

Information Sharing Strategies Used by Airlines Staff in Kano State

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the information sharing strategies used by Airlines staff in Kano state. It specifically studied types of information sharing strategies and the types of ICT tools used to facilitate information sharing among Airlines staff in Kano state. In order to achieve the objective, set by the paper, quantitative research method was used through cross-sectional survey design to collect data from 87 respondents. Stratification techniques were used to enable for earnest participation of the respondents, which lead to the collection of objective data that was analyzed through descriptive statistics. However, the results of the analyses revealed that; 100% of staff agreed that one of the efficient strategy used in sharing information, is staff internal meetings; 91.95% of the staff indicated that, periodic meeting with FAAN managements is another efficient strategy used for sharing information. Also, 98.85% staff revealed that, WhatsApp application strategy were among the efficient way information are been shared. The findings also revealed that, 68.96% respondents revealed that printed copies of information were among strategy used by Airlines staff to share information. Furthermore, the findings on ICT tools used to facilitate sharing of information, revealed the followings: computers, radio messages, email attachments, online chat forums, video recording and Intranet devices were among the major ICT tools used. The study concludes that, Airlines managements should have adopted the smartest strategies and uses them for relative information processing and sharing to be able to address the problem around what to share, with whom and why to share, then, how and when to share among their staff. However, concerted effort to the advantage of digital technologies to effectively adopts the smartest technologies in order to facilitate efficiency and time management issues. However, it will also facilitate sharing of information in order to bring collaboration and transparencies into play in the circle of information sharing among the employees (staff).

Keywords: Information Sharing, Information Sharing Strategies, ICT Tools Use by Airline Staff, Airline Staff

Introduction

Information sharing is the critical aspect of communication in various fields including healthcare, business, government, and Information science etc. The processes of sharing information can be challenging and several studies have documented the difficulties and obstacles that can arise such as information silos and fears of molestation due to un-transparent systems. The concept of strategies is used to describe the ways trough which information is communicated from one point or person to another within an organization. Considering the importance of information and timely provision of information, organisation should be

conducting information sharing training for their staff in order to share information through a usual work-place business using any strategies available to them. That should be done transparently to encourage cooperation and collaboration among members in their workforce in the cycle of information sharing cultures. However, strategies used for sharing Information should be effective in order to facilitate sharing the desired information effectively. The strategies adopted in sharing information to airlines in Kano state facilitate communication and knowledge sharing among staff. The information sharing strategies differs depending on organization and the resources available to them.

Generally, Information sharing strategies could be words of mouth, phone calls, internet using emailing systems, interactions through secured internal mailing portal. These are commonly used strategies when collaborating for asynchronous information sharing practices. The information sharing strategy focused on: 'developing responsibility to develop culture in which organisation identify important information to share through a unique activity that make everyone in the loops to be informed about better way to render services to customers'. Strategies used for sharing information within an organization can be critical to organisational success and staff alike. Some empirical studies have shown that, information sharing strategies' effectiveness is linked to key terms such as trust. In effective information sharing, staff in an organization needs to trust each other. That enables them to share information and improve their performances in dealing with other staff and clientele. Formal information sharing process can enhance information sharing among members of the same organization. These are information sharing protocols and Information Management Systems which can facilitate sharing of Information through an available platform peculiar to Airlines staff. Such structure can lead to more effective and efficient communication as well as improved decision making processes.

Furthermore, it has been observed that Airlines staff in Kano State may not have had formal information sharing strategies and structures in places to enhance their shared understanding relating to their operations and services. This is the problem that provoked this paper to investigate 'information sharing strategies used by Airlines staff in Kano State'. In view of the aforementioned, it is pertinent to review the related literature to have adequate knowledge relating to the concept and significance of information sharing, information sharing strategies and ICT tools used to facilitate

sharing of information among Airlines staff in Kano State.

