

**TITLE PAGE**

KNOWLEDGE RETENTION STRATEGIES IN SELECTED SOUTHERN AFRICA  
PUBLIC BROADCASTING CORPORATIONS

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis is my own and, has not been previously submitted for a degree in its entirety or in part to any university except as fully acknowledged in this text. Any assistance that I have received in the preparation and writing of this thesis has been acknowledged in the thesis.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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To the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ I say thank you for giving me strength and wisdom to complete this study.

## **ABSTRACT**

Knowledge is now regarded as the most important resource surpassing other resources like land and capital. It is a foregone conclusion that knowledge flows out of organizations through various ways such as resignations, retirement and death yet, it does not seem as if organizations are employing strategies to retain such a vital component of production and service delivery. This study investigated the knowledge retention strategies in three Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) public broadcasting organizations of the South African Broadcasting Corporation in South African (SABC), the Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS) in Botswana and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) in Zimbabwe. The aim of this study was to establish how knowledge is captured and retained at such organizations. The objectives of the study were; to find out the types of strategies the three broadcasting organizations employ to capture and retain knowledge; establish how the three broadcasting organizational cultures enable knowledge acquisition, transfer, sharing and retention; establish the role of ICTs as tools and enablers of knowledge retention, creation, transfer and sharing in the three broadcasting organizations; and to propose recommendations on the best strategies for retention of knowledge in the three public broadcasting organizations as well as suggest areas for further and future research.

The study used the survey method and employed the triangulation design for data gathering. Data were collected from three SADC public broadcasting organizations. The population sample comprised 240 professional staff including 38 managers from different sections of the broadcasting organizations. The researcher collected data by administering a questionnaire to staff, interviews with managers and observations. Documentary analysis was also conducted in order to supplement data and fill in gaps. The researcher was mainly interested in gathering data that would give a comprehensive picture about knowledge retention methods in broadcasting organizations.

There were four main findings. First, knowledge management as a relatively new concept and practice has not yet been properly embraced in the public broadcasting organization system in order to capture and retain knowledge that is acquired and generated in the organizations. There are no measures put in place in the organizations to retain the knowledge to ensure that once those who hold vital tacit knowledge are gone, the knowledge may still be available and accessible.

Second, the study established that the respective organizational cultures impede on organizational knowledge retention. The study established that there was no culture of knowledge sharing. It also emerged that employees were not free to share their knowledge because of government regulations, prevailing political contexts, mistrust and general lack of incentive to share knowledge.

Third, the study established that the organizations have no strategies or systems in place to capture the experts' knowledge or the knowledge of experienced staff and

those approaching retiring age. The Human Resources Departments hold exit interviews that cover issues purely to do with why the person is leaving the organization instead of recording the work experiences and expertise of the departing employees.

Fourth, the study revealed that the public broadcasting organizations still lag behind in collaborative and communicative technologies that facilitate knowledge transfer and sharing of tacit knowledge but retention of knowledge generally. The study also found that, some of the organizations studied did not have internet connectivity and websites were not yet functional, which hampered acquisition and sharing of knowledge for retention purposes.

The importance of this study is that it has made a contribution and provided literature on knowledge retention strategies for public broadcasting corporations as part of knowledge management practice.

On the basis of these findings the study recommended the following: appointment of knowledge management officers, establishment of Communities of Practice, encouraging knowledge sharing between employees, introduction of joint programmes with other broadcasting organizations by managers and their supervision of mentoring programmes; organizations to facilitate acquisition of information and communication technologies that enable knowledge management.

## **DEDICATION**

To my loving wife Charity and children; Tariro, Tapiwa and Rutendo.



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

BTV-Botswana television

SADC-Southern Africa Development Community

SABA-Southern Africa Broadcasting Authority

SABC-South Africa Broadcasting Corporation

DBS-Department of Broadcasting Services

ZBC-Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

ZBC TV-Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation television

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**1.1 Introduction and Conceptual Background of the Study**

Knowledge has been increasingly recognized as the most important economic resource surpassing the traditional resources of capital, labour and land (Drucker, 1992). As a result of this growing acknowledgement and awareness, organizations, big and small, private and public, are realizing the need for knowledge retention, albeit slowly. Globalization has contributed to the increase of knowledge attrition and organizations are losing portions of their valued workforce over time. The present study was inspired by a growing concern over the loss of critical knowledge in public broadcasting organizations in the SADC region. This persuaded the researcher to conduct a study on knowledge retention strategies in South African Broadcasting Corporation, Department of Broadcasting Services in Botswana and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. The three broadcasting corporations are in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries of South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe respectively. The researcher has reason to believe that through attrition, the broadcasting organizations have been losing critical knowledge with employees moving on to new jobs, retiring and leaving the broadcasting organizations. When employees leave, the broadcasting organizations lose a tremendous amount of valuable knowledge yet it is the most critical asset to be managed (Halawi, Aronson & McCarthy, 2005). Strategic knowledge is seeping away through retirement, reorganization, job rotation, shift work as

professionals become highly mobile due to changing labour relations (Levy, 2011; SABC Annual Report, 2008; Mohamed *et al*, 2006; Southern Africa Migration Project, 2004; Madsen, Masakowski and Zaheer, 2002)

## **1.2 Knowledge**

Davenport and Prusak (1998) define knowledge as a fluid mix of experiences, values, contextual information and intuition that provides a structure to evaluate and incorporate new experiences and information. On the same note, Liebowitz (1999) defines knowledge as “the full utilization of information and data, coupled with the potential of people’s skills, competencies, ideas, intuitions, commitments and motivations”, while Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) regard knowledge as true and justified belief. From the interviews held with some managers the researcher established that in the broadcasting industry knowledge acquired by IT specialists, journalists, editors, engineers, archivists, public relations officers, librarians and marketing specialists need to be retained for the organizations to maintain a competitive edge.

### **1.2.1 Types of knowledge**

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have categorized knowledge into tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge and further state that tacit knowledge is that which resides in the people’s minds and is difficult to articulate. Explicit knowledge is found in an organization’s documents, data bases, manuals and procedures. This type of knowledge is easy to share. Since explicit knowledge is codified (McElroy, 2002) many find it easy to transfer and it is regarded as leaky and migratory. Accordingly, it is upon

an organization to gather and retain this knowledge through various means at work, meetings, workshops and seminars or in tutor and apprentice roles. In this way Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that there will be little risk that the know-how of the company will leave at the same time of the employees' retirement.

#### **1.2.1.1 *Tacit knowledge***

Tacit knowledge resides within the mind of a person and individuals who are rich in tacit knowledge constitute a wealth of intangible assets of an organization (Hamza 2008). "As long as they stay in employment with an organization, they continue playing a competitive figure through effective decision-making, communication and contribution" (Hamza, 2008). Since tacit knowledge resides in people's brains, it is advisable that organizations such as broadcasting corporations retain their workers' critical knowledge. If workers can easily walk out of the organization, knowledge in their heads will also disappear much to the disadvantage of the organization. Tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in individuals' experiences, ideas, values and emotions and as such it is important because expertise rests on it (Irick, 2007). Irick further argues that tacit knowledge is internal or interior knowledge, highly personal and important because expertise rests on it (Irick, 2007). From the interviews with managers and other junior staff it emerged that tacit knowledge is embedded in the senior and experienced employees of SABC, DBS and ZBC. Many of them had spent many years in the same organization and some even in the same job (Levy, 2011). Workers of the broadcasting organizations studied include managers of various sections, journalists, reporters, sales and marketing specialists, engineers and human resource practitioners. However, the tacit knowledge the workers carry in their heads is difficult to be accessed by other

employees and as such it needs to be codified (Szulanski, 2000) so that it becomes accessible.

Knowledge codification is based on managing the conversion of tacit knowledge to an accessible and usable form of knowledge, which is explicit knowledge (McElroy, 2002). Codification places its focus on explicit knowledge and to a larger extent it centres on information technology whereas personalization focuses on tacit knowledge and addresses the storage of knowledge in human minds (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001)

#### ***1.2.1.2 Explicit Knowledge***

This is the knowledge contained in an organization's documents such as procedures manual, policies, code of conduct, annual reports, records and archives. It is easy to share, unlike tacit knowledge. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995:8) "Explicit knowledge can be expressed in words and numbers and easily communicated and shared in the form of data, scientific formulae, codified procedures, or universal principles." They (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) further point out that explicit knowledge can easily be processed by a computer, transmitted electronically or stored in databases..."Explicit knowledge of SABC, DBS (Botswana) and ZBC was in the form of databases, records and archives, products and programmes as well as documentaries and was sharable.

Tacit knowledge can only be transmitted via training or gained through personal experience. Nonaka (1994) describes tacit knowledge as "know-how" - as opposed to "know-what" (facts), "know-why" (science), or "know-who" (networking). While

knowledge transfer contributes to the retention of organizational knowledge, Nonaka (1994) states that effective transfer of organizational tacit knowledge generally requires extensive personal contact and trust. For knowledge and skills transfer (for retention purposes) in broadcasting organizations to take place there has to be some degree of mutual trust between the individual employees (DeLong, 2004).

Organizations need to manage this invisible resource so as to enjoy the economic benefits that go along with knowledge management and above all knowledge retention. Successful knowledge management has positive outcomes such as better service delivery, better quality of products and enhancement of teamwork (Fombad, 2009) among other benefits.

This study sought to establish the efforts that were in place to harness the vital knowledge that the three broadcasting organizations accumulate through years of employee experience. From the findings some important recommendations have been made to the broadcasting organizations. Such recommendations, if adopted, will improve service delivery, performance and the competitive advantage of the broadcasting organizations.

### **1.3 Knowledge Retention**

Knowledge retention is the capture of critical knowledge and expertise that is at risk of loss when employees leave an organization (Kim, 2005; Dan, 2008). Knowledge retention aims at retaining as much of the departing employees' expertise and knowledge as possible. It is a managerial practice to ensure that knowledge is captured



and retained before experts walk out of the organizations through various forms of attrition. From the study, it was established that broadcasting organizations need to capture the knowledge of ICT specialists, engineers, transmission specialists, reporters, journalists, producers, marketing specialists, radio and television presenters, radio and television programmes managers, and various managers' expertise before they leave the organizations. Appropriate strategies and approaches must be developed to capture the employees' expertise and retaining it as organizational knowledge. Levy (2011) states that through knowledge retention, an expert's most valuable knowledge has to become an organizational asset. Experts and other specialists may not be willing to have their knowledge captured and as such employers may provide some incentives for members of staff to share their knowledge.

Some of the organizations that have realized the importance of knowledge for their businesses have institutionalized some processes to capture and retain employee knowledge as much as possible (Thomas, 2009). There is by no means any one method of knowledge retention. Organizations make use of interviews, videotaping, structured use of subject matter experts, repositories, mentoring and apprenticeship, knowledge maps, recruiting strategies, storytelling, leveraging retirees' in-house training functions, and sharing knowledge as effective knowledge retention and transfer methods.

Knowledge enables individuals to perform and make decisions thus contributing to a large extent to the way individuals and organizations operate (Maponya and Ngulube, 2007). Dixon (2000) observes that organizations are now addressing the issue of knowledge sharing due to their growing awareness of the importance of knowledge to

organizational success. However, this was not the practice in the three investigated broadcasting organizations. Through sharing, knowledge is retained in the organizations' employees. The transfer and sharing of knowledge for the purposes of retaining it, in any organization has its own challenges. Such challenges include mistrust, politics, reluctance to share knowledge for fear of losing individual power, hoarding knowledge and absence of strong group affiliation (Fombad, 2009; Wiig, 1999). These challenges are further discussed in Chapter three. Generally people hoard and hold on to knowledge and are reluctant to share it (Yang and Farn, 2009).

The absence of knowledge retention leads to loss of critical knowledge in broadcasting organizations. Knowledge acquired over some years can be lost through reorganization or restructuring (DeLong, 2004) like in the case of ZBC in 2001 when the organization lost 400 employees. The same organization lost its HR records through fire in 2007. Retention of staff competencies and organizational documents require a systematic management of organizational knowledge in order to avoid collective loss of corporate knowledge (Jamrog, 2009; APQC, 2011).

With the transition from an industrial society to a knowledge-based society where knowledge is the only resource that matters (Drucker, 1992), there has been an increasing focus on knowledge as the most important resource and a valuable asset critical for companies (Lim, 2007; Johannessen *et al.*, 2001). Being a key factor of production in both profit and non-profit organizations, Jain (2009) avers that knowledge is increasingly recognized as an important, strategic resource by all types of organizations and institutions, whether private or public, service oriented or production oriented. The recognition of knowledge as an important resource has become evident in

organizations such that its retention is critical and necessary for purposes of decision making and survival of the organization (Afiouni, 2008; Henczel, 2000; Martensson, 2000; Wiig, 1993).

Knowledge and employee expertise are critical resources that need to be properly managed and as such organizations need to come up with strategies of retaining them. There is need to capture the knowledge of ageing workforce to avoid loss of such knowledge due to the retirement of older and experienced staff. All the three organizations have experienced staff that is on the verge of retiring. Capturing of tacit knowledge of an ageing workforce can improve the overall performance of the public sector (Jain, 2009). Hence, it is advisable for organizations to devise strategies of retaining their knowledge. However, capturing tacit knowledge has its own challenges. This is because of its nature and characteristic of residing in the brain of individuals and being sticky (Szulanski, 2000). Some individuals view tacit knowledge as a source of power and consequently hoard their knowledge. Because tacit knowledge is personalized it is shared through person to person interface such as storytelling, personal meetings and personal contacts (Fombad, 2009). Drucker (1992) has argued that knowledge is the only factor of production that matters as we move into an era of knowledge capitalism. Knowledge, like any other organizational resource, need to be managed accordingly. Knowledge retention is one component of knowledge management. The other components include creation, transfer, storage, dissemination, audit, mapping (McElroy, 2002, Wiig, 2004)

## **1.4 Knowledge Management versus Information Management**

People have had problems in differentiating information from knowledge, information management from knowledge management (Bouthiller, and Shearer, 2002). Information is organized data (Saint-Onge, 2002) or data endowed with relevance and purpose (Drucker, 2001). According to Powell (2003) information becomes knowledge when people use their experience to add value to it. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) seem to treat explicit knowledge as information and this seems to create confusion to the readers of their work. This is because explicit knowledge is found outside individuals' brains and can only be converted to tacit knowledge when it is put to action.

The key difference is that in the case of knowledge human beings are the creators, carriers, conveyors and users of knowledge whereas in the case of information the same functions happen outside humans and without their direct influence (Terra and Angeloni, n.d). The confusion on knowledge and information has cascaded down to issues surrounding their management and therefore there is need to differentiate knowledge management from information management.

### **1.4.1 Knowledge management**

Knowledge management is the process of capturing, storing, sharing, and using knowledge. Knowledge retention is one of the major components of knowledge management. Du Plessis (2003: 145) posits that "knowledge management is a planned, structured approach to manage the creation, sharing, harvesting and leveraging of knowledge as an organizational asset, to enhance an organization's ability, speed and effectiveness in delivering products or services for the benefit of clients, in line with its

organizational strategy.” Knowledge management is a capability pertaining to knowledge creation, knowledge organization, storage and retrieval, knowledge transfer, and knowledge applications which enhances a firm’s ability to gain and sustain a competitive advantage (Carlsson, 2008). This is further elaborated in chapter 3 (Cf 3.2). Knowledge retention encompasses the fundamental concept that knowledge is an asset that is leveraged to deliver that value by capturing, adapting and transferring knowledge. For an organization to maintain an edge over its competitors, it needs to manage its knowledge and such issues as knowledge retention must be taken into consideration. The selection, storage and communication of knowledge are knowledge retention practices which imply that the organizational knowledge is being kept and preserved in the organization (Levy, 2011).

Knowledge management is introduced to help organizations create, share and use knowledge effectively (Wiig, 2003). This study focused on how each of the three broadcasting organizations (SABC, DBS and ZBC) retained the knowledge that is created, organized, stored, retrieved, transferred and shared to enhance continuous competitive advantage in the continent and the world at large. The study also focused on how the three organizations encourage their employees to share and retain knowledge and information within their organizations. The study also focused on how employees of the organizations acquired new skills, new knowledge and new capabilities. To survive the wave of competition generated by globalization and the collapse of geographical boundaries (Wall, 1998), knowledge retention is advisable in the broadcasting organizations.

### **1.4.2 Information Management**

Information management is often taken to mean knowledge management. Wig (1999) defines information as facts and data organized to characterize a particular situation. In this way data is made meaningful by being put into a context. Knowledge differs from information in that it can be put in action. Information is stored and retrieved. Information management therefore entails the processes, activities and plans to manage and control an organization's records (Bouthillier and Shearer, 2002). While information can be managed, tacit knowledge is difficult to manage because it resides in one's mind (Terra and Angeloni, n.d). Though, it is highly personalized and therefore difficult to manage, tacit knowledge can be retained in organizations through socialization

## **1.5 Organizational culture and organizational learning**

It is important to study organizational culture as it impacts on the flow of knowledge through an organization as well as the willingness of its members to share and reuse knowledge (Jennex, 2007a). Debowski (2006:83) describes organizational culture as the collective perceptions, beliefs and values of employees in the workplace. Organizations need to be studied in their own cultural context (Okunoye and Bertaux, 2007). In any organization, staff departures are inevitable and result in loss of knowledge. As such, the most effective means of managing the brain drain is maintaining a knowledge sharing culture where knowledge sharing, capture and reuse should be part of every employee's daily activity (Poole and Sheehan, 2009). Organizational culture plays an important role in motivating employees to share

their knowledge especially in an IT environment where technologies are constantly changing (Lee, 2004). An organizational culture that is characterized by fear results in employees repeating past mistakes let alone feel that sharing knowledge will lead them to a position where the company will not need them anymore (Tiwana, 2001)

### **1.5.1 A learning organization**

A learning organization is an organization where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together (Senge, 1990). A learning organization enables the learning of its members in such a way that it creates positive outcomes such as innovation, efficiency, improved alignment with the environment, and competitive advantage (Langer, 2005:75). Through training, workshops and seminars employees learn and acquire new skills and knowledge and the members are transformed. In spite of various challenges, the three broadcasting organizations try to equip their employees with necessary knowledge through learning, training, workshops, seminars, discussions and other methods. Organizational learning is an important aspect that must be addressed with regards to knowledge retention strategies.

## **1.6 Knowledge economy**

A knowledge economy is an economy or society that depends on knowledge for growth and has provision of superior services, highly educated and trained people (Ondari-

Okemwa, 2008). In a knowledge-based economy, knowledge resources as opposed to economic ones (labour, land and capital) are the critical element that determines the success of an industrial undertaking (Nghah and Ibrahim, 2008). The knowledge factor is very much at the heart of how organizations are run in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the vision of a knowledge-based economy reflects the differences that separate the world economy today from that of a century ago (Lim, 2007). This makes it imperative for broadcasting organizations included to properly manage and retain the knowledge that they acquire and produce.

The knowledge economy relies on the diffusion and use of information and knowledge of which the latter is regarded as a key tool for competitive advantage for all enterprises in the knowledge-based economy (Lim, 2007). In this knowledge economy organizations are facing dynamic competition and rapid changes in the global market so they have to emphasize knowledge creation, transferring and its application in order to accelerate product service and process of innovation to meet the needs of customers (Langer, 2005). In the knowledge-based economy, ICT is the main driver or the tool for building that knowledge society (Mezher, 2007). It is an economy in which knowledge is the most critical asset to be retained by broadcasting organizations so that they use it to improve the quality of service and products.

## **1.7 ICTs and Knowledge Management**

ICTs are electricity-based means of facilitating, seeking, communicating, storing, accessing, manipulating, sending, processing and transmission of information e.g.



radio, telephone, television, the internet and computers (Sayed, 2003:2; Marker, McNamara and Wallace, 2002; 40). This study investigated how ICTs are used by SABC, DBS and ZBC as tools and enablers of knowledge retention. This definition encompasses the full range of ICTs from radio and television to telephones (fixed and mobile) as well as computers and the internet. Knowledge is fundamental for business growth and survival in which ICTs play a critical role for the success of any enterprise in a competitive world (McElroy, 2002; Alavi and Leidner, 2001). During the transition from an industrialized society to knowledge based economy there has generally been an exponential advancement in ICTs (Johannessen, Olaisen and Olsen, 2001). However, the ICTs are limited to the transfer of explicit knowledge and not of tacit knowledge which happens to be very important in any organization. For most knowledge management systems, the use of appropriate and user –friendly information technology is quite fundamental and is important to ensure that new technology is utilized effectively (Ragsdell, 2009). This is so because technology aids knowledge management and knowledge retention. Technology is only an enabler of knowledge building and sharing leading to retention of knowledge but it does not motivate employees to share their knowledge (Ramirez, 2006; Bell and Oxbrow, 2001). Technology facilitates the transfer, sharing and retention of knowledge by easing communication channels. ICT is a powerful enabler of development because it improves communication and the exchange of information, thus strengthening and creating new economic and social networks (Mezher, 2007) that can facilitate knowledge sharing and retention.

Carlsson (2008) observes that, “In acquiring knowledge, a crucial means is the use of information and communication technologies.” Despite the fact that new technologies have been part of workplaces everywhere in the world they have rapidly replaced or renewed the old technologies and at the same time bringing new challenges (Arntzen and Ndlela, 2008). In the three organizations studied managers revealed that some old and long serving members were reluctant and unwilling to use new technology such as computers to email colleagues for the purposes of sharing, transferring and preserving knowledge. The other challenge is that when new technology is introduced, employees must be trained to equip them with new skills in readiness for using the new technologies and consequently this has budgetary implications. Warren (2008) suggests that the very important issues facing public radio programmes are the expressed needs of program directors to increase the knowledge about new media, how to deal with a broadening of their day-to-day responsibilities and staying informed about the changes in the new media landscape. The South African Broadcasting Corporation, Department of Broadcasting Services and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation are no exception in this regard. The DBS has had to hire and contract ICT expatriates while ZBC is undercapitalized and training to acquire new skills is affected. Due to technological obsolescence, the three broadcasting organizations have challenges of digitizing, scanning and migrating their audio-visual archives to new storage technologies. This study focused on the challenges raised due to the intense penetration of information communication technologies in the broadcasting working places and how the broadcasting organizations utilize ICTs as enablers for knowledge sharing, transfer and retention. ICTs facilitate exchanges, knowledge capitalization and broadcasting.

Knowledge management requires eliciting, capturing, retaining, digitizing, automating and managing what companies' smartest people know and sharing the knowledge with those who need to know (Hernandez, 2006). SABC has acquired modern equipment that it uses to scan and digitize its knowledge as a way of retaining it for preservation and re-use. The DBS is slowly modernizing its equipment in order to capture and retain the knowledge of its experts. ZBC has funding challenges that it finds it difficult to acquire modern equipment for digitizing its knowledge products. A Zimbabwe television (ZTV) manager indicated that ZBC would require US\$50 million to recapitalize the broadcasting organization and acquire modern equipment for knowledge capture and retention.

### **1.8 ICT –based knowledge management tools**

IT-based tools are developed to facilitate communications, for example e-mail, videoconferencing, workflow management systems, and group-decision support systems (Lim, 2007:187). To practise knowledge management most effectively, it is advisable for an organization to use latest information technologies to capture, create, store, transfer, share, and display, evaluate, maintain and update knowledge (Jain, 2009). Technologically, the knowledge network refers to individuals or teams that are connected together by a network of computers. ICTs play a vital role in the retention of knowledge in an organization by facilitating the transfer, sharing, capturing and storage of knowledge.

The ICT infrastructure and the information systems within the enterprise provide the infrastructure for knowledge networking. The use of ICTs provides new and faster ways of delivering, transferring and retrieving information and knowledge that can improve productivity (Lwoga& Ngulube, 2008; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Nonaka, 1994). ICTs enable the knowledge transfer thus the conveyance of knowledge from one place, person and ownership to another. For purposes of acquiring and retention of knowledge, ICT tools could be the probable answer to the problems associated with access to and use of information in order to improve broadcasting services and satisfying customers' needs. SABC is far ahead of the DBS and ZBC in terms of ICT infrastructure developments. ICTs are important as they enhance access to information, make knowledge production and exchange easier and remain an essential knowledge management facilitator in addition to other factors such as culture, storytelling, people, processes, communities and organizational learning (Jain, 2009; Kaniki and Mphahlele, 2002).

## **1.9 A public broadcasting organization**

A public broadcasting organization is one which uses state funds to carry out its duties as mandated by the government. A public broadcaster gets funding from the state and tries to meet the cultural values of that nation by broadcasting in the local languages, producing programmes that are not contrary to the cultural values and norms of the nationals. Public broadcasters are not without their competitors (Sibanda, 2011; SABC Report, 2008). There are private players who churn out programmes of their choice and

these organizations carryout their mandate in line with their missions. At the time of this study, there was only one private broadcaster, the Etv, in the three countries under study. This private broadcaster operates in South Africa.

Broadcasting is the transmission by means of radio frequencies, of signals capable of being received either aurally or visually or both by the general public (Chester *et.al*, 1978). Broadcasting involves dissemination of information to the dispersed public through the use of radio, television and film. The distribution of the audio and video content is done through digital transmission media. While radio communicates messages through sense of sound, television and film are mass media which are both visual and auditory in nature (Mohanty, 1994). All media are related in functions and personnel with radio, television and print media flashing, publishing and transmitting news items for the purposes of bringing awareness to the public. In fact radio and television are complementary and do support each other (Mohanty, 1994).

While television and radio have become powerful, the programmes they offer usually reflect the desires and values of the societies they serve (Chester *et al*, 1978:5). Television and radio can serve as vital players in advertising and persuade listeners to buy goods but the two forms of media are major sources of information and enlightenment in society. Television has had great influence on the viewers' culture (Sibanda, 2011)

Production styles associated with broadcasting organizations include news, current affairs documentaries, sports, drama, advertisements just to mention a few. According

to Dimbley *et al.* (1994) production is a result of careful planning and preparation and highly developed techniques and practiced skills. In spite of the state of the art equipment and other available resources the quality of thinking, imagination, and planning, technical know-how determines the final product. The processes of thinking and methods of working by knowledgeable and experienced producers are likely to ensure more success than failures in broadcasting (Sibanda, 2011; Mohanty, 1994; Chester *et al.*, 1978). Against this backdrop the study investigated the strategies used by public broadcasting organizations to capture and retain the valuable knowledge that the organizations acquire.

## **1.10 Backgrounds of the organizations of the study**

### **1.10.1 The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)**

As a corporate organization, SABC was established in 1936 through an Act of Parliament, replacing the African Broadcasting Corporation which had been formed in 1927. Through radio and television the SABC's major objective is to broadcast in all 11 major South African languages namely English, Xhosa, SiVenda, SiSutu, Ndebele, SiSwati, Tsonga, Tswana, Sipeidi, SiZulu and Afrikaans, and sometimes sign language. In spite of all these the SABC has had its fair share of criticism and accused of self-censorship, lack of objectivity and bias in news coverage. From its website, the SABC's other objective is to encourage the development of South African expression by providing, in South African official languages, a wide range of programming that reflects South African attitudes, opinions, ideas, values and artistic creativity. The corporation also displays South African talent in education and entertainment programmes, offers a

plurality of views and a variety of news, information and analysis from a South African point of view and, advances the national and public interest. Interviews with managers revealed that SABC, to a certain extent, tries to achieve its objectives though with limited success because of serious leadership, board challenges among other reasons.

The SABC creates and broadcasts radio and television's most sought after content on the continent. Its core business is to deliver high quality programs and services through television and radio that informs, educates, entertains and supports the public at large. The company does this through its four SABC TV channels (SABC1, 2,3 and SABC Africa) and 18 SABC radio stations (5FM, Metro FM, Channel Africa, Lotus FM, X-K FM, Ukhozi FM, Radio 702, Capital Radio, Highveld Stereo, Radio Jacaranda, East Coast Radio, KFM, Radio Algoa, OFM, YFM, Kaya FM, Cape Talk and Punt Classic FM). The SABC is obliged by the SABC Act of 1999 and its subsequent amendments of 2002 and 2009 to provide distinctive programmes and services that inform, educate, entertain, support and develop culture and education through its television and radio programming stations. In an interview with this researcher the human resource manager revealed that the total workforce stands at 3 700 at the head office.

#### **1.10.2 The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC)**

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is a state-run organization in with a staff establishment of 800, with five radio stations and two television stations– ZTV and Channel 2. Its staff stands at 800 including those in the other cities (Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo, Mutare, Chinhoyi and Bindura). The five radio stations are located in the cities of Harare (SFM and Radio Zimbabwe), Bulawayo (National FM) and Gweru

(Power FM) while the Television station is based in Harare, the capital. In an interview with the manager for TV content it was, revealed that in the whole of Africa, Zimbabwe was the first to have a television station in 1960. ZBC's name has evolved due to prevailing political situations from Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) to Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) in 1980 on attainment of independence. In Zimbabwe, there has been only one state broadcaster with some private players operating briefly but had their licenses terminated. No private radio station operates in Zimbabwe, thus prompting some former ZBC employees to join private and public broadcasters in the SADC region and abroad.

The organization's core values are professionalism, dynamism, nationalism and Pan-Africanism while the corporate culture is guided by dedication, integrity, transparency and disclosure of business interest. ZBC aims at achieving its goals through the following objectives: to direct, coordinate and supervise both television and radio services; to provide world class quality programs and services that reflect development; to foster and respect the Zimbabwean national identity, cultural diversity, national aspirations and Pan-African values. The supervision aspect, direction and coordination as well as provision of world class quality programs require utilization of knowledge and retention of that knowledge. ZBC is finding it challenging to achieve its objectives because of knowledge flight from the organization, redundant equipment, technological obsolescence and underfunding among other challenges.



### **1.10.3 Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS)**

The Department of Broadcasting Services in Botswana was formed in April 2003 and according to the human resource manager, its current staff compliment stands at 400. Its objectives are to disseminate information and interpret government policies to the public. During interviews the managers indicated that DBS is on the right track in achieving its objectives of information dissemination through the RB1 and RB2, TV and the free copy of The Daily News. The department commits itself to providing a wide range of services that inform, entertain, as well as support and develop culture and informal education. The Management section, Television, Radio, Engineering and Marketing, Sales and Research are the five major divisions of the Department of Broadcasting Services. The Management section is further divided into Human Resource Management, Financial management and Administration, Supplies/Procurement, records Management, corporate Communications, Sales and Marketing and the Training Unit. At the time of this study the Botswana Television (Btv) was the only national television broadcaster. The radio broadcasting started in 1961 and has seen positive developments with time. The division is responsible for Radio Botswana and RB2. The broadcasting department is housed in Mass Media Complex where the state-owned newspaper The Daily News is published and distributed to the nation. The DBS has district offices in Serowe, Molepolole, Kanye, Selebi Phikwe, Francistown, Maun, Kasane, Lobatse and Mochudi, where few members of staff are stationed. These centres collect news and send to the head offices for dissemination.

In order to remain competitive enough, discharging quality services and impressing on their clients, the SABC, DBS and ZBC manage local television news films and video

tapes which form an invaluable record of the day-to-day events and activities that have shaped the social and cultural fabric of both urban and rural communities in South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Besides, these three broadcasting organizations collect oral histories and traditions acquired through various television and radio documentaries. These organizations employ archivists and or librarians to manage the video materials. All these provide detailed coverage of historical issues which stand as primary sources documenting specific historical events. Sibanda (2011) notes that television is a vital vessel for the transmission of history and cultural meaning. The study also investigated how the broadcasting organizations managed the knowledge created internally in these broadcasting organizations to their respective competitive advantage.

This researcher undertook an empirical study on knowledge retention strategies in the SABC, DBS and ZBC. The study established that two categories of knowledge, tacit and explicit, are key to the organizations' output. Tacit knowledge is a crucial input to the innovation process (Hamza, 2008) and creativity that is associated with some of the media products in the broadcasting industry. Interviews with managers revealed that execution of broadcasting duties requires expertise and knowledgeable personnel that organizations should nurture and retain at all costs. The human resources managers indicated that knowledge is important to the broadcasting organizations and the employees at large whose age groups and experiences may span 4-5 decades. The retirement age in the three broadcasting organizations is pegged at 65 years.

Through literature search and interviews with staff (managers) from the organizations, the researcher noted that knowledgeable, talented and highly qualified professionals

were leaving these organizations resulting in the loss of valuable organizational knowledge. In 2008 the SABC Board Chairperson reported that they had up-scaled some strategic functions and evolved a holistic reward system “and staff wellness strategy in pursuit of our goal of becoming South Africa’s employer of choice so as to minimize loss of talent... While numerous appointments were made, there have also been ongoing resignations of skilled staff, some of who have joined competitors” (SABC Annual Report, 2008). The brain drain of skilled professionals from Zimbabwe has become particularly voluminous and damaging over the last decade (Southern Africa Migration Project, 2004). The DBS in Botswana has lost knowledgeable staff and experts in journalism, reporting, transmission, technicians, ICTs specialists etc to private media organizations and some have migrated to the West, particularly Australia. This study tried to establish the strategies of these three broadcasting organizations in retaining knowledge since individuals who are rich in tacit knowledge constitute a wealth of intangible asset to the organization (Hamza, 2008).

The most valuable type of knowledge in any organization is tacit knowledge and this type of knowledge resides in the heads of employees as well as stakeholders such as customers (Nonaka, 1994; Skyrme, 1999; Polanyi, 1966; Snowden, 1998). Tacit knowledge is personal knowledge embedded in individual experience and is shared and exchanged through direct, face-to-face contact. However, people leave organizations and subsequently walk away with their valuable knowledge, experience and expertise (Hernandez 2006; Skyrme 1999). In this regard, organizations such as SABC, DBS and ZBC should find ways of converting tacit knowledge into corporate knowledge. Broadcasting organizations may document and retain the knowledge of their key

personnel and subject matter experts before it simply walks out the door (Hernandez, 2006).

### **1.11 Statement of the Problem**

It seems to this researcher that knowledge may be seeping out of the three broadcasting organizations (SABC, DBS and ZBC) through various forms of inevitable staff attrition and yet the knowledge that accompanies an individual out the door is tacit. The knowledge that is flowing in the broadcasting corporations need to be captured and retained in the organizations' systems. ICTs are enablers of knowledge retention and yet some of the broadcasting organizations do not have the infrastructure for ICTs. ICT infrastructure enables the retrieval, transfer and sharing of knowledge among employees, indirectly facilitating the retention of critical knowledge and expertise that rest with experienced and senior staff nearing retirement. To date, the three national broadcasting organizations have continuously suffered from knowledge attrition (retirement, personnel changes, turnover), unexpectedly losing experts knowledgeable, skilled and talented individuals. This has prompted this researcher to conduct this study in order to establish knowledge retention strategies that are in place in each of the broadcasting corporations and suggest solutions for loss of knowledge in these broadcasting organizations. Knowledge retention in these corporations seems to be a problem in that at times there is poor service delivery, poor broadcasting products and gaps in work performance. These institutions lose experienced personnel's knowledge and the organizations seem to lack strategies to retain the same knowledge. Retirees

leave the broadcasting organizations without their knowledge having been captured and retained. It is against this backdrop that the present study used a survey method to establish the knowledge retention strategies in the three broadcasting organizations and suggest some strategies of retaining valuable organizational knowledge that they need. As far as this researcher is aware this study is the first of its kind in broadcasting industry in the SADC and as such it stands to make new meaningful contributions to knowledge management literature on broadcasting organizations.

### **1.12 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study was to establish how knowledge is captured and retained at South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), Department of Broadcasting Services (DBS) and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). To achieve this, the researcher was guided by the following research objectives:

- a) To find out the types of strategies the three broadcasting organizations (SABC, DBS and ZBC) employ to capture and retain knowledge.
- b) Establish how the three broadcasting organizational cultures facilitate knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing.
- c) To establish the role of ICTs as tools and enablers of knowledge retention, creation, transfer and sharing in the three broadcasting organizations.
- d) To propose recommendations on the best strategies for retention of knowledge in the three public broadcasting organizations as well as suggest areas for further and future research.

### **1.13 Research Questions**

This research attempted to answer the following questions:

- a) How is knowledge captured and retained at SABC, DBS and ZBC?
- b) What kind of organizational cultural practices that enable knowledge acquisition, sharing and retention are in place at SABC, DBS and ZBC?
- c) How do the three broadcasting organizations utilize ICTs to transfer, share and retain knowledge in the three broadcasting organizations?
- d) What kind of strategies may the three broadcasting organizations use to retain the knowledge they need?

### **1.14 Justification of the location of the study (SABC, DBS and ZBC)**

The three public broadcasting organizations chosen for this study belong to the Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA), whose membership covers public service and other broadcasting organizations of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The organization aims at promoting quality broadcasting by enhancing professionalism and the credibility of public service broadcasting in the countries of the region (SABA, 2010).



Figure 1.1: The SADC region (Source: South Africa History Online)

While a study of the knowledge retention strategies in the whole SADC area would have formed an important foundation for regional strategy, this was not possible for several reasons, including data size, data collection time, logistics of data collection in the whole region, and duplication of data. The amount of data from a larger area would have been too large to handle, whilst a smaller area than the chosen region would not suffice. Choosing only one broadcasting organization would not have offered diversity and would not have been representative of the region. The regional body comprises fifteen member states whose public service broadcasting organizations are as follows; Angola (Televisao Publica de Angola, Radio Nacional de Angola), Botswana (Department of Broadcasting Services), DRC Congo (Radio television Nationale du Congo), Lesotho

(Lesotho National Broadcasting Services), Malawi (Malawi Broadcasting Corporation), Mauritius (Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation), Mozambique (Radio Mozambique, Televisao de Mozambique), Namibia (Namibia Broadcasting Corporation), Seychelles (Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation), South Africa (South Africa Broadcasting Corporation), Swaziland (Swaziland Television Authority), Tanzania (Tanzania Broadcasting corporation) Zambia (Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation), Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation) (SABA 2010/2011 brochure). At the time of this study Madagascar was on suspension from the group. So, SABC, DBS and ZBC were chosen to represent a realistic sample.

The time for data collection was sufficient for the number of public broadcasting organizations chosen for the study. Coverage of an area larger than the region chosen would have required more time than was available for the study. The three national broadcasting organizations, though having almost similar cultural and historical backgrounds would have the same level of advancement in the ICT and knowledge management. A study of the three public broadcasting corporations would therefore provide an opportunity to draw lessons from each other's strengths and weaknesses.

### **1.15 Significance of the Study**

Creswell (1998) observes that justification of a study explains the importance of the study. The importance of carrying out detailed research on knowledge retention strategies in the SADC region and in particular, SABC, DBS and ZBC cannot be overstated. As a concept of management, knowledge management is relatively new in organizations. In fact, as far as this researcher knew, there was no detailed and



structured research into any aspect of organizational knowledge management that had been conducted on how knowledge is retained in the three broadcasting organizations. While these public broadcasting organizations are producing and acquiring knowledge there is no guidance on the capture and retention of such knowledge. In this regard, it is hoped that this study would make a significant contribution towards the existing body of knowledge in the field of knowledge management in broadcasting organizations. The study is intended to provide an integrated picture of knowledge retention practices in the three public broadcasting organizations. This study suggests ways of improving knowledge retention strategies at the broadcasting organizations. The study's findings and recommendations make original contributions to the existing body of knowledge on strategies of corporate knowledge retention and to existing works on knowledge management in Southern Africa. Better knowledge retention practices would most probably enable the three organizations to acquire and sustain a competitive edge. The three broadcasting organizations may adopt the recommendations of the study which are based on the research findings.

### **1.16 Dissemination of research findings**

As part of the research requirements, the researcher will give one copy each to the three broadcasting corporations in order to share the findings with the respondents. Time permitting, the findings may be presented to the management in some one day seminars. The researcher intends to present the empirical findings at conferences and

workshops. The researcher intends to develop papers/articles that may be published in refereed journals.

### **1.17 Chapter Demarcation**

This thesis comprises seven chapters as briefly outlined below;

**Chapter 1** Introduction, background to the study, a brief history of each of the three organizations, knowledge and knowledge management, knowledge versus information management, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, research questions, limitations, delimitations, significance of the study, definition of terms.

**Chapter 2** The theoretical framework and the relevant theories of knowledge management. Knowledge management is multidisciplinary and as such it borrows from other disciplines. Some of the theories covered include: The Resource-based theory, The Adaptive Structuration theory, The Social Cultural Learning Theory and The organizational learning theory.

**Chapter 3** The chapter gives a background to previous research findings related to the study (Literature Review). The chapter reviews such sub topics as information and knowledge, knowledge retention, knowledge work, organizations cultures in relation to knowledge retention, use of various ICTs to facilitate knowledge transfer and knowledge retention.

**Chapter 4** Research Design and Methodology: An outline of the methodology and activities that are going to take place; target population, sample, research instruments, data collection procedures and ethics to be adhered to.

**Chapter 5** Data Presentation and interpretation. Background of the participants is also discussed in the preliminary stages of the chapter. The findings are presented using tables, figures, charts and narrative description. Some interview excerpts are also presented to allow the reader interaction with primary information.

**Chapter 6** This chapter discussed the findings of the study in relation to what is already known in the published literature. The major findings of this study were consistent with what other studies had established.

**Chapter 7** Conclusions and recommendations. A Summary of each chapter. Chapter 1 introduced the reader to the topic and the need for such type of research. Chapter 2 discussed the theories of knowledge management while chapter 3 was on the review of available literature on knowledge management and retention. Chapter 4 covered the methodology that was used to gather data and chapter 5 presented the data while chapter 6 discussed the major findings. Chapter 7 drew up the conclusions and made recommendations based on the findings.

## **1.18 Summary**

This chapter covered the research problem, outlined the research objectives and research questions and gave an overall background to the problem under investigation.

The limitations of this study were outlined and a justification of the study was described. The chapter provided a clear perspective to the context of knowledge retention. Brief backgrounds of the studied organizations were given and the difference between knowledge management and information management was outlined. The next chapter discusses theories of knowledge management as they relate to knowledge retention.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Knowledge is a very important economic resource and as such organizations are advised to capture and retain it (Levy, 2011; Drucker, 1996). This chapter discusses the theories that are associated with knowledge retention in general. The theories discussed for the purposes of this study were the resource-based theory, the social cultural learning theory, the adaptive structuration theory and the organizational knowledge creation theory. Knowledge management is multidisciplinary-based and as such the theories discussed hereunder were borrowed from disciplines such as Economics, Information and communication technology and Education. This study is anchored on Nonaka and Takeuchi's knowledge conversion theory whose socialization, externalization, combination and internalization processes retains knowledge in the organizational systems. The next section discusses these models.

## **2.2 Theories of knowledge management**

Neuman (2006) defines a theory as a system of interconnected ideas that condenses and organizes knowledge about the social world. It is a framework for thinking about a problem and may evolve into a statement of relationships among theoretical propositions (Wilson, 1997). A theory helps people visualize the complexity in the world and explains why things happen (Neuman, 2006). A theory serves as guides and lenses to empirical research of this nature. In this study, theories helped in placing the aspects of knowledge retention under close inspection. Theories provide comprehensive conceptual understandings of issues being studied such as how organizations operate, why people interact in certain ways. Theories give researchers different perceptions through which to look at complex aspects and social issues, focusing their attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct their analysis

### **2.2.1 The Resource- Based Theory**

Edith Penrose (1959) is considered the originator and key contributor of the resource based theory. Other authors such as Teece (1982) and Wernerfelt (1984) have made significant contributions to it. The theory rests on the premise that an organization is a broader set of resources and the growth of an organization involves the exploitation of existing resources and development of new ones. Penrose, (1959) also points out that human capital is not entirely specialized therefore can be redeployed to allow the firm's diversification into new products and services. This theory points out that an organization's success is due to joint assets, resources and capabilities which it owns

and these make the organization different from others. The resources and capabilities enable the organizations to achieve competitive advantage. While a subset of resources enable firms to achieve competitive advantage, another subset lead to superior long term performance. The valuable company resources and capabilities must be difficult to imitate, not acquired or replaced easily by competitors. Resources that are valuable and unique to the organization enable the enterprises to generate profits and a sustainable competitive advantage (Pesic, 2007).

A company's resources include capital, equipment, talent, know-how, skill and knowledge (Kotelnikov, n.d.). In a study of this nature i.e. broadcasting organizations, and in a knowledge-based economy, knowledge is the most vital resource that counts thus displacing capital in the economy and land in the agricultural economy (Lim, 2007). In a knowledge based economy, knowledge is the most critical element that determines the success of an industrial undertaking (Ngah and Ibrahim, 2008). However, this theory is silent on how knowledge should be acquired and retained in the organization. Such weaknesses leave Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)'s organizational knowledge creation theory unparalleled.

### **2.2.2 The Social Cultural Learning Theory**

Another relevant theory to this study is the Social cultural learning theory largely attributed to Lev Vygotsky (1978). The social cultural learning theory describes learning as a continuous social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. The primary focus of this

theory is on learning as social participation and participation refers to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, being active participants in the practices of social communities (Wenger, 1998). This theory views learning as a continuous phenomenon emerging from the social interactions and practices of individuals. Learning is social and it comes largely from our experience of participating in daily life (Lave and Wenger, 2010). The theory states that through interaction with others individuals learn and integrate the knowledge in their mental modes. A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with 'scaffolding' to support the student's evolving understanding of knowledge domains or development of complex skills. Collaborative learning, discourse, modeling, and scaffolding are strategies for supporting the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitating intentional learning. The implications of this Vygotskian theory are that learners should be provided with a socially rich environment in which to explore knowledge domains with their fellow students, teachers and outside experts. ICTs can be used to support the learning environment by providing tools for discourse, discussions, collaborative writing, and problem-solving, and by providing online support systems to scaffold students' evolving understanding and cognitive growth.

A social theory of learning identifies and integrates meaning, practice, community and identity as four components necessary to characterize social participation in the process of learning and knowing (Wenger, 1998). This theory views the Community as a social fabric for learning (Pionke and Browdy, 2008). Learning becomes an ongoing process that takes place through the collaborative practices of individuals whenever they create,



communicate, impose, or sustain shared meaning and identity. Communities hold and share collective knowledge.

