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INFORMATION SHARING DYNAMICS AND WORKPLACE COHESIVENESS IN NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT
This study investigate the relationship between information sharing dynamics and workplace cohesiveness in Niger Delta University in Bayelsa State. Specifically, it examines the extent to which information sharing and dissemination influence cohesiveness among employees. A descriptive survey research design was used, focusing on administrative staff of the studied university. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, and the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was applied for inferential analysis, processed through SPSS V.23. The findings revealed information sharing and transfer has a significant correlation with cohesion among employees. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between information sharing dynamics and workplace cohesiveness in Niger Delta University in Bayelsa State. Based on these findings, the study recommends encouraging knowledge sharing, enhancing information transfer mechanisms to foster greater cohesion among employee in university
KEYWORDS: *Information Sharing, Workplace Cohesion, Information Transfer*

INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies have changed the nature of sharing, which was previously primarily about exchange, into a hybrid of distribution and exchange (Wittel, 2011). Studies show that the phrases knowledge sharing and information sharing are frequently used synonymously (Savolainen, 2017). This is a practice that some researchers have followed (e.g., Ahmad, 2017b; Widén-Wulff, 2007). The interpersonal degree of information sharing—more especially, the sharing of work-related information amongst individuals inside an organization—is the subject of this study.

Previous studies show that while withholding or asymmetric information tends to have negative impacts, sharing typically results in favourable outcomes (Tong and Crosno, 2015). Sharing is a critical component of information practices (Almehmadi, 2014; Du, 2014), is necessary for successful work in various contexts (Choo, 2006), and is necessary for being informed (e.g., Khoir, 2015). It also helps to generate social capital (Huvila, 2014). It improves productivity, cohesiveness, and knowledge integration in teams (Mesmer-Magnus and DeChurch, 2009). Additionally essential to collective decision-making is information exchange (Mishra, 2014). Information sharing is acknowledged to have important preconditions, including social capital (Tötterman & Widén-Wulff, 2017) and trust (Wilson, 2010). In contrast to technological infrastructures or outside incentives, social integration plays a crucial role in information sharing, underscoring the significance of trust (Hall & Widén-Wulff, 2018).

Because of this, companies should appreciate the knowledge and expertise that each person possesses and arrange and preserve it so that others in the company may access it. In workgroups, face-to-face communication and cooperation are necessary for information sharing. Motivating people to contribute their knowledge presents a problem for information managers (Muhamad, Che & Rosmaini, 2014).

Information sharing and organisational success have been found to be positively correlated in the past (Ali et al., 2019; Du et al., 2007; Keszey, 2018; Oyemomi et al., 2016; Wang and Wang, 2012). Nonetheless, further clarification is required on how information sharing may be explicitly thought of within organisations and how it affects performance (Edwards, 2017). Many important topics are currently being debated by scholars looking into information sharing and organisational effectiveness (Du et al. (2007).

Tong and Crosno (2015) came to the conclusion that sharing usually has a beneficial impact on outcomes based on an analysis of the results linked to information asymmetry versus sharing. There are several advantages, such as increased creativity and productivity. Individuals-level dissemination of information (in terms of attitudes and behaviours) usually has an advantageous effect on an individual's work performance in addition to positive organisational results (Henttonen et al., 2016).

Improving information exchange has become a focus of research because of its critical role in organisational performance. Information sharing amongst employees is influenced by a number of characteristics that have been found in previous studies, including organisational culture, diversity, personality, feeling of coherence, and pay (Ahmad, 2017; Yang & Maxwell, 2019).

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Effective information sharing practices is adopted by organisations at a quick pace due to the assumption that it is a tool for creating robust and efficient management and administration that may improve output and increase employee happiness. Effective information sharing increase employee involvement, which creates synergy and growth.. Similar to individual workers, information sharing practices also create unique dynamics that require ongoing support and upkeep. When people work together to accomplish common objectives, they contribute to the organization's overall performance in a collaborative approach. Despite having various responsibilities and working for different departments, employees collaborate to achieve the organization's main goals through communication and information sharing. This practices help to further this shared goal, which serves as the driving force behind their actions.

