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# Knowledge Transfer and Use as Predictors of Law Firm Performance:
## Nigerian Lawyer's Perspectives

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## ABSTRACT

There has been observed low practice of conscious knowledge management among Nigerian law firms, and there is no evidence on how knowledge transfer and use predict their performance. Hence, this study examined knowledge transfer and use as predictors of Nigerian law firm performance. The study adopts descriptive survey research design and web-based questionnaire as instruments for data collection. There was a total response of 205 from the survey. It was found that Nigerian lawyers transfer knowledge through platforms such as meetings, training, workshops/seminars, and collaboration. Results show that Nigerian lawyers use knowledge to improve innovative thinking, enhance performance, maximize financial performance, and improve client satisfaction. Results show that there is statistically significant relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance. Results show that knowledge transfer and use will significantly predict law firm performance. This study provides fresh insights that knowledge transfer and use are veritable mechanisms to improve law firm performance.

## KEYWORDS

Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Use, Law Firm Performance, Nigeria Law Firm, Nigerian Lawyers' Knowledge

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge transfer is the design and transmission of knowledge within an organization or between organizations to enhance learning and productivity of workers, which is essential in the overall success of the organization (Gaur *et al*., 2019). Based on this assumption, it is clear that knowledge transfer theoretically enhances performance. However, there is no indication as to how that applies to law firms in Nigeria. Olatokun and Olueze (2012) analyzed the attitude of Nigerian lawyers towards knowledge sharing but the study did not show how that could significantly determine their performance. Meanwhile, knowledge transfer is important to enhance the functions of organizations and it is also necessary to ensure that the stock of knowledge circulates within the organization (Patriotta *et al.*, 2013). Effective knowledge transfer however may not be complete without the use of knowledge as knowledge transfer involves donation and collection (Wang, Ling & Li, 2021). It is possible that knowledge donated that is not put into proper use may not yield any positive benefit.

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Ikyanyon and Ode (2017) observed that it behooves on managers to develop strategies for effective knowledge transfer that will aid efficient knowledge use.

Knowledge use is basically important to knowledge recipient who employ knowledge for innovation and consequently improves organizational performance (Osabutey & Jin, 2016; Carvalho & Gomes, 2017). Moreover, the inability to apply knowledge received defeat the essence of knowledge transfer. Ha *et al.* (2016) observed that knowledge use is the process involving the application of knowledge for decision making and problem solving. In the case of Nigerian lawyers, the use of knowledge involves making informed decision as to legal practices and research, which could have effect on performance. Besides, knowledge application can help to transform knowledge from being a potential power tool into actual innovations or inventions, which can enhance overall performance of organizations (Matin *et al.*, 2013). The bulk of lawyers' responsibilities are knowledge-intensive and they are often given low margin of error in the course of their duty. Failure to apply knowledge properly and judiciously may lead to fatal error that could have consequential effect on the judicial cases being handled or invalidate legal opinion being offered. This supports the importance to understand how knowledge transfer and knowledge use predict law firm performance.

Ha *et al.* (2016) assert that organizational performance has been mostly assessed through financial based performance measures. It was stressed further that most widely used financial measures are return on assets (ROA), return on investments (ROI), return on equity (ROE), market share, sales growth, and profitability. Though these indicators are still the ultimate aim of most organizations' operation, but measuring performance solely on these indicators are no longer adequate to measure competencies that modern organizations are looking for (Ha *et al*, 2016). Moreover, law firms may not be inclined to provide data on financial performance as some may deem it to be sensitive. Hence, this study measured law firm performance from the perspectives of non-financial performance. There is none but one empirical study (Olatokun & Elueze, 2012) on knowledge sharing among lawyers in Nigeria, which only examined knowledge sharing attitude of lawyers in Ibadan, Nigeria. With the importance of knowledge transfer and knowledge use to organization performance, the study did not investigate how knowledge shared are put into use and invariably predicts law firm performance in Nigeria. This left a gap which this study envisages to fill. Hence, this study focuses on the practices of knowledge transfer and use of knowledge as predictors of performance of law firms in Nigeria. The research questions guiding this study are as follow:

*RQ1*: What are the knowledge transfer practices of Nigerian lawyers?
*RQ2*: Do Nigerian lawyers make use of knowledge transferred to them?
*RQ3*: What is the collaborative effect of knowledge transfer and use on law firms' performance?
*RQ4*: What are the challenges of Nigerian lawyers with respect to knowledge transfer and use?
*RQ5*: What are the probable solutions to the challenges of Nigerian lawyers in relation to knowledge transfer and use?