Literature Review

The Concepts and significance of information sharing are the fundamental terms used to know the related terms associated with information sharing discussions. There is a wider range of information that are shared within the firm across the supply chain of Airlines particularly those in Kano State. The sharing depends on the needs of the relative organization or each Airline. The information to be shared are such relating to their market, products, design, process, production, pricing, planning, inventory, logistic, demand forecasting, order, promotion strategies, customer demand, production schedule, distribution operation, technological knowhow, manufacturing methods and sales forecast etc. This Information should be identify, preserves and communicated with the supply chain partners in the Airlines service organizations (Ramayah & Omar, 2010).

Information sharing significance requires a careful understanding of how information is created, utilized and managed within organizational activity setting such as Airlines activities in Kano State. The key to successful information sharing is to understand the activity itself and how the information that needed to be shared among the actors is managed (Alhefeiti & Nakata, 2017). Li (2010) asserted that, collaborative effort in information sharing strategies is centered on different problem domains; policy making; destination marketing; tourism planning and information sharing. Organizations should engage in information sharing using strategies that is efficient to gain direct access to all relevant information that would help them to deliver services optimally.

Egberink (2015) has identified factors such as relationship investment; shared vision and communication which influenced inter-organisational information sharing. As well, Goldfarb (2014) has explained that, it is people that build and leverage on information sharing bridges and relationships. They excel in information sharing because of their highly analytic, understanding of the values in sharing information which usually impacted on their organizational changes and information sharing relationship and positive perception to improves on information sharing both directly and indirectly with trust.

Therefore, it is important to note that, before information is shared, it is necessary for information to be generated directly (primary), and indirectly (through people). However, it is a continuous cycle of man's curiosity to find meaning to the nature leading to identification, selection, processing, generation and re-generating of dependable data or information.

Consequently, information sharing strategies are channels used to exchanges information through from one staff to another. Bernama (2011) pointed that, Airlines staff and personnel of different enterprises working under Aviation industry and some organizations share information on social media sites. This enhance collaboration that make positive information sharing towards putting all actors on the same page to facilitate service delivery and also mitigating risks associated with services failure. Availability of internet offer a diverse information service that is of benefit to Airlines 'personnel worldwide include Airlines in Kano State in particular. Social networking sites are most helpful in sharing information among staff which is capable of effective communication distribution leading to knowledge spread across the Airlines businesses. Mazman and Usluel (2010) emphasized the usefulness of social media sites in creating platform to share

information and new ideas in form of group discussions and chats capable of sharing new information for urgent decision-making purposes thereby solving issues as they arise. Moreover, the performance of organisation in service delivery is determine by the nature of information generated or received and the strategies used to share it to various stakeholders. Yusuf (2012) has maintained that, for any meaningful information to be provided, certain relevant information sources must be consulted and it is only through such sources that Information seekers can obtain Information that is ideal for meaningful decision-making. Agarwal (2011) described an Information source as a 'carrier of Information' which involves both traditional sources such as books and people, and modern sources including predominantly digital which involve the use of electronic resources. Case (2012) argued that, one vital distinction that is made in the literature on Information seeking is between formal and informal sources of Information. Formal sources mostly involve books and reference materials whereas informal sources involve family, friends and colleagues. Marouf and Anwar (2010) list the purposes of using these sources which include:

1. Personal development,
2. Keeping up-to-date service delivery,
3. Research activities and
4. Consultation work

Indeed, the integrated work flow strategy, which build value that allowed everyone to know on how to contribute in making bigger picture, free-flow of information thereby giving everyone a better appreciation of how other teams and departments are affected by everyone collaborative and better actions. That would lead to an efficient collaboration which is a strategy that promotes synergy which account for togetherness of every employees to share valuable Information to better services delivery (Johnson, 2017).

Nonetheless, information sharing strategies are enhancing by ICT tools for better and seamless sharing of information by staff of Airlines in Kano state with ease of operations and services delivery system. ICT is Information sharing strategy that enhances to optimize business process such as planning, control, collaboration, communicating and addressing Information needs, internal operation, and expectations for making timely and informed decision. Spingies has conducted empirical study on ICT, the study revealed that, knowledge workers used ICT to gather knowledge in rural communities and found that, technology enable speed of knowledge gathered and simplify Information dissemination (Spingies, 2010).

