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KNOWLEDGE-SHARING BEHAVIOUR OF LIBRARY PERSONNEL: A STUDY OF RESEARCH INSTITUTES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Studies of knowledge sharing among Nigerian library personnel have mostly examined practices, tools and outcomes such as job performance and service delivery, largely in university libraries. Knowledge-sharing behaviour in research institute libraries and how it is distributed across modes of knowledge conversion remain underexamined. This study examined the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in federal research institutes in South-West Nigeria using Nonaka and Takeuchi's SECI model, comprising socialisation, externalisation, combination, and internalisation. A survey research design was adopted, using a total enumeration of 213 library personnel, of whom 185 responded, representing an 86.9% response rate. Data were collected using a questionnaire structured on a four-point agreement scale and analysed with SPSS using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The findings revealed a very high overall level of knowledge-sharing behaviour among the respondents. Socialisation and internalisation were rated very high, while combination and externalisation were rated high. Socialisation emerged as the dominant mode, indicating that knowledge sharing occurred predominantly through informal interpersonal interactions, including discussions, observation, mentoring, and collaborative activities. However, documentation-related knowledge sharing was comparatively weaker, suggesting a gap in the systematic capture and preservation of organisational knowledge. To the researchers' knowledge, this study is among the first to apply the SECI model to describe knowledge-sharing behaviour among library personnel in research institutes in South-West Nigeria. The study recommends institutionalising documentation as a routine practice, establishing shared repositories for documented procedures, and requiring reports on the practical application of knowledge gained from training. These measures could strengthen knowledge retention, accessibility, and reuse within research institute libraries.
Keywords: knowledge-sharing behaviour; SECI model; library personnel; research institutes; South-West Nigeria

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Introduction

Research institutes are centres for knowledge creation, preservation, and dissemination, driving innovation and evidence-based policy essential for sustainable national development. In Nigeria, these institutes are mandated to conduct systematic research addressing societal, economic, and technological challenges. Established during the colonial and early post-colonial periods to support agriculture, industry, and public health, these institutions have since evolved their mandates to include indigenous innovation and human capacity development. To fulfil these specialised mandates, research institutes maintain dedicated libraries that provide essential access to primary data, specialised archives, and scholarly journals across diverse fields. The success of these institutes is closely linked to the effectiveness of their library personnel, as the quality of information services directly influences research outputs and institutional performance.

Library personnel perform diverse functions that support access to knowledge, research, and the management of scholarly resources. Key responsibilities include acquiring, cataloguing, classifying, and digitising information resources; providing reference services; conducting outreach through liaison initiatives; and designing digital platforms. The quality of service delivered by library personnel largely depends on their knowledge sharing, which drives continuous improvement, innovation, and professional development at both the individual and institutional levels (Salihu, 2023).

Knowledge sharing is the exchange of information, skills, and expertise among individuals and groups to enhance organisational performance, develop capabilities, and gain a competitive advantage. However, knowledge sharing does not occur automatically; employees' knowledge-sharing behaviour drives it. Knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) refers to the individual actions, attitudes, and willingness of personnel to acquire or provide knowledge through formal and informal channels (Kmieciak, 2021). It encompasses proactive engagement in the transfer, dissemination, and application of knowledge to achieve organisational goals (Yeboah, 2023).

Knowledge-sharing behaviour fosters collaboration, professional relationships, and innovation, ultimately enhancing service delivery in research libraries (Shiimi et al., 2024; Olayemi et al., 2021). Social interactions, organisational culture, leadership support, and enabling environments such as staff meetings, workshops, and communities of practice

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significantly influence KSB (Izu & Fombad, 2024; Kumar & Devabalagan, 2023). This study adopts Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) SECI Model of Knowledge Creation: Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation to examine knowledge-sharing behaviour among library personnel.

