

How Storytelling Promotes Knowledge Sharing among Staff at Kenya National Library Service

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Abstract

Purpose: Effective knowledge sharing within national libraries is crucial for enhancing organizational learning and service delivery. This study investigates the role of storytelling in promoting knowledge sharing among staff at the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS). Despite its potential, knowledge sharing at KNLS has faced challenges, particularly in leveraging storytelling effectively. The purpose of this study was to evaluate how storytelling can enhance knowledge sharing among staff members.

Methodology: Guided by Social Learning Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, the research employed a descriptive research design. The study was conducted at KNLS headquarters in Nairobi and its key branches in Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Eldoret. The target population comprised 223 librarians, technical staff, administrative personnel, and management, with a sample size of 123 participants selected through stratified random sampling. Data collection tools included surveys and interviews, and validity was ensured through content, construct, and face validity, with reliability measured using Cronbach's alpha. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

Results: The study found that storytelling significantly enhances knowledge sharing by fostering a more collaborative environment and improving staff performance.

Conclusion: The major conclusion is that integrating storytelling into knowledge management practices can address existing gaps and improve overall organizational learning at KNLS. The study recommends that KNLS implement structured storytelling initiatives and training programs to optimize knowledge sharing. The responsibility for this action lies with the KNLS management team and the training department. The value of this study lies in its demonstration of storytelling as a practical and effective strategy for improving knowledge sharing in a national library context. This research contributes to the literature by highlighting the application of storytelling in a specific organizational setting and provides actionable insights for enhancing knowledge management practices.

Keywords: *Storytelling, Social learning theory, knowledge sharing, National Library Service*

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1.0 Introduction

Effective management and dissemination of information within libraries rely on collaborative efforts among staff members, which is crucial for maintaining relevance and enhancing service delivery in a dynamic information landscape (Smith, 2016; Jones & Brown, 2018). Libraries face challenges in fostering a collaborative culture due to barriers that hinder effective knowledge sharing, despite its importance for organizational success (Garcia & Martinez, 2019). This study focuses on strategies to promote knowledge sharing at the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), emphasizing storytelling as a tool to cultivate collaboration and innovation among staff (Connelly, 2021).

Knowledge sharing involves exchanging information, expertise, and experiences to facilitate learning and innovation. It encompasses processes such as socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization of knowledge (Odor & Samuel, 2018). The effectiveness of this sharing is assessed through indicators like document accessibility, network strength, and interaction quality (Hung et al., 2019). In developing countries, including those in Africa, factors such as limited infrastructure, resources, and organizational culture impact knowledge sharing. Challenges like technological constraints and language diversity further hinder effective communication (Arua & Mokomane, 2019; Agyen-Gyasi & Ahenkorah-Marfo, 2017).

In contrast, libraries in developed countries often use various mechanisms, such as staff meetings, online forums, and professional development workshops, to facilitate knowledge sharing (Odor & Samuel, 2018). However, barriers like organizational silos and technological disparities persist (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). Professional associations and collaborative networks, exemplified by organizations in Canada and Australia, effectively promote knowledge sharing and continuous learning (Johnson, 2019; Alavi & Leidner, 2021). African libraries also leverage professional associations to organize events that foster collaboration, though they face significant challenges due to limited resources (Gwizdka & Choudhury, 2015; Makori & Ileri, 2019).

The Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), established in 1965, is crucial for providing library services across Kenya. Despite its extensive network and knowledgeable staff, KNLS faces challenges in knowledge sharing due to technology limitations, insufficient training, and poor collaboration incentives. An internal assessment highlighted issues like communication barriers and a culture of information hoarding, which impact the organization's efficiency and service quality. This study proposes using storytelling as a strategy to improve knowledge sharing at KNLS, aiming to foster a collaborative culture and enhance overall service delivery (Garcia & Martinez, 2019; Chen & Wang, 2020). This study's findings are crucial for KNLS, library staff, and policymakers, as they enhance organizational efficiency, foster a collaborative culture, and inform policy decisions on knowledge-sharing practices within the library sector.

1.1 Problem Statement

In national libraries, effective knowledge sharing ideally involves seamless collaboration, where staff actively exchanges information and expertise to improve service delivery. A key tool in this process is storytelling, which can powerfully convey insights and experiences. However, in reality, storytelling is often underutilized due to a lack of structured frameworks, leading to fragmented understanding and missed opportunities for learning and innovation. Despite efforts to promote knowledge sharing, challenges such as organizational silos and limited technological infrastructure persist, further complicating the process. These barriers hinder the formation of cohesive knowledge-sharing practices and prevent staff from fully

leveraging the wealth of expertise available within the organization. Research into knowledge sharing within national libraries reveals significant gaps, particularly in the use of storytelling as a knowledge-sharing tool. Chen and Lee (2021) emphasize that storytelling is underutilized due to the absence of structured approaches, which limits its potential impact. Additionally, studies highlight how organizational silos and insufficient support hinder effective knowledge exchange (Kim & Park, 2019). Addressing these challenges, particularly by enhancing the use of storytelling, is critical for improving knowledge sharing within national libraries. By focusing on storytelling, libraries can tap into the rich experiences of their staff, fostering a more collaborative environment that enhances service delivery and organizational effectiveness. This study aimed to determine how storytelling promotes knowledge sharing among staff at Kenya National Library Service.

