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**Awareness and Application of Organizational Knowledge Management by Academic Librarians in University Libraries in South- East Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

Application of organizational knowledge management is crucial to effective information service delivery in university libraries. Its implementation in Nigeria is still at the initial stage while the level of awareness and application in university libraries in South-East is yet to be determined. This study investigated the level of awareness and application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in University libraries in South-East Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised 175 academic librarians from ten public universities. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. Percentages and mean were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used for testing the hypothesis. The study revealed among others that the level of awareness of organizational knowledge management was high however; the level of its application was low. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the collective knowledge of the organization is uncoordinated and knowledge sharing has not been institutionalized in the University libraries studied. This might have resulted to low application of organizational knowledge management in the university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. This defect impedes the achievement of organizational goals. It was recommended among others, that University libraries should formulate an organizational knowledge management strategy based on actual needs of the university; academic librarians should be equipped with skills and competencies to confidently and effectively apply organizational knowledge management for improved service delivery; trainers of academic librarians should expose and equip them with knowledge and competencies to confidently and effectively apply organizational knowledge management for improved service delivery.

**Keywords: Awareness, Application, Organizational, Knowledge, Management, Academic Librarians, University libraries**

## **Introduction**

University libraries all over the world are experiencing an exponential increase in data and information. The environment in which these libraries operate keeps changing, so, the need to respond equally to the information needs of the academic community, by practicing knowledge management. Knowledge is a strategic asset in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The creation of knowledge and application of a stock of it have had an increased significance to the growth process of organizations. Nwokocha, Unagha, Igwe and Ewa-Otu (2015), observed that knowledge management has gained momentum in recent years due to globalization of economies, rapid growth in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), increase in knowledge-based enterprises as well as opportunities and competitive pressure among organizations.

According to Igwe, Nnadozie and Unagha (2015), knowledge refers to skills or abilities (know-how) that someone possesses as a result of a blend in intuition and contextual

information in relation to the environment or task at hand. Knowledge is the resultant expertise that accumulates and builds up as a person continues to interact, use, practice and experiment with information. Knowledge may be explicit or tacit. Explicit knowledge is formalized and codified, collected, stored and disseminated. As a result, it is sometimes referred to as know-what. Explicit knowledge is documented and publicly shared; structured, fixed-content, externalized and conscious. It is what can be captured and shared through information technology. Tacit knowledge is the personal and context-specific knowledge of a person that resides in the human mind, behaviour and perception. It evolves from the person's interactions and requires skill and practice.

There are many information providers currently competing with general and university libraries in information provision enterprise. According to Ugwu and Onyancha (2017), this competitive information environment is forcing university libraries to explore avenues for innovative services to satisfy the dynamic needs of their users. Application of KM in university libraries could be an innovation that may help improve services and strengthen the relationship between university libraries and their users. This can be achieved through brainstorming, open discussions and provision of fertile ground for creativity. Others are sharing of ideas through organizing workshops, conferences, mentoring; web archiving and digitization. These enable identification and collectively addressing problems and finding solutions. Cherusuli, Tsamin and Takala (2012) noted that the application of KM in university libraries offers the opportunity to improve effectiveness and help to achieve the goals of the library.

Organizational knowledge management (OKM) is a deliberate and systematic coordination of people, technology, processes and organizational structure to add value through re-use and innovation (Nwokocha et al., 2015). This is achieved through creating, sharing and applying knowledge as well as feeding valuable lessons learned and best practices into corporate memory in order to foster continued organizational learning. OKM is the management of the organization's knowledge through a systematically and organizationally specified process for acquiring, organizing, sustaining, applying, sharing and renewing both the tacit and explicit knowledge of employees to enhance organizational performance and create value.

The aim of OKM is to facilitate access to and retrieval of content with special emphasis on the accessibility of knowledge for all members of an organization. It can, therefore, reside in

individuals and groups or exist at the organizational level. OKM has become a mainstream priority for organizations of all sizes as it enhances existing organizational business processes, introduces more efficient and effective business processes and removes redundant processes. Organizations that learn to manage their knowledge effectively take better decisions, reduce managerial training costs, and retain managerial expertise that might otherwise be lost as workers come and go. It also provides more uniform and effective policies and procedures that improve productivity and performance within the organization. OKM is a process involving several activities such as creating, acquiring, capturing, managing, sharing, using and re-using knowledge effectively. Organizations need to take full advantage of the value of knowledge. KM emerged in the business sector but is being practiced in non-profit organizations, including university libraries.

