gaining a better understanding of the research problem and questions.

In this study, data were collected from face-to-face interviews with individuals from the three selected sections. The researcher relied on data collected through open-ended interviews rather than observation or sending questionnaires to participants, although the researcher is based at the organisation in which the study was conducted. Open-ended interview questions typically begin with words such as “how”, “why” and “tell me about”. These questions are not technically demanding, but consist of a single statement to which a response is usually expected. According to Silverman (2006: 109), open-ended interviews are most common to qualitative research.

An open-ended interview is extremely structured in terms of the wording of the questions. Participants are always asked identical questions, but the questions are phrased in such a manner that responses are open-ended (Turner, 2010: 756). The author further states that during open-ended interviews, participants are often more willing to contribute as much detailed information as required and these interviews also enable the researcher to ask as many questions as necessary in order to follow up on participants' responses.

The open-ended interview occurs within the context of active listening, in which the interviewer allows the interviewees to freely express their views regarding the questions being posed. When conducting an individual interview case study, interviewing is practical and probably essential (Gillham, 2000: 61). The author further states that the overwhelming advantage of the face-to-face interview is the potential richness of the communication.

An open-ended interview is a way of gathering information from people. The interview is considered to be open-ended because even though the questions can be scripted, the interviewer does not know what the content of the response will be (Thibodeaux, 2012: 1).

In this study, the researcher sent an e-mail to all 8FAC/L's in the IS section of the UWC library, in order to obtain permission for conducting individual open-ended interviews. Individual open-

ended interviews with each FAC/L during their lunch-time or after hours were then scheduled. This study chose the open-ended interview as well because they are economical and save time and resources. The respondents are employed at the same institution where the researcher had the interviews. The open-ended questionnaires allowed the respondents to answer in their own words.

The questionnaires were framed in such a manner that the researcher could gain a deeper understanding of how KS is taking place in the selected sections of the UWC library.

3.7 Data collection instruments

The data for this study were collected through individual open-ended interviews with staff members of the sections mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The researcher interviewed each individual, in order to create a sense of privacy for each participant. All participants were asked nine questions. The interviews took place in a venue where the participants felt comfortable, which was, in most cases, in the privacy of the researcher's office.

The interview survey is an alternative method to collecting survey data (Babbie and Mouton, 2010: 274). During this study, the researcher asked respondents to read the questionnaires and then write down their own answers. The answers were then presented orally and the researcher recorded these answers. According to Babbie and Mouton (2010: 274), interviewing is typically done in a face-to-face encounter, although telephonic interviews are also an option. As stated in this chapter, the interviews took place on a small-scale platform.

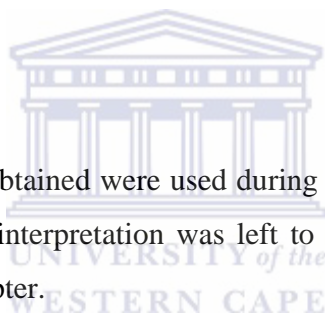
Babbie and Mouton (2010:275) states that when conducting interviews, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- Appearance and demeanor: the dress code of the interviewer should be similar to that of the people who will be interviewed;
- Familiarity with the questions: if an interviewer is unfamiliar with the questionnaire, the study will suffer and the respondents will carry an unfair burden;

- Following question wording exactly: when interviewing a participant, if the interviewer changes the wording of a given question, this may lead to the respondent answering “yes” rather than “no”. This means that the interviewer must follow the wording of the questions exactly and not try to change anything.
- Recording responses exactly: whenever the questionnaire contains open-ended questions, the aim is to obtain the respondents’ own answers, and it is therefore important for the interviewer to record these answers exactly as they are given. No attempt should be made to summarise, paraphrase, or correct bad grammar.
- Probing for responses: sometimes, respondents taking part in an interview will give an inappropriate or incomplete answer. In such cases, a probe or request for elaboration can be useful.

3.8 Conclusion

Interviews for analysing the data obtained were used during the course of this study. When the data had been gathered, the final interpretation was left to the researcher. The results of this study are presented in the next chapter.



Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to determine whether or not KS is taking place within selected sections of the UWC library, with the focus on how it affects the workflow. The possible reasons why KS is not taking place were explored, and the researcher attempted to gain an understanding of KS within the various sections of the UWC library. The platform on which KS takes place was also investigated, and the researcher held interviews with the participants, which took place during normal working hours. One participant's interview took place after working hours.

In this chapter, the results of this study are presented and discussed in terms of KS and how it affects the workflow in order to deliver services to library users. As a point of departure, a thematic approach is adopted. The reason for a thematic approach is due to the nature of the data and the theoretical framework that informs this study.

The following five themes were identified in this study:

- Understanding of KS and the influence it has on the staff within the framework of this study;
- Role of KS in the identified sections, as reflected in this study;
- The necessity for knowledge sharing;
- Workflow processes and procedures; and
- KS and its impact on workflow to promote service delivery.

Each theme is considered within the framework of the SECI model developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi.

All participants in this study were assured of their anonymity, hence the use of "P" for participant.

