Attitude of Lecturers Towards Knowledge Sharing Among Lecturers in Universities in Kano State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Knowledge sharing is widely recognised as a vital component for enhancing innovation, improving teaching quality, and strengthening research collaboration in higher education. This study examined lecturers' attitudes toward knowledge sharing and the strategies they employed in universities within Kano State, Nigeria. Adopting a quantitative research methodology with a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 346 lecturers across four universities, of which 323 responses were valid for analysis. The findings revealed that lecturers engaged in strategies such as seminars, workshops, mentoring, collaborative research, and the use of digital platforms like WhatsApp groups and Google Classroom. However, knowledge-sharing practices were largely informal and lacked structured institutional support. Attitudes were found to significantly influence participation, with positive dispositions promoting collaboration and negative perceptions shaped by mistrust, fear of losing professional advantage, and limited incentives hindering engagement. The study concludes that effective knowledge sharing requires both individual willingness and institutional frameworks. It recommends that universities provide incentives, strengthen digital infrastructure, and implement supportive policies to foster a culture of collaboration that enhances innovation, teaching, and research productivity.

Introduction

Knowledge sharing has become a central concern in higher education because it underpins teaching effectiveness, collaborative research, and institutional innovation. As Tweedie and Kianto (2024) observed in their qualitative study of universities, academics' willingness to share knowledge significantly shapes research productivity and organisational learning. In the Nigerian context, Kabiru (2020) highlighted those lecturers at Bayero University, Kano (BUK) share knowledge mostly through seminars, informal conversations, and digital tools, yet these practices are often limited by inadequate institutional support.

Other Nigerian studies confirm that barriers such as lack of trust, weak incentives, and fear of losing competitive advantage negatively affect lecturers' attitudes toward knowledge sharing (Ehijiagbone & Olatokun, 2020; Mayowa-Adebara & Enakrire, 2024). Bello and Oyekunle (2025) also found that while lecturers acknowledge the benefits of sharing, their perceptions and motivation strongly influence whether they actually engage in the practice.

Attitude is especially important because it links beliefs to behavior. Nguyen et al. (2025), in a study on medical educators, demonstrated that attitudes toward knowledge sharing strongly predict

lecturers' behavioural intentions, a finding consistent with social cognitive theories. Similarly, Mtebe, Komba, and Mwalumbwe (2023) reported that positive attitudes toward open educational resources (OERs) enhance lecturers' willingness to share materials and collaborate.

At the individual level, personality traits have also been found to shape attitudes toward sharing. Fagbola and Ejiwunmi (2025) revealed that traits such as conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness significantly influence lecturers' knowledge-sharing practices in Nigerian universities. At the organisational level, Ganiyu, Akintoye, and Alaka (2023) linked effective knowledge-management practices to higher skill acquisition and productivity among academic staff, emphasising the role of institutional policies in shaping positive attitudes.

In Kano State, with its growing number of universities and increasing pressure for research visibility and innovation, examining lecturers' attitudes toward knowledge sharing is timely. This study therefore seeks to investigate the extent, determinants, and implications of such attitudes among lecturers in Kano State universities, with the aim of offering context-specific recommendations for fostering a sustainable culture of knowledge exchange.

Statement of the problem

Knowledge sharing is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone for fostering innovation, enhancing teaching quality, and improving research productivity in universities. However, despite its importance, evidence suggests that Nigerian universities continue to experience inconsistent and underdeveloped knowledge-sharing practices (Ehijiagbone & Olatokun, 2020). In Kano State, anecdotal reports and preliminary observations revealed that many lecturers tend to work in isolation, rely heavily on informal networks, and often demonstrated a limited willingness to engage in structured collaborative knowledge exchange. Several factors account for this challenge. At the individual level, issues such as mistrust of colleagues, fear of losing professional

advantage, and low motivation discouraged lecturers from freely sharing knowledge. At the organisational level, weak incentives, inadequate institutional support systems, and limited access to technological platforms further undermined the development of a robust knowledge-sharing culture (Fagbola & Ejiwunmi, 2025). Importantly, prior studies have shown that lecturers attitudes whether positive or negative are strong determinants of their knowledge-sharing behaviours. Yet, empirical evidence specifically focused on Kano State universities is scarce, as most Nigerian studies emphasised other regions. This knowledge gap makes it difficult for policymakers, administrators, and stakeholders to design targeted strategies that can encourage effective and sustainable knowledge-sharing practices among lecturers in Kano State.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of this study is to examine the attitude of lecturers towards knowledge sharing in Universities in Kano state, while the specific objectives are as follows.