Socialisation involves sharing tacit knowledge through shared experiences, observation, practices and informal interactions, such as mentoring or collaborative tasks. This facilitates the transfer of know-how that is difficult to document (Ononye, 2021). Externalisation converts tacit knowledge into explicit forms, such as manuals, documentation, or models. During this type of knowledge creation, tacit knowledge is transferred and converted to explicit knowledge through dialogue, reflection, and codification. Hence, personal expertise becomes organisational memory, preserving institutional knowledge over time (Salihu, 2023). Combination integrates multiple explicit knowledge sources to generate more complex understandings, such as synthesising research findings or creating strategic frameworks. The use of ICT tools, databases, and digital repositories often facilitates knowledge conversion during the combination process (Igbinovia, 2022). Internalisation converts explicit knowledge back into tacit knowledge through practice and reflection, enabling employees to assimilate and apply information effectively (Moradia et al., 2024). Together, these processes provide a holistic lens for understanding how knowledge moves, transforms, and embeds within research libraries (Enwereuzor, 2021).

Studies have consistently reported that library personnel engage actively in knowledge sharing. Deka and Subaveerapandiyan (2021) found high engagement among South Asian library professionals through databases, conferences, webinars, email, and social media. Similarly, Ike (2023) and Salihu (2023) observed frequent knowledge exchange in meetings, seminars, institutional portals, and digital tools such as WhatsApp and Telegram. Common mechanisms include brainstorming sessions, storytelling, staff meetings, and informal verbal interactions (Onwubiko, 2022; Abubakar & Sahabi, 2022).

Knowledge sharing occurs via formal mechanisms (seminars, workshops, mentoring programmes) and informal interactions (peer discussions, corridor conversations), with interpersonal communication still dominating despite growing digital adoption (Akinyoola, 2021; Olatokun & Njideaka, 2020; Dei & Van Der Walt, 2020). Emerging digital platforms, including social media and cloud-based

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repositories, increasingly facilitate knowledge exchange (Igbinlola & Olatunde, 2023; Moradia et al., 2024).

Despite extensive literature on knowledge sharing among librarians, several gaps remain, particularly regarding research institutes in South-West Nigeria. Most studies in Nigeria focus on academic libraries and universities (e.g., Ike, 2023; Olubukola et al., 2022; Olatokun & Njideaka, 2020), with limited attention to research institutes, which differ structurally and functionally from academic libraries and universities as research-intensive and innovation-driven organisations. In addition, existing studies emphasise practices, tools, and outcomes (e.g., service delivery, job performance) rather than providing a comprehensive behavioural analysis of library personnel. Although factors such as trust, leadership, organisational culture, and incentives are explored, they are often examined in isolation or outside research institute contexts. Research on the application of the SECI model to library personnel in research institutes is scarce, limiting an integrated understanding of the interactions between tacit and explicit knowledge. Addressing these gaps, this study adopts the SECI model to analyse knowledge-sharing behaviour and aims to provide policymakers and library managers with actionable insights to enhance collaboration, training, and innovation.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in research institutes in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Assess the knowledge-sharing behaviour among library personnel through the SECI model dimensions.

Literature Review

Knowledge-sharing behaviour has emerged as a critical determinant of organisational effectiveness, particularly in knowledge-intensive institutions such as libraries. It refers to the process by which individuals exchange knowledge, experiences, and skills to enhance decision-making and improve service delivery. In the context of libraries, knowledge sharing behaviour occurs through both formal mechanisms, such as staff meetings, mentoring, and training programs, and informal practices, including peer-to-peer interactions and collaborative problem-solving (Kan et al., 2025; Herlina et al., 2024). These processes enable library personnel to collectively enhance their competencies, respond effectively to user needs, and improve service quality, thereby directly contributing to job performance.

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Okorie et al. (2021) found that a supportive organisational climate that encourages knowledge sharing significantly improves the efficiency and effectiveness of library personnel. Similarly, Odunlana et al. (2014) found that conducive work environments and a positive information culture, which facilitate knowledge sharing, are instrumental in enhancing library staff's overall performance. These findings suggest that knowledge sharing strengthens individual capabilities and fosters collective growth and innovation in library services.