4.2 Data analysis

The questions asked in this study were designed in such a way that the responses could easily be encoded and analysed. Nine questions were posed to participants, and the open-ended nature of these questions made it relatively easy to encode the responses. The same questions were asked to all the respondents, to get their overall impression of their views considering the fact that a study of this nature had never been done before in this particular academic library. Each question was encoded with an identification number for each of the sections and respondents.

According to Creswell (2009: 191), data analysis includes the following:

- Organising and preparing the data for analysis, such as writing transcripts of interviews, scanning material and arranging the data into different types, depending on the source of information;
- Reading through all the data;
- Beginning a detailed analysis using a coding process;

As a researcher, one will be in possession of a vast amount of data, regardless of whether in-depth interviews, open-ended interviews or any other method for collecting data for a qualitative study have been used.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2010: 400), the best process to follow in the analysis of qualitative research data is coding.

4.3 Understanding knowledge-sharing and its influence on staff within the framework of this study

This theme addresses participants' understanding of KS and the creation of new knowledge. The three sections selected for this study work very closely together to ensure that users obtain the correct information timeously.

Before a book goes from the acquisition section to the cataloguing section, a small catalogue record is being created. A full record will then be created on the Aleph cataloguing system by the cataloguing staff. After the book has been catalogued by the cataloguing staff, the IS staff

members are being informed to collect the books, to be rechecked by the IS staff members before the items will be displayed for users to borrow (P. 4).

For this reason, staff must be able to realise the importance of sharing experiences and the transfer of tacit knowledge for a smooth workflow.

4.3.1 Extracts from interviews conducted with staff

The responses provided below are the views of participants regarding their understanding of KS and if and how KS takes place in their respective sections. The responses indicate that KS is the sharing of three different sections' work with each other on the workflow, but it appears that the sharing of knowledge concerning the functions or tasks that each section performs is not taking place on a regular basis.

KS is the sharing of ideas, new technology within the sections. KS should not be static (P.1).

KS is letting people know what you know, what is available or not. Sharing of knowledge does not really take place in my section, only by certain librarians in the library (P. 3).

There should not be fear of sharing new knowledge that is created in a section with the other sections; the fear of change can be a factor of non-sharing (P 4).

The above findings are related to the problem statement provided in Chapter 1, as the selected library sections are now faced with the challenge of putting improved methods of exchange systems in place, in order to ensure efficient and effective access to library resources and their related applications.

The responses below highlight the fact that the work done by one section can affect the workflow of another section and therefore have an impact on service delivery.

An example of this is P 2, who stated that:

In the sections there is more knowledge of the work opposed to knowledge sharing. Due to many changes that took place in the sections, new knowledge being created, but the sharing of it was

on an informal platform such as sharing on the moment the need arise, not in a meeting or having a brown bag session. Hence the understanding of the sharing of knowledge in especially the sections which merged is the sharing of expertise of previous work, yet this is not happening on a regular basis. A procedure that is being encountered especially with new technology is shared.

Another participant observed that KS is about sharing your expertise with what you know about your work with your fellow colleagues in your section. KS is not formally implemented, not always happening, but if I need to know how to deal with a new task that I don't understand, I do feel free to approach my colleagues and on this basis KS is taking place in my section(P 3).

KS is everything about your work you pass on whether it is relevant or not relevant. KS does not take place on a regular basis in our section on a formal platform such as meetings or a training session, yet we do share if there is a need (P 5).

KS is the ability to share what you know. KS can be shared on a formal as well as informal platform. In our section KS takes place on a regular monthly session meeting, reading club(P 1).

To create new knowledge when attending the monthly meetings and attending reading club and training sessions is necessary to share with colleagues. When new knowledge is created and shared develops the other staff members. On this basis you will stay abreast with the latest trends in your field. KS is to get feedback from your colleagues after a session, to learn from each other (P 10).

KS is when you let people know what you know. You make information available to the staff in the library. KS does not really take place in my section. I am just told when necessary if I should know something concerning my task (P 11).

The collective findings of all participants can be summed up as follows:

It therefore seems, according to the views of participants 2 and 3, that KS can be transferred in an informal way from one colleague to another, and that everything one does on a daily basis is related to KS. Observing these views one can discern this variance of participant 11, KS is

variant to participants 5, 1 and 10. Participant 11 is of the view that KS is informative and irregular, as it does not take place on a regular basis, with another two participants, namely P.1 and P.5, indicating that KS takes place during the monthly meeting. Lastly, according to Participant 10, KS also involves the sharing of new knowledge with others, by letting people know what you know.

The central thought of the SECI model in terms of the understanding of KS by Participants 1, 10 and 11 is that the knowledge held by individuals is shared with others in order to create new knowledge. Socialisation, which forms part of the SECI model, is a practical example of this finding. Socialisation refers to the sharing of tacit knowledge through face-to-face communication or sharing experiences via an informal platform.

The findings of this study, as related to the research problem suggest that there is some form of KS taking place, but only within a particular section of the library, namely the IS section. The findings are largely in line with the views of Liu, Chang and Hu (2010: 455), who indicate that librarians are known as custodians for knowledge sharing. Tasks are shared and librarians in various sections within the library become familiar with their operational tasks. The literature reveals that individuals are important factors for KS in their respective sections, although, as noted in the responses, this remains a neglected area.

