ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE SHARING THROUGH SELF-ARCHIVING IN INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORIES BY FACULTY IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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AIIU/02277P/2016

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Science in Information and Knowledge Management in The School of Information and Communication studies of The Technical University of Kenya

(December 2018)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION..... ii
ABSTRACT..... iv

LIST OF TABLES..... ix
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS..... x
LIST OF APPENDICES..... xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS..... xii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... xiii
CHAPTER ONE..... 1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY..... 1
1.0 Introduction..... 1
1.1 Background of the study..... 1
1.1.1 Empirical studies on self-archiving 3
1.1.2 The context of the study..... 4
1.2 Statement of the problem..... 8
1.3 Aim of the study..... 9
1.4 Specific objectives of the study..... 9
1.5. Research questions..... 10
1.6. Assumptions..... 10
1.7. Scope and limitations..... 10
1.7.1 Scope..... 10
1.7.2 Limitations..... 10
1.8. Justification of the study..... 11
1.9. Significance of the study..... 11
1.10 Chapter summary..... 12
CHAPTER TWO..... 13
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... 13
2.0 Introduction..... 13
2.1 Theoretical framework..... 15

2.2 Empirical Studies..... 17
2.2.1 A Global Perspective..... 17
2.2.2 Sub-Saharan Africa..... 21
2.3 Intellectual Studies..... 23
2.3.1 Faculty members' awareness on self-archiving..... 23
2.3.2 Frequency of full-time faculty members in academic publishing..... 24
2.3.3 Motivators for or against knowledge sharing through self-archiving in the institutional repository by Full-Time Faculty Members..... 25
2.4. Summary and research gaps..... 27
CHAPTER THREE..... 29
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... 29
3.0. Introduction..... 29
3.1. Research design, methodology and approach..... 29
3.2. Study Sites..... 30
3.3. Study population..... 31
3.4. Sampling Techniques..... 31

3.5 Sample size..... 32
3.6 Data collection techniques and tools..... 33
3.6.1 Data Collection Techniques..... 33
3.6.2 Data collection tools..... 34
3.7 Data Collection and Management Procedures..... 35
3.8 Piloting..... 35
3.9 Data Analysis Techniques..... 36
3.10 Reliability and Validity..... 38
3.11 Ethical considerations..... 38
3.12 Challenges encountered during data Collection..... 39
3.13 Chapter summary..... 39
CHAPTER FOUR..... 40
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION..... 40
4.0 Introduction..... 40
4.1 Unit of analysis..... 40
4.2. Response rate..... 40
4.3 Background information of the respondents..... 41
4.4 Education level..... 42
4.5 Faculty's work experience..... 43
4.6 The faculty's awareness on self-archiving..... 44
4.7 Faculty's frequency in academic publishing..... 46
4.8 Motivators for self-archiving by the faculty..... 47
4.9 Impeding factors affecting the faculty's self-archiving in the institutional repositories... 48
4.10 Proposed strategies to maximize self-archiving in institutional repositories by the faculty
..... 49
4.11 Chapter summary..... 50
CHAPTER FIVE..... 51
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS..... 51
5.0 Introduction 51
5.1 Faculty's awareness on knowledge sharing through self-archiving..... 51
5.2 Faculty's frequency in academic publishing..... 52
5.3 Motivators for self-archiving by the faculty..... 52
5.4 Impeding factors affecting the faculty's self-archiving in the institutional repositories... 53
5.5 Proposed strategies to maximize self-archiving in institutional repositories by the faculty
…… 54
5.6 Chapter summary..... 55
CHAPTER SIX..... 56
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... 56
6.0 Introduction..... 56
6.1 Summary of findings..... 56
6.1.1 Faculty's awareness on knowledge sharing through self-archiving..... 56
6.1.2 Faculty's frequency in academic publishing..... 56
6.1.3 Motivators for self-archiving by the faculty 56
6.1.4 Impeding factors affecting the faculty's self-archiving in the institutional repositories.56
6.1.5 Proposed strategies to maximize self-archiving in institutional repositories by the

faculty 57
6.2 Conclusions..... 57
6.3 Recommendations..... 58
6.3.1 Recommendations to the library management..... 58
6.3.2 Recommendations to the institutions..... 60
6.4 Considerations for further research..... 61
REFERENCES..... 62
APPENDICES..... 70