Celebic and Rendulic (2011) maintain that, Information and communication technologies (ICT) have revolutionized the entire business world. It has fostered a dependency on technology for organization strategic management. Airlines were early adapter of ICT tools and they have long reutilized in history of technological innovation in comparison to many travel and tours businesses. Ansa (2013) instituted that, besides computer and all the necessary software, ICT-tools also comprises a network technology namely; the Internet, communication process, Information management, and Information storage. That has enhanced in the development of the quality of times Information processed and shared for better services delivery systems. Kanai, Chang, Yen and Magrans (2019) mention some of the significant of ICT tools in Airlines industries which simplified business processes and enhance collaborations of value chain in many ways. Importantly, ICT tools have the following benefits when staff used it to facilitate sharing of information:

1. Reducing dependency on intermediaries which has direct strategic implications for their

partners and strategic alliances. This enable them to communicate directly with consumers in a cost- effective manner than going through intermediaries

2. ICT has enhanced marketing support systems, operational systems as well as resource management systems.
3. ICT enable decision support systems to monitor traffic and bookings on computer reservation systems in order to identify customer behaviour, trends, as well as performance of their partners and sales agencies.

Challenges of Information Sharing Among Staff of Airlines

Challenges of Information sharing among staff in an organization are hindrances that either delayed proper Information sharing or prevented Information to be shared leading to lopsided decision making and poor services delivery by their staff. Oliveir (2016) explained that, 'Information sharing is viewed almost universally as the critical determinant for organisation success. Privacy and data protection concerns prevail; regulation is poorly understood; and Information's policies and procedures often place client confidentiality and discretion at the heart of business strategy. Balancing these two competing positions continues to generate issues during Information generation and sharing time.

Shankman (2014) argue that, of course there can be nothing guarantees about the future of Airlines companies if there is no sustainable demarcation in Information generation and sharing among staff of the organisation. That means, there should be technical supporting in using any ICT tools to foaster generation, storage and retrieval processes by staff of the organisation.

Ranjbarfard et al. (2014) posits that, lack of technical support is a barrier to Information generation, storage, distribution, and application in line with organisational learning. There must be a consideration in the regulation of the prices of ICT tools to encouraged using ICT tools to regulating sustainable sharing of Information to avoid issues that challenging sharing of Information in an organization.

Qureshi & Evans (2015) observed that, high cost of Information sharing and limitation of IT is also a challenge that prevent proper Information generation and sharing in the organization. Despite these barriers to Information sharing, there should be desire of individuals' staff to sort and share ideas to enable them learning from one and others. Insufficient support of top management and presence of poor leadership styles also hinders the successful sharing Information in an organisation. Unless management of the organisation have a good motivation packages to boast more inclusion in the participatory sharing of Information, there would be a persistent issues that challenging sharing of Information from the leadership styles among organizational managers.

McNichols (2010) identified lack of top management support as a barrier to Information sharing. Ali et al., (2017) mention that, reason behind failure of Information sharing can be constraints related to Information quality issues, incompatible Information system, lack of trust and confidential Information. This means, when the qualities of Information at hand is poor, sharing such Information may not bring any positive development to sharing of such Information. As well, sharing Information through incompatible way may discourages effectiveness in the participatory sharing. As well, transparency is the mother of trust in collaborative Information sharing and any organisation that lack trust, may not have effective Information sharing systems

which challenged sharing of Information effectively in an organization. Yang and Maxwell (2011) has identified these concerns as issues that challenged sharing of Information effectively: lack of resources, concerns of losing autonomy, lack of viable competitive advantages, lack of resistance to change, concerns of Information misuse and concerns of Information quality are barriers that to Information sharing. The greater is the internal competition that ravaging the effectiveness in sharing information in some service rendering organizations and among members working in such organizations.

Yang and Maxwell (2015) asserted that, greater perception of internal competition might be more likely to cause people to protect rather than share Information. In competitive environments, individuals may treat one and other as rivals and use different strategies to reach their own goals at the expense of others.