According to Huysman and De Wit (2002: 2), KS should be all about sharing in order to obtain further knowledge from one another.

4.4 Role of knowledge-sharing in the selected sections of the UWC library

As stated in Chapter 2 of this study, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) are of the opinion that knowledge held by individuals is shared with others in order for it to lead to new knowledge. This phenomenon has been viewed differently by P.6, who stated the following:

It is the sharing of your expertise over the years being gathered from your organisation, your own opinion and from your colleagues,

It is important for colleagues from the other sections to share knowledge for the sake of service delivery, the more you know the more you will gain experience.

The findings in terms of the relationship between the view of this participant and the SECI model shows clearly that other element such as externalisation and combination are not applicable to the sections of the library being focused on in this study. However, socialisation and internalisation, which are also mentioned in Chapter 2, are applicable to this study.

4.5 The necessity for knowledge

This theme provides an overall idea of when and how KS should take place. This is related to a specific time-frame and platform. Another neglected area is the time spent on KS within a section. Library staff are expected to be able to share sectional knowledge at any given time, but not everyone being interviewed was convinced about this. As the following participant states:

To me formal KS is time consuming, I prefer to do it informally and when I have the time to do so. I am also not in favour of brown bag sessions too, this kind of session takes up too many time (P 2).

According to P 4:

At a stage KS did take place in my section, but recently there is no KS taking place due to shortage of staff.

KS at this stage is not taking place between the Acquisitions, Cataloguing and IS sections (P 7).

It became clear during the study that the staff in the sections need places to share knowledge, and it was also discovered that the participants want KS to be shared informally.

The question which was asked by the researcher regarding what participants thought about a brown bag session was well understood by them.

P 6 had the following view in this regard:

Brown bag session is where resolutions can take place

At a brown bag session everybody is informed of new actions (P 3).

The experience of sharing knowledge and the creation of new knowledge among participants is better if it takes place informally.

I prefer an informal way for meetings, no workshops, no colloquium, rather over lunch time or in our offices at any given time (P 10).

I rather pick up a phone and share knowledge as well as GroupWise (e-mail) is a form of sharing knowledge (P 9).

Participants 5 and 7 also suggested they feel at ease if KS takes place when the need arises.

There should not be a set of rules; it can take place on an ad hoc basis (P 1).

We must wait for an ideal situation to share knowledge with another section, due to the nature of our task where books needs to be urgently processed I will suggest that sharing must take place when needed (P 2).

The circumstances below indicate that KS is necessary, but not all participants were of the view that KS should take place formally.

It is necessary for KS to take place within the cataloguing section, especially with the acquisition, if there is any hold up within the acquisition section and the cataloguing section which the cataloguing section is not aware of it can impact negatively on the cataloguing and classification of books and other records. The manner in which KS is taking place is not so important to me(P 3).

In order for the work to continue KS should take place during normal working hours. An induction for a new staff member to the section in the sections is a good method of sharing to allow the new person the understanding of exploring the workflow from one section to the other one. KS is a daily process there should be no formal time being set aside. It should take place when necessary and instantly. KS should be a continuous process (P 2).

In most cases where the user needs a book urgently, the acquisition staff as well as the cataloguing staff should also be notified, because the process start at the acquisition section where a small catalogue record is being created for the ordering purposes then the book must be go to the cataloguing section for the full detailed bibliographic record. Naturally, sharing of KS

between these sections can be done informally to speed up the workflow, but yes KS is necessary to be shared when the need arises (P 5).

For a certain group in the study, KS takes place on a formal platform.

In the IS meeting KS takes place on a more formal basis. A regular section monthly meeting takes place to share experiences and new knowledge only amongst the section. KS can be accessed via the S-drive, ARC Report and the Self Learning Zone (SLZ) which the IS team upload their new knowledge (P 1).

Each section is linked with one another. If it is a weak link, the workflow from one section to the other in order to provide service for our users will be inefficient and ineffective. In my section KS takes place during our regular meetings and our reading club (P 6).

Some of the participants in the study believed that KS should take place on a regular basis.

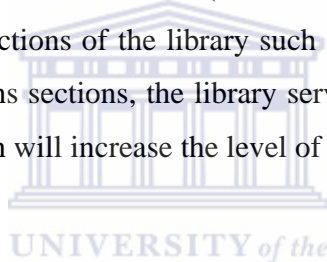
The library is one system; certainly we must be able to share knowledge amongst each other on a regular basis. Should it not take place uncertainty will kick in, lack of KS can create chaos, because when collection is not ready which is a circle, starting with IS, then go to acquisition to cataloguing back to IS will hamper the smooth flow of work flow and service delivery (P 9).