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The practice of strategic knowledge management process has been observed to be lowly practiced amongst Nigerian law firms. Olatokun and Olueze (2012) have shown that Nigerian lawyers have positive attitude towards knowledge sharing but how they have optimized that to improve law firm's productivity is unknown. Ikyanyon and Ode (2017) stated that in order to enhance the optimum performance of all organs of the organization, it is imperative for knowledge to be transferred across employees and units of the organization. Subsequently, this will accelerate the organizational performance. This, at the long run, may enhance the overall performance of law firms and help them achieve their overall goal. Therefore, this study investigates the gap that amongst knowledge transfer, knowledge use, and law firm performance in a bid to provide empirical evidence to show the importance of knowledge transfer and knowledge use to law firm performance.

The effectiveness of knowledge transfer will lead to the productivity and organizational effectiveness, and improvement of the technical skills/experience of expatriates to the local workforce (Yang, 2008). As such, this will improve performance of lawyers in the firm. With the highlighted benefits of knowledge transfer in an organization, carrying out an effective knowledge transfer process still proves to be a difficult challenge (Hansen *et al.*, 2005). However, it has been shown that knowledge transfer would lead to better performance (Law & Ngai, 2008). On the bigger look, increased performance may improve the gratification law firm's clients derive from the legal service provided. This study therefore shows how law firm performs based on the practices of knowledge transfer and knowledge use from the perspectives of Nigerian lawyers.

## 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 3.1 Impacts of Knowledge Management on Organizations

Since knowledge transfer is an essential part of knowledge and this study focuses on the predictors of law firm performance from the perspectives of knowledge transfer and use, it becomes expedient to explore the impacts of knowledge management on organizations. The impact of knowledge transfer and use on law firm performance is underpinned in the KM success model as first proposed by Jennex and Olfman, which was based on an ethnography study in an engineering work environment (Jennex & Olfman, 2006). Meanwhile, this study shows the perspectives of knowledge management success in evidence-based environment like legal profession. Constructs of the KM success model of Jennex and Olfman were adapted from the Information System Success Model (ISSM) as propounded by Delone and McClean (2003). The proposed constructs of the Jennex and Olfman (2006)'s KM success model include system quality, knowledge quality, perceived benefit, perceived benefits/intention-to-use, user satisfaction, and net benefits.

It has been advised that while examining KM performance in an organization, it is appropriate to consider the application of an organizational effectiveness model rather than a task/process knowledge management system (KMS) model (Jennex & Olfman, 2005). Meanwhile, Jennex and Olfman (2006) model is an organizational effectiveness KM success model that examined KM success with the use of six constructs. Jennex and Olfman (2006) model highlighted the importance of reusing knowledge to enhance organizational effectiveness by providing relevant knowledge to people in need at the appropriate time. This contextually means that knowledge transfer and use as used in this study embodies the provision of knowledge to lawyers that is in a position of "knowledge need". The benefits of knowledge use after being collected may determine whether it was collected at the appropriate time of need.

A decade after the Jennex and Olfman (2006) model, Jennex, Smolnik, and Croasdell (2016) found and proposed that KM success model is underpinned in four constructs, which include impact on business processes, impact on KM strategy, leadership/management support, and knowledge content. The authors further concluded that organizations that seek to explore KM initiatives should consider other measures in the four proposed dimensions of the Jennex *et al.*, (2016) KM success model. Moreover, Jennex (2017) re-examined the model in 2017 at a paper presented at the Hawaii International Conference on System Science and concluded that service quality should be added as a dimension of KM success model. Furthermore, Jennex (2017) recommended that further exhaustive literature review and empirical study should be conducted to ascertain more dimensions in measuring KM success model.

### 3.2 Related Empirical Reviews

Knowledge management practice in organization has continuously gained attention. Guo *et al.* (2020) noted that profession-specific knowledge held by individual employees is a fundamental resource which firms rely upon to enhance their operations. Firms that are genuinely interested in participating

in knowledge transfer must be willing to abolish old method of doing things for a more improved new ways. Unlearning of work procedures or methods has a direct effect on knowledge transfer (Xi, Wang & Zhu, 2020). This means that Nigerian law firms should be open to new to transfer knowledge and exploit Information and Communication Technologies ICTs. The advent of ICTs has enhanced knowledge transfer in an organization (Palvalin *et al.*, 2018). Olatokun and Elueze (2012) found that lawyers have positive attitude towards sharing knowledge. This signals that there may be possibilities that there is positive attitude towards knowledge sharing, however there is no indication of how the knowledge is used and its implication on law firm performance. Matin and Sebagh (2015) found that there is no relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational performance.

