

Full Length Research Paper

# Knowledge sharing Practice among Employees of Culture and Tourism Offices in the Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara and Southern Nation Nationalities and People Regions of Ethiopia

Addisalem Gulumma<sup>1</sup>; Lawrance A.Gojeh<sup>2</sup> and Amanuel Ayde Ergado<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jimma University Library system, Jimma University, Jimma, Ethiopia.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Information Science, Harmaya University, Harmaya, Ethiopia.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Information Science, Jimma University, Jimma, Ethiopia.

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Corresponding Author:

**Amanuel Ayde Ergado**

Department of  
Information Science,  
Jimma University, Jimma,  
Ethiopia.

Abstract

Knowledge sharing is knowledge transfer that means, sharing knowledge between individuals and groups in enterprises. Among various sectors, Tourism is a service industry and its management practices are highly focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of the information and knowledge exchanges that happen between the different organizations that need to collaborate to deliver composite products. The aim of the study is to identify the factors affecting knowledge sharing Practice among employees of culture and Tourism centers. Cross-sectional study design was employed for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 227 study participants. For data collection interview and questionnaire was used and the collected data was analyzed by descriptive statistics. The finding indicated that, frequency of culture and tourism office employees' communication with each other, teams or groups for sharing information and knowledge is very rare which accounts for 88(38.2%). The Culture and Tourism centers should be able to work to improve knowledge sharing practice by considering the factors and barriers reported.

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing, tourism center, culture and tourism, Ethiopian tourism centers

Introduction

Knowledge is defined as human expertise which is found in peoples mind and gained through experience and interaction. Every accomplishment needs some sort of knowledge, because there is nothing which can be performed without knowledge (Nakkiran & David, 2003). Hara (2007) proposed three broad types of knowledge that may be shared, which include: book knowledge, practical knowledge, and cultural knowledge. Therefore, the term 'knowledge sharing (KS)' implies the giving and receiving of information framed within a context by the knowledge of the sources Sharratt& Usoro (2003). According to Hoff & de Ridder, (2004), KS is the process of mutually exchanging knowledge and jointly creating new understanding. Knowledge sharing also known as knowledge transfer that means, sharing knowledge between individuals and groups in an enterprise (Disterer, 2001). Tourism is a service industry and its management practices are highly focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of the information and knowledge exchanges that happen between the different organizations that need to collaborate to deliver composite products (Teresa and Mariana, 2016).

Knowledge is essential in the modern business world and hence knowledge management is a determining factor for the survival of almost all businesses. The availability of critical knowledge is one of the most important success factors for organizations to achieve competitive advantages in today's knowledge-driven economies. One of the central activities of KM is knowledge sharing sources.

Organizations are managing the idea of sharing and some trust that sharing what you have is essential, yet most people especially in developing countries like Ethiopia do not agree with this thought, on the grounds that there is trepidation of losing their energy position, impetus and admiration in the event that they permit their insight to be utilized by others. The issue of knowledge sharing may also arise from the culture, infrastructure and administration issues of Organizations. The problems in tourism and culture centers of Ethiopia lead to the following research question.

What is the level of knowledge sharing practice among employees of culture and Tourism centers in the selected regions of Ethiopia?

Ethiopia is the largest land-locked country situated in the Horn of Africa. It is a federal republic with nine regional states (Amhara, Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Harari, Oromia, Somali, Tigray and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples) and two administration cities, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The regional states are divided into 85 zones and 765 woredas (districts) Census (2007). There are over 80 ethnic groups. Out of these, Oromo and Amhara account for 34.4 per cent and 27.0 per cent respectively.

From these nine regional states my focus was the three regional state and one city administration which is (Amhara, Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples, and oromia region and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia Country Profile, 2014).