2.0 Literature Review

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Bandura (1977), emphasizes that individuals learn by observing, imitating, and modeling others' behaviors and attitudes. Applied to knowledge sharing at KNLS, this theory highlights how employees are influenced by witnessing effective knowledge-sharing practices such as storytelling and mentorship. Observing successful examples of these practices encourages employees to adopt similar behaviors, thus fostering a collaborative culture. Additionally, active participation in communities of practice and the use of technology further facilitate knowledge exchange, as employees are motivated by the visible benefits and effective use of these resources. Therefore, Social Learning Theory offers a valuable framework for enhancing knowledge sharing at KNLS by promoting a culture of observation, modeling, and reinforcement.

Storytelling is a potent tool for enhancing knowledge sharing within organizations, especially in libraries where tacit knowledge and cultural nuances are crucial. By conveying complex ideas and values through engaging narratives, storytelling makes knowledge more accessible and relatable (Kim & Rhee, 2023). It fosters emotional connections, builds trust, and promotes a collaborative environment by creating empathy and shared identity among staff (Brown & Denning, 2018). Additionally, storytelling stimulates creativity and innovation by reflecting on past experiences and successes, inspiring new ideas and problem-solving approaches (Serrat, 2017). It also helps preserve organizational memory and reinforce values over time (Lee & Yoo, 2023). However, effective storytelling requires strong organizational support, including platforms for sharing, training, and a culture that values openness (Brown & Denning, 2018). Globally, storytelling has bridged generational gaps and improved service delivery, with promising applications in Kenya's public libraries (Mwangi & Njoroge, 2024). Future research should address challenges such as narrative consistency and cultural integration to fully leverage storytelling's potential for enhancing organizational learning and effectiveness.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design to analyze knowledge management sharing strategies within the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS), focusing on understanding the current practices and identifying areas for improvement. The target population included staff from KNLS headquarters and branch libraries across Kenya, comprising librarians, technical staff, administrative personnel, and management. A stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation from each subgroup, with a total sample size of 123 participants selected from a population of 223. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, which gathered quantitative information on various knowledge-sharing practices such as storytelling, mentorship, and technology use. The data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between

variables. Techniques such as correlation and regression analysis were utilized to explore the impact of different knowledge-sharing strategies and to establish predictors of knowledge-sharing behavior among KNLS staff.

The study's findings aimed to provide insights into improving knowledge-sharing practices within KNLS, emphasizing the importance of effective strategies for enhancing organizational efficiency and service delivery. By examining the current practices and their effectiveness, the research contributes valuable knowledge to the field of library and information science, with implications for both organizational management and policy development.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted a total population of 113 staff members at KNLS, including librarians, library assistants, technical staff, administrative staff, and management personnel. Out of this population, 111 staff members responded to the questionnaires, resulting in an overall response rate of 77.9%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of over 50% is considered adequate for analysis and reporting. The breakdown of response rates by category is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Category	Population	Responded	Did Not Respond	Response Rate (%)
Librarian and Library Assistance	63	61	2	96.8
Technical Staff	19	15	4	78.9
Administrative Staff	27	18	9	66.7
Management Personnel	13	9	4	69.2
Total	123	111	12	
Average				77.9

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study, focusing on their gender distribution, educational background, job positions, and work experience. Understanding these characteristics provides context for interpreting the findings related to storytelling and knowledge sharing.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	57	51.4
Female	54	48.6
Total	111	100.0
Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
PhD	5	4.5
Masters	23	20.7
Bachelor	61	54.9
Higher Diploma	11	9.9
Ordinary Diploma	7	6.3
A-Level	1	0.9
0-Level / KCSE	3	2.7
Total	111	100.0
Position	Frequency	Percentage
Librarian and Library Assistance	91	82.0
Technical Staff	15	13.5
Administrative Staff	4	3.6
Management Personnel	1	0.9
Total	111	100.0
Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	21	18.9
6-10 years	35	31.5
11-15 years	28	25.2
16-20 years	17	15.3
Above 21 years	10	9.0
Total	111	100.0