Knowledge-sharing behaviour has been shown to mediate the relationship between organisational practices and job outcomes. When library personnel engage in active knowledge sharing, they develop stronger professional networks, enhance their problem-solving capacity, and improve their ability to deliver innovative user services. Conversely, the absence of knowledge-sharing behaviour often leads to knowledge hoarding, duplication of effort, and inefficiency, undermining job performance. Thus, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and recognition is essential to sustaining knowledge-sharing behaviour and optimising the performance of library personnel in research and academic institutions in Nigeria and beyond. Knowledge sharing is a bedrock of effective knowledge management, enabling individuals and organisations to leverage collective expertise to improve performance and gain a competitive advantage. Knowledge sharing, defined as the collaborative process of refining ideas, suggestions, and insights through shared experiences, is particularly vital in library settings, where it enhances service delivery, professional development, and organisational efficiency. Empirical research across various library settings consistently indicates a positive relationship between knowledge-sharing behaviour and the job performance of library personnel (Ahmed et al., 2022; Olubukola et al., 2022; Akinyoola, 2021). These studies highlight knowledge sharing as a significant predictor of improved work performance.

Ahmed et al. (2022) found that knowledge sharing among academic library personnel significantly enhances library services, with a strong correlation between sharing practices and job performance. Olubukola et al. (2022) surveyed 480 Library and Information Science (LIS) educators in Southwest Nigerian universities, reporting a significant positive relationship between knowledge-sharing practices and job performance (69.5% response rate). Fagbola and Ize (2023) corroborated these findings in a descriptive survey of 67 academic library personnel in Kogi State, Nigeria, noting that sharing knowledge, such as experiences and

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expertise, directly improves work performance.

Okpidi-Urhibo (2020) examined 113 law library personnel in Nigeria and found that knowledge sharing and utilisation significantly enhance career fulfilment and performance. Likewise, Akinyoola (2021) investigated 119 library personnel in Oyo State, Nigeria, and identified a significant correlation among mentoring, information sharing, and work performance, particularly through professional development activities such as seminars and conferences. These effectively emphasise that knowledge sharing is a defining driver of organisational performance.

Knowledge-sharing behaviour in libraries varies between formal and informal methods, with a notable reliance on traditional and interpersonal approaches. Ondieki (2023) conducted a cross-sectional survey of 165 library staff in Kenyan public universities, identifying work groups, project teams, and communities of practice as effective methods for sharing embedded, explicit, and tacit knowledge. These methods had a positive impact on service delivery, including planning and management. Similarly, Fasola and Popoola (2024) surveyed 308 library personnel in 46 private universities in southern Nigeria, finding that informal face-to-face interactions, coffee room discussions, and library databases dominate knowledge-sharing behaviour, despite formal policies.

Olayemi and Olayemi (2021) studied health sciences library personnel in Africa at the 16th Biennial AHILA Conference, noting that face-to-face interactions were the primary mode for sharing information about conferences and workshops. Abubakar and Sahabi (2022) found that library personnel at Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria, rely on brainstorming sessions and verbal discussions to share knowledge about database searching and cataloguing. In Ghana, Dei and Van Der Walt (2020) highlighted the role of Communities of Practice (CoPs), such as informal corridor conversations (with a 88.98% recognition rate), in facilitating knowledge exchange. These studies indicate a preference for informal, interpersonal methods, although formal channels, such as meetings and workshops, also play a role.

Technology has transformed knowledge-sharing behaviours in libraries, enabling broader access and collaboration. Moradia et al. (2024) emphasised that digital repositories, open-source platforms, cloud technology, and collaborative tools have positioned libraries as vital components of the global knowledge-sharing ecosystem. These tools facilitate open access and efficient knowledge dissemination. Fagbola

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and Ize (2023) found that academic library personnel in Kogi State, Nigeria, are increasingly using social media, mobile devices, and digital platforms alongside traditional channels, such as staff meetings, to share knowledge. Similarly, Igbinlola and Olatunde (2023) found that library staff in private universities in Osun State, Nigeria, actively use social media to share bibliographic information and professional updates.

Awodoyin and Akinlabi (2024) examined knowledge sharing among 980 postgraduate students in Southwest Nigeria and found that mobile phones and interpersonal communication are the primary means of sharing academic knowledge. Onwubiko (2022) reported that 88% of 200 staff members in five Nigerian federal university libraries acknowledged the availability of ICT tools for knowledge sharing, supported by organisational mechanisms such as meetings and interactive sessions. These findings highlight the growing integration of digital tools in knowledge sharing in libraries, though traditional methods remain prevalent.

