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Knowledge Sharing Used by Jesus: A Model for the 21st Century Information Professional.

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Introduction

The model of Jesus' interactions with His disciples has many implications for the twenty-first century information professionals in the sense that knowledge sharing is a vital part of the profession. The concept of mentoring has since been extended to various fields including knowledge management and education. Knowledge sharing is a subset of knowledge management. In the concept of Christianity, mentoring is defined as a triadic relationship between mentor, protégé and the Holy Spirit, where the protégé can discover the already present action of God, ultimate identity as a child of God and a unique voice for kingdom responsibility (Anderson & Reese, 1999).

Even though the term mentor cannot be found in the scriptures, the notion of mentoring permeates it. Mentor-protégé pairs described in the Old Testament includes Moses and Joshua (Deut 31:7-8), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:7-18); 2:17-3:16), as well as Elijah and Elisha (2 Kgs 2:1-6). In the New Testament, Jesus mentored the Twelve. One of them, Peter, forged some form of mentoring relationship with Barnabas (Gal 2:11-13), who went on to mentor Paul and Mark (Acts 12: 25 – 13: 5). Paul in turn mentored Timothy, Titus and several others (2 Tim 2:2). In the contemporary church, it is not uncommon to find mentoring activities in a variety of formats, ranging from formalised mentoring programmes lasting from a few months to those that are intended to be informal and perpetual (Davies, 2001).

Purpose of study

The main purpose of this study is to critically analyse and suggest how knowledge sharing strategy by twenty-first information professionals can be fashioned towards the life of Jesus Christ while He was interacting with His apostles and disciples. To achieve this, the researcher reviewed the concepts of knowledge sharing, Jesus Christ's knowledge sharing styles and further discusses the relevance of Jesus Christ's knowledge sharing strategies in line with library professionals in the 21st century. Lastly, this paper will bring to light the Biblical foundation of knowledge sharing strategy.

Twenty First Century Information Professional

The 21st century is the millennium of information and it is also seen as the era of explosion of information output and information sources. It is known as the beginning of knowledge age. New patterns of work and new business practices have developed as a result; new kinds of work with new and different skills are required. In this century, the meaning of knowledge has changed. Knowledge is no longer what is stored in the minds of experts, represented in books

and classified in disciplines. It is now thought of as being like a form of energy, as a system of networks and flows – something that does things or makes things happen. In the knowledge age, change not stability is a given. Knowledge age workers need to be able to locate, assess and represent new information quickly. They need to communicate this to others. They need to be adaptable, creative and innovative and be able to understand things as a system or big picture level. In the 21st century academic library, the emergence of ICT has redefined the library's role. Print materials are no longer sufficient to store information. CD-ROM databases, electronic document delivery, automated cataloguing, circulation systems and online information retrieval have become the order of the day. Eguavoen (2011) admits that the advent of the internet, digitization and the ability to access library and research materials from remote locations have also created dramatic changes by the end of the 20th century. This century has also witnessed a dramatic change in users information seeking pattern. Byamugisha (2010) adds that the patrons' expectations for a distance service delivery across library services have increased; patrons have come to expect a wide variety of automated push and or pull services from libraries and from a distance. Nigerian academic libraries in the 21st century are gradually changing to fit into their clients' information seeking patterns. The situation has brought about the establishment of digital libraries to compliment traditional ones. This is evidenced in the attempt to digitize library resources to cater for the information needs of new generation users that is, the 21st century library users, who exhibit much dexterity in using new sources and new technologies.

Concept of knowledge sharing strategy

The mechanism of knowledge sharing is considered a means whereby people have access to knowledge and information from others. Knowledge sharing mechanisms are also defined as the formal and informal mechanisms for sharing, integrating and applying know-what, know-how and know-why embedded in individuals and groups that will aid in the performance of organisational tasks.