- To determine knowledge sharing strategies employed by lecturers in the Universities under study;
- To determine the attitudes of lecturers towards Knowledge sharing in the universities under study.

Empirical Literature Review

Empirical studies reveal diverse strategies used by lecturers in Nigerian and African universities. Kabiru (2020), in a survey at Bayero University, Kano, found that knowledge sharing primarily occurred through seminars, workshops, conferences, professional associations, and postgraduate supervision, though reliance on informal networks limited effectiveness. Similarly, Mayowa-Adebara and Enakrire (2024), in a cross-sectional survey across Nigerian universities, reported the use of departmental seminars, mentoring, collaborative research groups, and digital platforms, stressing that institutional incentives and norms influence engagement. In Tanzania, Mubofu and Kainkwa (2023) showed that lecturers relied heavily on OER repositories,

LMSs, and open licensing for sharing materials, facilitated by institutional encouragement. Other Nigerian studies, such as Afolabi, Ojo, and Adeyemi (2020), identified colloquia, research meetings, and WhatsApp groups as strategies, while Umar, Ali, and Bala (2022) noted the use of knowledge management systems, cloud storage, and Google Classroom. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that lecturers employ both traditional (seminars, conferences) and modern (digital platforms, repositories) strategies, though usage remains uneven across institutions.

Empirical evidence consistently shows that attitudes play a crucial role in shaping lecturers' willingness to share knowledge. Kabiru (2020) found that while BUK lecturers valued knowledge sharing for academic growth, many were guarded and selective, especially with tacit knowledge, due to mistrust and fear of intellectual property loss. Ehijiagbone and Olatokun (2020), at the University of Ibadan, similarly observed positive attitudes toward explicit sharing (e.g., publications) but reluctance toward tacit sharing. In Kwara State, Bello and Oyekunle (2025) reported that lecturers' attitudes were favourable when sharing enhanced career visibility and reputation, but institutional culture and rewards moderated this willingness. Mayowa-Adebara and Enakrire (2024) emphasised that social norms, incentives, and institutional support significantly

shaped lecturers' attitudes and engagement. Beyond Nigeria, Mtebe, Komba, and Mwalumbwe (2023) in Tanzania found that positive attitudes toward openness encouraged lecturers to adopt OER platforms. Likewise, Nguyen et al. (2025) in Vietnam confirmed that attitude is a strong predictor of intention and behaviour within the Theory of Planned Behavior framework. Together, these findings highlight that while many lecturers demonstrate favourable attitudes, contextual challenges such as mistrust, plagiarism fears, and weak incentives often limit knowledge-sharing behaviour.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research methodology through the use of a cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 2,611 lecturers in universities in Kano State. The Krejcie and Morgan formula was applied to determine the appropriate sample size in each of the four universities, resulting in a total sample of 346 lecturers, as recommended by Research Advisers (2021). A questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. A total of 346 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the lecturers by the researchers, out of which 323 were returned and found usable. The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequency and percentages.