Despite milestones in developing individuals and organisations, ensuring their full potential is achieved through effective knowledge-sharing behaviour. Several studies have identified barriers that hinder knowledge sharing. Ondieki (2023) found challenges in Kenyan public universities, including a lack of trust, poor leadership, weak social ties, and inadequate facilitation. Similarly, Nkomo et al. (2021) found minimal knowledge sharing at the City of Johannesburg Library, citing employee reluctance, a lack of onboarding support, and perceived benefits as obstacles. Igbinlola and Olatunde (2023) highlighted technological barriers in Osun State, Nigeria, such as poor internet connectivity, limited interest in social media, and insufficient institutional ICT support.

Abbas and Mairiga (2022) identified insufficient funding, poor communication, and a lack of administrative support as barriers among 172 academic library personnel in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Olayemi and Olayemi (2021) found a low level of knowledge sharing among African health sciences library personnel, partly due to the limited adoption of modern technologies, such as social media, for professional collaboration. These barriers pinpoint the need for organisational support, robust ICT infrastructure, and trust-building initiatives to foster effective knowledge sharing.

The reviewed studies demonstrate that knowledge sharing considerably enhances job performance, career fulfilment, and

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service delivery among academic library personnel and Library and Information Science (LIS) educators' personnel. Informal methods, such as face-to-face interactions and communities of practice, dominate knowledge-sharing practices, though formal channels like workshops and meetings are also utilised. Technology, including digital repositories, social media, and mobile devices, is increasingly vital for facilitating knowledge sharing and transforming libraries into global knowledge hubs. However, barriers such as a lack of trust, poor leadership, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and limited institutional support hinder effective knowledge sharing. These findings suggest that libraries must invest in formal knowledge-sharing policies, technological infrastructure, and trust-building initiatives to maximise the benefits of knowledge sharing.

Theoretical framework

The study is grounded on the Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination, and Internalisation (SECI) model developed by Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi (1995). This model provides a dynamic and process-oriented framework for understanding how knowledge is created and shared within organisations. It emphasises the interaction between tacit knowledge, personal, experience-based, and often difficult to articulate, and explicit knowledge, which is formalised, codified, and easily communicated. By capturing this interaction, the SECI model offers a robust lens for examining how knowledge flows within organisations, fostering collaboration, innovation, and improved service delivery. It further illustrates how knowledge is continuously generated, refined, expanded, and integrated into organisational systems to enhance performance and institutional effectiveness.

Empirical studies across diverse contexts demonstrate the applicability and relevance of the SECI model. For example, Rusland et al. (2020) applied the model within the Royal Malaysian Navy and found that socialisation and internalisation were the dominant modes of knowledge creation. Similarly, Romadona et al. (2024) identified all four SECI processes among library personnel, confirming the model's suitability for professional knowledge-sharing environments. In the academic library context, Igbinovia (2022) highlighted the model's effectiveness in improving knowledge management practices and service delivery. Furthermore, Mosha and Ngulube (2023) extended the model to Web 2.0 environments in Tanzanian academic libraries, demonstrating how digital tools facilitate virtual socialisation,

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documentation, knowledge integration, and reflective learning. These findings underscore the model's adaptability to both traditional and technology-mediated settings.

Beyond conventional organisational environments, the SECI model has also been applied in unconventional and emerging contexts. Maras et al. (2024) explored its application in darknet markets, revealing how knowledge is created and shared even within informal or illicit networks. In the tourism sector, Jayasekera et al. (2022) showed that the model supports the transformation of intangible knowledge into innovative services and sustainable business opportunities. Similarly, Purnamawati and Hidayat (2025) demonstrated its relevance in primary education, where internalisation and socialisation significantly enhanced learning outcomes, collaboration, and administrative efficiency, despite challenges such as time constraints and resistance to knowledge sharing.

The strength of the SECI model lies in its comprehensive and iterative approach to knowledge creation. It effectively bridges the gap between tacit and explicit knowledge, enabling organisations to harness both individual expertise and collective intelligence. Its versatility across sectors, including the military, libraries, education, tourism, and even non-traditional environments, highlights its broad applicability. Moreover, the model supports continuous learning and innovation by encouraging repeated cycles of knowledge conversion, while also recognising the influence of organisational culture and context in shaping knowledge-sharing practices.