In the context of a community the concept of identity involves a social perspective of individuals with regards to who that person is within a particular community. According to Wenger (1998) identity can be considered the set of behavioral/personal characteristics by which an individual becomes and is later recognized as a competent member of a community.

Meaning is the learning exercise through experiences. Pionke and Browdy (2008) observe that meaning involves the individual and collective ability to experience and interpret the world in a community context. It is a way of talking about our experiences as individuals and collectively (Wenger, 1998). In a community individuals can learn through doing. From the perspective of practice, learning involves achieving a level of recognized and sustained competence through participation in a specific activity (Lave, 1993)

The Organizational members dynamically transform explicit knowledge into knowing through collaborative practice and this makes it a unique feature of the Social Cultural Learning Theory. Within organizations knowledge is seen to arise from different groups of people called communities and these people are involved in shared practice. Through transfer and sharing knowledge in a community of practice knowledge is retained in the heads of workmates and most importantly in the young and new employees.

However, this theory places emphasis on the retention of knowledge among the members of a community of practice and not preservation of knowledge in databases,

computers, paper records and archives. In other words only tacit knowledge is retained in the organizational system in the minds of the workers and not stored as explicit knowledge. This leaves the social learning theory with some weaknesses.

### **2.2.3 The Adaptive Structuration Theory**

Adaptive Structuration theory is based on Anthony Giddens' (1979; 1984) structuration theory. This theory is formulated as "the production and reproduction of the social systems through members' use of rules and resources in interaction." DeSanctis and Poole (1989) adapted Giddens (1984, 1986)'s theory to study the interaction of groups and organizations with information technology, and called it Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST). AST criticizes the technocentric view of technology use and emphasizes the social aspects. Groups and organizations using information technology for their work dynamically create perceptions about the role and utility of the technology, and how it can be applied to their activities. These perceptions can vary widely across groups. These perceptions influence the way technology is used and hence mediate its impact on group outcomes.

This theory looks at the behaviour of humans as they use technology (such as computers) in a social structure. The theory also refers to the nature of group-computer interaction since organizations such as those in the broadcasting industry, now rely heavily on the use of advanced information technology for the purposes of communication and relaying information in a social structure. Since it focuses on communication using information technology the theory highlights the concepts of appropriation and structuration (Sedera and Zakaria, 2008). The theory draws some

links between individuals and organizational learning due to the key concepts that address aspects of group interaction with technology.

While it criticizes the technocentric view of technology use it places more emphasis on social aspects. Technologies such as computers enable the transfer, sharing and most importantly the retention of knowledge for preservation and reuse. However, in this study the AST theory was found wanting in that it was not applicable to all the organizations that were investigated for a number of reasons. Not all organizations were computerized. In one of the organizations internet connectivity was only in the managers' offices. The organizations' levels of development differed and modern technology was absent in other organizations. As such the theory could not be applied to knowledge retention purposes.

#### **2.2.4 The theory of organizational knowledge conversion**

This study is anchored on Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) theory of organizational knowledge conversion which views the interaction processes of tacit and explicit knowledge as an essential feature in knowledge management. This theory identifies socialization, internalization, externalization and combination as the four modes of interaction that facilitate knowledge management in an organization. Conversion of knowledge from one form to another, results in retention of knowledge in the organizational system. Senior workers and experts share their knowledge with juniors and new entrants. The sharing of knowledge and experiences means that when retirees leave they leave but their knowledge has been retained by new and young employees who remain behind. When tacit knowledge is converted to explicit (externalization) it

means that knowledge has been captured in the organizational system and the knowledge is retained in the documents and databases. Retention of knowledge includes all activities that preserve knowledge and allow it to remain in the system. It also includes those activities that maintain the viability of knowledge within the system. Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory is about how to create organizational knowledge, how to share it, how to convert knowledge from one type to another and how to manage organizational knowledge. Knowledge retention refers to all systems and activities that preserve knowledge and allow it to remain in the system once introduced. It includes all activities that maintain the viability of knowledge within the system (Newman and Conrad, 1999). The four modes are discussed at length below.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) identified tacit and explicit knowledge as the two types of knowledge that interact to produce new knowledge which through these conversions is retained in the organizational system. Tacit knowledge is the personal knowledge which lies within an individual. Such knowledge is difficult to articulate because it is highly personal. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) regard tacit knowledge as the most critical and is an important source of Japanese organizations' international competitiveness. Tacit knowledge is bound to persons, based on personal experiences, perception and intuition. While tacit knowledge is difficult to articulate the same cannot be said of explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easy to codify into formal language, mathematical expressions, specifications and manuals and grammatical statements. This form of knowledge is easy to share among employees. It is easy to transfer and exchange. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that US managers focus on explicit

knowledge while Japanese on the other hand, focus on tacit knowledge. To Nonaka and Takeuchi this explains the success of Japanese companies.

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) when tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge interact with each other they create four modes of knowledge conversion which are socialization, externalization, combination and internalization (SECI). In their view these constitute the engine of the whole knowledge-creation and transfer process. The ongoing collaborative engagement results in a knowledge dynamic of sharing and creation of knowledge that may be captured and retained in the organization. Through social interaction between individuals and organizations knowledge is created and expanded and this interaction is referred to as knowledge conversion. Harsh (2009) observed that this theory has been advanced and modified by Nonaka and his associates (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka *et al*, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka *et al*, 2000). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995:62)'s four major knowledge conversions referred to above are as follows:

tacit to tacit-socialization

tacit to explicit- externalization

explicit to explicit-combination

explicit to tacit-internalization.

A brief description of each interaction would suffice here.

#### **2.2.4.1 Socialization**

Socialization describes an environment where individuals or groups of individuals share personal experiences, mental modes, beliefs, perspectives and tacit knowledge through individual direct interaction (Harsh, 2009; Nold, 2009). During socialization, individuals share experiences thereby creating tacit knowledge such as mental models and technical skills. In organizations employees share their experiences, mental models, beliefs and perspectives. New employees who may have greater knowledge of ICTs for instance, have something to offer. According to this model individuals may acquire knowledge through observation, imitation and practice thus without using language. Nonaka and Takeuchi, (1995:63) argue that “Apprentices work with their masters and learn craftsmanship not through language but through observation, imitation and practice.” Brainstorming camps (tama dashi kai) and informal meetings set up at Honda to solve complex development projects were examples of socialization within a learning context which yielded new knowledge.

#### **2.2.4.2 Externalization**

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995:64) “externalization is a process of articulating tacit knowledge into explicit concepts...” Through externalization tacit knowledge becomes explicit “taking the shapes of metaphors, analogies, concepts, hypotheses or models” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995:64). Externalization describes a process whereby tacit knowledge is converted into a form that is capable of being transmitted to others, outside of the immediate group through creation of procedures, emails, and any other forms of media that transmit knowledge to a wider sphere (Nold, 2009). Examples of externalizing knowledge may be through speaking to an individual, writing, drawing a diagram, giving a presentation or even conducting a lecture.

#### **2.2.4.3 Combination**

Combination describes a process whereby individuals outside of the immediate sphere of personal contact receive knowledge that has been shared through some common media to combine the shared knowledge with existing tacit knowledge (Nold, 2009). “Combination is a process of systematizing concepts into a knowledge system,” state Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995:67). Different bodies of explicit knowledge are combined. When individuals communicate through various means they exchange and combine knowledge through documents, meetings telephone conversations, computerized communication networks”. Externalization is largely responsible for the knowledge created in schools through education and training.

#### **2.2.4.4 Internalization**

Internalization is the process of embodying explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. Individuals or groups process newly received knowledge with their own tacit knowledge and by merging knowledge from internal and external sources to create an entirely new nugget of knowledge (Nold, 2009). It is closely related to learning by doing. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that experiences through socialization, externalization and combination become valuable assets when they are internalized into individuals’ tacit knowledge bases in the form of shared mental models or technical know-how. Documentation helps individuals internalize their experiences thus enriching their tacit knowledge. Manuals facilitate the transfer of explicit knowledge to other people thus helping them experience the experiences of others indirectly.

Knowledge transfer refers to activities associated with the flow of knowledge from one party to another and these include communication, translation, conversion, filtering and

rendering (Newman, 1999). Knowledge transfer and retention occurs when people as members of the same and /or different organizations, exchange tacit and explicit knowledge (Jennex, 2008). These four modes of Nonaka and Takeuchi's SECI model show that knowledge can be transferred from one employee to another, from the heads of employees to documents/databases through knowledge conversion thus retaining knowledge in the organization system. Both formal and informal socialization facilitated the conversion of tacit knowledge from senior employees to juniors and new entrants through sharing. This helped to retain knowledge in the organizational system even when retirees and experienced employees leave. Through learning by doing, when juniors understudy seniors such as in the Engineering/transmission sections of the broadcasting organization, knowledge is converted from explicit to tacit. ICTs are used in the creation of explicit knowledge such as databases in the broadcasting organizations. Because of the findings the study found the SECI model quite appropriate for knowledge is retained in the organizational system in documents, databases and employees. This study established that the SECI model was appropriate in explaining knowledge retention in the broadcasting organizations through in-house trainings, workshops, seminars, formal and informal gatherings. In a way this helps the organization to harness, capture, harvest and retain the knowledge from transient workforces and ageing workers. The valuable tacit knowledge in individual employees is converted to explicit knowledge through the process of externalization. In this way relevant knowledge is captured, stored and is retrieved and applied to the current decision-making activity. However, due to media volatility and technological obsolescence there is need to identify and capture critical knowledge and store it in



updated knowledge storage media formats. In spite of its weaknesses the researcher found the SECI model quite appropriate and relevant to this study.

This study is anchored on Nonaka and Takeuchi's knowledge conversion theory. Through the conversion of knowledge (tacit and explicit) in the SECI modes knowledge is transferred, shared, stored and retained in the organization. During socialization tacit knowledge from the experienced and senior employees, is shared with juniors. When employees leave the organization through various attrition methods knowledge can still be located in other employees' heads. Externalization ensures that tacit knowledge is transferred and codified into explicit knowledge and becomes easily shareable with other employees thus allowing knowledge to remain in the organization even if the experienced retire or leave the organization. Codified knowledge is easily stored in computers and other forms thus knowledge is preserved and retained in the organization. Combination entails the conversion of explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge and as such knowledge can be codified and retained in the organization as explicit knowledge. Internalization means that explicit knowledge is converted into tacit knowledge. Such knowledge can only be retained and prevented from loss by sharing it with colleagues.

In short socialization, externalization, combination and internalization activities help organizations to retain knowledge in the organization in the event that the experienced leave.

## **2.3 Organizational knowledge**

Organizational knowledge is both explicit (the information contained policies, manuals of procedures, files, computer memories and databases) and tacit (the knowledge coming from deep understanding, intuition and sound judgment) (April and Izad, 2004). Bell and Oxbrow (2001:50) identify the organizational memory as corporate memory that resides in the heads of the people who work with and for the organization, the information they create and the records they make or acquire. In light of the above observation one notes that corporate knowledge is actually tacit and explicit knowledge combined. This knowledge needs to be retained in the organizational system.

Lim (2007:180) argues that knowledge within the enterprise (the collective) as well as the employee (individual) has an impact on productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. Skyrme (1999) observes that organizational memory exists in many places but most notably the brains of its people. It also exists in records, filing cabinets, personal computer disk files and the physical surroundings. Referring to organizational memory Oliver (2008:3) asserts, "Such knowledge is stored within the organization in physical records such as reports, operating manuals, computer files, or through shared mental models created by employees sharing experiences and best practice. Organizational knowledge is a strategic corporate asset that needs to be garnered, retained, updated, disseminated and applied to future organizational challenges (Malhotra, 2000)

Knowledge is considered as "the only meaningful economic resource" (Choo, 1998:2), an indispensable and critical component with regards to effective management and business leadership (Lim, 2007:178). Knowledge is a fundamental resource for effective

execution of organizations' mission. Because it is a critical resource for the sustenance and strengthening of business enterprise's viability it is advisable to capture and retain it within the organization for reuse.

Knowledge within the enterprise (the collective) as well as the employee (individual) has an impact on productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness (Lim, 2007:180). It is generally agreed that tacit knowledge is the most important of the two types of knowledge therefore the crux of a knowledge strategy is to seek ways of turning that personal tacit knowledge into organizational knowledge thus converting tacit knowledge into explicit form (documents, processes, databases etc) (Skyrme, 1999:48)

## **2.4 Summary**

This chapter has discussed the Resource-Based theory, the Social Cultural Learning theory (closely linked to the community of practice, which studies have shown that they are quite effective when retaining tacit knowledge among workers), the Adaptive Structuration theory and the Organizational knowledge Conversion theory in relation to knowledge retention. Each of the aforementioned theories was discussed and weaknesses in relation to the knowledge retention were pointed out. The study was influenced by Nonaka and Takeuchi's Organizational knowledge conversion theory also known as the SECI model. Organizational knowledge was identified to be in both tacit and explicit forms. The chapter concluded by defining some of the key concepts associated with the knowledge management that were used in the study. The next

chapter discusses issues of information management, knowledge, knowledge management, transfer, sharing, retention and use of technologies to manage and retain knowledge.

**Review of Related Literature****3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews literature on the subject of knowledge retention strategies in organizations in general and in public broadcasting organizations in particular. Literature review is an important step in any research because it places a study in the context of what others have written. Besides, reviewing literature helps the researcher to establish how other scholars have investigated the same problem (Mouton, 2008; Neuman, 2006). The following sections present the literature that was located and found to have covered the topic under study. The scholarship was organized according to the objectives as outlined in Chapter one. The studies that have been identified cover the processes of knowledge management and information management. These include studies based on data, information and knowledge; information and knowledge management, acquisition of knowledge, learning organization, organizational culture and knowledge retention, knowledge retention, knowledge retention strategies, use of ICTs in facilitating knowledge transfer and retention in organizations.

In the contemporary knowledge-based economies studies have shown that knowledge is not just another resource like labour or capital, but it is the only important meaningful resource (Drucker, 1995; Choo, 1998). As a source of economic success, knowledge has displaced traditional factors of production such as land and labour, hence the need

for knowledge retention in organizations. In this new economy, knowledge and expertise of workers must be seen as critical strategic resources (Drucker, 1992; Bender and Fish, 2000) and as such organizations need to devise ways of retaining them (Joe and Yoong, 2006). Knowledge may only be in the heads of the employees and is lost when they leave for other opportunities (Tissen, 1998). Because of this, organizations need to come up with strategies to retain it. This growing awareness of knowledge and its value has resulted in organizations investing in knowledge management in order to capture, preserve and retain it for reuse for the betterment of their organizations. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have stressed that the Japanese companies leverage their knowledge assets to gain competitive advantage over their rivals.

### **3.2 Data, information and knowledge**

There is confusion between data, information, knowledge and wisdom. More often than not people do think that the terms are the same and may therefore be used interchangeably. Because of this confusion it is therefore necessary to differentiate the terms.

Data is the representation of raw facts and numerical figures (Alavi and Leidner, 2001) that have no context or meaning on their own (Abraham, 1999). However, when the data is processed, organized and given structure, it becomes information. Data has no value to the end-users except when it has been turned into information (Abraham, 1999). Once individuals possess this information in their heads and apply it in actions or in decision making, then it is considered as knowledge. To Roger *et al.* (2007) knowledge is information that is processed, selected, and synthesized by humans and

is remembered or incorporated into our memory. Abraham (1999) argues that knowledge can only be captured in the human beings' brain and any other form of capturing it reduces it to information. To this end it can be argued that knowledge and information are different but closely related hence the effort to differentiate the two.

From the literature surveyed several definitions of the term knowledge do exist. In a paper that discusses the implementation of knowledge management principles and practices in police work in Singapore, Luen and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) define knowledge as active information that one can act upon or manipulate in order to generate value. Ward and Holtham (2000) define knowledge as the act, or the state of understanding while Webster (1996) views knowledge as a clear and certain perception of something. Davenport and Prusak (1998) defined knowledge as a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information and expert insight that offers a framework for evaluation and integrating new experience and information. Regarding knowledge Wiig (1999) says, "It consists of facts, truths, perspectives and concepts, judgments and expectations, methodologies and know-how." Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) define knowledge as true and justified belief. From the definitions it shows that some authors restrict their definitions of knowledge to refer to tacit knowledge while others incorporate the two, tacit and explicit categories. This is mainly because some authors think that knowledge is what resides in the head (tacit) and not outside (explicit).

Knowledge is the most valuable resource because it embodies intangible assets, routines and creative processes that are difficult to imitate (Hyypia and Parjanen, 2008:225). That being the case then, knowledge needs to be properly managed,

preserved and retained for the organization to improve on quality products and services. Knowledge implies knowing how and knowing about which is generally tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1985; Grant, 1996). Luen and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) noted that explicit knowledge in police work is captured in the form of documents such as police general orders, doctrines and operating procedures while tacit knowledge includes the competence, skills of police officers as well as experience. In the current study the researcher noted that knowledge in the three broadcasting organizations resides in different places such as databases, filing cabinets, print material and the intrinsic skills and experiences of reporters, journalists, camera persons, producers, marketing officers, librarians, archivists, editors, engineers, administrative officers, graphic artists, trainers, legal and corporate services, accountants, communication officers and others. Discussions with managers revealed that the types of knowledge that are found in the various sections in a public broadcasting organization are basically tacit and explicit. To understand the knowledge retention strategies in public broadcasting organizations, it is crucial to identify the knowledge types that are managed in these organizations.

### **3.3 Knowledge versus information**

There is confusion with regards to the terms information and knowledge. Information is often taken to mean knowledge and the two concepts are often interchangeably used yet they mean different things. In this regard there is need to differentiate the two terms in this study. When facts and data are organized to characterize a particular situation, they become information (Wiig, 1999). In this way data is made meaningful by being put



into a context. According to Abraham, (1999) information differs from knowledge in that information is tangible representation of data usually in some end-user oriented product like a book, magazine, article, or story while knowledge is information in context of an individual's role, learning behavior, and experience. Behrens, Olen and Machet (1999) offer the view that knowledge is something or facts inside an individual, something that is personally possessed while information is something or facts out there. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) regard explicit knowledge as information. This is so because explicit knowledge is knowledge outside the mind of individuals.

Knowledge differs from information in that it can be put in action while information is given to end-users who transform it into knowledge through actions. From the definitions knowledge is associated with action. Information is stored and as such can be retrieved easily unlike knowledge. Holbeche (2005) avers that information is shared through a variety of media, such as departmental meetings, conferences, interdepartmental meetings, in-house magazines, company newsletters and videos. So, information, unlike knowledge (tacit) is easy to share.

### **3.3.1 Types of knowledge**

Knowledge has been categorized into tacit and explicit (Polanyi, 1962; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Explicit is codified knowledge while tacit is personalized knowledge (April and Izad, 2004).

#### **3.3.1.1 *Tacit knowledge***

Tacit knowledge is that one which resides in the minds, cultures and experiences within the organizations (Rowley, 2003). Tacit knowledge is defined as one's personal, internal

or interior knowledge (Irick, 2007) and is deeply rooted in individual experiences, ideas, values and emotions (Gourlay, 2002). Tacit knowledge is hard to put into words (Jain, 2009) because it is highly personal and hard to communicate or share with others (Koskinen *et al*, 2003) but it is important because expertise rests on it thus making it a source of competitive advantage. Luen and Ai-Hawamdeh (2001) view tacit knowledge as possessed by individuals and communities and it can be optimized through the creation of communities of practice that can hold, share and grow tacit knowledge. This is in line with Baumard (1999) who contends that tacit knowledge could be an attribute of both individuals and of groups (Irick, 2007). Tacit knowledge can be achieved during socialization, face-to-face meetings, teleconferencing and electronic discussion forms (Jain, 2009). However, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) think that tacit knowledge can be transmitted through social interactions of individuals. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi tacit knowledge can be gathered by socializing, that is using face-to-face communication or better, sharing experience directly at work through two roles: the tutor and the apprentice. Through a process of dialogue, discussion, experience sharing and observation, such knowledge is amplified at the group and organizational levels (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1985). They further argue that in this way there will be little risk that the know-how of your company leaves at the same time of employee's retirement. This view suggests that socialization can be utilized to retain organizational tacit knowledge that is possessed by experts and experienced individuals in the organization. This is well explained in the Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization (SECI model) activities that were discussed in the previous chapter.

Unlike explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is dynamic and fast changing so it is knowledge in action. This makes it (tacit) more important than explicit and generally higher in value (Fombad, 2009) since it can determine to what extent companies will be competitive in a turbulent market (Johannesen, 2001; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Literature proves that there is agreement among researchers that tacit knowledge is the most important type of knowledge that exists in an organization (Wamundila and Ngulube, 2011; Tiwana, 2002; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) since it can be put to action, is used in innovation and creative practices thus adding value to services and products. Tacit knowledge represents knowledge based on the individuals' competence, experience and skills of employees (Jacobs and Roodt, 2007; Koskinen, Pihlanto & Vanharanta, 2002). The surveyed literature reveals that authors agree that tacit knowledge is the most important in organizations since it is associated with action.

The organizations lose tacit knowledge when employees leave for other organizations and other forms of attrition. Hamaza (2008:2) argues that "as long as they stay on employment with the organization, they continue playing a competitive figure through effective decision making, communication and contribution. Once employees leave an organization knowledge in their heads is also gone." The knowledge attrition challenges experienced in the broadcasting organizations that were investigated (SABC, DBS and ZBC) pose some serious knowledge retention challenges. A study by Wamundila and Ngulube (2011) on how to enhance knowledge retention at the University of Zambia indicates that knowledge retention challenges do exist in the form of retirements (58.9%), resignations (64%) and deaths (58.9%). This suggests that knowledge leakage

exists in public organizations such as universities and, public broadcasting organizations may not be exceptions.

Published literature seems to suggest that more knowledge is in people's minds than the documented or codified knowledge. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) 80% of knowledge lies in people's brains who also indeed know-how, secrets, personal skills that will never be shared if none work on it. This is quite consistent with Polanyi (1962)'s view that 'we know more than we can tell.' While explicit knowledge can be expressed in words, numbers or sound, and shared in the form of data, scientific formulas, visuals, audiotape, product specifications or manuals, tacit knowledge is sticky and difficult to share. Tacit knowledge is the lifeblood of an organization. Laura (2001) suggests that in order to make better use of tacit knowledge, it must find a way to be transformed directly to one another or capture it, make it explicit so that it can be shared throughout the organization. This concurs with Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) knowledge conversion theory (SECI). Individuals who are rich in tacit knowledge such as the experienced, retirees and other talented experts constitute a wealth of intangible assets of the organization. Loss of tacit knowledge that goes away with the holders seems to be impacting heavily on the quality of services and goods from these three public broadcasting organizations (Independent, June 12 2005).

#### **3.3.1.2 *Explicit knowledge***

Explicit knowledge is the knowledge that is and found outside the heads of individuals. Bouthillier and Shearer (2002) define explicit knowledge as knowledge that can be codified and therefore more easily communicated and shared. Because it is shareable it is regarded as leaky and migratory. According to Tiwana (2002) explicit knowledge is

captured in the form of official documents or routine records, databases, webs, emails and charts. This type of knowledge can be easily expressed in words and numbers, symbols and is therefore easily communicated and shared (Koskinen *et al*, 2003), and can be easily transferred to others by the use of information technology (Johannesen *et al*, 2001). Explicit knowledge can be documented, shared, articulated into formal language formally expressible and easily communicable (Jain, 2009; Jacobs and Roodt, 2007). Another way to view explicit and tacit knowledge is to see explicit knowledge as 'science' and tacit knowledge as 'art' (Luen and Al-Hawamdeh, 2001). While comparing explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge Borghoff (1998) stated that explicit knowledge is formal knowledge that can be packaged as information whereas tacit knowledge is practical knowledge that can be likened to the key to getting things done. This is in view of the fact that explicit knowledge is outside the mind and can only become value when it is put to action. Since it is codified knowledge explicit knowledge is shareable, can be readily transmitted to individuals formally and systematically (Takeuchi and Nonaka, 2004). Documented explicit knowledge is kept in routine records in broadcasting work and this was quite evident in the human resource sections.

### **3.4 Knowledge Management**

The published literature reveals that more work has been published on knowledge management generally than various aspects of knowledge management such as knowledge creation, knowledge production, knowledge audit and knowledge retention just to mention but a few. Knowledge retention is one component of knowledge management and at this stage it is befitting to review what others have said about

knowledge management before looking at knowledge retention. That knowledge is the most valuable economic resource is now common among the organizations and as such there is need to manage the knowledge (that is acquired and produced in an organization) with the aim of retaining this valuable asset. Knowledge management in organizations has been gaining attention for its potential to maximize competitive advantage through effective deployment organizational knowledge (Treleaven, 2004). The application of resources such as knowledge results in competitive advantage and any organization which operates in a competitive environment needs a competitive advantage in order to survive and prosper (Hall, 2000). Knowledge is now considered as the only meaningful resource (Drucker, 1997; Choo, 1998:2). The researcher seems to agree with this statement in that organizations may have all other resources but if the know-how of utilizing resources for a better end product is absent it is as good as useless. Knowledge carries the superiority to surpass other resources and capital. Published literature indicates that both private and public organizations are embracing knowledge management with the aim of retaining the knowledge they need for the benefit of their organizations.

There is no single universally accepted definition of the term knowledge management. The term knowledge management has assumed different interpretations (April and Izadi, 2004). Knowledge management can be described as systematic and disciplined actions that an organization takes to identify, capture, create, share and leverage the knowledge of the individual employees of an organization so that the knowledge becomes an organizational resource benefiting both clients and other employees (Hamza, 2008; Tiwana, 2002). However, for the purposes of this study, the researcher

adopted Gray's (2006:118) definition that "knowledge management is the organizational process of acquiring, organizing and communicating both tacit and explicit knowledge (so that people may use it to be more effective)". The combined knowledge and expertise of the employees in an organization makes it unique and employees become effective.

Wiig (1999) defines knowledge management as the systematic, explicit and deliberate building, renewal and application of knowledge to maximize an enterprise's knowledge-related effectiveness and returns from its knowledge assets. Wiig's definition embraces both tacit and explicit knowledge. Knowledge management requires eliciting, capturing, retaining, digitizing, automating and managing what the organization's smartest people know (Hernandez, 2006). The later definition seems to restrict the identification of knowledge to tacit knowledge. Nevertheless knowledge management, from both Wiig and Hernandez, suggest that once captured the experts' know-how can be retained in the organization. The organization may maintain its competitive advantage.

Owing to the multidisciplinary nature of the knowledge management field, various disciplines employ different research methodological approaches with success. Mearns (2008) conducted a study on the theories and research methodologies from doctoral theses completed in South Africa between 1998 and 2008. Data were gathered from 30 theses from a total population of 47 theses. The results indicated that from the 30 theses only one thesis used the quantitative approach, 13 used the qualitative research design and the other 16 employed the mixed methods design in LIS. The leading sampling technique was purposive sampling and, questionnaires and interviews were the preferred data collection tools. The study covered theses on information

management, knowledge management. However, it is important to note that Mearns' study excluded publications outside South Africa, doctorate theses completed before 1998 and after 2008, Master's degree or journal articles which the current study included for its literature review. The current study utilized literature from in and outside South Africa, from developed and developing countries in order to bring to the full the context of knowledge retention. Studies and published literature indicate that surveys were most commonly used design in knowledge management (Jacobs and Roodt, 2007; Fombad, 2009; Stafford and Mearns, 2009; Averweg, 2008; Ojo, 2009, Ojo and Grand, 2011; Phaladi, 2011; Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011) followed by case studies (Lahaie, 2005; Parker and Wills, 2009; Ragsdell, 2009, Stapplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010).

#### **3.4.1 Benefits of knowledge management**

The successful implementation of a knowledge management practice in the broadcasting corporations may result in better broadcasting service delivery due to better performance by employees. Main benefits would include better quality product, better employee performance, employee satisfaction and teamwork (Fombad, 2009; Dubin, 2005). Knowledge management provides professional satisfactions as new entrants in the broadcasting business were found to be eager to acquire new knowledge (Cf. 5.3.1) since the investigated organizations are all learning organizations (Cf. 3.7). Knowledge management results in the preservation of organizational memory that may be easily stored and retrieved for re-use. Poor knowledge management practices might lead to high costs as a result of lost institutional memory, knowledge gaps and poor decisions (April and Izadi, 2004). For a public sector organization such as a



broadcasting corporation, managing knowledge can leverage efficiencies across all its services to the public through accessing the right information for making informed decisions and eliminating duplication of efforts. In a study on knowledge management in the public sector that was conducted in Botswana, Jain (2009) suggests that by capturing tacit knowledge of an ageing workforce and by availing easy access to all relevant information, it can enhance partnerships with all the stakeholders and by doing so improves the overall performance of the public sector. This is mainly because ageing workforce or employees are well experienced, may have spent many years in the same organization and some on the same job probably because of limitations in career development. They have the knowledge accumulated during all the years and expertise that is required by new entrants to perform better. Jain (2011) is of the view that knowledge management can bring forth organizational benefits such as

- improved productivity and performance,
- continuous innovation,
- effective decision making,
- internal knowledge dissemination; and external information awareness (Jain, 2011)

In broadcasting industry new knowledge is required for innovation, improvement of programs and other media products, ICT, legal representation in court cases as

journalists/reporters are frequently sued due to unfavorable published stories, transmission and so on.

Some organizations that embraced knowledge management program have benefited through enhanced collaboration, improved communication, improved employee skills, better decision-making, and increased innovation (Jennex, 2007). Knowledge management can provide opportunities for achieving substantial savings, significant improvements in human performance, and other competitive advantages (Albers, 2009).

Jennex (2008) argues that organizations need knowledge management programs to help them identify, capture, store, and retrieve critical knowledge, to help organizations deal with changing storage strategies and deal with transience of knowledge workers.

### **3.4.2 Knowledge work and knowledge worker**

Knowledge work is relatively new but it entails the use of personalized and codified knowledge to execute duties and responsibilities at work. Effective organizational performance is achieved through the use of personal knowledge, understanding, and judgments (Wiig, 2004). Wiig further argues that workers on all levels-managers, professionals, crafts workers, and unskilled workers-are all required to think independently to act effectively. In this way knowledge becomes the key driver of economic progress, increasing outcomes. For now and for the foreseeable future knowledge work is the key to economic growth (Drucker, 1997) and know-how and expertise influence quality of work (Wiig, 2004). In the human socio-economic development, wealth in the Agricultural Age was defined by ownership of land while in the Industrial Age wealth was based on the ownership of capital while in the Knowledge

Age wealth is based on the ownership of knowledge and the ability to utilize that knowledge to improve goods and services (Savage, 1995). In the same vein Buckman (2004) argues that neither resources nor capital can create an ongoing competitive advantage in the face of superior knowledge. Buckman (2004) further opines that instead of teaching knowledge work, colleges and universities teach raw facts and analysis skills.

Knowledge work is there to increase productivity and innovation. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) think that knowledge is a major input to influence innovation and knowledge workers are agents for change in knowledge-creating companies. Buckman (2004) suggests that companies must be able to put knowledge to work. Writing about knowledge workers Wiig (2004) says they must respond to daily work challenges in ways that serve the enterprise, its customers, and themselves in the best way possible. Wiig further suggests that knowledge workers must have in-depth understanding of the enterprise's goals and motivation to 'think outside the box', use critical thinking, have personal motivation, and require the freedom to act. In this way knowledge management provides knowledge workers with the necessary tools and processes required to improve organizational performance.

Because of technology people can now work from anywhere performing organizational duties, working more hours and improving productivity. The electronic network connects people with problems to those with answers and this lets people make better use of their time. Buckman (2004) has concluded that,

- knowledge work can occur anytime and anywhere, whenever people want to engage their brains. They do not have to be at the office to do knowledge work.
- People work best at different times of the day or night. Some are morning people and some are night people. Encouraging knowledge work to be done at the time of best production can improve productivity relative to the time expended.
- People using laptops are two to four times more productive than those using desktops, because desktops can function only when their users are physically in the office. Distributing laptops instead of desktop computers frees knowledge workers from the physical office and permits redefinition of the time equation of work.

Moving people around wastes time but moving ideas and knowledge is much cheaper and much faster (Buckman, 2004). The transfer of ideas and knowledge can only be aided by ICTs in contemporary societies hence the inclusion of ICTs in this study as enablers in knowledge transfer and knowledge retention.

For various authors defining the term knowledge worker has not been easy. Knowledge workers are those people who promote the creation of new knowledge and integrate it into the organization. The knowledge work system incorporates the research findings into the information systems maintained by the company so that the other divisions may take advantage. What makes knowledge workers differ from other employees in the organization is their better level of education and experience and they think for a living (Cooper, 2006). This group includes doctors, teachers, and nurses. However, introducing the knowledge worker Cortada (1998) is of the view that the term knowledge worker refers to everyone and therefore must not be restricted to ministers, teachers,

lawyers, accountants, librarians, some managers and consultants among other professionals. This is because the amount of information and skills that everyone requires to perform their work has continued to rise (Cortada, 1998). Nevertheless, in this study knowledge workers include engineers, legal experts, broadcasters, journalists, reporters, producers, sales and marketing officers, financial administrators and human resource practitioners just to name a few. Knowledge work information systems aid workers such as engineers, scientists and legal workers. The knowledge work system helps create or gather new knowledge useful to all parts of the organization.

### **3.5 Organizational Knowledge**

Organizational knowledge is both explicit (the information contained policies, manuals of procedures, files, computer memories and databases) and tacit (the knowledge coming from deep understanding, intuition and sound judgment) (April and Izad, 2004). In the organizations focus is on the knowledge as the most important resource for companies as well as on how they can capture and use that knowledge to the advantage of the organization (Stafford and Mearns, 2009; Jahannessen *et al*, 2001). Literature surveyed suggests that world economies are increasingly becoming knowledge-based and as such organizations are encouraged to manage this vital resource.

A knowledge economy is an economy that depends on knowledge for growth, the provision of superior services, highly educated and trained people, and knowledge supplanting the traditional resources of production (Drucker, 1993). A knowledge

economy requires a significant segment of highly educated people where knowledge assets are accorded more importance than capital and labour assets (World Bank, 2007). Unlike tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge is often disconnected from personal experience of individuals. Organizational knowledge is stored in both individuals and other repositories for present and future use. This knowledge is also referred to as organizational memory.

Organizational memory refers to stored information from an organization's history that can be brought to bear on present decisions (Walsh and Ungson, 1997). Tidd (2000) avers that such information is stored either in the memories of members of an organization or in its operating procedures and routines. Some companies, having realized the importance of knowledge, are entering into alliances with each other, in order to expand the knowledge resources they can have at their disposal (Tissen, 1998:94). Respondents were also asked about the level of cooperation between the three SADC public broadcasting organizations with regards to knowledge sharing which would lead to retention of such knowledge in the organization. Organizational knowledge is present in people who work with and for the organization and in the form of other knowledge bearers such as electronic media, computer systems, records made and received, and machines (Spek and Spijkervet, 1997). This view is consistent with Skyrme (1999) who states that organizational memory exists in many places, most notably the brains of its people but also exists within the records, filing cabinets, personal computer disk files and the physical surroundings. This view indicates that what is regarded as organizational knowledge (also known as corporate knowledge and memory) is the inclusion of both tacit and explicit knowledge. In line with the knowledge

conversion theory (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1985) the crux of a knowledge strategy is to seek ways of turning personal tacit knowledge into organizational knowledge (Skyrme, 1999). Staff mobility and loss may mean that organizations are losing valuable organizational knowledge and corporate insight whenever their staff walks out the door (Bell and Oxbrow, 2001), which means that organizations are encouraged to put measures to capture the knowledge that they need in order to retain it.

Many organizations are becoming increasingly concerned with organizational knowledge and their use of knowledge to create and make quality products, deliver quality services (Wiig, 1993). Wiig's observation suggests that organizations are now aware of the value of knowledge and would do more to capture and retain it. Organizational memory forms the basis of intellectual capital that is held in an organization (Owen, 2008). One would therefore envisage the capturing and retention of such capital. To encourage retention of knowledge in an organization Koeglreiter and Torlina (2008)'s stance is that knowledge sharing has become an important facet of organizational life.

### **3.6 Knowledge Sharing**

Knowledge sharing is the willful application and transfer from one (or more) person's ideas, insights, solutions, experiences (knowledge) to another individual (or more) either via an intermediary such as a computer-based system or directly (Turban, McLean, Wetherbe, 2004; Bouthiller and Shearer, 2002). This sharing is crucial when new employees arrive and others quit. Those quitting could be retirees who have

accumulated years of experience and knowledge that the new employees who are arriving need to utilize in work situations. Studies have shown that much of the organizational knowledge is tacit (rather than explicit) in nature and for organizations to retain the knowledge and benefit there should be willingness on the part of employees who possess it to share (Hislop, 2003; Katsirikou, 2003; Jacobs and Roodt, 2007). The knowledge that could be shared among broadcast organization members include expertise on media product development, best practices, process improvement discoveries, knowledge about customers' needs, customers' habits and attitudes, legal representation, producing quality programming, knowledge on how to manage broadcasting records that include sound recordings. Knowledge shared by individuals and by a community of practice becomes organizational knowledge. With their connectivity and interactivity, individuals and groups create knowledge through knowledge sharing and this knowledge is in turn retained in the organizational processes. So knowledge sharing plays a vital role in ensuring that knowledge remains in the organization even when the knowledgeable have gone.

Koskinen, Pihlanto and Vanharanta (2003) investigated the social engagements that provide the proper project work context for knowledge acquisition and sharing. They discussed a project as a context of tacit knowledge utilization. One of their findings was that when the project team members interact face-to-face with each other there is reinforcement of tacit knowledge sharing. This finding implies that individuals learn and acquire new tacit knowledge through socialization activities such as imitation and coping as explained by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) in the knowledge conversion theory.



In another study, Staplehurst and Ragsdell (2010) investigated knowledge sharing activities of two small and medium sized enterprises in the United Kingdom (UK). It adopted a case study approach to compare and contrast three aspects of knowledge sharing in these two organizations. The results of the findings had similarities and differences. Respondents from both companies preferred knowledge sharing facilities such as meeting rooms, desks and sharing outside of the office during work time. Sharing knowledge in meetings provides a free environment where members may make their contributions. While the study revealed that senior managers and directors share knowledge most frequently this was at variance in the secretary/administration and sales job roles. Knowledge sharing facilities identified in this study is consistent with facilities that were revealed in other studies. For instance knowledge sharing can take place during workshops, seminars, conferences, teambuilding exercises and written reports (Gupta *et al.*, 2000) through face-to-face interactions (Chua, 2003), informal gatherings, dialogues, social events, collective reflections (Yang and Wan, 2004), training (Husted and Michailova, 2002; Yang and Wan, 2004), conventional employee suggestion programmes, performance appraisal, merit pay, promotions (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002). The study established that there was no single role that shared knowledge for long times and more than once a day. Knowledge sharing is not without its own challenges. Top of the barriers was lack of time, experience and lack of visible rewards for sharing knowledge. An outstanding difference in Staplehurst and Ragsdell (2010)'s study findings was in the different job roles that raised barriers to knowledge sharing due to levels of education and experience. This could be that individuals feel insecure to share their expertise for fear of losing their jobs.

Jacobs and Roodt (2007) conducted a study to discuss the development of a knowledge sharing questionnaire and the role of knowledge sharing in predicting nurses' turnover in South Africa. Using a sample of 530 registered professional nurses data were gathered through questionnaires and literature survey. Their findings were that knowledge sharing interacted with organizational culture. They concluded that if hospitals and nursing employers neglect the importance of knowledge sharing there is a possibility of losing professional nurses' knowledge and the nurses may not share what they know before they leave, taking their knowledge to competitors and finally the shared knowledge need to be stored. Knowledge loss or knowledge leakage in health institutions has attracted more attention from knowledge management researchers. Lahaie (2005) investigated the impact of corporate memory loss on a health care institution caused by retiring rates of senior executives in Huronia District Hospital in Canada. Contrary to many studies where survey research designs are commonly used, Lahaie employed qualitative research methods based on ethnographic interviewing techniques and grounded theory. Twelve senior executives whose tacit knowledge was highly regarded were interviewed. The findings indicated that mentoring and succession planning were popular vehicles for knowledge transfer for retention purposes. The study established that very little was being done to archive corporate memory (knowledge) or manage the tacit knowledge of the organization's members. This could be partly explained by the fact that it is difficult to manage tacit knowledge. The study established that there was great impact on the loss of corporate memory when the experienced people leave organizations which confirms Jacobs and Roodt (2007)'s findings in that

loss of health care personnel leads to knowledge gap. Knowledge loss in organizations justifies the conduct of a study of this nature.

Knowledge of employees is a critical strategic resource and organizations need to treat it as such by retaining it (Joe and Yoong, 2006) through various ways like storytelling. Storytelling is a natural behaviour and powerful tool in capturing knowledge (LeBlanc and Hogg, 2006) especially tacit knowledge (Reamy 2002; LeBlanc and Blogg, 2006). Khalid and Mahmood (2010) investigated the use of stories to transfer knowledge in a university in Malaysia. Using a small scale case study approach data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The major use of stories, it was found, was to share experience among colleagues rather than knowledge. Consistent with other studies story telling is not a popular or a common strategy of knowledge sharing yet some organizations have since seen the importance of using stories to capture and transfer knowledge (Beaerra-Hernandez *et al*, 2004; LeBlanc and Hogg, 2006). Storytelling is important for communicating shared knowledge and learning and maintaining organizational memory (Lehaney *et al*, 2003). However, Kalid and Mahmood (2010) concluded that the understanding of storytelling practice for the purpose of sharing knowledge seems to be unclear. Nevertheless in knowledge management, storytelling is used as a technique to describe complex issues, explain events, understand difficult changes, present other perspectives, make connections and communicate experience (Kalid and Mahmood, 2010). From Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)'s knowledge conversion theory storytelling could be regarded as one way of externalizing tacit knowledge from the experienced to new entrants, from mentor to mentee. Such

knowledge is transferred from the experienced to the less experienced. The organization benefits in the event of the experienced walking out.

Patel and Ragsdell (2011) investigated the ethical concerns raised about the sharing of knowledge by academics in two Faculties at a UK university. Using an online survey data was collected from 20 participants. To complement the questionnaire findings two semi-structured interviews were held. Results indicated that respondents agreed that knowledge sharing was fundamental to the workplace for research advancement, increase in value and respect for colleagues. The findings also revealed that respondents view the prospect of someone receiving recognition or accreditation for their knowledge. Their finding is consistent with other studies (Riege, 2005; Jacobs and Roodt, 2007).

Through knowledge sharing knowledge possessed by individuals may become shared knowledge and one way to support the transfer of this knowledge in communities is by telling stories and swapping anecdotes between old-timers and newcomers (Huysman, 2004). In this way shared knowledge is turned into organizational knowledge thus retained in the organization. In a community of practice an individual can choose to share or not to share one's knowledge with others, and others have the same options (Kim, Lee and Oslon, 2008). The choice to share or not is influenced by the fact that individuals join a community of practice voluntarily and may leave it anytime. However, as much as communities may reside inside an organization through a relationship of complementary practices, one organization's community of practice can be linked with those of other organizations through the common or shared practices (Kim, Lee and Oslon, 2008). Knowledge sharing is important for the success of an organization

because as a vital resource the knowledge is distributed and retained among the employees and utilized to the advantage of that organization.

Yang and Farn (2009) carried out a cross-sectional study in which 306 respondents from 67 organizations participated in a study that investigated an employee's tacit knowledge sharing and behavior within a workgroup in Taiwan. The study employed a multi-informant questionnaire to collect data. Their findings indicated that tacit knowledge sharing intention is affected by affect-based trust. The study also established that shared value is negatively related to tacit knowledge sharing intention. This was explained by the Taiwanese cultural value that discourage employee to share knowledge. Contrary to this finding Jacobs and Roodt (2006) believe that strong group affiliation and teamwork is critical for knowledge sharing to take place while Chua (2003) charges that the others should have a desire to reciprocate. The absence of strong personal ties hampers knowledge sharing (Wiig, 1999). In this regard employers must encourage and declare knowledge sharing as a core instrumental value of the organization and managers should support knowledge sharing initiatives, activities and behavior (Jacobs and Roodt, 2006). This could be achieved through according sufficient time for knowledge sharing, incentivizing the process, encouraging workmates to share knowledge and utilizing available ICTs in the public broadcasting organizations. Such moves obviously have organizational budgetary implications but is worth to invest that way.

Whereas explicit knowledge is well documented and accessible, tacit or implicit knowledge includes the competence, experience and skills of employees and employers must derive value from organizational knowledge. Much of the organizational

knowledge is tacit in nature and for employers to benefit from it, there should be a strong willingness on the part of those who possess tacit knowledge to share and communicate it (Hislop, 2003; Katsirikou, 2003). Organizations should therefore create a culture of knowledge sharing so that the organization would not be dependent on the knowledge of a few employees who are knowledgeable. Everyone in the corporation would benefit from the knowledge the firm has retained through sharing.

### **3.6.1 Factors that Hinder Knowledge Sharing**

Many people are familiar with the “knowledge is power” adage and indeed it is a source of power. The disclosure of knowledge and expertise to others might lead to erosion of such individual power (Burton-Jones, 2001). To a certain extent it explains why individuals are reluctant to share knowledge (Jacobs and Roodt, 2006) and therefore do withhold it. To counter such behavior, in order to internalize knowledge sharing, organizations and employees should build and maintain trust across the organization (Jacobs and Roodt, 2006). Studies have shown that reward, incentive system and recognition support knowledge sharing (Chua, 2003; Husted and Michailova, 2002; McDermott and O'Dell, 2001; Jacobs and Roodt, 2006). This suggests that employees want managers to recognize their efforts to share knowledge by giving them incentives.