University libraries are libraries that belong to universities. The mission of university libraries is to support the educational and research activities of the institution through provision of collections, services and user education. Providing support for teaching, learning and research is the focus of university libraries. They embrace vast amounts of knowledge in various areas, and the management of these is considered necessary for providing quality information services, making effective decisions, improving their overall performance and becoming more relevant to their parent institutions.

Academic librarians are a crop of professionals that are trained to carry out core duties of a library, beyond the day- to- day routines of library officers and library attendants (Ezeani, Eke & Ugwu, 2012). Academic librarians are therefore employed with the primary responsibility of supporting the goals and objectives of the parent institution. They are trained to ensure that all members of the institutions know the information resources available to them and how they can access them within the library or outside it. There is an increasing interest in KM by the library and information science community because of its benefits in library operations and in satisfying the information needs of the users. It has become imperative, therefore, to assess the level of awareness and application of OKM by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria in order to appraise the efficacy of the Universities in this part of the nation.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Libraries as service-oriented entities have the primary objective to provide the right information to the right user at the right time and in the right format. In the past, the information needs of the academic community are met by the library but, information landscape is changing, such that the uses of library services and the librarian's role have continued to evolve too. Libraries are, therefore, required to expand their access to knowledge through knowledge management for better quality services. Over the years, university libraries have generated increasing amounts of information about their operations, yet libraries rarely use this operational information to create or apply organizational knowledge. Awareness and application of organizational knowledge management offer university libraries the opportunity to organize and interpret the vast arrays of information about their operations to improve effectiveness. Academic librarians as a result of their training and work experiences, and changes in their work environment are expected to be aware of OKM and be able to apply the same in the performance of their duties. Libraries do not consider organizational knowledge as a resource in its own right as they do personnel, collections or facilities. Academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria do not manage knowledge about their organizations as they manage their other resources. This could be due to the level of awareness. The application of knowledge management by the librarians in these universities is not clearly known. It is, therefore, imperative to conduct this study to determine the level of awareness and application of knowledge management among academic librarians in SE universities.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the level of awareness and application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in South-East Nigeria university libraries. Specifically, the study determined the:

1. Level of awareness of organizational knowledge management among academic librarians in South-East Nigeria university libraries;
2. Level of application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in South-East Nigeria university libraries;
3. Challenges to application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in the university libraries;

## **Research Questions**

The study was meant to supply answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of awareness of organizational knowledge management among academic librarians in South-East Nigeria?
2. What is the level of application of organizational knowledge management among academic librarians in South-East Nigeria?
3. What are the Challenges to application of organizational knowledge management among academic librarians in South-East Nigeria?

## **Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO1. There is no significant difference in the application of organizational knowledge management by experienced and less experienced academic librarians.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is based on the Nonaka-Takeuchi knowledge conversions theory (Ceptureanu & Ceptureanu 2010). Nonaka-Takeuchi's model of knowledge creation and conversion is also known as Socialization-Externalization-Combination-Internalization (SECI) process. The theory explains the phenomenon of organizational knowledge creation. It holds that individuals initially create knowledge and that knowledge created by individuals becomes organizational knowledge through "knowledge conversion" processes of socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. Thus, as knowledge is socialized and shared, it passes through the four different modes of knowledge conversion. The modes are:

Socialization is a process of creating common tacit knowledge through shared experiences. In socialization, a field of interaction is built where individuals share experiences and space at the same time. Through this process, common unarticulated beliefs and embodied skills are created and developed. In socialization, the tacit knowledge of one person is shared and transmitted to another person, and it becomes part of the person's tacit knowledge.

Externalization is a process of articulating tacit knowledge into such explicit knowledge as concepts and or diagrams. The process often uses metaphors, analogies, and or sketches. The

mode is triggered by a dialogue intended to create concepts from tacit knowledge. A good example of externalization, according to Igwe, et al. (2015), is the process of creating or developing a new production process. Here, the tacit knowledge in the brains of experts are articulated and expressed as concepts or drawings, thus becoming explicit knowledge that can be further studied and refined.