In relation to this study, the SECI model provides a valuable framework for examining the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in research institutes. It enables the identification of strengths and barriers across the different modes of knowledge conversion, with particular emphasis on the dynamic interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge. Through socialisation, the study can assess how library personnel share experiential knowledge through collaboration and informal interactions. Externalisation enables the evaluation of how knowledge is documented and communicated through tools such as manuals, databases, and reports. The combination process facilitates the analysis of how diverse information sources are integrated into organisational practices, such as meetings and policy development. Finally, internalisation provides insight into how formal training, professional development programmes, and exposure to scholarly resources contribute to the

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development of practical skills and competencies. In conclusion, applying the SECI model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing knowledge-sharing practices among library personnel in research institutes.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design because it provides a systematic and efficient means of collecting data from a large and diverse population. The population of the study comprised two hundred and thirteen (213) library personnel working in federal research institutes located in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Total enumeration was used to include all library personnel within the population for comprehensive representation. A questionnaire was used for data collection as it provided a practical and systematic means of gathering information from many respondents within a relatively short period. Upon data collection, the response rate was 86.9%, and the data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a robust software package suitable for quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used for data analysis. The statistical tools enabled the organised presentation and interpretation of data, thereby providing clear insights into trends and patterns among library personnel and effectively addressing the research questions.

Results and Discussion

This section reports the findings on the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in research institutes in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics showing the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in research institutes in South-West, Nigeria

S/N	Research Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
SOCIALISATION (Average Mean = 3.41)							
1	I often engage in informal discussions with colleagues to share work-related experiences.	106 (57.3%)	70 (37.8%)	7 (3.8%)	2 (1.1%)	3.51	0.63

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2	I learn new work skills by observing and interacting with experienced colleagues.	97 (52.4%)	79 (42.7%)	6 (3.2%)	3 (1.6%)	3.46	0.64
3	I willingly share my personal work experiences to help others understand library procedures.	89 (48.1%)	89 (48.1%)	7 (3.8%)	-	3.44	0.57
4	I participate in team activities that promote the exchange of ideas and experiences.	79 (42.7%)	96 (51.9%)	4 (2.2%)	6 (3.2%)	3.34	0.68
5	I learn from social interactions such as break-time chats, group lunches, or informal gatherings.	74 (40.0%)	96 (51.9%)	15 (8.1%)	-	3.32	0.62
EXTERNALISATION (Average Mean = 3.20)							
6	I contribute to enhancing library manuals and guidelines.	69 (37.3%)	100 (54.1%)	15 (8.1%)	1 (0.5%)	3.28	0.63
7	I share my ideas in meetings in ways others can record or formalise.	70 (37.8%)	99 (53.5%)	14 (7.6%)	2 (1.1%)	3.28	0.65
8	I document my work processes so that others can understand and use them.	62 (33.5%)	103 (55.7%)	17 (9.2%)	3 (1.6%)	3.21	0.67
9	I encourage colleagues to write down or record their innovative ideas for future reference.	60 (32.4%)	94 (50.8%)	26 (14.1%)	5 (2.7%)	3.13	0.75
10	I create presentations, reports, or training materials to explain my knowledge to others.	56 (30.3%)	98 (53.0%)	29 (15.7%)	2 (1.1%)	3.12	0.70
COMBINATION (Average Mean = 3.24)							
11	I use existing reports, documents, and databases to generate new ideas or solutions.	75 (40.5%)	94 (50.8%)	14 (7.6%)	2 (1.1%)	3.31	0.66
12	I help compile and organise information from different resources for better access.	86 (46.5%)	73 (39.5%)	21 (11.4%)	5 (2.7%)	3.30	0.78
13	I collaborate with colleagues to integrate data and research from various departments.	71 (38.4%)	88 (47.6%)	24 (13.0%)	2 (1.1%)	3.23	0.71