While it is evident that efficient information sharing (IS) is crucial for team and group cohesion (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2013; Jehn & Shah, 2017), prior studies have demonstrated that teams frequently do not make the best use of information when making decisions. Instead of acting as a forum for the exchange of fresh knowledge, discussions typically serve to confirm each person's pre-discussion preferences.

The relationship between information sharing and organisational effectiveness has been examined in earlier research. People are the foundation of every workplace, hence interpersonal connection for professional goals is inevitable. Thus, teamwork is crucial to accomplishing organisational objectives. In order to maximise the advantages of group efforts, organisations work hard to foster a sense of teamwork among employees. Unrestricted communication is necessary for workplace cohesion. Actions to suppress knowledge from coworkers can impede business objectives by destroying collaboration. However, this study aims to examine the relationship between information sharing dynamics and workplace cohesion in Niger Delta University in Bayelsa State.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between information sharing dynamics and workplace cohesion in Niger Delta University in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study looked at:

1. To examine the extent to which information sharing relate to group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.
2. To ascertain the extent to which information transfer relate to group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does information sharing relate with group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State?
2. What is the correlation between information transfer and group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State?

HYPOTHESES

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between information sharing and group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.
H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between information transfer and group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

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CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Information Sharing Dynamics

Information sharing is the process of exchanging knowledge, data, or insights between individuals, organizations, or systems to facilitate decision-making, problem-solving, and innovation. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected through technology, the importance of effective information sharing has grown, touching sectors such as business, healthcare, education, and government (Hendriks, 2018). This essay explores the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations associated with information sharing, supported by relevant academic insights.

One of the most significant benefits of information sharing is its capacity to foster collaboration and innovation. In business, sharing information between departments or with external partners can lead to improved product development and streamlined operations. For example, knowledge-sharing initiatives in multinational corporations have been shown to enhance performance by facilitating the flow of ideas across borders (Hendriks, 2018). Cross-functional teams that collaborate by sharing knowledge are often more successful in addressing complex issues, as each team member contributes unique perspectives and expertise.

In education, information sharing is foundational to the learning process. Teachers share knowledge with students, and students collaborate with one another to enhance their understanding of a subject. Furthermore, research institutions benefit from the open exchange of academic findings, which accelerates the development of new theories and technologies (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2015). This fosters a culture of learning and continuous improvement, which is critical in today's rapidly evolving world.

Despite its benefits, information sharing faces several challenges. One significant barrier is the issue of trust. Organizations and individuals may be reluctant to share information if they are unsure whether the recipients will handle it responsibly. In some cases, there is a fear that sharing knowledge could lead to a loss of competitive advantage. For instance, proprietary information in business must be carefully managed to ensure that it does not fall into the hands of competitors (Tsai, 2019). This dilemma highlights the need for robust policies and agreements that govern how information is shared and used.

Information Sharing

Information should be freely available to everyone inside an organization, enabling its usage at any time and location. Information is widely disseminated thanks to modern technologies including intranets, the Internet, creative teamwork, and other digital tools (Yaghoubi et al., 2011). Establishing information dissemination policies and procedures within the organisation, using Internet technologies and office automation, encouraging group cohesion, hosting joint conferences, making sure that employees at all levels have easy access to information, regularly scheduling meetings for information exchange among employees, and publishing innovative employees' creative work through electronic means like the Internet and e-magazines are all important operational indicators of effective information dissemination (Anvari-e-rostami et al., 2009).

These days, a lot of CEOs and managers understand how important it is for staff members to share information, and they are keen to implement information management practices at work. According to Chaudhry (2015), over the previous five years, a number of studies have examined information management techniques and information-sharing policies in local businesses. For instance, Singapore makes a compelling case study. Chaudhry (2015) claims that Singapore is a special society that strikes a balance between a commitment to Asian cultural values and an openness to innovation and creativity. Meritocracy and system efficiency are the two main pillars of Singapore's heterogeneous and multiethnic society, and they are essential to the success of information management initiatives. However, not all organisations have adopted information-sharing procedures yet. Information sharing is not ingrained in the operations of many public and private organisations, especially those associated with multinational corporations. When private businesses do embrace information sharing, they frequently use their ingenuity and inventiveness to increase their revenue and expertise. Chong (2003) showed that knowledge exchange in some situations occurs informally through face-to-face conversation and collaborative workgroups. According to his research, these activities are supported by a culture that values knowledge exchange, learning from mistakes, and skill growth.