Combination is a process of assembling new and existing explicit knowledge into a systemic knowledge. For example, an engineer can combine available drawings and design specifications to produce a new process design or equipment (Igwe, et al. 2015). What commonly occurs is the combination of a newly created concept with existing knowledge to produce something tangible.

Internalization is a process of embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge or an individual's know-how or operational knowledge. That is learning by doing. Explicit knowledge that is available as text, sound, or video facilitates the internalization process. The use of operating manuals for various machines is an example of explicit knowledge that is used for internalization. The instructions are learned and become part of the person's tacit knowledge. Organizational knowledge is created by the interactions among these four conversion processes, and through the transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge from individual to group to organizational levels.

This theory explains the processes of knowledge creation and conversion, which usually occur in university libraries. Academic librarians are involved in learning and managing their competencies. At this stage, knowledge is largely disjointed, uncoordinated and unharvested as they keep their skills and competencies to themselves as opposed to making them available to those who need them (users and colleagues). This results in low productivity, competitive disadvantage and unsatisfactory service. Moreover, organizational knowledge in the form of the experience and expertise accumulated by employees is lost when the staff no longer works in the organization. However, the SECI model theorizes that knowledge keeps on changing from one form to another, and this necessitates the creation of new knowledge. For example, knowledge shared during meetings, brainstorming sessions, workshops, conferences are basically tacit knowledge (Mutula & Mooka, 2008). This knowledge is then converted to minutes of meeting and conference proceedings which are referred to as implicit knowledge. Such knowledge is used to improve the performance of the organization, secure and sustain a competitive advantage or viability. The tacit



knowledge of individuals is continuously converted to implicit knowledge of the organization as a result of the interactions in the conversion processes that ultimately lead to an improvement in product and services.

### **Awareness of Organizational Knowledge Management**

Organizational knowledge management can be achieved with serious consideration of the culture and management style of individuals, groups and organizations. Every organization owns information, records, creates and receives it in the course of the daily business transactions. Krishnamurthy and Balasubramani (2012) observed that every institution has to spend large costs to build library collections and librarian should be aware of the value of the knowledge to act as an association between the source and the user community. So, it is essential that librarians should be aware of the interrelationship between characteristics of knowledge and process of knowledge management in academic library. Krishnamurthy and Balasubramani also noted that the awareness of OKM process in university libraries among academic librarians are varied while the librarians on managerial level show a high level of awareness than others that are not in managerial level. This may be as a result of their professional education and experience. They suggested that most academic librarians need to gain additional skills to work in KM environment.

Koloniari and Fassoulis (2016) discovered that the level of awareness of KM among personnel working in Greek academic libraries is high. Most of the respondents indicated that they came to know about KM during their studies, suggesting that KM has become part of their Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula. Some others learnt about it from conferences, workshops, and seminars while from work experience was the least popular response. On the contrast, Valaei and Aziz (2012) found out that the level of awareness of KM by companies in Iran is low. To align organizational priorities and KM opportunities, Valaei and Aziz suggested that management should consider learning about KM activities. Top managers should be positive; consent to be a learning organization and creating an enabling atmosphere for practicing KM within an organization.

### **Application of Organizational Knowledge Management in University Libraries**

Success of university libraries depends on the ability to utilize information and knowledge of their staff to serve the needs of the academic community better. In that, according to

Ogolo (2012), knowledge is of no value to anyone unless it is applied to decisions that result in competitive actions. However, Islam, Siddike, Nowrin and Naznin (2015), observed that the application of OKM in university libraries is considered as one of the most useful solutions for improved services. It has also made such libraries more relevant to their parent institutions in this present digital, competitive and challenging environment. Jain (2014) observed that often, organizations do not know what knowledge they have and spend considerable funds on training and development to gain knowledge that they may already have. The practice of KM will make such hidden organizational knowledge become visible and usable.

