

## Knowledge Sharing Culture through the Lenses of Leadership Styles in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions.

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**ABSTRACT:-** Knowledge sharing culture is vital for any successful organization. Knowledge being a resource improves the competitiveness of the organization. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) train students on technical courses which have a positive impact their lives. Tutors transfer knowledge to students and amongst themselves. Leadership styles affect the environment under which knowledge sharing occurs. Various leadership styles affect how instructors collaborate and share knowledge and the way they enhance and encourage behavior of knowledge sharing. Leaders who provide a reward system to the knowledge sharer, encourages more knowledge transfer. The study reviews knowledge sharing culture in the lenses of leadership styles.

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing; Knowledge transfers; Knowledge sharing Culture; Leadership and Leadership styles.

### I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In this era of intense competition and dynamism, knowledge has become a strategic resource and when managed properly can be a source of competitive advantage (Chibuzor et. al., 2019). Knowledge sharing is the exchange of knowledge, task related information, helps and collaborate with others in an organization (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). The goal for knowledge sharing is to distribute the right content to a wide range of employees performing interrelated tasks. In this study, knowledge sharing is limited to the sharing of knowledge and skills amongst Tutors in Technical institutions in Kenya. Knowledge should be accessible by all Tutors, for it to be applied at any time and place. Nazim and Mukherjee (2016) opine that retaining intellectual assets and improving productivity are benefits of sharing knowledge. Teamwork, internet and intranet are some of the practices and technologies applied in knowledge sharing and dissemination (Chibuzor et al., 2019). Communities are formed by existence of some social capital from which every member can potentially benefit. It is feasible for a collaborative team to rely on one another's experiences which they interrogate individually to attain a common understanding of the content (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Knowledge sharing culture, information technology application and employee motivation are benefits which accrue from knowledge sharing. The partial knowledge held by individuals in a group becomes shared among all members who then attain common belief which is itself knowledge held by most people.

Knowledge sharing culture is the corporate culture which encourages and enables the free exchange of knowledge, insight, and experience for benefiting lecturers in national polytechnics (Al-Kurdi et al., 2018). A culture that has achieved distinguishable levels of competency at managing, sharing, and employing information and knowledge should positively influence the performance at the organization given a suitable environment (Abualoush, et. al., 2018). Hence knowledge sharing culture amongst national polytechnic lecturers would influence their performance and visibility as defined in indexing of institutions (Dhamdhare, 2015).

Knowledge sharing can be managed through a sustainable reward system which is promoted through leadership styles (Hussain, et al., 2017; Mishra & Pandey, 2019). Intrinsic rewards encourage private sharing of knowledge while extrinsic rewards encourage institutional sharing of knowledge. Overall, the rewards improve quality and quantity of knowledge sharing (Sedighi et al., 2018) which in turn increases visibility of the

institution. Visibility is the aspect of the work process that affect output (Natalardo & Sunardi, 2018). It is also considered as the publication count of an author in an information service or database (Dorsch, 2017).

### **Statement of the problem**

In knowledge economies, one of the key components that impacts productivity and efficiency of employees is knowledge management (Kianto, et. al., 2019). Earlier studies were inconclusive on the impact of knowledge sharing on worker productivity (Haas & Hansen, 2007) partly because investigations did not delve into processes and desegregation of types of knowledge shared. However, more recent studies have revealed a nexus between the two variables. Despite the convincing evidence in the studies, the Technical and vocational Education Training (TVET) appear to have taken a back seat in knowledge sharing practices (Abdur-Rafiu & Opesade, 2015).

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

Review of related literature conducted in form of content analysis. The documents that were reviewed were mostly electronic resources. The review was on based on the following keywords: knowledge sharing; knowledge sharing culture; information sharing and leadership styles. A systematic literature review was approached methodically by identifying afore-mentioned keywords.

### **Leadership styles**

There are several types of leaders who exhibit different leadership characteristics in any organization including technical institutions. Different leadership types include the following: autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic/participative, laissez-faire (Mishra & Pandey, 2019; Tewari et al., 2019).