Arsawan *et al*. (2017) revealed that subsidiaries performance and absorptive capacity moderated the relationship between knowledge transfer and subsidiaries performance. Rhodes *et al*. (2008a) found that organizational learning and social capital have significant impact on knowledge transfer process. It was also found that knowledge transfer has a significant relationship with perceived organizational performance. In another study by Rhodes *et al*. (2008b) revealed that personalized (tacit) knowledge transfer had a strong influence on innovative capabilities development and process innovation had a greater impact on organizational performance than product innovation. Srisamran and Ractham (2020) revealed that intention to receive knowledge can enhance the aptitude of white-collar workers in Thailand. This finding emphasizes the need for management of organizations to understand the knowledge recipient of their employees before engaging in knowledge transfer.

Wang, Ling and Li (2021) found that both knowledge donation and knowledge collection which are both elements of knowledge sharing are significantly related to service innovation of Malaysian motorcycle companies. It was shown that the effects of customer orientation, competition orientation, and inter-functional coordination on service innovation are mediated by knowledge sharing. Chen, Yuan, Wu, and Dai (2017) explored knowledge transfer usefulness and showed that knowledge management plays an important role in mediating between knowledge transfer usefulness and knowledge innovation. It was also shown that knowledge transfer usefulness predicts knowledge innovation. Carvalho and Gomes (2017) also showed the importance of knowledge management practices to innovations in organizations in the same industry.

Palacios-Marques *et al.* (2013) found that knowledge transfer positively impact firm performance. The positive results may be as a result of the intensive usage of knowledge in the industries under study. Meanwhile, Du *et al.* (2007) found that managers pay attention to the factors of knowledge sharing and this has an influence on the firm performance. Similar study by Al-Kashari and Al-Tehiri (2019) revealed that knowledge sharing is an important part of knowledge management process and it is a driving factor in organizational efficiency and productivity. All of these findings suggest that knowledge transfer within an organization can have a positive effect on organization performance. Moreover, all of these studies assessed organizational performance from the perspectives of non-financial performance. However, none of the studies were carried out on law firms which this study focuses on.

Ekore (2014) show that training is a major factor interacts with other components to significantly predict knowledge transfer success in the multinational enterprises. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate effective training in the effort to drive successful knowledge transfer that enhances productivity. Organizations are advised to deemphasize demographic characteristics of employees and focus on result-oriented training programs. Ofobruku and Yusuf (2016) found that knowledge transfer had positive effect on employees' performance. The study concludes that employees performance improve in line with the degree of knowledge transfer scheme put in place by the organization. Skimming through the literature reviewed show that the relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance in Nigerian has not been established.

Rodiqi (2010) found that knowledge utilization systems in construction projects should be developed as explicit systems of rules and processes. The study showed that embedding of ethical values in the overall project culture is another prerequisite for the successful utilization of knowledge

in construction projects. Ha *et al.* (2016) found that knowledge use has relationship with both financial and non-financial performance of organization. In this study however, performance of law firm is measured from the perspectives of non-financial perspectives. Amyan *et al.* (2016) found that there is a strong correlation between knowledge management and the utilization of knowledge. This shows that knowledge use is an important phase in knowledge management. Indeed, knowledge use is a component of knowledge management that assists organizations to envisage, make and control the whole decision making process (Kongpichayanond, 2009). Knowledge use is such an important part that if not triggered, knowledge will be inertia and practically not useful to the benefit of humanity. However, there is no study that has provided insights on how Nigerian lawyers make use of knowledge.

Cursory look through literature has shown that there is no empirical study that assessed the performance of law firm in Nigeria whether from financial or non-financial perspectives. This provides that this study seeks to stimulate the novelty in this area by examining how knowledge transfer and use can determine law firm performance. Performance is a recurrent theme in most branches of management, and it is of interest to both academic scholars and practicing managers. Although the importance of the performance concept is widely recognized, the treatment of performance in research setting is perhaps one of the troublesome issues confronting academic researchers today. With the increasing volume of literature on this topic, there appears to be little hope of reaching any agreement on basic terminology and definitions. There is no consensual concept or theory that is adopted by scholars to determine performance of organizations. The two general perspectives however are financial and non-financial performance. Nevertheless, it was noted that financial performance, operational performance, and organizational effectiveness are the elements inherent in performance (Liao and Wu, 2009).