According to Boh (2007), personalization versus codification and individualization versus institutionalization are two distinct dimensions of knowledge sharing strategy. Personalization strategies are often assumed to be more ad hoc and informal. If knowledge is shared through personalization strategy, it will be closely tied to the person who developed it and shared through direct person – to – person contacts. Codification strategies are assumed to be formal and involves the use of electronic databases. When knowledge is shared through a codification

strategy, knowledge is carefully codified and stored in databases and documents, where it can be accessed and used easily by employees in the company (Boh, 2007).

The other dimensions of knowledge strategies are individualized knowledge sharing strategy. Individualized knowledge sharing strategy facilitates knowledge sharing at the individual level, and tend to be informal and unstructured, while institutionalized knowledge strategy facilitates collective knowledge sharing, and tend to be formal and embedded in organizational routines and structure (Boh,2007). Bartol and Srivastava (2002) identified four mechanisms for the sharing of individual knowledge within organizations. The first mechanism is contributing knowledge to the organizational databases. The second is sharing knowledge in formal interactions across employees working in different teams, departments and divisions. The third mechanism of sharing knowledge is sharing through informal interactions like water cooler chat, telephone and others. The final strategy of knowledge sharing is, establishing community of practice (i.e., voluntary forums created around a particular topic of interest). Community of practice enable employees within the organization to communicate in topics of interest.

Knowledge sharing among 21st Information Professionals

Like other organizations, information professionals can promote knowledge sharing among librarians, their customers and suppliers in their everyday activities. Parirokh, Daneshgar and Fattahi (2006) found out that knowledge sharing initiatives have not been institutionalized in majority of higher institution libraries. To support this, Maponya (2004) stated that a great deal of knowledge sharing in academic libraries is largely uncoordinated; therefore sharing of information and knowledge among information professionals have always been on an informal basis and usually based on verbal conversations.

Shanshong (2000) proposed that information professionals should create and develop their own document / information resources and that libraries should make comprehensive utilization of expert systems and all media in sharing knowledge. In addition to this, Wen (2005) suggested that all operational documents should be stored on a library network or in a shared place. Though he noted that some employees may not want to share their knowledge due to the fear of losing their values, in this case he proposed that incentive system should be put in place. Liao, Fei and Chen (2007) stated that performance of information professionals in various parts of the organization is enhanced when people communicate information, effective practices, insights, experiences, preferences, lessons learned, as well as common and uncommon senses. Consequently, White (2004) observed that among the benefits of knowledge sharing in higher institution libraries are; better return on investment, improved performance, a greater

understanding of organizational goals, knowledge of long-serving employees is retained within organization, lesson learned on organizational change, and others.

Knowledge Sharing Strategies in the Bible , Mentorship and coaching in the Old and New Testament

The Bible adopts some strategies of knowledge sharing strategies such as mentorship, training and coaching. However , the idea of mentoring permeates in both Old Testament and the New Testament. Mentor protégé pairs that are described in the Old Testament includes Moses and Joshua (Deu 31:7-8), Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1:7-18; 17:3:16) as well as Elijah and Elisha (2kings 2:1-6). In the New Testament, Jesus mentored the Twelve. One of them, Peter, forged some form of mentoring relationship with Barnabas (Gal 2:11 - 13), who went on to mentor Paul and Mark (Acts 12:25 - 13:5). Paul in turn mentored Timothy, Titus and several others (2 Tim 2:2). Timothy mentored “faithful brothers and sisters” including Epaphras (Col 1:1 – 7) who in turn mentored “those at Laodicea and Hierapolis” (Col 4:13).