Tourism is a smokeless administration giving industry. It is the transient and transitory development of individuals outside their typical living and working spot to new destination. Tourism is a composite of exercises, offices, administrations and commercial enterprises that convey a travel experience, that is, transpiration, convenience eating and driving foundations, diversion, amusement, recorded and social encounters, destination attractions, shopping and different administrations accessible to voyagers far from home Shojaae (2000)

It's a place that is known for copious exceptional and brilliant tourism attractions. The excellent blends of verifiable, social, and common attractions denote the nation as a one of a kind traveler destination in the locale. Tourism as one autonomous financial segment is an extremely late wonder with regards to Ethiopia. Tourism was initially settled as a division for monetary advancement in 1962 and could indicate 12% advancement for the coming four years. Be that as it may, the main developmental years of tourism in Ethiopia in the mid 1970s was tested by turmoil of the Ethiopian .Upset of 1974 and common wars that took after the unrest. Dry spell and yearning that won in the nation in 1965 and 1984, as an after effect of which a large number of Ethiopians are said to have kicked the bucket, were additionally to have its own impact on Ethiopian picture by and large and tourism development and success specifically. ( MoCT, 2009; Keller, 1981 ).

UNWTO Tourism Highlight (2015) emphasized that Ethiopia's share of tourism recipient in Africa is far beyond its neighbor Kenya and a small island, Mauricius. Ethiopia has taken 1% share of Africa while Kenya and Mauricius have taken 2.2% and 4% share respectively (UNWTO, 2015). This shows that Ethiopia's tourism is still lagging behind contributing only very little as a petty economic activity opposite to the expectations vested up on it. Tourism infrastructure is very poor in Ethiopia compared to even other African countries. The other causes of poor performance in tourism industry in Ethiopia are limited participation of the private entrepreneurs and lack of skilled manpower in tourism business (Abebe, 2015)

The expertise built by employees thus needs to be safeguarded because tourism is a highly knowledge-intensive industry which is heavily dependent upon such skills and expertise. To increase its knowledge capital, tourism organization must develop an effective KS process and encourage its employees to share knowledge. KS is a significant method in tourism organizations while, if done successfully, it can result in shared intellectual capital, an increasingly important resource. Tourism organizations without a supportive culture, which encourage employees to share and learn from each other, will not benefit fully from the creation of new knowledge. Thus they need to facilitate their employees in acquiring, capturing, sharing and utilizing knowledge, in order to survive and to gain competitive advantage. In order to facilitate KS, they need to address the issue of the facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting KS behaviors (Yiu & Law, 2012).

While knowledge sharing is crucial but still individuals do not share their knowledge because they consider it important for themselves. According to Davenport (1995) as it can help them to remain valuable in the organization. They cannot be enforced to share their knowledge but can be motivated to do so (Gibbert & Krause, 2002). Even though there are motivational methods to encourage knowledge sharing behaviour but changing the behaviour of individuals is one of the greatest challenges for the success of KM and knowledge sharing (Ruggles, 1998).

The objective of this study is to identify the factors affecting knowledge sharing Practice among employees of culture and Tourism centers in selected regions of Ethiopia. Specifically, to determine the level of knowledge sharing practices and to find out the relationship between regions among factors affecting knowledge sharing practice

## Materials and Methods

### *Methodology*

Cross sectional study with both quantitative and qualitative study designs was used. It is chosen due to its importance to show current status in all research areas and it is relatively easy to conduct than longitudinal studies because the researcher can collect all the needed data at a single time (Tirualem, 2011).

### *Sample size and sampling technique*

The source population for this study was employees of Tourism and culture bureaus which are located in Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara and Southern Nation, Nationalities and People (SNNPR) culture and tourism office. For Quantitative study, the sample size was calculated using a single population proportion formula with 95% CI, 5% margin of error and by considering estimated proportion of knowledge sharing practice to be 50% Tirualem (2011). For qualitative study, four heads of Culture and Tourism Office were interviewed to gain general highlight and supportive information on the quantitative result. For data collection questionnaire and interview was used.

*Data gathering tools and procedures*

To collect data from the culture and tourism offices in regional states and city administrations the data collection instruments such as questionnaire and interview questions are employed to get primary data and document analysis was used to get secondary data. Interview question and document analysis used to support the data collected by using questionnaire.

