

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT NEEDS AND PRACTISES AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE NAMIBIA BUSINESS  
SCHOOL (NBS).**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, many organisations, including educational institutions, realise that traditional resources are not the only sources that should be managed during the transition to Knowledge Economy and Knowledge Society. Knowledge has become a strategic organisational resource for the 21st century that should ensure stable growth of performance and competitiveness for an organisation. The critical analysis of literature revealed that the role of knowledge management (KM) in achieving and sustaining a competitive advantage (CA) has been strongly emphasised in the extant literature. However, none of the existing studies examined knowledge management in the young business school in Namibia. Furthermore, little attempt has been made to address the relative importance of different factors constituting the organisational KM infrastructure capability in the context of emerging Southern African universities. This study is the first of its kind in Namibia.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge management needs and practises at the Namibia Business School required to achieve its short and long term strategic goals of becoming a “*world class business school*”. This paper aimed to investigate any existing knowledge management system at NBS and give recommendations, where necessary, regarding developing such a system as is prerequisite for attaining a competitive advantage in the market. This study adopted Nonaka and Takeuchi’s Knowledge Dynamics Model which involves knowledge creation and the transformation of Knowledge between tacit and explicit knowledge, as well as the SECI Model by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995).

The researcher chose to combine a Quantitative research approach (through quantitative surveys with the use of questionnaires) and a Qualitative approach (through interviews). The research participants in the study were full-time and part-time staff members of the Namibia Business School. The study used a judgemental sampling technique. The results of 45 surveyed respondents; full-time and part-time staff of the Namibia Business School (NBS), reconfirmed a general agreement found in the literature that staff members are keen to exchange and share knowledge because they trust one another. It is recommended that the organization should consider how to introduce and/ or improve training and education for its staff. NBS should create a formal system which allows for training staff and to share and exchange knowledge more formally. Also it is recommended that the NBS establish a formal knowledge management system for the school. The NBS can seek expertise within and outside the university in order to be able to develop and establish this system.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my mothers, Ipawa Mungungu and Kornelia Mungungu for having nurtured me into the young lady that I am today. God bless your beautiful souls.

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Mr. Jackson N.N. Nangolo.

**DECLARATION**

I, Magdalena Kandali Nangolo (Jnr), hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher learning.

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Magdalena Kandali Nangolo

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Date

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

HP-GSB -Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business

IUM- International University of Management

KM- Knowledge Management

KMS -Knowledge Management System

NBS- Namibia Business School

PoN -Polytechnic of Namibia

SPSS -Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNAM -University of Namibia

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

The revolution in modern day management has resulted in the evolution of management education. In Namibia the need to provide business education resulted in the creation of the Namibia Business School in 2008. The business environment for a young business school is very competitive. The Namibia Business School, apart from being young, is faced with fierce competition from business schools from outside the country as well as within the country ([www.nbs.edu.na](http://www.nbs.edu.na)). One of the solutions to ensure its survival and competitiveness may be to invest in a knowledge management system to enable the school to deliver excellent graduate education. Initially, NBS attempted to provide a solid foundation for its own survival and competitiveness by collaborating with established business schools abroad such as Maastricht School of Management in The Netherlands, to offer an Executive MBA Programme at UNAM and the University of Botswana ([www.nbs.edu.na](http://www.nbs.edu.na)). There was, however, no evaluation done at the end of the collaboration with the Maastricht School of Management or the on-going collaboration with the University of Botswana to establish the extent of knowledge and skills transfer to the Namibia Business School.

Internationally, benefits have been seen through the application of knowledge management and it has been noted that 80% of the biggest companies worldwide practice knowledge management (KPMG –2000). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence on its application to graduate business schools in Southern Africa. In the 21st century capital and labour are no longer regarded as the dominant production factors, they have been superseded

by knowledge. Therefore, knowledge management has become the key issue in today's world which is also called a knowledge based society. Knowledge application is generally based on employees' intellectual capacities, but it is also linked to observation, experience, study and investigation (World Bank, 1998). According to Bhatt (1997), business and academic communities believe that the process of leveraging knowledge can provide an organization with a long-term competitive advantage. Obviously, universities are no exception as they are centres for production and leveraging of knowledge.

Although it is hard to find a common, generally accepted definition for knowledge management, (Uriate, 2008) asserts that knowledge management is the process through which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge based assets. Defined in this manner, it becomes apparent that knowledge management is concerned with the process of identifying, acquiring, distributing and maintaining knowledge that is essential to the organization. Dalkir (2005) defines Knowledge Management as a deliberate and systematic approach to ensure the full utilization of the organization's knowledge base, coupled with the potential of individual skills, competencies, thoughts, innovations, and ideas to create a more efficient and effective organization.

Many of the knowledge management textbooks present powerful techniques and tools of converting knowledge to actionable strategic decisions. Some of the techniques include: best practice knowledge transfer, benchmarking, knowledge harvesting, communities of practice, lessons learnt, and setting up databases and other IT systems for knowledge management (FAO 2005; Davenport and Prusak, 2004; Dalkir, 2005)

As part of its vision, the Namibia Business School wishes "*To be a world-class African institution at the cutting edge of management education, research, consulting and related services*" ([www.nbs.edu.na](http://www.nbs.edu.na)). Certainly, the role of knowledge management in creating a

competitive organisation is vital for the organisational learning capabilities of the young Namibia Business School that needs to learn quickly in order to become a world class leading educator and remain competitive.

Namibia has two public tertiary institutions of general education, the Polytechnic of Namibia and the University of Namibia (UNAM), which have been complimented by the International University of Management (IUM). The Namibia Business School (NBS) based at the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business (HP-GSB) based at the Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN) are the only business schools based in Namibia. However, many South African business schools are active in Namibia, and they regularly recruit students and run short courses. The NBS, therefore, faces competition at both local and regional level.

Yazdani, Yaghoubi, and Hajiabadi, (2011) observe that knowledge has become a vital source of competitive advantage for organizations and that many organizations are trying to access the benefits of knowledge and improve their performance with a focus on knowledge management and extensive investments in information technology. According to Mwila (2013), in order for organizations to compete effectively they must be in a position of always knowing what they need to know- a position achievable through knowledge management. Thus, organizations need to constantly be aware of changes and know that these changes require adaptability with regards to the ways of knowing or acquiring knowledge, which can be referred to as innovation in knowledge management. The objective would be for the young school to grow into a competitive world class post-graduate education provider, able to use learning to generate new ways of working, to build on success and learn through mistakes and in the same vein, create an environment where knowledge sharing and learning is the norm.

Given all these experiences, and bearing in mind that no prior study has been conducted to examine how knowledge management could be utilized to support decision-making and also assist NBS to achieve its long term vision of becoming a world class organisation, it is clear there is a knowledge gap in this area and hence the need for this study.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Yazdani, Yaghoubi, and Hajiabadi (2011) and the literature cited elsewhere in this thesis has indicated the importance of knowledge management for organisational success and competitiveness. A carefully crafted knowledge management strategy contains tools and techniques which strengthen decision making and organization learning. The Namibia Business School (NBS) is a fairly young institution which operates in a very competitive environment yet has the ambition to become a world class business school. To be able to succeed, the school requires, amongst other things, the development of a top-notch knowledge management strategy to secure a competitive edge and create a capacity for quick learning and application of innovative ideas. The literature reviewed revealed that there exists a lack of empirical studies that have investigated knowledge management in higher learning institutions in Namibia. This study therefore has addressed this knowledge gap. In order to develop a robust knowledge management strategy which will support and stimulate the transition of NBS to a world class business school, it is essential to identify and describe the current and future knowledge requirements of NBS. Once the current and future knowledge needs are identified, a proposed knowledge management strategy can be recommended..

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to investigate knowledge management at the University of Namibia: A case study of the Namibia Business School (NBS).

### **1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge management needs and practises at the Namibia Business School required to achieve its short and long term strategic goals of becoming a world class business school.

1. Establish the knowledge needs of staff in relation to the strategic goals of NBS
2. Determine the factors that influence NBS' staff sharing and dissemination of knowledge with each other.
3. Establish how the NBS obtains knowledge from external sources including other business schools.
4. Examine how the knowledge management system is currently organised within the business school.
5. Investigate the IT facilities used within the NBS for facilitating knowledge communication among staff and stakeholders
6. Determine and recommend how NBS can link its knowledge management strategy to its long term strategic vision (to become a world-class African institution in management education, research, and consulting)

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study will contribute to the research and practice regarding knowledge management in academia. The study will add new knowledge to the knowledge management discipline particularly within the University of Namibia. The study will set a foundation for other

researchers in the future to carry out further studies in the same field that may lead to new insights and findings to enhance further understanding of the subject.

### **1.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This research is a case study of the Namibia Business School and thus the research cannot be generalised to other SOE's or UNAM departments. The study was conducted within the main campus of the University of Namibia (UNAM) in Windhoek. The target population was limited to the Namibia Business School. Despite this limitation the study generated useful knowledge towards knowledge management literature.

### **1.7 THESIS OUTLINE**

The thesis is divided into five chapters as follows; chapter one is the introduction which focuses on the background of the study, the objectives of the study and the problem statement. It gives a brief overview of the scope and limitations of the study as well as the aim of the study. Chapter two discusses the literature reviewed according to the defined research objectives of the study. Herewith, the conceptual and theoretical framework is outlined. Chapter three is the methodology, which explains the research design, the population and sample size of the study. Furthermore, it explains the sampling procedures utilized in the study, the research instruments, methods of data collection and the data analysis plan layout. Chapter four is the data presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings. This is done in both graphical and frequency form. The validity and reliability of the research instruments is also discussed in this chapter. Finally, chapter five is the conclusion, which discusses the conclusions deduced from the findings and provides recommendations for action and further research.

**1.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter discussed the orientation of the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the purpose of the study and research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study and finally the outline of study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The literature review provides a theoretical basis for the development and evolution of the subject of Knowledge Management, primarily focussing on the factors affecting the implementation of a sustainable knowledge management strategy at a business school. Although most recent sources on the subject have been sought, the researcher recognises that knowledge management is a wide field that has been explored over many centuries but not many direct studies have been done on business schools in this respect. The literature review in this thesis is related to the subject of knowledge management creation, knowledge management and organisational competitiveness, knowledge sharing in organisations (culture), knowledge management systems, ICT's role in knowledge management (knowledge management exchange systems), and knowledge creation processes.

#### **2.1 KNOWLEDGE, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The extent to which knowledge management, as a field, has developed since its inception in the late 1990's reveals an immense evolution in the body of knowledge surrounding this subject. Definitions of knowledge and knowledge management are guided by the various activities carried out, or lack thereof, as per specified criteria.

The literature on knowledge and knowledge management is varied, ranging from papers, journals and books. The literature reveals overlapping and/or conflicting definitions. At this point it is important to understand the term "knowledge". Understood and defined differently

by many authors, the various definitions are often related to the context within which the word is used. Below is an account of the definition of the term relating to KM:

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) define knowledge as a factor of production, whilst Wiig (1993) illustrates that knowledge consists of truths and beliefs, perspectives and concepts, judgments and expectations, methodologies and know-how. Additionally, Davenport and Long (1998) define knowledge as information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. Alavi and Leidner (2001) add that knowledge is justified personal belief that increases an individual's capacity to take effective action. Without getting into the theoretical meaning of the term knowledge, the author is only reviewing the technical definition of the term in relation to this thesis. The author concurs and appreciates all the definitions. They are applicable to the 21st century management education and more fitting for the academic environment setting which this study has investigated. It is important to note that knowledge can only be gained or obtained from outside sources or generated internally which is very significant for the formulation of a knowledge management system for the Business School.

***Knowledge management definition:***

There are various concepts, conflicting definitions and overlapping views among researchers and practitioners, but the central theme is still the same for all of them i.e. managing knowledge and encouraging people to share the same to create value adding products and services (Bhatt, 2001; Chorafas, 1987; and Malhotra, 1998). There is no single and general accepted definition for knowledge management, however many researchers and authors have all established that knowledge management is the process of creating, (generating), storing, gathering, organizing, sharing (dissemination), retrieving information, and the use of such knowledge, and in an organization this can be a useful resource. "Knowledge management has been defined in a number of ways, but in general the thought relates to unlocking and

leveraging the knowledge of individuals so that this knowledge becomes available as an organizational resource” ( Anand and Singh,2011).

Different researchers have used different approaches to define KM in their literature. The author has adopted the classifications presented below:

Beckman (1999) states that knowledge management concerns the formalization of and access to experience, knowledge, and expertise that create new capabilities, enable superior performance, encourage innovation, and enhance customer value. Davenport, Long and Beers (1999) state that knowledge management is managing information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. O'Dell and Grayson (1998) emphasize that KM is a strategy to be developed in a firm to ensure that knowledge reaches the right people at the right time, and that those people share and use the information to improve the function of the organization. Lastly, Sveiby (1997) defines knowledge management as the art of creating value from an organization's intangible assets.

Through the reviewed literature, the researcher has established that the definitions of knowledge management have evolved overtime. The researcher has summed up Knowledge Management as that which is concerned with the exploitation of an organization's intangible assets with the right policies, procedures and technologies in place to ensure that the right people share knowledge at the right time and place to improve an organization's function. Knowledge management is a process of creation, presentation, distribution, storage and application of knowledge.

## **2.2 CAPACITY FOR LEARNING AND APPLICATION OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS**

A very large portion of the literature on KM and organisational learning is developed by, and aimed at, commercial businesses and firms. Many organisations in the corporate sector look to KM as a solution to the new challenges of the information age. Knowledge and

information are becoming crucial core assets for businesses, who have to learn to handle these assets in new ways. Traditional accounting and monitoring systems designed to deal with tangible inputs and outputs are no longer adequate. Instead, organisations now find that they have to share information internally more efficiently and learn to adapt more quickly to external circumstances in order to retain their competitive advantage. In response to this situation, the ‘first generation’ of KM strategies aimed to improve knowledge sharing within organisations (McElroy, 2000). The first generation of KM was mainly focused on information technology and systems; technical tools were used to collect and codify existing knowledge in order to make the organization run more smoothly. A ‘second generation’ of KM strategies has now emerged, which focuses more on organisational processes and the creation of new knowledge in order to keep the organisation one step ahead of its competitors. For example, the most successful organisations are shifting from strategies based on prediction to strategies based on anticipation of surprises (Savage, 2000). They are shifting from management based on compliance to management based on self-control and self-organisation. They are also shifting from the utilisation of already known knowledge to the creation of new knowledge, from pure ‘technology’ KM applications only to also including ‘process’ applications (Binney, 2001).

When and how these shifts should be undertaken depends on the type of organisation in question. Accenture’s (2002) presentation of a typology of work settings distinguishes between four different types of organisations – ‘process’, ‘systems’, ‘network’ and ‘competence’ – based on the different levels of interdependence and complexity that are required in different work situations. For example, the ‘competence’ model describes a workplace that is highly reliant on individual expertise (low level of interdependence) in order to carry out evaluation and judgement-oriented work (high level of interpretation). The

'network' model denotes a workplace that depends on fluid deployment of flexible teams (high level of interdependence) in order to improvise and meet new challenges as they arise (high level of interpretation). Different work settings require different ways of handling and processing information to create the necessary knowledge.

The base of organizational learning is an organisation's ability to exploit the wonderful intellectual capacity of all the members of the organisation to create processes that will improve the organisation. In an organisation, the existence of a culture that supports learning increases the ability to create new knowledge. There is a positive relationship between time spent on employee learning and the amount of knowledge in an organisation. Thus, for success in knowledge creation, organisations must develop a culture of learning, allowing employees to gain experience and learn through trial and error, and governing the organisation so that all people have the enthusiasm to learn and transfer their knowledge to others (Yazdani, Yaghoubi, & Hajiabadi, 2011).

### **2.3 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS**

Knowledge Management literature highlights the fact that in the new economy, the achievement of a sustained competitive advantage depends on an organisation's capacity to develop and deploy its knowledge-based resources. However, not all resources are equally important for the achievement of this competitive edge. The resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991) examines the manner in which organisational resources are applied and combined, the causes which determine the attainment of a sustainable competitive advantage and the nature of rents generated by organisational resources. In order for organisational resources to become a source of sustainable competitive advantage, certain characteristics must be present. Barney (1991) argues that these resources must be rare, valuable, without substitutes and difficult to imitate. The knowledge-based theory of the firm suggests that

knowledge is the organisational asset that enables sustainable competitive advantage in hyper-competitive environments.

Barney (1991) observes that a firm is said to have a competitive advantage when it is implementing a value-creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors. The critical role of knowledge management in achieving and sustaining a competitive advantage has been strongly emphasised in the extant literature. However, most previous studies were conceptually grounded and empirically examined different sectors other than academia, specifically addressing KM in business schools. The focal point of this thesis is based on the standing fact that there is no existing study or review done on knowledge management at any of the business schools in Namibia. It is therefore against this background that the study embarked on developing the “best” knowledge management strategy that will ensure that the young University of Namibia business school grows into a competitive world class post-graduate education provider able to use learning to generate new ways of working, to build on success and learn by mistakes and in the same way, create an environment where knowledge sharing, transfer and learning is the norm.

The resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991, Peteraf, 1993, Ventura, 1996) examine the manner in which organisational resources are applied and combined, the causes which determine the attainment of a sustainable competitive advantage and the nature of rents generated by organisational resources. In order for organisational resources to become a source of sustainable competitive advantage, certain characteristics must be present. Barney (1991) argues that these resources must be rare, valuable, without substitutes and difficult to imitate. Dierickx and Cool (1989) suggest the following characteristics:

- They cannot be commercialized, as they are developed and accumulated within the company;

- They display a strong intrinsic character as well as social complexity;
- Their origin lies in organisational skills and learning;
- They should be strongly linked to the firm, with a high component of immobility and;
- Their development is path dependent, that is, being conditioned on the level of learning, investment, stocks, and previous activities

Knowledge is increasingly claimed to be a key critical resource and source of competitive advantage in the modern global economy, it is also increasingly claimed that all organisations will have to excel at creating, exploiting, applying, and mobilizing knowledge. The resource-based view of the firm suggests that organisations will need to be able to combine distinctive, sustainable, and superior assets, including sources of knowledge and information, with complementary competencies in leadership and human resource management and development to fully realize the value of their knowledge. Knowledge is a product of thinking, created in the present moment, whereas information is fully made and can sit in storage. To share knowledge, we need to think about the current situation where we can simply move information from one mailbox to another. However, knowledge is more than we often think, knowledge settles into our body, it is a kind of “under the fingernails” wisdom, the background know-how from which we draw. Most of us find it hard or impossible to articulate what we know, but information can be written or built into machinery. We acquire knowledge by participating in a community using the tools, ideas, techniques, and unwritten artifacts of that community; whereas we acquire information by reading, observing, or otherwise absorbing it (Wiig, 1997).

Drucker (1993) considers knowledge the main resource in a post-industrial society, Romer (1990) considers it the only unlimited resource, and business leaders or consultants the chief

asset of organisations and the key to a sustainable competitive advantage (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995, Davenport and Prusak 1998). Knowledge management is the corollary of decision-making and decisions' support systems: 'Knowledge is raw material, work in process and the finished good of decision making' (Holsapple 1996). From that, it can then be postulated that many authors have tested different ideas and thoughts on knowledge management, and the various authors all agree that knowledge management is imperative for the success of any existing firm and academic institution, in particular, to be transformed into competitive learning organisations.