Some employees feel indispensable when they hoard knowledge with the perception that knowledge is power. This becomes a major obstacle to the sharing of knowledge among organizational employees (Ramirez, 2007; Goman, 2002; Davenport, 1997). Other studies suggest that employees are afraid of diluting their authority in the organizations and weaken their chances to progress career wise (Bender and Fish

2000; Martensson, 2000; Miller, 2002). Individual employees are reluctant to share knowledge and expertise because the disclosure might lead to erosion of individual power (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002). These studies suggest that employees feel insecure at work if they disclose what they know to colleagues. In view of these it would be advisable for organizations to come up with strategies to capture and retain critical organizational knowledge for the firm to remain competitive.

Some employees may feel reluctant to receive knowledge from others with the fear that the receivers may be viewed as less knowledgeable and thus are dependent on others (Ramirez, 2007; Greengard, 1998). This perceived inferiority may be an obstacle to knowledge sharing. Ramirez (2007) alleges that some employees are unwilling to share knowledge on mistakes and failures even if the same knowledge could prevent other employees from making the same errors. Such behavior could be explained more by a desire to save their jobs in times of lay-offs than anything else.

Studies by Ramirez (2007) and, Jacobs and Roodt (2006) indicate that organizational employees may share knowledge for various reasons that may include the desire to gain recognition, to be rewarded, to satisfy self-fulfillment needs or just to enhance career prospects at work. In contrast, workers who regard themselves full of expertise prefer not to collaborate with other members in the organization (Bender and Fish, 2000; Ramirez, 2007). This could be that they look down with contempt upon those who have less expertise. Arora (2002) thinks that where there is an unhealthy competition and a spirit of rivalry between the organizational departments, people may be unwilling to share their knowledge with other departments. This could be so since when work relations are weak and low one cannot expect to find cooperation.

Organizational culture is often described as 'the way we do things around here' and provides a sense of identity to employees, supplying unwritten guidelines as to how to behave (Holbeche, 2005:27). Organizational culture can be referred to as a set of values, beliefs and behavior patterns that form the core identity of organization which help in shaping the employees behavior. Some organizational cultures discourage knowledge sharing (Goman, 2002). The concept of organizational culture will be dealt with more in section 3.12.

New knowledge is created by combining the shared knowledge and existing knowledge when employees share knowledge (Davenport & Prusak, 2000) and the new knowledge should be preserved and retained as knowledge assets in appropriate media which is accessible in order to prevent valuable expertise from disappearing.

### **3.7 Knowledge Transfer and Social Capital**

Before their departure, the organizational tacit knowledge of experts and ageing workforce need to be transferred to other employees so that the knowledge is retained in the system. Phaladi (2011) defines knowledge transfer as the convergence of knowledge from one place, person or ownership to another and is a one way process. Knowledge transfer is critical in order for an organization to sustain competitive advantage and the successful transfer of knowledge within organizations depends on the accumulated social capital and the network type (Rhodes *et al*, 2007; Sherif and Sherif, 2008). Social capital is a set of resources embedded in social networks that contribute to career success and the development of intellectual capital thus securing



benefits for the organizations and its individuals (Seibert *et al*, 2001; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Yang and Farn, 2009). This suggests that social capital determines the success or otherwise of knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, knowledge capture and knowledge retention in an organization.

Social capital has three dimensions: structural, cognitive and relational which are interrelated. Structural dimension describes the connections established within the network (Sherif and Sherif, 2008) and members can be at the core or periphery of the network whilst transferring knowledge formally and informally (Rhodes *et al*, 2007). Structural social capital is the extent to which actors in a social network are connected to share information with other actors in order to provide content and meaning in knowledge transfer. It includes the social relationships and the resources available (through these relationships) that can influence knowledge transfer. Strong structural ties support the development of mentoring relationships in order to guide the knowledge creation activities of junior and less experienced members (Seibert *et al*, 2001). For knowledge transfer to take place there need to be a strong structural ties to be in place in the organization.

The cognitive dimension refers to the need for a common context and language among members of the network (Rhodes *et al*, 2007; Sherif and Sherif, 2008; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Yan and Farn, 2009). Through interaction members are able to share a common understanding through shared language and narratives and information exchanged in communication across the network. The development of common context is vital for the tacit knowledge transfer (Nonaka, 1994).

The relational social capital refers to resources and assets embedded in relationships that members develop during their ongoing interaction. This dimension concerns issues of trust, shared norms, values, obligations, expectations and identification, and good will as individuals believe their actions will be appropriately reciprocated for mutual benefit (Rhodes *et al*, 2007). These dimension concerns inevitably determine the willingness to share knowledge subsequently leading to its retention in the organizational system.

Trust increases the incentive to exchange knowledge and such ties (governed by norms of reciprocity) facilitate the transfer of novel information and tacit knowledge (Sherif and Sherif, 2008). Strong ties create opportunities for knowledge transfer and ease knowledge exchange. Lack of trust leads to hoarding of knowledge but as trust develops members feel less pressed to protect their knowledge and skills and they start free exchange of knowledge. Trust is an important dimension such that individual knowers can choose whom to trust and, besides, trust is based on the emotional ties linking individuals through friendship, love, or care. Through knowledge transfer recipients increase their stock of knowledge, retain it and will utilize it for the benefit of the organization (Sherif and Sherif, 2008; Rhodes *et al*, 2007).

The three social capital dimensions provide benefits to the organizations enabling knowledge transfer. Social capital can reflect strong interpersonal connections such that an individual shares tacit knowledge with co-workers through reciprocal relationship (Yan and Farn, 2009)

### **3.8 A learning Organization**

Knowledge retention is closely related to the two confusing terms; learning organization and organizational learning. They are used interchangeably in this study since they mean almost the same thing to different authors (Gau, 2011).

A learning organization equips employees with operational knowledge which benefits the organization if the knowledge is retained. Senge (1990) observes that a learning organization is an organization where people continuously expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. Langer (2005) defines a learning organization as a form of organization that actively enables the learning of its members in such a way that it creates positive outcomes such as innovation, efficiency, improved alignment with the environment, and competitive advantage. These two definitions by Senge and Langer indicate that the organization plays a pivotal role in organizing, planning and facilitating the learning of its members. This could be in anticipation of favorable returns in future.

Huber (1991) thinks that an organization is assumed to learn if any of its units acquires knowledge that it recognizes as potentially useful to the organization. However, Huber's definition of a learning organization does not reveal the role of the organization in the learning process. It would appear as if it is the initiative of the units or individuals in that particular unit.

Kim (2006) provides an overview of the approaches to evaluate the contributions of knowledge management implementations to organizational performance. In her paper she claims that a company's ability to innovate and learn enables it to continue to make

improvements and create value. Kim insists that innovation and learning measures may include new product introduction and sales from new products. She does not, however, touch on services yet knowledge management, innovation and learning improve service delivery as well. Rashman et al (2009) conducted a systematic review of the literature on organizational learning and knowledge with relevance to public service organizations. They noted that learning within and between organizations has been identified as central to the processes of public service improvement, and the sharing of knowledge is central to improvement in public services. These observations do not mention the importance of retaining the shared knowledge in other forms such as record repositories like registries and records centres.

Oliver (2008) conducted a survey to investigate the knowledge management practices of organizations with a quality approach to operations. Data were collected from a mail survey and findings suggests that organizations with a more successful quality program have regular briefings to share experiences have a general environment where learning from experience is shared. The study revealed that management advocated that employees should engage in training activities (93.2% of the respondents) while 62% of respondents acknowledged attending seminars. Knowledge is closely linked to learning and as such organizational learning is all about knowledge acquisition. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)'s tacit knowledge transfer through the socialization process is closely linked to learning by imitation, copying and on the job training. Tacit knowledge acquisition is linked to Wenger's Communities of Practice (Wenger, 2006). When knowledge has been acquired as such it needs to be retained and maintained as an organizational asset.

Knowledge management initiatives may support and promote a learning culture that may foster growth and thus improve on the retention rate (Dubin, 2005). A Learning organization facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself. It is a fundamental goal for any progressive organization to use information produced and received in the course of its work to promote organizational learning (Powell, 2003). In a learning organization people engage each other in workshops and seminars so knowledge is acquired from within and outside. An organization with a learning culture favours the building and development of the collective organizational memory so that knowledge and competencies of the past are transferred to new employees across generations of learning (Pedler *et al*, 1989; Garvin, 1999). Learning organizations use learning to reach their goals and, the benefit of learning is the retention of key personnel to provide organizational memory (Holbeche, 2005). Such organizations facilitate the learning of all its members and can take advantage of the ever changing technology.

In a learning organization, the advantages of ICTs lie in what they can be used for. Mezher (2007) is of the opinion that the major advances in ICTs combined with the rapid growth of global networks have revolutionized learning and knowledge-sharing through communication, integration, collaborative working, online meetings and training. Powell (2003) contends that the use of ICTs in a learning organization can greatly expand the volume and type of potentially useful information which can be stored, searched, and easily accessed and reused.

### **3.9 Risks of Losing Knowledge**

Knowledge loss due to various forms of workforce attrition in organizations is inevitable. Critical knowledge in some departments of the broadcasting organizations largely rests with people rather than in processes. Poole and Sheehan (2009) believe that when such people leave they take with them the critical knowledge. According to Poole and Sheehan (2009) if the expertise of senior staff is not transferred to the next employee the potential to innovate will be eroded and there is an increased risk that avoidable mistakes will become a regular occurrence. Knowledge loss is not without its negative effects on the organizations losing it. Poole and Sheehan (2009) are of the view that the loss of expertise and on the job knowledge that was built up over employee's careers, the loss of client intelligence, established internal and external networks and loss of social and networking skills are some risks of losing implicit knowledge due to staff attrition in organizations.

In a recent survey conducted by Manpower (2010) 80% of the 2000 respondents (employment/staffing/hiring decision-makers in companies) who were randomly sampled stated that almost 5% of their staff were about to leave the organizations in 2010. In yet another study Right Management (2009) (as cited by Tennessee Valley Authority, 2007) noted that 60% of employees intended to leave and pursue new jobs while 21% of the employees were busy networking with potential employers. These findings suggest that the surveyed companies were bound to lose vast amount of organizational knowledge that was accumulated over years of company experience. Such knowledge needs to be retained.

Lahaie (2005) investigated the impact of corporate memory loss at Huronia District hospital, Canada. Findings indicate that the departure of senior managers at this hospital caused serious ramifications due to knowledge loss. Other risks of losing organizational knowledge, as observed by Manpower (2010), were financial impact as organizations replace lost knowledge through training of new employees. Manpower's (2010) interpretation of the loss of knowledge is that the value of the organizational knowledge lost when employees leave is difficult to quantify.

The SABC has been losing its key personnel and witnessed a total turnover of the top leadership responsible for transforming the corporation (The Star, 1999). The paper further states that "Apart from the departure of the top six, the SABC has lost a number of experienced managers... In the past six months 16 journalists have left the SABC." In 2007, 76 staff members from various departments quit SABC in brain drain and one prominent journalist wrote to his colleagues "We have over the last year, in particular lost our competitive edge." There has generally been staff exodus at SABC prompting the SABC management to hold meetings to deal with exodus of its top talent...12 of its top-drawer journalists and presenters left' (Motsepe, 2004).

The ZBC has not been spared either. According to Southern Africa Migration Project (SAMP) (2004) the brain drain of skilled professionals from Zimbabwe has become particularly voluminous and damaging over the last decade. In June 2002 the state broadcaster lost experienced staff in a restructuring exercise that started in 2001 at the launch of Vision 30 when 60% of the workforce was retrenched (ZBC brochure, 2010; Zimbabwe Situation, 2004). Zimbabwe has lost thousands of its talented professionals and the brain drain drawing professionals in their twenties to Britain, the US, South

Africa and Australia has among them doctors, nurses, engineers, lawyers and journalists (SAMP, 2009). A lot of talent, skills, expertise and accumulated knowledge went to waste.

Tennessee Valley Authority (2007) presents an American company which faces challenges of an ageing workforce nearing retirement, 30-40% staff eligible for retirement in 5 years' time and potential loss of critical, specialized knowledge. In the opinion of du Plessis (2004) the risk of knowledge deterioration that may arise when people leave the organization can be reduced by knowledge retention through capturing of the organization's individual tacit knowledge or team capabilities and subsequently transforming it into organizational knowledge and documentation processes. This observation seems to be focusing on tacit knowledge only thus excluding explicit knowledge.

### **3.10 Knowledge Retention**

This section of the chapter reviews studies that investigated the retention of knowledge. Focus is placed on the studies that were conducted in developed and developing countries. Knowledge retention, as a sub-discipline in knowledge management, is less covered in academic research (Levy, 2011; Phaladi, 2011)

Knowledge retention refers to all systems and activities that capture and preserve knowledge and allow it to remain in the organizational system once introduced. It includes all activities that maintain the viability of knowledge within the system (Newman and Conrad, 1999). Kim (2005) defines knowledge retention as the capture of



knowledge and expertise from employees before they leave an organization. In situations where broadcasters decide to leave the organization, knowledge retention ensures continuity of knowledge. The present study was a response to growing concern about knowledge loss by broadcasting organizations. Knowledge, expertise and skills are found in organizational employees' heads. When such people leave, the knowledge is lost unless there are measures in place to capture, preserve and transfer it. Staff attrition is inevitable and vast knowledge do accompany retiring or departing workforce out of the door. Employees retire due to age and in most cases these are the subject matter experts whose critical knowledge needs to be captured (Kim, 2005). Loss of knowledge can result in duplicating work, expensive search for expertise and knowledge, employees not learning from the experienced. When senior employees leave without handing over guidance or organized procedures, the job performance of successors often does not equal that of the retiree or transferee as was the case in most sections of the broadcasting organizations investigated.

Knowledge retention is about focusing on the critical knowledge that is at risk of loss and developing actionable plans to retain that knowledge (Dan, 2008). Not all knowledge in the broadcasting organizations is of value and need not be captured and retained but that which is critical and is at risk of loss (White-paper Power Documents, 2007). Through literature searching and observations the researcher realized that broadcasting workers' knowledge could be lost during layoffs, restructuring, retirement, resignations, moving jobs and other situations. Knowledge has appeared as the most strategically important resource for companies (Grant, 1996) and therefore losing it would affect organizational performance. Thomas (2009) insinuates that the awareness

of knowledge loss through staff attrition has prompted companies to institutionalize certain processes to capture as much knowledge from their employees as possible. Thomas further lists the strategies that organizations may employ to capture and retain their employees' knowledge before they leave (Cf 3.10). However, the puzzling observation is that some organizations have no strategy in place to capture and retain organizational knowledge and, instead continue to lose portions of their workforce's knowledge.

According to Shaw and Williams (2008) the retention of knowledge of knowledgeable employees is a critical economic resource and a core element to achieve significant competitive advantage. Walsh and Ungson (1991) argue that the contexts of knowledge retention within an organization include individuals, structures, organizational culture and the physical structure of the workplace. Statistics and literature search indicate that broadcasting corporations lose some years of collective experiences and industry knowledge due to retirements and staff departures. Long-term senior executives take with them on departure from an organization knowledge of the culture of the organization, knowledge of the day to day operation of the facility, knowledge of the past successes and failures within the organization and knowledge of the awareness of what went into the planning and decision making that formed the organization into what it is today (Lahaie, 2005). In most cases these people hold critical knowledge in their respective fields and as confirmed through interviews with managers, their departures usually has significant impact on the broadcasters' ability to compete in the broadcasting industry.

Organizations that fail to manage knowledge are likely to be at a disadvantage when employees with tacit knowledge move to another organization in response to incentives, or when such employees retire or die. Kelleher (2006) argues that even if organizations were to recruit new employees they could not replace the experiences or the knowledge of retirees.

Vinson (2003) posits that when discussing knowledge retention, the primary concern is how to tap the brains of employees who are retiring, moving on to new jobs or otherwise leaving the company. Vinson goes further to suggest knowledge sharing (ideas, best practices) and working with lessons learned but ignores other strategies such as communities of practice, archiving knowledge, mentoring, coaching and so forth. Knowledge is lost through retirement and movement of people but this loss can be overcome by documenting previous processes and procedures. To retain important information and knowledge has remained the main challenge and strategic goal for organizations (April and Izad, 2004). Knowledge can be retained in an organization through various strategies that may involve education, training, establishing communities of practice and professional networks, documenting the processes and use of advanced software to capture work processes (Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011; April and Izad, 2004; Vinson, 2003; Thomas, 2009; Lahaie, 2005). Most of the knowledge in organizations exists as tacit knowledge gained and built-up through years of experience. This knowledge has to be captured and stored in the organizations' repositories such as databases, documents, software and embedding it in processes, products and services thus transferring the existing knowledge around in the organization (Galagan, 1997).

Lamont (2009) is of the view that organizational knowledge is vulnerable due to retirement, so, capturing, disseminating and preserving such knowledge should be a top priority in order to retain it. Those retiring can severely affect and erode the knowledge base of an organization thus practical wisdom, accumulated knowledge, know-how and intuitions all gained through years of extensive experience may easily get lost. Not all knowledge need to be retained and as such the retention of information documents, people and experience requires competent and skilled management (April and Izad, 2004) to avoid throwing away valuable expertise.

Organizational knowledge loss through retirement of workers and other staff attrition factors is a major challenge. Holtshouse (2009) is of the view that education and training of the replacement employment are the top knowledge retention strategies for younger workers (25 years or younger) who leave the organization. However, valuable organizational know-how might be captured using resources such as communities of practice, professional networks, documentation processes and work processes knowledge capture through advanced software (Holtshouse, 2009). Managers should in some way encourage the creation and establishment of resources such as communities of practice and professional networks to encourage the capture and retention of personalized tacit knowledge that is found in individuals.

Studies that investigate knowledge retention in the SADC countries appear to be on the increase (Phaladi, 2011, Wamundila and Ngulube, 2011). For instance Phaladi (2011) investigated the knowledge transfer and retention in the East Rand Water Care Company of South Africa. Data were collected through interviews. The experts who were interviewed were reluctant to contribute to knowledge transfer and retention. They

perceived the juniors as likely to leave and that the organizational culture did not support knowledge transfer and retention activities. However, reluctance to share knowledge with juniors could be that knowledge is power and therefore they hold on to it. Another explanation could be that these experts may feel insecure at work.

In another study, Wamundila and Ngulube (2011) investigated how knowledge retention may be enhanced at the University of Zambia (UNZA) among thirteen senior management and 205 academics. Data collected through interviews and a self-administered questionnaire indicates that the university lacked some knowledge retention strategies to retain operational knowledge. The results indicated that 27% of the respondents agreed that UNZA use succession planning as a way to retain knowledge while 48% confirmed being members of a community of practice to retain knowledge. These strategies assist in capturing tacit knowledge of experts.

Retirees take away with them the knowledge they have acquired when they walk out the door. In a recent study involving eight organizations with more than thirty retiree knowledge retention mini projects, Levy (2011) found that successful knowledge retention can be achieved through documenting, integrating knowledge back into the organization but special care being dedicated to retaining best practices. Levy further argue that people may retire leaving significant knowledge outside the organization, causing business loss. The importance of capturing knowledge from retirees has been reported in several studies (Levy 2011; Mohamed and Mynors, 2006; Madsen, Mosakowski and Zaher, 2002; Newman and Conrad, 1999, Poole and Sheehan, 2009, APQC, 2011). This indicates that value of knowledge that is held by retirees is immense

therefore organizations such as broadcasting corporations need to capture knowledge from retirees of such organizations.

Knowledge retention is used to develop appropriate approaches for capturing the extensive knowledge of experts who are ready to retire and retaining it as organisational knowledge (Kim, 2005). Organisations need to document and retain the knowledge of their key personnel and subject matter experts, manage this intellectual capital before it simply walks out of the door resulting in organisations losing valuable intellectual capital, namely knowledge, talent, experience and expertise (Hernandez, 2006). Knowledge retention strategies can keep employees' workplace-acquired wisdom from walking out the door when they retire (Thilmany, 2008). He further recommends that organizations need to establish ways to retain employee's know-how and best practices so that the knowledge can be passed on to future workers and replacements who should regain the on-the-job knowledge the ex-employees spent years accumulating (Thilmany, 2008).

Organizations continue to suffer knowledge hemorrhaging through attrition and are most affected by retirements, shrinking knowledge pools and promotions and relocations (Young, 2006). The experienced employees possess much unique, undocumented knowledge and organizations need to capture the undocumented knowledge of employees nearing retirement. Knowledge retention depends on the efficient use of a wide range of people management techniques and organizational storage media, both electronic and otherwise (April and Izad, 2004).

When considering knowledge retention, Dan (2008) suggests that the following three questions must be asked;

- What knowledge may be lost?
- What are the organisational consequences of losing that knowledge?
- What actions can be taken to retain that knowledge?

This observation concurs with Young's (2006)'s view who describes a step-by-step process to combat the problem of organisational knowledge loss. The first step, as prescribed by Young, is the need to be aware of the risks an organisation faces if knowledgeable and valuable staff walk out of the door. This motivates the desire to retain knowledge by deploying knowledge retention strategies. Secondly a program to retain knowledge of staff must be put in place. The type of knowledge is that which senior executives regard as irreplaceable, crucial, and valuable for the future success of the company. The next step is to determine the status of the retention programme by considering whether the retention methods are going to be a one-off activity or will be part of a program. The last step considers the value equation, thus whether the cost of knowledge retention is worthy the knowledge captured for future use.

### **3.11 Knowledge retention strategies**

The impact of attrition can be reduced by making use of appropriate knowledge retention approaches to capture knowledge and information in the organization. The approach to retain knowledge take a variety of forms and the strategies include communities of practice, interviews, videotaping, repositories, mentoring and

apprenticeship programmes, knowledge maps, use of subject matter experts, After action/project milestone, storytelling programs, partnerships with In-house Training Organizations, leveraging retirees and others (Thomas, 2009). These are discussed at length in the paragraphs that follow.

### **3.11.1 Communities of practice**

Communities of Practice are voluntary groups of people held together by a common sense of purpose, who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in a particular area of concern by interacting on an on-going basis with a real need to know what each other knows (Skyrme, 1999:63; Wenger, 2006; Kim, Lee and Oslon, 2008; Albers, 2009). Such people have a common sense of purpose and common interests; they share work-related knowledge and experience and engage in a collective process of learning (Jain 2009; Bell and Oxbrow, 2001). In order to retain knowledge, organizations rely on Communities of Practices for the purposes of identifying, capturing, and transferring knowledge. Communities of practice share experiences and insights but the people are not a formal team. Communities of practice working on company projects and initiatives share both tacit and explicit knowledge by taking information and materials and refining them to a point where they can become corporate positions on topics.

A community of practice as a concept was introduced by and born out of Wenger (1998)'s Social Cultural Learning Theory that describes learning as a continuous process of social participation (This has been covered in the previous chapter.) In order to pursue their interests, members of the community of practice engage in joint activities



and discussions and share information. Their relationship helps to learn from each other. Because members of a community of practice are practitioners they develop a shared practice. Communities of practice are found everywhere and come in different forms and sizes.

The concept of community of practice has been adopted by people in business because of the recognition that knowledge is a critical asset that needs to be managed strategically (Wenger, 2006). While tacit knowledge is very difficult to transfer from one employee to another, a community of practice is one method of helping knowledge transfer from the experienced, skilled, talented or from old employees to the new employees. The main reason for utilizing the community of practice is to enable the retention of tacit knowledge in an organization. McDermott (1999:34) identifies a community of practice as a group that shares knowledge, learns together, and creates common practices. Because communities do possess tacit knowledge, the only way to optimize it is to have it shared for the benefit of the organization. Snowden (1998) states that knowledge management is about optimizing tacit knowledge, through the creation of communities of practice that can hold, share and grow tacit knowledge. Wenger (2006) argues that there is hardly any organization of a reasonable size that does not have some form of communities of practice. Community of practice enables practitioners to take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need, create a direct link between learning and performance and the practitioners can address the tacit and dynamic aspects of knowledge creation and sharing (Wenger, 2006).

Tacit knowledge is regarded as the most important form of knowledge in any organization because expertise rests on it (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Irick, 2007;

Jain, 2009) but capturing it remains a major challenge. While no technology or database can capture all knowledge required in an organization, communities of practice have proved the most powerful tools for learning and sharing knowledge for intellectual interaction and experience (Jain, 2009). Communities of practice can be used to capture retired and older employees' knowledge. While it is generally agreed that tacit knowledge is very difficult to transfer from one employee to another, a community of practice is one strategy of helping knowledge transfer from the experienced, skilled, talented or from old employees to the younger and new employees. In this way, knowledge can be retained in the organization when those who possess it depart.

The concept of communities of practice has been expanded into a network version called networks of practice which consist of a larger, loosely knit, geographically distributed group of individuals who may not know each other but are engaged in a shared practice (Kim, Lee and Oslon, 2008). Such networks may be internal or external or both. Based on a variety of communications, including lunchtime meetings, occasional conferences, newsgroups, or electronic mailing lists, or based on one-to-one contacts between members of the group (Powell, 2003) knowledge can be transferred, shared and retained in an organization. The sharing of practice related knowledge takes place through computer-based communication technologies. To encourage retention of knowledge in an organization knowledge sharing has become an important facet of organizational life (Koeglreiter and Torlina, 2008). Knowledge management is needed in order to help organizations identify, capture, store, and retrieve critical knowledge (Jennex, 2008). Because communities of practice develop people's skills and help

companies recruit and retain talent, some companies encourage the development of communities of practice which transcend organizational boundaries (Holbeche, 2005).

### **3.11.2      Mentoring and apprenticeship**

Mentoring and apprenticeship programmes can also be used as a strategy of transferring tacit knowledge, from an experienced employee (subject matter expert) to a more junior employee (LaMonica, 2007; Nonaka, 1997; APQC, 2011). Mentorship entails the pairing of an experienced member of staff with a new employee in order to assist the new employee acquire new knowledge and skills to operate (Beazley, Boenisch and Harden, 2002). Mentoring and tutoring techniques enable senior employees to transfer their knowledge, wisdom, specific insights and skills to their juniors within a short space of time such that when the experienced employees leave the organizations or die the organization's substantive practice, knowledge, history, stories and culture are preserved (Rusanow, 2004; Dubin, 2005). Mentors gently transfer subtle and private skills and experiences to others as role-models thus introducing mentees to their network in an informal setting. Subject matter experts (SMEs) are paired with individuals who have interest and therefore need further training and development in a subject matter area (APQC, 2011). The apprentices follow the more experienced employee through their job and the apprentices extract information, write down information about the experiences for future references and for reuse (APQC, 2011). The same source further states that, 'this technique provides unique opportunities for veteran employees to share their experiences, thought processes, and decision-making strategies with junior members of the staff.'

### **3.11.3 Subject matter experts (SMEs)**

SMEs demonstrate mastery of particular topics or jobs and play a key role in knowledge management in organizations because of their ability to answer questions, provide historical perspective, and offer solutions and so on (APQC, 2011). Effective succession planning of experts is also desirable to encourage retention of knowledge and expertise (Debowski, 2006:159). In some organizations SMEs are assigned duties of mentorship and apprenticeship, identifying core knowledge for their communities, answering questions, and as instructors teaching internal courses (APQC, 2011).

### **3.11.4 Story telling**

Another powerful knowledge retention and transfer strategy is the story telling practice which has the potential to personalize an issue by bringing it alive for listeners or readers (APQC, 2011). Storytellers in an organization maintain cohesion and provide guidelines for people to follow (Holbeche, 2005). Stories are effective in bridging generational gaps, communicate vital information about an organization's culture, and help employees develop a sense of organizational identity (APQC, 2011; Holbeche, 2005). Storytelling may be used to capture successes, lessons learned and other knowledge explicitly. Stories are instrumental for knowledge sharing and collaboration. While storytelling may take up to an hour only 15minutes are reserved for question and answer session, thus putting the story into context and allowing listeners to ask questions (APQC, 2011).

The retention of tacit knowledge will require other strategies involving people to people interaction, communities of practice and the teaching of lessons learned (Poole and Sheehan, 2009) and storytelling provides the required interaction setup.

### **3.11.5 Leveraging retirees**

Organizations use their retirees to provide critical skills and experience on specific projects, to mentor junior employees, participate in storytelling and training activities thus allowing them to share their knowledge and experiences (APQC, 2011). Retirees may be hired to work on an as needed basis, part time and gradually transfer knowledge and insights to younger employees. Retirees should be allowed to return to work as consultants that are immediately productive as they know the organization (Poole and Shenan, 2009)

The other important way of leveraging existing knowledge is through the transfer and re-use of existing specialized knowledge in an organization (Behboudi and Hart, 2008).

Various authors seem to agree that much as there might be many strategies to retain knowledge in organizations, there is no one way to create good knowledge retention since each organization places importance on different aspects of knowledge(Vinson 2003; APQC, 2011).

## **3.12 Organizational Culture and Knowledge Retention**

Debowski (2006:83) describes organizational culture as the collective perceptions, beliefs and values of employees in the workplace while Deshpande and Webster (1989)

opine organizational culture as patterns of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand organizational functioning and thus provide them with norms for behaviours in the organization. It is very important to study organizational culture since it impacts on the flow of knowledge through the organization as well as the willingness of its members to share and reuse knowledge (Jennex, 2007). Ignoring culture usually leads to failure in implementing knowledge management practices.

Organizational culture is a determinant in knowledge retention. The importance of organizational culture cannot be overemphasized (Jafari *et al*, 2009). In fact recent studies indicate that culture plays an important role in influencing knowledge sharing (Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011, Jacobs and Roodt, 2011, Ragsdell, 2009). Mustaq and Bokhari (2011) investigated the impact of organizational culture. Using a self-report questionnaire, data were collected from a sample of 116 participants of various banks in Pakistan. The findings indicate that organizational culture and transformational leadership have an influence on knowledge sharing. These findings support prior studies by Ragsdell (2009) who found that organizational culture facilitated knowledge sharing. Ragsdell investigated the enhancers and inhibitors to knowledge sharing processes within Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau in UK. Data were collected using 67 questionnaires and 8 interviews that lasted between 30 and 50 minutes. One of the findings was that knowledge was shared through such processes as staff meetings, newsletters and memos, informal interaction, briefing sessions, and the use of the notice board. The majority (75%) were of the view that culture supported knowledge sharing and volunteers were encouraged to make suggestions for improvement in the organizations. Interview results indicated that there was a friendly and open atmosphere

whereby individuals availed themselves to share information and knowledge. This contrasts with Ramirez (2007)'s observation that some corporate cultures still discourage open communication such that employees are reluctant to share knowledge.

Jacobs and Roodt (2011) investigated the relationships between organizational cultures, knowledge sharing and turnover intentions in the nursing profession of South Africa. The findings were derived from data that were gathered from a sample of 539 nurses in private and provincial hospitals in South Africa. The major findings revealed that there was a positive correlation between organizational culture and knowledge sharing, nurses will share knowledge if they perceive desirable outcomes of their efforts. The other finding was that managers could plan strategies and interventions to provide professional nurses with opportunities to share, including training courses, workshops and sharing in informal settings.

Knowledge management is about people. Such people have their way of living and doing things. Workers bring in their cultural values, norms and ethos to the workplace. The way they behave at work is heavily influenced by their culture (Jennex, 2007; Debowski, 2006). To this extent one can aver that knowledge sharing and retention may be studied in the context of the organizational culture. Traditions, ideas and values are historically derived and selected. Organizations need to be studied in their own cultural context (Okunoye and Bertaux, 2007) since culture is imbedded in people's lives (Jennex, 2007). In the African context it is relatively easy to recognize the leaders and people in position of power because they are treated with absolute respect and obedience, their views and opinions are accepted and their judgments are not publicly questioned (Okunoye and Bertaux, 2007). In the same vein one would like to think that

the experienced senior citizens' knowledge, views and ideas are likely to be accepted by the juniors at work places. If shared with new entrants the experienced elderly's knowledge is in turn retained in the organizations.

Since the value systems are not the same, differences in culture may lead to differences between national groups within the same organization causing those groups to understand knowledge differently or have significant barriers to participating in the sharing of knowledge (Jennex, 2007). Of the three public broadcasting organizations the researcher found the SABC as the most multicultural with employees from diverse cultures and religions.

Debowski (2006) opines that through hearing stories observing incidents and experiences, individuals learn about the culture of their organization from the first day in a new workplace. However, besides geographical separation, organizational members are separated by their different cultures and backgrounds and, when sharing knowledge the receiver is influenced by his or her cultural background (Usono and Kuofie, 2007)

In any organization staff departures are inevitable, resulting in loss of knowledge and as such the most effective means of managing the brain drain is maintaining a knowledge sharing culture where knowledge sharing, capture and reuse are part of everyone's daily activity (Poole and Sheehan, 2009). For an organization to avoid dependence on the knowledge of a few employees and for everyone in the corporation to benefit from the knowledge that the firm has enabled, it is important that organizations create a culture of sharing knowledge and information (Ramirez, 2007, Hart and Warne, 2007). Knowledge management and retention flourishes in a culture that supports the forging



of good working relationships and communication both within and between organizations (Ragsdell, 2009)

There is need to gain greater enlightenment on an organization's culture since culture can significantly facilitate or hinder knowledge sharing in culturally diverse teams (Usono and Kuofie, 2007). A common identity for individuals that work for an organization gives them a similar way of utilizing their resources and this common view enables effective communication, the development of trust and shared understanding and expedites sharing of information and knowledge (Hart and Warne, 2007).

Just like communication, knowledge sharing is done through a cultural context such that in a face to face communication, voice cues and body language enhances the meaning of the information shared (Usono and Kuofie, 2007). People interact and work together and this collaboration enables the sharing of information and knowledge such that those who need the knowledge can find it and use it when it is required (Hart and Warne, 2007). Organizational culture is a prerequisite for knowledge sharing.

While culture is critical in implementing knowledge management, an ideal knowledge management culture is characterized by trust, openness, teamwork, collaboration, risk taking, tolerance for mistakes, autonomy, common language, courage, and time for learning (Albers, 2009). Knowledge management initiatives and employees' knowledge sharing behaviors are guided by the organizational culture (Ramirez, 2009) since it has been built from a variety of inputs over time and therefore it is difficult to change (Lahaie, 2005). The culture of an organization affects the people who are a part of it

through the associations and interactions experienced in the process of performing their work (Mason and Orhun, 2009)

People enjoy working in teams towards shared goals if they are provided with the right organizational cultural environment as well as technological information or knowledge management systems (Hart and Warne, 2007). In the current study it was observed that two organizations provided a free cultural environment to share knowledge among its employees thus enabling its retention. Organizational culture plays an important role in motivating employees to share their knowledge especially in an IT environment where things are constantly changing (Lee, 2004). In any case for it to be successful and gain acceptance, IT depends on the incorporation of knowledge management behavior into the organizational culture. In most cases cultural barriers are responsible for failures to share and transfer knowledge in organizations (Firestone and McElroy, 2003). However, other cultural values such as open communication and networking support a sharing and learning culture that can encourage dialogue between employees who can exchange knowledge through cross-functional team working (Ahmed, Lim and Loh, 2002).

Sociability is a measure of friendliness and flourishes among people who share similar ideas, values, personal histories, attitudes and interests (Lee, 2004). Such factors provide a conducive environment to share knowledge. This is a result of the trust, openness and teamwork that is fundamental for sharing to take place (Ahmed, Lim and Loh, 2002)

The most important factor in knowledge management is the need for a conducive environment where people do not feel forced to share knowledge but rather have a constant desire to learn together so that they complement each other (Jain, 2009). On the other hand an organizational culture that is characterized with fear result in employees repeating past mistakes let alone feel that sharing knowledge will lead them in to a position where the company will not need them anymore (Tiwana, 2001). On the other hand Holbeche (2005) thinks that employees are often unwilling to spread their good ideas more widely within their organization if it may be at the expense of their own 'uniqueness' and reduce their value as knowledge experts.

Strong leadership is required for success in a knowledge management programme but more so leaders need to set the tone for creating an environment for knowledge sharing (Albers, 2009). However, organizational politics are recognized as damaging to trust (Holbeche, 2005). Leadership has a powerful influence on organizational culture (Debowski, 2006) and effective leaders need to inspire and empower workers (Tiwana, 2001) with the knowledge. Since different cultural environments require different managerial behaviours and competencies senior executive must possess a sound corporate memory and awareness of the culture specific to that organization in order to manage the relations between the organization and its corporate culture (Lahaie, 2005)

In the three investigated organizations the researcher found out a mixture of leadership styles. Some were democratic, autocratic and some were firm thus providing a different working environment for knowledge sharing.

### **3.13 Knowledge retention and organizational resiliency**

The main objective of knowledge retention is to achieve resiliency and the capability of the organization to operate effectively even under stress. Adler (n.d) avers that knowledge retention is a critical component of resiliency. By identifying and codifying critical knowledge, procedures, and processes from individual employees, knowledge retention contributes to organizational resiliency. Should individuals become unavailable temporarily or leave their positions permanently through retirement, promotion, and workforce turnover, organizations can then utilize this core knowledge to maintain or restore operations.

### **3.14 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and knowledge management**

ICTs are electronic means of capturing, processing, storing, and communicating information and these ICTs include digital information, computer hardware, software and networks and analogue based information such as radio, television and telephone (Kiplang'at and Ocholla, 2005). Holbeche (2005) avers that as knowledge is generated, it is captured and made accessible to others through IT systems. This study investigated how ICTs are used by the three broadcasting organizations as tools and enablers of the practice of knowledge acquisition and retention. Technology tools such as collaborative computing tools, knowledge servers, enterprise knowledge portals, electronic document management systems, knowledge harvesting tools and search engines that support knowledge management are called knowware (Turban *et al*, 2008).

Carlsson (2008) observes that, “In acquiring knowledge, a crucial means is the use of information and communication technologies.” Information technology has made the sharing, capturing and integrating of knowledge more feasible (Albers, 2009; Dixon, 2000).

Ojo & Grand (2011) conducted a study on the extent of IT acceptance and use for knowledge management in Botswana using a population of 127 individual law knowledge workers in 44 private and public Botswana Law Organizations (BLOs). Data were collected using self-reporting questionnaires. The results indicate that the proportion of BLOs using IT for knowledge seeking and documenting was ranked highest at 76%, followed by knowledge organizing 73.9%, knowledge sharing was a 69.1% then lastly knowledge generating at 54.8%. This suggests that ICTs are mainly used for documenting and storage of knowledge which is retention of knowledge in a way. In a similar survey study on knowledge management in law firms in Botswana by Fombad, Boon and Bothma (2009), data were gathered from 217 lawyers through a questionnaire. The study established that the firms use legal information systems for legal research and also use the internet, intranets, extranet and the World Wide Web to gather knowledge that may be used.

New technologies have long been part of workplaces everywhere in the world (Arntzen and Ndlela, 2008). However, the pace at which new technologies are coming into the market, replacing or renewing the old brings new types of issues and challenges. Warren (2008) conducted a study on the knowledge management for Public Radio Programme Directors in Pennsylvania. In this study Warren (2008) highlights the technological challenges in the broadcasting networks by saying, “Four of the top six

important and very important issues facing public radio programmes highlight the expressed needs of program directors to increase their knowledge about new media, how to deal with a broadening of their day-to-day responsibilities and staying informed about the changes in the new media landscape.” ICT has a triad component of hardware, software and persware that contributes to knowledge management in general but knowledge retention in particular. The persware component includes human resources and procedures involved in ICT. Hardware includes the transmission media, computers, printers, telephone, mobile phones, fax, copiers, scanners and etc. Tacit and explicit knowledge have a symbiotic relationship whereby tacit knowledge contributes to explicit and vice versa (Srikantaiah, 2001:11). Information technology is a powerful facilitator and necessary enabler for effective knowledge management activities such as capturing, sharing, and integrating knowledge (Albers, 2009; Jain, 2009; Sahasrabudhe, 2001:270). Contrary to previous perception that technology was key to success, the corporate world now realizes that the effectiveness of enterprises lies in the people’s knowledge, intellectual capital and expertise (Wiig, 2004:37)

Information technology and other technologies are quite significant but occupy the secondary role because they serve as passive infrastructure (Wiig, 2004:4) in an organization. Effective knowledge management practice could be achieved by utilizing latest information technologies in order to capture, create, store, transfer, share, and display, evaluate, maintain and update knowledge (Jain, 2009). While technology is a crucial enabler in knowledge retention in public broadcasting organizations, typical tools

and technologies for knowledge management are networked computers, emails, telephone, internet and intranet technologies.

Information technology provides broadcasters tools to handle, store, locate, distribute and present tacit and explicit knowledge through networking among the people in possession of the knowledge (Wiig, 2004:302; Saharabudhe, 2001: 269-270). Technology-based approaches are used to mine and capture historical knowledge from well-known and routine tasks more effectively and comprehensively than people are able to do (Wiig, 2004:302). The adoption and utilization of ICTs in knowledge creation, acquisition and retention may lead to increased yields and quality production of goods and services in the broadcasting industry. Technology has revolutionized operations at work such that in some organizations email is integral to the activities of most individuals, communicating in teams, across organizational divisions, with clients and other external stakeholders (Debowski, 2006:8).

Technologies facilitate the transfer of tacit knowledge and the exchange of documents and convert broadcasters from information consumers to consumers of knowledge. In many organizations knowledge is embedded in documents such as reports, books, working papers in texts, graphics, audio, video and document management systems can support storage and retrieval of these mixed media documents (Saharabudhe, 2001: 270). Technology makes virtual organizations more feasible. Networking technologies, chat rooms, videoconferencing, discussion forums, Wikis, and groupware are collaborative tools that can enable knowledge sharing, transfer and retention in an organization (Albers, 2009). By using technology most of the collaboration and communication throughout the organization, be it top to bottom, side to side, could be

accompanied quicker and cheaper. According to Holbeche (2005) most organizations now actively encourage employee use of the internet, intranet, bulletin boards, e-mail and shared databases. Technologies such as telephones and personal networked computers with standardized productivity tools (word processing, spreadsheets, legal databases and presentation software), collaborative and communicative technologies (intranet portals and internet), and groupware (emails, video conferencing, calendaring, group scheduling and task list) are the initial tools and technologies required for knowledge management in organizations (Fombad, 2009). Information technology provides a number of capabilities for the transferring, sharing, preserving and retaining of knowledge as discussed below.

### **3.14.1 Internet**

Due to its availability in most parts of the world the internet is now the world's public communication system linking individual people worldwide (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). The internet is a huge network of computers in a global scale connected via telecommunication links, for the sake of sharing information. The World Wide Web is the worldwide collection of documents linked together. The internet provides extensive pathways for sharing knowledge because of its simplicity and ubiquitous presence (Saharabudhe, 2001:271). Clients use the internet to request information from a particular Web server and the server sends the requested information back to the client over the internet (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). This gives broadcasters leverage to acquire more information from other sites. Organizations set up web sites to assist people access knowledge through the internet.



### **3.14.2 Intranet**

This intranet technology is a common feature in many organizations where employees access data, information and knowledge from within an organization while those from outside are restricted (Laudon and Laudon, 2007; Saharabudhe, 2001). According to Skyrme (1998) the first knowledge management initiative for many organizations is to install or improve the already existing organizational intranet. The intranet is protected from visits by outsiders. Averweg (2008) conducted a study at eThekweni Municipality (Durban, South Africa) on developing an intranet towards knowledge sharing. From a practitioner-based inquiry perspective data was gathered using a survey research design whereby employees were asked to fill in an online questionnaire that was emailed to them. The findings revealed that 87% of the respondents regarded an intranet as a useful platform to share and access inter-departmental information, 81% viewed the intranet as an effective way to conduct organizational interaction, 77% were of the view that it is the quickest focal point to disseminate and get organizational communication, 72% said it enhances departmental communication while 65% were of the opinion that it helps the organization improve its service to customers. These results indicate that the intranet is mainly used for accessing and sharing organizational information. As observed by Debowski, (2006) intranets provide the technological platform for recording organizational knowledge. Averweg (2008) further argues that intranets are integral to an organization as it enhances an organization's knowledge sharing activities, supports the distribution, connectivity and publishing of information.

### **3.14.3 Workflow**

Workflow tools allow documents and other forms of information to be routed among individuals and, this may mean routing a new document to various members of a working team or sending a draft document to individuals for review and approval (Saharabudhe, 2001:272; Laudon and Laudon, 2007). Knowledge that does not flow doesn't grow and eventually ages and becomes obsolete and useless and yet by contrast knowledge that flows by being shared, acquired, and exchanged, generates new knowledge (Borghoff *et al*, 1998). Averweg (2008) ranked the findings in ascending order and 63% of the respondents thought it did not help with productivity while 50% of the respondents viewed the intranet as necessary for employees to perform daily work functions. This suggests that much as the intranet may be utilized as a workflow tool it was not viewed as such at the eThekweni Municipality because it was ranked 6 and 7 position.

### **3.14.4 Data warehousing and Data mining**

Many organizations have data spread across different databases and to get information out of those databases is difficult and as such information technology based tools can enable easy search and extraction from a mass of data the nugget of knowledge that may be crucial to the business objectives of an organization (Saharabudhe, 2001:273). Information technology usually maintains the databases, hardware and software access points with the view to ensure survivability of information (Jafari *et al*, 2009).

Data mining is one of the tools that are used to obtain information and knowledge in order to make an informed decision in an organization (Jain, 2009). Tools and techniques such as data mining are used to discover knowledge that is immersed within

organizations and can help knowledge seekers to discover desired knowledge from the huge databases of the organizations. Data mining takes explicit knowledge found in databases and transforms it into tacit knowledge.

### **3.14.5 Virtual teams**

Web conferencing and collaboration software provide virtual conference tables for participants to view and modify documents and slides, write or draw on an electronic whiteboard, or share their thoughts and comments using chat or voice conferencing (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). Virtual communication operates through a variety of technological channels which include email, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, electronic brainstorming, group display screens, discussion threads and net meetings and other forms of electronic interaction (Debowski, 2006:8, 73).

Virtual knowledge teams come to existence because of the existence of physical boundaries that have to be overcome. Such challenges may be geographical, temporary or even organizational separation and as such virtual teams rely on information technology to share knowledge and maintain communication. Virtual knowledge teams need to meet frequently in order to maintain group cohesion but team members rely on meetings to share issues.

