

Exploring Potential Areas for Institute of Adult Education's Promotion of Knowledge Sharing among Adult Population in Tanzania

Onesmo Emmanuel

Institute of Adult Education

Contact address: 20679

Email: one032001@gmail.com

Abstract

Knowledge is a valuable resource and commodity on which development of organization or society greatly depends. This paper presents findings of the study which explored potentials of the Institute of Adult Education in promoting knowledge resource sharing among the adults in Tanzania. The study aimed at finding out the position of IAE in promoting knowledge sharing among adults and seeking to establish potential areas for IAE's consideration in ensuring that knowledge sharing is enhanced. Through qualitative approach, data were collected in Dar es Salaam in the year 2020 through two methods: content analysis (documents review) and interactive interviews. Content analysis involved four documents and interviews were conducted to eight IAE staff. Findings of the study reveal that though IAE is vested with mandate on adult education in Tanzania the national education policy and plans do not make direct recognition of that. Similarly, there is no establishment of clear and effective mechanisms that provide avenue for wide sharing of knowledge among adults in a country. However, the study provides some areas which are potential for IAE to adopt in its efforts to promote knowledge sharing behaviour among adults in the country. It recommends that, if its functions are clearly defined while pegged on its establishment act and if the potential areas proposed in this study are analysed for implementation IAE will play a notable role in managing knowledge sharing behaviour in the country.

Key Words: Knowledge, Knowledge management, Knowledge sharing

Introduction

Knowledge is increasingly becoming a strategic resource to the extent that nowadays it is viewed as the basis for competitive advantage of individuals, firms and nations (Dalkir, 2013; Omerzel & Gulev, 2011). As argued by Dalkir (2013), the current globalized world in which knowledge is being regarded as a valuable commodity requires systematic knowledge sharing management for effective organization. The advent of the Internet is a factor that makes knowledge management even a more fundamental ingredient in creating sustainable competitive advantage (Omerzel & Gulev, 2011).

Knowledge as a resource is considered to be capital and commodity (Koulikov, 2011) which is valuable and important. It is both individual and public resource. Nordin et al., (2012) show that knowledge resource sharing is theoretically unnatural because people are not freely willing to share it without incentives. It is also challenging to share tacit knowledge as it requires face-to-face interactions (Razak et al., 2016) which cannot be attained without incentives or some sort of coordination. It is the voluntary interactions among human actors through a framework of shared institutions (Koulikov, 2011). For effective knowledge sharing to take place, therefore, effective supportive structures and institutions are necessary (as argued by Koulikov, 2011).

Knowledge resource is, however, a commons which has a peculiar characteristic. In contrast to other commons (or common pool resources), which are said to be subtractive (see Hess & Ostrom, 2007), knowledge is easily shared without losing it. It is a commons which is more productive when jointly used. Thus, efforts to promote sharing and use of it leads to its increase it.

In Tanzania, like any other country or organization, the necessity of making efforts to use diverse types of knowledge from different individuals (as insisted by Rathwell et al., 2015 and Nguyen & Ross, 2017) is of vital importance. The importance calls for a need to have effective knowledge resource sharing mechanisms which are well administered. In Tanzania, the Institute of Adult Education Act vests adult education responsibilities in the hands of IAE. Yet, the extent to which IAE is working towards promoting knowledge sharing among adults in the country is not clearly documented. Also, possible strategies through which the IAE can accomplish the same are not clearly established.

This paper presents findings on potentials of IAE in enhancing knowledge resource sharing among the adults in Tanzania. It has two specific objectives.

The first one was to find out the position of Institute of Adult Education (IAE) in promoting knowledge resource sharing among adults in Tanzania. The second objective was to establish potential areas for IAE's consideration in ensuring that knowledge resource sharing is enhanced among the adult population of Tanzania.