Competitive advantage depends more and more on "people-embodied know-how" (Prahalad, 1983). Additionally, it is human capital rather than physical or financial capital that distinguishes leaders in the market. For these reasons, and given the fact that employees' knowledge, skills and abilities constitute some of the most significant and renewable resources which a company can take advantage of, the strategic management of this capital now has greater importance than ever (Ulrich, 1991).

## **2.4 KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

The literature reviewed offers a variety of definitions, terminology and models relating to knowledge exchange. In general, explanations of knowledge exchange propose an interactive and on-going process of collaboration, which provides research users with information they perceive as relevant in easily usable formats whilst research producers receive information about the needs of users. Within a modern, knowledge driven economy, knowledge transfer is about transferring good ideas, research results and skills between universities, other research organizations, businesses and the wider community to enable innovative new products and services to be developed (Abiodun and Akintunde, 2007). Universities and Publicly Funded Research Agencies (PFRAs) are knowledge organisations; their core objectives are to generate, acquire and transfer knowledge. These

objectives are realized through the full range of functions performed, including research, teaching and community service or engagement. They play an important role in the process of stimulating economic growth. Knowledge transfer is significantly integrated with the academic domains of research, scholarships, and learning and teaching, which are themselves constantly overlapping and integrated. World-class research activity generates a wealth of new knowledge and technologies that can be commercialized to the benefit of the economy and the community at large.

Knowledge transfer is a very broad concept, and there is no single definition for it. Knowledge transfer is when know-how and knowledge become available in a systematic way to those who previously did not have access to them.

Alavi (1991) suggests that one of the biggest reasons for focusing on knowledge sharing is that knowledge creation by itself cannot lead to superior performance for an organisation. Rather, companies have to create value by using that knowledge, and knowledge can only be utilised if it is shared successfully. Organisations have to effectively manage the knowledge transfer process to obtain success (Ale, 2005). Knowledge transfer requires people to exchange ideas, share and create knowledge together. Employees know knowledge transfer among members of an organisation is a precondition for the creation of knowledge.

### ***What is Tacit versus Explicit Knowledge?***

A key distinction made by the majority of knowledge management practitioners is the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is often subconscious, internalized, and the individual may or may not be aware of what he or she knows and how he or she accomplishes particular results. At the opposite end of the spectrum is conscious or explicit knowledge, that is, knowledge that the individual holds explicitly and consciously in mental focus, and may communicate to others. In the popular form of the distinction, tacit

knowledge is what is in our heads, and explicit knowledge is what we have arranged into an organised system.

- Tacit knowledge is often difficult to access. People are not aware of the knowledge they possess or how valuable it may be to others. Tacit knowledge is considered more valuable because it provides context for people, places, ideas, and experiences. Effective transfer of tacit knowledge generally requires extensive personal contact and trust.

Business schools have gained strong recognition over the past few decades all over the world. The initial endeavour started in the USA and originally observed rather rigid, stereotypical, and curriculum based activities in the business schools, which are at present showing drastic changes in the form of wide flexibilities, intensive researches, e-learning and collaborative learning activities (Selen 2001). According to Selen, there is always an attempt to keep realigning itself (the Business School) with today's and tomorrow's business needs and to keep forming the basis for continued reengineering of its organisational knowledge structure. Richard Osborne and Scott Cowen remarked that "Business schools must become learning organisations or else we will become increasingly irrelevant to a rapidly changing world that is assaulting our assumptions about society and its principal organisations. Business schools presume to teach other organisations and individuals to learn to manage in cyberspace while managing our own systems as railroads with fixed tracks, schedules and destinations." (Osborne & Cowen, 1995).

Hence, business schools can be considered to be highly knowledge intensive organisations and candidates for empirical studies on knowledge management. Ever since their inception, universities have been occupied with the fundamental elements of what is now known as "knowledge management". Universities are pivotal in promoting and perpetuating conceptions and practices of organisations through their role in management education,

thereby advancing the concept of the “learning organisation” in their own organisation practices (Franklin et al. 1998). Patterson (1999) applied the idea of learning organisation to universities, suggesting that as they adapt to increasingly competitive external environments, they were becoming learning organisations. ‘Academic capitalism’ has been defined as institutional and professional market or market-like efforts to secure external funds for higher education, where return on investment gains precedence over social returns (Slaughter and Leslie 1997). McClellan et al. (2006) argued for academic capitalism, stating that the rise of globalisation has caused severe constraints on funding of higher education by governments, resulting in academic institutions becoming more business oriented for long-term sustainability rather than their previous characteristics of social organisations. To attain higher ranking in the academic competition, institutions do not have any other choice but to increase their knowledge activities to stay in the market. According to some recent researchers (Metcalfe 2004; Petrides & Nguyen 2006), such market-like behaviour of higher education organisations has been often borrowed from the theory and practices of the business sector.

## **2.5 KNOWLEDGE NEEDS**

Another central aspect for implementing a successful KM strategy is the development of an appropriate organisational needs analysis. That is to say, despite the fact that some existing functions within an organisation such as HRM and IT have already been working with knowledge issues, establishing a group of people with specific and formal responsibilities for KM is crucial. Roles within this team can either be devolved to existing positions or to new ones.

Training and education is another important consideration for successful KM in terms of knowledge needs. In a basic sense, organisational members need to be aware of the need to manage knowledge and to recognise it as a key resource for the viability of a company. This

issue can be addressed if proper basic training is provided to the employees. Through such training, they will have a better understanding of the concept of KM. Training also helps to frame a common language and perception of how the organisation defines and thinks about knowledge. Besides this, employees can be trained and educated in using the KM system and other technological tools for managing knowledge (Wong, 2005).

This helps to ensure that they can utilise the full potential and capabilities offered by these tools. In addition, training individualsto understand their new roles for performing knowledge-oriented tasks might be needed. It is equally important to equip them with the skills needed to foster creativity, innovation, and knowledge sharing. Horak (2001) suggested that for effective KM, skills development should occur in the following areas: communication, soft networking, peer learning, team building, collaboration and creative thinking. Likewise, Yahya and Goh (2002) showed that training related to creativity, team building, documentation skills and problem solving had a positive impact on the overall KM process.

Garvin (1993) defines the learning organisation as an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights. Therefore, a learning organisation is an entity that increases collective capacity through learning Gorelick, (2004). For success in the creation of knowledge, organisations must develop an innate or rooted culture of learning and provide different learning tools (Lee & Choi, 2003). Organisational learning consists of all the methods, mechanisms and processes within an organisation that can be applied to realize learning.

Some of the most significant and frequently cited authors on KM and learning are Argyris (1992), Senge (1990), Nonaka (1995), Levitt and March (1988), March (1991) and Schein

(1992). They all situate themselves within the second generation of KM strategies and work within the corporate sector. This does not however, mean that they did not place a degree of emphasis to universities or institutions of higher learning. The knowledge management within the Namibia Business school is currently being practiced in a way that individuals may not recognise it as such and may not realise how important it is to fully exploit the knowledge at their disposal. Individuals within the school are sceptical of the external knowledge they obtain. Respondents in this study do exchange knowledge with their co-workers. They also rely on experience, skills and knowledge acquired throughout their employment. NBS is a learning organisation and this study will assist the policy making and decision making processes, making them more effective as staff are well equipped with the necessary knowledge.

A very large portion of the literature on KM and organisational learning is developed by, and aimed at, commercial businesses and firms. Many organisations in the corporate sector look to KM as a solution to the new challenges of the information age. This can also be applicable to the business school. Knowledge and information are becoming crucial core assets for businesses, who have to learn to handle these assets in new ways. Traditional accounting and monitoring systems designed to deal with tangible inputs and outputs are no longer adequate. Instead, organisations now find that they have to share information internally more efficiently and learn to adapt more quickly to external circumstances in order to retain their competitive advantage. In response to this situation, the 'first generation' of KM strategies aimed to improve knowledge sharing within organisations McElroy, (2000). The first generation of KM was mainly focused on information technology and systems; technical tools were used to collect and codify existing knowledge in order to make the organisation run more smoothly.

A 'second generation' of KM strategies has now emerged, which focuses more on organisational processes and the creation of new knowledge in order to keep the organisation

one step ahead of its competitors. For example, the most successful organisations are shifting from strategies based on prediction to strategies based on anticipation of surprises (Savage, 2000). They are shifting from management based on compliance to management based on self-control and self-organisation. They are also shifting from utilization of already known knowledge to the creation of new knowledge, from pure 'technology' KM applications to also including 'process' applications (Binney,2001).

With reference to the said literature, some authors such as Levitt and March (1988) are less positive about the capacity of organisations to manage knowledge effectively and to learn from past experiences. Their oft-quoted 1988 article, and a later article by March (1991), highlight the considerable limitations that impede organisational learning. These include the complexity of organisational experiences, human habits, hierarchical structures, routines, and differing interpretations by different sub-groups within an organisation. Schein (1992) touches on many of the same issues as Levitt and March, but in a more optimistic manner. He argues that the limitations to learning within an organisation can be overcome through good leadership.

“A knowledge management strategy is simply a plan that describes how an organisation will manage its knowledge better for the benefit of that organisation and its stakeholders. A good knowledge management strategy is closely aligned with the organisation's overall strategy and objectives” (the ABC of Knowledge Management, 2005). With the above said, it is evident that the NBS needs to align its strategic goals with the knowledge needs of staff. The survey has discovered that the staff(both full-time and part-time) have indicated that the knowledge embedded within their two groups needs to be synchronised.

It is human nature to feel insecure in sharing knowledge at the work place as knowledge is regarded as a valuable resource within any profession. There is a natural tendency in every

individual to hoard knowledge and consequently there is no motivation to share it with others unless she/he is convinced, rewarded or recognised properly (Chua 2003). There have been instances of motivating employees towards knowledge sharing. Some researchers advocate for rewards and incentives to motivate employees towards learning, thereby leading to organisational learning Gardiner and Whiting, (1997). PriceWaterhouse devised reward mechanisms for knowledge sharing activities among its employees and linked them with their performance evaluation (O' Dell and Grayson 1998).

Companies experimented with role-playing and games (based on knowledge usage) to reduce the passiveness of knowledge users, particularly when knowledge to be received was in passive form (Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995). Learning and knowledge are considered to be the two most important emergent characteristics of future world-class organisations (Bennet and Bennet 2002). The purpose of the organisational transformation towards a learning organisation is to enable the organisation to search for new ideas and new opportunities for learning from which competitive advantage can be extracted in an increasingly changing and competitive world. Organisations and their employees must know how to change in such a dynamic environment Rowley, (1998).

## **2.6 TRANSITION TO WORLD-CLASS BUSINESS SCHOOL**

However limited the literature on transition or rather transformation of a business school to a world class institution is, the available literature advocates that this is an on-going process that an institution needs to continue harnessing to realize its full organizational needs.

Effective knowledge management is considered to play an increasingly important role in creating competitive advantage. Knowledge is becoming a driving force for organisational change and wealth creation. As a result, organisations are at varying stages of planning and implementing knowledge-based strategies in efforts to improve their competitiveness,

productivity, organisational effectiveness and customer service. As a whole, KM initiatives are rather expensive and do not always yield the desired results. KM processes involve major investments in a wide spectrum of areas related to knowledge capturing, storage, value addition, distribution and finally educating employees about the benefits of knowledge creation and sharing (Davenport 2000).

Ever since their inception, universities have been occupied with the fundamental elements of what is now known as “knowledge management”. Universities are pivotal in promoting and perpetuating conceptions and practices of organisations through their role in management education, thereby advancing the concept of the “learning organisation” in their own organisation practices Franklin, (1998). Patterson (1999) applied the idea of the “learning organisation” to universities, suggesting that as they adapt to increasingly competitive external environments, they are becoming learning organisations. “Academic capitalism” has been defined as institutional and professional market or market-like efforts to secure external funds for higher education, where return on investment gains precedence over social returns Slaughter and Leslie, (1997). McClellan et al. (2006) argued for academic capitalism by stating that the rise of globalization has caused severe constraints on funding of higher education by governments, resulting in academic institutions becoming more business oriented for long-term sustainability rather than their previous characteristics of social organisations. Thus to attain higher ranking in the academic excellence competition, the institutions do not have any other choice but to increase their knowledge activities to stay in the market. According to some recent researchers (Metcalf 2004; Petrides and Nguyen 2006), such market-like behaviour of the higher education organisations has often been borrowed from the theory and practices of the business sector.

Based on the above reviewed literature, it may be concluded that a business school or a university has to be transformed into a learning organisation for long term sustainability. The

key driver for the transformation is nothing but change in the environment. Therefore, this research offers ideas regarding the adaptation of such changes to the Namibia Business School and how an academic organisation becomes a learning organization. Lorange (1996) proposed a four factor framework, which includes individual discipline based faculty learning, discipline based teams of faculty learning, faculty learning around specific academic programmes and faculty team learning with business schools' customer organisations. His arguments on contribution of individual knowledge into the organisational knowledge are strong and realistic. Good teamwork under the support of top management appears to also be an important factor of success. Jennex and Olfman (2004) suggested an elaborate and generalized framework of organisational knowledge management success factors, composed of 12 independent components. However, although these were designed for business organisations in general, some of the components may be considered relevant for an educational institution. Moreover, introducing the concept of KM from the business sector into the educational arena is a highly innovative idea but in practice, it appears to be a slow and often under-utilized process. This is partially due to the fact that KM is a multi-layered and systems-oriented process requiring organisations to rethink what they do and how they do it (Brown & Duguid, 2000); Senge,(1990). On the other hand, one should appreciate that educational institutions are traditionally hierarchical with silo-like functions making cross-functional initiatives difficult to implement (Friedman and Hoffman 2001; Petrides, McClelland and Nodine 2004).

## 2.7 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE

Most literature alludes that the most effective knowledge management systems are able to access information from multiple documents and databases, capture it in a centralized knowledgebase, and continually improve it for ongoing use by individuals seeking answers.

Measuring, managing, and improving upon intellectual capital has quickly become one of corporate America's top priorities, according to *Knowledge Management of Internal Best Practices* (Best Practices, LLC, 2001, pp. 36 ). Their benchmarking study and "Best Practice Database" provides an example of what is being promulgated. Derived from "studying world-class customer service practices [that] foster higher quality customer service and satisfaction. . . ," **Best Practices Benchmarking™** reports provide "fast and effective access and intelligence to world-class excellence:

Using best practice research findings, the Best Practices, LLC research team identified key performance dimensions or sub-elements that are cornerstones of the integrated management system. The key performance dimensions include:

1. Link Best Practices to Strategy Fulfilment
2. Best Practice Identification Systems
3. Best Practice Recognition Systems
4. Communicating Best Practices
5. Best Practice Knowledge Sharing Systems
6. On-going Nurturing of Best Practices" (<http://www.best-in-class.com/>)

## **2.8 CURRENT AND FUTURE KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS**

One of the means for driving the success of KM is to have a clear and well-planned strategy (Liebowitz, 1999). This provides the foundation for how an organisation can deploy its capabilities and resources to achieve its KM goals. While several strategies for implementing KM have been suggested in literature (O'Dell et al., 1999; Liebowitz, 1999; Soliman and Spooner, 2000), a suitable one should be well adjusted to the situation and context of the organisation at hand. In order to attach more significance to a KM strategy, it should support an imperative business issue of an organisation. There seems to be common agreement in literature that a KM strategy has to be linked or integrated with the enterprise business strategy (Zack, 1999; Cook, 1999; Maier and Remus, 2002).

The author concurs with Arora (2002) and Ahmed (1999), who point out that measuring KM is necessary in order to ensure that its envisioned objectives are being attained. Measurement enables organisations to track the progress of KM and to determine its benefits and effectiveness. Essentially, it provides a basis for organisations to evaluate, compare, control and improve upon the performance of KM (Ahmed, 1999). In this regard, for the Namibia Business School to attain its long term as well as short term objectives, it needs to continually evaluate itself on the basis of its KM strategy.

## **2.9 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN ORGANIZATIONS (CULTURE)**

The ability to transfer or share knowledge across an organisation has been found to contribute to organisational performance. Knowledge sharing in an organisation is dependent on the organisation's culture which includes willingness of employees to work with each other and share what they know for mutual benefit, as well as a high level of trust and cooperative behaviours (Alavi & Leidner, 1997). It is then expected that a change in culture should be one

that acknowledges that knowledge is power and is better shared so as to facilitate its continuous renewal.

Ismael and Yusof (2005), point out that there are five important dimensions in knowledge management activities, which are: knowledge capture; knowledge creation; knowledge use (leverage); knowledge sharing; and knowledge retention. The above authors note that few firms fully realise the benefits of highly valued knowledge. Knowledge that is located in one department or in a specific segment of the organisation is not used fully. New knowledge should be harnessed and managed through internal knowledge management systems that create learning opportunities for other departments or areas within the firm.

## **2.10 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

Alavi and Leidner (1997) observe that knowledge management systems are designed by organisations as information systems that are specifically intended to facilitate the sharing and integration of knowledge. To be successful, a knowledge management system (KMS) should address the two main types of knowledge: tacit and explicit knowledge. A knowledge management system (KMS) should have the capacity to locate, capture, store, communicate, and create knowledge. Additionally, the KMS should use a wide variety of social and technological tools to facilitate the exchange of knowledge.

## **2.11 ICTS ROLE IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT EXCHANGE SYSTEMS)**

The role of ICTs is crucial for knowledge management. ICTs are one of three important elements in the knowledge management environment. The other two elements are people and processes (FAO, 2005). The function of ICTs in knowledge management is to provide a “pipe line” for the flow of explicit knowledge, including its acquisition, refinement, storage and retrieval, and dissemination. With the use of ICT tools such as the World Wide Web,

groupware and databases, an organisation can build a multimedia repository with the knowledge content indexed and linked by categories, which allows the explicit knowledge to be displayed easily and used through electronically mediated channels.

## **2.12 KNOWLEDGE CREATION PROCESS**

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1994) contend that knowledge creation is based on a critical assumption that human knowledge is created and expanded through social interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge. The capability to create and apply new knowledge successfully constitutes the true source of competitive advantage of the firm. Enrique, Gregorio and Pedro (2006) point out that the organisation, as a system, is composed of several subsystems, groups, or teams, which in turn comprise several elements or individuals. Nonaka (1995), and his co-workers created a consistent body of theory concerning knowledge creation in organisations based on four main ideas: a) knowledge creation at individual level is a direct result of the continuous dialogue between tacit and explicit knowledge; b) there are four basic knowledge conversion processes: socialization, externalisation, combination and internalisation, which are utilised in the methodology. (Nonaka& Takeuchi, 1994).

## **2.13 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical Framework that was employed in this study was designed to investigate the nature and significance of knowledge management to the survival and competitiveness of the Namibia Business School. While the literature review revealed the existence of many knowledge management theories and models, two theoretical models were selected as appropriate for this study.

The first one is the well-known Knowledge Dynamics Model elaborated by Ikujiro Nonaka and his co-workers (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The second framework is the Systemic Knowledge Management Framework based on Probst, Raub and Rohmardt (2000).

### **2.13.1 Knowledge Dynamics Model**

Nonaka's *Knowledge Dynamics Model* involves knowledge creation and the transformation of Knowledge between tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This model consists of three layers of the knowledge-creation processes: (a) the process of knowledge creation through Socialization-Externalization-Combination-Internalization (SECI), the knowledge conversion process between tacit and explicit knowledge, (b) the platform for knowledge creation and (c) knowledge assets as explained below:

Nonaka (1994) considers two dimensions for knowledge creation: epistemological dimension and ontological dimension. The first dimension is related to the conversion of knowledge from tacit level to explicit level, and from explicit level to tacit level. The second dimension is related to the conversion of knowledge from individuals to groups and further to the organisation. Combining these two motions results in a spiral model for knowledge creation and processing. Additionally, Nonaka makes a fundamental assumption which is the core of the SECI model, that is, "The assumption that knowledge is created through conversion between tacit and explicit knowledge allows us to postulate four different modes of knowledge conversion: (1) from tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge, (2) from explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge, (3) from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, and (4) from explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge" (Nonaka, 1994, p.19). The first process of creating tacit knowledge through shared experience has been called socialization. Tacit knowledge is hard to formalize and express using language, it is context related. It is the way apprentices learn their craft through observation and imitation of their masters. The second

process is a result of social interaction through language. This process of creating explicit knowledge from explicit knowledge has been called combination.