ABSTRACT

Knowledge sharing is a tool for competitive advantage in every organization. Academic institutions have embraced and adopted this practice especially amongst academicians by creating a conducive environment for knowledge exchange. One of the practices adopted to make knowledge sharing successful is through self-archiving in institutional repositories in Kenya. Despite having an open access policy in place, statistics indicate that there is a low or no report of activities of self-archiving in most institutional repositories. The aim of this study was to investigate knowledge sharing through self-archiving by faculty in selected private universities in Kenya, and to propose strategies to maximize self-archiving in institutional repositories. The objectives of the study were to: investigate full-time faculty members' awareness on self-archiving; establish how often full-time faculty publish or self-archive; explore motivators for self-archiving by the full-time faculty in the selected private Universities; establish the impeding factors affecting self-archiving by faculty in the institutional repositories; and propose strategies to maximize self-archiving in institutional repositories. This study was informed by Social Exchange Theory and was a qualitative multi-case study. The population of the study was drawn from fulltime faculty and librarians from Strathmore University and United States International University Africa. This study employed purposive sampling to come up with a sample size of 26. Semi structured interviews were conducted on all the respondents from both Strathmore University and United States International University-Africa. Desk research was performed on the virtual documents from both Universities as well. A Pilot study was conducted at Strathmore University. Data was analyzed thematically and presented in thick description. The findings indicated that self-archiving in the institutional repository is not practiced by the faculty and concluded that the faculty views self-archiving as a practice with no benefits attached to it. The study recommends self-archiving mandate as one of the key factors of success to this practice. The findings of this study are useful to academic institutions by proposing strategies to maximize knowledge sharing through self-archiving in institutional repositories.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction This chapter provided the definitions of terms and concepts that were applied in the study, a brief background to the study and an explanation of the problem that the study will address. It also presented the aim of the study, objectives, and research questions on which the study was based on, assumptions, justification of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study Lin (2006) defined knowledge sharing as the activities relating to how to help communities and groups of people with similar objectives work together, facilitating the exchange of knowledge amongst them to enhance organizational learning capacity, and increase their ability to achieve organizational goals as well as individual goals.

According to Björk, Laakso, Welling, and Paetau (2014), Open Access is free, unrestricted access to online versions of scholarly publications. He further explains that open access is replacing the old method of selling journal subscriptions and restricting access to paying readers only. This is a model that matured and got established during the era of printed journals and it implies that open access is gaining popularity amongst scholars and they are embracing it.

Björk (2017), notes that open access came about as a result of the current subscription-dominated journal publishing model which was a bit complex and was filled with obstacles. This meant that for any scholar to gain full access to these digital articles, they had no option but to part with some subscription fees which were very high, and the majority of them could not afford.

Self-archiving is used as a synonym for green Open Access as explained by Björk et al. (2014a). Green Open Access is publishing an article in a non-Open Access journal but also self-archiving it in an Open Access archive. The study further explains in Willinsky (2006) that there are heated debates on why scientific research should be made available on open access, noting that free open access to research results leads to innovation through advancement of science, knowledge, and commerce. Since scientific research is mainly financed by public funds, it is expected that the results should be considered a public good, and that they be availed to the public for free. Magazin (2013) stressed that considering the effects of self-archiving inside the scientific publishing, dissemination process would reduce the global costs of the process when compared with the subscription-based model.

Self-archiving is considered to be one of the ways of sharing knowledge especially in institutions of higher learning. Universities are knowledge hubs that play a very extensive role in knowledge creation through research and dissemination of knowledge through open access self-archiving. The scholars deposit their scholarly works which include research publications in the institutional repositories so that the internal public can access these works. Institutional repositories as explained by Björk et al. (2014), refers to highly structured collections of digital materials originating from scholars who are employed by a university or a research institution.

This means that the input comes from the internal publics of the institution. He further explained that even though authors are the main contributors of content, professional librarians are fully involved to ensure that quality assurance process is well taken into consideration by, checking metadata and permissibility of uploaded digital materials and ensuring that the long-term preservation of the content is observed. Self-archiving therefore can be said to be opening access to information that would have otherwise been archived behind paywalls by availing research publications to the users with no restrictions at all.

Knowledge sharing through Open Access self-archiving is a practice that is being carried out in institutions of higher learning to strengthen research and increase competitive advantage and to make this a success, libraries must collaborate with the scholars in the institutions of higher learning.