Technology enhances the way people share knowledge and expertise in the organization. Knowledge sharing can take place through virtual teams formed to operate for various purposes such as project management, professional networks, and collaborative specialization between organizations, production, service and management (Debowski, 2004)

Virtual teams are valuable in facilitating the generation of ideas and new strategies, collecting data and sharing information and identifying creative solutions to problems (Buckley & Carter, 2001 quoted in Debowski, 2004:9). However, they are less successful in generating solutions to problems or when dealing with technical or interpersonal conflicts. There is likelihood of poor communication and misinterpretation when the transmission channel is electronic.

### **3.14.6 Electronic mail (E-mail)**

Electronic mail (e-mail) is a system that enables users to compose, transmit, receive and manage electronic messages and images across networks from computer to computer (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). Through this technological channel an individual can share knowledge with one or more people by routing and or forwarding a message using a distribution list (Laudon and Laudon, 2007; Saharabudhe, 2001). Besides messages an e-mail has capabilities for attaching text documents or multimedia files to messages (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). An e-mail enables a community of practice to share knowledge via the internet and can be spread across the world.

### **3.14.7 Video-Conferencing and Teleconferencing**

This is a facility whereby teleconferencing allows the additional capability of viewing participants via video screens. A video-conference allows a community of practice to share knowledge and have visual contact with each other which is how many individuals across the world can participate in sharing knowledge through video-conferencing (Saharabudhe, 2001:275). Teleconferencing is a basic technique of conferring simultaneously via telephone or email groupware. Laudon and Laudon (2007) aver that

internet telephony enables organizations to use internet technology for telephone voice transmission over the internet or private networks.

Linked to telephony technology is the use of cellphones to share and retain information. Mobile phones enable people to communicate and access internet where conventional telephone or internet service is expensive or unavailable (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). Through short message service (SMS) individuals receive and send data and alphanumeric messages that can be forwarded, stored and later retrieved. With the technological advancements there is now the third generation (3G) powerful enough to transmit voice, video, graphics and other rich media (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). This shows that cellphones can be utilized to share and retain information that can be put into action.

#### **3.14.8 Electronic workplace for collaborative work**

Information technology tools provide an electronic workplace to enable collaboration and synchronizing activities effectively at work (Saharabudhe, 2001:275). Setting up discussion groups, bulletin boards, and news groups allows members of a community to share substantive knowledge with each other, reduce face-to-face meetings, save travel time and cost (Laudon and Laudon, 2007).

#### **3.14.9 Groupware**

Collaborative computing tools or groupware are used to enhance the transfer of tacit knowledge within organization (Turban *et al*, 2008). Groupware provides individuals, teams, and workgroups at different locations in the organization the capabilities to write and comment on group projects, sharing ideas and documents, conducting electronic

meetings, tracking the status of tasks and projects, scheduling, and sending email (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). Groupware supports teams of people working together on a particular project. This software has created the death of distance by enabling people from any geographical location to work together via networks. Groupware tools allow two or more individuals to brainstorm electronically. Through groupware many people can work collaboratively across the room or across the world. Organizational knowledge is a result of various interactive learning processes and the use of IT in the company generates sustainable competitive advantages (Johannessen, Olaisen and Olsen, 2001).

The use of IT facilitates the transfer of external explicit knowledge and increases the speed of the availability of information (Johannessen, Olaisen and Olsen, 2001). Stafford and Mearns (2009) investigated the usage patterns, user attitudes and perceptions regarding online social networking technologies as a professional application for knowledge sharing within the workplace at IBM Global Business Services in SA. Self-administered questionnaires were administered online to a sample of 68 employees and one in-depth structured interview was held with the organization's knowledge manager the findings revealed that employees had positive attitudes regarding usage of social networking tools for knowledge sharing. In this study 92% of the respondents said they used email and selected it as one of their most preferred collaboration tools. This is consistent with Laudon and Laudon, (2007) who argue that through the use of online social networks (OSN) tools such as emails, blogs, Wikis, forums, virtual communities, chat system, UseNet newsgroups and instant messaging, employees are able to collaborate and share their ideas and knowledge in an informal

setting since OSN tools are highly effective in promoting knowledge sharing on a professional level among employees. A tool called Sametime, IBM's Instant Messaging tool, was ranked second highest level of awareness and use at 90%.

Subsequent studies that have been conducted in SA indicate that organizations now utilize the available technologies to facilitate knowledge retention and knowledge management. For instance Gaffoor and Cloete (2010) assessed knowledge management enablers at Stellenbosch Municipality and found out that the municipality had various contemporary information technology systems in place which are utilized in various departments. The study established that the municipality runs a number of information systems that include Collaborator a document management system, a database known as the Strategic Management Sytem which is used to capture all information and data related to the organization's budget. The municipality operates an e-library for staff to access a number of documents, runs a website where GIS, e-library notices, job vacancies and links to council employees are available. This suggests that Stellenbosch is abreast with current technologies that it uses in the knowledge economy to maintain a competitive edge.

#### **3.14.10 Blogs**

A weblog shortened to blog is a type of electronic communications that is widely used personally and commercially and even at workplace to capture information, publish stories, news, express opinions, commentaries and create journals and provides links to other sites of interest (Laudon and Laudon, 2007; Ramirez, 2006). Certain communities of practice may use blogs as a meeting space by posting questions, minutes, information, comments and sharing ideas. Blogs provide news on particular subjects

allowing readers to leave comments interactively and such aspects make them suitable to store knowledge from individuals that can be shared by a community (Ramirez, 2007). Blog entries are usually archived for future use and departments can appoint individuals to archive their knowledge base. Blogging supports knowledge sharing and captured knowledge in a blog is easy to retrieve (Ramirez, 2007). In some situations organizations can use blogs as their homepage where they may include news about the organizations, events, celebrations, important notices. Blogs can capture an extensive range of information photographs, audio or video presentations, calendars and schedules, polls, links to current news. However, blogs can be difficult to monitor and regulate so great care must be exercised to guard against unprofessional and inappropriate issues being shared (Atwood, 2009)

Ramirez (2006) carried out a sociotechnical view of knowledge management to review the literature on knowledge sharing and its barriers. After presenting a series of knowledge sharing strategies blogging is then discussed to formalize the knowledge sharing strategies as a way to develop an organizational culture that promotes knowledge sharing. Blogging allows the reader to leave comments, suggestions in an interactive manner. The comments posted on the blogs are preserved and in this way knowledge is stored for future use by a community. Blogging presents itself as transparent tool to share knowledge.

Parker and Wills (2009) investigated the use of Web 2.0 technologies in enhancing the information flow within the Cape Flats community to assist prevent the growth and spread of gangsterism and use of drugs. They used a qualitative case study approach



contrary to other studies referred to. Data were gathered by separately interviewing, on a one on one and face-to-face basis, a group of 12 people. One of the findings of this study was that only five of the 12 interviewees would blog three or more times in a week. Consistent with Ramirez (2007)'s observation this group was a community of people whose interests were bordering on drug abuse and other crimes in the Cape Flats.

### **3.14.11 Wikis**

This is an online platform that allows visitors to add, delete or modify information directly into the knowledge base thus allowing the listings to add viewpoints from different sources (Atwood, 2009:50; Laudon and Laudon, 2007). An organization can hold various wikis that may include topic-based, departmental, or troubleshooting forums. Wikis unlike blogs are collaborative websites (Laudon and Laudon, 2007) improve employee engagement in knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.

Formal structured technological communication networks such as videoconferences, teleconferences, e-mail, internet, web-based networks intranets, extranets and mobile communications are effective ways and tools for effective knowledge sharing but does not motivate employees to share knowledge (Ramirez, 2007). Technology, much as it may be seen to be very important in knowledge management, remains a useful enabler rather than a central tenet at the heart of knowledge management (Fombad, Boon and Bothma, 2009). Nold (2009) contends with this view and argues that technology can facilitate information and knowledge sharing but single individuals create new knowledge. Information technology makes it possible for the connections that enable knowledge sharing (Ramirez, 2007) but the mere existence of technology or its use

does not turn a knowledge hoarding organization to a knowledge sharing one (Fombad, Boon and Bothma, 2009). In any case the use of appropriate and user-friendly information technology is a fundamental part of most knowledge management systems (Ragsdell, 2009)

#### **3.14.12 Database**

This is a shared collection of logically related data designed to meet the varied information of an organization.

A narrative database is an oral history or commentary that is created by one person interviewing another, talking about what they know and recording presentations done by organizational leaders. A narrative database can capture performance histories, participant comments where experience and tacit knowledge reside. The databases may comprise audio files, videos, or transcripts of discussions to ensure that the information is conveyed in a speaker's own words. This technology can be very useful in capturing the wisdom of retiring employees. (Atwood, 2009:49). Such sources will be revisited when need arises. Database technologies make it possible for organizations to swiftly collect, archive and distribute knowledge (Egan, 1998:4)

### **3.15 ITCs use for knowledge management in broadcasting organizations**

The activities of broadcasting are knowledge intensive and so require IT use for effective knowledge management. Face to face interviews with managers revealed that

journalists, reporters, editors, engineers, camera persons, are all professionals who have gained knowledge through formal education (explicit) and through learning on the job (tacit). Broadcasters engage in different types of knowledge activities. Knowledge can be referred to as the intellectual capital of both individuals and the organizations (Mezher, 2007; Rhodes *et al*, 2007) and as such knowledge remains the broadcasting organizations' principal asset. This study focused on the challenges raised due to the intense penetration of the information and communication technologies at SABC and ZBC. In knowledge intensive institutions such as public broadcasting organizations' use of ICTs and particularly for knowledge management is a pre-requisite for IT investments to yield the desired productivity dividends.

Laudon and Laudon (2007) are of the view that employee use of email, instant messaging and the internet is supposed to increase worker productivity. Many corporations are making huge investments in building knowledge management systems and this investment pattern will continue into the foreseeable future (Chau and Hu, 2002). Organizations are making use of internet conferencing tools to stage meetings, conferences, and presentations online (Laudon and Laudon, 2007)

The study focused on how each of the three broadcasting organizations facilitate the creation, organization, storage, retrieval, transfer, sharing and most importantly the retention of knowledge in their organizations to enhance continuous competitive advantage in the media industry.

### **3.16 Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature pertaining to knowledge retention strategies in the organizations. The concepts of data, information and knowledge were defined and the differences between information and knowledge management were outlined. Factors that affect knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer for retention purposes were examined. Emphasis was placed on the knowledge retention strategies of communities of practices, use of subject matter experts, mentoring and apprenticeship, conducting exit interviews, documentation of processes as strategies to capture organizational knowledge. The aspects of organizational learning were also discussed. The review included an examination of the organizational culture and how it affects the retention of organizational knowledge. The review culminated in the review of how various ICTs contribute to organizational knowledge sharing, transfer and retention for future use. It was clear that various authors acknowledge the importance of ICTs in playing an enabling role for the key aspects of knowledge management.

The review revealed a combination of various approaches in conducting studies in knowledge management. The methodologies included the use of questionnaires, interviews, observation, and these seemed appropriate for the problem under study. The next chapter describes the methodological framework that was employed to gather data in the three broadcasting organizations.

**Research Methodology****4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the procedures followed in conducting this study. It gives an overview of the processes that were followed and the methodology used in collecting data for the research. The chapter describes the ethical considerations, identifies the target population and describes the sampling technique used, the validity and reliability issues. The instruments that were used to collect data and their validation are also discussed. The chapter ends with the data analysis to determine the guidelines of knowledge retention in the three public broadcasting organizations that were studied namely SABC, DBS and ZBC.

This study adopted a survey research design to establish how knowledge is retained in the national broadcasting organizations of South Africa (South Africa Broadcasting Corporation), Botswana (Department of Broadcasting Services, and Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation). A survey was appropriate for this study because it asked many respondents about many things at one time (Neuman, 2006:222). Survey research was probably the best method available to this researcher who was interested

in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2010). This researcher viewed a survey as an excellent vehicle for measuring attitudes by sampling many respondents who answered the same questions, measuring many variables about past behavior, experiences or characteristics in a large population (Babbie, 2010; Neuman, 2006).

An integrated approach involving quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was used for this study. The most important strength about the descriptive survey method was its use of a multiple number of techniques for data collection such as the questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and content analysis which usually arises from the need to safeguard validity and reliability of the processes used. Babbie (2010) contends that surveys are useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. A carefully selected purposive sample combined with a standardized questionnaire offered the possibility of making a refined description about knowledge retention strategies in the three broadcasting corporations. A survey method made a large sample feasible for this study. However, this survey had its own weaknesses such as being inflexible, use of standardized questionnaire with all respondents that may result in missing what was appropriate to many respondents (Babbie, 2010).

The advantages/strengths were that in two of the broadcasting organizations the researcher gave questionnaires directly to respondents who went on to record their answers at their convenient time. The main instrument for data collection in this study was a questionnaire and the analysis was essentially quantitative. Interviews were held with managers to cater for the weaknesses of the questionnaire, and as a result qualitative data was collected. The advantages of the interviews were that the

researcher could observe the surroundings, use non-verbal communication, ask all types of questions and could probe. The main weaknesses of the face to face interviews were interviewer bias and besides, the appearance, tone of voice and wording of questions at times influenced the answers. Nevertheless, the interviews complemented the quantitative data that were gathered using the questionnaire. The researcher chose this particular methodology which employed a multifaceted approach in order to provide an in-depth analysis and investigated the problems of knowledge retention at SABC, DBS and ZBC. The rationale for choosing this methodology ahead of others was that this methodology was appropriate for collecting large amounts of data from various sections/departments of each of the three broadcasting organizations within a short space of time. Use of the questionnaire helped in gathering large amounts of original data and increased honest answering on some sensitive issues from the respondents. This is further discussed in section 4.9.1.

## **4.2 Quantitative and Qualitative research methods**

This study used an integrated approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This integration was adopted to cater for the weaknesses of one methodology over another. The weaknesses of the quantitative paradigm are found in the strengths of the qualitative paradigm and vice versa as suggested by social researcher (Babbie, 2010; Stangor, 2011; Neuman, 2006). The main data collection tool was the questionnaire (that was completed by both employees and their managers) while 38 face-to-face interviews were conducted with top, middle and line managers from all the three public broadcasting organizations. Sixteen observations each lasting

between 28 minutes to one hour were used during the four month period of gathering data at the public broadcasting corporations.

#### **4.2.1 Quantitative methods**

This research relied more on quantitative approaches. Stangor (2011:15) observes that quantitative research is descriptive research that uses more formal measures of beliefs, attitudes, intentions, behaviour, including questionnaires and systematic observation of behaviour that is subjected to statistical analysis. In most cases quantitative research places emphasis on quantification in the collection and analysis of data and the data can be expressed in numbers, percentages, tables (Babbie, 2010: 35). It includes the use of closed survey methods (Myers, 1997). Quantitative research is associated with deductive approach (Babbie, 2010:36). Quantitative researchers emphasize the need for research to be reliable and generalizable and the results from the limited sample to apply to the population from which the sample was drawn.

According to Ngulube (2009) one of the strengths of quantitative data analysis is to arrange large amounts of confusing data in graphical form or numerical summaries thus satisfactorily answering research questions posed. Quantitative research is more formalized and controlled than qualitative research and it has the possibility of replication using different groups of subjects (Stangor, 2011; Babbie, 2010; Ngulube, 2009). However, quantitative research has its own weaknesses. Quantitative research makes use of experiments yet social processes observed in a laboratory setting may not necessarily occur within natural settings (Weingand, 1993). From the wording, quantitative research places focus more on quantity than quality.



However, in this study quantitative data facilitated the measurement of knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, effects of organizational culture on knowledge sharing for retention purposes, and the use of ICTs in knowledge transfer, sharing and retention.

#### **4.2.2 Qualitative methods**

This study used some qualitative techniques such as interviews and observations to gather qualitative data. Stangor (2011:15) describes qualitative research as descriptive research that is focused on observing and describing events as they occur, with the goal of capturing all of the richness of the everyday behaviour. Qualitative research takes place in a natural setting of the phenomena to be studied (Ngulube, 2009). Whereas in quantitative research the questionnaire is the main data collection tool, in qualitative researchers are the main data collection tool. By using their senses, wits and human relations skills rather than instruments to understand phenomena they gather first-hand information. In this study the researcher used both tools to gather data.

The data forming the basis of qualitative research include field notes, audio or video recordings (Stangor, 2011:15) and is presented in narrative form which tries to capture the flavor of the natural setting (Ngulube, 2009). Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data such as in-depth interviews, document and participant observation, ethnography to understand and explain social and cultural phenomena (Ngulube, 2009; Myers, 1997). Qualitative research emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and the data are expressed in words information about feelings, values and attitudes (Babbie, 2010: 35). Qualitative research tends to be

associated with the idea that social life is the product of social interaction and relationships and actions characterize the social world (Babbie, 2010: 36). In fact it often focuses on viewing the experiences from the perspective of those involved. Qualitative data helped the researcher determine the managers and heads of sections' experiences, efforts and perceptions regarding the retention of knowledge that is generated or acquired by their organizations.

One of the major weaknesses or drawbacks of qualitative data gathering techniques such as in-depth interviews, observations and content analysis is that it is time consuming. Qualitative research is also associated with researcher bias. The quantitative technique of using questionnaires catered for this weakness of the qualitative research technique. Be that as it may, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches complement each other, and in this study they were used to gather useful data on knowledge retention strategies. While quantitative research is objective in approach, qualitative studies are subjective or micro thus looking at the actions of individuals or small groups as key sites of social construction (Babbie, 2010: 37). In fact Fombad (2009) argues that quantitative and qualitative methods tend to overlap and establishing a clear cut difference between the two is complex.

### **4.3 Triangulation**

Kelly (2006) defines triangulation as collecting material in using as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible thus assisting researchers to understand better a phenomenon by approaching it from several different angles. Social

researchers have embraced triangulation, the idea that looking at something from multiple points of view improves accuracy (Stangor, 2011). Hammersley, (2008:22) observes that triangulation is a term that is being widely used but has divergent interpretations. Neuman (2006:149-150) identifies the following four types of triangulation: triangulation of measures is when researchers take multiple measures of the same phenomenon in order to see all aspects of it; triangulation of observers is making use of multiple observers in a study thus adding alternative perspectives to reduce limitations, triangulation of theory occurs when the researcher uses multiple theoretical perspectives in planning the research or interpreting data and triangulation of method means mixing qualitative and quantitative styles of research and data. This study engaged triangulation of measures, theory and methods in order to obtain reliable data and valid results.

To gain a better understanding of the knowledge retention strategies this researcher made use of interviews, questionnaires, observations and study of institutional documents. The study triangulated the methods and the data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods and found them complementing each other. This study used a quantitative survey questionnaire and followed up with an interview to gather data that was analyzed statistically. The researcher obtained quantitative data by administering questionnaires to top, middle and line managers together with their subordinates. Qualitative data were obtained through observations and interviews with managers and heads of sections. The researcher was then able to compare and contrast results from the questionnaires and interviews in order to determine the extent to which they did and

did not agree with each other. This enabled the researcher to develop more complete and well-substantiated conclusions about the knowledge retention strategies in these three SADC public broadcasting organizations.

#### **4.4 Surveys**

Surveys are mostly used to capture the thoughts of a large population and collect descriptive information (Stangor, 2011:16,107) and the best method to the social researcher who is collecting original data (Babbie, 2010; 244). Survey research seems to be the most common in the field of Library and Information Science. Kemoni and Ngulube (2007:125) and Babbie (2007:110) argue that it is the best study design as it uses more than one research method, thus taking advantage of their various strengths.

Stangor (2011:107) observes that surveys are the widely used methods of collecting descriptive information about a group of people within a short space of time. In this study, large amounts of data were collected from the three broadcasting organizations through a self-report measure administered through questionnaires. The researcher found it suitable to employ the survey method in this study since surveys are chiefly used in studies that have individual people as the units of analysis (Babbie, 2010:254). The main aim of a survey is to produce a snapshot of the opinions, attitudes, and behaviours of a group of people at a given time (Stangor, 2011: 107). The researcher found the survey method quite appropriate to use for this study considering the population and sample size and the short time available for completing this study.

## **4.5 Research design**

A research design is a programme that guides a researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and giving meaning to it (Ngulube, 2009). Du Plooy (2001) defines design as a plan of how the research will be conducted, indicating who or what is involved and where and when the study will take place. This study employed the descriptive survey research design. Stangor (2011:14) views a descriptive research design as designed to answer questions about the current state of affairs, describing the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals. Through use of questions the researcher chose the descriptive survey research design for the purposes of describing the current state of affairs, describing junior employees' and managers' thoughts and feelings about issues on knowledge retention that were studied.

Once the proposal was accepted by the University of Fort Hare's Higher Degrees Committee the researcher went on to construct the data gathering instruments/tools namely the main questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide. For four months, August to November 2010, the researcher collected data at SABC, DBS and ZBC through questionnaire administration, interviews and observations. Managers and their professional subordinates, who were purposively selected, were the participants in this study. Assisted by the SABC, DBS and ZBC corporate and public relations officers the researcher distributed the questionnaire to participants. Collection of questionnaire went on for a month. This was because some questionnaire got lost, some misplaced by the respondents so the researcher had to replace 28 of them. After the questionnaire was collected the researcher went on to interview the managers as planned. The SABC and

DBS' corporate and communications offices as well as the ZBC public relations office arranged for the interviews.

The researcher then coded and analyzed data using SPSS version 20. The interview and observation data were placed under various themes and formed part of the findings in the report. The findings are presented graphically in Chapter five.

To many readers, research design and research methodologies seem to mean the same thing but they are different (Bryman, 2004) though intrinsically linked (Babbie, 2010:134). A research design provides the logical and strategic framework for conducting the research project and enables the researcher to gather evidence that will enable the research questions to be answered (Babbie, 2010:134; Durrheim, 2006:34). There are a number of definitions with regards to research design but this study adopted Stangor's (2011) definition that a research design is the specific method a researcher uses to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

While a research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data, a research methodology is a technique for collecting data and can involve a specific instrument such as a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule or a participant observation whereby researcher watches participants (Bryman, 2004). However, Babbie and Mouton (2001:72) described a research design as a plan for finding out something. According to Barbie and Mouton, (2001) a research design is an end product or a result of the study while a research methodology focuses on the research processes and the tools and procedures to be used (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:75). The data collection tools and procedures are part of the research design.

Punch (2005:63) states that the research design connects the research questions to data since data is collected and analyzed from a sample using tools and procedures.

#### **4.6 Population of the study**

All the fifteen SADC public broadcasting organizations formed the population of this study. David and Sutton (2004:149) define a population as 'every possible case that could be included in a study'. A population is the entire group of people that the researcher desires to learn about (Stangor, 2011:110), any set of persons or objects that possess at least one common characteristic (Busha and Harter, 1980: 56-7) or a target group who would, in the ideal world, be the subject of the research, and about whom one is trying to say something (Punch, 2005:101). However, Gay (1981:86) described a population as group of interest to the researcher the group to which she or he would like the results to be generalized. This researcher targeted the 15 SADC national broadcasting organizations whose main characteristic is that they are all state funded, public, government run and found in every country as a national broadcaster.

According to Powell (1997:66) the population should be selected with great care bearing in mind the selection criteria, the desired size and the parameters of the survey. In light of the above this study selected all the 15 SADC public broadcasting organizations of the fifteen member states (population), but then narrowed down to a selected number of cases from the population of the whole group (sample) thus the SABC, DBS and ZBC. The three were chosen because they use the same language (English) as a medium of communication and of broadcasting, they are in close proximity to each other and to the

researcher such that it was fairly easy for the researcher to visit the organizations. The population of the study is that group about whom we want to draw conclusions (Babbie, 2007:111) or simply every possible case that could be included in your study (Babbie, 2010:149). The entire SADC grouping of public broadcasting corporations was too large to be studied within the time frame in which this study was scheduled to be completed hence the need to select a representative group (sample).

#### **4.7 Sample**

No study can involve everything or everyone (Punch, 2005; 101). For this study to be effectively conducted there was need to sample. The sample was derived from the population and comprised three national broadcasting organisations, 36 managers and 240 employees. With the assistance of the HR and PR departments of all the three broadcasting organizations the researcher was availed with a complete list of members or employee's positions to select potential participants. This was the sampling frame, a list of the units of composing a population from which a sample is selected (Babbie, 2010). The three public broadcasting organizations were arrived at on the basis of them using the same official language (English) and besides they are neighbours thus making it easy for the researcher to conduct the study. The employees were purposively chosen because of their levels of education and positions at work to meaningfully contribute to the objectives of this study and provide information on knowledge retention. The involvement of employees was based on their active generation of knowledge in this creative industry. Secondly, employees may leave an organization any time so issues with regards to knowledge sharing and organizational culture are better found from



them. The researcher held preliminary meetings with the human resource managers and the public relations/corporate communications officers to purposively select employees who would participate in this study.

These employees were preferred because they were believed to be information rich and professionally mature and knowledgeable enough to assist in this study. Sampling is the selection of research participants from an entire population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours or social processes to observe (Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006:49). Time and funds being major constraints, this study used purposive sampling where this researcher deliberately targeted knowledgeable people (managers) in their respective sections. The population of the study, the 15 SADC national broadcasters, was too large for the survey so a representative group was selected (Babbie, 2010: 149). It would be difficult to involve every worker of the three national broadcasting organizations and for that reason the researcher had to use a sample. Phillips (1981) suggests that the respondents should not be chosen randomly but should have some specific criteria such as particular status, specialized knowledge, or accessibility to the researcher. Stangor (2011:110) refers to a sample as the smaller group of people who actually participate in the research and as such only those in the position of managers and subordinates with some educational qualifications took part in this study.

In some cases it is logical and appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population or its elements (Babbie, 2007; 184) and this is referred to as purposive sampling. This study used purposive sampling. Purposive samples are occasionally referred to as judgment samples (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1990) or theoretical

sampling (Babbie, 2010: 152). Knowledge retention practices is a managerial responsibility thus this researcher had to employ purposive sampling which among other sampling techniques 'uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases or selects cases with a specific purpose in mind'(Neuman, 2005:222). The researcher could not involve every employee of SABC (3800), DBS (400) and ZBC (800). In view of the large numbers sampling was inevitably required. Neuman (2005:222) states that purposive sampling is appropriate to select unique cases that are especially informative. Through the assistance of the public relations and corporate communications officers the researcher held briefings with some managers who in turn selected subordinates that would participate in this study. As Stangor (2011) suggests the researcher sampled on the basis of wanting to interview people who were relevant to the research questions. So the informative sources of this study were carefully and purposefully chosen to be those with secondary education or holding certificates, diplomas or degrees.

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1990) the sampling units are selected subjectively by the researcher who attempts to obtain a sample that appears to him or her to be representative of the population. The units were selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones would be the most useful and as such only professionals holding diplomas and degrees in their respective areas participated in this study. Babbie (2010: 152) further states that the units in purposive sampling are selected according to the researcher's own knowledge and opinion about which ones they think are appropriate to the topic area. Knowledge management is a managerial aspect thus only 38 employees in the managerial positions were interviewed in a face-to-face situation and also participated in responding to the questionnaire. These

individuals, as rightly observed by Babbie (2010:152), were judged by the researcher to hold specific knowledge on knowledge retention and as such were considered the most appropriate respondents to participate in this study. However purposive sampling is not without its issues of bias. The choice of the respondents was based on the researcher bias of particular experts. It may be difficult to convince readers on the criteria that was used to select the organizations and respondents.

## **4.8 Data Collection Instruments**

In this study the researcher used the self-administered questionnaire, interviews, observations and institutional documents as research instruments for collecting data.

### **4.8.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a set of fixed-format self-report items that is completed by respondents at their own pace, often without supervision (Stangor, 2001:108). Some of the answers were sensitive so a questionnaire guaranteed the respondents' anonymity thereby increasing the likelihood of obtaining information in a less threatening way. Besides, the questionnaires encouraged frankness of respondents' opinions. Studies (Martins, 2011; Fombad, 2009; Fombad, Boon and Bothma, 2009; Stafford and Mearns, 2009; Steyn and du Toit, 2009; Ojo-Ronke, 2009, Jacobs and Roodt, 2007; Ondari-Okemwa, 2006) suggest that the self-reporting questionnaire is commonly used in knowledge management to collect large amounts of data, get frank responses from knowledge workers and managers, and cater for sensitive responses as the

questionnaire encourages anonymity. Surveys use questionnaires to collect large amounts of original data (Babbie, 2010:254).

A questionnaire was designed and administered to both managers and employees at SABC, ZBC and DBS. A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed as follows; 70 at DBS in Botswana, 70 to ZBC employees and 100 to SABC employees. The size of each broadcasting organization influenced the disparity of questionnaire distribution. SABC being the largest of the three public broadcasting organizations in terms of workforce and managers received the most questionnaires to complete while ZBC and DBS completed the same number. The purpose of the questionnaire was to seek employee and managers' individual opinions with regards to knowledge retention in their respective broadcasting corporations. This form of data collection allowed for a number of people to be involved in the study and thus completed the questionnaire at a time convenient to them. Questionnaires may produce more honest responses and answers than interviews because of their anonymous nature (Stangor, 2011). Respondents to the questionnaire enabled the participants to retain anonymity.

This instrument had both open ended and close-ended questions that were all designed to elicit information from the respondents. Myers (1997) and Dawson (2006:32) argue that open-ended questions can be used to produce qualitative evidence. When used in qualitative research open-ended questions do not contain boxes to tick, but instead leave blank sections for the respondents to write answers (Dawson, 2006). These open-ended questions helped to achieve the objectives of this study in that respondents gave their own opinions with regards to knowledge sharing and knowledge retention in their respective organizations. For this reason, the questionnaires used in this study were

designed to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. While it may not be a perfect data collection tool this researcher chose a questionnaire for its advantages of accommodating a variety of questions and minimizing time and money constraints.

The corporate relations office in Botswana prepared a distribution list and an interview schedule that made easy the self-administration of the questionnaire. Sections that completed the questionnaire in this study include Radio Botswana 1 and 2, Botswana Television Services, corporate communications, human resources, marketing department, engineering, news, library, archives, transport and administration. The Botswana television (Btv) section presented serious challenges with regards to questionnaire return. Of all the departments the response was low in this section with only three (37.5%) questionnaires returned out of the eight distributed.

The public relations officer in the office of the CEO of ZBC took charge of the distribution of the questionnaire and made use of the registry clerks to distribute the questionnaires to various sections of the ZBC. The same clerks were in charge of ensuring the return of the questionnaires but with fair success.

The Corporate Affairs officer distributed the questionnaire at SABC. SABC has a vast and massive complex with 29 floors in the radio park and 15 floors in the TV side.

#### ***4.8.1.1 Questionnaire design and layout***

The length of a questionnaire is debatable (Neuman, 2006:292). This study used a 19-page questionnaire with 40 questions and achieved a 65% response rate. According to Neuman (2006:292) researches using 10 pages or 100 items have been successful but

for highly educated respondents and salient topic, using questionnaires of 15 pages may be possible.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. While the main purpose of the questionnaire was to seek the employee insights into knowledge retention, the first part covered general biographical data and organizational knowledge. This was done to create the respondents profile for the purposes of classification and comparison at the data analysis stage (David and Sutton, 2004:162). The researcher was careful to avoid asking too many boring background questions (Neuman, 2005:295). Questions on the same topic/objective were placed together to avoid mixing questions thereby confusing the respondent. Section B contained questions on knowledge sharing as a way of retaining organizational tacit and explicit knowledge. Knowledge retention refers to the activities which allow knowledge to remain in the system and one way of achieving this is through knowledge conversion. Section C had questions on knowledge conversion from both tacit to explicit, explicit to tacit as outlined by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Organizational culture influences knowledge sharing for retention purposes and as such Section D posed questions on how corporate culture may affect knowledge retention. The final part, section C contained questions on the role of ICTs in knowledge transfer, sharing and retention in the broadcasting organizations.

For this study every questionnaire section was preceded by clear, basic instructions and or introductory remarks to help the respondents understand and complete the questionnaire without problems (Babbie, 2010:266; Neuman, 2006; 277). Efforts were made to ensure that the questionnaire was clear, neat, and easy to follow (Neuman, 2005:295) in order to increase completion rate and improve response rate. This was

done to raise the validity due to high response rate. Taking from Babbie (2010:262) that a questionnaire should be spread out and uncluttered, the researcher made efforts to design an attractive professional questionnaire that had boxes adequately spaced apart to persuade and encourage the respondent to complete it.

This study made use of closed questions with very few open-ended questions (Cf Appendix 1). Out of the 40 questions, 37 were closed and 3 were open-ended. While in an open-ended question respondents are free to offer any answer, in closed questions respondents must choose from a fixed set of answers (Neuman, 2005:287; David and Sutton, 2004:162). Closed questions were chosen ahead of the open-ended questions mainly for their advantages in this study because

- they are quicker and easier for both respondents and researcher,
- answers of different respondents are easier to compare,
- answers are easier to code and statistically analyze,
- respondents are more likely to answer about sensitive topics and
- replication is easier (Neuman, 2005:287-288; David and Sutton, 2004:163).

In any case closed questions are popular in survey research because they provide greater uniformity and are easily processed compared to open ended questions (Babbie, 2010:256). The range of responses provided was exhaustive and included 'none', 'other' with a 'please specify' category at the end of every item (Babbie 2010:257, David and Sutton 2004:164). The major weaknesses of closed ended questions are as follows:

- they can suggest ideas that the respondent would not otherwise have

- the researcher may overlook some important responses in the questionnaire
- respondents with no opinion or no knowledge can answer anyway
- it is confusing if many (e.g., 20) response choices are offered
- distinctions between respondent answers may be blurred
- they force people to make choices they would not make in the real world
- they force respondents to give simplistic responses to complex issues (Neuman, 2005:287-288; David and Sutton, 2004:163).

The disadvantages of closed questions were overcome by mixing closed and open ended questions to avoid a total reliance on closed questions which Neuman (2005:288) argues can distort results. Open ended questions such as items 10b, 40a and 40b on the questionnaire enabled respondents to express their responses in their own words.

Out of forty questions on the questionnaire, there were 8 contingent questions whereby on the basis of answers provided to the first question, the respondent was required to proceed to the next. Neuman (2006:286) defines a contingent question as a two-part survey question in which a respondent's answer to a first question directs him or her either to the next questionnaire item or to a more specific and related second question. This was the case with questionnaire items 10a and 10b, 24 and 25, 28 and 29 then, lastly 37a and 37b.

#### **4.8.2 Interviews**

The researcher conducted face-to-face structured interviews with a mixture of top level, middle level and lower level managers depending on who was available. Managers were asked to answer questions relating to knowledge retention strategies in the



broadcasting organizations and each manager provided answers with respect to his/her department and, in some cases, where they once worked. Through the offices of the public and corporate relations an interview guide/schedule was sent to the identified managers during the first week of data gathering at each of the public broadcasting organization. This was done to give the interviewee ample time to prepare. A total of 38 face-to-face semi structured interviews were held with selected managers of the three broadcasting organizations (15 at SABC, 10 at ZBC and 13 at DBS). SABC happens to be the largest of the three organizations and, for that reason more face-to-face interviews were conducted there. The researcher asked for permission from the respondents to record the interviewees before conducting the interviews. The managers' views were then captured with the aid of a voice recorder and the interviews were later transcribed.

As proposed by Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006) the scheduled structured interviews were based on an established set of questions with fixed wording and sequence of presentation. Knowledge management is a managerial issue thus managers from various sections are directly involved in the knowledge creation, transfer and utilization and sharing for retention purposes in these organizations. However, every employee may be involved in all the knowledge management activities thus making every employee a knowledge manager. Knowledge has often been managed operationally by the managers who are directly responsible for a particular function (Wiig, 1995). However, some senior and highly skilled employees were not necessarily in the ranks of management in these three broadcasting organizations but they held critical knowledge that may need to be captured and retained.

While the structured interview is a prominent data collection strategy in both qualitative and quantitative research, it is chiefly used within social sciences research (Bryman, 2004:109). This study employed a structured interview whereby respondents were given exactly the same context of questioning. The researcher gave the managers an interview schedule in advance in order to prepare (see Appendix 2). Where necessary the researcher probed and asked follow-up questions to get clearer answers. As a data gathering tool, a face-to-face interview provided flexibility that enabled the researcher to get qualitative data from the interviewees. A case in point is an illustration below;

*Interviewer:* Of the two, tacit and explicit knowledge, which one do you think is the most important in the section that you are the manager?

*Interviewee:* Well, both but tacit is more important and once the person walks out, you lose it and it is gone.

*Interviewer:* So, have you lost much of such knowledge through resignations, death or retirement?

*Interviewee:* Oh! Yes indeed.

*Interviewer:* In light of that, what strategies has your organization put in place to capture and retain it?

*Interviewee:* Well in this section we just encourage seniors to share their knowledge with juniors because one day they will leave and once they leave we feel the gap...

In order to obtain in-depth information about knowledge retention in the three public broadcasting organizations, the researcher interviewed managers of different sections

(engineering/transmission, administration, legal services, sales and marketing, radio and television services, online news, information technology) to gather their insights into knowledge retention strategies and all in all there were 37 managers. Kelly (2006:300) suggests that an interview should last from 20 minutes to an hour and half because people find it difficult to concentrate much beyond that. Interviews for this study were conducted with managers in their respective offices and lasted between 20 and 50 minutes.

Babbie (2011:275) suggests that interviewers should dress in a fashion similar to that of the people they will be interviewing and as such the researcher had to dress smartly to portray a good image of him. Broadcasters dress for the occasion. Knowledge management is a management issue and as such researchers should contact managers during data collection phase to improve both quality and reliability of empirical results (Giovanni, 2009:5)

The interviews with the managers addressed a number of pressing issues that could not be dealt with in the questionnaire. The interviews were meant to gain insight into the identification of strategies in place for organizational knowledge retention, how knowledge sharing may contribute to knowledge retention, how a learning organization renews itself, thus converting knowledge from one form to another, resulting in better performances and better products. The interview guide also focused on how the corporate culture influences knowledge sharing for retention purposes. While ICTs may not transfer embrained, embodied and encultured types of knowledge, they are enablers and aids in knowledge transfer, sharing and retention and as such the role of ICT was also covered. The researcher further probed incomplete answers for the

purposes of elaboration and in most cases eliciting favourable and meaningful answers from the managers. Probing, according to Babbie (2011: 277), is a technique employed in interviewing to solicit a more complete answer to a question. The answers from the respondents were recorded verbatim, yielding 130 pages of raw data for analysis. As suggested by Stangor (2011:108) the structured interviews allowed for better comparisons of the responses across different individuals because the questions, time frame, and responses formats were controlled to be the same for each respondent. Interviewing managers face-to-face had its own problems. Rescheduling of interviews was not uncommon. Some managers remained elusive and kept on postponing the interview time. Some managers assigned their deputies to carry out the interviews. During interviews interruptions from subordinates, personal assistants (PAs), telephones and mobile phones was frequent and at times disrupted the flow of the interviews and the researcher could not dictate what to do and what not to do while in their offices. Because of the ever busy and tight schedule of these managers two of the interviews were rushed through and ended in 20 minutes. Efforts to reschedule other interviews were turned down citing time challenges.

#### **4.8.3 Observation**

Observational research entails making observations of behaviours and recording those observations in an objective manner (Stangor, 2011:129). The researcher mingled with the staff during the four months long data gathering exercise at each of the research sites, SABC, DBS and ZBC making observations (See appendix 3). The researcher observed employees' dress and how the juniors mixed with their seniors formally and informally in the offices, corridors, and canteen and food cafes at work. For the four-

month data gathering period, the researcher observed how employees conducted themselves before their seniors and juniors. Observation is the recording of events as observed by an outsider (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006:114). The researcher recorded all the observations and then used the data to compile the findings. While collecting data for one and half months at SABC, one of the days the researcher observed for two hours how employees utilized the library computers to share knowledge, sending emails to workmates and colleagues, supervisors, directors and managers in the same building and in other regions. In one of the offices, the manager demonstrated to the researcher how he uses the office communicator to communicate face-to-face with a fellow manager in another region. The two managers discussed for 22 minutes before hanging up.

Qualitative researchers observe human behavior as it happens and this needs patience as observations are carried out in unstructured manner (Ngulube, 2009). In line with Ngulube's assertion the researcher observed seniors and juniors socializing informally, sharing knowledge and work experiences during tea and lunch breaks. The researcher managed to observe employees, journalists and reporters acquiring knowledge in the corporate libraries at SABC, DBS and ZBC. In one of the broadcasting organizations the researcher was invited to attend and observe a 30 minute brainstorming session in the newsroom where journalists, editors and reporters were gathered discussing news items and stories.

During the one month period of data gathering at the DBS in Botswana, the researcher observed subordinates and juniors freely mixing and exchanging information and knowledge acquired at work during lunch time, in and outside the staff canteen. At ZBC

the researcher spent one and half month collecting data and observed new archivists and library assistants working together for an hour, sharing knowledge and information during the processing of audiovisual tapes and other library materials to facilitate access. At the same organization the researcher, as a guest hosted by the public relations office, was invited for lunch with some managers. For 45 minutes the researcher observed managers exchanging views and sharing managerial insights in the managers' canteen.

The researcher wished to observe how seminars, workshops, training and classroom activities were conducted as part of knowledge (tacit and explicit) exchange, sharing and conversion took place. However, this was not possible as there were no training sessions identified during the data collection period.

#### **4.8.4 Documentary analysis**

The researcher accessed and read some reports, magazines and other organizational circulars and notices from chief executive officers (CEO) and managers posted on the noticeboards as mode of communicating with organizational employees.

### **4.9 Data collection techniques**

The researcher made some visits to the broadcasting organizations (later to be followed by a pilot study, see 4.11 below) prior to undertaking the study “so as to gain familiarity with protocol and to build up a trusting relationship with potential participants” (Staplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010). In order to obtain access and maximum support from

the research participants, the researcher approached the gatekeepers well before approaching the participants directly so that the later would participate in the study (Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006:145). Efforts were made to ensure that the respondents were professionally and fully informed about the purpose of the study, about issues of confidentiality and anonymity (Punch, 2005:100). Respondents were also appraised on the use of the information that they would provide.

This study used a combination of interviews, observations and questionnaires to collect data. Information professionals are using qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to support studies concerned with the practices and techniques of information and knowledge management (Mavodza and Ngulube, 2011). Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering techniques were employed. In order to ensure good quality data collection the researcher remained in control of the data collection procedure (Punch, 2005:100). The researcher collected a letter of introduction from his supervisor which was used to introduce the study and the researcher to the various respondents (See Appendix 5). Before embarking on data collection the researcher's supervisor telephoned the SABC Corporate Communications manager to appraise and further discuss the proposed study. Permission to administer the research instruments at SABC was requested by personal contacts through emails, telephone calls and physical visits. In compliance with the Botswana government research requirements, the researcher applied for a research permit to conduct research at DBS.

The questionnaires were given to the contact persons who assisted the researcher in administering the questionnaires to the respondents. In some cases like SABC and DBS the researcher gave out the questionnaires directly to respondents in their offices.

The researcher collected the filled in questionnaires a day after. On behalf of the researcher, the public relations officer and corporate affairs offices made telephone calls to remind employees to complete questionnaires. In the case of ZBC the registry office distributed the questionnaires and collected the completed tool before forwarding them to the Public Relations Officer (PRO) for onward transmission to the researcher. Questionnaires may be effective and 'the response rates may be high for a target population that is well educated or has a strong interest in the topic or the survey organization' (Neuman 2005:299). The researcher went to collect questionnaires from the offices and divisions. Data were collected in a period of four and half months, one month at DBS, one and half at SABC and one and half at ZBC.

#### **4.10 Pilot Study and Instrument validation**

To achieve reliable and valid results the researcher carried a pre-test of the questionnaire and interview schedule with the Department of Broadcasting Services in Botswana radio and television staff. A pilot survey was then conducted to obtain employees' views on the structure and wordings of the questionnaires. Riet and Durrheim (2006:94) posit that pilot studies are preliminary studies on small samples that help to identify potential problems with the design, particularly the research instruments. A pilot study was conducted to check on a number of aspects so as to improve on the data collection instruments. Thirty five questionnaires were completed and eight interviews were conducted with eight managers. The information that was obtained from the pilot study was used 'to refine the questionnaire and the interviewing process' (Neuman, 2006:312). For Babbie (2010:267) questionnaire pretesting is the surest



protection to avoid errors, ambiguous questions and one that people cannot answer. The essence of this pilot study was to test the instruments both for appropriateness of context and the ease of completion for the prospective respondents.

David and Sutton (2004:89) suggest that the first step in the piloting processes would involve showing your provisional themes and questions to colleagues and experts in the field for their critical review. A draft copy was given to fellow PhD students, staff in the Library and Information Science department and two professors in the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Botswana (Professors S.M. Mutula and N.M. Mnjama of the University of Botswana) to solicit their candid opinions over the tool. A number of respondents commented on their understanding of the questions and the length of the questionnaire versus completion time. The second step according to David and Sutton (2004:89) is to interview a small number of people from the target population. The pilot interviews were conducted with eight managers at the Department of Broadcasting Services in Botswana. This gave the researcher an opportunity to practise using the voice recorder and helped in knowing how to open files in the recorder, record the interview, pause when disturbed by visitors or incoming calls, gauge the average recording time and other issues.

The questionnaire was eventually pilot-tested with the Department of Broadcasting Services in Botswana and meaningful comments were received from the respondents. Some errors were identified and corrected subsequently. Some questions were dropped for being ambiguous, double barreled and lacking clarity. Where necessary, wordings and phrases were modified to ensure that they were clear and unambiguous to suit the purpose of the main study. Babbie (2010: 260) recommends that researchers should

provide clear, short items that will not be misinterpreted under those conditions. From the above and the data gathered thereafter, the researcher learnt that 'it is best to pilot-test survey interviews and questionnaires prior to implementation' (Neuman, 2006:312).