Throughout the history of the church, mentoring relationships play a crucial role in developing and passing the faith from one generation to the next which, in other words, is known as knowledge sharing. Mentors not only help clarify the call of God in the protégés’ lives but also develop the inner character and spiritual depth of their protégés. The people of God have always continued in this tradition by engaging in some form of mentoring for the formation and preparation of godly servant-leaders for the communities in their generation (Williams, 2005). Although there are no exact terms in the Scripture for mentoring, there are a number of words which are closely associated to mentoring. For example, these words include verbs such as “make disciple” (matheteuo), “teach” (didasko), “train” (didaxo), “be sound” (hugiano) and “follow” (akaloutheo), as well as nouns such as “disciple” (mathetes), “teacher” (didaskalos) and “imitator” (mimetes) (Smith, 2010). In fact, the Scripture is replete with examples which fit well with the notion of mentoring.

In the Old Testament, central to the spiritual formation and religious education of any Hebrew child was the Torah. However, “rather than a set of rules legislated by a cosmic lawgiver, this covenant-law is a way of life to follow that had to be learned through the close association with a teacher” (Williams, 2005:182). Moses trained young Joshua to succeed him as the leader (Exod 24:13; Num 27:18). Eli raised Samuel since he was a child to be a priest and judge (1 Sam 3:1). When Samuel grew up, he in turned anointed and advised the future King David (1 Sam 19:18). Elijah mentored Elisha (1 Kgs 19:19-21) while Jehoida took responsibility for

sevenyear- old Joash and taught him how to be a godly king like his predecessor David (2 Kgs 12:2).

There is equally no lack of mentoring examples in the New Testament. Elizabeth encouraged young Mary, believed in her pregnancy, and blessed her (Luke 2:39-56). Jesus also considered mentoring an important part of his earthly ministry. Apart from carrying out a teaching ministry for the Galilean crowds, he was engaged in developing a personal relationship with his disciples (Matt 13:10-23). This involved investing personal time (John 1:37-2:12), modeling an intimate relationship with God (John 2:13-17, 4:31-38, 13:1-17), explaining Scriptural truth (Matt 5-7), and affording opportunities to apply this truth under his supervision (Matt 10:1-42). Paul mentored several men during his lifetime, including Sosthenes (1 Cor 1:1), Tychicus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7), Silvanus (1 Thess 1:1), Titus (Tit 1:1) and Timothy (1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:2) to whom he wrote two epistles. The brief reflection on these biblical examples shows that the people of God have always engaged in some form of mentoring as a way to grow in faith and in the knowledge of God.

Another notion related to mentoring is that of coaching. Compared to mentoring, coaching seems to have a more recent history in the English language. Writings on coaching emerged only from the nineteenth century, most of which focused specifically on performance and attainment in educational and sports settings (Garvey and Megginson 2009). Similar to a mentor, a coach is more skilled, experienced or knowledgeable. Today, coaching practices are dominant in church environments, and are usually linked to people that aspire to live a godly life. However, unlike mentoring practices, they cannot be found in all sectors of society and are less associated with voluntarism than mentoring. Furthermore, relationship development and a sense of mutuality are usually less evident in coaching than in mentoring. Barnabas is one of the most important people in the New Testament, but he gets almost no recognition. He probably wouldn't even make most people's top ten list. Yet consider the significance of what Barnabas did with regards to coaching. Originally named Joseph, Barnabas was one of Paul's closest companions, traveling with him on missionary journeys. Translated literally, Barnabas means "son of encouragement." Acts 11:23- 24 describes Barnabas in this way: "When he arrived in Antioch and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord." That's a great description of a coach: one who is called alongside to encourage, prepare, equip, and help other succeed. Barnabas often acted as a liaison between people, building bridges to bring them together. After Paul's conversion, Paul tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem, but they were afraid of him.

After all, Paul had a reputation for killing Christians. The disciples reasonably enough thought it was a trap. But Barnabas took Paul and brought him before the disciples, testifying to the genuineness of Paul's conversion. Barnabas also brought John Mark back onto the team after John Mark had abandoned Paul and himself on a previous journey. In spite of that history, Barnabas saw potential in John Mark for significant future ministry. Imagine what that must have meant to John Mark to have someone believe in him in spite of his past failures. This is how we see Barnabas operating as he coached others relationally and experientially throughout his ministry. Barnabas was a helpful and encouraging person to have around. He was someone who, instead of taking center stage, empowered others. He sponsored in both of these apostles. If we take Paul and Mark out of the equation, how much of the New Testament wouldn't even be written? Barnabas may never have been in the starring role, but without him many others would not have been able to accomplish the great things for God that they did. Through his investment in people, his impact was exponential.