#### **Autocratic leadership**

This style is known as authoritative or directive style of leadership (Al Khajeh, 2018), the leaders have absolute power over the employees this position is supported by Chukwusa, (2018) who opines that an autocratic leader does not allow staff to make decisions. The employees have little opportunity to make suggestion. Autocratic leaders often lead to high absenteeism and employee turnover. Typically autocratic leaders make choices based on their own ideas and judgements and rarely accept ideas from followers (Solihah et al., 2021). In regarding knowledge sharing Rüzgar, (2018) opines that the leader makes a decision completely at his discretion without the knowledge or consent of team members. Therefore, autocratic leadership pose obstacles to knowledge sharing. However autocratic leadership could be beneficial in situation where decisions need to be made quickly without consulting a large group.

#### **Bureaucratic leadership**

According to Al Khajeh, (2018), bureaucratic leaders influence people under them follow rules and policies rigorously. The leaders are committed to processes and procedures but not to the people. Futher Kaleem (2016), opines that bureaucratic leaders take after guidelines thoroughly and ensure their followers absolutely follow them. This style is less successful in groups and associations that depend on adaptability, imagination or advancement. Owing to the fact that technical institutions are innovators hub, this style pose obstacles to knowledge sharing (Jamaludin et al., 2015).

#### **Charismatic leadership**

According to Elrehail et al., (2018) there has been an increased interest in the predictors of knowledge sharing. Leadership plays a vital role in inspiring and supporting knowledge sharing behaviours. Charismatic leaders inspire lots of enthusiasm in the employees and very energetic in driving others forward (Novitasari et al., 2021). However these types' of leaders believe in themselves than in the employees. In the context of organizational learning knowledge sharing is crucial for growth and innovation (Shao et al., 2017). Furthermore, charismatic leadership acts as a means of developing the nature of the trust that exists between the leader and followers. Organizations need an environmental conditional which allows members to access new knowledge. In view of above charismatic leadership style appears to be an effective strategy in knowledge sharing in national polytechnics.

#### **Democratic/ participative leadership**

This style is also known as participative; leaders invite other members in the team to contribute in decision making process, although leaders make the final decision (Imende & Maureen, 2020). Several studies have concluded that this style motivate individuals to exchange ideas, information and knowledge (Al Khajeh, 2018; Fauzi et al., 2019), Democratic leadership style influecences knowledge sharing positively (Rüzgar, 2018) this type of leadership increases job satisfaction through involvement with others and helps in development

people's skills. Employees feel to be control in their destiny and motivated to work hard. Democratic or participative leadership is most suitable for when working as a team.

### **Laissez-faire leadership**

According to Baffour-Awuah, (2020) laissez-faire means "leave it be" in French. It describes leaders who leave the employees to work on their own. Laissez-faire leadership is effective when leaders monitors the achievement and communicates regularly to the team. Often this type of leadership is effective when employees are experienced and skilled self-starters. However, Ibiama, (2020) posits that laissez-faire leader has no confidence in leadership ability. This style of leadership is blamed for low productivity (Jamaludin et al., 2015). In Laissez-faire leadership style, authority and responsibility is granted to subordinates to work out things and perform according to their own direction when the leader is absent. In technical institutions Laissez leadership style, allows subordinates to have freedom of implementation hence enhancing knowledge sharing (Chelimo et al., 2020; Nanjundeswaras wamy & Swamy, 2014).

### **People-oriented and Task oriented leadership**

People-oriented leaders are focused on organizing, supporting and developing teams. It is a participative style which encourages good team work and creative collaboration (Nyukorong & Quisenberry, 2015; Wakhlu et al., 2016). In practice leaders adopt either task oriented or people oriented. Highly task oriented leaders are focused on getting the work done. The leaders actively define the work and roles required, put structures in place, plan organize and monitor. In this leadership approach could suffer many flaws of autocratic leadership (Rüzgar, 2018).