Research Objectives

The paper has addressed the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the Information Sharing Strategies used by Airlines staff in Kano state
2. To find out the types of ICT tools used to facilitate sharing of information by staff of Airlines in Kano state.
3. To examine the purpose of information sharing among the staff of Airlines in Kano State.
4. To identify the challenges of information sharing among staff of airlines in Kano State

Methodology

In furtherance to meet with the objectives of this paper, quantitative research paradigm was used through survey cross-sectional design. That has allowed objectives, quantum and quality data been collected from the respondents. The used of survey cross sectional design has enables to managed time due to the nature of Airlines schedules in the process of data collection from the respondents at the specific period of time. The choice of the methodology and the research design was because of the nature of the operations of the Airlines staff which provides them with ease of time to participate in this research. However, that has enhanced the participation by individual respondents haven objectively responded to the demand put forward by the research questions in order to meet with the objectives of the paper.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Findings

The paper descriptively analyzed the data using frequencies distribution and percentages computation. The use of descriptive analysis is because statistical analysis usually begins with descriptive analysis and it is greatly helpful in itemizing data sets, enables to identify exceptions and mistakes thereby keeping data in a format that is easy to understand and interprets.

4.1 Information Sharing Strategies by Airlines staff in Kano states

The question sought to find out the types of information sharing strategies used by Airlines staff in Kano state. The descriptive analyses of the data collected were done and the responses were made thus;

Table 1.0 Strategies used in sharing Information among Airlines Staff in Kano State

S/N	Items	Freq.	Percent.
1.	Phone calls	68	78.16
2.	Email via internet	67	77.01
3.	What's App	86	98.85
4.	Text messages	66	75.86
5.	FAAN scheduling meeting	80	91.95
6.	Conference calls	56	64.36
7.	Blog messages	10	11.49
8.	Face book medium	10	11.49
9.	Smart phone apps	20	22.98
10.	Staff meetings	87	100
11.	Share hard copies Information	60	68.96
12.	Zoom meetings	34	39.08
13.	Voice messages	67	77.01
14.	Skype medium	11	12.64
15.	Video conferences	43	49.42

It could be deduced from Table 1 that 68 staff of Airlines operating in Kano state revealed that they shared Information using phone calls which represents 79.16%. This medium is employed by staff because it is the easiest platform to facilitate the distribution of Information within their Airlines value chain. They reliably used strategies for Information sharing was staff internal meetings which represented 100% and email via Internet represented 77.01%. Another important strategy used for Information communication is the monthly compulsory progress meetings with FAAN representing 91.95%. Sharing Information using this strategy enable to discuss the progress of operations and services issues within the month under review. That would enable to table fresh customers' issues, services issues and suggest better ways for addressing such issues. Skype represents 12.64% and it is among the lowest strategies due to its newness in Information sharing circle, blog messages represents 11.49% and Face book medium has 11.49% the least mediums through which Information is shared among Airlines staff in Kano state. Hence, Voice message medium account for 77.01%, Skype represents 12.64% also,

Video conference accounts for 49.42%. While hardcopy strategy accounts for 68.96% and zoom interactions accounts for 39.08% respectively. Therefore, table 4.1 represents ICT tools used to facilitate sharing of information among staff of Airlines in Kano state.

ICT tools used to facilitate sharing of Information by staff of Airlines in Kano state

S/N	Items	Freq.	Percent.
1.	Computer via Internet	85	97.70
2.	Radio message	35	40.22
3.	Smart phone apps	51	58.62
4.	Intranet devices	26	29.88
5.	Online chat forum	77	88.50
5.	Voice recording	34	39.08
6.	Email attachment	45	51.72
7.	Video recording	68	78.16
8.	Public addressing systems	4	4.59