*Data analysis*

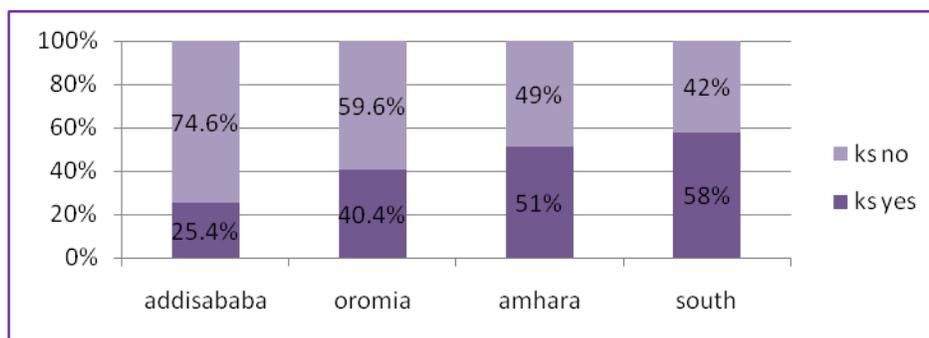
Data was edited and coded, before entry to a computer, then entered, and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0 for Windows. Data was analyzed for descriptive statistics like percentages and analytical techniques such chi square was undergone to test the association between dependent and independent variables. P-value of 0.05 at 95% confidence interval was considered as a cut-off point for statistical significance.

**Data Analysis**

All of the distributed questionnaires (227) were filled and collected, thereby making the response rate of 100% which allowed the researcher to continue with the research.

**Result and Discussion***Level of Knowledge sharing practice among employees of culture and Tourism*

the main focus of the study was to determine the level of knowledge sharing practices among employees of culture and Tourism centers in selected regions of Ethiopia and to as well answer the research question, which states “What is the level of knowledge sharing practice among employees of culture and tourism centers in the selected regions (i.e. Addis Ababa, Oromiya, Amhara and SNNPR) of Ethiopia?”. Figure 1 below shows the reflections of the level of knowledge sharing practices in the selected regions of Ethiopia.



**Fig 1:** Distribution of knowledge sharing practice among the regions of culture and Tourism Offices in Ethiopia

From figure 1 above, knowledge sharing practice was 98 (43.2%) while 129(56.8%) of the respondents do not practice knowledge sharing. Further analysis indicated that majority of the respondents who share knowledge, 33(58%) were from the SNNPR Culture and tourism office followed by Amhara which accounted for 28(51%).

*Knowledge sharing practice*

Knowledge can be shared through social interactions and referring to different documented resources. New knowledge is created when employees share what experiences, thoughts and ideas they have. The knowledge sharing of staff of the organization has been considered in table 4.2 on knowledge sharing practices to answer and further explain the first research question which states “What is the level of knowledge sharing practice among employees of culture and tourism centers in the selected regions (i.e. Addis Ababa, Oromiya, Amhara and SNNPR) of Ethiopia?”

The table below indicates that, the majority of, 90 (39.6%), the respondents rarely share their know – how with other members of the staff and twenty eight percent of the respondents often share their knowhow with other colleagues but five of them (2.2%) never share their knowhow. Similarly, while 93(41%) participants rarely share the knowledge they obtained from workshops and training, 59(26%) share the knowledge they acquired from the workshop and training often the times. Concerning the frequency of sharing knowledge gained from guidelines, journals, and book to staffs, 92(40.5%) of them share rarely followed by sometimes which accounts for 26.4%. Majority (33.5%) of the participants rarely use face to face communication to share knowledge and only 5.7% of the participant a use face to face communication always as a way to share knowledge.

Eighty-five (37.4%) respondents never use internet to share knowledge with their colleagues while 25.6 % of the participants use it as a means of communication rarely and in the contrary, only 7.5% of the participants use internet and intranet as a method of sharing knowledge. Regarding phone, only 6.2% of the participants use it always while the majority (37%), did use phone rarely to share knowledge.

