Utilisation of social media tools to enhance knowledge sharing among library staff at NM-AIST, Arusha, Tanzania.

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Introduction

- Knowledge Sharing (KS) among employees is a vital part in most of Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs).
- KS involves communicating, participating, and transferring knowledge between and/or among people.
- HLIs facing with challenges on how to get employees share knowledge (tacit knowledge).
- The emergence of social media tools creates more possibilities for KS practices in HLIs.

Introduction…

- Social media tools make it possible for people to connect, collaborate, and share knowledge with anyone in the world.
- In Tanzania, the use of social media tools has increased, majority of people are using these tools for communication etc.
- Despite the spread and use of social media tools among individuals, the extent to which these tools contribute to KS is not yet clearly understood.
- This study assessed the utilisation of social media tools to enhance KS among library staff at NM-AIST.

Methodology

Study area	NM-AIST
Approach	Qualitative
Design	Case study
Sampling technique	Non-probability purposive sampling
Sample size	12 library staff
Data collection	• Interview (semi-structured) • Observation (Participant) • Document review (Institutional)
Data analysis	• Thematically

Findings

Theme 1: Level of KS

Interview	Observation	Document review
Low level of KS within the institution	No KS activities observed during data collection	No document
Low level of trust on using social media tools to share knowledge	Employees refused to use social media tools to share knowledge	No document
No KS awareness initiatives among employees	Observed	No document
Advantages of KS participation not indicated	Observed	No document
KS occurs when need arises	Observed	No document
Face to face and meetings reported as the dominant mechanism for KS	Observed	No document

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Theme 2: Factors that affect KS

Interview	Observation	Document review
Lack of institutional culture to support KS practices	Observed	No document
Lack of KS policy and guidelines	Observed	No document
No Human Resource Management (HRM) policy and procedure to guide employees	Observed	No document
No motivation mechanisms for KS participants	Observed	No document
Social media tools initiatives in place (Web 2.0, 3.0, 4.0… tools) to enhance the bilateral flow of knowledge	WiFi, wired network, Computers, IRC	NM-AIST, 2013b
No dedicated time to participate on KS	Overtime for unfinished institution duties and not for KS	No document

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Theme 3: Library's roles to support KS

Interview	Observation	Document review
Reference and advisory services.	Reference service desk	NM-AIST, 2013c
Borrowing privileges.	Library users were allowed to borrow 2 books for 14 days	NM-AIST, 2013c
Current Awareness Services (CAS)	Display (Television) of new arrival library materials	NM-AIST, 2013c
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	Link of subject specialists (ABCD Library System)	No document
Library Management Systems (LMS)	ABCD system in place	No document
Collection development for both printed and electronic resources	Budget was indicated (Financial year 2014/15)	Institutional budget 2014/15 document

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Theme 4: Status of social media tools implementation

Interview	Observation	Document review
Computers connected to the internet	Observed in the library	NM-AIST, 2013b
Video conferencing service	Observed in the main building (administrative block)	No document
Multimedia section	Observed in the library	No document
Reliable power supply (Standby Generator)	Observed	No document
Information and Technology Recourse Centre (IRC)	Observed	NM-AIST, 2013b

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Theme 5: Social media tools available to support KS

Interview	Observation	Document review
WhatsApp (Not official)	People with smartphones and other personal gadgets (e.g. Ipad, Laptop etc.)	No document
Google Docs	Reported but not observed	No document
Institutional staff mails (Gmail)	Observed among library staff	No document

Challenges

Institutional	Lack of institutional culture to support KS, lack of policies and guidelines, no dedicated budget to support the KS and social media tools implementation, no support and motivation mechanisms among KS participants.
Technical	Lack of skilled personnel to facilitate the integration of social media tools.
Individual	Lack of trust and security among social media tools, lack of training and awareness, lack of time, wrong perceptions if social media tools could support academic issues, technophobia.

Progress after data collection (2014)

- Integration of social media tools (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter…..).
- Institution and Library Websites were developed.
- Reliable internet connection (TTCL-service provider).
- Plagiarism software (Turnitin) in place.
- Institutional Repository (NMAIST) implementation and registration ---IR policy is in the final stages.
- Development of institutional policies which can also support KS (eg. Staff Regulations, Research and Innovation, and Intellectual Property policies).

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Future plans

- More policies to be development (e.g. Research Data Management and Plagiarism Policies)
- Short courses, training and seminars among employees (KS and social media tools).
- Establish Open Data Centre for data sharing.
- Online resource sharing and inter-library lending.

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Conclusion and recommendations

- **Institutional culture to support KS practices in HLIs.**
- **Trained and committed library and IT staff.**
- **Well equipped and accessed libraries.**
- **Reliable Internet connection.**
- **Implementation of social media tools which support KS such as Wikipedia, SNS etc.**
- **Marketing and promoting library services.**
- **Management support**

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