Application of OKM in university libraries will enable libraries to organize and provide access to intangible resources that help librarians to carry out their tasks. Hislop (2013) believed that OKM injects new blood into the library culture, which results in mutual trust, open exchange, studying, sharing and developing the knowledge operation mechanisms of libraries. Hislop noted that if OKM is applied in libraries, personal knowledge may be turned into corporate knowledge that can be widely shared throughout the library.

Ogolo (2012) posited that application of OKM is a crucial notion for academic libraries involved in efficient and effective collection, organization, access and dissemination of tacit or intangible knowledge. While corporations may be concerned with utilizing their intellectual capital to maximize profits, academic libraries should aim at meeting the needs of their users in the best possible way. In applying OKM in libraries, there is considerable opportunity for librarians to use their traditional skills to assume a new function of managing knowledge within the library and which would complement the traditional library service function.

Moraes de Bem and Coelho (2013) noted that application of KM in libraries would lead to generation of new knowledge, development of new procedures and practices to improve integration and sharing of knowledge within organizations. Ogendi (2017) averred that the application of KM in libraries involves creating, acquiring, sharing and applying both tacit and explicit knowledge for benefit of university library and the entire user community. This will be through provision of the right information to the right user in the right format and at the right time in order to accomplish the institution's goals and objectives. KM programme tailored specifically to libraries can reduce costs, increase revenue and promote staff

efficiency and improve the activities, products and services. This will ensure improved library performance and guarantees a position in the knowledge market.

### **Challenges to Application of OKM in University Libraries**

KM is considered as an essential and necessary component for organizations, especially libraries, to survive and maintain competitiveness. In a knowledge-based economy, KM is increasingly viewed as critical to organizational effectiveness and performance (Bosua and Venkitachalem, 2013). Although KM is a useful tool, there are several challenges to implementation of OKM in university libraries.

Moraes de Bem and Coelho (2013), citing Jain (2007), pointed out that academic librarians have to face the following challenges when working with KM: a) intellectual challenge of managing tacit knowledge and capturing relevant information from the overflowing reservoir of information; b) challenge of developing the right culture to provide an environment of knowledge creation and sharing; c) challenge of managing central repositories of knowledge to the main organization, through compilation of explicit knowledge documented; d) the challenge of being well equipped in technological know-how to work effectively and efficiently, as well as working collaboratively with IT experts; the challenge of digitizing the library collection for easy access; h) the challenge of updating knowledge available regularly in order to remove the obsolete information and engage the most updated information.

Bosua and Venkitachalam (2013) noted that the attitude of staff is another obstacle to the implementation of KM in university libraries. Most workers are resistant to change. All organizations experience some degree of resistance to changes in daily operations. There is a resistance of most employees to incorporating KM technology. Bosua and Venkitachalam also observed that reluctance to embrace organizational change is due to misunderstanding or misconception of the purpose of the change. When new technologies drive organizational changes, resistance may be caused by ignorance of function and scope of the capability of the technology.

Jain (2014) identified the major challenges in practicing KM as; constant budget decline, inadequate staff training, lack of clearly defined guidelines on KM implementation, insufficient technology, limited KM expertise and lack of knowledge sharing culture. The budget has an impact on everything, including inadequate tools and technologies, a lack of

reward system, inadequate training plans and lack of expertise in KM. Jain noted that with a stagnant or dwindling library budget, academic libraries have to increase their operational efficiency in order to meet this challenge. Indeed, when libraries face tight budgets or budget reductions, it is only natural for library administration to hesitate to invest in such KM system. In the same view, Nazim and Mukherjee (2011), identified the challenges as a misunderstanding of KM concept, lack of knowledge sharing culture, top management commitment, incentives and rewards, financial resources and IT infrastructure.

Lack of awareness of KM, communication gap, lack of government policies and appropriate budget, lack of central strategy and lack of professionally dedicated staff are some of the challenges identified by Islam et al. (2015). Reducing communication gap and improved knowledge sharing is essential in the application of KM in university libraries. Librarians should improve internal communication that will assist in making the decision process easier for sharing of knowledge among them.

## **Methods**

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to determine the level of awareness and application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of 175 academic librarians in all 10 public university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The population size is small and as such it was studied in entirety using census sampling. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire contained 39 items in two sections of A and B. Section A, contained items on demographic data of the respondents while Section B was divided into three clusters of B1, B2 and B3 questions with 20, 10 and 7 items respectively. Sections B1 contained two options of True or False, while B2 and B3 were structured on a 4-point rating scale. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages for research question1 and inferential statistics while arithmetic means were used for research questions 2 and 3. The null hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.5 significance level.