Rhodes *et al.* (2008a) asserted that measurement of organizational performance may take different forms. Mostly in business wise, organizations assess performance based on financial outcomes, which are tangible unit such as monetary profit cost reduction, sales volume and inventory turnover while they assess the intangibles such as customer satisfaction rate, rate of product development, and new competencies and capabilities. Owing to the perhaps invasive nature of financial data, it was deemed that the best possible measure is to derive the organization performance asking participants' perception of the situation to assess organizational performance using non-financial performance metrics. Although perceptual data introduces limitations through increased measurement error and the potential for mono-method bias, it is an acceptable method particularly when true financial data are not easily obtainable from the organization (Rhodes *et al.*, 2008a). Crabtree and DeBusk (2008) added that non-financial performance measures are more useful on predicting future performance and facilitating the performance of the organizations. Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were tested for the study:

$H_{01}$: There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance
$H_{02}$: There is no significant relationship between knowledge use and law firm performance
$H_{03}$: Knowledge transfer and use will not significantly predict law firm performance

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts quantitative research methods, using descriptive survey research design. Web-based questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. All the 33 law firms that were listed on Chamber's Global coverage in 2019 were selected for the study. Chamber's Global coverage collated Nigeria's best law firms using metrics such as organization, individuals and market place. Owing to the common characteristics of the respondents and unavailable records of the total number of lawyers in these law firms, total population sampling technique was adopted. The link to the survey was shared on lawyers via e-mail and WhatsApp messages in February-March, 2020. The links were

shared to Junior and Senior Associates of selected law firms. Responses were allowed for a period of six weeks with periodic reminder so as to surge the number of responses.

The items of the questionnaire were adapted from the literature. The questionnaire was peer-validated by one Senior Advocate of Nigeria (equivalent of Queen's Counsel in the UK) and another lawyer with over a decade experience in legal practice. A total of 30 items were on the initially developed copy. However, eight items were advised to be expunged and three items were added by the peer-validators based on their experience as lawyers. Two of the validations suggested some changes as to wordings of five of the items. All corrections were effected and formed the basis for the questionnaire used for data collection. Using split-half method, the questionnaire has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.761 co-efficient which means that the questionnaire is fit to produce consistent results. At the end, only two hundred and five (205) responses were collected as that serve as the unit of analysis. Data collected were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics (frequency count and simple percentage) and inferential statistics (Pearson's product moment correlation and ANOVA).

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The total responses collected was 205 from the lawyers whom were shared the web link of the survey. Hence, the analysis of unit for this study is 205.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 123 | 60.0% |
| Female | 82 | 40.0% |
| Total | **205** | **100.0%** |
| Age | | |
| Less than 25 years | 121 | 59.0 |
| 26-35 years | 59 | 28.8 |
| 36-45 years | 10 | 4.9 |
| 46 years and above | 15 | 7.3 |
| Total | **205** | **100.0%** |
| Years of Experience | | |
| 1-5 years | 135 | 65.9 |
| 6-10 years | 41 | 20.0 |
| 11-15 years | 23 | 11.2 |
| 16 years and above | 4 | 1.9 |
| Total | **205** | **100.0%** |

Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were male and that indicates that most of the practicing lawyers in Nigeria are male. Moreover, the Table shows that more than half of the respondents were less than 25 years of age. This illustrates that most of the respondents were youth. It can also be seen that the least age distribution of respondents were those between 36-45 years (4.9%). It can also be viewed from Table 1 that most of the respondents have only between 1-5 years of experience of law

practice and the least years of experience distribution are those that had 16 years of experience and above. This means that most of the respondents do not really have long term experience as it relates to law practice.

**Table 2. Practice of knowledge transfer by Nigerian lawyers**

| Items | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agreed | | Agreed | | Neutral | | Disagreed | | Strongly Disagreed | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Training is a means to transfer knowledge | 119 | 58.1 | 65 | 31.7 | 7 | 0.4 | 4 | 1.9 | 10 | 4.9 |
| I transfer knowledge during collaboration with colleagues | 75 | 36.6 | 86 | 41.9 | 20 | 9.8 | 9 | 4.4 | 15 | 7.3 |
| Meeting allows transfer of knowledge | 24 | 11.7 | 38 | 18.5 | 81 | 39.5 | 43 | 21.0 | 19 | 9.3 |
| I transfer knowledge through personal contact with colleagues | 63 | 30.7 | 95 | 46.4 | 16 | 7.8 | 10 | 4.9 | 21 | 10.2 |
| I transfer knowledge during seminars/ workshop | 82 | 40.0 | 59 | 28.8 | 13 | 6.3 | 23 | 11.2 | 28 | 13.7 |

Source: Field Survey (2020) (N.B.: SA+A=A, SD+D=D)

Table 2 shows that training is a means employed by most of the respondents to transfer knowledge. It can be in the Table that most of the respondents agreed that they transfer knowledge during collaboration with colleagues. It is also revealed in Table 2 that the highest distribution of the respondents was not sure whether meeting allows transfer of knowledge. It can be seen in Table 2 that most of the respondents agreed that they transfer knowledge through personal contact with colleagues. Also, it is shown in the Table that most of the respondents agreed that they transfer knowledge during seminars/workshops.