In our section we work according to our Key Responsible Areas (KRA's) we assisted the academics with sometimes different enquiries as opposed to the students' requests. Both groups of users need books, journals and other research materials such as media collection and e-resources. It is the role of the library to provide all these resources to our users. At the IS section we deal with one knowledge that is to be able to provide the optimal service which our users require and to provide what they need. KS starts with being actively involved in the sections such as the acquisitions section and the cataloguing section. The acquisitions section is a key section of the library, hence the smooth day-to-day running of the workflow which must take place amongst the staff. Necessary sharing of new knowledge to the acquisition section from the IS section to assist with the teaching and learning of the institution to build research output is of the utmost importance. The cataloguing section, on the other hand, is also an important section. They have to create a full bibliographic record available to the entire

university community. Users must be able to retrieve the information. If the process in the cataloguing section is not taking place as it must it can make it difficult for users or the smooth running of the section can make it easy (P 7).

The researcher found, based on the interviews conducted, that participants are of the opinion that sharing of knowledge should take place within their sections during working hours, and not during lunch breaks or after hours.

According to Musoke (2007:2), in order to stay abreast of the new technology (ICT), staff need to be able to update their knowledge, especially if a staff member works in the acquisitions or cataloguing section. As mentioned by Participant 2, the older staff should be able to train other staff members. At the Malaysian Library, the individual sharing of knowledge provides the opportunity for workers to enhance their skills (Ismail & Yusof, 2009: 40). According to Townsend (2001:45), in certain sections of the library such as the reference and IS sections, as well as cataloguing and acquisitions sections, the library services are designed to encourage the use of scholarly information, which will increase the level of academic use of resources in higher education.



The literature states that KS takes place both internally and externally. Internally, KS takes place among colleagues in the same section and externally, it takes place with colleagues in other sections (Moll and Kleinveldt, 2008:2). According to Moll and Kleinveldt (2008:2), KS will only take place externally among those staff who are interested in the creation of new knowledge. However, the findings of this study reveal that the IS section, as indicated in Chapter 1, does share knowledge with partner universities, such as the hosting of colloquiums at which the two university libraries share their experiences with each other.

According to Liu, Chang and Hu (2010:455), effective knowledge sharing in sections of an academic library can play an important role in contributing towards insights into the entire library service, not only amongst people within a certain section, in order to ensure an efficient and accurate workflow. The spiral of KS within each section, such as new book processes, how to catalogue a new record, and how to search for information on the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) or e-resources, can be linked to the spiral knowledge in Nonaka and

Takeuchi's SECI model. O'Dubhchair, Scott and Johnson (2001: 85) refer to this as the creation of new knowledge, which occurs when explicit and tacit knowledge interact with each other as a continuous process.

This study reveals that KS is necessary for the acquisition and distribution of new knowledge, and that the productive use of knowledge in itself can encourage the creation of new knowledge, with the expectation being that the library staff will have the same experiences. However, for P 3 and P 4, it was still difficult to express what and when sharing is necessary, as indicated below:

I am not in favour of a brown bag session as it is time consuming, the important thing is that the end users get what they want, it is better if I telephone or email the other colleagues from the different sections that I deal with on a regular basis(P3).

KS is taking place within the IS section, but only as a formal session such as the monthly meeting session, new product or databases, workshops only for IS staff (P4).

The views above indicate that some colleagues in some of the sections feel that knowledge is important, no matter how it is shared.

It was found that although KS was not at the forefront of their minds, some employees made a special effort to share their new knowledge with all the other sections in the library. What evidence is there to suggest this?

4.6 Workflow processes and procedures

The following are the services which were identified in this study and how each section performs its tasks.

4.6.1 Information services (IS)

This is the section in which information is provided to all users on a professional level. Researchers from the faculties and students at all levels, whether post-graduate or undergraduate, will seek information assistance from the FAC/L's. Within the IS section, there are 11 trained FAC/L's. Each FAC/L is responsible for the management of the collection, amongst

other duties such as research support, information literacy (IL) training and liaison with individual faculties.

The workflow of the IS section involves providing the orders of new titles for books, journals and multimedia to the acquisitions section, in order for them to be ordered, while the processing of a full bibliographic cataloguing record takes place in the cataloguing section.

The responses below give an indication of the kinds of problems encountered with book orders when they are captured by the FAC/L.

All book orders received from the academics are first and foremost verified against the OPAC to assure that there is not more than one copy of the same date available. If there are enough copies available the FAC/L's will liaise with the department and suggest the latest edition. The next process is to order the books via Blackwell Collection Management, Dawson or Bookdata Online (Nielsen). The orders should be automatically forwarded to the acquisitions section staff member responsible for my faculty (P 1).

It is not always known if the orders which I forwarded to the acquisition section have arrived, there is no formal or informal communication which I received from the acquisition section whether my order has been attend to. Most of the times I am not contacted to alert me of my books ordered has arrived or not. I have to go to the section to ensure that my orders have been captured or if my department's new books have arrived (P 4).

I don't get feedback of my orders received from the acquisition section (P 2).

The literature suggests that this is why formal or informal round-table discussions are so relevant and important, in order to establish communities of practice in which everybody participates in the discussions by sharing their experiences, be they good or bad, as well as knowledge and ideas related to their work, during office breaks (Moll and Kleinveldt, 2008:9).

According to Ismail and Yusof (2010: 37), the ultimate goal of workflow in an academic library is to achieve excellent service delivery to clients.