Neuman (2006) has put it succinctly that the importance of instrument validation and reliability in research cannot be overemphasized. During the instrument pre-test, the questionnaire was critically reviewed and the preliminary interviews conducted. The triangulation of the research techniques (Cf 4.3) and the theories discussed in chapter 2 were meant to improve the validity and reliability of the conclusions. All this was done to cater for the validity and reliability issues.

#### **4.11 Reliability and Validity in Research**

Reliability is the degree to which the indicator or test is a consistent measure over time or simply, will the respondent give the same response if asked to give an answer at a different time (David and Sutton, 2004:171). Reliability is about dependability and consistency (Neuman, 2006:188). It is the degree to which the results are repeatable (Van der Riet and Durrheim, 2006:92). Punch (2005:95) avers that reliability basically means consistency and it is the central concept in measurement. Neuman (2006:188) argues that though researchers strive for perfect reliability it is difficult to achieve.

Validity refers to the degree to which a measuring instrument actually measures and describes the concept it was designed to (David and Sutton, 2004:171). Validity refers to the degree to which the research conclusions are sound (Van der Riet and Durrheim,

2006:90) and suggests truthfulness (Neuman, 2006:188). Measurement validity means the extent to which an instrument measures what it is claimed to measure (Punch, 2005:97)

Both the quantitative and qualitative research aim at achieving reliable and valid measurement. To ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of data, the researcher recorded interviews with the aid of a voice recorder and then professionally transcribed.

#### **4.12 Response rate**

Response rate is the percentage of people who actually complete the questionnaire and return it to the investigator (Stangor, 2011:109). Of the 240 questionnaires administered, 156 were returned, providing an overall response rate of 65%. This was pleasing given the distribution and collection dates and time and the fact that the respondents were at work and viewed the questionnaire completion as disturbance and taking their time. Questionnaires whose nonresponse rate to certain questions was high were not considered for selection during clean up. Response rate may not be very high and as such investigators may increase it by providing gifts or monetary payments for completing the survey (Stangor, 2011; 109). To mitigate on this challenge the researcher gave out some University of Fort Hare T-shirts to the public relations office. This motivated them to encourage their staff to complete and return the questionnaires. Nevertheless, the researcher made follow-ups to remind the respondents to complete the questionnaires. To guard against possible lower and nonresponse that would weaken the survey, the researcher designed an attractive questionnaire, easy to

complete. According to Neuman (2006:296) a poorly designed questionnaire affects the response rate.

The researcher collected completed questionnaires with the assistance of Registry Clerks, Public Relations Officers (DBS, Botswana) and Communication Relations Officers (SABC). Neuman (2006:297) avers that the people most likely to participate in surveys and polls are the most interested, informed and active in society. This may explain the high response rate at ZBC whose respondents meet the above characterization. However response rates that are as low as 26% still provide some sense of interpretation and conclusion of findings (Debowski, 2006:274). Nevertheless, very low response rates are both disappointing and troublesome, since they carry the possibility of biased results (Punch, 2005:101)

After the completion of the questionnaires the public relations offices of the respective broadcasting organizations made interview arrangements with managers. Interviews were scheduled with managers of the following sections: Radio and television services, online news, sales and marketing, corporate libraries and archives, corporate communications/public relations manager, information technology, engineering and transmission, administration, human resources and legal services. Thirty eight interviews were conducted distributed as follows: 15 at SABC, 12 at ZBC and 11 at DBS.

#### **4.13 Problems encountered in the field**

The data collection exercise had its own rigors and challenges. Despite all these challenges, the research was successfully carried out and all the hurdles were overcome. The challenges encountered varied from one organization to the other. At DBS the challenge was the poor cooperation from the television side. The questionnaire completion and return from the television section was low compared to other sections (See 4.9.1 above). Questionnaires were lost and some were misplaced. The researcher had to incur some costs of reprinting some extra questionnaires. At ZBC interviews were affected by the absence of top and middle level managers due to funerals of a national hero and non-availability of some managers leading to the appointment of deputy managers to assist the researcher. To overcome this challenge the researcher had to postpone some of the interviews so that key managers would take part in the research.

At SABC and DBS the researcher moved from one office to the other and one floor to the other to collect the completed questionnaires. However some questionnaires were returned uncompleted and some were reported lost or misplaced. This explains the 68% return rate.

#### **4.14 Data Analysis**

In this study the main tools of collecting data were self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observations and institutional reports about the individual organization. After the collection of completed questionnaires (23 August 2010 to 26

November 2010) data were checked for completeness, comprehensibility, consistency and reliability, a step referred to as cleaning the data. The data cleaning exercise was done to get rid of numerous problems that may arise during analysis. The data gathered through the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 20. The results of some of the analysis were exported into Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel for visual presentation and reporting of the results.

The data that were collected from the interview sessions were analyzed manually by content analysis, using the notes that were taken by the researcher from the respondents during the interview sessions. A few of the open-ended questions were also analyzed in the same way.

#### **4.15 Ethical considerations**

In conducting this study, the researcher had to adhere to ethical and moral obligations with regards to data collection, analysis and report writing. The researcher avoided acting in an ethically irresponsible manner because this study involved people.

According to Babbie (2010:64) ethics are typically associated with morality and concern matters of right and wrong. In this regard the researcher had to protect and preserve organizational and people's individual privacy. Privacy entails anonymity and confidentiality. In the final report the researcher did not reveal the identity of specific persons who were participants in this study. The researcher assured and transformed

into reality that the respondents' identities would remain anonymous and all information provided was treated as confidential.

Prior to this study the researcher had made contacts with the three organizations to establish feasibility of such a research. The researcher sought permission to conduct research at SABC, DBS and ZBC (See Appendices 5 and 6). In South Africa the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has a Code of Research Ethics (1997) which spells out ethical research guidelines to be followed when conducting research. This researcher complied with these guidelines. Consequently with the assistance of the project supervisor this researcher acquired permission from the three broadcasting organizations (See appendices 4, 5 and 6).

Ethical considerations cover such aspects as voluntary participation, protection from all forms of harm, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, privacy and the conduct of the researcher when executing the research exercise (Babbie, 2010: 64-67; Neuman, 2006:129; Bliss, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006:142-146; David and Sutton, 2004: 136-137).

In order to obtain informed consent from the potential respondents the researcher attached a letter (on the main questionnaire) spelling out the objectives of the study well before the completion of the questionnaire. Since it is the duty and responsibility of the researcher to furnish the potential participant with the necessary information on the nature and purpose of the research to be undertaken (Stangor, 2011:48; Babbie, 2010:136) the present researcher provided a covering letter with all the required details. All research subjects have ethical rights to be consulted, to give or withhold information

and consent. When conducting research various authors (Babbie, 2010; David and Sutton, 2004) advise that researchers should obtain people's permission and voluntary participation on a full understanding of the risks involved. In the covering letter the researcher made clear that participation was voluntary and those who chose to participate were free to withdraw their participation at any stage if they so wished. David and Sutton (2004:137) suggest that to obtain informed consent the participant should be given enough time to consider their participation in the research. In this study respondents had one week to consent on participating in the study. While it is recommended that participants should sign to confirm informed consent Barbie observes that for surveys, completion and return of the questionnaire can be taken as evidence of consent (Babbie, 2010:137). Informed consent is a statement, usually written, that explains aspects of a study to participants and asks for their voluntary agreement to participate before the study commences (Neuman, 2006:135). In this study the researcher did not ask the participant to sign but the researcher assumed that completion and returning the questionnaire was acceptance. Those who did not return questionnaires were assumed to have refused consent.

Social researchers need to respect participant's privacy (Stangor, 2011:51) and according to Neumann (2006:139) privacy takes two forms thus anonymity and confidentiality. Confidentiality refers to the researcher ensuring that no one outside the research team will be able to identify the participants in the study and that responses of individuals are not directly repeated to others (Babbie, 2010: 136). Data collected from the respondents need to be secured and such personal information must not be made available to anyone other than the researcher. Confidentiality is the ethical protection for



those who are studied by holding research data in confidence or keeping them secret from the public; not releasing information in a way that permits linking specific individuals to specific responses but is publicly presented in aggregate form such as in percentages (Neuman, 2006:139).

The researcher ensured that anonymity is upheld in this study and even in the final report. Anonymity refers to the practice of ensuring that no one will be able to identify the participants in the study (Babbie, 2010:136) and the data must not be obviously associated with a participant's name (Bliss, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006;142-146). The ethical quality of anonymity in this study is that the researcher and the people who interact with this report cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. Anonymity is the ethical protection that participants remain nameless; their identity is protected from disclosure and remains unknown (Neuman, 2006:139). In this study the researcher ensured that the people/respondents remained anonymous to the reader.

In the case of the face to face interviews with the managers, the researcher sent a covering letter attached to the interview schedule guiding questions prior to the interview for familiarization and preparation. On the interview date the researcher verbally reminded the interviewees that they would be recorded in the voice recorder. In one of the incidences at DBS in Botswana the potential interviewee refused to be recorded verbatim since she was just a stand in head of section in the absence of the actual manager. At ZBC one of the managers refused to be recorded on the voice recorder. In both cases the researcher had to do the ethical thing thus respect their rights. Barbie suggests that it is necessary to obtain informed consent from 'key others' who may act as gatekeepers to access (Babbie, 2010:137) and in this study it was well

pronounced in the case of obtaining permission and informed consent from ZBC. May be this was a result of the political situation prevailing in that country at the time of the study. However, at SABC no problems were encountered with regards to any of the above ethical principles.

The data that are presented in the next chapter were ethically and accurately collected, recorded and processed. This was done to avoid scientific misconduct. Scientific misconduct occurs when a researcher falsifies or distorts the data or the methods of data collection, or plagiarizes the work of others (Neuman, 2006:130). To avoid plagiarism the researcher, acknowledged all the ideas borrowed from other people's writings. Plagiarism is regarded as fraud that occurs when a researcher steals the ideas or writings of another or uses them without citing the source (Neuman, 2006:130).

Ethical research involves reaching agreements about uses of data and how its analysis will be disseminated (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1998:146). The researcher undertook to report the procedures and findings as accurately as possible since 'the fabrication or falsification of data is a very serious ethical transgression' (Bliss, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006:145). The researcher followed the ethical principle of full disclosure of intent to the participants with regards to what the research was all about as well as the benefits of participating in it among other intentions. The researcher honestly described the nature and use of the research (Stangor, 2011:52) to the subjects. According to Babbie (2010:66) the analysis and reporting of data can be a source of harm to subjects since respondents can locate themselves in indexes and tables in published works. As such the findings were reported as aggregates in percentages.

It is unethical not to report back to the research participants and as such a copy will be deposited with each of the three broadcasting organization's library and other public bodies as a legal deposit. This is done to ensure the rights of participants to be informed of the results of the study that they participated in. The organizations may want to inform their policies and practices and improve people's lives (Bliss, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006:146). The results are presented in a clear and understandable manner. Journal articles are being worked out to publish the results as a way of communicating the results to the scientific community (Bliss, Higson-Smith and Kagee, 2006:146)

Neumann (2006:132) advises social researchers to avoid placing people in stressful, embarrassing, anxiety-producing, or unpleasant situations that can lead to arrests or negative effects on their careers and incomes such as loss of their jobs. While there was the potential for harm in this study all reasonable attempts were made to counteract it. The researcher took all precautionary measures to avoid inflicting psychological abuse, stress or loss of self-esteem of individuals who participated in this study or the organizations studied. Babbie (2010:65) advises against revealing information that would embarrass subjects or endanger their home lives, friendships, jobs and so forth. Indicating or attributing the findings which appeared embarrassing to specific broadcasting organization would attack on the self-esteem of the said organization. The researcher did this to create a good rapport with the organization in case of future research with the same organizations. In this regard confidentiality was maintained in the report.

## **4.16 Summary**

This chapter has described the methodology that was used in this study. The research design, the triangulation and data collection techniques complemented each other in making it possible to identify and describe the knowledge retention strategies in the three public broadcasting organizations. The data collection procedures, tools, instrument validation, data analysis, ethical considerations were all outlined. The next chapter presents the research findings from this study.

## **Data Presentation and Interpretation**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter four outlined how the researcher collected data for the study. In this chapter the researcher presents and analyses the data that were gathered using various techniques. Both quantitative and qualitative data are presented. When used in a single study quantitative and qualitative results may converge, supplement each other or may contradict each other (Kelle and Erzberger, 2004). In this study quantitative and qualitative results are complementary in presenting a comprehensive picture of knowledge retention strategies in the three SADC public broadcasting corporations (South Africa Broadcasting Corporation, Department of Broadcasting Services and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (SABC, DBS and ZBC)). The main aim of the study was to identify the knowledge retention strategies in the three national broadcasting organizations. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- a) To find out the types of strategies the three broadcasting organizations (SABC, DBS and ZBC) employ to capture and retain knowledge.
- b) Establish how the three broadcasting organizational cultures facilitate knowledge acquisition and sharing.
- c) To establish the role of ICTs as tools and enablers of knowledge retention in the three broadcasting organizations.

- d) To propose recommendations on the best strategies for retention of knowledge in the three public broadcasting organizations and to suggest areas for further and future research.

The gathered data were presented according to the objectives as stated above. Data were gathered from three broadcasting organizations (SABC, DBS and ZBC) in the SADC region (see appendix 7). Two hundred and forty self-administered questionnaires were physically handed to the employees of these organizations through the Public Relations and Corporate Affairs offices. The questionnaires were completed and returned giving a response rate of 65%. Interview schedules with selected managers and observations were used to gather data. The data were then correlated to represent the situation in the studied institutions.

Quantitative and structured qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews were coded and analyzed. The open-ended qualitative data were analyzed. SPSS and EXCEL computer programmes were used. The latter was used to display the data graphically.

In line with the research ethics individuals and institutional results from the questionnaires and recorded interviews were kept confidential. This makes the report more general in appearance. The researcher observed that some of the respondents were not familiar with knowledge management and its aspects hence the high item nonresponse rate to some of the questions. The triangulation method improved reliability of the findings since the researcher had to cross-check the facts provided in the questionnaire during interviews with managers and observations. In the following sections the results of the findings are presented.

## **5.2 Respondents' profile**

Each questionnaire and interview session opened with biographical information of the respondent. This was done to establish the competency of the respondent in providing information that would be valid for this study. This information was useful for the purposes of follow-ups during interviews with managers to clarify certain issues.

### **5.2.1 Age and Gender**

Broadcasting organizations like most businesses have employees whose age groups span from 17 years to retiring age of 65 or older depending on the country's labour laws with regards to retirement age. Such workers have varied set of experience, expertise, talent, skills and educational levels that an organization can exploit to its advantage.

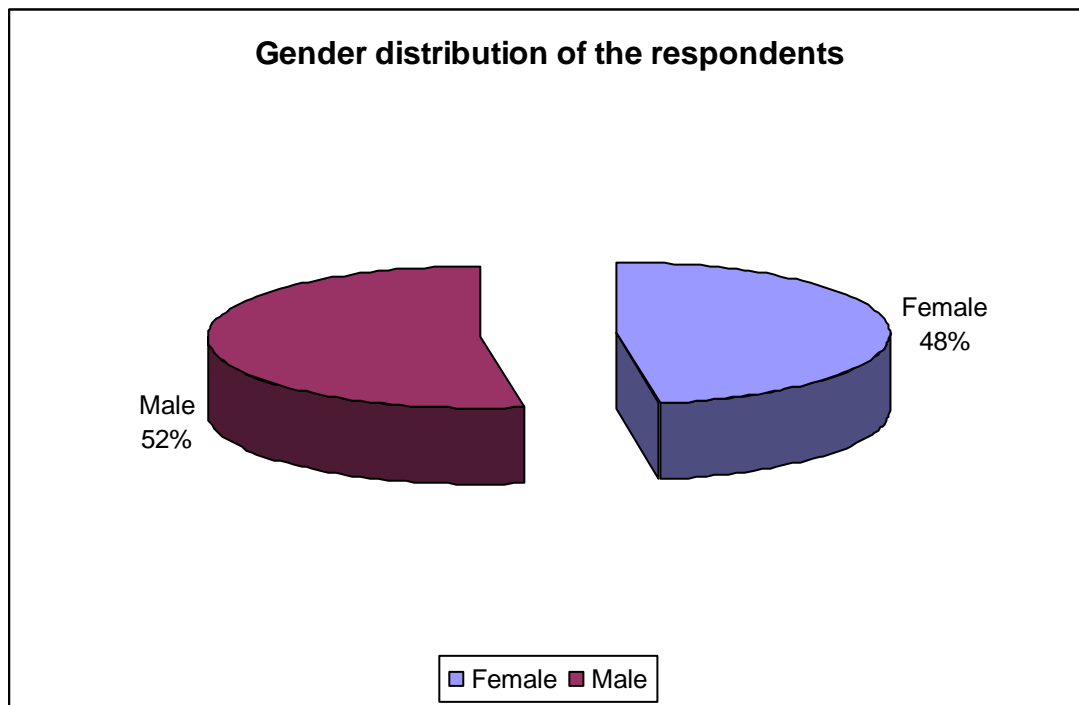
As shown in table 5.1 the age range of the respondents was between less than 25 to above 65 years. The majority of the respondents 71(43%) were aged 25-35 while few respondents 2(1.2%) were in the age bracket 58-65 years. There were no respondents aged above 65.

**Table 5.1: respondents' age (N=165)**

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage of the respondents %
Less than 25	6	3.6%
25-35	71	43%
36-46	57	34.5%
47-57	29	17.5%
58-65	2	1.2%
Above 65	0	0%



Male respondents were more (85) (52%) than females (80) (48%) in the sample that was studied.



**Chart 5.1: gender distribution (N=165)**

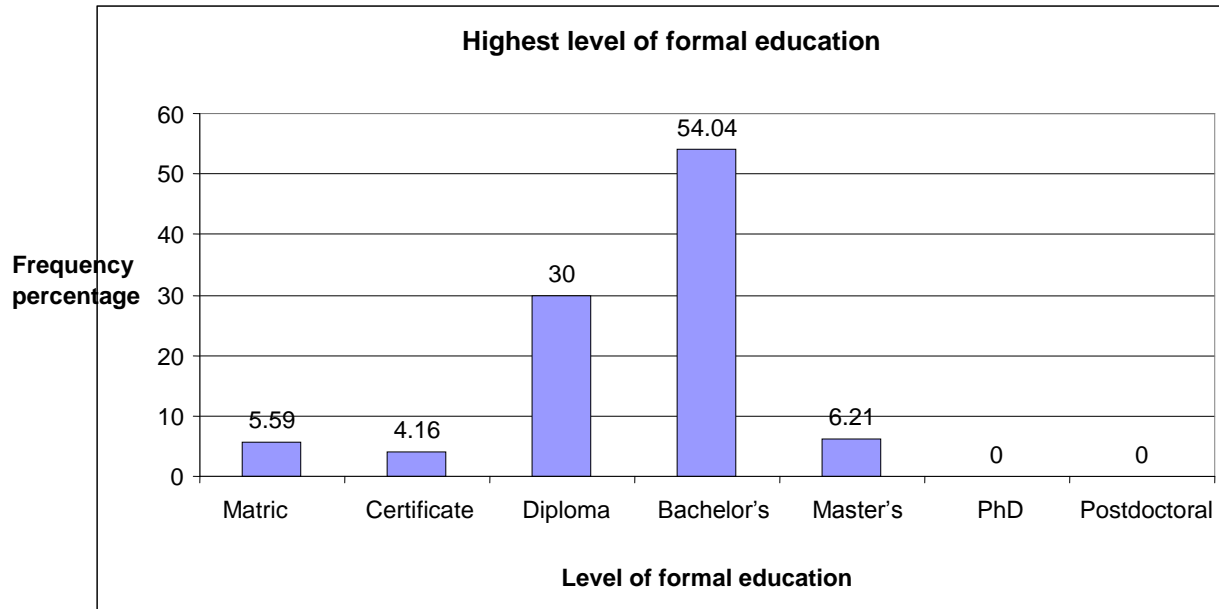
Gender, qualifications and experience of the managers were also considered. The gender disparity in favour of males was even wider at managerial level. Out of the 38 managers who provided qualitative data through interviews, 10 (27%) were females and 27 (72.9%) were males. One female manager conceded to the researcher, 'Being a manager takes much of my family time and I find it difficult to explain to my husband that I will be attending some of the late night meetings'. Discussions with some of the female heads revealed that generally women were reluctant to take up managerial posts because of the demands and challenges that are associated with the positions. The results are shown in table 5.2 below:

**Table 5.2: gender distribution for managers (N=38)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of the respondents %</b>
Females	10	27.0%
Males	28	73%

### **5.2.2 Education/Training levels of the respondents**

Level of education and work experience in each organization was also investigated since research has reported them to be related to organizational knowledge acquisition and retention (Giovanni, 2009; Sveiby, 1997). Respondents with higher levels of educational qualifications are presumed to be competent and appreciative of studies that are undertaken in their organization. They are aware of the benefits which may accrue if they participate diligently in such studies. Against this backdrop the present researcher wanted to ascertain the highest level of education attained by each respondent. The results of this finding are shown in figure 5.2 below:



**Figure 5.2: respondents' level of education (N=165)**

The frequency distribution of respondents revealed that 87 (54.04%) have Bachelor's degree, 48 (30%) are Diploma holders, 10 (6.21%) have Master's degree. Matric/Advanced level/High School accounted for 5.59% and 7 (4.16%) had post matric and post Advanced level Certificates. There were no responses to the PhD and Postdoctoral category.

Professionals responding to a questionnaire have true information in spite of their roles in the organization. The present researcher chose managers and their immediate subordinates who were professionals or at least had high school education. As Phillips suggested, the present researcher assumed that managers had particular status, specialized knowledge and were accessed by the researcher by appointments made through the Public Relations office. Age, gender and level of education improved the quality of data that were gathered from the public broadcasting organizations.

The profile presented above suggests that the respondents had a working knowledge and experience to give responses and useful opinions on the aspects that were covered in both the main questionnaire and interview guide with regards to their respective broadcasting organizations.

### **5.2.3 Departments/Sections/Divisions**

The departments of which these managers were heads were purposively selected. It was assumed that they were the departments where critical knowledge should be captured and retained for the broadcasting organizations to be competitive. Besides, if knowledge from these departments is captured the broadcasting organization may achieve resiliency in the event of loss of knowledge through various means of attrition such as retirements, resignations or death.

Table 5.3 below gives a summary of the different departments and positions that participated in this study:

**Table 5.3: Departments and roles of respondents (N=240)**

Department	Position/roles	Number of respondents
radio services	broadcasting officers;  producers, editors,  reporters, journalists, radio announcers, station managers,	44
television services	broadcasting officers  camera persons, channel controller; editors, reporters, journalists	38
sales and/ marketing	sales & marketing officers; events coordinator	24
library / archives	librarians; archivists	26
corporate communications	communication specialists, public relations officer	20
information technology	IT Officers, systems administrator,	20
engineering/transmission	technical superintendent,  broadcasting engineers, transmission engineers	32
administration (transport, supplies, stores, accounts, HR, legal services)	fleet supervisor, transport administrator, accounting officers, legal officers, human resource officers, stores and supplies officers	36

### 5.2.4 Work experience in the organization

The level of education coupled with the experience attained by individuals made the respondents assume the role of key informants providing aggregate information or organizational properties rather than personal attitudes and behaviour (Giovanni 2009; 4). The questionnaire was administered to both managers and subordinates. Figure 5.3 below indicates the period of service of all the respondents to the questionnaire, managers included:

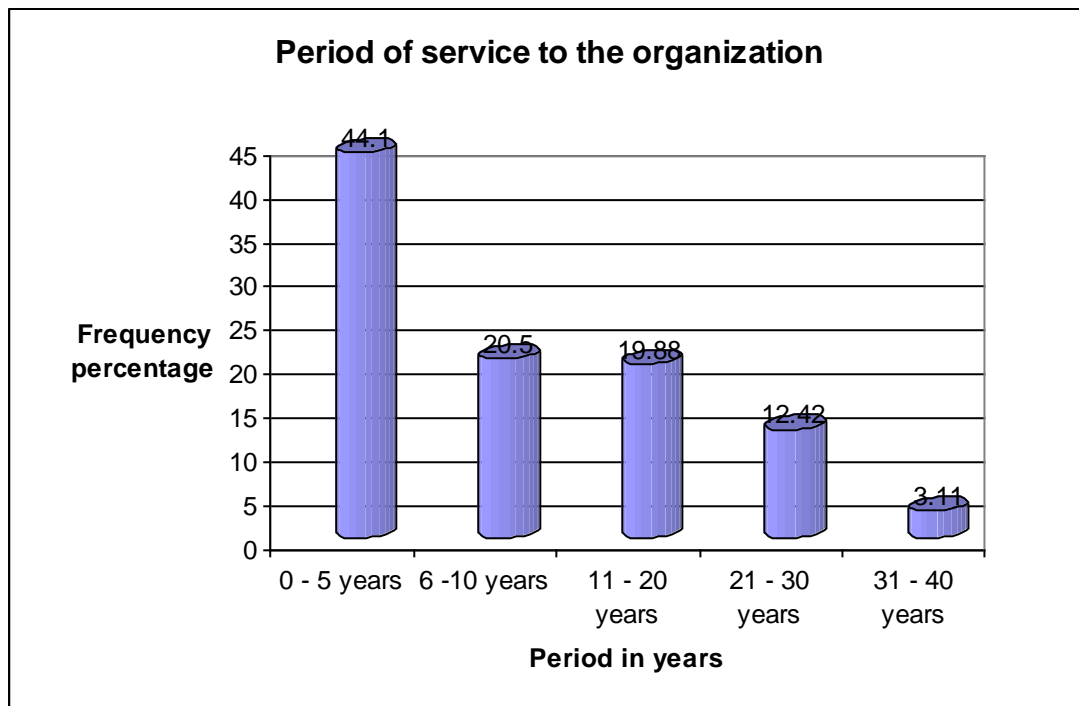


Figure 5.3: period of service in the organization (N=165)

The majority (44%) had served in their respective organizations for a period between 0-5 years and the least (3.11%) had worked for the organizations for a period in between 31-40 years. The employee acquires knowledge while on the job in the organization. The tacit knowledge acquired is part of the organizational knowledge (Skyrme, 1999)

that an employee can accumulate while in the organization. That knowledge may be retained for the benefit and better performance of the organization.

The purpose of question 8 on the Interview guide (Appendix 2) was to establish the length of period the managers had worked for their respective organizations. This would help in determining the knowledge accumulated about the organization and its culture (Giovanni, 2009). The longevity of service of the participant managers is represented as follows: 10 (27%) had worked for between 0 to 5years, 6 (16%) for 6-10years, 9 (24.3%) for 11-20, 12 (29.72%) for 21-30 years, 1 (2.70%) for 32-40 years. No manager indicated the “other category”.

**Table 5.4: managers’ period of service in the organization (N=38)**

<b>Number of years</b>	<b>Number of managers</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
0-5	10	27%
6-10	6	16.2%
11-20	9	24.3%
21-30	12	29.72%
31-40	1	2.70%
Other	0	0%

Giovanni (2009) observes that interviews on generally involve people in the top of the hierarchy since these people possess appropriate knowledge and information. The level of education combined with experience equips managers with vast and thorough

organizational knowledge that is used to furnish researchers with detailed and precise responses thereby increasing the reliability of the results.

From the interviews it was revealed that five managers were Diploma holders, 25 had first degrees, four had Master's degrees, one indicated a post high school Certificate another mentioned a 'higher degree' and the researcher could not yield favorable results through probing. So, to avoid creating unnecessary tension the researcher could not further probe the interviewee to establish whether the 'senior degree' was an Honors or a Master's degree.

Other questions were asked to enable the researcher to determine knowledge transfer activities from employee to employee for the purposes of retention just in case one employee walks out of the organization. The questions covered the organizational knowledge, knowledge sharing, knowledge conversion, organizational culture, knowledge retention and the role of ICTs in knowledge transfer, sharing and retention in an organization. These are discussed below.

### **5.3 Organizational knowledge**

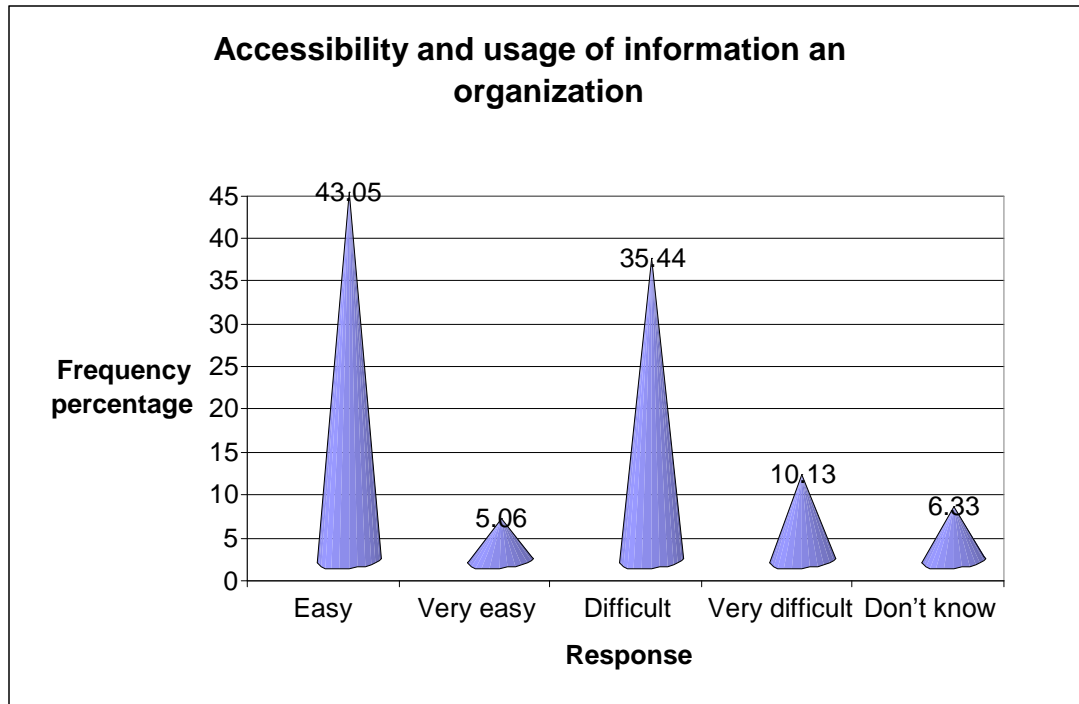
Organizational knowledge comprises of both tacit and explicit knowledge that is found in an organization. The study sought to establish how organizational knowledge flows in the three broadcasting organizations studied. A question on whether knowledge acquisition was a priority in the organizations which were studied was asked. Responses from the questionnaires showed that acquisition of information and knowledge was a priority in all the institutions. The majority of the respondents, 142



(88.13%) indicated the acquisition of knowledge and information was a priority while a few 18 (11.25%) objected and two respondents did not respond to the question because presumably they were new employees who did not know much about the organizations.

### **5.3.1 The ease of finding and utilizing information in the public broadcasting organization**

The ease with which information is found and utilised in an organization reflects on how knowledge is easy to acquire (from colleagues and storage areas) and share it among employees. Sharing of knowledge assists to retain knowledge in the event of a knowledgeable employee leaving an organization through retirement, death, resignation or getting fired. Respondents were asked how easy it was to access and utilize information in their respective organizations. Below are the findings represented graphically:



**Figure 5.4: Ease of finding and using information in an organization**

The results indicate that it is generally easy (43.05%) to find information, very easy (5.06%), difficult (35.44%), very difficult (10.13%) and don't know (6.33%). Combined the easy and difficult options would yield 48.11% and 45.57% respectively.

The respondents who chose the 'difficult' option were further asked to explain in the space provided why it was difficult to find and utilize information in the organization studied. They cited bureaucracy, lack of transparency and co-operation, lack of resources such as computers and reading material, no internet connectivity, classified information, poor archiving system and old equipment. One of the broadcasting organizations had its personnel records gutted by fire in 2007. In that regard HR respondents indicated that it was difficult to get staff information because of that

disaster. Cases of file misplacement were common making access and utilization of information difficult for employees.

### 5.3.2 Knowledge acquisition

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1985) organizational knowledge is produced and acquired when employees interact. Knowledge is generated and acquired through interaction processes such as training, education, workshops, seminars, storytelling, mentoring and apprenticeship. Individuals acquire new knowledge through learning such that behaviour change is noted and this can be measured through performance. A question was asked to establish what knowledge acquisition activities were taking place in the broadcasting organizations. The findings are represented below in figure 5.5:

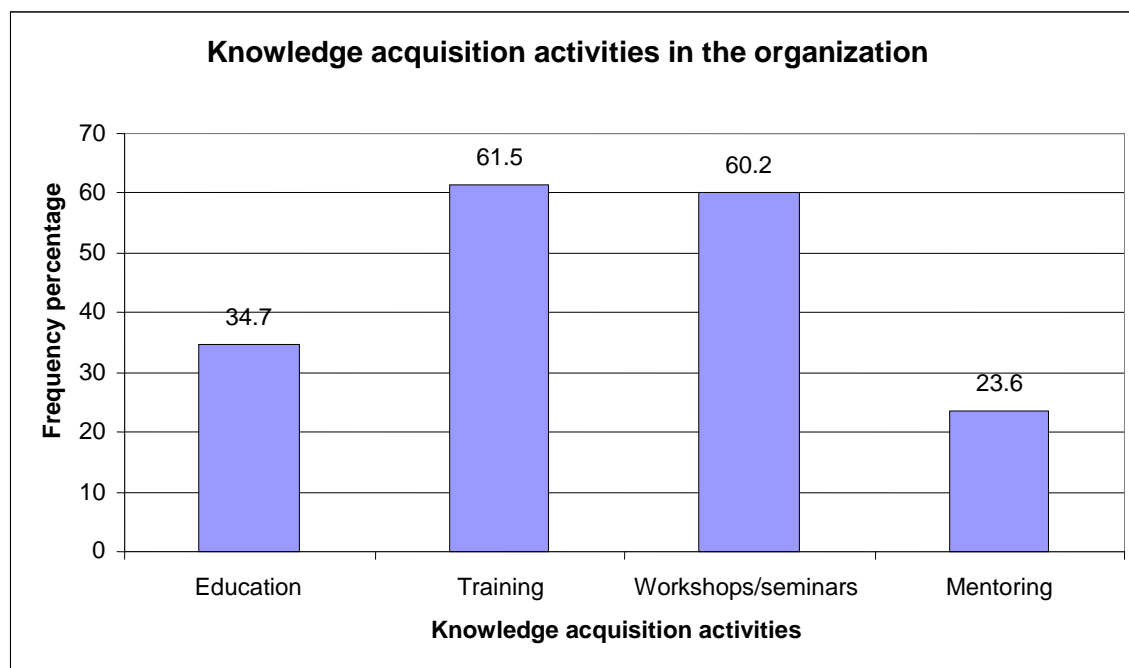


Figure 5.5: Knowledge acquisition activities in the organization

Majority of the respondents (61.5%) indicated that knowledge was acquired through training followed by workshops/seminars 97(60.2%), education 56 (34.7%) and mentoring 38 (23.6%). While the majority (36) of the managers spoke highly of mentoring, they went on to reveal that there were no mentoring programmes in place. One manager even said, 'Mentoring is there in name but experienced employees are free to implement it or not.' At ZBC the Manager Online News noted that new employees such as reporters struggled and as such they had been paired with the experienced journalists and reporters for guidance in their daily operations. At the SABC the researcher gathered from the interviewees that mentorship had just started but it was an informal arrangement as there was no formal mentorship programme. At the DBS, mentoring was largely viewed as a way of continuous improvement and knowledge generation activity but without formal arrangement to see its implementation.

From the questionnaires and interviews responses, it emerged that all the three public broadcasting organizations sponsor their employees for further education to acquire basic degrees or advanced degrees at local and regional universities. From the interviewees, the following universities were identified; University of Botswana, Limkokwin University in Botswana, Rhodes University, Witwatersrand University all in South Africa. In Zimbabwe ZBC sponsors its employees to attend schooling at Midlands State University, National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe Open University and technical colleges namely, Harare Polytechnical College, Bulawayo Polytechnical College, Gweru Polytechnical College, Masvingo Technical College, Mutare Technical College. In most cases, employees attend in-house training and workshops to improve and acquire new knowledge and capabilities.

The twelve managers interviewed at ZBC cited economic woes and sanctions as major challenges hampering training and education of the corporation's employees. The managers also indicated that ZBC's entire experienced, smart people, employees with expertise had left to join other broadcasting organizations in the region and abroad. Their departure has left a performance gap due to loss of critical knowledge in its various sections. However, the head of human resource section indicated that efforts were being made to arrest the situation through offering attractive packages and benefits to encourage those who had left the ZBC to return to the corporation.

### **5.3.3 Tacit or explicit knowledge?**

Question 9(a) on the interview guide required managers to identify the type of knowledge that was more important in their organizations. The majority (36) indicated that tacit knowledge was far more important than explicit knowledge. However, all were quick to point that both forms of knowledge were important for the organizations. Managers stated clearly that broadcasting, being a dynamic industry, tacit knowledge is the most important form of knowledge as the employees react quickly to issues. 'Tacit knowledge is closer to action.' argued another manager. One manager from the engineering section stated that staff in the section relies on tacit knowledge for transmission because it is practical. Another one stated that the broadcasting industry is a creative, mobile and dynamic industry which rely on tacit knowledge and not explicit. An SABC manager from the marketing and sales section stated that one needs tacit knowledge when discussing issues with a client rather than to make references to recorded knowledge. Managers from administration sections such as transport, human

resource, accounts and stores all acknowledged the importance of explicit knowledge since they use recorded information.

#### ***5.3.3.1 Risks of losing knowledge in the broadcasting organizations***

All the managers from radio and television services had either journalism, media or communication training backgrounds. Transmission and ICT managers had engineering and computer technology training respectively while those in administration had Arts, social sciences or humanities training backgrounds. Their training grounds coupled with years of relevant experience made them relevant to their positions

Managers were asked to indicate some of the risks that they considered to be associated with loss of tacit knowledge in their organizations. One manager from the engineering department retorted that, 'If we lose tacit knowledge we are doomed. People will suffer because they will not have information that they want. When we maintain transmission equipment we do what is called modification so the next person should know what modification has been done.' Another manager said, 'Risks are very high...if you don't document; if the person leaves, also the knowledge is gone.' One of the ICT managers said losing tacit knowledge moves the whole organization 'five years back at the same time affecting the vision and strategic planning of the organization.'

On the loss of strategic knowledge in the three public broadcasting organizations managers made the following various comments, 'organization would be grounded', 'work performance would be substandard', 'continuity is affected', 'negative impact on art, political and economic stories that broadcasting corporations produce', 'challenges of retrieving information', 'adverse effect on the chains of production', 'output is not up to scratch', 'radio and television listeners and viewers will note that the programmes are

half-baked and do not have depth’, ‘loss of knowledge creates a gap’, ‘quality of work may deteriorate because we can’t replace 20 years of experience.’ These comments indicate that managers were quite conversant with possible ramifications associated with loss of organizational knowledge but surprisingly some of them took no initiatives to curb the knowledge losses. As one ZBC manager alluded to, loss of knowledgeable employees was well pronounced on the quality of broadcasting products that the organization was producing when it lost most of its experts in 2004 due to the restructuring exercise and economic challenges.

## **5.4 Knowledge retention**

Attrition through retirements may cost broadcasting organizations studied a lot in terms of lost knowledge. The retiring experienced employees possess vast unique but undocumented organizational knowledge that if captured and retained in the broadcasting system through sharing with new employees may benefit the organization.

### **5.4.1 Role of managers in promoting knowledge transfer and sharing**

Knowledge has often been managed operationally by managers who are directly responsible for a particular function (Wiig, 1995). Managers play a key role in retaining organizational knowledge. Retention of institutional knowledge assists in producing quality products and service delivery due to better performance. Respondents were asked to identify the various roles played by their managers in promoting knowledge

transfer and sharing to ensure that the knowledge remains in the system for the benefit of the organization. Respondents could select more than one category. Table 5.5 below shows the results:

**Table 5.5: Role played by managers in promoting knowledge transfer**

<b>Role of the manager</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Establishing communities of practice	8	4.9
Promoting professional networks	45	27.7
Encouraging staff to share knowledge with co-workers	106	65.4
To attend informal gatherings where knowledge is shared	41	25.3
Appointing mentors	20	12.3
Regular meetings with other staff (1-2 times per month)	51	31.48
Encouraging communicating through intranet	15	9.25
Inviting experts to give lectures	10	6.17
Establishing work teams/project teams	2	1.23
Use of information repositories	12	7.40
Use of databases	8	4.93
Any other (please specify)-- -----	0	0

The data presented in the table indicate that respondents wish managers to encourage staff to share knowledge with co-workers (65.4%). May be the employees are aware of the potential of professional growth in sharing knowledge with fellow employees. Surprisingly the employees do not expect managers to establish work teams or projects teams (1.23%) yet these teams also facilitate the sharing of knowledge among employees. From the interviews it emerged that managers encourage staff to join

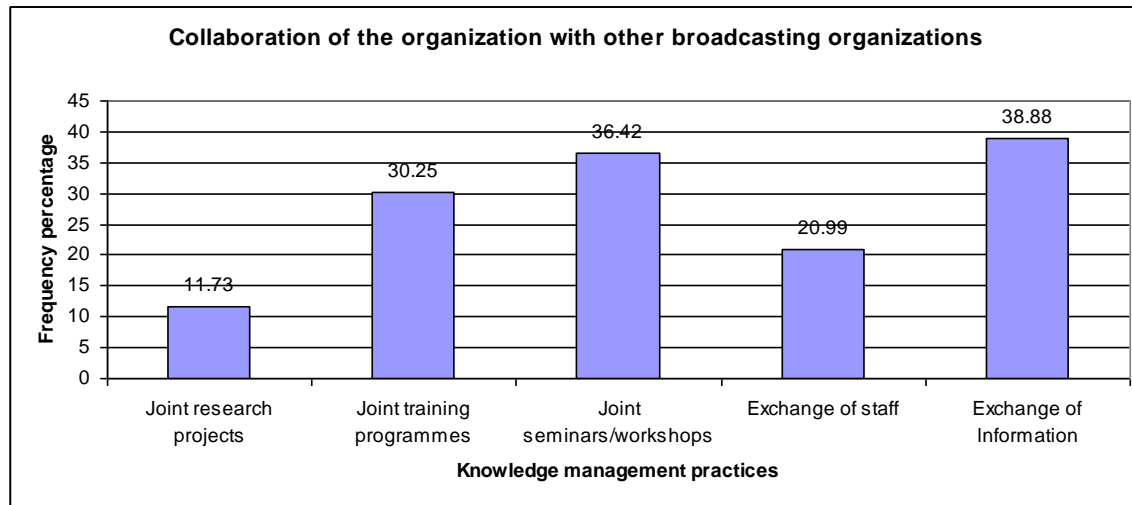


professional networks and associations, invite experts and retirees to give some lectures and training, encourage their staff to communicate through the intranet thus sharing knowledge with coworkers, to attend informal gatherings and social games making use of regular meetings with other staff for briefing. Managers also encourage staff to make use of information resources and databases to access information and share it with colleagues. These activities enhance knowledge retention in that knowledge shared is knowledge retained. In the event of the knowledgeable individuals and experts leaving the broadcasting organizations the knowledge is left with other employees who remain behind.

#### **5.4.2 Co-operation with other broadcasting organizations**

The purpose of question 13 on the questionnaire was to find out if the public broadcasting organizations studied worked collaboratively with other broadcasting organizations. Such joint operations result in the generation and/or acquisition of new useful knowledge that could be retained as organizational knowledge for future use and development of an organization (Mohamed *et al.* 2006). Inter-organizational interaction promotes knowledge creation and sharing through joint projects, training programmes, seminars and exchange of staff. Such programmes promote learning and production of new knowledge (Johannessen *et al.* 2001). Respondents were asked to select all those options that applied. Collaboration with other organizations in knowledge management practices is represented as follows: joint research projects 19 (11.72%), joint training programmes 49 (30.24%), joint seminars or workshops 59 (36.41%), exchange of staff 34 (20.99%) and exchange of information 63 (38.88%). These activities promote knowledge retention in that in joint activities employees learn from each other,

exchanging ideas and share knowledge which can be retained in the broadcasting organizations that were investigated. Seminars and workshops result in brainstormings that generate new knowledge which may be acquired by employees (Hansen *et al.* 2001).



**Figure 5.6: Collaboration with other organizations**

From the interviews with managers, it emerged that joint training, exchange of programmes and information were conducted internationally, with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), broadcasting organizations in Japan or through associations such as African Union of Broadcasters (AUB) and members of Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA). It was also revealed that these public broadcasters from the continent meet in France every year to share broadcasting information. Another manager stated that broadcasters on the African continent exchange programmes and news with neighbouring broadcasting corporations as well as send their staff to learn from each other. On returning from international or regional

training and exchange programmes employees were expected to share their newly acquired knowledge and skills with other employees such that in the event of that knowledgeable person leaving the organization the knowledge will remain in the minds of other employees. An individual was expected to submit a report that would be circulated for the benefit of other employees.

In order to retain knowledge, some of the broadcasting organizations motivate their employees by giving incentives to their employees to share knowledge. Because of such incentives the senior and experienced employees may share their knowledge with the less experienced, new entrants and juniors. The majority of the respondents (34.56%) revealed that promotion at work was the most significant incentive to encourage sharing of knowledge in the organization, followed by 12.96% respondents for pay rise and 9.87% respondents for monetary rewards. In the 'Any other' option respondents from the broadcasting organizations investigated suggested 'awards, certificates of appreciation for hard work, prizes, presents, chosen as best employee in the section.' When further probed the three HR managers indicated that it was challenging for the human resources department to encourage knowledge sharing in their organizations. The same managers revealed that the three organizations did not have policies on knowledge retention.