Table 2 revealed that, 97.70% of the staff of Airlines in Kano state shared Information using computer and internet facilities. This has facilitated the faster way at which Information is been shared among Airlines staff in Kano state. Also, 34 staff of Airlines in Kano state shared 39.08% Information using video recording facilities. Again, 77 staff among Airlines in Kano state shared 88.50% Information using online chat forum. This ICT facility has facilitated easy sharing of Information no matter the distance with less cost. As well, 35 staff shared 40.22% Information using Radio message. This ICT facility enables everyone to be connected at the same time hearing what Information is being communicated across the waves down and spontaneously to every staff using the radio gadget. Indeed, 51 staff of Airlines in Kano state shared 58.62% Information through smart phones supported applications. This has facilitated digital sharing of Information easily. 45 staff shares 51.72% Information through email attachments. This ICT facility have

facilitated sharing quantum of Information effortless. Nonetheless, 26 staff of Airlines in Kano state shared 29.88% Information through Intranet ICT facility. This facility is been recognized, where crucial Information is shared through across their front lines staff, management and customers respectively.

Indeed, the aforementioned analyses have pave way for the discussion of findings of the paper:

Discussion of Findings

The first research question on the type of information strategies used by Airlines staff in Kano state, the findings revealed that, Airlines staff in Kano state, shared Information using the strategies such as: Phone calls, Email messages, WhatsApps messages, text messages, schedule meetings with FAAN management, Airlines’ staff internal meetings, conference calls, video conferences, Zoom interaction, shared hard copies, face book medium respectively.

The usefulness of these strategies revealed in the findings of the paper would simplify ways information are processed, stored, retrieve and shared to enhanced customer services delivery and for proper managing of the time in which information are conveyed for effective operations.

Again, the second research question about what type of ICT tools used to facilitates in sharing Information by staff of Airlines in Kano state, findings has revealed that, staff of Airlines in Kano state used Computer via Internet, Intranet, Radio messages, Email Attachment, online Chat Forums, Zoom interactions, Voice Recorder, smart phone support apps respectively. The significant of these ICT tools has lead to more motivation and bring collaboration in the ways staff of Airlines has being

participating in Information sharing respectively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded from the findings of the study that, Airlines staff in Kano state have varieties of Information needs such as ; cognitive, technical, situational, ability, attitudinal, affective, arrival and departure, as well as customers services Information needs respectively.

Cognitive Information are basic to all staff of Airlines in Kano state. It assist them to have the knowledge of the fundamental to perform their operation effectively. These Information are: sign on ID, password details, Personal Number Records (PNR), destination Information, baggage entitlement required, tags Information, reservation Information and proof of payments Information etc. The technical Information help them to show how when needs arises. The customer services Information enable to know their customers and their related request and problems to attend to them efficiently. Attitudinal Information is a point of references Information enable to enhanced their relationship. And, service Information create general awareness in all what is required to render services, perform their operations effectively.

Similarly, it was concluded also that Airlines staff shared the following types of Information ranging from: service, operational, security, technical, customer service and flight Information respectively. Services Information give them all the relevant knowledge about their daily services. Operation Information give them relevant knowledge in their relative operations areas. Security Information give them security awareness knowledge and how they should relate in times security related circumstances. Technical Information give

them more relevant knowledge in techniques of operating machines and applied their relative ideas or knowing how to the technically challenged areas. Customer services Information give them general relevant knowledge about their customers and how to address their respective complain and requests respectively. Also, the flight Information enable them to know more about their flights schedules in relation to expected time of arrival (ETA), connecting hours, flights number, and departure time respectively.

More so, it was concluded that Airlines staff shared Information using the following strategies: phone calls and walkie talkie, email via internet, WhatsApp, text messages, schedule meeting with FAAN managements, conferences calls, blog messages, facebook medium, internal schedule meetings, hard copies Information, Zoom interacts, voice messages, video conferences etc.

Again, the following factors was concluded to be the motivating zeal's for sharing Information by Airlines staff in Kano state. There are Collaboration, Airlines cultures, understanding among staff, competitions, team spirit, services delivery system, task performances, personal factors, relationships building and fixing complains etc.

Above all, it was concluded from the findings of the study that, the challenges of Information sharing of Airlines staff are; Airlines cultures, individual factors, fear of committing shared errors around shared implicating Information, lack of proper knowledge of ICT tools used, lack of proper motivation by management in Information sharing circles, issues around re-establishing trust and losing authority to whom Information is shared with respectively.

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