The books are collected by me for display on my level. Before I display the book for users to borrow I re-check the book record on the OPAC. In the case where I picked up the wrong Dewey decimal classification or (DDC) I will immediately notify the cataloguer to correct the classification. Wrong classification of book numbers or (DDC) can lead to misinterpretation that the book has not yet arrived or shelved in a wrong place (P10).

The staff from the cataloguing section will communicate via telephone to alert me my books are catalogued. I will collect my books, check for any errors, which I do find, but I will contact the cataloguing staff and ask them to rectify their mistake. After the corrections have been done I will e-mail my departments academics to inform them their new titles had arrived. I will place some of the books on display; some books will be taken to the short loan desk (P 7).

4.6.2 Acquisitions section

This section is responsible for the ordering of and budgets for books, printed journals, multimedia and e-resources such as electronic journals, eBooks and databases. Previously, in the UWC library, the acquisitions section functioned as an entity on its own by just being responsible for the ordering and purchasing of printed books which it received from the FAC/L or other library staff. Recently, the library management introduced some changes to certain sections of the library. One of them was the merging of the acquisitions and periodicals sections, which became one section, hence the dual function of the acquisitions section.

Reactions to this change and the impact that this has on KS yielded the following responses:

The merging is a good idea, but staff members who have been so long for many years within a particular section find it difficult to share their work experience with each other which might have an impact on the creation of new knowledge, as well to share their knowledge being built over the years. A positive idea of the merging is when meetings do take place, the staff can debate about an issue on how the ordering process can take place now in comparison to how it use to take place. Everybody can give their idea on this matter (P 7).

Due to the merging process the workload will be much heavier as opposed to when we operated as a single section that is the Periodical section and the Acquisition section. That is why we

need the KS amongst us regularly in order to understand each other's workload what is expected from us when we get our orders from the FAC/L's, but I must say the merging will also assist us in being more efficient with more staff to assist with the ordering processes(P 12).

I do know how to catalogue; I was trained to catalogue a small record on the ALEPH Software System before the record is ready for a full record on to the OPAC system. Not all of us in the acquisition section are trained to create a small record for the catalogue, it will be a good suggestion if the cataloguing section will give every staff member in the cataloguing the necessary training how to create a small record(P 3).

4.6.3 Cataloguing section

The cataloguing section can be seen as the “heart” of the library services. Within this section, all the materials of the library, such as books, printed journals, multimedia, theses and many more, are catalogued. In order for efficient service delivery and prompt information searching to take place, the library's OPAC must be a search tool with which users can find their information online. Most of the library's materials are classified according to the Dewey Decimal System.

The whole process basically is that we receive the new books from the acquisition section submitted by a small record. We have to search on Online Catalogue of Library Congress (OCLC) to get the full bibliographic record. We do it alone as a cataloguing team. We have no assistance from the other sections. When done classifying and cataloguing we place the books on our shelves ready for the FAC/L to collect. We do alert the FAC/L of the books that has been processed (P 5).

According to Kinengyere and Tumuhairwe (2009: 3), librarians should always ensure that their end product satisfies their users. In this regard, a reliable workflow among the sections in the library is of the utmost importance. Librarians should ensure that information is always available in a retrievable format for ultimate service delivery. Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) theory states that interaction with others in the workplace will assist the individual to learn, observe and put what he/she has been taught into practice. This action will lead to a better workflow amongst sections, with fewer mistakes and misunderstandings, in order to satisfy users when providing library services to them. Socialisation involves people gathering and learning

together. This is the process during which new tacit knowledge is converted through shared experiences into explicit knowledge.

4.7 Knowledge-sharing and its impact on workflow to enhance service delivery

A problem related to the non-sharing of knowledge within a certain section of the library, which is evident in the poor workflow amongst other sections and the impact on service delivery, was highlighted in the following remarks:

KS did not happen in the past, book orders did not take place in an efficient way, but now that meetings are held in our section and we are allowed sharing our difficulties and what we experienced in order of workflow, the service we render is much better. KS is not taking place with the other sections and my section as it must. I am not aware of what is taking place in the other sections (P 10).

It would be an ideal situation if KS was effectively practised, this would have helped with the work piling up. Delivery of records which needs to be uploaded on the catalogue would take place in specific space of time (P 1).

If only a workshop can be held amongst the staff of each section of their particular workflow to streamline the process then timely services of books being ordered and processed (P 3).

It is important that the workflow must be shared, and in my section where I'm working this does not happen on a continuous basis to improve service delivery in this sense service will not be slowed down or unnecessary come to a halt if the particular material for the usage of information is needed(P 6).

If KS is practised in a particular section which is necessary, the clients will get the best possible services (P 9).

The abovementioned responses corroborate the results of research in terms of non-sharing and the lack of creation of new knowledge, which can be an obstacle to service delivery. However, as mentioned in chapter 1 of this study, this can result in staff leaving the organisation without sharing their knowledge.

Maponya (2004:4) states that the success of academic libraries should hinge on a rethinking and exploration of the ways in which to improve services and become learning organisations, by determining how to capture and share tacit and explicit knowledge amongst staff. The library should implement the procedure which is currently taking place within the IS section in the other sections mentioned in this study, in order to give employees opportunity to share new knowledge and workflow information during a formal session. This session could take place in the form of a workshop, where the staff members of that particular section are involved in facilitating the workshop.