Result/Findings

Table 2: knowledge sharing strategies

STATEMENT	Frequency(percentage)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Stronghly disagree
Through Formal Knowledge Sharing	77(23.8%)	43(13.3%)	17(5.3%)	48(14.9%)	138(42.7%)
Participation in seminars	100(31.0%)	87(27.0%)	37(11.5%)	12(3.7%)	87(26.9%)
Participation Workshops	95(29.4%)	118(36.5%)	23(7.1%)	8(2.5%)	79(24.5%)
Attending Conferences	107(33.1%)	105(32.5%)	30(9.2%)	2(.6%)	79(24.5%)
Contribution in departmental meetings/committees	94(29.1%)	103(31.9%)	30(9.3%)	9(2.8%)	87(26.9%)
Publishing in journals and proceedings	112(34.7%)	101(31.3%)	15(4.6%)	8(2.5%)	87(26.9%)

In Table 1 the findings indicated that lecturers in

Kano State universities employed a variety of formal knowledge sharing strategies, though their levels of participation differ. While only 37.1% generally affirmed engagement in formal knowledge sharing, a larger proportion (42.7%) strongly disagreed, suggesting that some lecturers remain disengaged from structured sharing activities. However, participation becomes more evident when looking at specific strategies such as seminars, workshops, and conferences, where between 58% and 65.9% reported active involvement. This reflects lecturers' preference for professional gatherings as important platforms for exchanging ideas and building networks.

Other strategies also received strong support. About 61% agreed that they engage in knowledge sharing through departmental meetings and committees, highlighting the role of internal academic structures in facilitating collaboration.

Additionally, publishing in journals and conference proceedings was widely practiced, with nearly two-thirds (66%) of respondents actively involved. This underscores the traditional academic expectation of publishing as a key means of disseminating and sharing scholarly knowledge.

Overall, the results indicate that while lecturers generally value and participate in specific formal knowledge sharing strategies (seminars, workshops, conferences, departmental meetings, and publishing), their responses to the broad category of "formal knowledge sharing" were mixed, with a significant proportion expressing disagreement. This suggests that lecturers may associate formal knowledge sharing more with specific structured activities rather than a general concept. It also highlights the need for universities to strengthen institutional culture and provide more enabling environments that encourage formalised sharing of academic knowledge.

Table 2 Attitude of lecturers towards knowledge sharing

STATEMENT	Frequency(percentage)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Strongly disagree
I have positive regard towards Knowledge Sharing	206(63.8%)	55(17.0%)	11(3.4%)	2(.6%)	49(15.2%)
Knowledge Sharing will lead to Success in academic activities	181(56.0%)	62(19.2%)	6(1.9%)	3(.9%)	71(22.0%)
Trust among academics develop Positive attitude to share Knowledge	151(46.7%)	57(17.6%)	72(22.3%)	3(.9%)	71(22.0%)
Motivation Boost and increase Knowledge Sharing attitude	135(41.8%)	52(16.1%)	40(12.4%)	11(3.4%)	85(26.3%)
There is a danger in giving away Knowledge through Sharing	58(18.0%)	54(16.75%)	47(14.6%)	27(8.4%)	137(42.4%)
I hate to Share Knowledge so as to avoid plagiarism	49(15.2%)	50(15.5%)	42(13.0%)	54(16.7%)	128(39.6%)

Table 2 shows that lecturers in Kano State universities generally maintain a positive attitude toward knowledge sharing, with 80.8% expressing favorable views and 75.2% linking it to academic success. This highlights their recognition of its importance in enhancing teaching, research, and professional growth.

However, trust emerged as a mixed factor: while 64.3% agreed it fosters positive attitudes, nearly 44% expressed doubt. This suggests that mistrust among academics may still hinder effective knowledge exchange despite overall positive perceptions. Motivation also played a role, with

57.9% acknowledging its influence, though 26.3% strongly disagreed, indicating that not all lecturers are equally driven by motivational factors.

Concerns around intellectual property and plagiarism were also apparent. Although 42.4% strongly disagreed that knowledge sharing is dangerous, 34.7% still viewed it as risky. Similarly, while 39.6% dismissed plagiarism fears, 30.7% admitted avoiding sharing to prevent it. These findings show that while most lecturers embrace knowledge sharing, a notable minority remain cautious, shaped by fears of idea theft, loss of ownership, or diminished authority.