Table 3 illustrates that most of the respondents agreed that knowledge received from colleagues changes their thoughts on subject matter. It is shown in Table 3 that most of the respondents make informed decision with knowledge received from colleagues. Also, Table 3 shows that knowledge received from colleagues helps in strategic planning. It can be seen in Table 3 that most of the respondents agreed that knowledge received from colleagues entrench ethical value in legal profession. Table 3 also show that most of the respondents filter knowledge transferred to them from colleagues before usage.

Table 4 illustrates that more than half of the respondents agreed that knowledge transfer and use increases law firm's financial performance. It can also be seen in the Table that most of the respondents agreed that knowledge transfer and use helps in improving quality of service delivery. The implication of the above is that knowledge transfer and use could stimulate not only the services rendered by Nigerian law firms but fatten their purse in terms of monetary gain. It can be observed in Table 4 that a huge significant number of the respondents agreed that knowledge transfer and use is recipe for innovative thinking and ideas. It can also be seen in the Table that a large number of the respondents agreed that knowledge transfer and use help overall job performance of law firms.

**Table 3. Attitude of Nigerian lawyers on the use of knowledge transferred**

| Items | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agreed | | Agreed | | Neutral | | Disagreed | | Strongly Disagreed | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Knowledge changes thoughts on subject matter | 77 | 37.6 | 59 | 28.8 | 36 | 17.6 | 15 | 7.3 | 18 | 8.8 |
| I make informed decision with knowledge received from colleagues | 46 | 22.4 | 92 | 44.9 | 41 | 20.0 | 16 | 7.8 | 10 | 4.9 |
| Knowledge received from colleagues helps in strategic planning | 51 | 24.9 | 68 | 33.2 | 33 | 16.1 | 29 | 14.1 | 24 | 11.7 |
| Knowledge received entrench ethical value in legal profession | 73 | 35.6 | 75 | 36.6 | 15 | 7.3 | 15 | 7.3 | 27 | 13.2 |
| I filter knowledge before usage | 104 | 50.7 | 79 | 38.5 | 6 | 2.9 | 4 | 2.0 | 12 | 5.9 |

Source: Field Survey (2020) (N.B.: SA+A=A, SD+D=D)

Furthermore, Table 4 shows that most of the respondents agreed that knowledge transfer and use help to drive client's satisfaction.

**Table 4. Collaborative effect of knowledge transfer and use on law firm's performance**

| Items | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agreed | | Agreed | | Neutral | | Disagreed | | Strongly Disagreed | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Knowledge transfer and use increases law firm's financial performance | 68 | 33.2 | 54 | 26.3 | 32 | 15.6 | 30 | 14.6 | 21 | 10.3 |
| Knowledge transfer and use ensure quality service delivery | 71 | 34.6 | 63 | 30.7 | 25 | 12.2 | 17 | 8.3 | 29 | 14.2 |
| Knowledge transfer and use stimulate innovative thinking and ideas | 112 | 54.6 | 81 | 39.5 | 2 | 1.0 | 4 | 2.0 | 6 | 2.9 |
| Knowledge transfer and use help overall job performance | 108 | 52.7 | 91 | 44.4 | 5 | 2.4 | 1 | 0.5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Knowledge transfer and use help drive client's satisfaction | 81 | 39.5 | 65 | 31.7 | 28 | 13.7 | 18 | 8.8 | 13 | 6.3 |

Source: Field Survey (2020) (N.B.: SA+A=A, SD+D=D)

**Table 5. Challenges involved in knowledge transfer and use in law firms**

| Items | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agreed | | Agreed | | Neutral | | Disagreed | | Strongly Disagreed | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Incomplete transfer of knowledge | 67 | 32.7 | 84 | 41.0 | 22 | 10.7 | 10 | 4.9 | 22 | 10.7 |
| Deliberate hoarding of knowledge | 22 | 10.7 | 32 | 15.6 | 15 | 7.3 | 75 | 36.6 | 61 | 29.8 |
| Inadequate infrastructure to support knowledge transfer | 59 | 28.8 | 78 | 38.1 | 20 | 9.8 | 30 | 14.6 | 18 | 8.8 |
| Cross-coordination of roles and responsibilities | 52 | 25.4 | 88 | 42.9 | 25 | 12.2 | 10 | 4.9 | 30 | 14.6 |
| Geographical distance | 24 | 11.7 | 14 | 6.8 | 5 | 2.4 | 83 | 40.6 | 79 | 38.5 |