The disciples had heard a great deal of training from the lips of the Lord Jesus. They had learned a great deal of theology. But now they needed to be trained/learn to trust in Him and in His word. It was the practical theology of trusting Him to empower their ministry and to meet their needs. There was a specific purpose for the training which Jesus gave his disciples, a purpose that would be fulfilled for their future ministry. Jesus was training the twelve to trust Him for their every need and especially their daily needs. If the disciples were to have a roof over their heads at night and food on the table, the power of God would have to be real in and through them. It would be difficult for people to believe them. Rather the disciples went about preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God and healing the sick. These training and instructions which the Lord gave to His disciples- not to take any of the needed provisions for their travels were obeyed and then in Luke 22:35-36.

Nature and types of knowledge imparted

The nature of knowledge imparted in a mentoring relationship can be conceptualized in three ways. First, it can be classified as explicit, tacit or implicit. Explicit knowledge is defined as knowledge which is articulated through procedures, instructions and formulae while tacit knowledge covers intuition, judgment and hunches which cannot be easily expressed. Jesus passed on tacit knowledge to his twelve disciples and other people through the parables he told them in the new testament. Implicit knowledge lies somewhere between explicit and tacit. Paul's writings in 1 and 2 Timothy represent explicit knowledge. A second classification divides knowledge into declarative (know what), procedural (know how) and causal (know why). In his counsel to Timothy, Paul used declarative knowledge, for example, about the

salvation act of Jesus (1 Tim 1:15), procedural knowledge, for example, on how to handle different demographics in the church (1 Tim 5:3 – 6), as well as causal knowledge, for example, on the outcome of persevering in the right doctrine: saving himself and the audience (1 Tim 4:16). A third way to classify knowledge differentiates among human, social and structured knowledge. Human knowledge is akin to tacit knowledge which is embodied in people. Social knowledge refers to knowledge created and shared by a group. Structured knowledge is detached from humans but embedded in artifacts, systems, processes and routines. As the mentor, Paul represents human knowledge. Social knowledge is common knowledge shared between Paul and Timothy as a mentor-protégé pair. Structured knowledge lies outside the mentoring relationship but could be a resource the mentor points to the protégé. For example, Paul pointed to the Scriptures and reminded Timothy of its role in building his faith (2 Tim 3:15).

Mentoring in the church

Throughout the history of the church, mentoring relationships played a crucial role in developing and passing the faith from one generation to the next. Mentors not only help clarify the call of God in the protégés' lives, but develop the inner character and spiritual depth of their protégés. The people of God have always continued in this tradition by engaging in some form of mentoring to prepare godly servant-leaders for the communities of their generation. They include 'Augustine in the fourth and fifth-century Africa, Catherine of Siena in the twelfth-century Italy, John Newton in the eighteenth-century England, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in twentieth-century Germany' (Williams, 2005:189). As a result of the mentoring efforts of these men and women, each generation lived out the biblical truth that healthy, obedient congregations can reproduce in chain reactions of daughter, grand-daughter, great grand – daughter churches (O Connor, 2006).

Mentoring continues to be relevant today in the preservation and spreading of the gospel message. Para-churches, such as the Navigators and campus crusade for Christ, advocate one-on-one mentoring and a disciplined programme for the Bible study, scripture memorisation and training in witnessing (Hull, 2009:18). Their focus, method and the ability to process large numbers of people through a curriculum have made significant inroads into the churches. Churches, too, commonly run mentoring programmes (sometimes known as discipleship programmes) which allow for both mentors and proteges experiencing the blessings of participating, encouraging and supporting spiritual friendships.