In summary, the results suggest that lecturers in Kano State universities generally maintain a positive outlook toward knowledge sharing and recognised its role in enhancing academic activities. However, challenges such as lack of trust, concerns about plagiarism, and perceived dangers of giving away knowledge still discourage a portion of lecturers from fully embracing knowledge sharing practices. This indicates that while attitudes are mostly favourable, institutional efforts to build trust, safeguard intellectual property, and address plagiarism concerns will be essential to strengthen a culture of knowledge sharing.

Discussion of the Study Findings

Objective One: Formal Knowledge Sharing Strategies

The study revealed that lecturers actively participate in seminars, workshops, conferences, departmental meetings, and publishing, aligning with findings by Mtebe et al. (2023) who reported that African academics rely on structured platforms to exchange knowledge. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2025) noted that conferences and publications remain key dissemination channels globally. However, the relatively low general endorsement of "formal knowledge sharing" contrasts with Fagbola and Ejiwunmi (2025), who found high institutional reliance on formalised strategies, suggesting that in Kano universities,

knowledge sharing may be driven more by specific activities than broad institutional policies.

Objective Two: Attitudes toward Knowledge Sharing

Most lecturers in this study expressed positive attitudes toward knowledge sharing (80.8%), consistent with Oluwaseun and Adebayo (2021) who observed similar trends in Nigerian universities. Like Mayowa-Adebara and Enakrire (2024), the findings also highlight trust and plagiarism concerns as barriers. The mixed views on motivation align with Ganiyu et al. (2023), who argued that incentives alone do not guarantee sharing. However, unlike Fagbola and Ejiwunmi (2025), where fear of superiority loss was a major hindrance, Kano lecturers were more open, showing readiness to embrace sharing provided institutional safeguards exist.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that lecturers in universities within Kano State employed diverse knowledge-sharing strategies such as seminars, workshops, mentoring, collaborative research, and the use of digital platforms. However, these practices were often informal and lacked structured institutional support. The results further showed that lecturers' attitudes played a significant role in determining the extent of their engagement in knowledge-sharing activities. While many lecturers demonstrated positive attitudes towards collaboration, factors such as mistrust, fear of losing professional advantage, and weak institutional incentives negatively influenced participation. It was also evident that digital tools were increasingly adopted; yet their sustainability depended on training, motivation, and supportive policies.

Overall, the study concludes that effective knowledge sharing among lecturers in Kano State universities requires both individual willingness and strong institutional frameworks. By addressing barriers related to attitudes, incentives, and policy support, universities can foster a more collaborative culture that enhances innovation, teaching effectiveness, and research productivity.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Institutional Incentives**: Universities should establish clear reward and recognition systems (e.g., promotion points, awards, research grants) to motivate lecturers to actively participate in formal knowledge-sharing platforms such as conferences, workshops, and departmental seminars.

2. **Enhance Trust and Collaboration**: Since mistrust and fear of plagiarism emerged as barriers, universities should adopt policies that protect intellectual contributions while encouraging collaborative research groups, mentorship, and co-authorship to build trust among lecturers.

3. **Provide Training on Knowledge Management Tools**: Regular training should be organise to build lecturers' capacity in using digital platforms such as LMSs, repositories, and cloud-based tools, ensuring sustainable adoption of technology-driven knowledge-sharing strategies.

4. **Develop Institutional Knowledge-Sharing Policies**: Universities in Kano State should formulate formal policies and guidelines for knowledge sharing, ensuring that it becomes an integral part of academic practice and culture.

5. **Promote Communities of Practice**: Departments should create smaller, discipline-focused communities of practice where lecturers can comfortably share tacit knowledge, reducing isolation and overreliance on informal networks.

6. **Integrate Knowledge Sharing into Academic Workload**: Knowledge-sharing activities such as mentoring, collaborative publications, and seminar participation should be formally integrated into lecturers' workload, ensuring they are seen as core responsibilities rather than optional practices.

7. **Foster Motivation and Positive Attitudes**: Universities should implement motivational strategies both intrinsic (peer recognition, academic prestige) and extrinsic (incentives, funding) to encourage lecturers to sustain positive attitudes towards sharing.

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