Literature Review

The concept of 'knowledge' differs depending on use. The literature provides a range of definitions depending on context and focus of authors. Malecki (2010) views knowledge as the prior accumulated information, skills and insights that can be used in future contexts. Treacle and Krell (2014) conceptualize it as the accumulated awareness of facts, processes and their interactive dynamics. In line with that, this paper conceptualises knowledge as the accumulated useful information, experiences, interpretation, intuition, beliefs, perceptions, concepts, judgement, and creativity and the ability to use them to act in specific contexts. Fombad (2010) contends that knowledge is an innately human quality, residing in the living mind.

The author of this article concurs with Schryen et al (2015) who viewed knowledge as all intelligible ideas, information and data in whatever form it is expressed, obtained or preferred. In a more expanded form, he buys the view by Bennet & Bennet (2014) which show that knowledge consists of our understanding, insights, meaning, intuition, creativity, judgment, and the ability to anticipate the outcome of our actions.

Knowledge can be classified as tacit or explicit (see Schryen et. all, 2015; Bennet & Bennet, 2014). It can also be categorized into traditional, indigenous and local knowledge as opposed to modern, scientific or universal knowledge (Treacle and Krell, 2014). Bennet & Bennet (2014) add categories of surface, shallow or deep knowledge.

The importance of knowledge to personal and societal development needs not to be underestimated since it is a consolidated fact in the literature. Gonzalez and Martins (2017) view knowledge as an asset that, although intangible, generates competitive advantage to the organization. Dalkir (2013) considers it to be the fundamental resource that enables people to function intelligently. Considering it as a resource suggests that it is capital and commodity with specific value (Koulikov, 2011). Since it is a commodity and capital, it is valuable and so important that people are not freely willing to share it unless there are incentives (Nordin et al., 2012).

Sharing of knowledge is considered important because it may lead individuals to improve absorptive capacity, improved innovation capacity, and other capabilities, and therefore, to sustained competitive advantage (Foss et al., 2010). Although knowledge resource sharing is said to be unnatural, knowledge in itself is a wonderful resource because of its peculiar characteristics. Dalkir (2013) highlights that the use of knowledge does not make it diminished. He also argues that transfer of knowledge does not result in losing it. He concludes that knowledge is abundant, but the ability to use it is scarce. Referring to Foray (2004), Malecki (2010) summarizes three key properties of knowledge as nonexcludable which is difficult to control or to prevent others from using it; nonrival, meaning that it is inexhaustible since others can use it, even simultaneously, and it continues existing; and cumulative.

Knowledge resource sharing is the voluntary interactions among human actors through a framework of shared institutions such as ethical norms and regulations (Koulikov, 2011). It is, however, not free from challenges. While explicit knowledge can be articulated and readily transmitted to others, sharing of tacit knowledge is very difficult because it cannot easily be verbalized and codified. Since knowledge resource sharing requires face-to-face interactions (Razaka et al., 2016), effective structures and institution's support are necessary for meaningful knowledge resource sharing to take place (Koulikov, 2011). Janus (2016) insists that knowledge sharing cannot be taken for granted as it not happen effectively without specific structures, systems, and roles to support it. The structure and institutions are, according to Gonzalez and Martins (2017), responsible for knowledge management - a process that promotes the flow of knowledge between individuals and groups within the organization. The process consists of four main steps: acquisition, storage, distribution and use of knowledge (Gonzalez and Martins, 2017).

The structures and institutions are all about knowledge governance. Knowledge governance is, according to Foss et al (2010), about choosing organizational structures and mechanisms that can influence the processes of using, sharing, integrating, and creating knowledge in preferred directions and towards preferred levels. Gonzalez and Martins (2017) add that the governance of knowledge or management of knowledge involves development of methods, tools, techniques and organizational values that promote the flow of knowledge between individuals and the retrieval, processing, and use of this knowledge in

improving and innovating activities. Indriati et al (2016) present five conditions under which knowledge sharing prevails: (1) recognition of value of the source of knowledge, (2) willingness of the source to share knowledge, (3) presence of media of the communication, (4) willingness of the recipient to acquire knowledge and (5) absorptive capacity of the recipient. For these conditions to prevail there must be a coordination mechanism. The fact that knowledge is a uniquely scarce resource that is difficult to substitute with other resources (Indriati et al (2016) call for organizations to be in a need of playing a coordination role of learning and organize how to capture, create, and share the new knowledge to beat the competition.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative design that enabled the author to acquire rich information characterising the meanings and values concerning the process of management of knowledge sharing processes among adults in Tanzanian community. Two methods were used to collect data: content analysis (documents review) and interactive interviews with Institute of Adult Education staff. The interviews were conducted in August and September 2020 aimed at generating primary data for in-depth and intimate understanding of the staff's experiences and desires concerning the topic under study. It involved eight staff who were purposefully selected because of their experiences on functions of IAE.