The literature further reveals that knowledge sharing is a human behaviour and must be studied in the context of human performance, whereby people are the most important components of knowledge management, since managing knowledge depends on people and their willingness to share (Ismail and Yusof, 2010: 37). In this regard, the following can be stated:

- The ideal situation would be to make staff aware of what tacit and explicit knowledge are.
- Staff should be educated about the importance of creating new knowledge for the development of the library in an ever-changing environment.

4.8 Conclusion

In a study conducted by Jantz (2001:35), clear conclusions were drawn based on a review of knowledge management practices related to knowledge sharing, which is referred to as informal knowledge.

A conclusion can be made that knowledge sharing does not necessarily have to take place on a formal platform such as meetings. Instead, a brown bag session during lunch time can be held to share ideas on how to improve the services of the library, which is striving to become an all-new, active research library, where librarians are well informed and able to assist users effectively.

The findings of this study can be linked to a previous study which was conducted in a Malaysian public university library, which found that knowledge sharing was still very low (Ahmad, 2011: 2) and that the staff were more interested in their day-to-day work routine. The following

reasons could be identified as to why knowledge sharing is not of interest to the abovementioned universities:

- The lack of ICT infrastructure and familiarity with ICT knowledge sharing methods; and
- There are no rewards for the sharing of knowledge with colleagues.

Viehland (2005:443) states that in order to keep workers motivated, proud and able to share knowledge, especially organisational knowledge, with each other, staff needs to be rewarded. The author further states that the major obstacles to sharing knowledge with each other are the following: people might be too busy and have very little time to share knowledge, and workers might not have the necessary tools to share their knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995: 37) state that learning from and sharing knowledge with each other can sometimes be difficult to grasp. The model further states that information which is transferred from one person to another, where the latter is not in the same section, often does not make sense to the one who receives it.

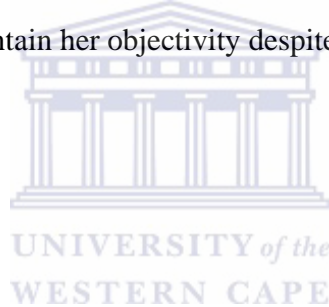
The findings of this study clearly indicate that there is no model that explains how KS is being shared amongst the sections of the UWC library. There is no formality of a policy that recommends to a section that KS should take place in order to empower staff. Rather, KS takes place as the need arises. With the exception of one specific section, namely the IS section, where KS is taking place on a formal level, such as meetings, reading clubs and workshops, the other sections in this study lack this practice. It is clear that KS is not a practice that is taken seriously most of the time, due to time and workload demands on staff members and their lack of interest in KS. KS is understood differently by the various participants, although the majority of them agree that KS is necessary and must take place. Service delivery and the workflow within each section is a priority, but formal KS is lacking.

This study concludes that if KS must take place, the practice of KS must be done informally. It also transpired that KS normally only takes place in a certain section, and that the other participants feel that if KS were to also take place in their section, it would definitely improve the workflow within each section. Ultimately, more effective and efficient service delivery would then be achieved.

4.9 Reflexivity

Throughout this study, the researcher was consciously aware that staff members feared the intrusion into their work space and that the researcher would ask questions which might expose them in terms of their understanding of what knowledge sharing is all about and the role that it plays in their section.

According to Nkubunga (2010: 26), personal views, judgements, preconceptions and biases can have an impact on a study. Therefore, the researcher needs to be aware of his/her role within the research process and how it may influence the participants. The abovementioned author further states that a researcher needs to be continuously aware of how he or she projects his or her own subjective views onto the research, in order to avoid changing the meaning and content of the information. The objectivity of the researcher in this study may have been a challenge. However, she has managed to maintain her objectivity despite this challenge.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations in terms of the views of the participants in this study. This conclusion and recommendations are based on participants' knowledge sharing practices, as well as their understanding of the concept.

5.2 Summary of the findings

KS and the way in which it is understood differed among participants in this study. According to some of them, knowledge sharing is taking place, but not on as regular a basis as it is supposed to. This study sought to determine how knowledge sharing takes place within the three selected sections of the library, namely acquisitions, cataloguing and IS, and if the methods for the sharing of knowledge are facilitating effective and efficient workflow among library staff in terms of KS and knowledge creation.

The participants were given a platform to share their views and experiences during the interviews that were held. These experiences were described individually by each staff member, and the interviews took place during normal working hours. Not all of the fifteen participants were interviewed during working hours, however some allowed the researcher to interview them during their tea or lunch break, while others were interviewed after hours.

5.3 Summary of findings and conclusion

Five themes were identified during the data analysis process of this study.

- Understanding of KS and the influence it has on the staff within the framework of this study;
- Role of KS in the identified sections, as reflected in this study;
- The necessity for knowledge sharing;
- Workflow processes and procedures; and

- KS and its impact on workflow to promote service delivery.

The findings represent the overall descriptions of how KS is taking place in the three selected sections of the UWC library. These findings were not presented in any particular order and included the staff member understanding of KS, as well as whether or not KS takes place. In addition, the presentation of the findings focussed on how and when knowledge creation takes place and the workflow between one section and another, in order to deliver optimal services to library users.