The third and fourth processes are different from the previous ones since they involve both types of knowledge. These transformation processes are based on the idea that tacit and explicit knowledge are two complementary forms of knowledge in a continuous interaction. The third process, that of transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge has been called externalization. The success of this process depends on sequential use of metaphors, analogies and models (Nonaka, Toyama & Byosiere, 2001). The fourth process deals with transformation of explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge, and it has been called internalization. This is a process of embodying explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. It is closely linked to learning by doing. In Nonaka's view, the first three processes are related to organisational learning, while the last one is related to individual learning. Based on the above ideas, Nonaka concludes that organisations create knowledge continuously by restructuring the existing knowledge base through the synergy of the four fundamental processes of knowledge transformation: "That is to say, knowledge creation centres on the building of both tacit and explicit knowledge and, more importantly, on the interchange between these two aspects of knowledge through internalization and externalization" (Nonaka, 1994, p. 20). The foundation of these four basic processes is Ba, a rather fuzzy concept proposed by the Japanese philosopher Kitaro Nishida, and further developed by Shimizu. Ba is defined "as a context in which knowledge is shared, created, and utilized, in recognition of the fact that knowledge needs a context in order to exist" (Nonaka, Toyama & Byosiere, 2001, p.499). This context can be tangible, intangible or any combination of tangible and intangible elements. In this perspective, the concept of knowledge is strongly related to a given material and cultural context, beyond the fact that it is considered a personal belief. Knowledge belonging to a given person may be shared, recreated or

amplified when that person is an active actor in Ba. To make things even more confused, Nonaka, Toyama and Byosiere (2001, p.499) consider that “Ba as an interaction means that Ba itself is knowledge rather than a physical space containing knowledge or individuals who have knowledge”.

### **2.13 The Systemic Knowledge Management Framework**

The Systemic Knowledge Management Framework is divided into six components which work together to ensure the knowledge management system functions well. The different components, with brief descriptions of each part, are presented below (Hourcade-Bellacq, Haytayan & Camacho, 2008: 86):

i) Strategic knowledge – refers to the types of knowledge needed by the organisation and on which the knowledge system is focused, in this case this is the various categories of knowledge for development as determined by the strategic goals of different organisations

ii) Knowledge processes – the systemic framework identifies six knowledge processes which ensure that the knowledge system works, namely: locating knowledge which refers to finding the right information and knowledge; knowledge capture, which refers to gathering the relevant information and knowledge; knowledge creation, which refers to creating and generating new knowledge; sharing knowledge, which refers to the process of communicating and sharing knowledge; applying knowledge, which refers to putting available knowledge to action to carry forward the plans of the organization; storing knowledge, which refers to the creation of knowledge repositories to store existing knowledge for future use.

iii) Tools and Practices – this is a component which refers to both social and technology based tools, but also includes paper based tools (publications, newsletters, and manuals). The social tools refer to face to face events such as workshops, seminars, social events and such,

while technology tools include websites, intranets, blogs, electronic newsletters and such. Practices for knowledge sharing on the other hand refer to the various practices for sharing knowledge, such as communication approaches, after action reviews, and knowledge harvesting.

iv) Stakeholders – are all key population groups and organisations who are relevant for the knowledge system of the selected organisations.

vi) Organisation setting is a concept that refers to the whole management process, including the management of the knowledge system, resource availability, infrastructure, and monitoring and evaluation.

vii) Culture is the set of underlying behaviours and habits that may hinder or support knowledge sharing and learning in the organisation.

## **2.14 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

The supreme objective of this study was to investigate the knowledge management needs and practices at the Namibia Business School required to achieve its short and long term strategic goals of becoming a world class business school and also recommend to develop a top notch knowledge management strategy that will enable the Namibia Business School to attain and maintain a competitive edge in the sector. The reviewed literature reveals that there is no record of a study of this nature ever being conducted at the University of Namibia, particularly the Namibia Business School. At the time of this study, there was no evidence of any researcher investigating knowledge management practices in Namibia at any of the existing business schools. This paper sought to fill the identified gaps by adapting the two

theories identified to develop a theoretical model/ strategy of knowledge management to ensure that the strategic objectives of NBS are attained.

From the reviewed literature it is evident that a correlation between competitiveness and knowledge management exists. Furthermore, it is also evident that all organizations, particularly those in academia, need to have a working knowledge management strategy that is aligned with their strategic objectives. It has been established that developing a knowledge management strategy is not simple as it requires the organisation to know its knowledge capabilities and knowledge needs in order to develop a sustainable knowledge management strategy. It is therefore prerequisite that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, universities and business schools constantly review their strategies on knowledge management, as they exist in changing environments, to ensure that they are always in line with their long term objectives. The next chapter deals with the methodology used to gather data pertaining to these issues.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The term methodology refers to a theoretical analysis of the methods employed or applied to a particular study or field of study. The research methodology employed qualitative and quantitative techniques which in the case of this study are the methods and principles applied in the research process.

#### **3.1 RATIONALE OF THE METHODOLOGY**

This study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate the knowledge management practises employed at the Namibia Business School (NBS). The quantitative research approach made use of quantitative surveys through questionnaires and the qualitative approach was employed through observations. The research participants in the study were both full and part time staff members of the Namibia Business School.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design of the study is a case study which focused on the Namibia Business School. The philosophy of the study was positivism paradigm and the reality of the Namibia Business School was studied as a fixed entity. The researcher was objective while conducting the study and all efforts were done to avoid bias (Blanche and Durrheim, 2014). The researcher implemented the quantitative research approach through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The data collection method used by the researcher was to deliver the questionnaire in person to the participants and collect it after completion. The research

participants in the study were both full and part time staff of the Namibia Business School. Close-ended questions and open-ended questions were administered to participants. According to Creswell (2012) “quantitative approaches use more open-ended approaches in which the researcher identifies set response categories” (p.20). The researcher conducted a pilot study prior to administering the survey. The pilot study was conducted within the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, in the Department of Economics. The pilot study was primarily conducted in order to improve the questionnaires. The result of the pilot study indicated that the questionnaire will yield the desired results. The designed questionnaires were used to obtain views from the participants (Namibia Business School staff).

### **3.3 POPULATION**

According to Creswell (2012) he defines population as “a population in which a group of individuals possesses one characteristic that distinguish them from other groups”(p. 381). For the purposes of this study, the population consisted of the Namibia Business School department, both full and part time staff. Fox and Bayat (2007) advise that a researcher clearly indicate if the population is finite or infinite. In this particular case the population is finite as the total of individuals who represent the whole sum of cases for the study were known.

### **3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE (SAMPLE)**

The study used a non-probability sampling technique, particularly judgemental sampling. Judgmental sampling design was made use of due to the limited number of individuals who possess the trait of interest. This allowed the researcher to select a more representative sample that can bring more accurate results than by using other probability sampling techniques. Furthermore, Creswell define a sample as “the group of participants in a study selected from the target population from which the researcher generalize to the target

population” (p. 381). The population (The Namibia Business School), only a sample of 21 full-time employees and 24 part-time staff (Lecturers) of the Namibia Business School was used. This gives a summation of 45 staff members as the respondents of the study.

### **3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The primary data was collected using open-ended and close-ended questions personally administered to the full-time and part-time staff of the Namibia Business School by the researcher. The content of the questions was reviewed and all queries were dealt with before handing the questionnaire out to the research participants. The questionnaire format was designed using the Lickert scale model and check-list format. These are universally accepted scientific models for construction questions to elicit data.

### **3.6 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaires were handed to individual respondents in their work stations or at the Namibia Business School by the researcher. Face to face administration of questionnaires assists in clarifying questions for the respondents, while also ensuring that the questionnaires are completed in full. Ethical issues of participants’ rights, privacy and confidentiality of information were emphasized to the respondents during the data collection process.

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION**

This research adopted a survey method. Fox and Bayat (2007) indicate that this method has an advantage of producing unbiased questions and responses. The questionnaires were collected personally from respondents at least an hour after being given to them. Claire, Craig and Sello (2014) argue that questionnaires can be used to explore or describe a situation but also to assess the a correlation between two variables. A checklist was used to ensure that all questionnaires handed out were collected. All questionnaires collected were perused to ensure that all items had been answered. Upon giving/handing out the questionnaires to the

respondents explanations were given to make it easier for respondents to comprehend the question to ensure a 100% response rate.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

The primary data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data obtained was analysed after grouping the data in particular analytical categories such as level of education and age. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and descriptive statistics were generated. The study made use of frequency tables and charts were created from the analysis using the SPSS. Content analysis was used to analyse the open ended questions.

### **3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS**

This study addressed ethical issues by ensuring that the data collection techniques employed did not cause physical or emotional harm to the respondents. Informed consent was solicited from research respondents before the completion of questionnaires. According to Hessebieber and Leavy, (2006) ethics should be at the forefront of the researcher's agenda and a primary consideration rather than an after thought. The participants were also informed that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the survey at any stage. Furthermore, participants were informed that they were taking part in a research and that the results thereof could be published. All sources used in this study have been appropriately referenced and acknowledged and thus have not been passed as the researcher's own work. The anonymity and privacy of participants has been respected and personal information has been kept confidential and secure.

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

This section dealt with the methodology employed in this study. The type of research and research design have been described and explained. The sampling procedure and data collection methods as well as data analysis have been outlined in this section. This research has been described as mixed approach research and the adoption of both qualitative and quantitative research methods has been justified. The methods of collecting data by means of questionnaires have been clarified, and finally, the need for ethical considerations when collecting data was also elucidated.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This study focused on the investigation of any existing knowledge management system at the Namibia Business School so as to deliver excellent graduate education and shed light on the knowledge management needs and practises at the Namibia Business School required to achieve its short and long term strategic goals of becoming a world class business school. This chapter focuses on the presentation, and analysis of data collected based on the research objectives and research questions.

#### **4.1 Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Establish the knowledge needs of staff in relation to the strategic goals of NBS
2. Determine the factors that influence NBS staff's sharing and dissemination of knowledge with each other.
3. Establish how the NBS obtains knowledge from external sources including other business schools.
4. Examine how the knowledge management system is currently organised within the business school.
5. Investigate the IT facilities used within the NBS for facilitating knowledge communication purposes among staff and stakeholders.

6. Determine and recommend how NBS can link its knowledge management strategy to its long term strategic vision (to become a world-class African institution in management education, research, and consulting).

## 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Primary data was collected in order to determine the views and opinions of the respondents. This collected data congregated was ultimately utilized to draw conclusions on the research predicament. Following are the demographics of the respondents.

### 4.2.1 Demographic Profiles of the Interviewees

In this section the author will refer to respondents as both full-time and part-time staff of NBS. In accounts of the clear distinction of the aforementioned, it will clearly be stated as such.

**Table 1: Age Group**

**Age Group \* Gender Cross tabulation**

N= 45

		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Age Group	Under 25	2	0	2
	25-30	7	5	12
	31-40	3	16	19
	41-50	2	9	11
	Over 50	0	1	1
Total		14	31	45

Deducing from table 4.1 above, Using SPSS, with a total of 45 respondents; of which 14 were female and 31 were male. Of the 14 female respondents, 2 were under 25 years of age, 7 were between 25-30 years, 3 were between 31-40 years of age, 2 were between 41-50 years of age and none were over 50 years. Whilst of the 31 male respondents, none were under 25, 5 were between 25-30 years, 16 were between 31-40 years of age, 9 were between 41-50

years of age and only one was over 50 years. It is evident that the majority of the respondents were males as opposed to females. Thus it can be said that NBS is a male dominated working organisation. In terms of age, the majority of employees are aged between 31-40 years.

**Table 2: Age Group and Educational Profile**

**Age Group \* Educational Profile Cross tabulation**

**N=45**

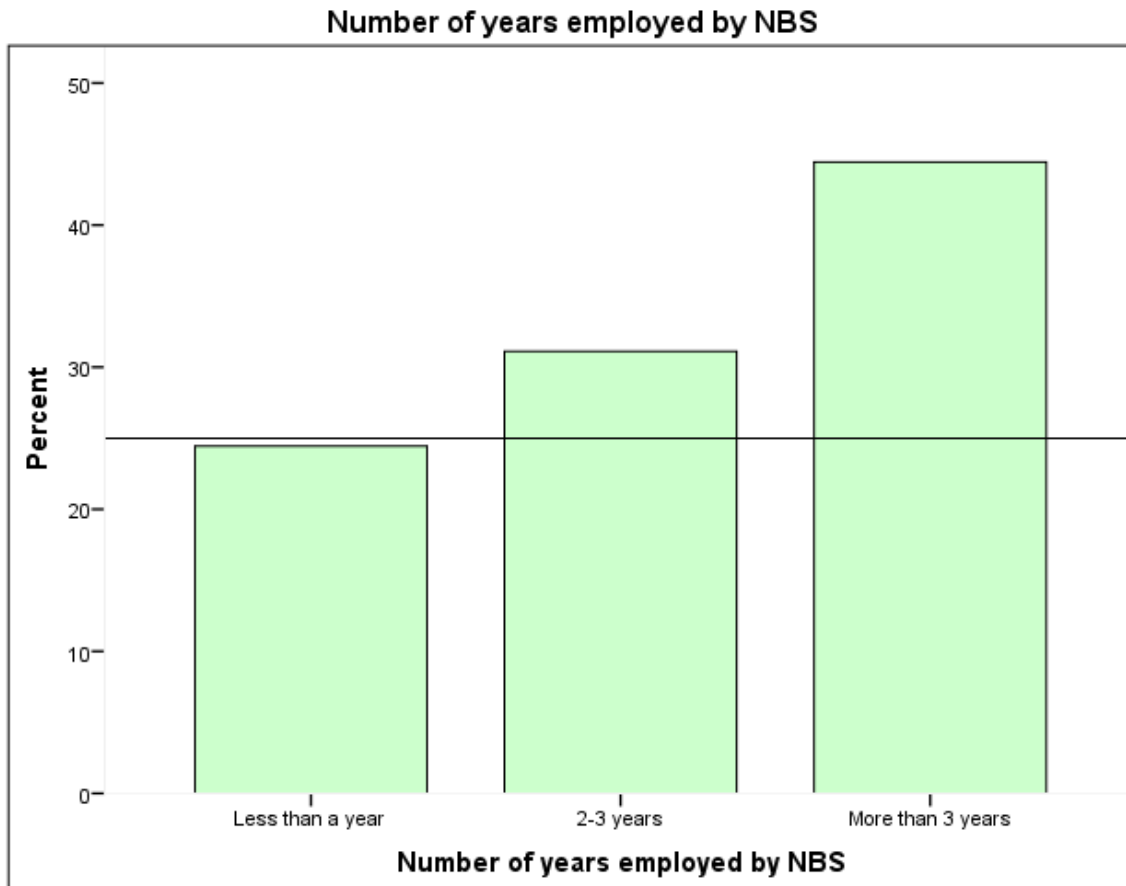
		Educational Profile						Total
		Diploma	Degree	Honours-Degree	Post-graduate Diploma	Masters	PhD	
Age Group	Under 25	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	25-30	0	2	1	2	7	0	12
	31-40	0	2	1	3	12	1	19
	41-50	0	0	1	2	6	2	11
	Over 50	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>45</b>

In terms of the respondents educational profiles (highest level of education) and their ages, the results are as follows:

Only one employee over the ages of 50 has a diploma. Those with degrees were 4 in total: 2 between the ages of 25-30 and 2 between the ages of 31-40. Of the 5 with Honours-Degrees, 2 were under 25 years of age, 1 was between 25-30, 1 between 31-40 and another one was under 41-40 years of age. 7 respondents possess Post-Graduate Diplomas- 2 of which were between the ages of 35-30, 3 between 31-40, and 2 between 41-50 years of age. Respondents with Maters' Degrees were 25 in total, 7 were between the ages of 25-30, 12 who made up the majority of this group were between the ages of 31-40 years. The remaining 6 were between the ages of 41-50 years respectively. 3 respondents had PhDs, one was between the

ages of 31-40 and the remaining two were between the ages of 41-50 respectively. It is evident that the majority of the staff are Masters' holders.

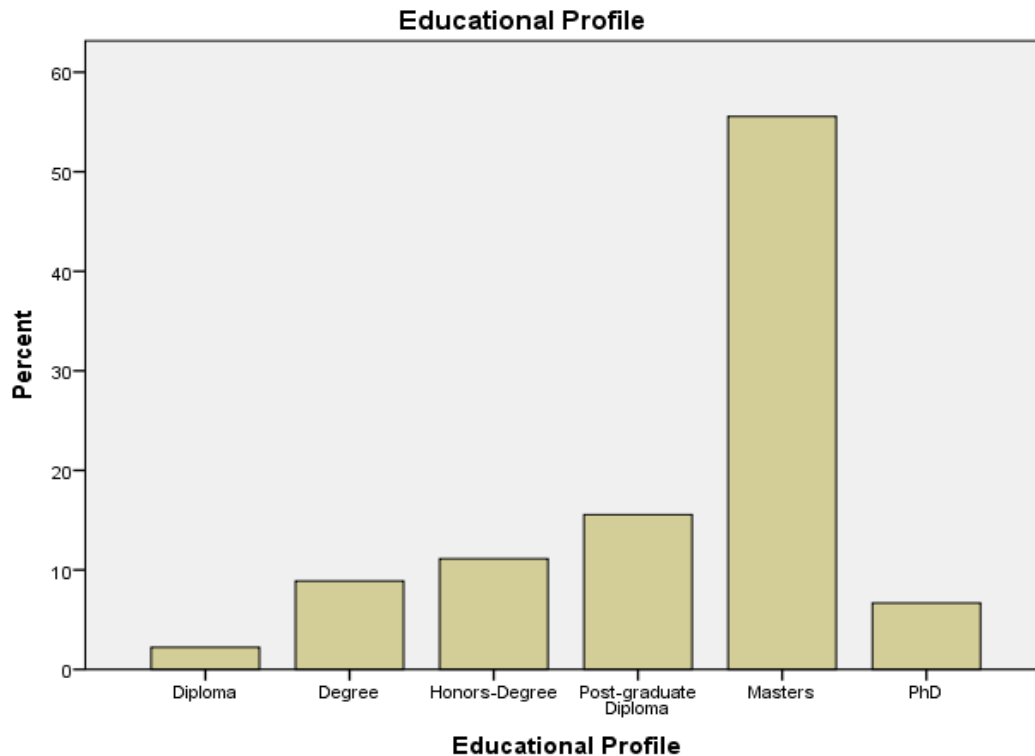
Below is the graphic demonstration of the tabulated figures explained above. Each Profile is represented in its individual graph:



**Figure 1 Number of Years employed by NBS**

Figure 1, indicates the number of years the surveyed respondents have been employed with the Namibia Business School. It was found that majority (45%) of the respondents have been employed with the school for longer than 3 years, which is then followed by 30% which is categorized by those respondents who have been employed for a period between 2-3 years,

and finally, 25% of the respondents have indicated that they have been employed with the school for less than one year.