Secondary data were obtained from official documents related to transfer and knowledge resource sharing in the country. The key consulted documents are: Education and Training Policy of 2014, Education Sector Development Plan (2016/17 – 2020/21), Adult and Non-formal Education Development Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17, and Institute of Adult Education Act of 1975. These sources were primarily used to obtain data which correspond with the study objectives. After all data were collected, they were organized systematically, filtered and classified to obtain clear data which reflect study objectives for easy interpretation and presentation.

Results

The findings of this study are presented in a flow that corresponds to the two study objectives. Discussion is made in the next section. Review of the Institute of Adult Education Act (URT, 1975) was done and it was found that it provides

IAE with the mandate of ensuring effective implementation of adult education in the country. The objects and functions of the Institute, according to the act, are seventeen (17). These functions indicate that IAE has responsibility of ensuring promotion of knowledge exchange among the Tanzanian adult population. Among them, the following three designate the responsibilities:

(b) to assume responsibility for adult education within the United Republic and to make provision for places and, centres of learning, training and research in matters pertaining to adult education;

(c) to co-operate with the Government of the United Republic and the people of Tanzania, in the planned and orderly development of adult education in the United Republic;

(i) to stimulate and promote mass education and the development of mass media resources; including cinematography, photography, radio and newspapers for adult education purposes and to cooperate with the Government, institutions and organizations in Tanzania in the, production; and, distribution of magazines, newspapers and other similar publications

Results of the analysis of the Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014) show that the document does not specify the authority responsible for management of knowledge sharing among adults in the country. It, however, provides general policy statements concerning adult education. For example, its section 3.3.4 on page 44 states that:

“The Government shall set up procedure and enabling environment to ensure that education and training including adult education is provided efficiently at all levels through different methods including open and distant learning.”

It also proposes for amendment of the existing legislations to make them match with the requirements of the statements of the Policy. Among the acts suggested for amendments is the Institute of Adult Education Act Cap 39 (Page 61).

Analysis of the Education Sector Development Plan (2016/17 - 2020/21) has found that the document recognizes that the education sector in Tanzania is organised in five main clusters namely: Basic and compulsory education (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary education); Advanced secondary education; Technical and vocational education and training (including teacher education); Adult education and non-formal education; and Higher Education (URT, 2018). In its section 1.4 which highlights the state of education in Tanzania by then, however,

the plan does not show anything about education of adults. It highlights about several adult and non-formal education programmes under implementation in other sections such as Complementary Basic Education and Training (COBET), Open and Distance Learning (ODL), the academic stream of the Integrated Post-Primary Education, and the Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE). The plan, generally, reports that the two main programmes which are operating in adult and non-formal education sector are the Complementary Basic Education (COBET) - which caters for out of school children aged 9-18 - and the Integrated Community Basic Adult Education (ICBAE) - which caters for youth and adults aged 19+.

The plan shows that the responsibilities for education of adults are within the President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) and the Ministry of Education. PO-RALG has responsibility of administering the delivery of pre-primary, primary, adult and non-formal, and secondary education. The Ministry of education is responsible for policy and planning, monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance, technical and vocational education and training, higher education and teacher education, and adult and non-formal education through the Institute of Adult Education. The summary of operation presented in the plan as Annex 1 is displayed in this article as Table 1.