- KS and the creation of new knowledge in a library, especially an academic library, have emerged as a new phenomenon in recent years, and need to be fully understood in order for a much faster and more efficient workflow to take place within the sections being focused on in this study.
- The common belief of participants in this study was that KS is a basic practice that should take place on an informal platform.
- In this study, an informal platform refers to ideas being shared among staff while in their workspaces and that there is no need to call a meeting or alert every staff member for this purpose.
- The knowledge can be shared as and when it is needed.
- Generally, it was felt that the creation of new knowledge does not need to be shared on a formal platform and that it is not necessary to engage with the other sections immediately.
- The new knowledge can only be shared amongst the staff within a particular section.
- Other staff members believe that KS is all about one's work and whether or not one passes it on to fellow colleagues is entirely the responsibility of those who initiate such an event.
- To some, KS does not always take place on a regular basis or to a significant extent.
- Some participants believe that KS and the creation of new knowledge take place on a regular basis, especially during meetings.
- If new knowledge is introduced, the idea is to share it immediately with everyone in that particular section, as well as with the management of the library.

The study conducted by Maponya (2004:13) yielded that KS and the creation of new knowledge are typically the outcomes of an interactive process that involves a number of individuals who are brought together in a project team or some other collaborative arrangement. The author further states that knowledge creation is essential for academic libraries in terms of the development of new skills, new products, better ideas and more efficient processes. The findings state that participants were of the opinion that KS will definitely improve the efficiency of the workflow and have a positive impact on service delivery levels. The results of the interviews support the literature, which indicates that librarians work on a daily basis with information sources, as well as with their colleagues, in order to perform their duties. The participants' belief in this regard is that KS will then take place automatically.

The understanding of KS and how staff members practice it is important for this study. Some participants had a clear idea of what KS is, but others did not seem to have a clear understanding of important aspects of KS. Workflow is essential to ensuring a smooth service delivery process, but KS is not necessarily a means to an end in this regard. After conducting interviews with some of the participants, it was clear that they realised the importance and benefit of having a system in place for sharing new knowledge and avoiding a backlog in the workflow from one section to another.

The views of some participants were that a certain section in the library namely the IS section was often exposed to the sharing of knowledge on a formal platform, such as meetings, seminars, workshops and colloquiums, and that a similar formal session for the other two sections would be of benefit to them, especially when new changes have taken place.

However, it should be noted that all participants in the three sections agreed that KS is important for satisfying the needs of those whom they serve (users), although some of the sections that were interviewed in this study did not necessarily interact directly with the users. If KS takes place in all three sections, the sections working behind closed doors will deliver a better quality of service to the section that deals directly with the users.

Although KS is necessary and important, participants felt that they do not always have the time to spend on KS within their section and the other sections on a regular basis. KS, according to

some participants, should take place, but at such times that it does not interfere too much with their daily routines. Therefore, participants suggested that KS take place when the need arises. Therefore, it appears that KS is not a number one priority for some participants. However, when a participant in the IS section was interviewed during this study, it was found that the learning outcomes of the students whom this section served have everything to do with KS. By simply interacting with others and being aware of new knowledge within a particular section, this will impact on the workflow of the section. Knowing the shortfalls and the duration of time before a particular book or journal is ready for collection has a big role to play in terms of the ultimate goal, which happens to be service delivery. Changes taking place within the different sections have an impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of workflow from one section to the other. If staff members from the other sections are not directly involved when KS takes place, the new changes should be communicated via email or reported on during meetings.

The conclusions that were drawn from the findings of this study suggest that KS should be shared when needed and not necessarily during a brown bag session, which will take up time (although this is not a bad idea if there is a definite need for it). KS can be shared when one is in need of an answer or solution to a problem. There was, however, a slight difference in this study with regard to one section, which viewed KS as very important. This section had been exposed to many sessions, both formal and informal, during which new knowledge was shared. Despite the challenges and differences in terms of how the participants viewed KS and experienced workflow, the outcome was positive when KS was shared and well understood. Moreover, the participants preferred KS to take place, and felt strongly that all sections in the library should be involved, instead of only one particular section.

5.4 Recommendations

It appears that the staff members of the UWC library understand and share different views regarding how to share knowledge with one another. The sharing of knowledge and the types of knowledge that can be shared remains problematic. The sections in this study do not work closely with each other when it comes to the sharing of new knowledge. The fear amongst staff is that when a new person takes over, drastic changes will take place, hence the fear of sharing knowledge with the new staff member.

Participants reported that KS is not practiced to the extent that it should be. Staff members are being introduced to a new activity as it appears, and being able to be part of the specific section in which KS often takes place remains a concern for staff members of the other sections.

The socialisation element of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995:5) SECI model (from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge) is what the researcher found to be the most appropriate method to recommend. With socialisation, the tacit knowledge being shared is knowledge that will be regarded as a way in which years of experience can be shared with one's colleagues. The new knowledge is shared in a face-to-face situation, and the staff members involved can be exposed to knowledge that is applicable to their own daily work.