Mentoring Insights from 1 and 2 Timothy

Commonly called the Pastoral Epistles since the eighteenth century, 1 and 2 Timothy (together with Titus) were letters written by the apostle Paul to his protégé, Timothy, whom he had left in charge of the church in Ephesus. Originally from Lystra, Timothy was of mixed lineage. His mother was Jewish (2 Tim 1:5) while his father was a Greek (Acts 13:49—11:25). When Paul visited that area a second time, he heard the local believers speak with such glowing praise of the young man that the apostle felt compelled to meet him (Swindoll, 2010). Paul desired for the young disciple to travel with him and had him circumcised to accommodate the expectations of the Jews whom they would seek to evangelise. This began a long mentoring relationship and mutual affection in the work of the Lord (Phil 2:18-24). Paul's purpose in writing 1 Timothy were three fold, namely (a) to stress the importance of teaching sound doctrine and firmly opposing unsound doctrine, (b) to give ecclesiastical instructions over how the church ought to be organised, and (c) to dispense personal advice to Timothy in the areas of health and conduct (Fee, 2011). The purposes for 2 Timothy stemmed from a combination of official and personal reasons. In an official sense, Paul wrote to strengthen Timothy and encourage him to remain faithful to the ministry (2 Tim 1:6–12). Paul also intended to continue warning Timothy against the danger of false teachers and unsound doctrines. On a personal note, Paul wrote to request Timothy's presence in Rome. It was clear Paul longed for Timothy's companionship during the last days of his life. Besides calling Timothy to his side, Paul sought to appeal to Timothy's loyalty, given the incidents of deflections (Fee, 2011).

Paul's mentoring approach

The mentoring flavour of 1 and 2 Timothy is unmistakable. A two-pronged approach to mentoring can be observed, namely, empowerment and deployment (Hoehl 2011:36–41). Empowerment is defined as a 'cognitive state characterised by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalization' (Menon, 1999:162). Paul deliberately emphasised these components by assuring Timothy that his calling was from God (1 Tim 1:18), setting an example for Timothy to follow (2 Tim 1:13), and reminding Timothy of his ministerial goals (1 Tim 4:13–16). Next, as Paul gained confidence in Timothy's competence as a minister, he deployed Timothy into one of the most demanding ministerial environments: the church in Ephesus. Paul had previously spent time developing the church at Ephesus, but now was concerned about the spread of false doctrine and heresy among its members. By offering Timothy the challenging position of dealing with the issues at Ephesus, Paul gave Timothy the opportunity to exercise his ministerial competencies. Besides issuing explicit instructions on matters such as worship and prayer (1 Tim 2:1–15) and to combating false teachings (2 Tim

2:18), Paul encouraged Timothy in his personal spirituality (1 Tim 6:11–12) and pointed him to the eschatological reality of Christ's reward and return (1 Tim 6:14–16; 2 Tim 4:7–8).

Dynamics and roles in mentoring

In mentoring, there are at least four dynamics involved. The first is attraction. The mentor must see the potential value in working with the protégé, while the protégé must look up to the mentor as a model. The second is relationship, which can be defined as the 'nurturing hospitable space of trust and intimacy' (Anderson & Reese 1999:13). Without doubt, a strong relationship is necessary for mentoring to be impactful. The third is responsiveness. For spiritual growth and maturity to take place, the protégé needs to be teachable, submissive, and responsive to the direction of the mentor (Anderson & Reese 1999:12). However, to build commitment toward the plan for growth, the mentor has to be engaged with the protégé's thoughts, feelings, and aspirations, so that both the mentor and protégé have a hand in charting the mentoring journey together. The fourth is accountability. The mentor is responsible for evaluating how the protégé progresses, and hold the protégé accountable along a path for growth.