## **Results**

### **Level of Awareness of Organizational Knowledge Management by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria**

**Table 1: Respondents Level of Awareness of Organizational Knowledge Management**

| S/N | ITEMS   | True |      | False |      | Level of Awareness |
|-----|---|------|------|-------|------|--------------------|
|     |   | F    | %    | F     | %    |                    |
| 1.  | OKM enables management to deliver the right knowledge to the right people at the right time.                                  | 163  | 98.8 | 2     | 1.2  | Very High          |
| 2.  | OKM is about systematic organization of knowledge in an organization.   | 111  | 67.3 | 54    | 32.7 | Moderate           |
| 3.  | OKM is not internally generated within personal domains of intuitions of people working in the organization.                  | 17   | 10.3 | 148   | 89.7 | Very High          |
| 4.  | OKM applies the collective knowledge of the entire workforce to achieve specific organizational goals.                        | 156  | 94.5 | 9     | 5.5  | Very High          |
| 5.  | OKM is about systematic capturing of knowledge.   | 155  | 93.9 | 10    | 6.1  | Very High          |
| 6.  | OKM is not centered on enabling the organization to be more effective by recording and making available what its people know. | 16   | 9.7  | 149   | 90.3 | Very High          |
| 7.  | OKM improves organization's ability to sustain a competitive advantage.   | 77   | 46.7 | 88    | 53.3 | Low                |
| 8.  | OKM does not involve developing an environment where knowledge is created, shared and used.                                   | 68   | 41.2 | 97    | 58.8 | Moderate           |
| 9.  | OKM improves internal and external communication.   | 160  | 97   | 5     | 3    | Very High          |
| 10. | OKM is about systematic renewal of explicit knowledge.  | 36   | 21.8 | 129   | 78.2 | Very Low           |
| 11. | OKM offers the opportunity to systematic management of knowledge within units inside and outside the organization.            | 89   | 53.9 | 76    | 46.1 | Low Level          |
| 12. | OKM aims only to draw out from people what they know.   | 6    | 3.6  | 159   | 96.4 | Very High          |
| 13. | OKM is concerned with the cultivation of channels through which knowledge flows in an organization.                           | 148  | 89.7 | 17    | 10.3 | Very High          |
| 14. | OKM focuses on practice using communication and collaboration to improve how people do their practice.                        | 149  | 90.3 | 16    | 9.7  | Very High          |
| 15. | OKM occurs only when group knowledge from several subunits is combined used to create new knowledge.                          | 30   | 18.2 | 135   | 81.8 | Very High          |
| 16. | OKM advocates the creation and use of formal organizational processes to encourage the individuals to create new knowledge.   | 33   | 20   | 132   | 80   | Very Low           |
| 17. | OKM enables individuals in an organization to collectively acquire knowledge.   | 149  | 90.3 | 16    | 9.7  | Very High          |
| 18. | Technology is the only enabler of OKM in organizations.   | 15   | 9.1  | 150   | 90.9 | Very High          |
| 19. | In OKM mapping of processes helps to depict what is really going on in the organization.                                      | 94   | 57   | 71    | 43   | Moderate           |
| 20. | In OKM information systems are critical means to disseminate organizational knowledge assets.                                 | 155  | 93.9 | 10    | 6.1  | Very High          |

From Table 1, it can be seen that 89.7%, 90.3%, 96.4%, 81.8% and 90.9% of the respondents were able to correctly identify that items 3,6,12, 15 and 18 respectively are false statements about OKM. The respondents showed an understanding of the concept of OKM to the level that they were able to identify false and misleading information about the concept and responded appropriately. 98.8%, 94.5%, 93.9% 97.0%, 90.3% and 93.9% respondents were also able to identify correct statements about OKM. Thus exhibiting a high level of awareness.