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14	I update and refine documents or policies by merging information from multiple sources.	67 (36.2%)	96 (51.9%)	18 (9.7%)	4 (2.2%)	3.22	0.71
15	I regularly combine information from different library sections to improve service delivery.	52 (28.1%)	111 (60.0%)	20 (10.8%)	2 (1.1%)	3.15	0.64
INTERNALIZATION (Average Mean = 3.35)							
16	I apply the knowledge I gain from training sessions in my daily work.	104 (56.2%)	70 (37.8%)	8 (4.3%)	3 (1.6%)	3.49	0.66
17	I improve my skills by practising the procedures I read in manuals or guidelines.	92 (49.7%)	76 (41.1%)	13 (7.0%)	4 (2.2%)	3.38	0.71
18	I develop my expertise using information from books, articles, or databases.	83 (44.9%)	83 (44.9%)	15 (8.1%)	4 (2.2%)	3.32	0.72
19	I adopt best practices learned from documented experiences into my work routines.	78 (42.2%)	88 (47.6%)	17 (9.2%)	2 (1.1%)	3.31	0.68
20	I reflect on lessons learned from projects and apply them to future tasks.	73 (39.5%)	90 (48.6%)	20 (10.8%)	2 (1.1%)	3.26	0.69
Overall Mean =3.30							

Decision rule: Mean scores were interpreted against a four-band scale: 1.00–1.74 as very low, 1.75–2.49 as low, 2.50–3.24 as high, and 3.25–4.00 as very high, corresponding numerically to anchors of 1 through 4. However, the one with the highest mean represents the dominant knowledge-sharing behaviour among library personnel in research institute libraries in South-West, Nigeria.
Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2026)

Table 1 above presents the responses on the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in research institutes in South-West Nigeria. As shown in the table above, socialisation emerged as the dominant knowledge-sharing behaviour in research institute libraries, with an average mean score of 3.41. This is followed by internalisation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35), combination ($\bar{x}$ = 3.24), and externalisation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.20). The overall mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30) indicates that library personnel generally exhibit positive knowledge-sharing behaviours on the four-point scale.

In the socialisation dimension, all five items were very high. Some items, such as Informal discussion of work experiences (3.51; 95.1% agreed or strongly agreed) and learning new skills by observing experienced colleagues (3.46; 95.1%), were the highest-

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rated items in the table, followed by willingness to share personal work experiences (3.44; 96.2%). Participation in team activities (3.34) and learning from informal social interactions (3.32) were also very high. Regarding externalisation, contributing to library manuals and guidelines (3.28) and sharing ideas in meetings in ways others can record (3.28) were very high. The last two items, I encourage colleagues to write down or record their innovative ideas for future reference (3.13) and I create presentations, reports, or training materials to explain my knowledge to others (3.12), were the lowest-rated items rated by respondents.

In terms of the combination dimension, using existing reports and databases to generate new ideas (3.31) and compiling information from different resources (3.30) were very high. Collaborating across departments (3.23), merging sources to update documents (3.22), and combining information across library sections (3.15) were rated highly. With respect to the internalisation dimension, all five items were very high, led by applying knowledge from training in daily work (3.49; 94.1%), and practising procedures from manuals (3.38), while reflecting on lessons learned from projects for future tasks (3.26) was the lowest in this mode. The internalisation mode suggests that library personnel not only acquire knowledge but also apply it in their daily work.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study show that library personnel in research institutes in South-West Nigeria reported very high knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) overall (mean = 3.30), suggesting that knowledge exchange is embedded in routine professional practice. This supports studies by Deka and Subaveerapandiyan (2021), Ike (2023), and Salihu (2023), which report that librarians actively engage in knowledge sharing through both formal and informal channels. It also agrees with Romadona et al. (2024), who identified all four SECI processes among librarians at a research and innovation agency. However, a more nuanced analysis based on the SECI model shows that engagement is not uniform across the four modes. Socialisation recorded the highest means and is the dominant mode, highlighting the predominance of informal, interpersonal interactions such as discussions, observation, mentoring, and collaborative activities. This fits the argument that tacit knowledge is most effectively transferred through social interaction (Herlina et al., 2024). Nigerian and Kenyan studies report a similar reliance on face-to-face exchange and work groups

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(Abubakar & Sahabi, 2022; Fasola & Popoola, 2024; Ondieki, 2023).