Depending on the level of involvement with their protégés, mentors can be placed along a continuum. At the most extreme end is intensive mentoring where mentoring activities are deliberate (Stanley & Clinton, 1992). A mentor can play the roles of a discipler, spiritual guide and coach. In the middle of the continuum, mentoring is occasional. Here, a mentor can play the roles of a counsellor, teacher, and sponsor. At the other extreme end, where mentoring activities are not deliberate, mentoring takes a passive form. A mentor can either be a contemporary person who can be respected and imitated, or a historical figure whose words and deeds are gleaned, usually from books.

Knowledge impartation: nature and types

In mentoring, the transference of knowledge from the mentor to the protégé takes a distinct significance and is referred to as knowledge impartation. In fact, knowledge impartation calls for the whole corpus of consciousness. Mentoring involves the whole person, as mind and body; emotion, cognition and physicality together create what is known (McInerney 2002).

Despite the amorphous nature of knowledge, scholars generally agree that it can be classified as explicit, tacit, and implicit (Leonardi & Bailey 2008:414).. Human knowledge is akin to tacit knowledge which includes cognition and skills that individuals possess. Social knowledge refers largely to tacit knowledge created and shared by a group. Structured knowledge is detached from humans but embedded in artefacts, systems, processes, and routines.

Three types of knowledge can be imparted in mentoring. The first is instruction which is given as an act of furnishing with authoritative directions. Given that it is usually laden with cognitive content, the protégé who receives an instruction from the mentor is able to expand his or her own reservoir of knowledge. The second type of knowledge is encouragement, which is a process or an action that conveys the mentor's respect for and trusts in the protégé. The third type of knowledge is inspiration. The mentor inspires the protégé to reach goals that may have previously seemed unreachable by raising the protégé's expectations, and communicating confidence that the protégé can achieve those goals (Antonakis & House 2002). Example of sharing knowledge through inspiration includes communicating attributes of a role model for the protégé to follow and using persuasion to build morale (Wu, Tsui & Kinicki 2010).

Impediments to Knowledge impartation

Even though knowledge impartation is integral to mentoring, it does not always happen efficaciously. Using the idea of knowledge 'stickiness' (Szulanski, 2003), four sources of impediments to knowledge impartation can be identified. The first is the mentor. As a gatekeeper of knowledge, the mentor's motivation to supply or facilitate knowledge access to the protégé is likely to influence the extent to which the protégé is able to receive knowledge. Another factor relating to the mentor is the issue of credibility (Szulanski 2003:28). The mentor's credibility affects the extent to which the protégé is willing to receive knowledge.

The second source of impediment to knowledge is the knowledge itself. Two characteristics of knowledge that impede knowledge impartation are causal ambiguity and an unproven state of knowledge. Causally ambiguous knowledge lacks the certainty of cause-and-effect relationship, while knowledge, which is unproven, does not elicit a positive expectation of its efficacy. As a result, the protégé is unlikely to accept such knowledge from the mentor.

The third source of impediment to knowledge is the protégé. Specifically, the mentor's lack of motivation to receive knowledge represents a significant barrier to knowledge impartation. Another factor is the protégé's lack of absorptive capacity. Without a prior stock of requisite knowledge, the protégé is unable to recognise the value of new knowledge from the mentor. The fourth source is the relationship between the mentor and the protégé. If the mentoring relationship is arduous, then trust and openness are likely to be missing. This hampers mentor – protégé communication, which in turn impedes knowledge impartation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, knowledge sharing can be dated back to the historical times when Jesus was alive. He shared knowledge with His disciples and they in turn shared knowledge about Jesus

in various ways to other people. In relating this to the 21st century information professional, knowledge can be shared likewise through tacit, implicit and explicit ways just to mention a few. The way knowledge was imparted in the Bible through coaching, training and mentoring, same is applied in today's information professional. Though some impediments rear their ugly heads while sharing knowledge, they can be overcome through motivation. It is safe to say that knowledge sharing in the Bible and with twenty first information professionals are same.

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