Source: Field Survey (2020) (N.B.: SA+A=A, SD+D=D)

It can be seen in Table 5 that incomplete transfer of knowledge is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use. It can be seen in the Table that most of the respondents disagreed that deliberate hoarding of knowledge is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use. Furthermore, the Table shows that most of the respondents agreed that inadequate infrastructure to support knowledge is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use. Table 5 illustrates that most of the respondents agreed that cross-coordination of roles and responsibility is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use. Also, the Table

**Table 6. Probable solutions to challenges of knowledge transfer and use in law firms**

| Items | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agreed | | Agreed | | Neutral | | Disagreed | | Strongly Disagreed | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Flexible structure for knowledge transfer and use | 90 | 43.9 | 53 | 25.8 | 16 | 7.8 | 27 | 13.2 | 19 | 9.3 |
| Provision of infrastructure for knowledge transfer and use | 88 | 43.0 | 70 | 34.1 | 7 | 3.4 | 30 | 14.6 | 10 | 4.9 |
| Development of guidelines for knowledge architecture | 55 | 26.8 | 80 | 39.1 | 22 | 10.7 | 33 | 16.1 | 15 | 7.3 |
| Proper coordination of personnel | 47 | 22.9 | 75 | 36.6 | 31 | 15.1 | 17 | 8.3 | 35 | 17.1 |
| Community of practice with mandatory attendance | 41 | 20.0 | 34 | 16.6 | 27 | 13.2 | 56 | 27.3 | 47 | 22.9 |

Source: Field Survey (2020) (N.B.: SA+A=A, SD+D=D)

shows that a huge percentage of the respondents disagreed that geographical distance is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use.

Table 6 shows that most of the respondents agreed that flexible structure for knowledge transfer and use is a probable solution to the challenge of knowledge transfer and use. It can be seen in Table 6 that provision of infrastructure for knowledge transfer and use is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use in a law firm. Also, Table 6 shows that most of the respondents agreed that the development of guidelines for knowledge architecture. Table 6 illustrates that 122(59.5%) agreed that more than half of the respondents agreed that the proper coordination of personnel is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use in law firms. Moreover, the Table shows that more than half of the respondents disagreed that community of practice with mandatory attendance is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use in law firm.

## Test of Hypotheses

$H_{01}$: There is no statistical significant relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance

**Table 7. Relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance**

| Variables | N | df | R-value | P-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge transfer | 205 | 203 | .029** | 0.001 | Sig… |
| Law firm performance | | | | | |

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) ***Source*: Field work (2020)**

It can be observed in Table 7 that the r-value of the tested hypothesis is 0.029174, with a degree of freedom of 203. Moreover, it can be seen that the *p* value is 0.001, which is lower than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis that states that there is no statistical significant relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance will be rejected. Hence, it shows that there is statistically significant relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance.

$H_{02}$: There is no statistical significant relationship between knowledge use and law firm performance

**Table 8. Relationship between knowledge use and law firm performance**

| Variables | N | df | R-value | P-value | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge use | 205 | 203 | .014** | 0.001 | Sig… |
| Law firm performance | | | | | |

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed) ***Source*: Field work (2020)**

The degree of freedom for the hypothesis second alternative hypothesis is 203. Also, it can be seen that the r-value is 0.01491. With a *p* value is 0.001, the null hypothesis that states that there is no statistical significant relationship between knowledge use and law firm performance is hereby

accepted. Therefore, it means that there is statistically significant relationship between knowledge use and law firm performance.

$H_{03}$: Knowledge transfer and use will not significantly predict law firm performance

**Table 9. Statistics Output**

| Regression Statistics | |
|---|---|
| Multiple R | 0.97046513 |
| R Squared | 0.985121885 |
| Adjusted R Squared | 0.994874591 |
| Standard Error | 0.129943217 |
| Observations | 205 |

Source: Field work (2020)

Results on Table 9 show that the multiple R is 0.970, which represents a high positive relationship. The Coefficient of Determination is 0.985 and that shows that 99% of the variation of the law firm performance can be explained by the knowledge transfer and use. With a standard error of 0.123,

**Table 10. ANOVA**

| | df | Sum of Square | Mean Square | F | Significance F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 2 | 585.638 | 292.819 | 1.528E2 | 0.01375 |
| Residual | 202 | 15.124 | 0.075 | | |
| Total | **204** | **600.762** | | | |

Source: Field work (2020)

the observations are closer to the fitted line as the average distance of the data points from the fitted line is about 0.1%.