**Figure 2 Educational Profiles**

Only one employee over the ages of 50 has a diploma. Those with degrees were 4 in total: 2 between the ages of 25-30 and 2 between the ages of 31-40. Of the 5 with Honours-Degrees, 2 were under 25 years of age, 1 was between 25-30, 1 between 31-40 and another one was under 41-40 years of age. 7 respondents possess Post-Graduate Diplomas- 2 of which were between the ages of 35-30, 3 between 31-40, and 2 between 41-50 years of age. Respondents with Masters' Degrees were 25 in total, 7 were between the ages of 25-30, 12 who made up the majority of this group were between the ages of 31-40 years. The remaining 6 were between the ages of 41-50 years respectively. 3 respondents had PhDs, one was between the ages of 31-40 and the remaining two were between the ages of 41-50 respectively. It is evident that the majority of the staff are Masters' holders.

The 45 respondents were asked the number of years employed by NBS as well as their employment status and the below cross tabulation was calculated:

**Table 3: Number of years employed by NBS and Employment Status with NBS Cross tabulation**

**Number of years employed by NBS \* Employment Status with NBS Cross tabulation**

**N=45**

		Employment Status with NBS		Total
		Part-time	Full-time	
Number of years employed by NBS	Less than a year	9	2	11
	2-3 years	7	7	14
	More than 3 years	8	12	20
Total		24	21	45

The table above gives the statistics of the Employment Status of the respondents:

In total, 11 respondents employed by NBS took part in this survey, of which 9 part-time staff had been employed for less than a year and 2 full-time staff had been employed for the same period. Additionally, 7 part-time staff and 7 full-time staff had been employed for a period between 2-3 years, which adds up to 14 respondents in this category who took part in this survey. 20 respondents that indulged in the survey had been employed for more than 3 years; 8 on a part-time basis and 12 on a full-time basis.

The 45 respondents were asked which department they work for or the programmes they teach , below are the results of their responses:

**Table 4: Department of Employment and Programme taught Cross tabulation**

**N=45 Department of Employment \* Programme taught Cross tabulation**

		Programme taught						Total
		Full-time staff	PGDBA	EDPM	MBA: FINANCE	MBA: MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	MBA: NATURAL RESOURCES	
Department of Employment	Part-time staff	0	12	2	5	4	1	24
	Academic	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
	Finance	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Administration	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
	Marketing	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Research	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>

Table 4.4 represents a cross tabulation of the departments of employment for full-time and programmes taught for part-time employees. It is gathered that of the 21 full time staff, 5 were employed within the academic department, 3 within finance, 8 within administration 3 within marketing and 2 within the research department. Whilst of the 24 part-time respondents, 12 teach/lecture the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDBA), 2 the Executive Diploma in Police Management (EDPM), 5 MBA- Finance, 4 MBA-Management Strategy and 1 MBA-Natural Resources. It is worth noting at this point that some of the lecturers teach more than one programme (that is, different modules at different dates). Some teach a combination of the programmes, for instance, there may be one

lecturer for the Business Ethics and Academic Writing modules, the students would then be combined and taught in one class.

#### **4.2 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN NBS (FULL TIME STAFF ONLY):**

Respondents were asked to assess to what extent employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from external sources (e.g. through seminars, conferences, educational courses, subscription journals, expert networks).

The 45 respondents were asked, to assess the extent to which they obtain new knowledge from external sources below are the results of their responses

**Table 5: Knowledge from external sources**

**Knowledge from external sources**

N=45

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.4
	Disagree	2	4.4
	Neutral	9	20.0
	Agree	7	15.6
	Strongly Agree	1	2.2
	Total	45	100.0

Respondents were asked if employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from external sources for instance, through seminars, conferences, and educational courses. The majority of respondents (9) were neutral to the said statement, 7 agreed, 2 strongly disagreed, 2 disagreed, and 1 strongly agreed. This adds up to a total of 21 fulltime respondents.

The 45 Respondents were also asked to rate to what extent employees exchange knowledge with their co-workers, below is a summary of the results of their responses:

**Table 6: Knowledge exchange with co-workers**

**Knowledge exchange with co-workers**

N=45

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
Neutral	3	6.7	6.7	62.2
Agree	10	22.2	22.2	84.4
Strongly Agree	7	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were asked to rate if employees exchange knowledge with their co-workers. Out of the 21 full-time staff respondents, 1 disagreed, 3 were neutral, 10 agreed, 7 strongly agreed. It can be said that there is knowledge exchange between employees within NBS. In terms of percentages, 22.2% of the 21 full-time respondents agreed with the statement, whilst the lowest which is 2.2% disagreed.

The 45 Respondents were asked to rate to what extent employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from business partners (e.g. suppliers, clients), below are the results of their responses

**Table 7: Knowledge from Business Partners**

**Knowledge from Business Partners**

N=45

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
Disagree	3	6.7	6.7	62.2
Neutral	3	6.7	6.7	68.9

Agree	14	31.1	31.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

The question whether employees frequently obtain a high level of new knowledge from business partners such as suppliers and clients revealed that 14 (31.1%) of the 21 full-time respondents agreed, 3 (6.7%) were neutral, 3 disagreed and one, 2.2%, strongly disagreed.

The 45 Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which employees rely on experience, skills and knowledge in their work, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 8: Employees reliance on skills, experience and knowledge**

**Employees reliance on skills, experience and knowledge**

N=45

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	57.8
Neutral	5	11.1	11.1	68.9
Agree	2	4.4	4.4	73.3
Strongly Agree	12	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

An inquiry to find out if, in their work, employees rely on experience, skills and knowledge revealed that 12 (26.7%) of the full-time respondents strongly agreed, 2 (4.4%) agreed, 5 (11.1%) were neutral, 1 disagreed and one strongly disagreed.

The 45 respondents were asked to rate the extent to which employees rely on written sources (e.g. previously implemented projects documentation, organisational procedures, instructions and other documented sources they have access to), below is the results of their combined responses:

**Table 9: Employees reliance on written sources**

**Employees reliance on written sources**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
	Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	57.8
	Neutral	8	17.8	17.8	75.6
	Agree	10	22.2	22.2	97.8
	Strongly Agree	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Furthermore, the survey sought to query, if in their work, NBS employees rely on written sources (e.g. previously implemented projects documentation, organisational procedures, instructions and other documented sources they may have access to). This revealed that the majority, 10 (22.2%) out of the 21 full-time respondents agreed with the statement, 1 strongly agreed, 8 (17.8%) were neutral to the statement, 1 disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they believe employees share their knowledge orally at informal gatherings (e.g. during lunch and in the hallway), below are the results of their responses:

**Table 10: Share knowledge orally informally**

**Share knowledge orally informally**

N=45

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	57.8
	Disagree	4	8.9	8.9	66.7
	Neutral	2	4.4	4.4	71.1
	Agree	13	28.9	28.9	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

The survey also went on to inquire if employees share their knowledge orally at meetings or informal gatherings (e.g. during lunch, in the hallway). The results show that 13 (28.9%) out of 21 agreed that knowledge was shared orally informally, whilst 4 (8.9%) disagreed, 2 (4.4%) strongly disagreed, and 2 (4.4%) were neutral.

In this section of the questionnaire, employees were asked to rate how they share their knowledge through formal procedures (e.g. project reports, organisational procedures and instructions, reports, company publications and meetings, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 11: Share knowledge through formal procedures**

**Share knowledge through formal procedures**

N=45

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
	Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	60.0

Neutral	13	28.9	28.9	88.9
Agree	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

In relation to the knowledge management within NBS, the survey asked if employees share their knowledge through formal procedures (e.g. project reports, organisational procedures and instructions, reports and company publications) which revealed that 13 (28.9%) respondents out of the 21 full time staff were neutral, 5 (11.1%) agreed, 2 (4.4%) disagreed, and one strongly disagreed.

Finally, employees were asked to rate the extent to which they consider their knowledge as an organisational asset and not their own source of power, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 12: Consider knowledge as an organisational asset**

**Consider knowledge as an organisational asset**

N=45

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Strongly Disagree	5	11.1	11.1	64.4
Neutral	13	28.9	28.9	93.3
Agree	2	4.4	4.4	97.8
Strongly Agree	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

As stated above, the survey also inquired if employees in the organisation considered their knowledge as an organisational asset and not their own source of power. Out of the 21 respondents, 13 (28.9%) were neutral, 2 (2.2%) agreed, one strongly agreed, 5 (11.1%) strongly disagreed.

### 4.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WITHIN NBS

This section looks at how the survey investigated the IT infrastructure used within the NBS for facilitating knowledge communication purposes among staff and stakeholders. Old ways of doing business are no longer sufficient to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities of today. The importance of quickly having access to available knowledge and expertise, no matter where they are located, is critical. The ICT infrastructure of the NBS is imperative for its growth and success, its existing state requires the NBS to answer the following questions which were part of the questionnaire administered to the respondents:

The 45 respondents were asked if the intranet is efficient and easy to use, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 13: Intranet is efficient and easy to use**

**Intranet is efficient and easy to use**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Yes	17	37.8	37.8	91.1
No	3	6.7	6.7	97.8
Maybe	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

17 (37.8%) of employees agreed that the intranet platform is an efficient method of communication and is easy to use. 3 (6.7) said no, and one (2.2%) respondent was unsure.

The 45 respondents were asked to rate the communication between NBS staff and lectures, if they believe there is constant and effective communication between the aforementioned parties, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 14: Communication between lecturers and NBS Staff**

**Communication between lecturers and NBS Staff**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Yes	18	40.0	40.0	93.3
	No	1	2.2	2.2	95.6
	Maybe	2	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

When asked if there is constant and effective communication between the lecturers and administrative staff of the NBS, 18 (which is 40% out of the 45 respondents) responded yes, 2 (4.4%) said maybe and one (2.2%) said no.

Again, the 45 respondents were asked if they have constant access to their emails, below are the results to their responses:

**Table 15: Access to emails**

**Access to emails**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Yes	17	37.8	37.8	91.1
	No	3	6.7	6.7	97.8
	Maybe	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

When asked if they have frequent access to email facilities, 17 (37.8%) respondents said yes, 3 (6.7) said no (2.2%) and one (2.2%) said maybe.

The 45 respondents were asked if there exists a need to involve new partners and use social media to help the school move towards real time, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 16: The need to involve new partners and use social media to help move towards real time**

**Need to involve new partners and use social media to help move towards real time**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Yes	17	37.8	37.8	91.1
No	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

When queried if there exists a need to involve new partners and use social media and other tools that help move towards real-time monitoring and more effective engagement of citizens, 17 (37.8%) recorded yes and 4 (8.9%) said no.

The 45 respondents were asked if the existing ICT tools are being used to support collaborative work, below is the results of their combined responses

**Table 17: ICT tools used to support collaborative work**

**ICT tools used to support collaborative work**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Yes	8	17.8	17.8	71.1
No	3	6.7	6.7	77.8
Maybe	10	22.2	22.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

When asked if in their organisation, ICT tools are used to support collaborative work (e.g calendars, video conferencing systems and communication tools) the majority response was maybe, whilst 8 (17.8%) responded yes and 3 (6.7%) said no.

#### 4.4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN NBS (FULL-TIME STAFF ONLY)

The respondents were asked to rate, based on the availed options, the ways to improve internal communication within NBS:

The 45 respondents were asked if there exists a need to reward the best performing departments within the school, the results of their responses are tabulated below:

**Table 18: Introduce rewarding systems for best performing department**

**Introduce rewarding systems for best performing department**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Neutral	4	8.9	8.9	62.2
Agree	2	4.4	4.4	66.7
Strongly Agree	15	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

15 (33.3%) respondents strongly agreed to introducing reward systems for best performing departments within the school, whilst 4 (8.9%) were neutral and 2 (4.4%) agreed.

The 45 respondents have been asked if there is a need to set rules, procedures and policies that support internal communication, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 19: Set rules, procedures and policies that support internal communication**

**Set rules, procedures and policies that support internal communication**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Neutral	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
Agree	3	6.7	6.7	62.2
Strongly Agree	17	37.8	37.8	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

17 (37.8% ) respondents strongly agreed to setting rules, procedures, and policies as organisational structures that support internal communication, 3 (6.7%) agreed, and one (2.2%) was neutral.

The 45 respondents were asked if there exists a need to host fixed time intervals for face-to – face meetings within the school, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 20: Host fixed time intervals for face to face meetings**

**Host fixed time intervals for face to face meetings**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Neutral	3	6.7	6.7	60.0
Agree	15	33.3	33.3	93.3
Strongly Agree	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

When asked if hosting fixed time intervals for face-to-face meetings will improve internal communication within NBS, 15 (33.3%) agreed, 3 (6.7%) strongly agreed, and 3 (6.7%) were neutral.

The 45 respondents were asked if the goals of the school are well communicated, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 21: Communicate well defined shared goals of NBS**

**Communicate well defined shared goals of NBS**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Neutral	2	4.4	4.4	57.8
	Agree	2	4.4	4.4	62.2
	Strongly Agree	17	37.8	37.8	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

When asked if communicating well-defined goals of NBS to all staff (to become a world class business school) so that all departments work towards one common goal will improve internal communication, 17 (37.8%) strongly agreed, 2 (4.4%) agreed, and 2 (4.4%) were neutral.

The 45 respondents were asked if employees higher in the hierarchy show support towards Knowledge Transfer, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 22: Employees higher in the hierarchy should show support towards Knowledge Transfer**

**Employees higher in the hierarchy should show support towards Knowledge Transfer**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Neutral	2	4.4	4.4	57.8

Agree	2	4.4	4.4	62.2
Strongly Agree	17	37.8	37.8	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Probed whether frequent emphasis on the importance of knowledge transfer by employees higher in the hierarchy of employment, showing support for knowledge management transfer will improve internal communication, 17 (37.8%) strongly agreed, 2 (4.4%) agreed and 2 (4.4%) were neutral.

The 45 respondents were asked if there is a need to developing a policy for a system that captures and shares knowledge, below is the results of their responses:

**Table 23 Developing a policy for a system that captures and shares knowledge:**

**Developing a policy for a system that captures and shares knowledge**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Part-time staff	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	55.6
Neutral	3	6.7	6.7	62.2
Agree	2	4.4	4.4	66.7
Strongly Agree	15	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

An inquiry into whether the development of a deliberate policy for a system that captures and shares existing knowledge can/will improve internal communication within NBS: 15 (33.3%) strongly agreed, 2 (4.4%) agreed, 3 (6.7%) were neutral, and one strongly disagreed.

#### 4.5 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN NBS (FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STAFF)

The 45 respondents were asked if a knowledge management system may affect service delivery, below (table 24) are the results of their responses:

**Table 24: Knowledge management system may affect service delivery**

Knowledge management system may affect service delivery					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Neutral	4	8.9	8.9	11.1
	Agree	13	28.9	28.9	40.0
	Strongly Agree	27	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

27 (60%) out of 45 strongly agreed that service delivery would be affected by a knowledge management system, whilst 13 (28.9%) agreed, 4 (8.9%) were neutral and one strongly disagreed.

The 45 respondents were asked if the intranet platform is valuable information and knowledge sharing tool for students and lecturers, below (table 25) are the results of their responses:

**Table 25: Intranet is a valuable information and knowledge exchange tool between students and lecturers**

**Intranet is a valuable information and knowledge exchange tool between students and lecturers**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Agree	14	31.1	31.1	35.6
	Strongly Agree	29	64.4	64.4	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Additionally, the respondents were asked if the NBS intranet platform is a valuable information and exchange tool between students and lecturers: 29 (64.4%) strongly agreed, 14 (31.1%) agreed, and 2 (4.4%) strongly disagreed.

An inquiry was further made in to the “Personalization strategy” which assumes that knowledge is shared mainly through direct interpersonal communication, and the “Codification Strategy” which assumes that the document-to-person approach were knowledge artefacts are stored and indexed in databases to enable easy retrieval. The results are presented in table 26 below:

**Table 26: Personalization Strategy Vs Codification strategy**

**Personalization Strategy is preferred at Postgraduate level \* Codification strategy is preferred at Postgraduate level Cross tabulation**

**N=45**

		Codification strategy is preferred at Postgraduate level		Total
		Yes, I agree with the statement	No, I don't agree with the statement	
Personalization Strategy is preferred at Postgraduate level	Yes, I agree with the statement	33	3	36
	No, I don't agree with the statement	7	2	9
Total		40	5	45

40 of the 45 respondents agreed with the codification strategy and 5 disagreed, whilst 36 agreed with the personalization strategy and 9 disagreed. It can then be said that the codification strategy is preferred in NBS.

The 45 respondents were asked to indicate the materials they would encourage the lecturers to utilize, below is the result of their responses:

**Table 27: The Materials lecturer's use:**

**As a lecturer I encourage students to utilize**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid e-Journals	24	53.3	53.3	53.3
Print Journals & Articles	10	22.2	22.2	75.6
Books	7	15.6	15.6	91.1
Past Papers	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Majority of the lecturers preferred to use e-journals and full-time staff also recommended the use of e-journals, followed by print journals and articles, books and past papers. 53.3% of the respondents preferred e-journals, 22.2% Print journals and articles, 15.6% books, and 8.9% past papers.

The survey sought to evaluate the perception of the respondents of NBS in terms of competitiveness:

The 45 respondents were asked to rate the competitiveness of the business school; below (Table 28) is the results of their responses:

**Table 28: In terms of competitiveness NBS is**

**In terms of competitiveness NBS is**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid NBS is taking full advantage of its KM capacity to secure its market positioning	8	17.8	17.8	17.8
It is making an effort but can do better	32	71.1	71.1	88.9

I am not aware of an existing KM strategy for the NBS	5	11.1	11.1	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Thirty-two (32) out of the 45 respondents (71.1%) feel that NBS is making an effort but can do better in relation to competitiveness and market positioning. 17.8% (8 respondents) believe NBS is taking full advantage of its knowledge management capacity to secure its market position as well as remain highly competitive in the market. 11.1% (5 respondents) revealed that they were not aware of an existing knowledge management strategy at NBS.

Moreover, the survey proceeded to examine ways in which NBS can attain its strategic goals in relation to knowledge needs of its occupational staff. Table 29 presents the results of the 45 respondents:

**Table 29: The strategic goals of NBS in relation to knowledge needs of its occupational staff**

**The strategic goals of NBS in relation to knowledge needs of its occupational staff**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Provide training and educational incentives to motivate its staff to study	9	20.0	20.0	20.0
To have frequent seminars/workshops for its staff	11	24.4	24.4	44.4
To establish an exchange programme for its staff with other Business schools	22	48.9	48.9	93.3
Study tours of other business schools	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

48.9% (22 out of the 45 respondents) felt that for NBS to achieve its strategic goals in relation to knowledge needs of its occupational staff, the Namibia Business School (NBS) must establish exchange programmes for its staff with staff from other business schools. 11 respondents (24.4%) believed NBS needed to have frequent seminars/workshops for its staff, whilst 20% (9 respondents) agreed with the point that the business school ought to provide training and educational incentives to motivate its staff to study. Lastly, 6.7% (3 respondents) indicated that study tours of other business schools would be the best option.

This study would not be comprehensive if it overlooked the collaboration NBS had with MSM. After its collaboration and networking with the Maastricht School of Management (MSM) in the Netherlands to offer an Executive MBA programme at UNAM, the respondents were requested to indicate if they believed there was knowledge transfer between the two institutions, below are the results:

**Table 30: Knowledge transfer through collaboration with MsM**

**After the collaboration with MSM was there knowledge transfer/exchange  
between the two institutions**

**N=45**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Yes	20	44.4	44.4	44.4
No	13	28.9	28.9	73.3
Maybe	9	20.0	20.0	93.3
I don't know	3	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

44.4% (20 respondents) selected yes, 28.9% (13 respondents) indicated no, 9 respondents (20%) indicated maybe and 3 respondents (6.7%) indicated they did not know.