Asked to indicate reasons and other motivations for sharing knowledge, respondents indicated that employees shared knowledge mostly to support management strategic objectives as well as to enhance individuals' career ambitions. The results are presented in order of the highest to lowest scores in the table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Reasons for knowledge sharing**

<b>Reason for sharing knowledge</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
To support management strategic objectives	74	45.67
To enhance my career	64	39.50
To satisfy self-fulfillment needs	35	21.6
To enhance productivity	30	18.5
To get recognition	19	11.72
To impart education	15	9.25
To impart training	15	9.25
To enhance quality of service	10	6.17
Any other	10	6.17
To mentor junior colleagues	6	3.72
To be rewarded	6	3.72

The reasons to share knowledge indicate that employees do it to fulfill job requirements by supporting management strategic objectives (45.67%) and to enhance their careers (39.50%). However, such comments as *‘staff members hardly share information because it’s a closed system’* were not uncommon. May be the absence of tangible incentives could have contributed to reluctance to share knowledge as well as the issue of job security thus seniors fearing to mentor juniors.

### **5.4.3 Knowledge sharing tools**

The aim of this study was to establish the strategies of retaining knowledge in three SADC public broadcasting organizations. Explicit and tacit knowledge are the basis of institutional memory and such knowledge can be retained by sharing the knowledge through the use of a variety of tools. Question 16 required respondents to identify tools that are commonly used to share knowledge among employees for the purposes of retaining it, improving performance at work among other reasons. From the same options question 17 required respondents to identify tools that were effective in sharing knowledge. The results for the two questions were as follow:

**Table 5.7: Knowledge sharing tools**

Tool	Commonly used for sharing knowledge		Most effective in sharing knowledge	
	Frequency	Percentage%	Frequency	Percentage %
Staff meetings	126	77.77	105	64
News letter	63	38.88	58	35.0
Circulars/memoranda	79	48.76	51	31.48
Informal interaction	51	31.48	40	24.6
Briefing sessions	58	35.8	52	32.09
Use of the notice board	67	41.35	57	35.18
Email	81	50.0	81	50.0
Websites	40	24.69	52	32.09
Mobile cell phones	33	20.37	43	26.54
Intranets	30	18.51	63	38.88
Web portals	11	6.79	74	45.67
Blogs	11	6.79	50	30.86
Mail groups	80	49.38	32	19.75
Communities of practice	19	11.72	20	12.34
Workshops/seminars	52	32.09	62	38.27
Conferences	54	33.33	58	35.80
Teambuilding exercises	20	12.34	15	9.25
Written reports	80	49.38	79	48.7
Face-to-face interactions	66	47.74	80	49.38
Social events	20	12.34	28	17.28
training sessions	58	35.80	58	35.80
Performance appraisal	15	9.25	10	6.17

Mentoring programmes	51	31.48	88	54.3
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Staff meetings emerged as the mostly widely used tool to share knowledge in all the three organizations. It was also indicated to be the most effective tool to share knowledge. Blogs, web portals were less used may be because not all of the surveyed organizations had internet connectivity and not all employees had access to internet.

The researcher observed some of the memos, circulars on the public noticeboards, in the elevators, in office corridors and at staff canteens. This indicates that knowledge is shared even using public places.

Effective sharing of knowledge is vital to facilitate knowledge transfer from the experienced to the new entrants/less experienced (Buckman, 2004). The interviewees revealed that SABC uses what it calls the 'rediffusion' channel. This is a channel which has satellite links for every employee to get firsthand information from the SABC Board or the Chief Executive Officer's address to employees of the organization. The address takes place while the employees are in a studio or to anyone with access to SABC's network so that he/she may watch and listen to the address while in their respective offices. Intercom magazine is a magazine that is posted on the SABC intranet to communicate on daily basis with all its employees including those in the regions. While 'rediffusion' is used once in a while for knowledge sharing, the Intercom magazine is a daily knowledge sharing tool amongst employees at SABC.

From these findings, it emerged that staff meeting was the common and effective knowledge sharing tool in all the three organizations studied.

## **5.5 Learning Organization and Knowledge Conversion**

A learning organization facilitates the learning of its members, acquiring new knowledge and skills (Cf 3:3.7). By so doing the organization renews and continuously transforms itself. All the managers revealed that the three public organizations were learning organizations and had a policy to train all of their respective employees. The interviewees further revealed that employees were sponsored to undertake further education in universities and technical colleges. The human resource sections avails funding for workshops and seminars to equip employees with knowledge and sharpen their skills for better performance at work. From such gatherings employees generate knowledge that can be retained in the organization. Interviewees revealed that two of the surveyed organizations (SABC and ZBC) have training and development units within the HRD. These units are responsible for coordinating all the training that take place in the organization. The other organization (DBS), the interviewees revealed, sends its staff for training to other government departments for training.

The interviewees revealed that employees are 'sent to other broadcasting organizations such as BBC and Deutch Welle in Germany where they learn and bring new ideas.' One IT Manager opined that, 'training brings new ways of thinking thus we send our people to Germany, USA and the Far East for training.' One of the findings is that some individuals in the organizations started in the low ranks and have been promoted to



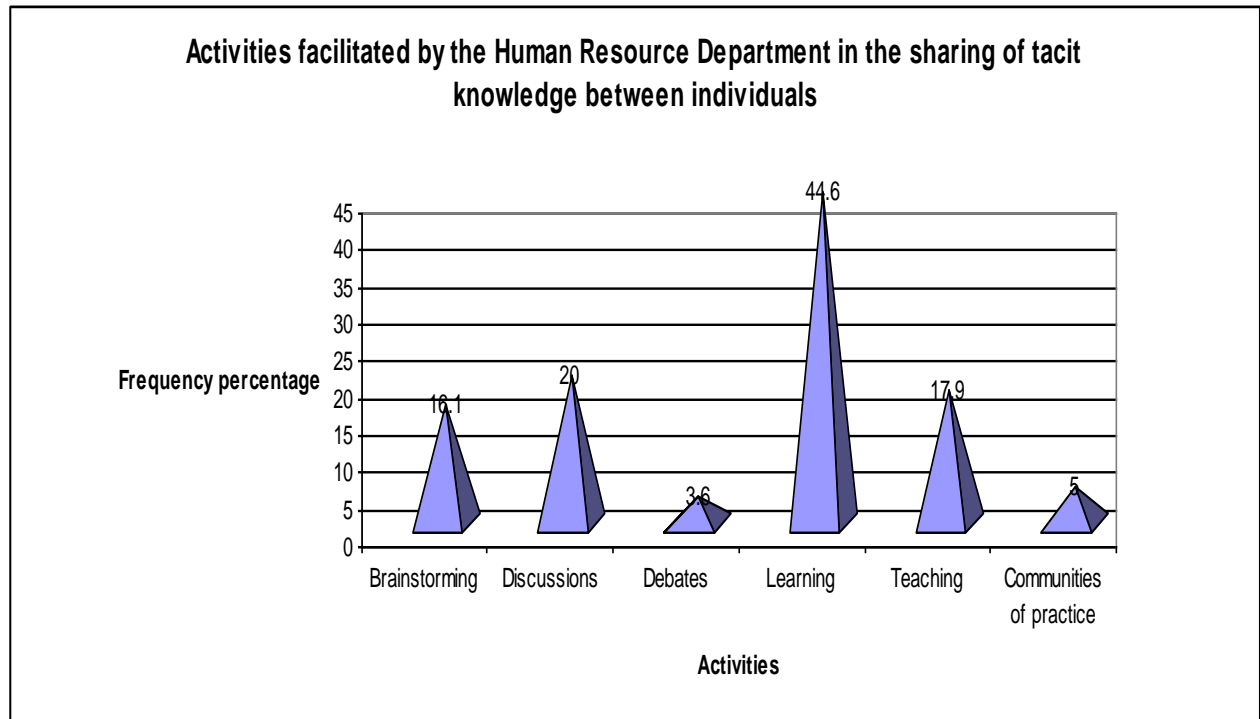
higher positions. This was credited to the culture of learning in the organizations. For instance some individuals started as canteen operators but to date are technicians and camera persons while some started as receptionists but they are now Executive Secretaries. The head of human resource at ZBC revealed that as part of its organizational training policy, ZBC reimburses 50% of the costs upon successful completion of a relevant course.

Managers were further asked how their organizations acquired and generated knowledge. The interviews confirmed that knowledge is acquired through education, discussions in meetings and newsrooms, training, holding seminars and workshops, and mentoring the new employees. From the interviews, it emerged that the public broadcasting organizations which were studied recruit graduates from the local universities in the region. At SABC bursaries and loans are availed to those employees who want to further their education. Such employees may repay later.

An organization's HRD can facilitate the knowledge conversion (tacit and explicit) as a way of creating new knowledge and retaining it as organizational knowledge. This can be done through employee participation in discussions on particular topics during workshops/seminars, learning, teaching, debates and brainstorming among other activities (Afiouni, 2008). Individuals can share knowledge during interaction as described by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) socialization activities in the knowledge conversion theory.

A question was asked to establish how the HR Department facilitates the sharing of tacit knowledge between individuals and the results were as follows: brainstorming 29

(18.1%), discussions 32(20%), debates 6 (3.6%), learning 71(44.6%), teaching 29 (17.9%) and communities of practice 8 (5%). The responses indicated that the human resource department plays an important role in overseeing the learning of its organizational members. Figure 5.7 below presents the finding:

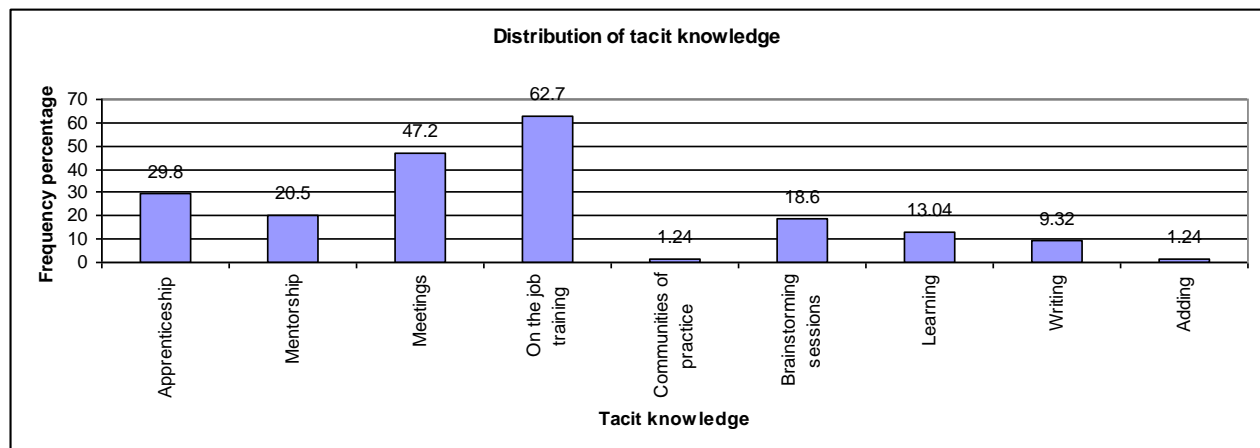


**Figure 5.7: How HR facilitates knowledge sharing**

Interviews with all the three HRD Managers from the three public broadcasting organizations in which the study was conducted revealed that there were training sections placed under the HR section of each of the broadcasting organizations investigated. The training divisions coordinate and facilitate the training of organizational employees by arranging workshops, seminars and short courses. The interviewed managers indicated that supervisors in various sections of the broadcasting organizations studied identify training needs by establishing performance gaps thus

assessing individual employee's current performance against the expectations. The supervisors may also identify needs for training when new equipment and technology is to be introduced to employees without the background knowledge. Upon identifying training needs immediate supervisors place requests to the Training co-ordinators of each of the broadcasting organizations studied.

When asked if tacit knowledge was distributed and shared through formal socialization activities, it was clear that workers acquire most of their knowledge while at work thus on the job training 101 (62.34%), meetings 76 (46.91%) and apprenticeship 48 (29.62%). The rest of the responses are as follows; mentorship 33 (20.37%), formal communities of practice 2 (1.24%), brainstorming sessions 30 (18.5%), formal learning 21(12.9%), writing15 (9.25%) and adding 2 (1.23%). The results are also presented graphically in figure 5.8 below.



**Figure 5.8: Methods of acquiring tacit knowledge**

During the interviews with radio and television services managers (middle and line managers) of the three broadcasting organizations it emerged that news teams, journalists meet in editorial meetings where they discuss and share knowledge on

stories and news items. In such meetings managers brainstorm, discuss and share their tacit knowledge.

Respondents were also asked if tacit knowledge was distributed and shared through informal socialization processes and activities. Sixty-six (40.74%) of the respondents indicated that tacit knowledge is distributed and shared through employee experiences, while 49 (30.2%) respondents shared knowledge during sporting activities as they interact informally and discuss work issues with colleagues. Some 42 (25.9%) respondents indicated that they share tacit knowledge by spending time with each other and 33 (20.37%) respondents shared tacit knowledge during retreat resort. Only one (0.61%) respondent indicated informal communities of practice. In the 'any other' category respondents identified media events and staff functions such as Women's Day events.

Interviews were held with all the three HR managers of the three organizations. Two HR managers indicated that they had training officers who facilitated the training of employees and holding of workshops and seminars when necessary. The other organization did not have a training section but would send their employees for training to other Ministries or better engage consultants when need arose.

Interviews revealed that all the three organizations studied had sporting activities as social events to encourage socialization, sharing information and knowledge in a non-work environment. Employees from different sections, provinces and regions form some sporting teams for various sporting disciplines. Such teams would meet on arranged dates to engage in competitions. During such formal and informal gatherings employees

meet and discuss some tasks. In this way they share their tacit knowledge with some workers from whom they are geographically separated.

## **5.6 How Organizational culture affects knowledge retention**

Broadcasting organizations like any other business have their own practices, methods, norms and values. Such organizations are made up of different people who come from different backgrounds. New technologies bring about clashes between culture and change. However, if an organization's culture promotes new ideas, new products and new methods it stands a better position to learn. The values, beliefs and behaviour patterns of an organization shape the employee's behaviour and in turn impact on knowledge sharing and retention (Langer, 2005). Asked if there was a knowledge sharing culture in their respective organization majority, 59.09%, of the respondents said 'yes' and 40.91% said 'no'. This is shown in figure 5.9 below:

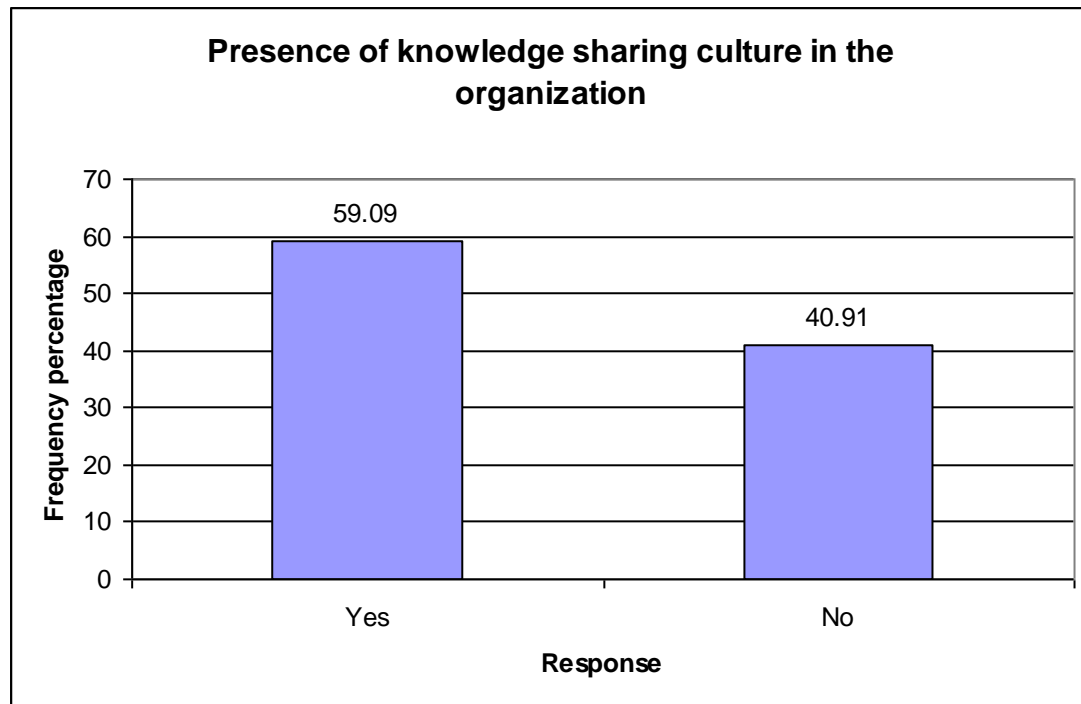


Figure 5.9: Knowledge sharing culture in the organization

Some respondents who chose the yes option further explained that the knowledge sharing culture was present in their broadcasting organizations, was well pronounced and practised in certain sections or divisions. These include news department, engineering and transmission and sales and marketing departments.

### 5.6.1 Cultural impediments to knowledge sharing

If knowledge is not shared it means those who know may leave with their knowledge without sharing it with anyone in the organization (Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011; Levy, 2011 and Lahaie, 2005) Organizational culture may contribute to hampering knowledge sharing (Jennex, 2007). In question 22 participants were asked to identify cultural impediments to knowledge sharing that could in turn affect knowledge retention. Some

74 (45.67%) respondents identified lack of trust as the worst impediment to knowledge sharing while 67 (41.35%) respondents identified unwillingness to share knowledge as the second impediment to knowledge sharing and 64 (39.5%) respondents viewed lack of participation in knowledge sharing as another impediment but 60 (37.03%) respondents were of the opinion that dress was fourth in ascending order while 57 (35.18%) respondents identified lack of rewards or recognition for knowledge sharing as another major impediment to knowledge sharing. The respondents viewed the other four as minor impediments to knowledge sharing with 27 (16.66%) respondents citing beliefs, 10 (6.17%) for values, 9 (6%) for norms, and 2 (1.23%) lack of training. From the responses it showed that lack of trust and unwillingness to share knowledge were major impediments to sharing knowledge in the broadcasting organizations investigated.

A Chief Technology Officer with one of the organizations studied suggested that openness, honesty, collaboration and trust create a conducive environment for knowledge sharing but in his view his organization did not encourage people to share knowledge because “some managers do not want people to be better than them.”

Responses to questions on dress code indicated that employees were encouraged to dress in smart casual when on duty. For journalists they were required to dress for the occasion, be it for a football, political rally, so that they fit the situation and not look awkward.

### 5.6.2 Freedom to share knowledge

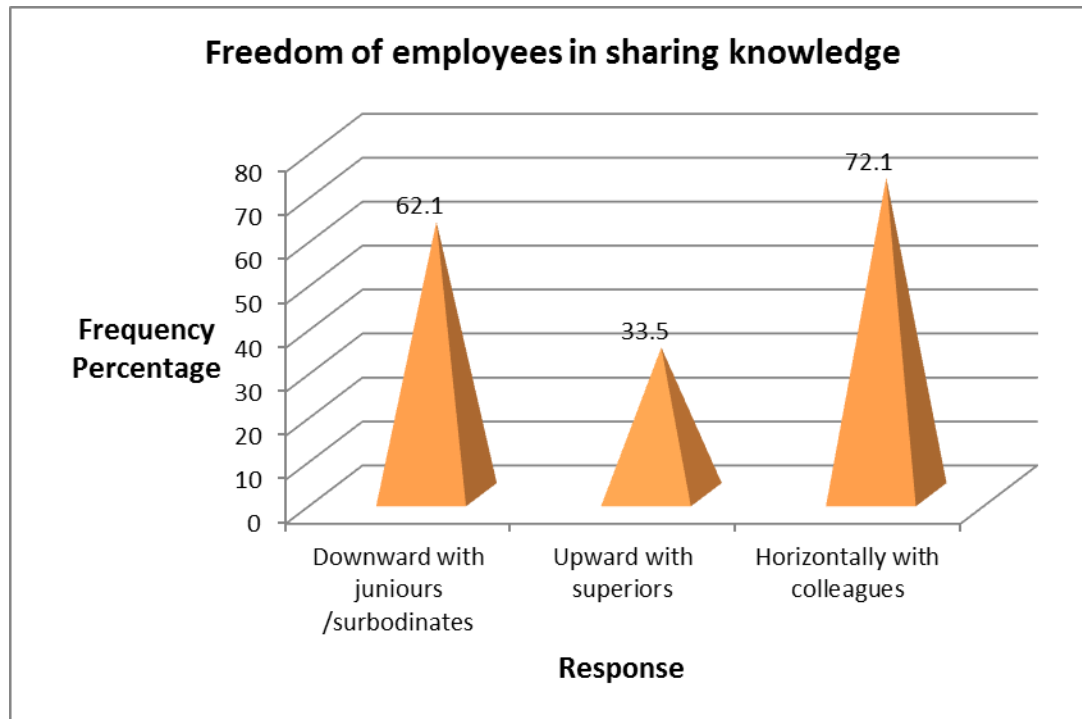
Asked if employees were free to share knowledge in their organizations 67.52% respondents said yes and 32.48% said 'No'. One respondent said 'yes we are free to share knowledge but not upwards.' The researcher probed further about those who chose the 'yes' option and it emerged that employees were free to share with employees of the same ranks and juniors. During the interviews all the managers (37) indicated that employees were free to share knowledge but most of them do not want to do so. Managers were quick to point out that they encouraged their subordinates to share knowledge.

Those respondents who said 'No' 51 (32.48%) were further asked to select the reasons why they were not free to share knowledge. The majority of participants 36 (22.22%) considered lack of trust among organizational members as the main reason, 28 (17.28%) chose culture of secrecy within their organization and a similar number 28 (17.28%) identified the people's attitudes towards knowledge sharing. Twenty-five (15.43%) of the respondents said those in privileged positions hoard knowledge for fear of losing privileges while 20 (12.34%) settled for limited sharing of knowledge because of superiority complex. Responding to the 'any other' category 0.61% of the respondents cited 'political', 'sensitive information is confidential' and 'inferiority complex' as reasons why they were not free to share knowledge in their organizations.

When knowledge is shared between the experienced and the less experienced employees it is likely to be retained in the heads of the employees and becomes institutional knowledge (Hansen *et al*, 2001). Question 23 in the questionnaire asked if employees were free to share knowledge downward with juniors, upward with superiors



and horizontally with colleagues in the same ranks. The results are shown below in figure 5.10



**Figure 5.10: Freedom of employees to share knowledge**

The results indicate that employees were free to share their knowledge horizontally with colleagues 116 (71.6%), downward with juniors or subordinates 100 (61.72%) rather than upward with superiors 54 (33.33%).

## **5.7 Organizational Knowledge Retention**

Knowledge retention is the preservation and storage of organizational knowledge in the organizational systems for future use (Newman and Conrad, 1999). Knowledge retention provides a systematic approach to ensuring that the knowledge of veteran

employees is transferred to the workforce of the future (Tennessee Valley Authority, 2007). This knowledge is found in both organizational employees (tacit knowledge) and company documents (explicit knowledge). It is du Plessis's (2004) opinion that an organization that does not retain the knowledge that it acquires and produces stands the risk of losing competitive edge.

### 5.7.1 Knowledge Storage

Against this backdrop the present researcher asked respondents from the public broadcasting corporations studied to identify as many as possible formats in which knowledge is stored for retention purposes. Figure 5.11 below shows the formats in which the knowledge is stored in the three broadcasting public organizations.

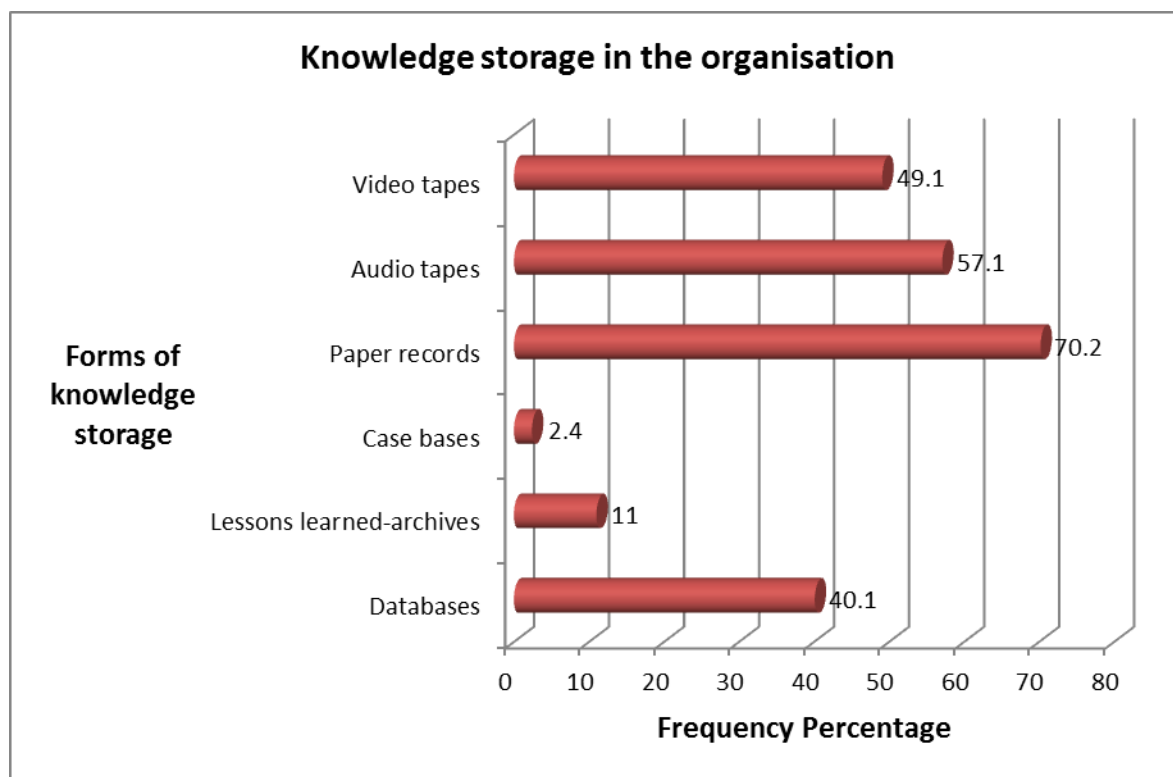


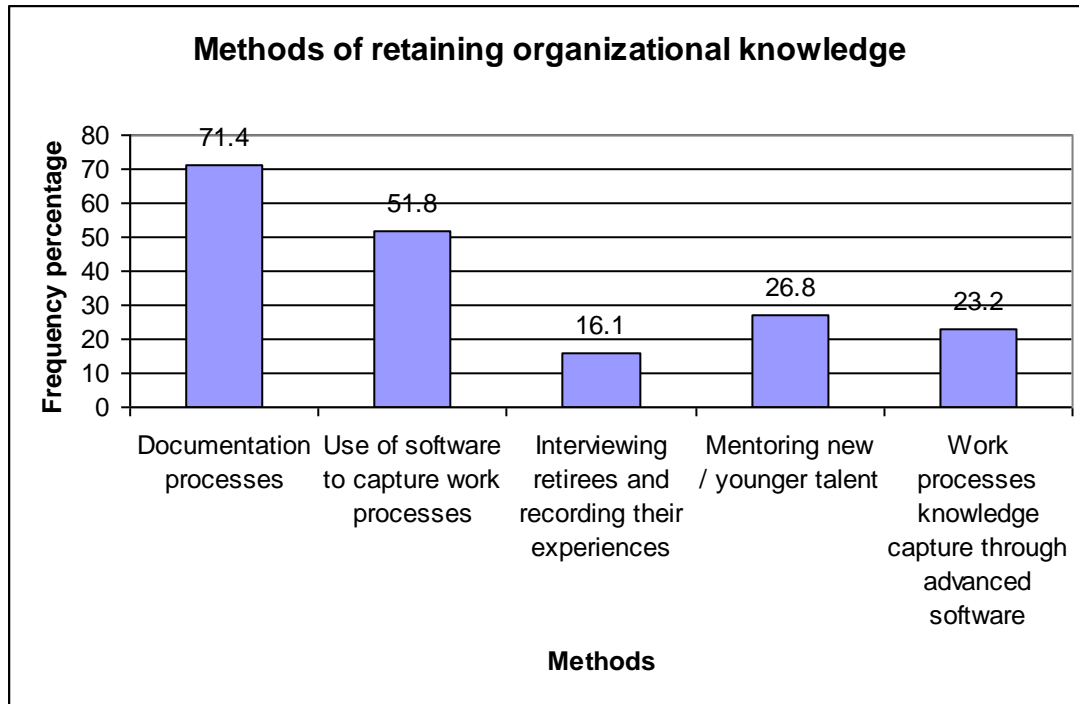
Figure 5.11: Formats of storing knowledge

Figure 5.10 shows that the national broadcasting organizations rely on paper records as 113 (70.2%) respondents indicated. Paper-based records are cheap, they represent original documents; can be readily accessed unlike electronic which need a computer and power, a computer literate individual; besides not all offices were computerized at the time of study. As organizations largely dealing with sound 92 (57.4%) respondents cited audio tapes, 79 (49.1%) respondents cited databases while 79 (49.1%) chose video tapes as a format for knowledge storage and preservation for reuse. Lessons-learned archives 19 (11.8%) and case bases 4 (2.40%) are rarely used for knowledge storage. Case bases are particular cases that are recorded in video to assist in seminar and workshop presentations. One ICT manager indicated that the server retains the organizational knowledge.

Observations revealed that the national broadcasting organizations had libraries, records offices and archives sections which form the knowledge repositories of the respective organizations. At SABC the library and archives unit is headed by Head of Libraries and Archives while at DBS and ZBC Librarians are the managers.

### **5.7.2 Methods of Retaining Organizational Knowledge**

The respondents were further asked to choose methods/ways of retaining organizational knowledge from possible answers which were given. Figure 5.12 below illustrates the finding graphically.



**Figure 5.12: Methods of retaining organizational knowledge**

The purpose of question 27 was to establish ways or methods which were used by the broadcasting organizations to retain organizational knowledge. It emerged that 121 (74.69%) respondents cited documentation processes, 64 (39.50%) chose use of software to capture work processes while 51(31.48%) respondents chose mentoring new or younger talent. Interviewing retirees and recording their experiences was cited by 23 (14.19%) respondents and capturing work processes through advanced software was chosen by 20 (12.34%) respondents.

During an interview one HR manager indicated that it was his organization's policy to interview retirees and record their experiences. Another HR manager from another organization revealed that they only interview selected individuals on why they leave and not about their operational knowledge. These are purely exit interviews which had nothing to do with capturing an individual's knowledge. The other HR manager from the

third organization said they do not have resources to conduct such interviews though the organization viewed it as a noble idea to capture the insights of the knowledgeable retirees.

### **5.7.3 Knowledge Lost Within the Last Five Years**

Literature reviewed indicates that when experts leave an organization they leave with their knowledge. Questions 28 and 29 required respondents to identify experts, talent and expertise that had left the organizations which were studied within the last five years. The results of the findings are shown in table 5.8 below.

**Table 5.8: Experts who left the organizations**

<b>Experts</b>	<b>Left the organization</b>
Technicians	64%
Engineers	60.3%
Editors	55.3%
IT Specialists	50.9%
Accountants	44. %
Marketing Specialists	37.3%
Public Relations Officers	26.7%
Librarians	21.1%
Information officers	19.9%
Communications manager	19.9%
Researchers	16.8%
Archivists	14.9%
Documentalists	8.7%

Loss of technicians, engineers and editors was even supported during interviews by the managers. Technicians seem to be mobile in the region due to their rare knowledge and skills in the broadcasting industry.

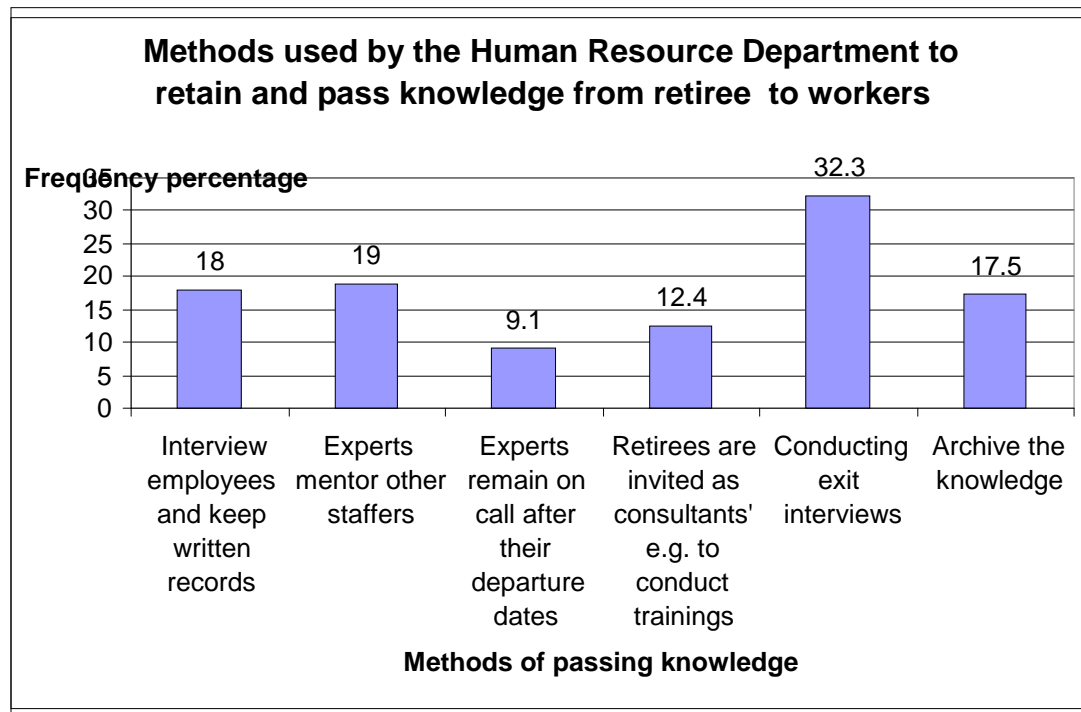
When asked to indicate “any others” the respondents gave reporters, journalists, channel controllers, board members, top management, chief executive officers, producers, cameramen, technical operators, logistics officers, data capturers, audio operators, programs managers and photographers. The respondents gave answers with regards to the sections they were placed in the organization and less on the general knowledge of the organization.

Asked whether those who left were interviewed to capture their knowledge respondents posted various comments such as; ‘not to my knowledge’, ‘the organization does not interview people when they leave’, ‘sometimes people even leave without a good bye’, ‘HR conducts exit interviews’, ‘not privy to the processes that happens after resigning’ and ‘HR can provide more accurate statistics’ written on the questionnaires. Interviews with managers revealed that some of the experts who departed held exit interviews with the HRD for purely personnel matters on why they were leaving. Further asked in the interview about interviews to capture the knowledge of departing experts some managers indicated that the experts left under different circumstances, some made sudden departures, some retired, some were fired, some were retrenched some died and some disappeared never to return.

#### **5.7.4 Role of HRD in Knowledge Capture and Retention**

In most cases retirees are the most experienced workers. In their heads they carry the organizational knowledge (Thomas, 2009). The HRD is a vital cog for knowledge retention of this group of people by virtue of its functions and responsibilities (Afiouni, 2008). As such a question was asked to establish the role of the human resource

departments in tapping into retaining and capturing retirees' know-how and experts' best practices so that the information can be passed on to current and future workers.



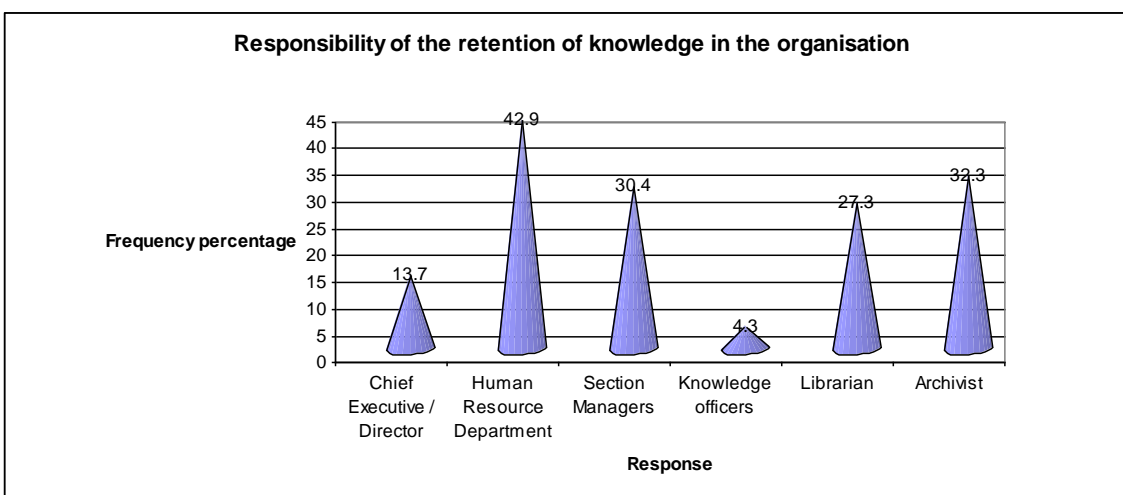
**Figure 5.13: HR methods to capture and retain retirees' knowledge**

The results for this was that 29 (18%) respondents were of the view that HR interview employees and keep written records, 5 (19%) respondents suggested that HR would encourage experts to mentor other staffers 29 (9.1%) experts remain on call after their departure dates. Thirteen (12.4%) opined that retirees are invited as consultants, 20 (32.3%) conducting exit interviews and 52 (32.09%) archive the knowledge. From the interviews it emerged that various sections can call retirees as and when they need assistance but it is not something that was formally arranged by the public broadcasting organization that were studied. In another interview a manager revealed that HR conducts exit interviews with the leaving employee during the last week of employment yet this does not capture knowledge of an expert. However, one of the managers put it



retorted when he said, ‘There is no retention program for knowledge and no knowledge retaining measures are in place as far as I am concerned.’

When further asked to identify those responsible for retaining organizational knowledge the majority 69 (42.59%) of the respondents suggested HRD followed by 52 (32.09%) respondents for Archivist, 49 (30.24%) chose section managers, 44 (27.16%) librarian, 22 (13.58%) respondents regarded Chief Executive/Director as responsible and 7 (4.32%) thought the responsibility was for knowledge officers. The results are shown in figure 5.14 below:



**Figure 5.14: Responsibility for retaining knowledge**

This shows that there are no knowledge officers in the public broadcasting organizations, a fact which was supported by the HR managers in the interviews. The researcher had to follow up this score (4.3%) to seek clarification from the managers during interviews. The absence of knowledge officers is better explained by the fact that knowledge management is a new phenomenon in the field of information management.

Knowledge management is about people, processes and policies. The present researcher wanted to establish if there were policies in the national broadcasting organizations which were investigated with regards to reusing knowledge, preservation of knowledge, assigning responsibilities to retain knowledge. All the public broadcasting organizations indicated that they had a policy of recalling retirees (20.5%), extracting from company archives (56.5%), and data mining (12.4%).

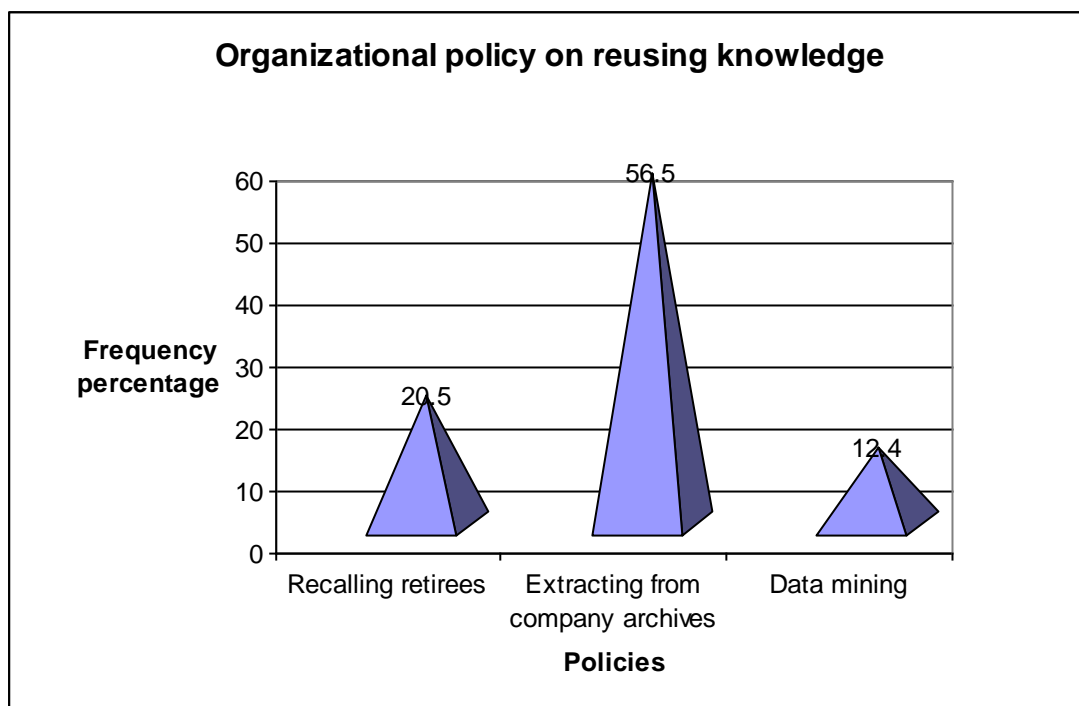
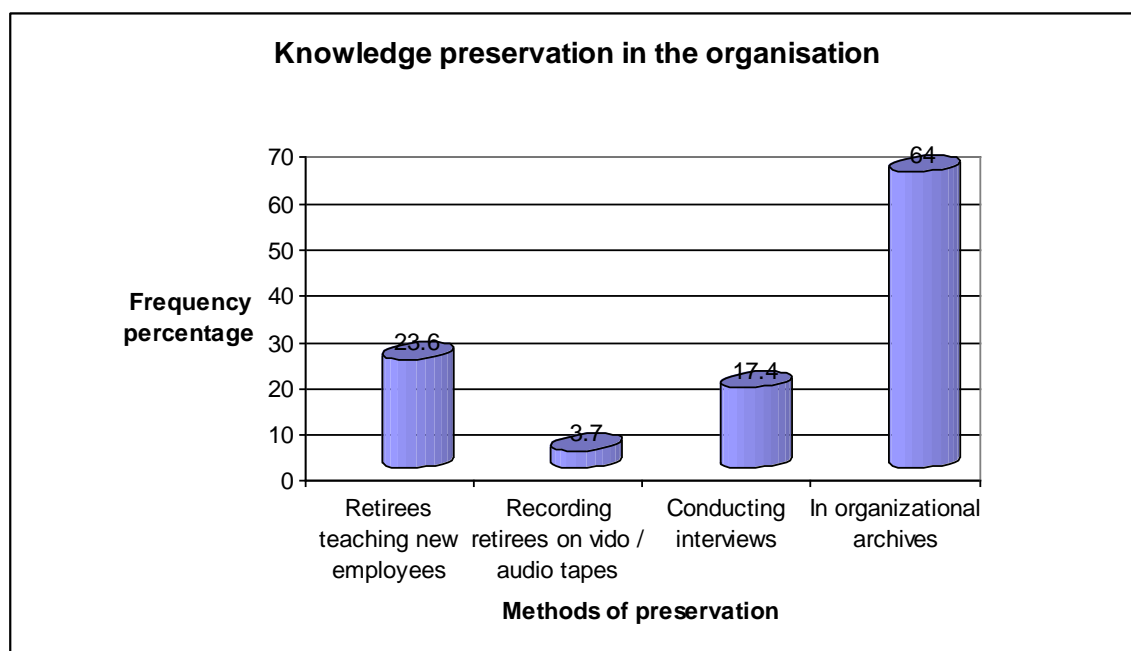


Figure 5.15: Organizational policy on reusing knowledge

### 5.7.5 Libraries and Archives as Knowledge Repositories

Documented knowledge may be preserved in the organizational archives. This was evidenced by the establishment of repositories set aside to store organizational archives in all the three organizations. From the interviews it emerged that Archivists and Librarians head these sections assisted by Records Managers, Library Assistants, Assistant Librarians, and Records Clerks.

Processes, procedures, and ways of knowledge preservation depend on the organization and nature of business and products and services that are discharged (Skyrme, 1999). Asked how knowledge was preserved in the broadcasting organizations investigated respondents indicated retirees teaching new employees 38 (23.6%), recording retirees on video/audio tapes 6 (3.7%), and conducting interviews 28 (17.4%), in organizational archives 103 (64%).



**Figure 5.16: Knowledge Preservation in the organizations**

For the 'any other' option respondents indicated that knowledge is also preserved through written reports. The recognition of knowledge preservation through archives reveals that employees were quite aware of the role of recording knowledge in their respective organizations.