Table10 illustrates that the *f* value is 1.528E2, which is greater than 1 and that points that the null hypothesis is false. With a *p* value of 0.01375, the null hypothesis that states that knowledge transfer and use will not significantly predict law firm performance will hereby be rejected. Hence, knowledge transfer and use will significantly predict law firm performance.

Table 11 illustrates that knowledge transfer and use have statistically significant regression coefficient with law firm performance with *p* value lesser than 0.05. This indicates that the null hypothesis which states that knowledge transfer and use will not significantly predict law firm performance is hereby accepted. Therefore, knowledge transfer and use will significantly predict law firm performance.

**Table 11. Coefficient**

| | Coefficients | Standard Error | t-Statistics | p-value | Lower 95% | Upper 95% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 5.715042661 | 0.754123698 | 4.239687132 | 0.02950 | -7.142456 | 8.5624127 |
| Knowledge transfer | 0.857411759 | 0.314572186 | 2.714683104 | 0.00457 | 2.5174986 | 3.71834736 |
| Knowledge use | 0.247564472 | 0.155078432 | 2.007852910 | 0.00152 | 1.2479368 | 2.93658120 |

Source: Field work (2020)

## 6. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings revealed that training is employed by most of the lawyers to transfer knowledge. Results also show that most Nigerian lawyers adopt collaboration with colleagues in order to transfer knowledge. This implies that teamwork can help entrench transfer of knowledge among lawyers in Nigerian law firms. Meanwhile, Rhodes, Lok, Hung, and Fang (2008) revealed that organizational learning can aid knowledge transfer. This signifies that Nigerian law firms should encourage organizational learning to aid effective knowledge transfer. Findings revealed that most Nigerian lawyers transfer knowledge through personal contact. Moreover, it was shown in the findings that seminars/workshop is another popular platform among Nigerian lawyers to transfer knowledge. Ekore (2014) revealed that training is a major predictor of knowledge transfer and suggested result-oriented training programme. This study also found that there is statistically significant relationship between knowledge transfer and law firm performance. This is similar to the findings of Arsawan, Sanjaya, Putra, and Sukarta (2017) and Ikyanyon and Ode (2017) that knowledge transfer has significant relationship with organization performance. Similarly, it was shown in (Palacios-Marques *et al.* 2013; Du *et al.* 2007; Kashari and Al-Tehiri, 2019) that knowledge transfer has impact on firm performance. The finding of this study differs that of Matin and Sebagh (2015) which revealed that there is no relationship between knowledge transfer and organizational performance.

Results show that most Nigerian lawyers' knowledge received from other colleagues change their thoughts on subject matter. This is an implication that knowledge transfer has influence on Nigerian lawyers. It keeps them informed and changes their opinion on legal subject. Also, the study revealed that most Nigerian lawyers make informed decision with knowledge received from colleagues. Results show that Nigerian lawyers use knowledge in strategic planning. In other findings, it was shown that knowledge from colleagues help entrench ethical value of Nigerian lawyers. Rodiqi (2010) found that embedded ethical value is another prerequisite for the successful utilization of knowledge in construction projects. Moreover, the study results revealed that most Nigerian lawyers filter knowledge transferred to them from other colleagues before usage. This means that lawyers do not take knowledge without proper evaluation. This signals that knowledge received by lawyers are usually synthesize before it is put into use. This is essential because applying inaccurate knowledge to legal practices may have a dire implication on the outcome of a legal task and could cost law firms bigly. It was also shown that there is significant relationship between knowledge use and law firm performance. This is consistent with the findings of Ha *et al.* (2016) that knowledge use has relationship with both financial and non-financial performance of organization. Moreover, Amyan, Al-Saudi, and Al-Onizat (2016) found that knowledge use in an organization can enhance its performance.