Any existing business school needs to learn and use the latest innovation expertise and methodologies, this is referred to as knowledge capacity in this study. In order for NBS to

offer quality postgraduate learning and extend the application of innovative ideas it is mandatory that The research department of the school acquires more staff (expansion of department)

An inquiry if there is a need to expand the research department yielded the following results below. From the 45 respondents.

**Table 31: Expansion of the research department**

**Expansion of the research department**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Disagree	3	6.7	6.7	8.9
	Neutral	6	13.3	13.3	22.2
	Agree	7	15.6	15.6	37.8
	Strongly Agree	28	62.2	62.2	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

28 respondents (62.2%) strongly agreed that the research department needs to acquire more staff. 15.6% (7 respondents) agreed, 13.3% (6 respondents) were neutral, 6.7% (3 respondents) disagreed, whilst 1 respondent strongly disagreed.

The 45 respondents asked if the library resources and lecture notes are sufficient and readily available the results of their responses are show in table 32 below:

**Table 32: Library resources and lecture notes are sufficient and readily available**

Library resources and lecture notes are sufficient and readily available					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Disagree	4	8.9	8.9	13.3
	Neutral	19	42.2	42.2	55.6
	Agree	16	35.6	35.6	91.1
	Strongly Agree	4	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

42.2% which is the majority of the respondents were neutral, whilst 16 respondents (35.6%) agreed, 4 (8.9%) respondents strongly agreed, 4 disagreed (8.9%), and 2 (4.4%) strongly disagreed.

The 45 respondents asked if the teaching staff of the school possesses essential capabilities and skills the results of their responses are show in table 33 below:

**Table 33: Teaching staff possess essential capabilities and skill**

Teaching staff possess essential capabilities and skills					
		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Neutral	3	6.7	6.7	8.9
	Agree	27	60.0	60.0	68.9
	Strongly Agree	14	31.1	31.1	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

60% (27 respondents) agreed, 31.1 % (14 respondents) strongly agreed, 6.7% (3 respondents) were neutral and one disagreed with the statement that the teaching staff possess the essential skills.

The 45 respondents asked if the staff (full/ part time) possess the necessary skills for the growth of a business school the results of their responses are show in table 34 below:

**Table 34: The staff (full/ part time) possess the necessary skills for the growth of a business school**

N=45

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	2.2
	Disagree	1	2.2
	Neutral	3	6.7
	Agree	24	53.3
	Strongly Agree	16	35.6
	Total	45	100.0

53.3 % of the respondents agreed with the statement, whilst 35.6% strongly agreed meaning that more than 80% of the respondents agreed with the statement. 6.7% were neutral and 4.4% disagreed.

The 45 respondents asked if there is a need for NBS to expand collaborative and networking functions with other business schools the results of their responses are show in table 35 below:

Table 35: NBS needs to expand collaborative and networking functions with African and non-African Business Schools

**NBS needs to expand collaborative and networking functions with African and non-African Business Schools**

N=45

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Disagree	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Neutral	2	4.4	4.4	8.9
Agree	17	37.8	37.8	46.7
Strongly Agree	24	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

53.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 37.8% agreed, in total 91.1% of the respondents agreed with the statement:

The 45 respondents asked if the staff at NBS socialize to build trust and share knowledge the results of their responses are show in table 36 below:

Furthermore, survey participants were asked to rate the following statements:

**Table 36: Staff at NBS socialize to build trust and share knowledge**

**Staff at NBS socialize to build trust and share knowledge**

N=45

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Yes	18	40.0	40.0	40.0
No	7	15.6	15.6	55.6
Maybe	20	44.4	44.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

44.4% responded that maybe staff at NBS socialize to build trust and share knowledge, 40% indicated yes, whilst 15.6% chose no.

The 45 respondents asked if the staff knowledge combined with staff skills help achieve the long term goals of NBS results of their responses are show in table 37 below:

**Table 37: Staff knowledge and the NBS goals**

**The staff knowledge combined with staff skills help achieve the long term goals of NBS**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	37	82.2	82.2	82.2
	No	2	4.4	4.4	86.7
	Maybe	6	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

82.2% indicated that yes the available staff knowledge combined with the staff skills help to achieve the long term goals of NBS, 4.4% disagreed and 13.3% responded maybe.

The 45 respondents asked if the NBS staff are competent, they absorb and apply knowledge efficiently the results of their responses are show in table 38 below:

**Table 38: NBS staff are competent, they absorb and apply knowledge efficiently**

**NBS staff are competent, they absorb and apply knowledge efficiently**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	36	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	2	4.4	4.4	84.4
	Maybe	7	15.6	15.6	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

80% specified yes NBS staff are competent, efficient and are able to absorb knowledge, whilst 4.4% indicated no and 15.6% said maybe.

The 45 respondents asked if the NBS Staff complete their allocated tasks timely and they are done well results of their responses are show in table 39 below:

**Table 39: NBS Staff complete their allocated tasks timely and they are done well**

**NBS Staff complete their allocated tasks timely and they are done well**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	27	60.0	60.0	60.0
	No	9	20.0	20.0	80.0
	Maybe	9	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

60% of the respondents indicated that the NBS staff complete their allocated tasks timely and that the tasks are done well, 20% indicated no and another 20% indicated maybe.

The 45 respondents asked if the knowledge in NBS is easy to extract below is the results of their responses are show in table 40 below

**Table 40: Knowledge in NBS is easy to extract/ transfer from individual to individual**

**Knowledge in NBS is easy to extract/ transfer from individual to individual**

**N=45**

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Yes	28	62.2	62.2	62.2
	No	8	17.8	17.8	80.0
	Maybe	9	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	45	100.0	100.0	

62.2% of the respondents indicated that knowledge within NBS is easy to extract and transfer between individuals. 17.8% indicated no and 20% indicated maybe.

The 45 respondents were asked if they believe there exists an up to date database of books and other reference sources within the school – ( this question is in addition to the one on table 9)the results of their responses are show in table 41 below:

**Table 41: There exist up to date databases, books and other reference sources within NBS**

**There exist up to date databases, books and other reference sources within NBS**

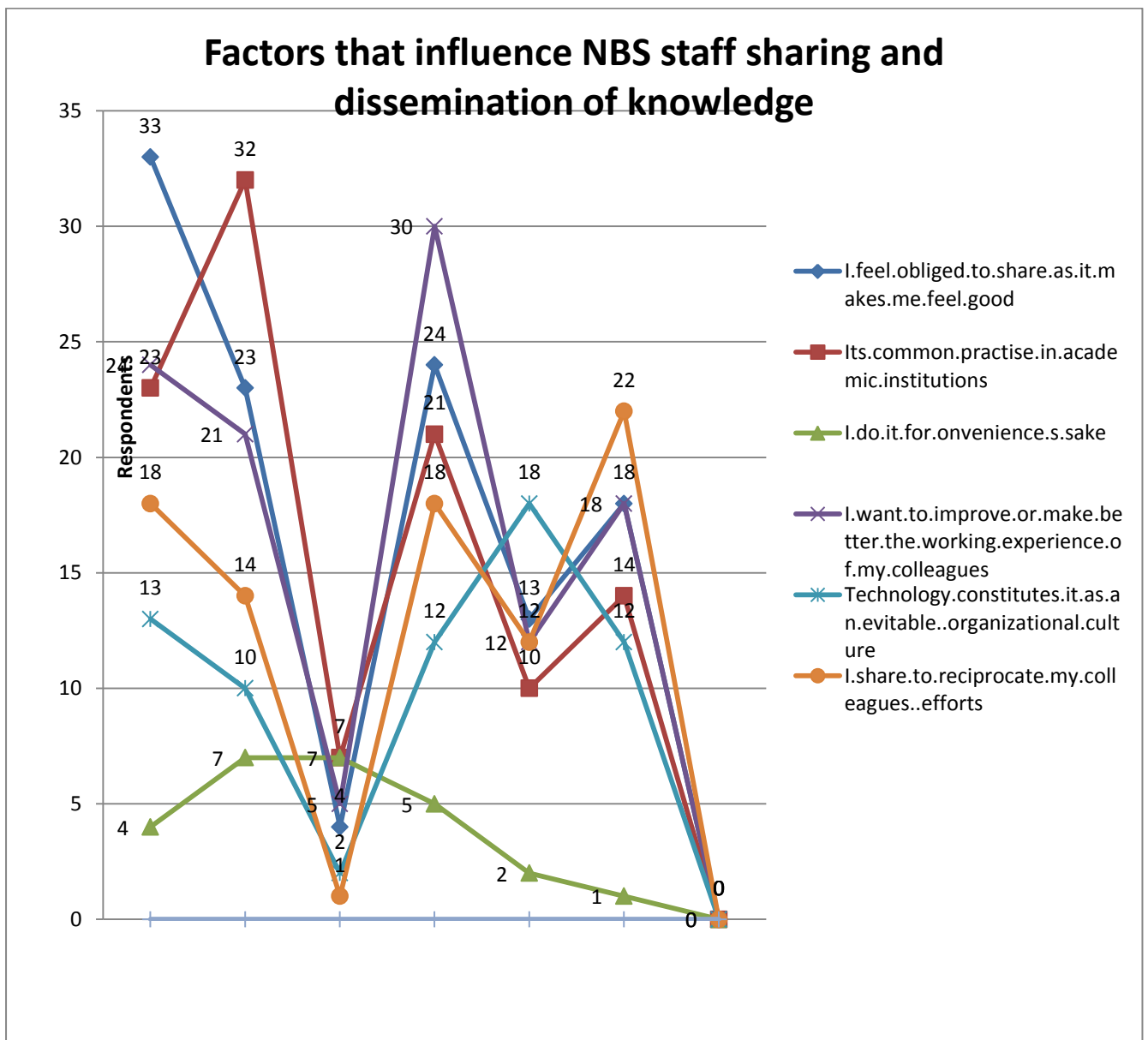
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Yes	16	35.6	35.6	35.6
No	10	22.2	22.2	57.8
Maybe	19	42.2	42.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

35.6% of the respondents indicated that there exist an up-to-date data base, books and other reference sources at the disposal of the staff and students within NBS. 22.2% disagreed, in other terms indicated no, and the majority 42.2% was unsure, they indicated maybe.

The study further did an inquiry into the factors that influence NBS staff's sharing and dissemination of knowledge, with the understanding that knowledge sharing is an activity through which knowledge (information, skills, or expertise) is exchanged between people. When they encountered new knowledge or new methods of doing something the respondents were asked if they immediately share with their colleagues and the reasons behind their sharing.

The 45 respondents were asked to make choices of responses provided in the questionnaire in order to determine the factors that influence knowledge sharing and dissemination amongst the staff the results of their responses are show in Figure 3 below:

**Figure 3**

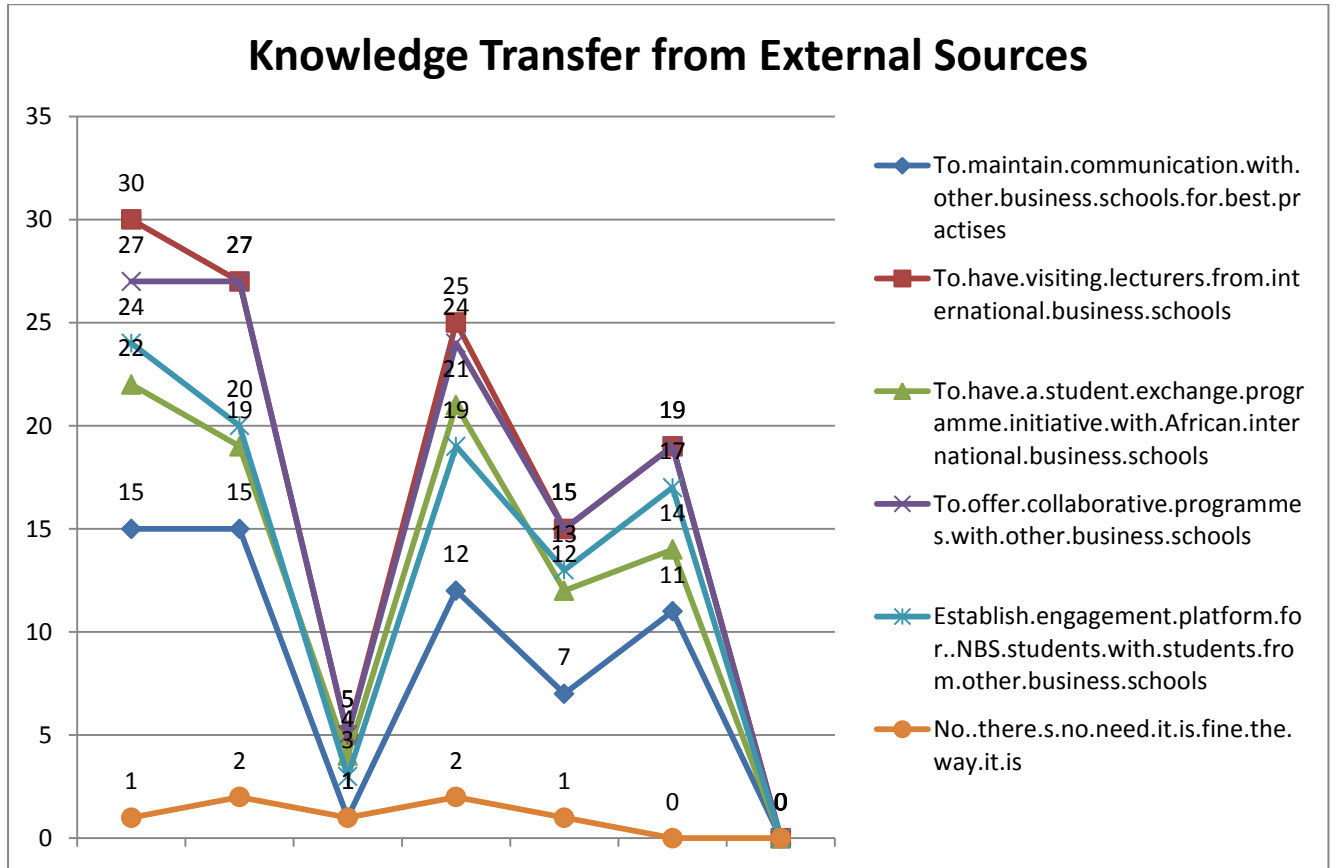


**Figure 3 Factors that influence NBS staff’s sharing and dissemination of knowledge**

A majority of the respondents share their know because they feel obliged to share as it makes them feel good, the 2<sup>nd</sup> favoured response was that its common practise in academic institutions. Many respondents also indicated that they share knowledge in order to improve the working experience of their colleagues, along with sharing to reciprocate colleagues' efforts. A few of the respondents indicated that they do it for convenience's sake. None of the respondents indicated that they do not share for the fear of losing knowledge power in the organisation if they share.

As organisations in academia have recognised that knowledge constitutes a valuable intangible asset for creating and sustaining a competitive edge, it is essential that NBS follow suit. An inquiry into how the NBS transfers knowledge from external sources including other successful business schools was carried out. To improve the transfer of knowledge from external sources for NBS requires the following, as presented in figure 4.

The 45 respondents were asked to make choices of responses provided in the questionnaire in order to determine the factors that influence/determine knowledge transfer from external sources with the school the results of their responses are show in Figure 4 below



**Figure 4 Knowledge Transfer from External Sources**

A majority of the respondents indicated that to improve the transfer of knowledge, NBS needs to have visiting lecturers from international business schools followed by the option of offering collaborative programmes with other business schools. The third preferred option amongst the respondents was to have student exchange programme initiatives with both African and international business schools. The option for maintaining communication with

other business schools for best practises was the second least preferred followed by an engagement platform for NBS students with students from other business schools.

The 45 respondents were asked to make choices of responses provided in the questionnaire in order to determine the factors that will enable the Business School to establish a top notch knowledge management strategy, the results of their responses are show in Figure 7 below:

For the NBS to create and maintain a competitive edge and position in the Namibian context, it needs, amongst other things, to establish a top notch knowledge management strategy that will enable it to operate to its fullest capacity. An inquiry into establishing a knowledge management system yielded the following responses:

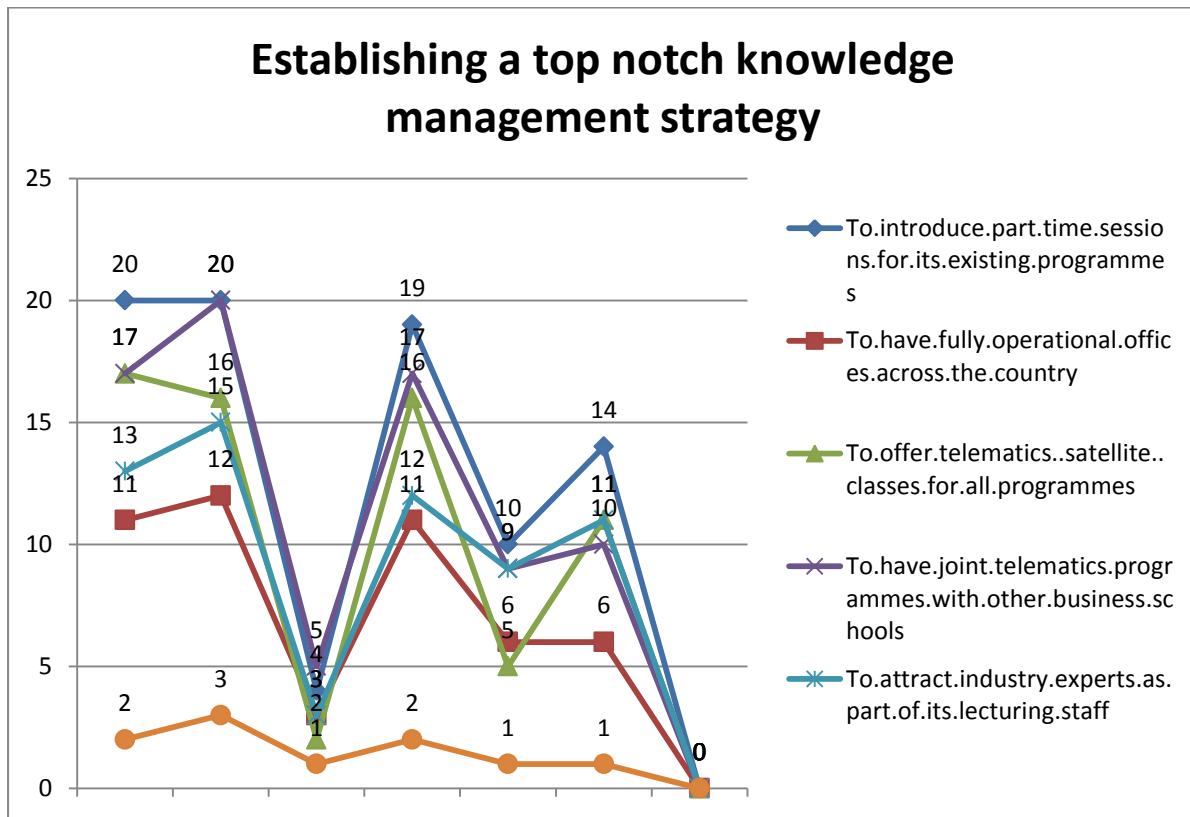
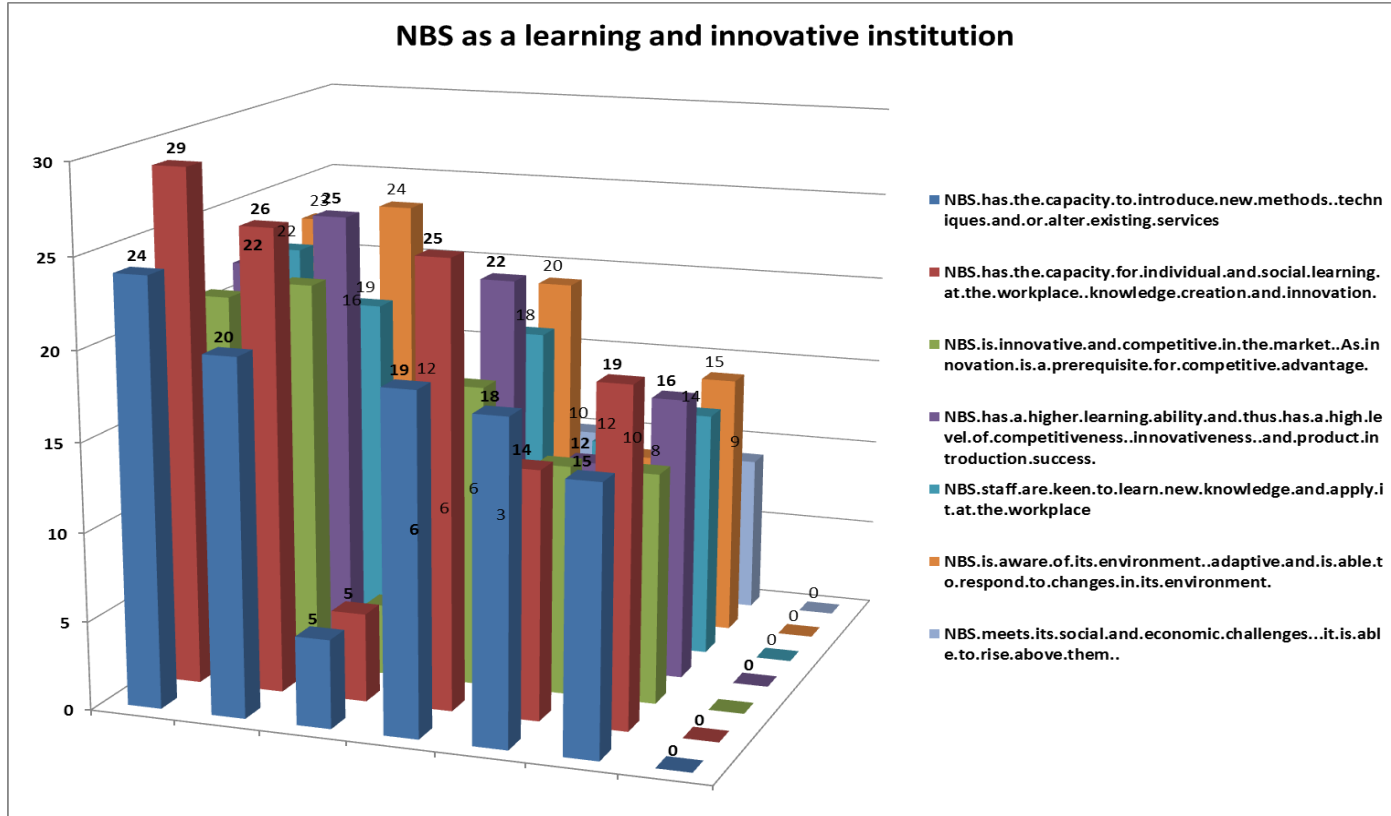


Figure 5: Knowledge Management Strategy

A majority of the respondents indicated that for NBS to operate at full capacity, it needs to introduce part time sessions for its existing programmes. Following this, was the option to have joint telematics programmes with other business schools which was followed by the option of offering telematics/ satellite classes for all programmes at the NBS. The option of attracting industry experts as part of its lecturing staff was selected by some of the respondents, along with having fully operational offices across the country and offering classes outside of Namibia.

The 45 respondents were asked to make choices of responses provided in the questionnaire in order to rate the factors that will enable the Namibia Business School as a learning and innovative institution, the results of their responses are shown in Figure 8 below:

An analysis of NBS as a learning and innovative institution was carried out during this study. Respondents were asked to pick the options that best describe NBS as a learning and innovative institution. The following graph is a summary of the results:



**Figure 6 NBS a learning and innovative institution**

A majority of the respondents indicated that the NBS has the capacity for individual and social learning at the workplace, and knowledge creation and innovation. Following this, the respondents indicated that the NBS is innovative and competitive in the market, as innovation is a prerequisite for competitive advantage. Additionally, the respondents pointed out that NBS has the capacity to introduce new methods, techniques and/or alter existing services. This part of the questionnaire had various options. The option preferred after the aforementioned was that NBS has higher learning ability and thus has a high level of competitiveness, innovativeness, and product introduction success. The NBS staff are keen to obtain new knowledge and apply it at the workplace option was also favoured amongst the respondents. NBS is aware of its environment, adaptive and is able to respond to changes.

The least favoured option was that NBS meets its social and economic challenges, that is, it is able to rise above them.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter presented findings of the study, which included the demographic information of the respondents, the knowledge management characterises of the full time and part time staff of the Namibia Business School, as well as the factors that influence knowledge dissemination amongst the staff. This chapter also looked at knowledge transfer and the ICT infrastructure of the school.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the knowledge management practises at the Namibia Business School, specifically, to investigate if there is an existing knowledge management system in place and to find ways to improve the existing system. The study effectively provided a departure point for policy initiation, research and practises regarding the aforesaid. This study sought to provide solutions and recommendations for the gaps found and solutions for overcoming current and potential future challenges. In the discussion of findings, a comparison of the results obtained during the study to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 was also undertaken with a view to identify similarities and departures from the knowledge gained from other authors. Chapter 4 presented and analysed the findings. This chapter will discuss the findings from chapter four and link them to the literature reviewed in chapter two. The conclusions and recommendations will also be presented in the next chapter.

#### **5.2 DISCUSSION**

The following specific objectives guided the study:

1. Establish the knowledge needs of staff in relation to the long and short term strategic goals of NBS;
2. Determine the factors that influence NBS staff sharing and disseminating knowledge;

3. Establish how the NBS obtains knowledge from external sources including other successful business schools;
4. Examine how the knowledge management system is currently organised within the business school;
5. Investigate the ICT facilities used within the Namibia Business School for facilitating knowledge communication among staff and stakeholders within the NBS; and
6. Determine and recommend how NBS can link its knowledge management strategy to its long term strategic vision (to become a world-class African institution in management education, research, and consulting).

### **5.2.1 THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDS OF STAFF IN RELATION TO THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF NBS**

The first objective focused on establishing the knowledge needs of the NBS staff in relation to the short and long term goals of NBS. The findings showed that 48.9% of the full-time staff felt that for NBS to achieve its strategic goals in relation to knowledge needs of its occupational staff, the school (NBS) must establish exchange programmes for its staff with staff from other business schools, a smaller number (24.4%) believed NBS needs to have frequent seminars/workshops for its staff, whilst, the rest (20%) indicated that the business school ought to provide training and educational incentives to motivate its staff to study.

The fact that the majority of the staff indicated the need to establish exchange programmes with staff from other business schools can be explained by the need to establish a benchmark with the best practises of other business schools and apply them to the young Namibia Business School. Furthermore, a number of the staff also wished to have workshops and/or

seminars as they can learn through knowledge exchange and transfer with other staff from different business schools. It was perceived that the study tours with well-established business schools would give the staff the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the operational activities at well-established business schools across Africa in terms of daily operational activities and classroom/lecture sessions. The results show that NBS staff's need is to see how other business schools operate.

The findings have shown that 48% (10 out of 21) of the full-time staff indicated that there is a knowledge exchange with co-workers and also that most of the staff (98%) indicated that NBS has the capacity for individual and social learning at the workplace, along with knowledge creation and innovation. Learning and knowledge are considered to be the two most important emergent characteristics of future world-class organisations (Bennet and Bennet 2002). The purpose of the organisational transformation towards a learning organisation is to enable the organisation to search for new ideas and new opportunities for learning from which competitive advantage can be extracted in an increasingly changing and competitive world. Organisations and their employees must know how to change in such a dynamic environment (Rowley 1998). The survey further did an inquiry and found that 81% of the full-time staff agreed on developing a deliberate policy for a system that captures and shares existing knowledge which will improve the internal communications within NBS. In the same vein, the study did an inquiry on the knowledge exchange between MSM and NBS after their collaboration, these results will be discussed in this chapter.

The findings further revealed that NBS as a learning organisation facilitates learning for all staff members to continually transform themselves; the organisation encourages individuals to be proactive in learning which was indicated by the survey results that showed that most of the NBS staff (87%) were keen to learn new knowledge and apply it in the workplace. It can thus be said that the young institution is a learning organisation and this will influence policy

making and decision making more effectively as staff are well equipped with the necessary knowledge. The knowledge management within NBS is treated as a process that facilitates knowledge exchange/sharing and establishes learning as a continuous process within the organisation. This has been confirmed by (Pedlar, 1991; Garavan, 1997; and Lopez, 2004) who found that a learning organisation emphasises that the aspects of the organisation operate to facilitate and encourage individual learning actively.

Employees complete their allocated tasks timely, and efficiently. This is evident from the survey results presented in chapter 4 which indicated that 80% of the respondents agreed that the staff complete their allocated tasks timely and the tasks are done well, and also that the staff are competent, they absorb and apply knowledge efficiently.

With literature evidence cited above, many authors have since investigated the topic this is quite true to the young Namibian Business School is a learning organisation. In addition, respondents revealed that the need for training and education is another important consideration for successful KM in terms of knowledge needs. This is in agreement with Wong (2005) who states that organisational members need to be aware of the need to manage knowledge and to recognise it as a key resource for the viability of a company. This issue can be addressed if proper basic training is provided for the employees. Through such training, they will have a better understanding of the concept of KM. It also helps to frame a common language and perception of how the organisation defines and thinks about knowledge. Besides this, employees should be trained and educated in using the KM system and other technological tools for managing knowledge.

Furthermore, Horak (2001) suggested that for effective KM, skills development should occur in the following areas: communication, soft networking, peer learning, team building, collaboration and creative thinking. Likewise, Yahya and Goh (2002) showed that training

related to creativity, team building, documentation skills and problem solving had a positive impact on the overall KM process. In the context of NBS, staff identify and communicate their knowledge needs through staff meetings, and the school responds by addressing these needs through team building events, informal meetings and other means.

It is important to note that there was no existing knowledge management structure or system at NBS at the time this survey was carried out. It is important that a knowledge management system be introduced so that all the information, data and knowledge within the organisation can be shared amongst all employees. The lack thereof creates a situation of asymmetric information within the organisation which may make some individuals extremely unhappy with their work environment. Information gathering and processing in an organisation that is within academia is probably a daily routine. All employees at all levels should be encouraged to participate in the knowledge sharing and exchange practises until such a time as they become organisational culture.

To a large extent, the survey has shown that the knowledge needs of individual staff members may vary per person but are however positively linked or evolving with the organisational needs with regards to the use and dissemination of knowledge. Staff members are keen to acquire new knowledge, experiences, procedures and methods of carrying out their daily operational activities within the school. The study further revealed that staff members and the organisation at large, are not resistant to change in their environment, if anything they welcome and embrace it. The knowledge needs of the staff are directly proportional to that of the organisation. In contrast, the study also revealed that at the point of conducting this survey, there was no existence of a knowledge management system in place at the school that guides the use of knowledge within the school. The knowledge needs of the individual staff members are found to be positively linked to the strategic goals of the NBS. That is to say, all

the above stated knowledge needs of the staff members are essentially drivers towards attaining the goals of the school.

In summary, in relation to this objective, the survey findings have shown that the staff indicated the need to fast track learning through observing how other schools operate. There is a belief that with direct contact, the process of knowledge exchange between the two institutions will be strengthened. Although survey results indicate that the staff are competent in completing their allocated tasks, there is a need for knowledge management training within the organisation as indicated by the respondents.

### **5.2.2 THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE NBS STAFF SHARING AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE WITH EACH OTHER.**

The findings show that NBS staff members are prompted to share and distribute knowledge for various reasons, the most important are indicated below:

- 89% (40 out of 45) of the respondents feel obliged to share as it makes them feel good
- 84% (38 out of 45) of the respondents share knowledge because they want to improve the working experience of their colleagues
- 64% (29 out of 45) of the respondents share to reciprocate their colleagues' efforts
- 56% (25 out of 45) of the respondents share because technology constitutes it as an unavoidable organizational culture
- 44% (20 out of 45) of the respondents indicated that they share for convenience's sake
- 33% (15 out of 45) of the respondents indicated that they share since it is common practise in academic institutions

The above were part of the options presented in the questionnaire. This is in order of the respondents' preferences as deduced earlier in chapter 4.

The fact that 89% of the survey respondents feel obliged to share as it makes them feel good can indicate that the staff feel comfortable in exchanging and sharing their knowledge. The staff also feel the need to improve their work experience with their colleagues by means of sharing knowledge. In this manner, when one employee shares knowledge, it is inevitably recognised by another employee who will then reciprocate this effort by also sharing knowledge. Alavi & Leidner (1997) have found that the ability to transfer or share knowledge across an organisation contributes to organisational performance. Knowledge sharing in an organisation is dependent on the organisation's culture which includes willingness of employees to work with each other and share what they know for mutual benefit, as well as a high level of trust and cooperative behaviours, which confirms this study's findings. The findings thus indeed indicate that staff members are keen to share knowledge due to shared trust.

Additionally, as technology evolves, employees are required to develop a knowledge sharing culture within the organisation. For instance, within the NBS the intranet platform which is used as a medium of exchange between staff members and the students acts as a vital source of knowledge transfer, exchange and dissemination. Some employees indicated that they share knowledge for convenience sake, this can perhaps be attributed to the fact that knowledge sharing is an easy process for an individual to carry out within the NBS. For example, it may be from a mere act of sending an email to all staff members which may be considered as very convenient and simple to carry out and thus useful for staff in exchanging knowledge.

The survey found that 79% of the respondents indicated that the school's research department should employ more staff (expand), this is so that the school may learn and use the latest innovation methodologies being utilized by successful business schools across the continent. There was a high number amongst the respondents (87%) who indicated that the library resources and lecture notes are sufficient and readily available, additionally 91% of the respondents indicated that the NBS teaching staff possess essential capabilities and skills. These results indicate that this is one of the ways information and knowledge is shared between staff members, as well as between staff members, particularly part time staff members, and students. Furthermore, the results presented in chapter 4 revealed that 89% of the respondents indicated that the full and part-time staff possess the necessary skills for the growth of a business school. In this section of the questionnaire, the last part revealed that 92% of the respondents indicated that for NBS to support knowledge capacity building, it needs to expand collaborative and networking functions and mechanisms with other (African & non- African) business schools.

Additionally the study did an inquiry on how the NBS staff socialize to build trust and share knowledge. Most of the respondents (84%) indicated that that is indeed the case at NBS. As presented in chapter 4, respondents were asked if knowledge is easy to extract /transfer between individuals within the organisations, 80% indicated yes, it was easy to transfer knowledge at NBS. The most significant inquiry the study focused on under this objective is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The researcher presented options to the surveyed respondents that were derived with the guidance of the SECI model by Takeuchi & Nonaka (1995). This section of the study reveals that the second preferred option amongst the surveyed NBS staff was the need to improve the working experience amongst colleagues. There have been instances of motivating the employees towards knowledge sharing. Some researchers advocate for rewards and

incentives to motivate employees towards learning, thereby leading to organisational learning (Gardiner and Whiting 1997). PriceWaterhouse devised reward mechanisms for knowledge sharing activities among its employees and linked them with their performance evaluation (O' Dell and Grayson 1998).

Some authors have indicated that knowledge transfer requires people to exchange ideas, share and create knowledge, and work together. They knowledge transfer among members of organisations is a precondition for the creation of knowledge. This is no exemption for NBS.

Various factors have been identified as impediments for knowledge sharing, including inadequate organisational structures, sharing unfriendly organisational cultures, and denominational segregation (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Tissen et al., 1998). Of critical concern is the issue whether or not knowledge workers are motivated to share their knowledge with others. With respect to this objective, the researcher found that the majority of the respondents feel the need to share knowledge as it is part of their work obligations, whilst a very high number also feel that they want to make the experience of their colleagues better. In addition, many feel they need to share in order to reciprocate the efforts of their colleagues who also share knowledge with them. In contrast, some of the respondents feel it is routine to share knowledge, they may feel it's a dragging process. The study found that sharing is self-driven rather than institutional driven. Stott & Walker (1995) and Tampoe (1996) refer to Maslow's theory that indicates that motivation for knowledge work comes from Maslow's three highest hierarchical levels. Their implication is that most knowledge workers, for instance, do not share or are not motivated to share knowledge because of monetary rewards but their motivation rather comes from their desire for self-actualization.

In summary, with respect to this objective, the study reveals that the respondents are motivated to share and exchange knowledge because they trust one another. This is a key element in knowledge sharing. . The study further found that sharing is self-driven rather than institutional driven. These findings are in support of the SECI model which this study employed. Although, there is an indication that the library resources and lecture notes are sufficient, this does not amount to a knowledge management system.

### **5.2.3 HOW THE NBS OBTAINS KNOWLEDGE FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES**

This section is guided by the third objective which was to establish how the Namibia Business School (NBS) obtains knowledge from external sources. It has already been established in this study that for the NBS to create and maintain a competitive advantage and position, it needs, amongst other things, to establish a top notch knowledge management strategy that will require it to operate at its full capacity.

The results of the study have revealed that the majority (44 out of 45) 98% of the surveyed NBS staff indicated that there is a need for NBS to improve the transfer of knowledge, NBS needs to have visiting lecturers from international business schools. 93% (42 out of 45) of the respondents chose the option of offering collaborative programmes with other business schools. The third preferred option amongst the respondents, 89% (40 out of 45), was to have student exchange programme initiatives with African and international business schools. 87% (39 out of 45) of the respondents indicated the need to maintain communication with other business schools for best practices acquisition and the least preferred option (53% of the respondents) was creating engagement platforms for NBS students with students from other business schools. The researcher provided these options in the questionnaire (see Appendix A) based on the SECI model by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). In a nutshell these results indicate that the current access to knowledge management within the organisation is inadequate. The current level of knowledge in the organisation is not sufficient to deal with the existing and

arising problems that may be encountered within NBS, and most knowledge responds look towards the knowledge transfer from external sources.

It is important to relate tacit knowledge to Nonaka and Takeuchi's SECI model of knowledge creation because the model places tacit knowledge at its heart and suggests that organisations have to find ways of communicating and capturing tacit knowledge. The SECI model is the interplay of four knowledge processes, namely; socialization, externalization, combination and internalization, in converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge and vice versa. The model by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) stresses the importance of repeated conversion of explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge and vice versa to generate new knowledge. The model highlights the mutual complementary nature of tacit and explicit knowledge in the four-component SECI model.

Firstly, socialization is the "process of sharing experiences and thereby creating tacit knowledge such as shared mental models and technical skills" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Hall and Andriani (2003) suggested that socialization is the process of communicating and enhancing tacit knowledge. A key feature of socialization is that tacit knowledge is passed on between people and not between impersonal media (Argote & Ingram, 2000). This has been indicated by the survey results as the respondents revealed that NBS staff share their experiences, they share knowledge orally informally, and they share knowledge through formal procedures. Visiting staff from international business schools possess knowledge embedded in their minds which could be passed on to NBS staff through the socialization process.