The Adult and Non-formal Education Development Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 (URT, 2012) recognizes that appropriate institutional and administrative arrangements are crucial in ensuring an efficient and effective delivery of the adult, non-formal and continuing education programmes. It outlines roles and responsibilities of various ministries, institutions and organizations involved in implementing adult and non-formal education in Tanzania. At national level, it shows that the PMO-RALG is mandated to oversee the decentralization of the government functions to local levels including the delivery of adult and non-formal education by councils. It provides technical support and guidance to regional secretariats and the LGAs. The Ministry of Education is mandated for policy formulation and regulation of education provision, setting standards, monitoring and evaluation of the provision of education. The Institute of Adult Education (IAE) is responsible for the implementation of adult education and non-formal education programmes within the framework of existing national policies and strategic interventions.

The Adult and Non-formal Education Development Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 has presented different roles of different institutions. The data indicates that the responsibility for adult and non-formal education is within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

With regard to the objective on potential areas for IAE to promote sharing of knowledge resource among Tanzanian adult population, the Institute of Adult Education Act and the Adult and Non-formal Education Development Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 provides some basis. The three identified functions of IAE stipulated by the act (which established it) establish potentialities for IAE with regard to promotion of knowledge sharing among adults. On the other hand, the Adult and Non-formal Education Development Plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 (URT, 2012) assigns IAE the key roles in relation to implementation of adult and non-formal education which somehow differ) from those of prominence in the act as they are narrowed down as follows:

- i) Providing in-service training for literacy, continuing and other non - formal education teachers;
- ii) Providing Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for secondary education and community based education;
- iii) Organizing mass education programmes on critical issues such as civic education, poverty reduction, HIV-AIDs and environment education;
- iv) Conducting research and evaluation on non-formal and continuing education and disseminate information;
- v) Providing consultancy and advisory services to stakeholders on curriculum development, and study materials for non-formal and continuing education; and
- vi) Designing and developing secondary education ODL curricula and teaching and learning materials.

The policy documents concerning education show the trend of reducing the responsibilities and functions of IAE. The proposed review of the Institute of Adult Education Act is likely to follow the same trend. That the trend is a merit or demerit to IAE is a question that is beyond the reach of this article.

In respect to interviews on how IAE could promote knowledge sharing-among adult Tanzanians, major two categories of findings were gleaned. First, it was revealed that IAE needs to re-define explicitly its role in Tanzania to include

aspects of promoting knowledge exchange and sharing among adults. In this view, respondents suggested that IAE needs to invest much in developing standards and guidelines for monitoring and evaluating adult and non-formal education rather than offering adult and non-formal education. Some respondents argued that, in the current practice, the role of education delivery to adults is within the jurisdiction of President's Office – Regional Authorities and Local Governments (PO-RALG) and the private stakeholders.

The second area of findings is that IAE has got fertile ground of serving the public in many areas including of promoting knowledge sharing among adults. Some respondents argued that the fertile ground can be easily met if the functions of IAE are summarised into the following four functions:

1. To provide (technical, academic and professional) services and advice to the government and the public on matters of adult and non-formal education in the country;
2. To guide implementation of provision of adult and non-formal education in the country;
3. To ensure training and availability of facilitators competent for managing adult and non-formal education programmes; and
4. To monitor and evaluate adult and non-formal education programmes in the country.

In response to a question that needed them to propose some fertile areas of services which can serve in promoting knowledge sharing in a country, some of the respondents mentioned the following:

- i) Public information service centres throughout the country (regional, sub-regional and local community stations) which can provide to adults and the public in general varying information needed such as how to benefit from community schools, vocation education and training opportunities, processes of recognition of prior learning, available scholarships within and outside the country, ways of acquiring education qualifications, applications processes for studies and information on many other available services).
- ii) Establishment of public information services via electronic systems for inquiries, application processes, registration, and other service linking the public to different educational service providers.
- iii) Establish a system of identifying, registering and awarding adults who possess extra-ordinary local expertise or demonstrate creativity and innovations in different learning areas in the local community.

The provided areas can assist in promoting effective knowledge sharing (not connecting). In addition to that, the three areas, if properly designed, can provide significant source of income.