Regarding the demographic data of the study participants, the results in Table 2 show that the participants comprised 57 males (51.4%) and 54 females (48.6%), reflecting a nearly even gender split among the participants. Participants held various educational qualifications, with the majority having a Bachelor's degree (54.9%). Other educational backgrounds included Masters (20.7%), Higher Diploma (9.9%), PhD (4.5%), Ordinary Diploma (6.3%), A-Level (0.9%), and 0-Level/KCSE (2.7%). The majority of respondents were librarians and library assistants (82.0%). A smaller proportion included technical staff (13.5%), administrative staff (3.6%), and management personnel (0.9%). Experience varied across the sample, with 18.9% having 0-5 years, 31.5% with 6-10 years, 25.2% with 11-15 years, 15.3% with 16-20 years, and 9.0% with more than 21 years of experience.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

4.3.1 Storytelling

This section presents the findings on storytelling, based on respondents' ratings of their agreement with various statements related to different aspects of storytelling. The questionnaire assessed three key indicators of storytelling: engagement, impact, and accessibility. The detailed results from the respondents are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive results for storytelling

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Engagement							
The storytelling sessions held at the library are well-attended.	4.9%	11.9%	11.9%	38.5%	32.9%	3.8	1.16
I actively participate in the storytelling sessions at the library.	6.3%	21.7%	12.6%	35.7%	23.8%	3.5	1.24
I am encouraged to share my own stories and experiences during these sessions.	12.6%	21.7%	15.4%	32.9%	17.5%	3.2	1.31
Impact							
The knowledge shared through storytelling sessions is easy to remember and apply.	22.4%	22.4%	11.9%	29.4%	14.0%	2.9	1.41
Storytelling sessions have inspired new ideas or initiatives in my work.	3.5%	14.2%	8.8%	42.1%	31.4%	4.0	1.05
I have collaborated more with colleagues from other departments as a result of storytelling sessions.	6.2%	30.5%	16.8%	25.3%	21.2%	3.2	1.29
Accessibility							
The storytelling sessions cover a diverse range of topics and perspectives.	24.5%	12.3%	32.6%	23.1%	7.5%	3.3	1.25
I have easy access to recorded storytelling sessions or written stories in the library's digital repository.	4.8%	13.1%	18.2%	37.9%	25.9%	3.6	1.10
The stories shared in the sessions are relevant and applicable to my role.	5.2%	9.8%	16.7%	40.5%	27.8%	3.7	1.09

The findings indicate that storytelling sessions at the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) are well-attended (Mean = 3.8) and inspire new ideas (Mean = 4.0). Participants moderately engage in these sessions (Mean = 3.5) and are somewhat encouraged to share their own stories (Mean = 3.2). The ease of recalling and applying knowledge from these sessions is moderate (Mean = 2.9), and the sessions are seen as covering a diverse range of topics (Mean = 3.3) and being accessible (Mean = 3.6). Respondents also find the stories relevant to their roles (Mean = 3.7) and believe the sessions have promoted some interdepartmental collaboration (Mean = 3.2). Recommendations for improvement include structured workshops, storytelling circles, and better documentation of stories. A specific example highlighted a librarian's story about overcoming a digital archive challenge, demonstrating the practical value and collaborative benefits of storytelling.

4.3.2 Knowledge Sharing among Library Staff

The study investigated knowledge sharing as the dependent variable, asking respondents to rate their agreement with various statements related to technology application strategies. The questionnaire addressed indicators such as information accessibility, user engagement and support, and collaboration and networking. The findings are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis Results for Knowledge Sharing among Library Staff

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std Deviation
Accessibility of information							
The library's collection effectively meets my information needs	6.4%	21.6%	12.7%	35.6%	23.7%	3.4	1.23
I find it easy to locate and access resources in the library.	12.7%	21.6%	15.5%	33.0%	17.2%	3.1	1.30
The library's cataloging and classification system helps me find relevant materials quickly	22.1%	22.2%	11.7%	29.5%	14.5%	2.8	1.40
User Engagement and Support							
Library staff provide helpful assistance when I have information needs	2.8%	11.9%	9.1%	43.4%	32.9%	3.9	1.07
I am satisfied with the reference services provided by the library	7.7%	32.2%	8.4%	26.6%	25.1%	3.0	1.26
The library offers useful training sessions to improve my information literacy skills	23.8%	13.6%	6.2%	34.5%	21.9%	3.0	1.27
Collaboration and Networking							
The library collaborates effectively with other institutions to enhance resource availability	4.2%	12.6%	7.5%	38.5%	37.2%	3.8	1.12
I feel informed about professional developments and opportunities through the library	5.6%	8.4%	4.9%	42.0%	39.1%	3.8	1.11
The library actively promotes knowledge sharing among its staff and users	4.9%	11.9%	8.1%	38.5%	36.6%	3.8	1.16

Respondents generally felt that the library's collection meets their information needs (Mean = 3.4) and found it moderately easy to locate and access resources (Mean = 3.1). They perceived the cataloging and classification system as somewhat helpful but inconsistent (Mean = 2.8).