Another recommendation is that the knowledge should be shared during "brown bag" sessions to which staff members from the different sections are invited and exposed to an informal yet interactive method of KS. During these sessions, questions are allowed, and the questions asked and answered can be recorded for the purpose of assisting with the workflow from one section to the other, as well as being recorded on a KS system whereby all questions asked must be revisited to ensure optimal workflow with fewer mistakes. This may result in more effective service delivery to users.

Time is an important factor in KS. Staff members do not want to be occupied with other matters, such as having to stop their work and start sharing knowledge. The researcher recommends that, as in the case of the acquisition section being investigated, the following needs to be taken into account:

- Regular monthly meetings should be held;
- Staff from all three sections should be invited on a quarterly basis to a session at which knowledge is shared;
- Workflow that will affect service delivery must be revisited after a "brown bag" session;
- A system must be in place to gather all new knowledge and determine how this knowledge should be shared; and

- A similar system to that described in Nonaka and Takeuchi's model under the element of socialisation could be recommended in this regard. The conversion of new knowledge through shared experiences which can be combined with the combination element.

It is during such KS sessions that problem solving can be addressed. Knowledge-sharing must take place in a different environment such as a boardroom, which gives the staff members from various sections the opportunity to engage with one another to gain knowledge on an informal level.

The capacity to share is not a phenomenon that is familiar to everyone. The researcher suggests that a staff member with more learning experience should take the lead in introducing a platform for sharing new knowledge, and allow a new member in the KS group to take the lead in a subsequent session. Technology plays an important role when KS takes place, and another suggestion would be to share the knowledge with the new member who needs to present the next session. Face-to-face interaction is also highly recommended for staff members who prefer to be taught using a face-to-face method.

In-service training to share new knowledge should also be provided, and this should take place on a regular basis. The role of ICT in sharing knowledge must be fully understood in order for KS to be motivated. KS can be used to understand the library's goals and in order for staff to be motivated to share knowledge for better communication and a more efficient workflow, which will ultimately lead to better service delivery. KS must be utilised to empower staff members and to motivate them to strive for positions of promotion within the library.

Lastly, future research should also attempt to explore the relationship between KS and service delivery. This will assist in user education within the library and the research output of the university as a whole. Future studies could focus on determining how users experience the library services and whether or not KS results in the delivery of faster and more efficient services to clients.

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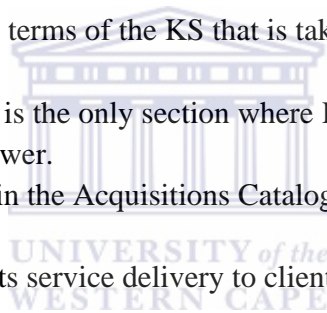
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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Interview Questions on Research Topic

1. What is your understanding of Knowledge sharing?
2. Explain how knowledge sharing is taking place in your section
3. Why do you think it is necessary that knowledge should or should not take place amongst the sections i.e. cataloguing and IS section?
4. In your opinion if Knowledge sharing is taking place amongst the two sections will it benefit service delivery?
5. Indicate if it is necessary for your section, namely acquisition or cataloguing section to share knowledge with the IS section and if so on which platform should it take place. e.g. Lunch-time brown bag sessions, formal workshops or merely contact the section for a KS session?
6. What is your observation in terms of the KS that is taking place in the IS section w.r.t. service delivery?
7. Do you think the IS section is the only section where KS takes place on a regular basis? Give a reason for your answer.
8. Should KS occur regularly in the Acquisitions Cataloguing sections? Give reasons for your answer.
9. How do you think KS affects service delivery to clients?



Appendix B

Consent Form

RESEARCH TITLE:

Knowledge sharing and its impact on service delivery at the UWC library: an exploratory investigation

Consent of Participant

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Letitia Luethe Lekay, Faculty librarian at the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, telephone numbers: Home-021-9325756. Work-021-9592296, Cell-0848880500, E-mail address: llekay@uwc.ac.za** under the supervision of **Dr. G Davis** of the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of the Western Cape.

I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time during my participation without negative consequences. Should I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed. I have had the opportunity to ask questions with regard to this study, and any additional details I was unsure of.

I received permission from the University Library to conduct this study. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the Department of Library and Information Science.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study
Print Name

Signature of Participant

Dated at:

Witnessed

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Appendix C

Assent form

Letter of Permission to do Interviews

Permission to do interviews for my Thesis

Dear Me Matshaya

I am currently writing my M.Bibl (Knowledge Management). My thesis topic is *“Exploring Knowledge sharing practices among a selection of library staff at the University of the Western Cape”*

I am now with my Chapter 3 “Research Methodology”. My Research Strategy is a case study and will therefore focus on interviews and an open-ended questionnaire which will be conducted with the following sections namely Cataloguing section and the Information section.

Participants from the cataloguing section as well as the IS section will be interviewed to determine “to what extent knowledge sharing and creation play a role in service delivery to the faculty librarians”.

I therefore ask permission from your office to conduct my research during my lunch hour as well as the lunch hour break from my colleagues.

I trust my application will meet your favourable consideration.

Thank You,

Kind Regards
Letitia Lekay