### **Level of application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria**

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Ratings on Level of Application of Organizational Knowledge Management by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria =165

| S/N                 | ITEMS   | Mean        | SD   | Remarks          |
|---------------------|---|-------------|------|------------------|
| 1.                  | Providing professional education and training to facilitate employees understanding of knowledge management and its benefits                      | 3.14        | .68  | High Level       |
| 2.                  | Connecting people through the use of collaborative tools such as e-mail, video conferencing, discussion boards etc                                | 3.07        | .69  | High Level       |
| 3.                  | Encoding knowledge into a knowledge repository (Institutional repository)   | 2.73        | .74  | High Level       |
| 4.                  | Capturing and disseminating knowledge obtained from organizations like IFLA, NLA  | 2.56        | .68  | High Level       |
| 5.                  | Creating knowledge centre for collecting, organizing and disseminating knowledge  | 2.46        | .80  | Low Level        |
| 6.                  | Conducting exit interviews to capture knowledge from staff leaving the library  | 2.40        | 1.01 | Low Level        |
| 7.                  | Encouraging experienced workers to communicate their knowledge to less-experienced workers  | 2.26        | .59  | Low Level        |
| 8.                  | Providing good quality information services tailored to each user's need in order to improve knowledge communication, application and generation. | 2.15        | .73  | Low Level        |
| 9.                  | Analyzing records of users, and use the knowledge acquired from exercise for planning and redesigning of library services                         | 2.11        | .67  | Low Level        |
| 10.                 | Harvesting and documenting the knowledge that is in the head of individual librarians (tacit knowledge)   | 1.31        | .78  | Very Low Level   |
| <b>Cluster Mean</b> |   | <b>2.44</b> |      | <b>Low Level</b> |

As shown in Table 2, the highest level of application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in South-East Nigeria is providing professional education and training to facilitate employees' understanding of knowledge management

and its benefits (3.14). Other areas that organizational knowledge management is applied to a high level include connecting people through collaborative tools such as e-mail, video conferencing, etc (3.07) encoding knowledge into a knowledge repository (Institutional repository) 2.73 encoding knowledge into a knowledge repository (Institutional repository), 2.73 capturing and disseminating knowledge obtained from organizations like IFLA, NLA (2.56). However, the respondents indicated low level of application of organizational knowledge management in areas such as creating knowledge centre for collecting, organizing and disseminating knowledge 2.46, conducting exit interviews 2.40, encouraging experienced workers to communicate their knowledge to less-experienced workers 2.26. The lowest level of organizational knowledge management application is harvesting and documenting the knowledge that is in the head of individual librarians (tacit knowledge) with a very low mean score 1.31. The cluster mean score of 2.44 is below the acceptance point of 2.50 shows that academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria apply OKM at a low level. The standard deviations are within the same range, indicating that the respondents were homogeneous in their views.

### **Challenges associated with application of OKM by academic librarians in South East University libraries**

Table 3 shows that the respondents agree that lack of organizational leadership commitment with mean score 2.96, Librarians lack of expertise in knowledge management with a mean score 3.04, insufficient and inappropriate technological systems 3.18, lack of clearly defined guidelines on knowledge management implementation 3.24, lack of relevant training 3.26 and unfavourable organizational culture that impedes knowledge sharing behaviour 3.28, indicating that they are some of the challenges of implementing OKM by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. Lack of awareness of knowledge management concepts and lack of appropriate reward system and incentive with mean scores of 2.25 and 2.42 respectively indicating disagreement by the respondents with these as challenges of implementing OKM by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. However, the cluster mean score of 2.95 shows the agreement of the respondents with items as challenges of implementing OKM by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria.

**Table 3: Respondents' Mean Ratings on Challenges associated with application of OKM by Academic Librarians in University libraries in South-East Nigeria. N=165**

| S/N                 | ITEMS   | Mean | SD  | Remarks  |
|---------------------|---|------|-----|----------|
| 1.                  | Unfavourable organizational culture that impedes knowledge sharing behavior | 3.28 | .55 | Agree    |
| 2.                  | Lack of relevant training   | 3.26 | .56 | Agree    |
| 3.                  | Lack of clearly defined guidelines on knowledge management implementation   | 3.24 | .59 | Agree    |
| 4.                  | Insufficient and inappropriate technological systems                        | 3.18 | .62 | Agree    |
| 5.                  | Librarians lack of expertise in knowledge management                        | 3.04 | .76 | Agree    |
| 6.                  | Lack of organizational leadership commitment                                | 2.96 | .82 | Agree    |
| 7.                  | Lack of appropriate reward system and incentives                            | 2.42 | .53 | Disagree |
| 8.                  | Lack of awareness of knowledge management concepts                          | 2.25 | .88 | Disagree |
| <b>Cluster mean</b> |   | 2.95 |     | Agree    |

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the application of OKM by experienced and less experienced academic librarians.

**Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of difference in respondents' mean ratings on the level of application of organizational knowledge management by academic librarians in South-East university libraries based on years of experience**

| Source of variation | N  | Mean | Sd   | df  | t-cal | P-value | Decision |
|---------------------|----|------|------|-----|-------|---------|----------|
| Experienced         | 82 | 3.08 | 0.47 | 163 | 0.48  | 0.627   | Not-Sig  |
| Less Experienced    | 83 | 3.04 | 0.47 |     |       |         |          |

Table 4 shows that at the 0.05 level of significance and 163 of df the calculated t of 0.48 with a p-value of 0 .623, which is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected.



This means that there is no significant difference in respondent's level of application of OKM based on experience.

## **Discussion**

This study examined the level of awareness and application of OKM by academic librarians in University libraries in South-East Nigeria. The study revealed that academic librarians in South-East University libraries have a high level of awareness of OKM. This finding is in line with Koloniari and Fassoulis (2016), who reported that the level of awareness of OKM of all the personnel in academic libraries in Greece is high. Chandra and Raman (2009) and Potgieter, and Rensleigh (2013) also reported that employees were aware of organizational management are also in agreement with the finding of the present study.

On level of application of OKM by academic librarians in University libraries in South-East, Nigeria, the study revealed that there is a low level of application of OKM by academic librarians in university libraries in South-East Nigeria. With this, it may be difficult for university libraries to make an appreciable impact on the services rendered. This is because according to Islam, Siddike, Nowrin and Naznin (2015) the application of OKM in University libraries is considered as one of the most useful solutions for improved services. It offers the libraries further relevance to their parent institutions in the present digital, competitive and challenging environment. The finding of this study is in line with the study of Jain (2007), who reported that most academic libraries in East and Southern Africa are not applying OKM. The finding further revealed that the respondents did not differ significantly in their level of application of OKM as a result of years of experience. This means that both the experienced and less experienced academic librarians are at the same level of application of OKM. This could be as a result of a lack of knowledge sharing in the libraries studied.

The study revealed some challenges affecting the application of OKM by academic librarians in University libraries in South-East, Nigeria. These challenges include lack of relevant training, an unfavourable organizational culture that impedes knowledge sharing, lack of clearly defined guidelines of knowledge management and lack of organizational leadership commitment. The finding supports Islam, Siddike and Nowrin (2015) who reported that librarians in Bangladesh were experiencing challenges such as; lack of knowledge sharing among staff, lack of skilled manpower in the libraries, lack of technological infrastructure, lack of central strategy for the application of knowledge

management in the libraries and lack of government policies and adequate budget. However, the present result differs from the findings of Jain (2014) who identified lack of appropriate reward system and incentives as challenges to the application of OKM in Southern African Development Community University libraries.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has established that the level of awareness of OKM of academic librarians in University libraries in South-East Nigeria is high, while the level of application of OKM is low. This implies that the collective knowledge of the organization is uncoordinated and knowledge sharing has not been institutionalized in the University libraries studied, thereby impeding the achievement of organizational goals. When OKM is applied at a low level, it implies that the library is not making the best use of the knowledge of the staff and the processes in serving the user community.

Based on these findings, the following are recommended:

1. Trainers of academic librarians should expose and equip them with knowledge and competencies to confidently and effectively apply OKM for improved service delivery.
2. University management should provide enough emotional and environmental motivation for the implementation of OKM by librarians.
3. The library and University management should provide social, managerial and technological support to strengthen the implementation of OKM.
4. University libraries should formulate an organizational knowledge management strategy based on actual needs of the university.
5. Academic librarians should be equipped with skills and competencies to confidently and effectively apply knowledge management for improved service delivery.

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