Secondly, externalization is the "process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts and metaphors are frequently used to facilitate the process" (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Thirdly, combination consists of the activities of systemizing concepts and exploiting

knowledge into a knowledge system through different media. Explicit knowledge is passed on during combination. Lastly, internalization is the “process of embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge” (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). It is closely related to “learning by doing”. The NBS staff could be taught how to carry out certain procedures and activities from staff from international business schools. The NBS students may engage with students from other business schools in the form of class/ lecture experiences and completing group assessments together.

It is the process of internalizing explicit knowledge relevant to oneself that creates tacit knowledge. The staff from other business schools may document reports in the form of recommendations on improving the operational activities of the NBS. This can thus be regarded as a conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Therefore, tacit and explicit knowledge are not totally separate but mutually complementary entities. Both tacit and explicit knowledge interact continuously between the four processes of socialization, externalization, combination and internalization, Hall and Andriani (2003)

This confirms the findings from this study which indicate that there is indeed an exchange of tacit knowledge amongst NBS staff (through sharing of experiences and on-the-job-training, learning how to complete a certain task from colleagues) and implicit knowledge, for instance, through the use of the NBS intranet platform and exchange of documents in the form of reports and lecture notes amongst NBS staff. The Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) SECI model highlights organisational knowledge exchange as a social process. It also shows the need to convert different types of knowledge in a cyclical way to create a competitive advantage. Essentially, organisational knowledge exchange involves a recurring set of activities to change one type of knowledge, for example, tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge and vice versa. However, some processes like externalization and combination favour explicit knowledge while others like socialization and internalization favour tacit

knowledge. Those processes that favour tacit knowledge sharing tend to have the characteristics of informal knowledge processes, that is, they are spontaneous and voluntary in nature. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)

In terms of the SECI model the survey revealed that the employees do socialize with each other within and outside of the organisation. Staff members are also able to implement their own knowledge externally. In the SECI model, this is referred to as externalization. Staff members are able to put or transfer their knowledge into actions. With reference to combination the study revealed that staff members are able to codify or put in writing the knowledge embedded in them for purposes of sharing with other staff members. Lastly, the internalization process is notable amongst the staff as they practice the conversion of explicit into tacit knowledge. This can be done in the form of an employee reading a policy document for instance, and he/she keeps the information in her mind and eventually shares with the next employee through the socialization process.

To sum up, the study found that the majority of the respondents indicated that it is necessary to have the transfer of knowledge from external sources with the school through benchmarking with other successful business schools, that is, through hosting or visiting lecturers from international business schools, followed by offering collaborative programmes with other business schools which may be similar to the MSM collaborative programme discussed in the previous chapter. In conclusion, with respect to the aforementioned objective, the existence and usage of ICT infrastructure such as emails, intranet, and video conferencing does not constitute the existence of a knowledge management system. The survey results indicate that there is a need to improve the transfer of knowledge. The results show that the current access to knowledge management within the organisation is inadequate, hence the desire to have more knowledge from external sources.

#### **5.2.4 HOW THE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN NBS IS ORGANISED**

This section is guided by the fourth objective which was to examine how the knowledge management system is currently organised within the school. The findings indicated that 18% of the employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from external sources (e.g. through seminars, conferences, educational courses, subscription journals, expert networks). This is done when seminars are organised by the school or by external organisations and NBS staff meet with staff from other organizations enabling knowledge exchange to take place. Although much emphasis was on the external sources, the internal sources can also not be ignored, as knowledge management involves combining internal knowledge with external knowledge. Staff members may obtain knowledge from internal sources such as staff meetings, departmental staff retreats, team building activities and so forth, where staff may share knowledge during the proceedings of these said activities. An inquiry into the internal communication within the school revealed that 81% of the respondents indicated that there is a need to introduce a reward system for best performing departments within the school, whilst 95% indicated that there is a need to set rules, procedures, policies and an organisational structure that supports internal communication. The survey also revealed that 86% of the respondents indicated the need to create fixed time intervals for face to face meetings. This enables constant knowledge exchange between staff members. A large number (90%) of the respondents also indicated that there is a need to communicate the well-defined vision of NBS (To become a world class business school) so that all departments work towards one common goal.

Moreover, 81% of the surveyed staff agreed that employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from business partners (e.g. suppliers, clients). The staff communicate everyday with their business partners as well as faculty members. This ranges from academic meetings for staff members, graduation ceremony arrangements, registration arrangements and examination related issues. 81% of the staff agreed that employees within NBS exchange knowledge with their co-workers. Through the course of this paper it has been established that the staff exchange knowledge in formal and informal ways. Adding to that, 67% of the NBS staff agreed that in their work, employees rely on experience, skills and knowledge. This is in confirmation with Davenport & Long (1998) who emphasized that knowledge is information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. Beckman (1999) further states that knowledge management concerns the formalization of and access to experience, knowledge, and expertise that create new capabilities, enable superior performance, encourage innovation, and enhance customer value. Davenport, Long & Beers (1999) state that knowledge management is managing information combined with experience, context, interpretation, and reflection. Staff rely on their shared experiences to complete their tasks, projects and carry out their jobs. The staff are keen to share their experiences with one another in attempts to improve service delivery methods.

Moreover, 52% of the employees agreed that in their work, employees rely on written sources (e.g. previously implemented projects documentation, organisational procedures, instructions and other documented sources, as they have access to this information). It is important that there exist records of all kinds of information to assist the staff in retrieving archives of documents they wish to make use of at any point in time. These records should be freely available and accessible.

Furthermore, 71% of staff agreed that they share their knowledge orally at informal gatherings (e.g. during lunch, in the hallway). Additionally, 86% of the surveyed employees agreed that they share their knowledge through formal procedures (e.g. project reports, organisational procedures and instructions, reports, company publications and meetings.) Lastly, only 48% of the staff agreed that they consider their knowledge as an organisational asset and not their own source of power.

The staff indicated that there is a need to set rules, procedures, policies and an organisational structure that supports internal communication through creating fixed time intervals for face-to-face meetings. These meetings can be done to communicate well defined goals of NBS (to become a world class business school) so that all departments work towards one common goal. The study further revealed that employees higher in the hierarchy of employment can show their support of KM transfer by frequently emphasising the importance of knowledge transfer. The school may look into developing a deliberate policy for a system that captures and shares existing knowledge.

In conclusion, with respect to this objective, the survey shows that although there is trust amongst the staff which encourages knowledge sharing, there is no particular knowledge management system which would stimulate a culture where collaboration, knowledge sharing, learning, and personal development are encouraged and highly valued. There is no clearly organized system but an outline of sorts of a system, however it's not clearly defined. The majority of respondents indicated that there is the existence of a knowledge sharing and exchange process amongst the staff which takes place within the school. This can then be linked to the last objective of how such a system can then be created or improved. A minimal number of respondents indicated that they consider knowledge as an organisational asset and not their own source of power. This implies that employees consider knowledge as a source

of power, which may be as a result of the non-existent knowledge management system within the school.

### **5.2.5 THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) FACILITIES WITHIN NBS**

This section focuses on the fifth objective which was to investigate the IT infrastructure utilized within the school for facilitating knowledge communication purposes amongst staff and stakeholders. The results derived from the questionnaires and observations indicated that the surveyed respondents value information technology as a tool for facilitating effective knowledge communication within the school, and the pivotal role it plays in sharing the knowledge within an organisation. This is confirmed by Ruggles, (1997) who states that IT plays an important role in efficiently storing, distributing and adding value to knowledge. Additionally, it is widely acknowledged that IT and Communication Technology have developed a rich state of sophistication and are capable of performing knowledge exercises efficiently (Van der Spek and Spijkervet 1997). However, it is only a tool for knowledge management and cannot replace knowledge management which requires human beings to interact and collaborate.

Only 37.8% of the employees agreed that the intranet platform is an efficient method of communication and is easy to use. 3 (6.7%) said no and one (2.2%) respondent was unsure. When asked if there is constant and effective communication between the lecturers' and administrative staff of the NBS, 8 ( which is 40% out of the 21 respondents) responded yes, 2 (4.4%) maybe and one (2.2%) no. When asked if they have frequent access to email facilities, 7 (37.8%) respondents said yes, 3 (6.7) no (2.2%) and one (2.2%) maybe. When queried if there exists a need to involve new partners and use social media and other tools that help move towards real-time monitoring and more effective engagement of citizens; 17 (37.8%) recorded yes and 4 (8.9%) said no. When asked if in their organisation, ICT tools are

used to support collaborative work (e.g calendars, video conferencing systems and communication tools), the majority response was maybe, whilst 8 (17.8%) responded yes and 3 (6.7%) said no.

The intranet platform is used by all NBS staff to communicate with students, post their notes, assignments and relevant lecture material and it is also used by students to interact with one another. The respondents have indicated that this is an efficient and effective method of communication which is easy to use. Marshall, (1997) indicated that perhaps the most prominent ICT tool for facilitating knowledge sharing is an intranet. Some authors even equate promoting knowledge sharing with the challenges and pitfalls associated with the introduction and deployment of an intranet.

Through frequent exchange of emails, phone calls and personal contact, there is constant communication between the lecturers and administrative staff of NBS. The NBS staff indicated that they have frequent access to their emails; the full-time staff have Wi-Fi in their offices which enables continuous access to staff and private emails, as for the part-time staff, they have constant access to their private and work email addresses which are utilised for communication purposes between them and full-time. There is a need for the school to engage and involve new partners and use social media for promoting the school, and to keep in touch with the staff and students. ICT tools are used to support collaborative work such as the use of team emails when staff are working on a project together, calendars and video conferencing systems.

A common misconception is that knowledge management is mainly about technology – getting an intranet, linking people by e-mail, compiling information databases and so on. Though technology is often a crucial enabler of knowledge management, it can help connect people with information, and people with each other, but it is not the solution, and it is vital

that any technology used “fits” the organisation’s people and processes otherwise it will simply not be used. It is thus very crucial that the ICT infrastructure within NBS drives the school towards attaining its goals and vision by creating and sustaining a continuously improved knowledge management system. (Servin, 2005)

Old ways of doing business are no longer sufficient to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities of today. The importance of having access to quickly available knowledge and expertise, no matter where they are located, is critical. The ICT infrastructure of the NBS is imperative for its growth and success, its existing state requires the NBS to exploit various options. This study identified the following: the intranet facility is an efficient method of communicating and is easy to use - many respondents agreed that indeed this platform is useful as it engages students, staff and lecturers. It is through the intranet that they can access their lecture notes and assignments (Servin,2005). There is constant and effective communication between the lecturers and administrative staff of the NBS, this too was agreed upon by a majority of the respondents as shown in chapter 4. NBS staff members have frequent access to email facilities which enable them to communicate effectively and timely. NBS staff feel the need to involve new partners and use social media and other tools to help them move towards real-time monitoring and more effective engagement of citizens - many people use social media as a marketing and advertising tool in this era. The NBS has followed suit in doing so. The respondents agreed that the school should continue to do so and perhaps place more emphasis on it. In NBS, ICT tools are used to support collaborative work (e.g. calendars, video conferencing systems, communication tools). As demonstrated in chapter four, the staff indicated that the aforementioned is quite true in NBS.

The results of the survey reveal that there are many notable strengths that the school possesses in relation to ICT as described previously in this chapter four. Ruggles (1997) discovered that ICT may be effective in lowering at least some barriers involved in

knowledge sharing. However, the intranet platform, although a very easy and efficient method of communication between the staff and students, is often under-utilized by the students due to the fact that they mostly only log in to retrieve their notes, assignments and read communications. There is a notable weakness in the ICT facilities with regards to knowledge sharing which is explained by the possibility that in the process of exchanging emails and other communications some of the staff may not receive or respond in a timely manner. The administrative staff of NBS, though few in number, need to be accessible and available for consultations during office hours at all times. Looking at ICT for knowledge sharing in this light reveals that it has limited value because it ignores when and how the quality of knowledge sharing will be enhanced.

Related problems may occur when information systems, such as intranets, distributed libraries, document management systems, or groupware applications are introduced to support knowledge sharing. The common motivation to introduce these technologies is that they may empower the individual knowledge worker by providing the tools to support and boost his or her knowledge-sharing skills (Tampoe, 1996). Reports, however, show that all too often the introduction of these systems does not result in significant improvements in knowledge sharing, as many instances occur in which these systems are not used to their full potential ( DeLong, 1996). Again, if individuals are not motivated to share knowledge, it is not likely that they are motivated to use tools facilitating knowledge sharing. As Tissen (1998, p. 31) puts it, 'An intranet will not cause people to work for the good of the company rather than for the good of themselves'.

How do information systems, and more particularly information and communication technology (ICT), relate to the motivation for knowledge sharing? Let us presume that some technology has been introduced in an organisation to further knowledge sharing, and that no significant increase has yet been established. Perhaps a first reaction then might be to ask for

factors influencing the motivation for using the ICT. This question may then, for instance, lead to introducing incentives for using the technologies, such as money or ‘air miles’ (DeLong, 1996). More careful consideration reveals, however, that this first reaction is inadequate. It confuses means and goals. The more fundamental question is to assess how ICT affects the motivation for knowledge sharing (Kempees, 1998, unpublished manuscript).

In summary, the survey results show that there is generally a notable indication of an existence of good technology although it is mainly used to facilitate routine activities and not geared towards knowledge management. There are ICT tools such as the intranet, emails, video conferencing facilities, just to mention a few, these do not constitute the existence of a knowledge management strategy/system. The low percentages indicated by the results show that the said ICT tools are under-utilized. There is a need to improve the use of these tools. Literature reviewed has shown that the most prominent ICT tool is the intranet, which may be used to facilitate the exchange and sharing of knowledge. It thus goes without saying in this respect, that the NBS needs to improve the use of the intranet by all staff members to support collaborative work as at the moment (point of research), it is not the case.

#### **5.2.6 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND NBS LONG TERM STRATEGIC VISION (TO BECOME A WORLD-CLASS AFRICAN INSTITUTION IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND CONSULTING)**

This last section of the discussions and conclusions focuses on the last objective which was to determine and recommend how the school can link its knowledge management strategy to its long term strategic vision which is to become a world-class business school. The few scholars who have attempted to define what world-class universities have that regular universities do

not possess have identified a number of basic features such as highly qualified faculty, excellence in research, quality teaching, high levels of government as well as non-government sources of funding, international and highly talented students, academic freedom, well-defined autonomous governance structures, and well-equipped facilities for teaching, research, administration, and, often, student life (Altbach, 2004; Khoon, 2005; Niland, 2000, 2007). The above said literature is in confirmation with the results of the survey obtained from the questionnaires. The respondents specified that NBS has well-equipped facilities for teaching, research and consultation.

The findings show that the majority of the respondents indicated that for NBS to create and maintain a knowledge management strategy it will need to operate at a higher capacity. This can be attributed to the fact that for the school to attain competitive advantage and operate at higher capacity, it needs to exploit all the resources at its disposal which include individual competencies and knowledge within the organization. Additionally, 98% (44 out of 45) of the respondents indicated that the NBS has the capacity for individual and social learning at the workplace, along with knowledge creation and innovation. In relation to knowledge capacity which requires the young business school to be able to learn fast and use the latest innovation, the respondents gave positive answers in this regard

Following this, 96% (43 out of 45) of the respondents indicated that the NBS is innovative and competitive in the market, as innovation is a prerequisite for competitive advantage. Generally, the most successful and competitive business schools in the world are those who are quick to innovate and thus remain competitive. In relation to its strategic goal of becoming competitive in the market, the NBS staff indicated that the school is indeed innovative and competitive. Additionally, 93% (42 out of 45) of the respondents pointed out that NBS has the capacity to introduce new methods, techniques and/or alter existing

services. In doing so, it will yield reputable graduates that are competitive in their respective work environments. The school will also gain a good reputation amongst its competitors who may then wish to imitate its services. The school will be able to keep up with the constantly changing academic environment it operates in.

This part of the questionnaire had various options. The option preferred after the aforementioned was that NBS has higher learning ability and thus has a high level of competitiveness, innovativeness, and product introduction success, as indicated by most of the respondents (91%). The staff indicated that they possess the necessary skills for the growth of a business school. The findings further indicated that 87% (39 out of 45) of the NBS staff are keen to learn and obtain new knowledge, and apply it in the workplace. 82% (37 out of 45) of the NBS staff indicated that the school, as an organisation is aware of its environment, adaptive and able to respond to changes within the environment. The least chosen option in this section, indicated by 80% of the respondents, was that NBS meets its social and economic challenges, that is, it is able to rise above challenges.

Learning and knowledge are considered to be the two most important emergent characteristics of future world-class organisations (Bennet and Bennet 2002). The purpose of the organisational transformation towards a learning organisation is to enable the organisation to search for new ideas and new opportunities for learning from which competitive advantage can be extracted in an increasingly changing and competitive world. Organisations and their employees must know how to change in such a dynamic environment (Rowley 1998).

For the young Namibia Business School to achieve its mission and vision of becoming a “WORLD-CLASS BUSINESS SCHOOL” using knowledge from internal and external sources to meet its needs to remain competitive in the market as well as attain a competitive advantage. It needs to introduce delivery methods not employed by its main rivals. This is

derived from the results of the questionnaires from the surveyed respondents. Alternatively, the NBS may consider a top notch knowledge strategy that will be continuously revised and improved in line with the latest technology.

The findings from the study indicate that NBS staff identified that NBS needs to implement a value-creating knowledge strategy in order to attain its long term goals. This is confirmed by Barney (1991) who observed that a firm is said to have a competitive advantage when it is implementing a value-creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy. The critical role of knowledge management in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage has been strongly emphasised in the reviewed literature. According to Barney, four ambitions are prevalent when knowledge is put on the agenda, (Barney,1991). These are: 1) a strengthening of the competitiveness, 2) an increase in the added value for the customers, 3) a stimulation of the innovative abilities and 4) an improvement of the work climate.

Additionally, (Barney, 1991, Peteraf, 1993 & Ventura, 1996) examined the manner in which organisational resources are applied and combined, and the causes which determine the attainment of a sustainable competitive advantage and the nature of rents generated by organisational resources. In order for organisational resources to become a source of sustainable competitive advantage, certain characteristics must be present. They found that these resources must be rare, valuable, without substitutes and difficult to imitate.

The following authors made quite notable and distinct emphasis on knowledge management and knowledge management as a tool for competitive advantage; Drucker (1993) Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995, Davenport and Prusak 1998) all emphasized that a knowledge management

strategy constitutes an opportunity for competitive advantage. The NBS can attain its vision, mission and goals through knowledge management as a source of competitive advantage.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

The study found that although NBS is a learning organisation there still exists the need for staff training and education. At the time the survey was carried out it was established that there was no existing knowledge management structure or system within the school. The study further found that the staff are keen to share and exchange knowledge due to the high level of trust amongst them. The staff members have developed a knowledge sharing culture within the organization. The study further found that sharing is self-driven rather than institutional driven. These findings are in support or confirmation of the SECI model which this study employed. The study revealed that the usage of ICT infrastructure such as emails, intranet, video conferencing within the school, exists however it does not constitute the existence of a knowledge management system. The survey results indicate that there is a need to improve the transfer of knowledge within the school. Furthermore, the results show that the current access to knowledge management within the organisation is inadequate, hence the desire to have more knowledge from external sources.