### 5.7.6 Sources of tacit knowledge to be retained

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) regard tacit knowledge as the most important category of knowledge because it is used for innovation. As such a question was asked on the major sources of knowledge that have to be captured and retained in their organizations. The results are shown in the figure 5.17 below:

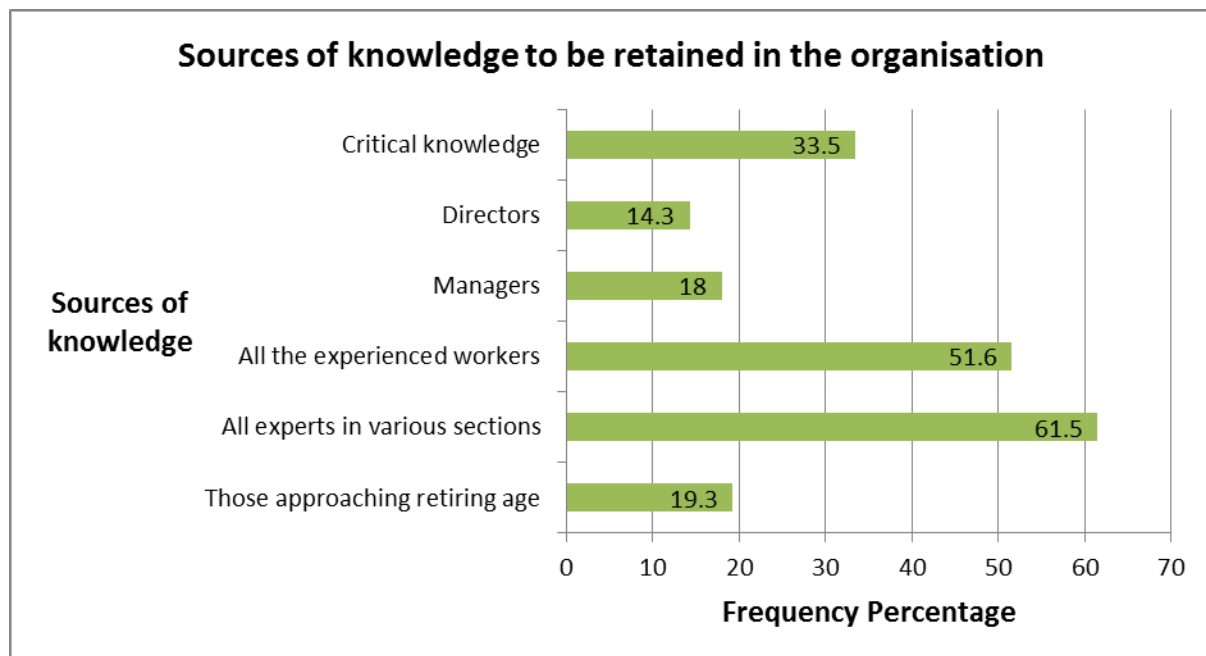


Figure 5.17: Knowledge to be retained in the organization

Not all knowledge needs to be captured. Majority of the respondents 99 (61.5%) were of the view that knowledge of all experts in various sections need to be captured but 83 (51.6%) suggested knowledge of all the experienced workers while 54 (33.33%) said critical knowledge holders and 31(19.3%) respondents suggested those approaching retiring age. Twenty nine (17.9%) said managers and 23(14.19%) chose directors. Further asked on who were critical knowledge holders in their respective organizations,

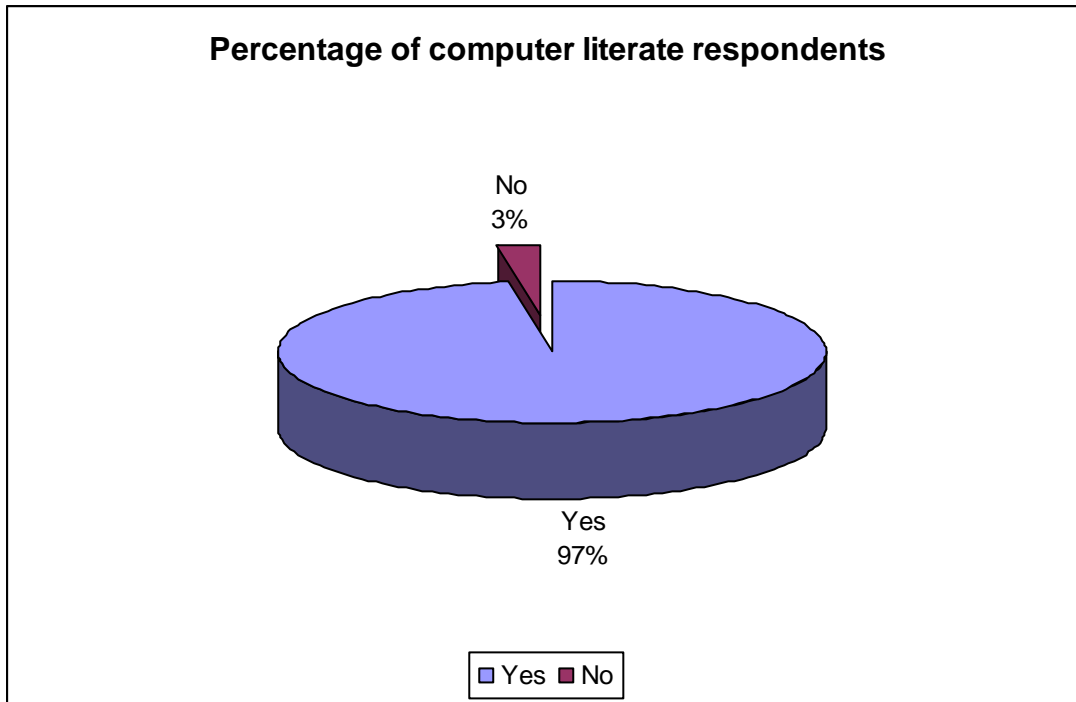
managers revealed that those who had been with the organizations for more than 20 years and were approaching retiring age, experts, experienced workers, directors and even new employees who possessed vital skills for the organization to continue existing in their business.

## **5.8 Role of ICTs in knowledge retention, transfer and sharing**

The knowledge-based view focuses on the organization's ability to gather, produce, maintain, and disseminate knowledge. ICT is impacting heavily on the way organizations function and plays a vital role in the knowledge society (Raman *et al*, 2008). Communications up and down, from one department to another, from manager to manager can be enhanced and increased by using technology. In this way the lines of communication are shorter, clearer and more concise. ICTs make it possible for connections that enable knowledge transfer, sharing and retention in organizations (Carlson, 2008).

### **5.8.1 Computer literacy and access to ICTs**

For individual workers to be able to retrieve and share knowledge they must be computer literate. Computer literacy is the ability to utilize computer technology in order to get information and communicate (Laudon and Laudon, 2007). Out of the 156 returned questionnaires 153 (97.45%) regarded themselves as computer literate while 4 (2.55%) said they were not computer literate. Five (3.08%) did not respond to this question.



**Figure 5.18: Computer literacy**

Technologies are enablers in knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing and knowledge retention (Carlson, 2008; Buckman, 2004) therefore respondents were asked which ICTs they had access to in their respective organizations. The results are shown in order of the highest to the lowest in score in table 5.9.

**Table 5.9: Access to ICTs**

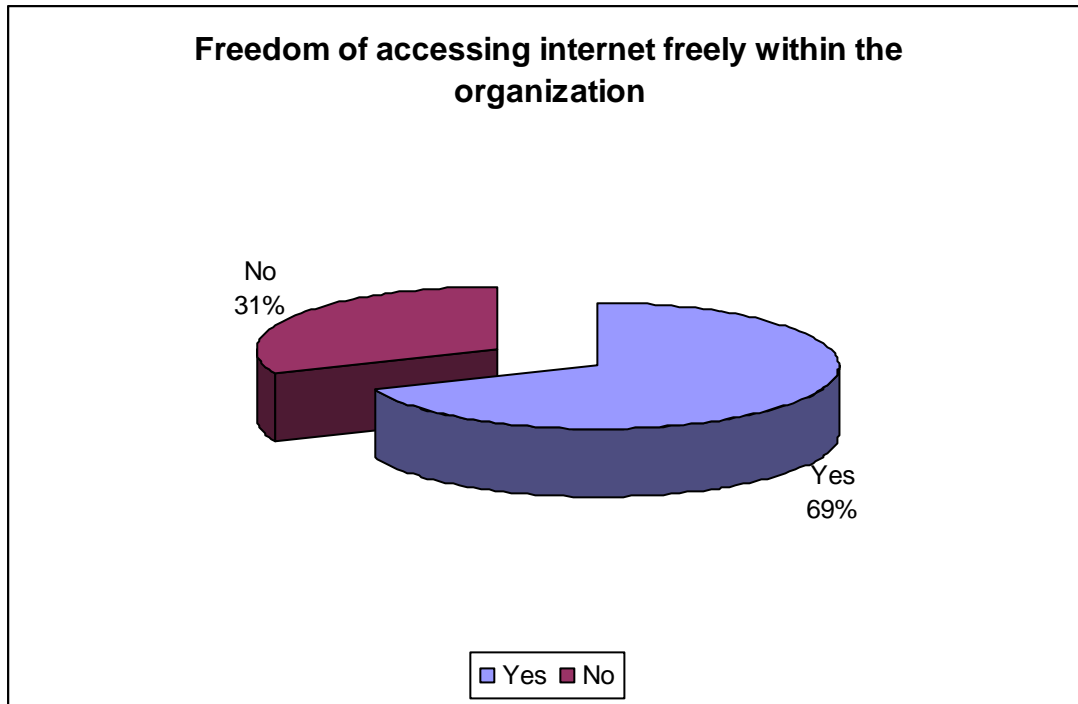
<b>Tool</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Fax	147	90.74
Internet	136	83.95
Intranet/electronic mail	121	74.69
Telephone	120	74.07
Cellphone	116	71.60
Discussion forums	99	61.11
Databases	90	55.55
Knowledge directories	88	54.32
Computers	82	50.61
Virtual conference	77	47.53
Libraries	68	41.97
Websites	65	40.12
Intelligent search engines	59	36.41
Groupware	58	35.80
Electronic bulletin	56	34.56
Wikis	40	24.69
Skype	33	20.37

The majority 147 (90.74%) of the respondents had access to fax, 121 (74.69%) to intranet/electronic mail, 136 (83.95%) to internet and 116 (71.60%) to cellphones. One hundred and twenty (74.07%) respondents had access to telephone. Wikis (24.69%) and Skype (20.37%) had the lowest score suggesting that employees did not have access to such ICTs at their workplaces. These percentages show that knowledge, in these organizations, is mostly transferred and retained in the form of documents through faxes, intranet and internet.

Two of the surveyed organizations had no intranet at the time of the study. Interviews with the two respective ICT managers revealed that their sites were under construction. Further probed on the state of organizational technology the two interviewees considered their broadcasting organizations as technologically behind others in the region.

If the organization had internet connectivity the respondents were then asked if they had free access to the internet. The majority 108 (68.79%), indicated that they had free access to internet but 49 (31.21%) did not have access to the internet. Further probing revealed that those who indicated that they had free access to internet could access the internet three to five times per day in their respective offices. Those who said they had no access to internet revealed that they had no other means of technologies such as computers in their offices and workmates were reluctant to let them use their office and personal computers. Furthermore their offices did not have internet connectivity.

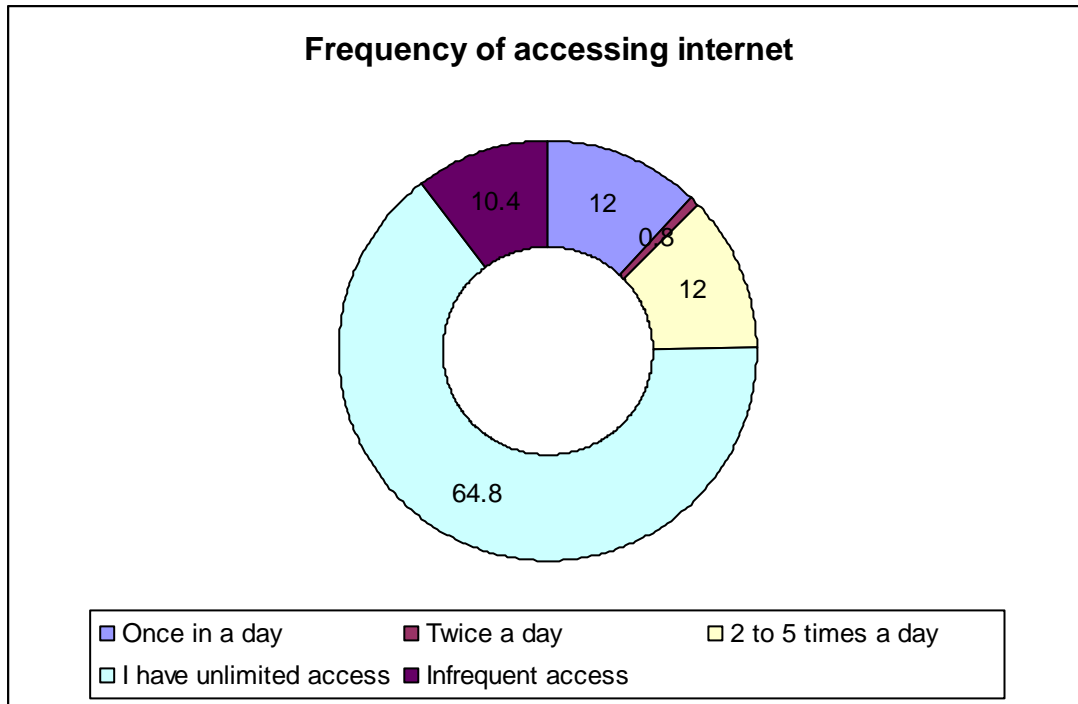




**Figure 5.19: Freedom of access to internet**

Employees, who have free access to the internet can access information through their computers, retrieve information and share it with workmates. They use computers to create databases and retain the knowledge and for all the information they need in their duties and responsibilities.

The majority 108 (68.79%) of respondents who answered in the affirmative were further asked to indicate their frequency in accessing the internet. The results revealed that 15 (12%) accessed the internet once in a day, 1 (0.8%) twice a day, 15 (12%) two to five times a day, 81 (64.8%) had unlimited access while 13 (10.4%) had infrequent access to the internet thus no access or once per day. The results are shown in figure 5.19 below.



**Figure 5.20: Frequency of accessing internet**

Accessibility to technologies makes it feasible to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge. This is why the researcher thought it important to ask respondents to identify technologies that were accessible to them for the purposes of knowledge retrieval, sharing and dissemination. The results were shown in order of highest to the lowest in table 5.9 below:

**Table5.10: Technologies used to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Telephone	124	76.54
Internet	110	67.90
Computers	105	64.81
Websites	100	61.72
Intranet/electronic mail	95	58.64
Cellphone	94	58.02
Libraries	86	53.08
fax	80	49.38
Discussion forums	46	29.39
Databases	37	22.83
Electronic bulletin	31	19.13
Intelligent search engines	23	14.19
Virtual conference	21	12.96
Skype	17	10.49
Knowledge directories	13	10.49
Wikis	13	8.02
Groupware	6	3.70

The majority 124 (76.54%) of the respondents used telephone, 110 (67.90%) used internet, 105 (64.81%) used computers and 95 (58.64%) used intranet/electronic mail. Skype (8.02%), knowledge directories (8.02%), Wikis (8.02%) and Groupware (3.7%) were less used to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge. These percentages

show that in most cases employees use telephone, internet, intranet/electronic mail and cellphones to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge. While there could be some overlaps between internet and computers the internet could be accessed through other gadgets such as cellphones.

## **5.9 Respondents' suggestions on knowledge sharing and retention**

At the end of the questionnaire and the interview respondents were asked to make some suggestions, recommendations or comments regarding knowledge sharing and knowledge retention in the public broadcasting organizations which were investigated. The respondents' suggestions are hereby presented graphically and a summary of the comments is given thereafter.

### 5.9.1 Suggestions on knowledge retention

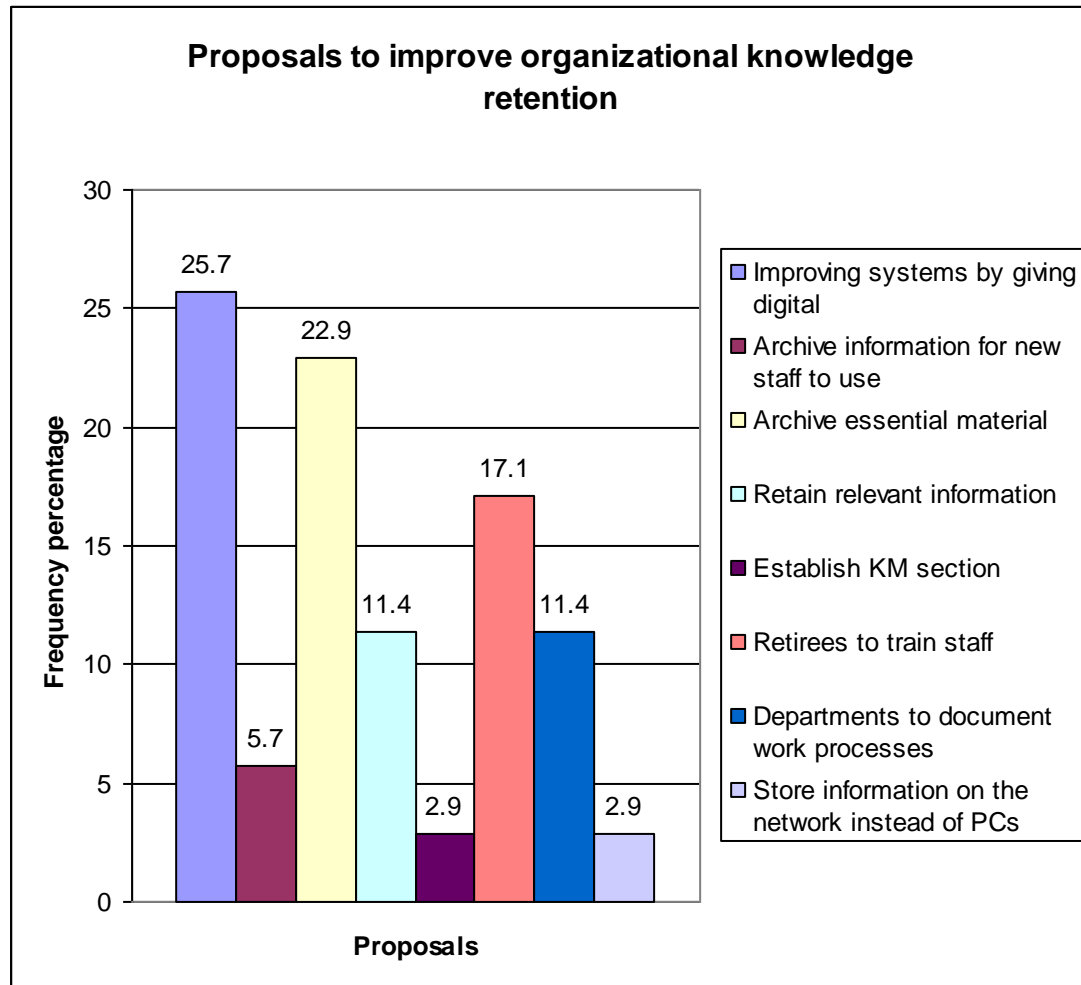


Figure 5.21: Suggestions on improving knowledge retention

Below is a summary of the respondents' suggestions on knowledge retention. The suggestions have been grouped into specific sub themes.

Respondents suggested that there is need for each of the three public broadcasting organizations' management to first acknowledge that knowledge retention is crucial and then set up a section that deals with knowledge retention.

Respondents suggested that there is need to acquire state of the art ICTs to improve knowledge sharing and retention. Respondents recommended that their broadcasting organizations establish internet and intranet services to facilitate access to knowledge and encourage knowledge exchange. They also suggested that their organizations should facilitate the increase of formal and informal group interactions and discussions through email to encourage knowledge sharing.

It was also suggested that the broadcasting organizations need to establish a highly computerized recording and archiving system to enable retrieval and accessibility of knowledge by every employee. Respondents suggested the establishment of a central library and archives that should be digitalized and expanded to enhance their operations and research. It was recommended that knowledge should be readily accessed through the creation of a database of documents.

Respondents suggested hiring of experts, retirees and other specialists to train junior staff, provide coaching and mentoring services for a reward so that knowledge will be captured and retained in the public broadcasting organizations. Retirees may be recalled when need arises. Respondents suggested that the public broadcasting organizations studied should draft policies to allow the use of experts to mentor new employees; retirees to do consultancy work and be recalled to assist when need arise. Deliberate policies should be established to encourage knowledge sharing.

Respondents charged that there must be manager-subordinates openness, frequent meetings, formal and informal gatherings, training, refresher courses, seminars, workshops, joint interaction with managers outside the working environment to improve

socialization and knowledge sharing. It was also suggested holding that more seminars, training and workshops for knowledge dissemination so that when the knowledgeable experts leave the public broadcasting organizations those who remain will still remain with operational knowledge.

Respondents suggested that the organizations investigated may give incentives, rewards to the experienced, skilled and talented employees to gain staff co-operation, motivate and encourage them to share knowledge and mentor other employees. They also suggested that the three broadcasting organizations should create a supportive knowledge sharing environment to ensure that knowledge is retained in databases, libraries and technical training manuals. Respondents implored the managers of the three broadcasting corporations to promote and encourage trust between workers.

Respondents encouraged the Public broadcasting organizations investigated should join with other regional and international broadcasting stations in exchange programmes so as to exchange knowledge and embrace aspects of advanced technology in other countries. It was also recommended that the three broadcasting organizations introduce mentorship programme to enable the coaching of juniors and new employees to learn by doing, observing and imitating from the experienced and experts.

## **5.10 Summary**

The data presented in this chapter were gathered through questionnaire, interviews and observations and are the results of an empirical study on knowledge retention strategies in three SADC public broadcasting organizations. To analyze data the researcher used descriptive statistics from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), content analysis of the studied broadcasting organizations' reports, analysis of gathered data through observations, analysis of the transcribed interviews. The analysis helped in obtaining vital information on the profile of the participants. Knowledge management practices in the public broadcasting organizations as well as the tools and technologies for knowledge retention in the organizations investigated were identified. The presented data indicated that there were no knowledge retention strategy programmes as yet in the public broadcasting organizations that were investigated (SABC, DBS and ZBC). The data were presented in tables and charts. The results presented here provide the background for the discussions in the next chapter. The next chapter discusses the data to show how the findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge.



## **Discussion of the findings**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an interpretation and discussion of the data that were presented in the previous chapter. According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1998:196) interpretation is a process by which a researcher attaches meaning to collected data and findings and compares that meaning to other authors. The main objective of this chapter is to bring the findings into the fold of the existing literature in the retention sharing, transfer and preservation of knowledge and how organizational culture and ICTs affect the processes in the organizations which were studied. The aim of this study was to identify the knowledge retention strategies in three SADC public broadcasting organizations. To achieve this aim four main objectives/ research questions were formulated to guide the study and this chapter provides a discussion of the findings in line with the objectives as outlined in Chapter 1 (Cf 1.11 and 1.12). The discussion that follows focuses on the following research themes:

- strategies to capture and retain knowledge;
- knowledge preservation and storage for reuse;

- how organizational culture facilitates knowledge acquisition and sharing for retention purposes; and
- role of ICTs as enablers of knowledge transfer and retention.

In the preliminary stages of the chapter some important aspects such as respondents' profile and organizational knowledge are discussed to give a clear reflection of the study.

## **6.2 Respondents' Profiles**

Section A of the questionnaire and interview guide opened with the respondents' profile. This section revealed that the majority of the respondents, 71 (43%) and 57 (34.5%) were in the age groups 25-35 years and 36-46 years respectively. These are the age groups who are very mobile, can change organizations resulting in knowledge leakage (Mohamed *et al.* 2006; Madsen *et al.* 2002).

The study revealed that in the broadcasting organizations investigated there were more male employees (52%) than females (48%). The gap even widened further in managerial positions. Of the 38 managers that were interviewed only 10 were females and 28 were males. Due to some social family commitments and the traditional gender roles ascribed to them women still find it difficult to assume challenging posts at work.

From the questionnaires and during social interaction in the offices, tea break and lunch time the researcher observed and noted that the majority were recent graduates from technical colleges and universities. Sveiby (1997) as cited by Ondari-Okemwa (2006)

argues that the level of one's education is a valid indicator since people who have gone through institutions of higher learning are capable of processing vast information. In similar study, Giovanni (2009) found that a number of professional employees provided the needed information. The majority of the respondents (84.4%) had Diplomas and Bachelor's degree but there were no PhD holders. This could be explained by the fact that the minimum qualification, in the TV and Radio services where most of the respondents were drawn from is the Diploma and PhD holders are better utilized in universities. One station manager revealed, *'For the posts of reporters, journalists, newsreaders and producers the incumbent must be a diploma or bachelor's degree holder.'* The researcher noted that the public broadcasting organizations recruit people of different levels of education and training background but mostly diploma and degree graduates. The broadcasting organizations that were studied train them 'to use their analytic and creative skills on solving unique business problems' (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001). From these two sections 61 questionnaires were completed. The views of the respondents who were highly qualified educationally are thus invaluable (Steyn and du Toit, 2010) with regards to contributions on knowledge retention.

In the literature surveyed, the SADC region has technical universities and colleges which run training programmes in Mass Communication, Media studies and Journalism. The investigated broadcasting organizations' employees study and acquire such skills from these technical colleges and universities. The broadcasting organizations also recruit from these tertiary institutions. This explains the high levels of tertiary education possessed by employees of the broadcasting organizations studied. All the broadcasting organizations' HR and Training sections opined that they were learning

organizations which support continuous education and training of their employees to the levels of degree qualifications. In a study by Terra and Angeloni (n.d.) on the differences and similarities of knowledge management and information management, knowledge is viewed as the 'stock' while learning is the 'flow' of knowledge. As noted above, that broadcasting employees learn in the universities and technical colleges would imply that knowledge is flowing in the broadcasting organizations studied.

### **6.3 Organizational knowledge: Tacit and Explicit**

According to Taylor (2007) individuals join an organization with certain levels of knowledge and increase those levels of knowledge until they become familiar with their new roles and culture of the organization. Both personalized (tacit) and codified (explicit) knowledge constitutes what is regarded as organizational knowledge. The importance of either type of knowledge varied with interviewees (managers) or their sections. Some managers viewed tacit as more important than explicit and vice versa. Thirty-six out of 38 respondent managers argued that tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge complement each other and therefore organizations should come up with strategies to retain both such knowledge. For instance, Head of News and Current Affairs (Botswana) indicated that both types of knowledge were important in the broadcasting organization since they relied on "tangible facts that can be proven or seen and also brainstorm sessions where people use tacit knowledge for example news and story ideas". However, the Chief Engineer (Radio and TV Transmitter) argued that "explicit knowledge is more important because we keep it and can be reused whereas tacit is kept by an individual and if he goes he leaves with it". The three organizations

have lost valuable organizational knowledge through such departures (Cf 5.7.3) it is difficult to separate tacit knowledge from its holder. This is consistent with literature surveyed where tacit knowledge is referred to as sticky while explicit is leaky and migratory (Turban *et al.* 2008; Nemani, 2010). One head/manager of Operations perceived tacit knowledge as the most important because “we are a creative industry.” In reference to explicit knowledge he further argued that “knowledge on paper is not in action”. The head of procurement with another organization argued that “tacit knowledge is very important since quick decisions need to be made without reference to documents of which might be time consuming.”

All the three HR Managers were agreed that explicit knowledge was more important in personnel management and therefore need to be properly managed and retained. In the HR sections explicit knowledge was found to be important because it is easy to make reference to it. There is continuity when you refer to recorded information and it is difficult to deal with something which is not on paper. It is clear why the HR sections rely on documentation for decision-making processes.

The study established the majority (55.46%) who participated in this study had 6-40 years in the broadcasting industry in the organizations surveyed (Fig 5.3). Valuable knowledge is acquired through the number of years an individual spends in an organization (Mohammed *et al.* 2006). During an interview with one of the ZBC managers the researcher established that the current ZBC CEO joined the organization in the early 1980’s as a reporter but he was at the helm of the organization during the survey. This confirms Levy’s (2011) findings that many of those retiring nowadays have

spent many years in the same organization and some even in the same job such that there is a vast amount of knowledge to be transferred and retained.

Taylor (2007) observes that all individuals, regardless of how skilled or experienced they may be, will have to develop knowledge on joining an organization. Consistent with Taylor's observations in this study 61.1% of the respondents were of the view that organizational knowledge was acquired predominantly through training followed by workshops/seminars education and mentoring. However, contrary to the finding, Feliciano (2007) suggests that knowledge is extracted from experts using techniques such as interviewing, observations, protocol analysis and brainstorming. The contrast reveals that extracting knowledge from experts was not practised in the broadcasting corporations that were investigated. Had there been knowledge management officers in the organizations studied, formal mentoring programmes could have been introduced. It was found out that much as explicit and tacit knowledge are both important for the organization, explicit knowledge is found in the documents on the intranet and files but the experience is not in documents. Mentorship is therefore important for the retention of tacit knowledge in the organization.

### **6.3.1 Loss of knowledge/knowledge leakage**

To check on the loss of tacit knowledge through some knowledge attrition methods, respondents were requested to identify experts, talent and expertise that had left their organizations. Loss of tacit (personalized) knowledge takes place when the knowledgeable leave or die while explicit (codified) knowledge is lost when organizational documents cannot be found (Dan, 2008; Taylor, 2007; Kim, 2005 and du

Plessis, 2004) for one reason or another or when documents get destroyed in a disaster. In organizations, knowledge is embedded in documents, repositories, organizational routines, processes, practices and norms (Holbeche, 2005). From the study it emerged that the three broadcasting organization studied more often lost experts such as technicians, engineers, editors and IT specialists. This confirms other studies (Wamundila & Ngulube, 2011, Phaladi, 2011; Levy, 2011 and Tennesse Valley Authority, 2007) that knowledge attrition is inevitable. Such high labour turnover means the public broadcasting organizations lose specialist knowledge which in some cases is the core to their business (Staplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010). Knowledge retention ensures resiliency in times of organizational stress caused by loss of critical knowledge. Knowledge retention mitigates the impact of critical knowledge loss (Tennessee Valley Authority, 2007).

During interviews with managers, it emerged that the performance gap left by these experts has compromised the quality of products and services in the public broadcasting organizations. This is consistent with Mohammed *et al* (2006) and Frank (2002) who indicated that if the trained employees were to leave the organization and seek employment somewhere else it has a negative impact on knowledge leakage in that knowledge has leaked out rather than leaking in. The human capital services manager opined that the broadcasting organizations studied have been losing technical knowledge of engineers and IT specialists who are in charge of screening, wiring broadcasting and felt they were a training ground for some private broadcasting organizations and competitors like Multichoice and Etv. An SABC Executive Manager in Content Enterprises lamented the loss of “one elderly person with vast experience, who

had worked for the organization for 42 years now and he is retiring. Such people should be considered to assist in the mentoring of juniors”.

Explicit knowledge was lost in these organizations through various ways. One of the results of this study was that some vital HR information ‘went up in smoke’ when fire broke out at one of the surveyed organizations and some important decisions could not be made because the papers were destroyed. In another investigated organization explicit knowledge was lost during the migration of documents from one medium to another. Though the decision makers could remember some issues such as pending dismissals they could not be implemented in the absence of documented knowledge. This goes to show how tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge may complement each other. It follows therefore that such type of knowledge need proper management that entails transfer to other places and retention thereof.

An organization may feel the negative impact of knowledge loss as staff leave to join competitors. With regard to the case of ZBC, knowledge loss was largely felt by the organization during the period 2000-2009 when it lost a number of experienced staff to the region and overseas because of the economic challenges and the restructuring exercise. Some experienced and knowledgeable ZBC engineers, and technicians joined the SADC regional members like South Africa, Botswana and Zambia while SABC lost knowledgeable programmers to private competitors. In a study conducted by Mohammed *et al.* (2006), it was evident that there is an inflow of knowledge into an organization through people who come from other organizations, particularly where an organization recruits from competitors for their knowledge assets. So in the above case it means that the recipients were beneficiaries of knowledge that was lost by Zimbabwe



Broadcasting Corporation. Mohammed et al (2006) argue that the opposite is perceived as a negative outflow if personnel leave for competing organizations, critical knowledge held by the departing employees may be leaked or lost forever if it is not banked while the personnel were still in the organization.

### **6.3.2 The knowledge that should be retained**

Levy (2011) avers that determining the knowledge to be retained is one of the most important tasks of knowledge retention projects. It emerged that respondents highly valued knowledge from various experts, knowledge from experienced workers, critical knowledge and knowledge from those approaching retirement age what Tennessee Valley Authority (2007) regard as the 'critical knowledge of veteran employees'. During the interviews, managers concurred with this observation and individual managers could even mention some experts whose knowledge needed to be captured as long as they were still working for the organizations. The three organizations determined critical knowledge on the type of the job and achievers. Examples given included a good mechanic who was encouraged to share his knowledge practically, assembling the engine or gearbox such that with the passage of time his workmates would reach his level of competency. Another one was an experienced worker with critical knowledge who was now retiring after serving the organization for 42 years was considered for mentoring the young as a way of capturing and retaining critical knowledge. These observations are consistent with Dan (2008) who posits that knowledge retention is about focusing on the critical knowledge that is at risk of loss and then developing actionable plans to retain that knowledge.

Knowledge retention is also about capturing knowledge from experts before they retire, leaving vital knowledge outside the organization. Though in this study 19% of the respondents thought that those approaching retiring age were third in order of importance, Levy (2011) is of the view that explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge is only possessed by the retiring employees whether in their minds or in the computers.

Tacit knowledge is used when undertaking many tasks and this factor makes certain individuals more valuable than others (Taylor, 2007). This was confirmed by the study when respondents suggested that engineers were at the top of the experts list who were interviewed at the time of departure, followed by technicians, accountants, IT specialists and Public Relations Manager and editors. This was supported by the interview data. Keller (2006) is of the view that of primary importance is the identification of the key knowledge areas that your organization needs to retain whether they are technically specific to certain tasks or roles, or they are procedural. Managers from the studied organizations revealed that technicians and engineers were the people who make broadcasting run. In other words these categories possess the critical knowledge that oils the broadcasting work presumably so because they are involved in radio and television services. From the main questionnaire and the interviews with managers it emerged that engineering, technical, accounting and IT knowledge was the crucial, valuable and irreplaceable areas of knowledge that needed to be retained. This finding is consistent with Young's (2006) assertion that the most irreplaceable, high risk areas are where your knowledge retention efforts need to be focused.

### **6.3.3 The ease of finding and utilizing knowledge**

The findings revealed that generally respondents were of the view that it was easy to find and utilize knowledge in the broadcasting organizations though some had other views. Though statistically insignificant, the 6.33% of the respondents who indicated that they did not know whether it was easy or difficult to find and utilize knowledge in the broadcasting organizations studied were likely to be new members of staff in the organizations therefore they were not aware of where knowledge could be found.

Another finding was that it was difficult to access and utilize knowledge in the organizations because of bureaucracy, lack of transparency and co-operation, lack of resources such as computers and reading material, lack of internet connectivity, classified information, poor archiving system and old equipment. In the case of personnel records that were burnt in 2007, HR respondents indicated that it was difficult to get staff information because of that disaster. Cases of file misplacement were common and access and utilization of information may be difficult for employees.

### **6.3.4 Knowledge generation and acquisition activities**

Converting either tacit to explicit knowledge or vice versa helps in capturing knowledge in an organization. This study established that some sections of the public broadcasting organizations such as news rooms, engineering, marketing and transmission focus on dialogue between individuals and by so doing convert tacit knowledge to tacit in the employees' heads. The findings of this study indicated that tacit knowledge was distributed and shared through formal socialization activities such as apprenticeship, staff meetings and mentorship confirming Levy's (2011) view that tacit knowledge is

transferred vertically during mentoring, teamwork and in chat rooms. Knowledge that has not been codified (i.e. tacit knowledge) is transferred in brainstorming sessions and one-on-one conversations (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001). Holbeche, (2005) asserts that brainstorming, where free-flow group discussion can stimulate a number of ideas, is one of the standard techniques of tacit knowledge sharing resulting in retention of such knowledge in other employees' heads

It is also important to note that knowledge was acquired through formal activities such as education, training, workshops/seminars and mentoring. This finding confirms Jacobs & Roodt's (2011) suggestion that managers can plan strategies and interventions to provide opportunities to share, including training courses, workshops and sharing in informal settings. All the activities mentioned above confirm Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) stage of socialization where knowledge is created and shared by employees through the SECI activities.

### **6.3.5 Learning organizations and knowledge conversion**

Senge (1990) regards a learning organization as that which provides members with energy to keep exploring the world and adjusting themselves to changes. Vinson (2003) posits that to truly learn from employees organizations must have knowledge sharing programs. The interviewees (managers) indicated that in spite of various challenges that may be faced by the surveyed organizations, the three public broadcasting organizations engage in organizational learning activities. At ZBC organizational learning, thus cognitive development, knowledge is generated through training, subject to availability of funds but in most cases they receive invitations from Netherlands,

Canal France International, BBC, Germany (Deutsche Welle), India, South Africa and China among others. The training in China is usually in engineering, news and IT for durations ranging from one to three weeks. Upon return employees write reports which are then circulated to other members of staff. At times organizations studied hold in-house workshops with presenters and producers for the purposes of learning and equipping workforce with skills and knowledge to adapt to new trends. It was further pointed out that some units were teaching their staff for example how to translate (Translation).

Such activities are consistent with Johannessen *et al.*'s view (2001) that organizational learning produces organizational knowledge which if retained gives the organization competitive advantage. The learning enables workers to acquire new knowledge and skills which in turn should be retained as organizational knowledge to improve organization's resiliency in times of crises and, when the knowledgeable employees leave the organization. This was also consistent with Turban *et al.* (2008) who refer to organizational learning as the development of new knowledge and insights that have the potential to influence an organization's behavior. SABC hold weekly internal courses, engages some interns, Witwatersrand University assists in enhancing broadcasting skills and the government looks into broadcasting skills development. It also emerged that SABC's technology section holds joint training programmes with BBC, engage in information exchange with Japan while the News department staff attend workshops with other broadcasting associations such as the SABA which was held in April 2010 at First National Bank (FNB) Stadium. Turban *et al.* (2008) refers to a learning organization as an organization's capability of learning from its past

experience, learning from the best practices of others, and transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently within the organization. For purposes of learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills the DBS in Botswana employees attend seminars, workshops with stakeholders, and government sends people for training at Rhodes University in South Africa, University of Botswana, Limkokwin University, UK, and Harare Polytechnic College in Zimbabwe. Besides at DBS the training activities are managed by a training coordinator.

From the discussions with managers, it emerged that workers do learn from the past experiences and knowledge is transferred from one employee to another during workshops, training, work discussions and problem resolving. This is consistent with Taylor's (2007) suggestion that many organizations have individual learning programs for staff, including induction. In the current study the learning through problem solving was more pronounced in engineering and transmission sections whereby employees learn through solving real work problems as they engage in tasks.

Various forms of explicit knowledge exist in the broadcasting organizations and are found in various organizational records in the various sections namely personnel records, financial records, administrative records, marketing records, audio-visual records, cassettes, tapes, medical records, legal records, procurement information and others. The organizational knowledge is retained in these records and some of them become institutional archives forming part of the organizational memory.

### **6.3.6 Role of HRD in knowledge capture, sharing and retention**

Knowledge management is a relatively young discipline and as such the management of organizational knowledge is entrusted in the human resources department of the organization (Afiouni, 2008). The HR section plays a role in facilitating the sharing of tacit knowledge. In this study, the results suggest that discussions were one way of retaining knowledge through sharing tacit knowledge. The other activities were learning, brainstorming, teaching, debating and use of communities of practice to acquire and retain knowledge. This confirms Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) mode of socialization where tacit knowledge is converted and new knowledge is created during active interaction such as observation, imitation and practice. Afiouni (2008) is of the view that the human resource department (HRD) can play an important role in knowledge management by designing individual or group jobs which facilitate observation, learning and the sharing of experience. During teaching, learning and communities of practice tacit knowledge is converted into explicit knowledge. The HRD can facilitate training, establish development programs, recruit and retain knowledge workers who can develop right competencies in technical and behavioural areas (Afiouni, 2008).

The study also examined the role of the HRD in tapping into retaining and capturing retirees' know-how and experts' best practices such that the knowledge and information could be passed on to current and future organizational employees. Fifty-two (32%) of the respondents were of the opinion that archiving the knowledge was the most important activity to retain organizational knowledge. Interviews with three HR managers of the three investigated broadcasting organizations revealed that the

interviews that the HR sections conduct are purely on personnel matters and not on knowledge retention. This finding is consistent with Keller's (2006) argument that organizations undertake exit interviews with staff that are about to leave and the interviews tend to focus on typical HR issues, such as the reasons for moving on and what they liked or did not like about their time as employees.

Despite Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001)'s opinion that knowledge management should not be isolated in a functional department like HR or IT, in this study, 43% of the respondents identified HRD as the section responsible for the retention of knowledge in the public broadcasting organizations that were investigated. This could be due to the fact that HR is perceived as the section that oversees the workforce issues. Interviews revealed that there was not a single post of a knowledge officer in all the three organizations studied. This study established that the HRD could play a vital role in knowledge retention as spelt out by Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) socialization, externalization, combination and internalization activities. This is also supported by Afiouni, (2008)

## **6.4 Strategies for capturing and retaining knowledge**

The major objective of this study was to establish the knowledge retention strategies in the broadcasting organizations. One of the findings was that the broadcasting organizations did not have strategies in place to capture and retain the knowledge that they need and as such, the managers would do what they thought was suitable. Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001) suggest that knowledge management is a young



discipline and as such, executives have lacked successful models that they could use as guides. Research has shown that the role of capturing and retaining knowledge has been exclusively left to the HRD (Keller, 2006).

#### **6.4.1 Knowledge retention through Sharing**

The most prominent knowledge retention strategy identified by both managers and subordinates was knowledge sharing. The following were some of the responses from interviewees on how to capture and retain knowledge through sharing in the three broadcasting organizations; 'knowledge must be distributed to everyone in the department,' 'experienced employees teach others including new entrants what they know to avoid vacuum when they leave,' 'sharing critical knowledge as a backup,' 'transfer of skills to fellow employees in order to promote multiskilling to expose all workers in this section when the identified knowledgeable leave,' 'existence of a vibrant Learning and Development unit that facilitate training and knowledge sharing,' 'in some sections there is high level knowledge sharing between seniors and juniors,' Knowledge sharing ensures that knowledge is retained in the organization's employees once the knowledgeable have left due to attrition.

Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001) are of the opinion that in personalization of knowledge, managers need to reward people for sharing knowledge directly with others while in the codification, managers need to develop a system that encourages people to write down what they know and to get those documents to the electronic repository/database. From the gathered data on the incentives to encourage knowledge sharing it was established that promotion at work was the most expected way of

incentivizing knowledge sharing. This finding supports Holbeche's (2005) suggestion that meaningful rewards for knowledge sharing, knowledge creation and innovation stimulates creativity. In the current study, when asked to specify the 'other' category, respondents mentioned 'certificates', 'worker of the year', 'token of appreciation' which some respondents regarded as meaningless rewards thus contrasting Holbeche (2005)'s view that non-financial rewards such as praise and encouragement of new ideas and giving credit where it is due can be very motivating. However, studies done by Stafford and Mearns (2009) indicate that incentives such as bonuses, salary increments and promotions do incentivize employees to share knowledge. Interviews revealed that managers encouraged knowledge sharing but did not have meaningful incentives to encourage the sharing of knowledge for retention purposes. This is consistent with the work of Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001) who argue that people need real incentives not small enticements to participate in the knowledge sharing process.

#### • ***Knowledge sharing tools***

The study established that organizations' cultures supported knowledge sharing individuals chose share knowledge when they felt like doing so and experts could leave the organizations. The loss of knowledge due to an employee leaving can be minimized if there is a high level of knowledge sharing (Barber *et al.* 1989 cited in Staplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010). When sharing knowledge individuals willfully explicate of one's ideas, insights, solutions, and experiences to another individual either via intermediary, such as a computer-based system, or directly (Turban *et al.* 2008). Table 5.6 (Cf Table 5.6) show that all the respondents were familiar with all the knowledge sharing tools in the

broadcasting organizations. Interviewees shed light on why some tools were not effective. Save for one, the studied broadcasting organizations belong to developing countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa and as such they are not yet technologically advanced to equip their institutions with state of the art technology like those in the Western world. For that reason this study established that staff meetings were the most commonly used tool for knowledge sharing and at the same time regarded as the most effective tool for knowledge sharing. Studies by Staplehurst and Ragsdell (2010) and Leibowitz (2002) confirm that face-to-face meetings were best for knowledge sharing.

Beside the meetings they hold with subordinates the study established that managers hold meetings on their own at managerial levels which is consistent with Nemani's (2010) view that valuable sharing of knowledge occurs during managerial staff meetings where young managers learn from the more experienced managers. In the case of journalism interviewees revealed that knowledge sharing is functional especially in newsrooms during editorial meetings where everybody sits including the head/editor and they follow what they agree on. The same is done in engineering departmental meetings. This is consistent with literature surveyed by Levy (2011) who affirms that there is horizontal knowledge transfer where knowledge is shared and transferred among people in the team/department/organization. She further argues that effective vertical knowledge transfer facilitates organizational knowledge retention enabling minimal business competitive loss due to employees' retirement.

One of the findings at SABC was that in the staff meetings attendants use face-to-face verbal communication through 'rediffusion', a videoconferencing face-to-face on screen and teleconferencing. With 'rediffusion' the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Management

and staff sit in a conference room, communicating with other managers and employees in other provinces. Face-to-face meeting is conducted through 'Office Communicator' another knowledge sharing tool whereby one can dial from his/her desk computer and talk to a colleague face-to-face.

While mentoring was regarded as the second most effective tool in knowledge sharing, the study established that e-mails were second to staff meetings as a common knowledge sharing tool. This is consistent with findings of a study conducted by Staplehurst and Ragsdell (2010) on two UK based small and medium enterprises (SMEs) where it emerged that knowledge flows easily via supporting emails.

Some 51(31.48%) of the respondents identified informal interaction as a common tool for knowledge sharing. The researcher observed juniors and management staff interacting during tea and lunch breaks and other social gatherings. This is consistent with research works conducted by Khalid and Mahmood (2010); Staplehurst and Ragsdell (2010) which indicated that employees and management went to lunch or for smoking breaks in small groups. The study identified web portals and blogs as infrequently used but surprisingly they were regarded as more effective than mail groups. Another finding was that performance appraisal was regarded as the least effective in knowledge sharing. Circulars/memoranda were also common tools for knowledge sharing. Interviews with managers confirmed that employees use memos that are posted on noticeboards in staffrooms for staff communication. Respondents added Intercom Magazine on 'Any other category.' Further discussions on this magazine revealed that it was used at one of the investigated organizations.