### **Servant leadership**

Servant leadership is a form of democratic approach in many ways, because the whole team is in involved in decision making. In this approach the supporters suggest moving ahead where values are increasingly important and where servant leaders achieve power on basis of their values and ideals. Knowledge sharing as a mediate variable between servant leadership and job performance (Chelimo et al., 2020; Kadarusman & Bunyamin, 2021). Servant leadership influence workers attitude to knowledge sharing positively. Servant leadership encourages lecturers to share knowledge amongst them. In this type of leadership, the leader is a servant first. The servant hood consciousness brings the aspiration to lead (Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020).

### **Transactional leadership**

Transactional leadership starts with employees agreeing with the leaders in accepting the job. The transaction is usually the organization paying the team members in return for their effort and compliance. The leader has right to punish employees if the workers doesn't meet the pre-determined standard. Transactional leadership is more of type of management, as it focus on short-term tasks (Nanjundeswaras wamy & Swamy, 2014). It has serious limitations for knowledge-based or creative work. Where transactional leadership is utilized knowledge sharing is limited. According to Hussain et al., (2017) reward and recognitions from transactional leadership encourage knowledge sharing. Further transactional leadership fosters knowledge sharing.

### **Transformational leadership**

Transformational leaders are leaders who inspire the employees constantly with a shared vision of the future. In many organizations transformational and transactional approaches are utilized. Transactional leaders ensure routine work is done reliably while transformational leaders look for new initiatives that add value (Nanjundeswaras wamy & Swamy, 2014). Transformational leaders; has integrity, set clear goals, clearly communicates a vision, sets a good example, expects the best from employees, encourages, inspires and supports, recognizes good work and people, provides stimulating work and helps people see beyond their self-interests and focus more on team interests and needs. Transformational leadership help to stimulate knowledge transfer and innovation (Chelimo et al., 2020; Sheehan, 2016). Where transformational leadership is embraced in polytechnics knowledge sharing is successful.

### **Effect of leadership style on knowledge sharing culture**

Leadership style is the pattern of behaviour that a leader exhibits in influencing subordinates in realizing the goals of the organization (Abasilim, Gberevbie & Osibanjo, 2019). In addition, leadership style changes with group and situation (Xie, et al., 2018; Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Ford, Ford & Polin, 2021).) However the concept of leadership is fluid, and many scholars have conceptualized leadership as based on five distinct approaches namely; trait, behavioural (Matthews, Kelemen & Bolino, 2021), contingency (Wang, et al.,

2021), transformation (Peng, et al., 2021) as well as servant leadership theories (Li, et al., 2021; Kauppila, et al., 2021). Leadership knowledge is fundamental for any organization to realize its strategic goals and its key to management in national polytechnics in Kenya (Gui, Lei & Le, 2021; Cortes & Herrmann, 2021). Leadership is the process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in accomplishment of specific goals (Oorschot, Moscardo & Blackman, 2021; Kershaw, et al., 2022). Literature shows that shared leadership minimizes employee's turnover which enhances knowledge sharing (Vandavasi et al., 2020). According to Sheehan, (2016) leadership style has been recognized as a strategic factor influencing knowledge and innovation (Chaithanapat, Punnakitikashem & Rakthin, 2022).

Knowledge sharing is largely dependent on the personality of the leader and how the leader motivates the workers to share knowledge. A perfect leadership style plays a vital role in knowledge sharing. Lecturers being a part of workforce in National polytechnics are affected by leadership style in the way share knowledge either with peers or transferring it to the students (Elrehail et al., 2018). Leadership styles and knowledge sharing have positive impact on innovation. Conducive environment should be availed by the management to enhance knowledge sharing among the lecturers. Depending on various leadership style the lecturers are encouraged to share knowledge or not. The next section expounds more on various leadership styles and effects on knowledge sharing culture.

### III. CONCLUSION

Knowledge sharing culture is critical in any organization to realize its competitiveness. Knowledge is always effective when it is utilized and enhanced to allow competitive advantage. Instructors in Technical institutions transfer knowledge to students who utilize it improve their livelihoods. Conducive knowledge sharing environment is paramount to ensuring knowledge is well articulated and disseminated. Leadership styles affect knowledge sharing culture as well as knowledge sharers. Leaders who allow free integration of tutors and instructors provide perfect grounds for knowledge sharing. Different types of leadership styles affect knowledge sharing in different environments.

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