Discussion

In investigating potentials of IAE in enhancing knowledge resource sharing among the adults in Tanzania this study has obtained varying findings which indicate several issues. First, there is no specific single authority which is responsible for overall coordination and promotion of adult and non-formal education in the country. That is evidenced by the way URT (1975), URT (2014) and URT (2018) address the matter.

The second issue is that mechanisms of providing avenue for wide sharing of knowledge among adults are not clearly addressed. The reviewed documents do not stipulate clearly how knowledge sharing among adults is supposed to be managed. Neither do they harmoniously show clearly the responsible institution for its management.

The third issue that captures interests of this article is the position of IAE in management of adult and non-formal education matters in the country. While URT (1975) show that IAE is a responsible organization for adult education in Tanzania, URT (2014) and URT (2018) do not position it at that stature. The summary of operation presented in Table 1 obscures it in relation to adult and non-formal education. One can easily think that IAE is within the Ministry of Education (MoEST), but what about TEA (Tanzania Education Authority), TIE (Tanzania Institute of Education), NECTA (National Examination Council of Tanzania) and ADEM (Agency for the Development of Educational Management). They are agencies under MoEST and they support its functions (URT, 2014). Why are they explicitly indicated while they are also part of the Ministry like the case is with IAE!

In line with the argument made by Gonzalez and Martins (2017) on importance of knowledge governance, the findings of this study show that there is a need to have a designated authority responsible for development of methods, tools, techniques and values for promoting sharing and use of knowledge in the entire society in order to sustain a learning society. The argument concurs with the emphasis made by Foss et al (2010) on a virtual need of organizational antecedent in managing knowledge. They show that the antecedent includes having in place reward systems, job descriptions, managerial style, corporate culture, capabilities etc in matters of consolidating knowledge sharing behaviour and outcomes.

From the findings, it is concluded that there is no specific single national authority in Tanzania which is specifically responsible for overall promotion and regulation of adult education. Similarly, there is no establishment of clear and effective mechanisms that provide avenue for wide sharing of knowledge among the adult population in the country. The reviewed documents do not stipulate clearly how knowledge sharing among adults is supposed to be managed. Furthermore, the findings indicate that IAE is slowly getting side-lined from the mainstream in matters of being responsible for development of adult education in the country. This is evidenced by lack of a clear mention in the recent adult education plan (URT, 2018) in relation to engagement in adult education matters in the country. With this move, the promotion of public knowledge sharing and exchange among the adults is becoming the business of none, though findings show that IAE still have a wide fertile ground for the development of the same. On the other hand, findings provide for a recommendation that, if IAE's functions get clearly defined while pegged on its establishment act, the Institute can be able to provide direct public-touching services in promotion of knowledge resource sharing. If the proposed areas of its potentialities get thoroughly analysed and properly installed it can be able to reap from the fertile ground on which it stands and significantly contribute to create a continuously learning society. This can be achieved through establishing varying programmes capacitated by modern communicative and collaborative technologies, web-based technologies of knowledge databases, and content management systems aimed at improving people's capacity to share knowledge. Such improvements can increase IAE's dependability and viability in the country and provide reliable sources of organization's income at the same time.