The survey results further revealed that there is generally a notable indication of an existence of good technology practices within the school although it is mainly used to facilitate routine activities and not particularly geared towards knowledge management. The low percentages indicated by the results show that the said ICT tools are under-utilized. There is a need to improve the use of these tools.

Finally the study found that there is no knowledge management strategy within school, however knowledge management has a critical role to play in achieving and sustaining

competitive advantage, which has been strongly emphasized in the literature . The NBS needs to introduce delivery methods not employed by its main rivals. This is derived from the results from the questionnaires used in the survey.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter six, which is the last chapter of this paper outlines the summary, conclusions and recommendations which have been deduced from the preceding chapter, which discussed the findings from chapter four. The conclusions are guided by the research objectives of the study. The chapter begins with the contributions to knowledge, followed by the recommendations and finally the suggestions for further studies/research.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Below is a summary of the study:

##### **6.2.1 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate knowledge management at the University of Namibia: A case study of the Namibia Business School (NBS), with the following objectives:

- 1 Establish the knowledge needs of staff in relation to the long and short term strategic goals of NBS;
- 2 Determine the factors that influence NBS staff sharing and disseminating knowledge;
- 3 Establish how the NBS obtains knowledge from external sources including other successful business schools;
- 4 Examine how the knowledge management system is currently organised within the business school;

- 5 Investigate the ICT facilities within the NBS used for facilitating knowledge communication among staff and stakeholders; and
- 6 Determine and recommend how NBS can link its knowledge management strategy to its long term strategic vision (to become a world-class African institution in management education, research, and consulting).

### **6.2.2 Research design and methodology**

The study was carried out at the University of Namibia Main Campus, at the Namibia Business School. With a sample size of forty five (45) respondents (NBS Staff members, 21 of which were full-time and 24 were part-time). The research instrument utilized was a questionnaire which composed of close and open ended questions. The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the open ended questions were analyzed using content analysis. The data was collected during the course of the study, questions were given to the part-time staff members in person when they came for contact classes. Questionnaires were collected immediately after completion. The study made use of frequency tables, charts and percentages obtained from the analysis using SPSS. The study used a mixed method approach combining both the quantitative research approach (through quantitative surveys through the use of questionnaires) and the qualitative research approach (observations).

### **6.2.3 Summary of the findings**

Below is a brief discussion or overview of the key findings covering each objective.

The study found that although NBS is a learning organisation, there is still the need for staff training and education. At the time the survey was carried out, it was established that there was no existing knowledge management structure or system within the school. The study

further found that the staff are keen to share and exchange knowledge due to a high level of trust amongst them. The staff have developed an informal knowledge sharing culture within the organization. The study further found that sharing is self-driven rather than institutionally driven. These findings are in support of the SECI model which this study employed. The study revealed that the usage of ICT infrastructure such as emails, intranet, video conferencing within the school exists, however it does not constitute the existence of a knowledge management system. The survey results indicate that there is a need to improve the transfer of knowledge. The data shows that the current access to knowledge management within the organisation is inadequate, hence the desire to have more knowledge from external sources.

The survey results further revealed that there is generally a notable indication of an existence of good technology practices within the school although mainly used to facilitate routine activities and not geared towards knowledge management. The low percentages indicated by the data show that the said ICT tools are under-utilized. There is a need to improve the use of these tools for knowledge management.

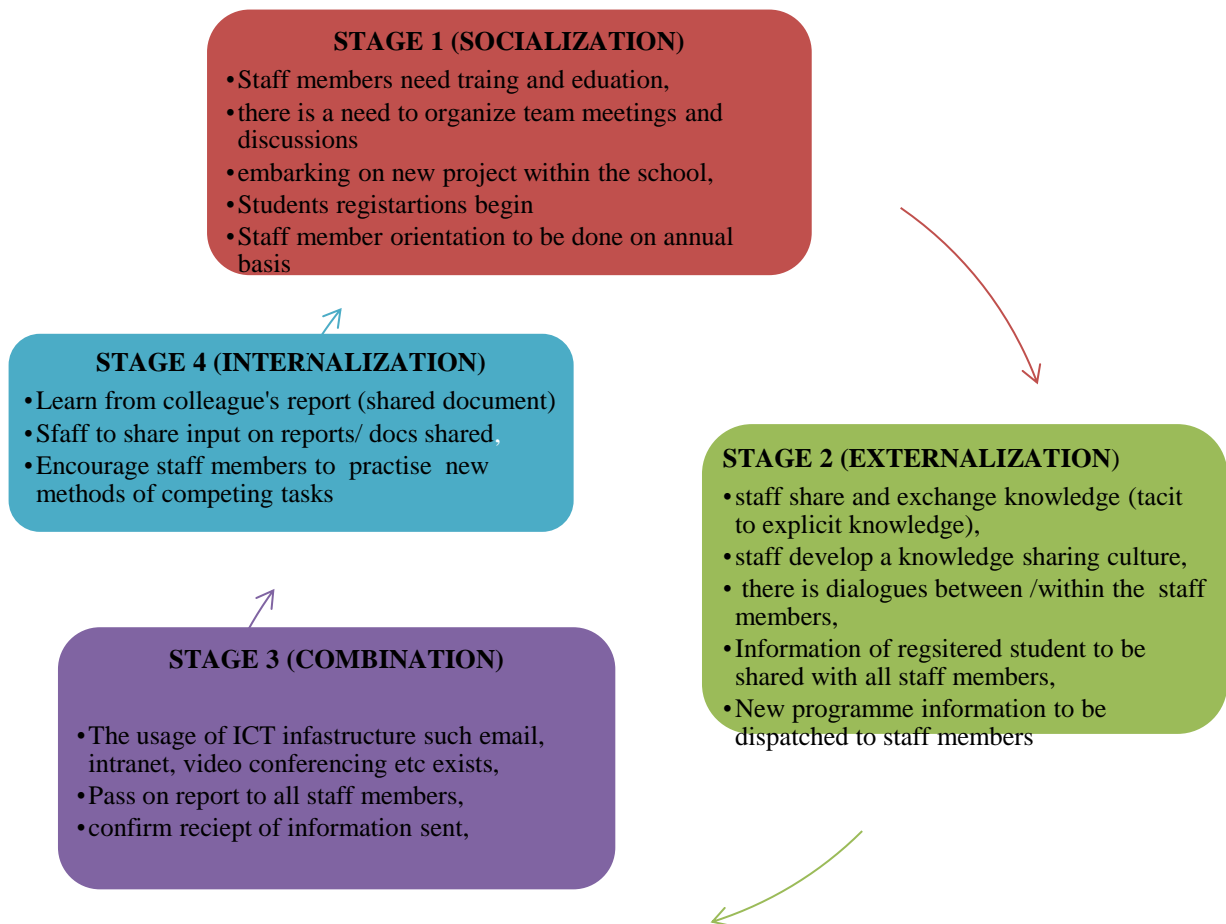
Finally the study found that there is no knowledge management strategy in the school, however the fact that knowledge management plays a critical role in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage has been strongly emphasized in the reviewed literature. The NBS needs to introduce delivery methods not employed by its main rivals. This is derived from the results from the questionnaires used in the survey.

## PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

Following the recommendations to establish a knowledge management strategy below in

**Figure 9** is a graphical presentation of the proposed processes to be part of the strategy,

**this has been done with the guidance of the SECI model:**



**Figure 7: PROPOSED FRAMEWORK BASED ON SECI MODEL**

### 6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the objectives, findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. With regards to the survey results discussed in the previous chapters and the first research objective which is related to the knowledge needs of staff in relation to the goals of the NBS, the organization should consider how to introduce and/ or improve training and education for its staff. The business school ought to provide training and educational incentives to motivate its staff members to share and exchange knowledge within the school. The NBS should have frequent seminars/workshops for its staff. Regarding the gaps identified in knowledge between current knowledge and the long term goals, NBS should build up its knowledge resources so that the knowledge base reflects its long term goals.
2. The recommendation with respect to the second objective is that although the business school staff members do share and exchange knowledge, this is done informally. NBS should create a formal system and train staff to share and exchange knowledge more formally.
3. In relation to the objective of investigating how NBS transfers knowledge from external sources, with respect to the findings in chapter 4 and discussions in chapter 5, it is advised that since the previous collaboration experience

between MSM and NBS did not include a clear and strong knowledge transfer component, in future, when NBS has other exercises of this kind, it is advised that there should be a clear and strong knowledge transfer component included in the agreement so that staff can benefit from the collaboration by getting access to the knowledge of the other institution.

4. There is no formal knowledge management system in the school at the moment, the current informal system was established by the staff and thus it is recommended that the NBS establish a formal knowledge management system for the school. The NBS can seek expertise within and outside the university in order to be able to develop and establish this system.
5. In terms of the objective of investigating IT infrastructure used within NBS for facilitating knowledge communication amongst the NBS staff, the following recommendation has been made: NBS needs to improve ICT infrastructure to include components of knowledge management so that it may be geared towards sharing and exchanging knowledge, in this way allowing staff members to constantly communicate with each other on work related issues and matters.
6. In relation to the last objective which was to determine and recommend how NBS can link its knowledge management strategy to its long term strategic vision (to become a world-class African institution in management education, research, and consulting) , it is recommended that the NBS should develop a knowledge management vision that is in line with its long term strategy as this does not exist at the moment.

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY**

It is recommended that future research be carried out to explore the following areas:

- The factors that will ensure the sustainability of any Knowledge Management strategy and practices within Namibia Business School.
- ICT infrastructure and the alignment of knowledge management within the school, which is how to utilize the ICT infrastructure and align in such a way that makes it a platform for knowledge sharing.
- Action research through the use of a pilot study. How to use the resource centre (NBS library) and convert it to be part of the knowledge base within the Namibia business school.

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## **APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Acknowledgement of Consent**

Topic: An investigation into Knowledge Management at the University of Namibia: A case study of the Namibia Business School (NBS).

#### **To the respondent,**

Thank you in advance for taking your time to partake in this survey.

I am Magdalena Kandali Nangolo, a student at Namibia Business School (NBS) at the University of Namibia (UNAM). I am pursuing a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) with a speciality in Management Strategy. This survey is being conducted to write a thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Master's degree. Please be cognizant that your participation in the survey is voluntary.

This survey will take you less than 10 minutes to complete.

No personal identification is required in this survey. Please be assured that your response will be held anonymous. The results will be used for research purposes and only be published as well as presented in aggregate. Your accurate and specific response is important to the success of this survey.

Your participation in this survey/ research is highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

---

Ms. Magdalena Kandali Nangolo

**SECTION A- DEMOGRAPHICS**

This section of the questionnaire refers to background or demographic information. Although the author is aware of how sensitive the questions in this section may be, the information will allow the researcher to compare groups of respondents. Once again, be assured that your response will remain anonymous.

**Instructions: Please mark with an (X) sign in the appropriate box(s).**

1. Please tick your Gender:

Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please tick your age group:

Under 25	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-30	<input type="checkbox"/>
31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-50	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 51	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please indicate your highest level of education:

Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honours-Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post graduate Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doctorate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please indicate your Employment status with NBS:

Part-time staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full-time staff	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please indicate the number of years you have been employed by NBS:

Less than a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-3 Years	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you are part time employee, proceed to question 6,**

6. Which department are you employed in:

Academic	
Finance	
Administration	
Marketing	
Research	
Training	

**If you are full-time employee, proceed to SECTION B**

7. Which programme do you teach/ lecture:

Postgraduate (PGDBA)	
EDPM	
MBA- Finance	
MBA-Management Strategy	
MBA: Natural Resources	
DBA	

**SECTION B- FOR NBS FULL TIME EMPLOYEES ONLY**

**Instructions:** Please assess to what extent the following statements related to knowledge management apply to NBS. Indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement that fits the situation in NBS. Please circle one choice for each of the following statements (1= strong disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree)

**8. Knowledge Management**

Employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from external sources (e.g. through seminars, conferences, educational courses, subscription journals, expert networks).	1 2 3 4 5
Employees obtain a high level of new knowledge from business partners (e.g. suppliers, clients) always.	1 2 3 4 5
Our employees exchange knowledge with their co-workers.	1 2 3 4 5
In their work, employees rely on experience, skills and knowledge.	1 2 3 4 5
In their work, employees rely on written sources (e.g. previously implemented projects documentation, organisational procedures, instructions and other documented sources as they have access to this information).	1 2 3 4 5
Employees share their knowledge orally at informal gatherings (e.g. during lunch, in the hallway).	1 2 3 4 5
Employees share their knowledge through formal procedures (e.g. project reports, organisational procedures and instructions, reports, company publications and meetings).	1 2 3 4 5

Employees in our organisation consider their knowledge as an organisational asset and not their own source of power.	1	2	3	4	5
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### 9. Information Technology

Old ways of doing business are no longer sufficient to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities of today. The importance of having access to quickly available knowledge and expertise, no matter where it is located, is critical. The ICT infrastructure of the NBS is imperative for its growth and success, its existing state requires/ the NBS ...

	Yes	No	Maybe
The intranet facility is efficient method of communicating and is easy to use			
There is a constant and effective communication between the lecturers' and administrative staff of the NBS			
I have a frequent access to email facilities			
Need to involve new partners and use social media and other tools that help move towards real-time monitoring and more effective engagement of citizens;			
In our organisation, ICT tools are used to support collaborative work (e.g. calendars, video conferencing systems, communication tools).			

### 10. Internal Communication

To improve internal communication within NBS, the organisation must:

Introduce a reward system for best performing departments	1	2	3	4	5
Set rules, procedures, policies and organisational structure that supports internal communication	1	2	3	4	5
Host fixed time intervals for face-to-face meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate well defined goals of NBS (To become a world class business school) so that all departments work towards one common goal	1	2	3	4	5
Employees at the higher hierarchy of employment can show their support of KM transfer by frequently emphasising the important of Knowledge transfer.	1	2	3	4	5
Developing a deliberate policy for a system that captures and shares existing knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Other (Specify):					

### **SECTION C - FOR NBS FULL-TIME AND PART- TIME EMPLOYEES**

*This section of the questionnaire it seeks to extract information on knowledge management and the Namibia Business School full-time and part-time employees.*

**Instructions:** Please assess to what extent the following statements related to knowledge management apply to NBS.

11. A knowledge management system may affect service delivery:

**(Tick the appropriate box to show your choice)**

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly agree	

12. The NBS intranet platform is a valuable information and knowledge exchange tool between students and lecturers:

**(Tick the appropriate box to show your choice)**

Strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly agree	

13. At Post-graduate level it is preferred that the “Personalization strategy” which assumes that knowledge is shared mainly through direct interpersonal communication:

Yes, I agree with the statement	
No, I don't agree with the statement	

14. On the other hand, “Codification Strategy” assumes that the document- to –person approach where knowledge artefacts are stored and indexed in databases to enable easy retrieval:

Yes, I agree with the statement	
No, I don't agree with the statement	

15. As a lecturer, I suggest or encourage students for the duration of their course work assessments to utilize:

e-Journals	
Print journals & Articles	
Books	
Past papers	
Others (specify)	

**Instructions: Please Tick the appropriate box with an (X) to show your choice.**

16. With the ongoing evolution and peaked growth in postgraduate education, in terms of competitiveness NBS is:

The NBS is taking full advantage of its KM capacity to take secure its market positioning	
It is making an effort, but can do better	
I am not aware of an existing KM strategy for the NBS	
Other (specify)	

17. In order for NBS to attain its strategic goals in relation to knowledge needs of its occupational staff, it needs:

To provide training and educational incentives to motivate its staff to study	
To have a frequent seminar/ workshops for its staff	
To establish an exchange programme for staff with other business schools	
Study tours of other business schools	
Other (specify)	

18. After its collaboration and networking with the Maastricht School of Management (MSM) in The Netherlands, to offer an Executive MBA programme at UNAM do you believe/think there was a knowledge transfer/exchange between the two institutions;

Yes	
No	
Maybe	
I don't know	

*If you would like to add anything else, kindly fill below:*

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19. Any Business School needs to learn fast and use the latest innovation and expertise; this is referred to as knowledge capacity in this study. In order for NBS to offer quality postgraduate learning and education it must internationalize its curriculum.

To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? Please indicate your answer using the following 5-point scale where:

1. = Strongly Disagree
2. = Disagree
3. = Neutral
4. = Agree
5. = Strongly Agree

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The research department of the school acquires more staff (expansion of department)	1	2	3	4	5
Library resources and lecture notes are sufficient and readily available	1	2	3	4	5
The teaching staff of the school possess the essential capability and skill	1	2	3	4	5
The staff (full/ part time) possess the necessary/ required skill for the growth of a business school	1	2	3	4	5
For NBS to support knowledge capacity building it requires to increase expanding collaborative and networking functions and mechanisms with other (African & non- African) business	1	2	3	4	5

schools					
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20. Do you believe the following exists within NBS part-time and full-time employees:

	Yes	No	Maybe
Staff at NBS socialize to build trust and share knowledge			
The available staff knowledge combined with the staff skills helps achieve the long term goals of NBS			
The staff at NBS are competent, absorb and apply knowledge efficiently			
Allocated tasks to staff are completed timely and are well done			
The available knowledge in NBS is easy to extract/ transfer from individual to individual			
There exists up-to-date databases, books and other reference sources within NBS			

21. With the understanding that knowledge sharing is an activity through which knowledge (information, skills, or expertise) is exchanged between people. When you encounter new knowledge or new methods of doing something do you immediately share with your colleagues, because:

*Please tick more than one option*

I feel obliged to share as it makes me feel good	
Its common practise in academic institutions	
I do it for convenience's sake	
I want to improve or make better the working experience of my colleagues	
Technology constitutes it as an evitable organizational culture	
I share to reciprocate my colleagues' efforts	
No, I do not share, I am afraid I will lose knowledge power in the organization if I share	
Other (specify)	

22. As organisations in academia have recognised that knowledge constitutes a valuable intangible asset for creating and sustaining a competitive edge, it is essential that NBS follow suit. To improve the transfer of knowledge from external sources for NBS requires:

*Please tick more than one option*

To maintain communication with other business schools for best practises	
To have visiting lecturers from international business schools	
To have a student exchange programme initiative with African/international business schools	
To offer collaborative programmes with other business schools	
Establish engagement platform for NBS students with students from other business schools	
No, there's no need it is fine the way it is	
Other (Specify):	

23. For the NBS to create and maintain a competitive advantage edge and position in the Namibian context it requires amongst other things to establish a top notch knowledge management strategy that will require it to operate at its full capacity, it will also require:

***Please tick more than one option***

To introduce part time sessions for its existing programmes	
To have fully operational offices across the country	
To offer telematics/ satellite classes for all programmes	
To have joint telematics programmes with other business schools	
To attract industry experts as part of its lecturing staff	
To offer classes outside of Namibia	
Other (specify)	

#### **24. Innovation and Learning Institutions:**

***Please tick more than one option***

NBS has the capacity to introduce new methods, techniques and or alter existing services	
NBS has the capacity for individual and social learning at the workplace, knowledge creation and innovation.	
NBS is innovative and competitive in the market. As innovation is a prerequisite for competitive advantage.	
NBS has a higher learning ability and thus has a high level of competitiveness, innovativeness, and product introduction success.	
NBS staff are keen to learn new knowledge and apply it at the workplace	
NBS is aware of its environment, adaptive and is able to respond to changes in its environment.	
NBS meets its social and economic challenges,- it is able to rise above them.	
Other (Specify):	

25. How can you as a staff member contribute to drive NBS to achieve its mission and vision of becoming a “**WORLD-CLASS BUSINESS SCHOOL**” using knowledge from internal and external sources?

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26. If you would like to add anything else, fill below:

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*Thank you for your time*