The prominence of socialisation suggests that research institute libraries serve as collaborative learning environments in which knowledge is shared through ongoing interpersonal engagement. This may reflect strong professional relationships and supportive organisational cultures (Izu & Fombad, 2024). Closely linked to this is the very high level of internalisation, which indicates that library personnel apply what they learn in their daily work. Applying knowledge gained from training was the highest-rated item in this mode. Studies link knowledge sharing to job performance, innovation, and problem-solving (Fagbola & Ize, 2023; Okorie et al., 2021; Olubukola et al., 2022), but performance was not measured in this study. The result shows only that the learning-into-practice behaviour emphasised in those studies is present. The high scores in socialisation and internalisation suggest an experiential learning pattern in which knowledge is shared and translated into practice.

Externalisation recorded the lowest means, indicating comparatively weaker engagement in documenting tacit knowledge in forms such as manuals, reports, and training materials, although the score remained in the high band. The weakest items were creating presentations, reports or training materials and encouraging colleagues to record ideas. Studies have associated weaker codification with limited ICT support, weak onboarding, and shortages of funding and administrative backing (Abbas & Mairiga, 2022; Igbinlola & Olatunde, 2023; Nkomo et al., 2021). It is worth noting that respondents reported practising procedures from manuals and adopting best practices from documented experience, yet documenting their own work received a lower score. A possible explanation is that the documented staff application comes primarily from outside the institute (training, books, databases) rather than from colleagues' own records.

Similarly, the combination mode was high, with just 0.01 below the very high threshold. Respondents reported using reports and databases and compiling information from different resources but scored lower on combining information across library sections. This aligns with Igbinovia (2022) and Moradia et al. (2024), who emphasise the role of ICT infrastructure and digital competencies in enabling effective knowledge integration. Infrastructural and skill-related limitations may therefore hinder fuller use of explicit knowledge resources, although this study did not measure them.

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Following the results, the 4 KSB dimensions studied, as explained, are: socialisation is tacit-to-tacit, externalisation is tacit-to-explicit, combination is explicit-to-explicit, and internalisation is explicit-to-tacit. The results suggest that knowledge circulates most readily where it stays with people and is comparatively weaker where it must be recorded (externalisation) or integrated (combination). The study measured how often each behaviour occurs, and the implication is a risk to institutional memory, since experiential knowledge that is shared and applied but not documented can leave with the individual. The gaps between KSB modes are small (3.41 versus 3.20), and so externalisation is best described as comparatively lower rather than deficient. In conclusion, while knowledge-sharing behaviour among library personnel in research institutes is well established, the findings point to a need to strengthen documentation, codification, and technological integration, which are rated comparatively lower. Enhancing these dimensions would help preserve tacit knowledge and support long-term organisational learning and service delivery.

Conclusion

This study assessed the knowledge-sharing behaviour of library personnel in research institutes in South-West Nigeria using the SECI model as a framework. The findings reveal that library personnel demonstrate a high level of engagement in knowledge-sharing activities, indicating that knowledge exchange is an established and integral aspect of their professional practice.

This study provides a SECI-based description of knowledge sharing in research institute libraries, a setting rarely studied compared to university libraries. It shows that knowledge-sharing is most common when it flows between people and when it must be documented or integrated. The study suggests that strengthening documentation and integration would help turn the knowledge staff already share and apply into lasting institutional memory

Recommendation

The findings of this study have significant implications for stakeholders, including library administrators, research institute policymakers, library heads, information professionals, and library personnel. are made for library management, library heads and library ICT units in federal research institutes in South-West Nigeria:

1. Socialisation. Library management should preserve the strong culture of informal discussion and peer learning among library personnel by sustaining mentoring and peer-

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discussion arrangements in the research institute libraries.

2. Externalisation. Externalisation was comparatively the lowest of the four modes, although it was still rated high, so documentation is where attention is most needed. Library management should make documentation part of routine professional practice in the institutes. Staff should be required to record workflows, procedures and best practices in a standard template, and to file a short guide or summary after attending training or completing a project.
3. Combination. Library ICT units, working with management, should provide and maintain a shared repository or intranet where documented procedures and reports from the different library sections are stored and kept up to date. Library heads should also hold periodic cross-section review meetings, so that staff regularly consolidate information across sections and collaborate to update documents.
4. Internalisation. Library management should pair training sessions with a follow-up step in which staff report how they applied what they learned in their work.

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