References

- Bennet, A., & Bennet, D. (2014). Knowledge, theory and practice in knowledge management: Between associative patterning and context-rich action. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Management and Innovation (JEMI)*, 10(1), 5-55. Retrieved February 6, 2021 from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/46ad/cc3e5d8a1bac2e38bcfa8a443de5a34a2167.pdf?_ga=2.124141635.810889192.1633669207-1153272667.1607859799.
- Dalkir, K. (2013). *Knowledge management in theory and practice*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Inc.
- Fombad, M. C. (2010). *Knowledge management in law firms in Botswana*. PhD Thesis. University of Pretoria. Retrieved January 12, 2021 from <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/25407/Complete.pdf?sequence>.
- Foss, N., Husted, K., & Michailova, S. (2010). Governing knowledge sharing in organizations: Levels of analysis, governance mechanisms, and research directions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(3), 255-282. <https://doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00870.x>
- Gonzalez, R., & Martins, M. (2017). Knowledge management process: A theoretical-conceptual research. *Gestão & Produção, São Carlos*, 24(2), 248-265. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0104-530X0893-15>.
- Hess, C., & Ostrom, E. (2007). *Understanding knowledge as a commons: From theory to practice*. The MIT Press Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England.
- Indriatna, F., Tjakratmadjaja, J., Ruditoa, B., & Thohac, N. (2016). An Integrated Theoretical Framework of the Antecedents of Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour among Lecturers. *Sains Humanika* 8(1-2), 25-31. <http://doi:10.11113/sh.v8n1-2.828>.
- Janus, S. (2016). *Becoming a knowledge-sharing organization: A handbook for scaling up solutions through knowledge capturing and sharing*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. Washington DC.
- Koulikov, M. (2011). Emerging Problems in Knowledge Sharing and the Three New Ethics of Knowledge Transfer. *Knowledge Management & E-Learning: An International Journal*, 3(2), 237-250. Retrieved January 23, 2021 from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/33675250_Emerging_Problems_in_Knowledge_Sharing_and_the_Three_New_Ethics_of_Knowledge_Transfer.

- Malecki, E. (2010). Everywhere? The Geography of knowledge. *Journal of Regional Science*. 50(1), 493-513. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9787.2009.00640.x>
- Nguyen, T. H., & Ross, A. 2017. Barriers and opportunities for the involvement of indigenous knowledge in water resources management in the Gam River Basin in north-east Vietnam. *Water Alternatives* 10(1): 134-159. <https://doi: 10.1111/cobi.12857>.
- Nordin, N., Daud, N., and Osman, W. (2012) Knowledge Sharing Behaviour among Academic Staff at a Public Higher Education Institution in Malaysia. *International Journal of Social, Behavioural, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering* 6(12). Retrieved March 3, 2021 from https://serialsjournals.com/abstract/82619_5277-5287.
- Omerzel, D. G., & Gulev, R. E. (2011). Knowledge resources and competitive advantage. *Managing Global Transitions* 9(4), 335–354. Retrieved March 3 2021 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/227458030_Knowledge_Resources_and_Competitive_Advantage.
- Rathwell, K. J., Armitage, D., & Berkes, F. (2015). Bridging knowledge systems to enhance governance of environmental commons: A typology of settings. *International Journal of the Commons*, 9(2), 851–880. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/ijc.584>.
- Razak, N. A., Pang, F., Zin, L., Yunus, N. A. M., & Asnawi, N. H. (2016). Theories of knowledge sharing behaviour in business strategy. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 37, 545-553. [http://doi: 10.1016/S2212-5671\(16\)30163-0](http://doi: 10.1016/S2212-5671(16)30163-0).
- Richard, B., & Dulipovici, A. (2006). The theoretical foundations of knowledge management. *Knowledge Management Research & Practice* 4, 83–105. <http://doi:10.1057/palgrave.kmrp.8500090>.
- Schryen, G., Wagner, G., & Benlian, A, (2015). Theory of knowledge for literature reviews: An Epistemological model, taxonomy and empirical analysis of IS literature. Thirty Sixth International Conference on Information Systems, Fort Worth 2015. Retrieved March 3, 2021 from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/33181095>.

- Treacle, J., & Krell, R. (2014). Territorial development and local knowledge systems engaging local farming knowledge through a right-based approach to agricultural development. FAO. Retrieved April 2, 2021 from <http://www.fao.org/3/mk953e/mk953e>.
- URT (2018). Education sector development plan (2016/17 – 2020/21). Education Sector Development Committee; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Tanzania.
- URT (2014). Education and training policy. Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Tanzania.
- URT (2012). Adult and non-formal education development plan (ANFEDP), 2012/13 – 2016/17. Education Sector Development Committee; Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.
- URT (1975). Institute of Adult Education Act, 1975. Acts Nos. 12 of 1975. Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.
- Wang, W. (2009). "Knowledge management adoption in times of crisis", *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 109(4), 445-462. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02635570910948605>.