Results of the study show that knowledge transfer and use help increase law firm's financial performance. This shows that Nigerian lawyers perceived that knowledge transfer and use have great implication on the financial performance of law firms. Also, it was revealed that knowledge transfer and use helps in improving the quality of service delivery by law firms. Matin and Sebagh (2015) noted that organizational performance indicates the ways company meets its goals. In this case, the

goal of every law firm is the provision of quality service delivery. Adequately providing quality service delivery will positively improve the image of Nigerian law firms. It was also shown that knowledge transfer and use is a recipe for innovative thinking and ideas among Nigeria lawyers. Moreover, it was found that knowledge transfer and use help overall job performance of law firms. Improved job performance will help yield positive results for Nigerian lawyers and law firms at large. It was found that knowledge transfer and use help to drive client's satisfaction. It was revealed that there is collaborative effect of knowledge transfer and use on law firm performance. Vidovic (2010) observed that organizational performance can be examined via increased profits, reduced costs, increased empowerment of employees, better employee attraction/retention, improved productivity, return on investment of knowledge management efforts, and increased share price. It was also found that knowledge transfer and use will significantly predict law firm performance. In similar vein, Ofobruku and Yusuf (2016) found that knowledge transfer had positive effect on employees' performance.

The findings show that incomplete transfer of knowledge is a challenge involved in knowledge transfer and use among Nigerian lawyers. It was found that there is no habit of deliberate hoarding of knowledge among Nigerian lawyers, which could hinder the flow of knowledge transfer and use. This means that there is positive attitude towards transfer of knowledge by Nigerian lawyers. This is consistent with the findings of Olatokun and Elueze (2012) that lawyers in Ibadan, Nigeria, has good attitude towards knowledge sharing. The findings of this study indicate that same attitude is a commonplace among lawyers in Lagos State, Nigeria, which is the hub of commercial activities in Nigeria with considerably highest law firms among all Nigerian States. It was revealed that inadequate infrastructure to support knowledge transfer is a challenge to the transfer and use of knowledge. This is a disturbing revelation understanding that knowledge transfer among Nigerian lawyers has positive impact on law firm performance. It was also shown that cross-coordination of roles and responsibility is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use. Findings revealed that geographical distance is a challenge to knowledge transfer and use among Nigerian lawyers.

It was found that flexible structure for knowledge transfer and use is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use. Provision of a flexible knowledge management system and environment would help alleviate the challenges of knowledge transfer and use among lawyers in Nigerian law firms. Meanwhile, Nigerian law firms could leverage on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to aid effective knowledge transfer and use in order to improve their law firms performance. Results show that the provision of infrastructure for knowledge transfer and use is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use in a law firm. The findings revealed that the development of guidelines for knowledge architecture. The results of the study show that proper coordination of personnel is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use in law firms. It was revealed that community of practice with mandatory attendance is a probable solution to challenge of knowledge transfer and use in law firm.

The findings of this research provide evidence as to knowledge transfer and use as predictors of law firm performance. Meanwhile, the findings show that training is an effective tool to ensure that knowledge management is entrenched in Nigerian law firms. Therefore, the KM community can adopt training as a mechanism to deepen knowledge management practices in Nigerian law firms. The cultural practices however among law firms in Nigeria is that there is usually no periodic training except for some law firms that have periodic Chamber's meetings where lawyers deliberate on upcoming court cases. These chamber's meetings do not really translate to training as they involve report and plan as to forthcoming court cases. In fact, this study has established that meeting is not an effective tool to transfer knowledge in the Nigerian context. It was also shown in the findings that seminars are used to transfer knowledge. The adoption of seminars to transfer knowledge is evident in the Nigerian context of social interaction, most especially in the peculiar time of COVID-19.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study provides novel revelation on how knowledge transfer and use predict the performance in knowledge-intensive industry like legal practice. Training is the most popular mechanism for knowledge transfer among the lawyers. The study established that knowledge transfer and use are effective mechanisms to enhance the performance of a law firm. However, it was shown that lawyers ensure knowledge collected is filtered before putting into use. It was concluded that knowledge transfer and use have collaborative effect on innovative thinking of lawyers. Hence, it is established that law firms can maximize effective knowledge transfer and use to improve law firm non-financial performance. For the lawyers, the findings of this study elucidate on the best possible way to boost their innovation and the overall non-financial performance of law firms.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

i. Law firms should maximize the Information Technology infrastructure to transfer knowledge as inadequate infrastructure is shown to be a challenge to Nigerian lawyers.
ii. The use of knowledge transferred should be filtered based on the authority of the sender.
iii. Law firms should provide periodic training to aid knowledge transfer and use.
iv. Future study may consider qualitative research approach to explore the impact of knowledge transfer and knowledge use on law firm performance.
v. Future study should examine the use Information Technology in knowledge transfer.
vi. Further study may investigate how knowledge transfer and knowledge use predict financial performance of law firms.

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