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Information Transfer

Information transfer in an organisation is the distribution of data among groups and individuals. Information flow is very important for companies as, as a benefit, knowledge increases value via use (Quinn et al., 1996). Many businesses have tried to improve their information management systems to more successfully extend their current knowledge through employee information transfer (Watson and Hewett, 2006), given the relevance of knowledge and information sharing for a company's competitive advantage in today's business environment. Information flow, according to Szulinski (1996), can result in employee behavioural changes as well as the emergence of fresh ideas that propel such actions (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). But for information to information to flow inside a company, staff members and teams of workers must show great degrees of cooperative behaviour (GoA successful information transfer depends on honest and open communication, as well as developing trust within the communication and information flow systems ingrained in the company's structure and culture. of the company. A review of these contributions has helped to classify the factors of the information transmission process and find strategies for a better understanding of it (Minbaeva, 2007).

The 2019 Ferri et al. study examines the interaction between two IT systems—patents and academic spin-offs—the 2019 Ferri et al. study looks at how patents, which reflect the knowledge passed on from the parent university and academic founders, affect the performance of these spin-offs. Using panel data models, the study examines data from 132 academic spin-offs spread over 67 Italian universities. Ferri et al. (2019) add to the IT literature in three major areas and give ideas for future study. Firstly, they argue that IT researchers should consider evaluating patents and spin-offs together, given that they are both common strategies used by universities to transmit information. Secondly, the analysis demonstrates that patenting processes serve as an effective mechanism for conveying explicit knowledge in academic spin-offs. Thirdly, the authors contribute to the continuing discussion concerning the trade-off between obtaining external information and preserving internal information, offering insight on the issues academic spin-off founders confront. While patenting is demonstrated to be a favourable factor in the performance of spin-offs, the findings also alert academic entrepreneurs about the possible downsides.

Workplace and Group Cohesion

Workplace cohesiveness is the bond that draws people into a particular group and prevents them from leaving it. It can be defined as the set of elements that motivate people to stay in or be drawn to a certain group. Cohesion is a social phenomenon that characterizes organizations where members interact frequently, and it reflects the dynamics that draw group members together (Carron, 2002). The concept of group cohesion is multifaceted, with meanings ranging from interpersonal attraction among members to broader aspects of collective cohesion. As a result, defining the phrase has created confusion and inconsistencies among academics (Mudrack, 2017).

Cohesiveness is an important factor in group maintenance and is closely related to organizational effectiveness. Thus, this variable must be included while evaluating organizational results (Elenkov, 2002). Keller (1992) examined the relationship between group cohesiveness, physical proximity, job happiness, innovation orientation, and performance in a major R&D organization. This longitudinal study, which included 32 project groups, employed hierarchical regression analysis to discover that group cohesion was the only predictor significantly associated with project group performance. Furthermore, the study found that group cohesiveness was the most powerful predictor of success, both at the start and over time.

Despite the fact that there are numerous definitions and techniques to evaluating group cohesion, the diversity of perspectives from other professions may explain this. In this study, group cohesiveness is defined as the process by which a group remains unified and collaborates to achieve its aims and objectives (Carron, 2002). This term is especially appropriate for work groups since it includes both task cohesion (group tasks) and social cohesion (relationships among group members) (Carron & Brawley, 2000).

Widmeyer, Carron, and Brawley (2005) define group cohesion as a dynamic process in which members bond and remain together in the pursuit of collective and institutional goals. In their study of cohesion concepts and measurement, Carron and Brawley (2012) stressed the significance of taking group structure and context into account when operationalizing group cohesion.

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is based on social cognitive theory by Bandura, (2000). In accordance with social cognitive theory, reciprocal causality—where behaviours, personal attributes, and environmental circumstances interact—shapes both individual and collective actions. Understanding the sociopsychological mechanisms influencing team responses might be suitable for this idea (Campbell & Martens, 2009). Team response can be affected by elements including direct success, observation of others, verbal encouragement, and physiological conditions.