Table: 1. Knowledge sharing practice characteristics among employees of culture and Tourism office, 2016

Knowledge sharing practice		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	mean	SD	Decision
Frequency of sharing know-how with the staff.	N	5	90	51	64	17	2.99	1.03	N
	%	2.2	39.6	22.5	28.2	7.5			
Frequency of sharing knowledge obtained from workshop and training to the staff	N	19	93	43	59	13	2.79	1.09	N
	%	8.4	41.0	18.9	26.0	5.7			
Frequency of to Sharing knowledge gained from guidelines, journals, and book to staffs.	N	20	92	60	45	10	2.70	1.02	N
	%	8.8	40.5	26.4	19.8	4.4			
Frequency of face to face communication to share knowledge with colleagues	N	29	76	60	49	13	2.74	1.10	N
	%	12.8	33.5	26.4	21.6	5.7			
Use of internet to share knowledge with colleagues	N	85	58	36	31	17	2.28	1.29	D
	%	37.4	25.6	15.9	13.7	7.5			
Frequency of use phone to share knowledge with colleagues	N	29	84	45	55	14	2.74	1.14	N
	%	12.8	37.0	19.8	24.2	6.2			
Frequency of employees communicate with each other teams or groups for sharing information and knowledge	N	11	88	46	77	5	2.89	1.00	N
	%	4.8	38.2	20.3	33.9	2.2			

The finding indicates that, frequency of employees' communication with each other, teams or groups for sharing information and knowledge is very rare which accounts for 88(38.2%) (Table 3.2). In order to interpret the perception scores of respondents on the factors that affect knowledge sharing in Culture and Tourism office which was based on the five point Likert scale; the researcher adopted the method used by Gojeh *et al* (2015) by converting the ranked order Likert scale to interval scale using an equal interval of 0.80. Hence, a mean score was considered 1.00 - 1.80- Never; 1.80 - 2.60- Rarely; 2.60 - 3.40- Sometimes; 3.40 - 4.20- Often; and 4.20 - 5.00- Always. there is a consistence between the employees' response of knowledge sharing practice which is reported to be low and top managers' response on the existence of knowledge sharing in the organization. One interviewee provided the following answer: 'There is no formal established system of knowledge sharing among the employees in our organization except the 'one to five' association (small groups that discusses their daily activities and plans of their work) which might rarely creates the environment of some sort of knowledge sharing among the employees . Even though I personally believe that sharing knowledge is important, as organization there is no responsible body that works on knowledge sharing'.

### Discussion

Table 3.2 above revealed that respondents were neutral on six items on their knowledge sharing practices indicating they are only share knowledge sometimes. These items include: Frequency of sharing know-how with the staff (22.5%), Frequency of sharing knowledge obtained from workshop and training to the staff (18.9%), Frequency of to Sharing knowledge gained from guidelines, journals, and book to staffs(26.4%), Frequency of face to face communication to share knowledge with colleagues (26.4%), Frequency of use phone to share knowledge with colleagues(19.8%), Frequency of employees communicate with each other, teams or groups for sharing information and knowledge(20.3%). This could imply that employees share the knowledge they gained from different sources only sometimes.

### Conclusion

Generally the study indicated that the level of knowledge sharing is low even though it has importance to development of an organization. The factors that are associated with knowledge sharing in this study includes age, motivation, having free access to the majority of document, information and knowledge within organization, Receiving appropriate financial value when sharing know-how, knowledge sharing to get more chance of promotion and Knowledge sharing to get chance to show skills to colleagues. So, it is possible to conclude that the knowledge sharing was not uniformly practiced among employees of different age groups, motivation level, having access to the documents, information and knowledge within organization, receiving appropriate financial value when sharing know-how, knowledge sharing to get more chance of promotion and Knowledge sharing to get chance to show skills to colleagues.

### Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the practice of knowledge management is highly recommended for culture and Tourism offices because without availability of captured, organized and structured knowledge it is unlikely to implement effective knowledge sharing.

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