Regarding user engagement and support, respondents agreed that library staff provide helpful assistance (Mean = 3.9) and were moderately satisfied with reference services and training sessions aimed at improving information literacy (Mean = 3.0). In terms of collaboration and networking, they agreed that the library effectively collaborates with other institutions (Mean = 3.8), keeps them informed about professional opportunities (Mean = 3.8), and actively promotes knowledge sharing among staff and users (Mean = 3.8).

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis evaluates the strength and direction of relationships between variables (Chatterjee, 2012). In this study, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the association between storytelling (ST) and knowledge sharing (KS). The results are shown in Table 5. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1, where a positive value indicates that as one variable increases, the other also increases, while a negative value indicates an inverse relationship (Sekaran, 2013; Saunders & Thornhill, 2012).

Table 5: Pearson correlation analysis results

		Storytelling
Storytelling	r	1
	p-value	
	N	111
Knowledge Sharing	r	.640
	p-value	.000
	N	111

The Pearson correlation coefficient between storytelling (ST) and knowledge sharing (KS) is 0.640, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p = 0.000$). This indicates a strong positive correlation, suggesting that more effective storytelling is associated with higher levels of knowledge sharing among participants.

4.5 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to explore the direct relationship between storytelling (ST) and knowledge sharing (KS).

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Storytelling and Knowledge Sharing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.640 ^a	0.409	0.403	5.67

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4491.344	4	4491.344	88.571	.000 ^b
	Residual	6554.567	109	60.234		
	Total	11045.911	110			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	7.245	1.678		3.353	.001
Storytelling	.386	.127	.249	3.032	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Knowledge Sharing

b. Predictors: (Constant), Storytelling

The R-square value of 0.409 indicates that storytelling accounts for 40.9% of the variance in knowledge sharing among library staff. This suggests that storytelling significantly impacts

knowledge sharing, explaining a substantial portion of the variability in the dependent variable. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows a p-value of 0.000, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. This confirms that the regression model is statistically significant and effectively predicts knowledge sharing. The F-statistic of 88.571, which exceeds the critical value, further supports the significance of the model.

The regression coefficient for storytelling (ST) is 0.542 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong positive relationship between storytelling and knowledge sharing. As storytelling practices improve, knowledge sharing among library staff is expected to increase significantly. In summary, the regression analysis highlights a significant and positive impact of storytelling on knowledge sharing, underscoring the value of effective storytelling in enhancing knowledge dissemination within the organization.

4.6 Discussion

The results of this study align with existing literature that underscores storytelling's effectiveness in knowledge sharing. Storytelling humanizes knowledge by contextualizing abstract concepts through relatable real-life situations, making complex ideas more accessible (Chen & Hung, 2023). It fosters emotional connections and empathy among staff, enhancing trust and collaboration (Brown & Denning, 2018). Additionally, storytelling supports the preservation of organizational memory and culture, reinforcing values and traditions, and stimulating creativity and innovation (Lee & Yoo, 2023; Serrat, 2017). However, the literature also emphasizes that storytelling's impact is optimized when supported by organizational practices such as training and creating sharing platforms (Brown & Denning, 2018). Research from both developed and developing countries, including Kenya, confirms storytelling's effectiveness in improving knowledge sharing and fostering a collaborative environment (Johnson & Smith, 2018; Adeola & Emeka, 2021; Mwangi & Njoroge, 2024).

5.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that storytelling sessions at the library are well-attended, with participants actively engaging and sharing their own stories to a moderate extent. The knowledge gained from these sessions is seen as moderately easy to remember and apply. The sessions have successfully inspired new ideas and initiatives and have facilitated moderate collaboration among colleagues from different departments. Additionally, the storytelling sessions cover a diverse range of topics and are accessible through recorded sessions and written stories in the library's digital repository, with the content deemed relevant and applicable to the participants' roles.

6.0 Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of storytelling sessions at the library, several key recommendations are proposed. First, increasing participation can be achieved by fostering a supportive environment and encouraging staff to share their stories through relevant prompts and themes. Improving the retention and application of knowledge involves making content more memorable and actionable, with practical examples integrated into the sessions. Expanding the range of topics and perspectives covered will make the sessions more relevant and engaging for a broader audience. Maintaining easy access to recorded sessions and written stories in the digital repository, with regular updates and clear instructions, is essential. Lastly, promoting cross-departmental interaction by organizing joint sessions or follow-up activities can enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing.

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