Personal successes are the most important source of information for performance or task success, according to Bandura (2000), followed by seeing others doing comparable tasks, and lastly, by motivating comments or persuasion. According to Campbell and Martin (2009), while repeated failures may reduce team responsiveness, good performance combined with vocal support from team members may improve it. Understanding group dynamics requires one to grasp social cognitive theory, which clarifies how people learn via social interactions and observations (Swanson and Holton, 2001). Socializing is the process by which companies teach new hires their values and direction on how to perform well within the company (Swanson and Holton, 2001). Furthermore, Tajfel and Turner's (1981) social identity theory has been used to explain team response. This theory offers an understanding of why and how people fit into and behave within social groupings.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Reviewing information management and team vitality one after the other helps one to look at worldwide results from many studies. The effects of management information systems on the performance of cement-producing enterprises in Southeast Nigeria were examined by Nworie and Oguejiofor (2023). They particularly examined how executive support systems, decision support systems, and transaction processing systems impacted company performance. With a population of 143 staff members from the accounting and management information systems departments of four chosen cement businesses in Southeast Nigeria, the study adopted a descriptive survey form. The Yamane formula let one find the sample size—141. Using a standardised questionnaire, data were gathered with relation to Pearson Product Moment Relationships between the variables were investigated at a 5% significance level using correlational analysis. The study revealed that the performance of cement-producing companies in the area was much improved by systems for transaction processing, decision assistance, and executive support.

Asilo (2022) investigated if trust acts as a mediator in the link between a favourable view of organisational changes and information sharing. 317 workers of a major Finnish multinational company received a questionnaire. Based on previous studies, hypotheses were assessed by partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that, via trust, a positive view of recent organisational changes improves information exchange both directly and indirectly. On the other hand, unfavourable opinions of changes result in less information sharing, which has been linked in past studies to several unfavourable effects on companies and their stakeholders. This study advances organisational information management by offering fresh perspectives on how little-scale organisational changes influence employee interpersonal information exchange. To our knowledge, this is the first quantitative study verifying how employee information-sharing behaviour is affected by opinions about organisational changes.

Barinua and Akpan (2022) looked at how information collecting may help to raise organisational performance. The study sought to ascertain how certain facets of information acquisition support improved organisational performance. To investigate this they looked at material analysis and a literature study. The results showed that elements of information acquisition—such as organisational learning, information initiation, and information transformation—positively affect organisational success. To improve performance and make use of both human and technology resources for efficient information transformation, the researchers advised companies to always be seeking and sharing information.

In Pakistan, Tirmizi, et al. (2022) looked at how information management affected public sector university performance. Through information management, this quantitative and correlational study examined important elements influencing university effectiveness. With a 150 respondent sample drawn using stratified sampling, the study concentrated on heads of academic and administrative departments from public universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Information management and organisational culture revealed a favourable link according the study. It came to be clear that overcoming obstacles and improving university performance depend on efficient information

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management. Based on the survey, public sector companies may handle modern issues by means of a well-organised organisational culture and sound policies.

Israilidis et al. (2021) investigated key failure factors (CFFs) in information exchange. The study sought to ascertain the reasons for rigid policies, poor information flow, and inadequate systems, as well as ways to minimise these problems. Data were gathered using a case-based inductive method from nine semi-structured interviews with experienced staff members from an aerospace and defence company and 375 completed questionnaires from the same company. The article emphasized the importance of controlling organizational ignorance when producing new information and avoiding failures, as well as the six CFFs that influence information sharing. The results provide fresh perspectives on the difficulties of information exchange and imply solutions to solve these shortcomings, thereby helping to clarify the reasons behind the frequent failure of knowledge sharing in companies.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a descriptive survey research design to gather data. The target population consists of senior administrative staff at Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. For the purpose of this research, "administrative staff" refers to all employees within the university who are responsible for carrying out administrative tasks. According to the Establishment unit, there are 187 employees who fall into this category. To determine the sample size, the Taro Yamane formula was applied, yielding a sample of 127 participants.

Data collection was primarily done through the use of a questionnaire. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's alpha technique was employed. The data collected was thoroughly analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis, which includes mean scores and standard deviations, was applied to demographic and univariate data. For the inferential analysis, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used because of its ability to measure the strength and direction of association between two variables. All data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 23.0.

ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Both bivariate and univariate analysis were used in the study. The bivariate tables reflecting the results of each hypothesis test between the dimensions of information sharing dynamics and the metric of workplace cohesion show the evidence about the correlation between the study variables. The Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient is used in the test as well, with a significance level of 0.05. A p-value less than 0.05 would indicate a significant relationship, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. On the other hand, a p-value greater than 0.05 would indicate an insignificant relationship, reinforcing and accepting the null hypothesis.

Univariate Analysis

Univariate Distribution for Dimensions of Information Sharing Dynamics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
IS	127	3.3274	.82501	-.127	.141	-1.176	.282
IT	127	3.4646	.80172	-.428	.141	-.005	.282
GC	127	3.3171	.80226	-.262	.141	-1.129	.282
Valid N (listwise)	127						

Source: Research Data (SPSS Output), 2024

Table above shows that the results for the distribution of information sharing dynamics dimensions are in agreement with their corresponding indicators. Results show that behaviours that represent information sharing dynamics as an effective relational feature of the organisation is obvious, since all two dimensions have mean coefficients surpassing the threshold of $x > 2.5$. The findings point to the administrative relevance of information sharing (IS) and information transfer (IT). Also, a similar outcome on the univariate analysis on group cohesion (GC) which is exceed the threshold of $x > 2.5$.

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Bivariate Analysis

Correlation outcome between Information Sharing and Group Cohesion

Correlations

			IS	GC
Spearman's rho	IS	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.551**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	127	127
	GC	Correlation Coefficient	.551**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	127	127

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, 2024

From the result in table above, with rho = 0.551, it shows a positive relationship between information sharing (IS) and group cohesion (GC). It is also significant @ [p = 0.00 < 0.01]. This implies that the null hypothesis stated above is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between information sharing relate to group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. This indicates that the way information is shared and communicated among team members has a notable impact on their ability to work together effectively. Efficient information sharing ensures that all team members are on the same page, which is crucial for coordinating efforts, making informed decisions, and achieving common goals. The findings underscore the importance of establishing robust communication channels and practices to foster a collaborative and productive team environment in the academic setting of Bayelsa State's public university. These results are in line with Israilidis et al. (2021) investigated key failure factors (CFFs) in information exchange. The study emphasized the importance of controlling organizational ignorance when producing new information and avoiding failures, as well as the six CFFs that influence information sharing. The results provide fresh perspectives on the difficulties of information exchange and imply solutions to solve these shortcomings, thereby helping to clarify the reasons behind the frequent failure of knowledge sharing in companies.

Correlation outcome between Information Transfer and Group Cohesion

Correlations

			IT	GC
Spearman's rho	IT	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.581**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	127	127
	GC	Correlation Coefficient	.581**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	127	127

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

SPSS Output, 2024

From the result in table above, with rho = 0.581, it shows a positive relationship between information sharing (IS) and group cohesion (GC). It is also significant @ [p = 0.00 < 0.01]. This implies that the null hypothesis stated above is rejected. The result outlined that a significant relationship exist between information sharing relate to group cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The findings are consistent with those of Tirmizi, et al. (2022) who examined the moderating role of supervisor support in the relationship between information sharing, group cohesion, and team performance among professionals in construction project-based organizations in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Regression analysis, correlation, and reliability testing were among the statistical methods they used. The findings showed that there was a favorable relationship between collaboration and performance as well as between information sharing and team performance. Furthermore, it was discovered that the association between information sharing and group performance was positively moderated by supervisor support.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted to examine the empirical relationship between information sharing dynamics and workplace cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Both descriptive and inferential analysis was used to give meaning of data collected with questionnaire. However, from the data generated and analyzed, it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between all the dimensions of information sharing dynamics and measure of workplace cohesion. Conclusively, the study had shown that significant relationship exist between information sharing dynamics and workplace cohesion in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study found a correlation between information sharing and resourcefulness, therefore recommends that team members should be encouraged to sharing knowledge/information that will help to acquire and efficiently deploy resources.
2. It was also recommended that in order to encourage all round responsiveness, information sharing practices should be encouraged through information platforms for all team members.
3. The study further recommends that information transfer mechanisms ahould be consolidated in order to support team members' capacity to remain resourceful.
4. From the study findings, information transfer is imperative for team responsiveness therefore university administration should build transfer capacity to guarantee skill enhancement in order to be responsive.

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