In this study the computer technology entails use of the email, websites, intranets, web portals, groupware, blogs and mail groups and as such the computer technology has been recognized as an enabling tool in facilitating knowledge acquisition (Nemani, 2010). Blogging was not common with respondents as a knowledge sharing tool. This could be so because employees preferred using other social networking such as Facebook and Twitter. The Internet plays a pivotal role in knowledge management activities by providing access to the worldwide wealth of information (Malhan and Gulati, 2003)

#### **6.4.2 Communities of practice and the retention of organizational knowledge**

Wenger and Snyder (2001) define a community of practice as groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise. The study established that communities of practice were not yet in use as a strategy for knowledge sharing and retention among professionals in the broadcasting organizations studied. Asked about the role of managers in promoting knowledge transfer and sharing, 4.93% respondents selected establishing communities of practice as the tenth choice an ascending order out of eleven options. Holbeche (2005) is of the view that in this era of technological advancement, organizations may encourage online communities of practice since the online environment supports and facilitates a community of learners networking. Asked to choose the commonly and effectively used tool for knowledge sharing, communities of practice was position 21 and 22 out of 25 options to select from. In question number 16 of the questionnaire, it emerged that

communities of practice were the least utilized activity by the HRD in the sharing of tacit knowledge between individuals yet Holbeche (2005) argues that greater value is placed on the sharing of information through networks.

In question 17 that followed, the finding was that communities of practice were the least used form of formal socialization used to distribute and share tacit knowledge in the broadcasting organizations. Since communities of practice are informal groups bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise, some meet over lunch time and some are connected through electronic mails (Wenger and Snyder, 2001), members do not feel obliged to adhere to CoPs and this makes it worse in the broadcasting organizations that were studied in that from the findings CoPs were not regarded as knowledge sharing facility.

From the interviews and responses to questionnaire, the study established that a community of practice was not popular among the broadcasters even though Holbeche (2005) avers that successful organizations encourage the development of CoPs networks. In all the questions (question numbers 12, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20) from the main questionnaire which had communities of practice as alternative choices responses were very low compared to other options. The findings are not consistent with Wenger and Snyder (2001) who opine that because today's global economy runs on knowledge therefore organizations use cross-functional teams to capture and spread ideas and know-how. This could be because employees do not trust each other to share knowledge in a community of practice because they fear competition or to be exposed.

### **6.4.3 Knowledge retention through Mentoring and Apprenticeship**

Mentorship is when a less experienced employee gets attached to an experienced employee to learn and acquire skills (Wamundila and Ngulube, 2011; Lahaie, 2005). The participants perceived mentoring as an important practice in knowledge retention and yet the investigated broadcasting organizations were not implementing it properly. The interviews revealed that there were no mentoring programmes in the broadcasting organizations studied. However, some managers work on a 'succession planning where each employee must have somebody understudying him/her or must work with an experienced employee so that when a manager exits there is no period of confusion.' What emerged from this study was that there was no formal mentorship programme. At ZBC reporting section a manager paired a number of new employees with the experienced to guide them in their day-to-day work.

Knowledge acquired is knowledge gained and as such a question was asked to establish the knowledge acquisition activities in the broadcasting organizations. What emerged was that workshops/seminars were found to be the most utilized method of knowledge acquisition. Mentoring was a fourth preference. Lahaie's (2005) finding contrasts with findings of the current study in that mentoring was considered as a vehicle for preserving knowledge and helps to identify where important knowledge is and how it can continue to be reflected in practice.

In a study conducted by Gau (2011) on the use of stories to capture and retain knowledge, it emerged that tacit knowledge can be delivered by apprenticeship, but both the learner's and the mentor's attitudes to interactions determine the success. Given that tacit knowledge is embedded in individuals, moving it and skills may be a

daunting task (Madsen, Mosakowski and Zaheer, 2002). Another explanation as established from the interviews with the managers of these three broadcasting organizations was that management lack the willpower, policies and proper structures to implement and supervise the practice.

The unpopularity of mentoring was consistent with the responses in that when asked to identify tools used for knowledge sharing, only 31.48% of the respondents regarded mentoring as a tool for sharing knowledge. The interviews revealed that mentorship was not properly implemented as a way of retaining knowledge through equipping new entrants.

#### **6.4.4 Subject Experts and retention of knowledge in organizations**

During interviews with managers, the study established that subject matter experts (SMEs) were loosely requested to assist in teaching juniors to become experts in executing their duties perfectly. SMEs are people who have special skills in certain disciplines that could be utilized for the benefit of the organizations. Just like in mentoring, there was no programme to ensure that subject matter experts' knowledge is captured and transferred to new entrants so that the expertise, knowledge and skills are retained as organizational knowledge. In a study conducted by Kim (2005) it was established that to capture tacit knowledge to the maximum extent possible, USA Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) identified and leveraged subject-matter experts through interviews and videotapes.



#### **6.4.5 Story telling as a tool of knowledge retention**

Story-telling is a potential tool in knowledge transfer as well as a powerful tool in knowledge capturing (Gau, 2011; Wamundila and Ngulube, 2011). Respondents were required to choose common and effective tools for sharing knowledge from questions 16 and 17 respectively. A question was also asked to identify how managers promote the transfer and sharing of knowledge in their organizations and particularly departments where they operate from. Contrary to Holbeche (2005)'s observation that story-telling is gaining popularity in the current study 2 (1.8%) respondents chose story-telling as a tool for knowledge retention. This indicates that story telling was not yet a popular strategy for knowledge retention in the public broadcasting organizations. Gau (2011) acknowledges that story-telling assists in transferring tacit knowledge but some experiences are complicated and therefore cannot be expressed by spoken word.

While stories are used to transfer and share experiences with colleagues (Kalid and Mahmood, 2010), and convey information and shape behaviour (Holbeche, 2005), the current study established that story-telling was not yet common as an important way of knowledge transfer and sharing. May be this is because of mistrust which is more prominent in influencing stories exchange (Kalid and Mahmood, 2010) or threats derived from other people's feelings to make them unwilling to tell the truth (Gau, 2011). This is a surprising finding given the inherent tradition of story-telling in Africa.

#### **6.4.6 Leveraging retirees**

In this study leveraging retirees was taken to mean using retirees for various activities such as training employees in the organization. In a way this would result in capturing

the retirees' knowledge. The practice of using retirees to facilitate training, learning and passing on knowledge to new employees is common in organizations and as such the same knowledge is retained in the organizations and becomes organizational knowledge (Behboudi and Hart, 2008). The study established that the broadcasting organizations studied made use of retirees in an ad-hoc manner though it was not an organizational policy to hire retirees. Managers revealed that retirees were leveraged as consultants, trainers transferring skills to young employees and in very exceptional cases. One of the interviewee (Station Manager) revealed that they had hired a retired producer to do some programmes but such retirees were paid as freelancers. The same was said of some journalists who had left the organizations but now working as freelance journalists. They were hired to train and cover certain political, economic and social stories for the media houses.

## **6.5 Knowledge preservation and storage for reuse**

Knowledge is preserved and stored for reuse in future. Organizations employ various techniques to capture and preserve knowledge (April and Izad, 2004). In the current study it was found out that knowledge was captured, preserved and stored in organizational archives which are consistent with Levy's (2011) view that documentation storage is documented knowledge that must be planned, stored and integrated as part of the knowledge management system. It was also established that organizational archives were the major knowledge storage facilities. This finding supports Beckman (1999) who opines that knowledge storage media take the form of human mind, organization, document, and computer. This is consistent with Shaw and McGregor

(2010) who identified organizational memories preserved in cultural portals, digital heritage archives and databases of digitally recorded interviews. The ZBC IT manager indicated that 'knowledge is captured in a backup system, put on discs then it is archived.' In a study conducted in Canada by Lahaie (2005), it was found that very little was done in the organizations surveyed to archive corporate memory.

The study's findings indicate that the broadcasting organizations use both codification and personalization approaches though with a heavy reliance on codification. Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001) advise organizations against straddling both codification and personalization so as to avoid undermining business.

#### **6.5.1 Responsibility to retain knowledge**

An organization's knowledge needs to be retained and someone should be responsible for the retention of that knowledge. Through interviews the study established that the retention of organizational knowledge was nobody's responsibility in all the three organizations despite questionnaire responses that identified the Human Resource Departments as responsible for the retention of knowledge in the investigated organizations. The findings of the current study are consistent with Jamrog's (2009) study who noted that over three quarters of respondents said their organizations did not have a specific person or team responsible for knowledge retention. Jamrog's study conducted in USA was on the lack of knowledge retention and hidden cost of corporate downsizing. The study covered companies of varying sizes.

Only 7 (4.32%) respondents were of the opinion that knowledge retention should be the responsibility of a knowledge officer. While Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001) advise

that knowledge retention responsibility should not be isolated in a functional department like the HR or IT the findings support Levy (2011) and Afiouni (2008) who suggest that the HR should be involved and play a pivotal role and assume new roles of knowledge facilitator.

Interviews with managers revealed that these three broadcasting organizations do not have the posts of Knowledge Officers yet there is plenty of knowledge created and acquired in the organizations. This could be so because of the fact that knowledge management is not yet fully implemented in organizations (Levy, 2011) such as public broadcasting organizations

### **6.5.2 Methods of retaining organizational knowledge**

There are various methods that organizations utilize to capture and retain organizational knowledge. The study established that the investigated organizations documentation processes was the most common method or way of retaining organizational knowledge. This is consistent with Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001)'s findings that people-to-people documents are not the only way to share knowledge; though people talk with one another they place emphasis on the codification strategy for certain types of work..

### **6.5.3 Organizational policy on reusing knowledge**

The study's findings indicated that the public broadcasting organizations that were studied capture knowledge for reuse. Mavodza and Ngulube (2011) opine that knowledge becomes manageable, shareable and reusable only if it is recorded and made available. All the three public broadcasting organizations had libraries, records

and archives sections that are used to keep the organizational explicit knowledge. The researcher was taken around and observed the repositories (where records, archives and books were stored for reuse) at all the three broadcasting organizations studied. Unpublished material such as records and archives were used by the managers, supervisors and heads of sections while books from the libraries were used for research especially by journalists, editors, and individual employees pursuing further studies.

Knowledge is captured and retained so that it will be reused when necessary for the benefit of the organization. Explicit knowledge in the form of staff records, financial records, audit reports, monthly and annual reports, audio and video tapes just to mention but a few, are all kept so that they will be reused in future. The efficient reuse of codified knowledge is essential because they are dealing with similar problems over and over (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001) for example in administrative sections such as human resources, accounts, transport, and procurement. The recurrent nature of routine problems prompts these sections to carefully manage their explicit knowledge for the purposes of making reference to such records.

Tacit knowledge is captured and retained while on the job, sharing and collaborating and in other informal activities. Apprenticeship and mentorship roles also help capture and retain tacit knowledge especially in news gathering and reporting, transmission and engineering tasks.

## **6.6 How organizational culture facilitate knowledge acquisition and sharing for Retention purposes**

Culture can be an enabler and an impediment to the generation, distribution and sharing of knowledge (Ondari-Okemwa and Smith, 2009), and can significantly influence the attitudes and behaviours of employees (Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011). In the current study the majority (59%) of the respondents acknowledged that there was a culture of knowledge sharing taking place in the three broadcasting organizations that were studied. However, in a study on knowledge management in government-owned organizations in Kenya by Ondari-Okemwa and Smith (2009), it was concluded that traditional cultures in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa discourage sharing of knowledge. In another study Jacobs and Roodt (2011) suggest that employers must create an organizational culture that is conducive to the pre-requisites necessary to ensure a willingness to share knowledge. The culture of an organization plays an important role in promoting knowledge sharing activity among the employees (Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011) and it impacts on knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing retains knowledge in an organization. Knowledge sharing refers to the sharing of both codified and personalized knowledge (Ambrosini and Bowman, 2001 cited by Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011)

In this study 46% of the respondents indicated that lack of trust was a major impediment to knowledge sharing while 41% of the respondents selected unwillingness as a major impediment to knowledge sharing. When the researcher further probed during interviews the managers indicated that mistrust was a product of both organizational and national politics in their respective organizations and countries. Consistent with

Mushtaq and Bokhari's (2011) findings in their study on the role of organizational culture and leadership style in promoting knowledge sharing activity among banking employees in Pakistan, identified trust as the prominent organizational cultural factor that impact on knowledge sharing.

### **6.6.1 Cultural impediments to knowledge sharing**

Turban *et al.* (2008) opine that the ability of an organization to learn, develop memory, and share knowledge is dependent on its culture. In this study a majority (59%) of the respondents indicated that they were free to share knowledge. This could be coming from two organizations where the researcher observed low and high ranking employees calling each other by first names. Two of the surveyed organizations had open and friendly cultures that facilitate knowledge sharing while the other had a firm culture of maintaining traditional values and respect of seniors. Organizations should create a culture of knowledge sharing to avoid dependency on the knowledge of a few employees (Ramirez, 2007). The study established that there were some organograms in offices which outlined the reporting line. This indicated the presence of communicating channels that enabled free flow of knowledge and information (Ragsdell, 2009). It was quite interesting to note that there was no respondent who said there was no culture of knowledge sharing. This finding was also consistent with prior studies (Staplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010).

Other respondents (41%) suggested employees were not free to share knowledge. There are a number of reasons why employees might not want to share knowledge. For instance, Taylor (2007) posits that failure to share knowledge may be linked to culture

and traditional values held by an organization. This is also supported by Holbeche (2005) who suggested that the main barriers to knowledge sharing appear to lie within organizational cultures and individuals' behaviours.

However, during interview discussions managers pointed out that, employees were free to share knowledge but this depended on the type of knowledge. Some respondents pointed out that they feared some powerful individuals in their respective organizations and for that reason they were not at liberty to share their knowledge. Studies conducted by Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011; Staplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010; Riege, 2005 as cited by Turban (2008) also identified fear as prominent organizational cultural factors that impact on knowledge sharing. In the current study the identified barriers include lack of trust, lack of time, age, gender, poor interpersonal skills, collaboration, empowerment, politics, power and autonomy. Albers (2009) opines that an ideal knowledge management culture is characterized by trust, openness, teamwork, risk taking, tolerance for mistakes, autonomy, common language, courage, and time for learning. Holbeche (2005) argues that organizational politics are increasingly recognised as damaging to trust. Nevertheless, organizations which cultivate and reinforce trust, collaboration and empowerment will positively force employees to share with others (Orzea, 2009; DeLong and Fahey, 2000 cited by Mushtaq and Bokhari, 2011). Knowledge shared is knowledge retained but the cultural factors are impediments to knowledge retention.

Dressing was at variance in all the three organizations. As public broadcaster ZBC encouraged smart casual for general staff, male managers put on tie and jacket, ladies were expected to preserve Zimbabwean cultural values (i.e. no jeans, no tight fittings,



no miniskirts and no cleavages.) This has since been incorporated in the HR code of Conduct and employees are encouraged to comply with it. On the other hand SABC is a culturally diverse organization that has to embrace diverse cultures and as such encourages its staff to dress appropriately in respect of various cultures and beliefs. There is no dress code at the DBS in Botswana but employees are advised to dress for the occasion, what one of the managers referred to as smart casual. An interviewee with DBS had this to say, 'dress formally you get attention, dress in a suit you get all the attention.' A manager opined that 'knowledge sharing is psychological and as a public broadcaster we promote a formal dress code across the board because the manner one presents himself/herself sends a message.' In this view dressing impacts on knowledge sharing and in turn knowledge retention. During interviews it emerged that some employees would share their knowledge and insights with people who were presentable in their dressing appearance.

### **ICTs tools as enablers of knowledge management and retention**

Carlson (2008) points that ICTs are enablers in knowledge management and they assist in the creation, storage, preservation, sharing and transfer of knowledge.

#### **6.6.2 Access to ICTs and the internet**

Knowledge transfer yields knowledge retention and besides it is the core of knowledge retention process (Levy, 2011). The level of internet penetration has greatly improved in developing countries. The majority (65%) of the respondents indicated that they had

unlimited access to the internet. This could be possibly because of internet cafes opened in many parts of towns and cities of the SADC countries as well as access to internet through cell phones. The use of modern information technologies is intended to help an organization cope with turnover, downsizing by making the expertise of the organization's human capital widely accessible; built to maintain a well-informed productive workforce, help large organizations provide a consistent level of customer service and also help organizations retain the knowledge of departing employees(Turban *et al*, 2008).

### **6.6.3 Technologies used to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge**

Companies that primarily adhere to the re-use model will want about 20% of their knowledge sharing to be person-to-person and therefore encourage the heavy use of e-mail and electronic discussion forums to avoid blind application of documents to situations which they are ill suited (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001). Participants were requested to identify technologies used in their organizations to capture, retrieve, share, disseminate and retain knowledge. The analysis from table 5.9 (Cf Table 5.9) indicated that the majority had access to telephones, internet, computers, intranet/email and cell phones for knowledge retrieval, capturing and sharing among other tools. This finding is consistent with studies done by Stapplehurst and Ragsdell, 2010; Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001 who established that tacit knowledge is shared mainly through face-to-face interaction, over the telephone, by email and even verbally. This finding is consistent with studies conducted elsewhere by Fombad, 2009; Stafford and Mearns, 2009 where it emerged that telephones, computers, personal networked computers, email, internet and face-to-face discussions with peers were the most

important for knowledge sharing and dissemination. Holbeche (2005) observes that most organizations now actively encourage employee use of the internet, intranet, bulletin boards, e-mail and shared databases for knowledge sharing.

Computers are used to share knowledge through person-to-person contacts and this is called a personalization strategy (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001). Hansen, Nohria and Tierney (2001) opine that the chief purpose of computers at some companies or organizations is to help people communicate knowledge, not to store it. However in a study conducted by Mavodza and Ngulube (2011) the majority (64%) of the respondents indicated that the knowledge that they needed to perform their job functions was retained in their computers or workstations. This shows that in as much as computers may be utilized to transfer knowledge, they may also be used to store knowledge. The rise of networked computers has made it possible to codify, store and share certain kinds of knowledge more easily and cheaply than ever before (Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 2001)

While intranet is a common feature in many organizations and well-suited for use as a strategic tool in knowledge sharing due to their ability to support the distribution, connectivity and publishing of data and information (Averweg, 2008) this study established that only one public broadcasting organization's intranet was functional. The other two were said to be under construction. One broadcasting organization cited undercapitalization and economic woes while the other pointed out that they were merging with other government departments. The one with a functional intranet had documents posted on the intranet and employees could access them. Information is posted on the intranet on daily basis. This indicates that IT enables the translation of the

organization's tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge then transfers it to recipients (Stafford and Mearns, 2009; Johannessen, *et al*, 2001). The documents available included annual reports, policies, procedures manual, and such information as job vacancies.

The study also established that telephones are the most popular tools used to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge followed by internet, computers, websites, intranet /email and cell phone. Telephones are most popular may be because fixed landlines are the most common in organizations and workers use them freely as they transfer costs to the employer. If there were company sponsored mobiles employees would utilize them since Parker and Wills (2009) observed that almost 100% of the population in South Africa lives within range of a mobile communication network.

All the interviewees from the three broadcasting organizations said that their organizations had websites ([www.zbc.co.zw](http://www.zbc.co.zw), [www.sabc.co.za](http://www.sabc.co.za) and [www.mopipi.bw](http://www.mopipi.bw)). Posted on these websites is information about the organization's documents, newsletters, monthly reports, content, tenders, stories, typical news content on line both local and international, daily bulletins, new products coming to the market, stock market money conversions and advertisements. Studies conducted by Malhan and Gulati, (2003) have indicated that intranet and email have such advantages as posting savings on travelling costs, more frequent interaction with experts, better coordination, and control of collaborative work.

This study established that groupware, knowledge directories, wikis, skype, virtual conference, intelligent search engines, electronic bulletin were the least used

technologies in retrieving, sharing and disseminating knowledge. This could be that the public broadcasting organizations were redirecting resources to some other projects other than information technologies. However, Gottschalk (1999) found that the more information technology is used in an organization the greater will be the extent of information technology use for knowledge management. But Gottschalk's study was done in a developed country (Norway) whereas the current study was done in developing countries. The developed countries are more advanced and well-equipped in respect of mass media than the developing countries and this is due to the poor economic condition and technical know-how on the part of the developing countries (Venkataiah, 2001)

All the three surveyed public broadcasting organizations had ICT departments established to oversee the functions of the technology of the organizations. In these days advances in information technology (IT) have made it easier to acquire, store and disseminate knowledge and many organizations are employing IT to facilitate the sharing and integration of knowledge (Kankanhali *et al.* as cited by Averbweg, 2010). Turban *et al.* (2008) suggest that Knowledge Management Infrastructure such as internet, intranets, extranets, data warehouses are built in part from increased pressure to maintain a well-informed, productive workforce. The researcher presumed so because a modern broadcaster should be well equipped technologically. The ICT managers from all the three broadcasting organizations confirmed that the IT departments in their respective organizations were the driving force for all the radio and television departments.

## **6.7 Summary**

In this chapter, the discussions of the findings of the study were presented. The findings from this study have shown that not a single public broadcasting corporation has established a knowledge management programme with a view to retaining the critical knowledge that is acquired in these organizations. Knowledge sharing is one critical way of retaining knowledge in an organization but in most cases employees do not share it. The findings have also shown that there are no mentoring programmes to ensure that knowledge is passed on from the experienced/experts to the juniors in succession. During the interviews managers pointed out some limitations with regards to knowledge retention and were not capable of enforcing some, such as sharing knowledge. While communication technologies make it easy to share information and knowledge, the findings of this study indicated that two of the organizations were still lagging behind in terms of technologies which enable collaboration such as groupware and videoconferencing. Although the findings were overall consistent with previous studies this study noted a number of contradictions suggesting some caveats in the area under investigation.

The following Chapter 7 is the final chapter of the study. It provides a summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

## **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge retention strategies, the effect of organizational culture on knowledge retention and how ICTs enable the management and retention of knowledge in SABC, DBS and ZBC, three SADC public broadcasting organizations. This chapter gives a summary of work beginning with the summary of the chapters 1 to 6, highlighting the main aspects of each chapter followed by a summary of findings. The summary of the findings is organized around how the research questions were answered. These are then followed by the major conclusions that were drawn from the findings. The chapter ends with recommendations made for further research.

### **7.2 Summary of chapters**

In an attempt to investigate the knowledge retention strategies in the three public broadcasting organizations in the Southern Africa region in chapter one the study began by giving a background of the project. The background of the study covered pertinent issues such as the nexus of knowledge and information, types of knowledge,

background histories of the three broadcasting organizations and defining a public broadcaster.

Chapter two covered theories of knowledge management. Some of the theories include Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory of Organizational Knowledge Conversion also known as the SECI model, the Adaptive Structuration theory, Social Cultural Learning theory, the Organizational Resource-Based theory. This study was anchored on Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) theory of organizational knowledge conversion.

Chapter three of this study covered literature review which is an overview of published literature on information and knowledge management, ICTs as enablers in knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, knowledge preservation all leading to knowledge retention for the benefit of the organization. The major themes covered in the literature were on the hierarchical nature of data, information, knowledge and wisdom; organizational culture and learning, knowledge retention; the role of ICTs as enablers in knowledge management and knowledge retention strategies.

Chapter four of this study discussed the methodology used to carry out the survey and the nature of the analysis for interpreting data. The survey had feedback of 156 individual respondents and conducted 38 interviews. The chapter gave details of the data collection procedure and the type of analysis done for the study. SPSS version 18 was used for analyzing the data collected.

Chapter five presented the data with a focus on the four research questions and objectives. Both qualitative and quantitative data were presented to the themes identified by the researcher. Great deals of quantitative data from questionnaires were



reduced to descriptive statistics and that data were presented in the form of tables, pie charts, bar graphs and histograms. Qualitative data from the interviews and observations were also presented in the form of narratives. Some short extracts from the transcribed interviews were presented.

In chapter six the discussion of the findings of the study based on the research questions and objectives were presented. The chapter was fairly long because of the discursive writing to explain the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data that were gathered using the questionnaires, interviews and observations. The discussions of the data in relation to other studies and findings in already published literature were done under various themes that included; background to the data collection, loss of organizational knowledge, knowledge that should be retained, role of the human resource department in capturing and retaining knowledge, strategies for capturing and retaining knowledge, responsibility of retaining knowledge and the role of ICTs in knowledge retention among others.

The current chapter (Chapter seven) synthesizes the research in to conclusions and recommendations. The summary covered findings with regards to the four research objectives that were formulated as research questions. The knowledge conversion theory and the adaptive structuration theory complemented each other in providing the theoretical framework. The study concluded that there is no systematic capture and retention of tacit knowledge whereas explicit knowledge is retained in organizational documents. The organizations are learning organizations but capturing of tacit knowledge is affected by their cultures. The study recommends the creation of posts of Knowledge Officers in all the three broadcasting organizations, the adoption of a

Knowledge Management Strategy in the three broadcasting organizations, establishment of viable Communities of Practice, encourage knowledge sharing, storytelling and computerization of all offices to ensure that knowledge is retained in the organizational systems,

### **7.3 Summary of the findings**

This section provides a summary of the findings with respect to the objectives meant to be achieved by the study. The study investigated the knowledge retention strategies in the three public broadcasting organizations of SABC (South Africa), DBS (Botswana) and ZBC of Zimbabwe. The findings suggest the following answers to the four main objectives which were reformulated into four research questions which guided this study.

#### **7.3.1 How is knowledge captured and retained at SABC, DBS and ZBC?**

The study found that capturing personalized knowledge was difficult since it is sticky and depended on the individuals' willingness to share the knowledge. However, efforts were made in the procurement division at SABC, engineering section at DBS and transmission division at ZBC sections to implement the mentoring system as a way of capturing and retaining the critical tacit knowledge. The documented explicit (codified) knowledge was found in the organizational systems and repositories. Each of the three broadcasting organizations had an archives and records system where knowledge was archived for future use and reference. The organizations' libraries held published material that could be consulted by all staff members. There were no proper efforts, for

instance, a Knowledge Management policy, strategy or budget in place meant to capture and retain tacit knowledge in the three broadcasting organizations studied. However, other divisions encouraged sharing of knowledge to avoid gaps in the event of experts or seniors leaving the organizations.

### **7.3.2 What organizational cultural practices are there at SABC, DBS and ZBC that enable knowledge acquisition, sharing and retention?**

It was established that organizational cultural practices of the investigated organizations impacted on sharing of knowledge for the purposes of retaining it (Cf 5.6.1). Some junior employees found it a daunting task to share knowledge with seniors (Cf 5.6.2). There were some individuals who feared for themselves at work and were not comfortable sharing their knowledge because of mistrust and political reasons. Sharing knowledge was regarded as a threat to their job security as they would be indispensable. Aspects as dress and religion were considered to be impacting on knowledge sharing and retention.

### **7.3.3 What methods of knowledge preservation and storage are used by the three broadcasting organizations?**

The findings from the study indicated that knowledge was retained and stored in organizational servers, archives, audiotapes, videotapes and databases. These are kept in the archival repositories and organizational libraries for use by staff. Overall, the results show that paper-based records were the most important knowledge preservation media in the broadcasting organizations. Recording of lessons learned was not so popular, which indicate that capturing of best practices as knowledge retention strategy was not yet common in the broadcasting organizations.

#### **7.3.4 How are ICTs utilized to create, transfer, share and retain knowledge in the three broadcasting organizations?**

It emerged that majority of the respondents (97%) were computer literate and therefore were capable of using the computer for knowledge creation, transfer, sharing and retention of explicit knowledge. The study also found that respondents had frequent access to fax, internet, intranet/email, telephone, cellphone, discussion forums, databases, knowledge directories and computers. However, compared to their counterparts in the developed world the investigated broadcasting organizations need to be equipped with advanced technology such as those in their counterparts in the developed world like the BBC. During the interviews, managers yearned for such advanced technology that they usually see when they visit developed world broadcasting organizations for training.

### **7.4 Theories of knowledge management**

Nonaka and Takeuchi's organizational knowledge conversion theory is a well-known theory of knowledge management. Knowledge management borrows from other disciplines such as Economics, Human Resources since it is a multidisciplinary field. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1985)'s Organizational knowledge Conversion and the Adaptive Structuration theories complemented each other in providing the theoretical framework for the research model. This integrated model enables accommodation of individual and organizational variables for studying knowledge retention. To make meaning of the

findings in this study both theories were used for organizing and analyzing the vast amount of information collected through the respondents' questionnaires, interview narratives and researcher's observations.

#### **7.4.1 Organizational Knowledge Conversion Theory**

The organizational knowledge conversion rests on the premise that knowledge is converted from one state to another (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1985) and in that way critical knowledge can be retained in the organization either by sharing it or preserving it in the archives, thus forming part of the organizational memory. Organizational knowledge conversion deals with the conversion of knowledge from tacit to tacit (socialization), from tacit to explicit (externalization), from explicit to tacit (internalization) and from explicit to explicit (combination). Socialization entails sharing knowledge between the experts, mentors, retirees from whom juniors and new entrants at work may benefit from imitating, observing and learning by doing. Sharing knowledge contributes to knowledge retention.

Socialization: this is the process of sharing experiences, and in the process creating tacit knowledge such as technical skills that may be obtained through observation, imitation and practice (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The socialization aspect was reflected in the news room discussions, editorial meetings, lunch and tea break meetings where journalists , producers, engineers, sales and marketing professionals meet every morning and after lunch every day to discuss their stories, marketing, engineering challenges. Sharing of tacit knowledge also manifested itself in the engineering and transmission sections. The study also established that tacit knowledge

was transferred to fellow employees in the Sales and Marketing sections. Through emails, intranet, electronic bulletin boards, training and brainstorming activities tacit knowledge was transferred from one employee to other employees. Computer technology makes it possible for the organizational knowledge to be spread across the entire organization (Nemani, 2010). Nevertheless, some of the officers did not have computers to use in their duties yet they needed them.

Externalization: this is the process of articulating tacit knowledge in the form of explicit concepts such as metaphors, analogies (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The study established that all the three broadcasting organizations are predominantly paper-based organizations. Tacit knowledge is externalized into paper records (organizational memory and archival repositories) that are accessed by the employees for use (codification).

Combination: this is the process of combining bodies of explicit knowledge. In combination explicit knowledge is systemized and refined for example utilizing information and communication technologies and databases (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Lwoga, Ngulube and Stilwell, 2010). Explicit knowledge is transferred through media such as e-mail, documents, meetings, and conversations and such knowledge leads to the generation of new knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). In this study it was found out that explicit knowledge was transferred through e-mails received and used to create other records. Broadcasters shared their explicit knowledge with fellow professionals during departmental, editorial and general meetings, through business cell phones and via e-mails.

Internalization is the process of converting explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge and is closely related to learning by doing (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). In this study library, archives and records were identified as sources of technical knowledge that was acquired by employees and then used to solve some work-related problems. The HR sections referred mostly to their personnel documents to attend to employee queries. Although the organizational knowledge conversion theory was appropriate for this study some limitations were identified. In their theory Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) do not mention the role of ICTs as enablers in knowledge management.

### **The Adaptive Structuration Theory**

The Adaptive Structuration theory is attributed to Antony Giddens. It describes the interaction of human groups and organizations with information technology utilization (Sedera and Zakaria, 2008). This theory was partially relevant in that it focuses on the behaviour of humans as they interact with technology. The broadcasting organizations now rely on the use of information and communication technologies for communication and information and knowledge sharing. The study established that most of the offices had computers. Employees were using these computers to store knowledge in form of documents and databases. In cases where the computer was networked employees could share knowledge thus improving on efficiency and work. The training departments utilized the computers for teaching and equipping employees with knowledge and skills at work thus linking individuals and organizational learning. The study established that there was group interaction with technology as some of the employees now use computers, internet, intranet, groupware, videoconferencing, and mobile phones for communication. However this applied to two of the studied organizations.

However, this theory had limitations in its applicability to this study due to variance in the level of technological advancement. For instance, not all of the surveyed organizations' offices had computers let alone internet connectivity

To cater for the weaknesses of the organizational knowledge conversion theory, this study adopted the adaptive structuration theory. The two theories complemented each other in investigating knowledge retention strategies in the three SADC broadcasting organizations. The Adaptive Structuration theories cater for the technology such as computers that have been embraced by many organizations as enablers of knowledge management. The Organizational Knowledge Conversion theory covers both tacit and explicit knowledge conversion from one form to another in the popularized SECI model. Knowledge is retained in the organization through these four activities.

## **7.5 Conclusions**

This study aimed at investigating the knowledge retention strategies in three SADC public broadcasting organizations. The purpose of the study was to establish the capturing, preservation and storage of knowledge, impact of organizational culture on knowledge sharing for the purposes of retaining it. The study also aimed at evaluating the enabling role of ICTs in the transfer, sharing and retention of knowledge.

The findings from the study revealed that there are weak strategies to capture tacit (personalized) knowledge (Cf 5.7.2; Cf 5.7.5) in the three broadcasting organizations investigated. However, explicit (codified) knowledge is captured in the organizational computers, servers, documents, records, archives, audio and video tapes (Cf 5.7.1; Cf



5.7.3) despite the low ICT penetration. Nevertheless, efforts made to capture and retain knowledge in these organizations are consistent with strategies suggested in the available published literature. It was also found out that there were no coordinated and formalized mentoring programmes (Cf 5.3.2) to ensure that mentees and apprentices learn from the experienced through copying and imitation. It was also established that there were no Communities of Practice (CoPs) to facilitate the sharing of knowledge. Sharing and acquiring knowledge in CoPs through collaboration and social networking of experts in the same field retains vital knowledge in the organizational system. The study established that storytelling has not yet been adopted as a way of sharing knowledge in the organizations investigated yet it has been found to be an effective way of transferring personalized knowledge to fellow employees. It was also established that the knowledge that the three broadcasting organizations acquire was and continues to be lost through various ways of attrition (Cf 5.7.3). Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that there is absence of knowledge management system (Cf 5.7.4) in the broadcasting organizations as evidenced by the non-existence of the post of Knowledge Officer in the organizations' organograms.

The findings indicate that the organizational cultures do affect knowledge sharing and retention. To a certain extent, the study established that employees are not willing to share their knowledge with colleagues and worse with seniors for lack of trust, fear, culture of secrecy, employee attitude as well as organizational politics among other reasons (Cf 5.6.1). In any case there are very few incentives to share their knowledge.

The respondents also indicated that the broadcasting organizations work jointly with other broadcasting organizations outside the SADC (Cf 5.4.2; Fig 5.5). As revealed by

managers in the interviews, collaboration results in the production and acquisition of useful and critical knowledge that may be retained for future use in the organizations.

The findings revealed that the surveyed organizations support the training and education of their workforce and therefore they are learning organizations (Cf 5.3.2; Cf 5.5; Fig 5.4). Employees are engaged in some training, workshops and seminars and some are given some soft loans to advance academically by acquiring higher academic qualifications. The learning exercise is meant to equip the staff with skills and expertise required to maintain competitive advantage in work performance and service delivery.

The study established that not all officers had access to the internet and as such not all professionals could access and share information and knowledge from the internet (Cf 5.8.1). Furthermore the findings from the study revealed that two of the three surveyed departments are still lagging behind technologically (Cf 5.8.1). Some of the employees in the two organizations had no access to information and communication technologies such as computers which assist in transferring, sharing and retaining knowledge.

Finally the study established that the organizations had not established proper Knowledge management strategies (Cf 5.7.4) to facilitate the capture and retention of personalized (tacit) knowledge. Most of the suggestions made by respondents are consistent with the ideas in the available literature. These include interviewing experts and recording them, recording lessons-learnt and keeping them as archives, appointing juniors to be mentored by experts and those who are about to retire, encouraging sharing of knowledge, incentivizing the sharing of knowledge by giving meaningful incentives. In light of the above findings it can be concluded that the absence of a

comprehensive Knowledge Management System requires the broadcasting organizations to be proactive, establish knowledge management programmes, create posts of, and appoint knowledge managers in all the three public broadcasting organizations.

## **7.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Out of all the 15 public broadcasting organizations in the SADC region, this researcher undertook a study on three broadcasting organizations thus, SABC DBS and ZBC. The study was not concerned with private broadcasters but focused on publicly funded television and radio stations operating under SABC, DBS and ZBC.

Creswell (1998:110) opines that limitations are potential weaknesses of a study. This study is no exception considering its scope. In view of the geographical location from where the researcher was based (University of Fort Hare), financial and time limitations put constraints on the number of visits to the two sites. The researcher would have wanted to visit all the seven SABC provincial stations for observations and interviews but funds and time could not permit. The same was for the DBS and ZBC radio stations which are scattered across various cities in the respective countries. The geographical locations posed logistical problems. Therefore the researcher conducted interviews and observations at the respective head offices only. The study administered questionnaires at the head offices in order to collect large quantities of data. Due to distance and location of provincial broadcasting stations it was not possible to cover adequately all the stations scattered in the major cities and towns in South Africa, Botswana and

Zimbabwe. The researcher then restricted himself to the head offices of the organizations and relied on the data collected there.

## **7.7 Recommendations**

The study investigated the knowledge retention strategies in three SADC broadcasting corporations. The aim of this study was to establish how knowledge is captured and retained at SABC, DBS and ZBC. To achieve this, the researcher was guided by the following research objectives: to find out the types of strategies the three broadcasting organizations (SABC, DBS and ZBC) employ to capture and retain knowledge; establish how the three broadcasting organizational cultures facilitate knowledge acquisition and sharing; to establish the role of ICTs as tools and enablers of knowledge retention, creation, transfer and sharing in the three broadcasting organizations; to propose recommendations on the best strategies for retention of knowledge in the three public broadcasting organizations as well as suggest areas for further and future research.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- The study recommends that each broadcasting organization should work out a knowledge retention policy on how to implement a mentoring programmes, coaching, succession planning, apprenticeship, encouraging communities of practice, utilizing retirees and subject matter experts recording experts and keeping the lessons-learned archives as strategies of capturing and retaining

critical and personalized/tacit organizational knowledge. The experienced and subject matter experts (SMEs) should be identified so that they assist junior employees in knowledge acquisition and skills equipping that should be retained in the organizations. It is recommended that the three public broadcasting organizations create the posts of Knowledge Officers. Knowledge officers may maximize the value of the organizations' assets, design and implement knowledge management strategies, effectively exchange knowledge assets internally and externally (Turban *et al*, 2008). Professional knowledge officers would execute the management of knowledge in the three broadcasting organizations and knowledge retention is one important component of knowledge management.

- In view of cultural impediments to knowledge sharing in the three organizations studied it is recommended that the senior executives and managers of the three organizations work on improving the organizational culture that promotes knowledge sharing.
- The study established that not all offices in the organizations were computerized and not all employees had access to internet. Therefore it is recommended that every office of the three broadcasting corporations be computerized. In this digital age where every job is dependent on ICT facilities, it is not an option but a survival kit to have access to latest technologies to enable employees to work smartly, effectively and efficiently (Jain 2011). Given that some of the professional's offices are not computerized the study recommends the speedy computerization to enable computer networking, access to internet/intranet,

online social networking and establishing online communities of practice. Tacit or personalized knowledge is retained in the organizational systems through sharing, collaboration, socialization. Computers are also used to store and preserve explicit or codified knowledge for future use.

- The study recommends the need to step up the level of cooperation with other broadcasting organizations in the region, continent and worldwide. Collaboration leads to the creation, sharing and retention of critical knowledge which these three broadcasting organizations may need for future use.

## **7.8 Areas for further study**

The researcher recommends further research in the following areas:

- a) An in-depth case study of knowledge retention on each of the public broadcasting corporations to overcome the weaknesses of the survey method used in the current study.
- b) A longitudinal study on knowledge retention involving SABC alone. This is because SABC is a massive organization with a large workforce (3700), many floors and offices (29 floors Radiopark and 11 floors TVpark) where knowledge flows.
- c) A study on knowledge retention strategies of particular sections of the three broadcasting organizations e.g. Transmission/Engineering, Radio or Television services, Sales and Marketing, Accounting
- d) A comparative study on knowledge retention strategies between privately-owned broadcasting organizations and public broadcasting organizations in the SADC.

## **7.9 Summary/Final conclusion**

The study has shown that there is critical tacit and explicit knowledge produced in the studied public broadcasting organizations and therefore should be harnessed, captured, preserved and retained in the three public broadcasting organizations for future use. The public broadcasting organizations lack proper knowledge retention strategies in place in order to capture and retain the critical knowledge that is acquired in these organizations. While there is mentoring of junior employees and apprentices the experts and seniors may decide not to mentor the juniors since there are no mentoring programmes in these three broadcasting organizations. Furthermore there are no Communities of Practice and knowledge sharing among persons with common interest in a specific field and discipline suffers as a result. It was therefore recommended that high ranking managers should encourage the establishment of communities of practice, organizations work out a mentoring programme, succession planning, coaching, utilization of a retirees and subject matter experts to retain personalized knowledge in the organizations. The study also recommended that ICTs be availed to all employees to enable knowledge transfer, sharing and retention. In this chapter the researcher recommends the creation of posts of Knowledge Management Officers who should oversee the implementation of a Knowledge Management Programmes in the organizations that were studied.

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## **Definition of important terms and concepts**

This sub-section gives definitions of terms and concepts frequently used in this study.

- Community of practice

In a learning context a community of practice has been identified as a group that shares knowledge, learns together, and creates common practices (McDermott, 1999)

- Competitive advantage

Competitive advantage is when an organization utilizes knowledge and earns a higher rate of economic profit than the average rate of other firms competing within the same market (Porter, 1980)

- Corporate knowledge

The knowledge that corporations hold and can be exploited as part of product or service offering. Such knowledge includes applications knowledge, market knowledge, and knowledge on how to solve problems encountered by users (Skyrme, 1999:53)

- Explicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be readily articulated, communicated and transmitted to individuals formally and systematically (Takeuchi and Nonaka, 2004, Angela and Oxbrow, 2001) It can be expressed in words, numbers or sound, and shared in the form of data, scientific formulas, visuals, audiotapes, specifications or manuals.

➤ Information and Communication Technologies

ICTs are generally regarded as technologies that support an individual's ability to manage and communicate information electronically, and include hardware such as computers, printers, scanners, video recorders, television, radio, and digital cameras as well as the software and systems needed for communication, such as the internet and email (Bialobrezeske and Cohen, 2003)

➤ Knowledge

Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insights that provide a framework for evaluating amid incorporating new experiences and information (Davenport & Prusak, 1998)

➤ Knowledge economy

This is an economy that depends on knowledge for growth, the provision of superior services, highly educated and trained people, and knowledge supplanting the traditional resources of production (Drucker, 1993)

➤ Knowledge management

Knowledge management is defined as the process of consciously creating new knowledge, disseminating it widely through the organization and embodying it quickly in new products/services, technology, and systems (Takeuchi and Nonaka, 2004:4)

➤ Knowledge retention

This refers to all systems and activities that preserve knowledge and allow it to remain in the system once introduced. It includes all activities that maintain the viability of knowledge within the system (Newman and Conrad, 1999).

➤ Knowledge workers

Individuals who make contributions through exercising intellectual expertise and understanding (Wiig, 1995:475)

➤ Learning organization

A learning organization is a form of organization that enables, in an active sense, the learning of its members in such a way that it creates positive outcomes such as innovation, efficiency, improved alignment with the environment, and competitive advantage (Langer, 2005:75)

➤ Organizational knowledge

This is knowledge of an organization that is found stored in both people and other forms such as records, procedures, databases and processes (April and Izad, 2004).

➤ Tacit knowledge

This is knowledge that is highly personal and hard to formalize, making it difficult to communicate or share with others. Tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual's actions and bodily experience, as well as in the ideals, values, or emotions that they embrace (Takeuchi and Nonaka, 2004:3-4)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Cover Letter

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Dear participant,

My name is Peterson Dewah a PhD student in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Fort Hare, South Africa. I am conducting a study in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a PhD degree in Library and Information Science. My study is titled **“Knowledge retention strategies in the national broadcasting organizations: A study of Botswana Broadcasting Services, South African Broadcasting Corporation and Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation.”** Knowledge is a strategic resource that makes a difference between success and failure for organizations and countries. I consider the broadcasting corporations to be knowledge organizations whose knowledge must be retained in order for the organizations to achieve competitive advantage in the broadcasting industry. To this end I kindly request that you complete the questionnaire attached herewith regarding the production and retention of knowledge in your broadcasting organization.

Please do not write your name or contact details on the questionnaire. It remains anonymous and confidential. The main objective of this study is to find out how knowledge is managed in the public broadcasting organizations, establish how ICTs are utilized as enablers in knowledge management and identify some of the setbacks associated with loss of knowledge at the broadcasting organization (BBS, SABC/ZBC) as a result of poor Knowledge management strategies. Ways will be suggested on how to improve strategies of knowledge retention, in particular and knowledge management in general. The study will be confined to BBS, SABC

and ZBC and hopefully, the findings will be applicable to other SADC Public broadcasting organizations and even across sub-Saharan Africa.

Your contribution to understanding how knowledge is retained at BBS, SABC/ZBC will be very important. Participation is voluntary and you are assured that the information you give will be treated confidentially and will be used solely for the purpose of the study. There is no right or wrong response to any question, but please give honest answers. Thank you for your time and participation in the survey. Please answer all the questions to enable the researcher to find answers to the research questions of this research.

Very Sincerely,

Peterson Dewah.

University of Fort Hare

Department of Library and Information Science

P Bag X 1314

RSA

Alice

Telephone 0406022558; Mobile +27791694554

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire

### SECTION A

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Background Information

Please write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Country .....
2. Province.....
3. Your job designation at BBS, SABC/ ZBC .....
4. Department.....
5. a) Your gender (To be used for statistics.)Please tick (√) in the box provided

Female	
Male	

b) Please indicate your age (in years) bracket by ticking in the relevant box as provided below;

Less than 25	
25-35	
36-46	
47-57	
58-65	
Above 65	



7) What is your highest level of formal education?

Matric/Advanced level/High School	
Certificate	
Diploma	
Bachelors/BTech	
Master's	
PhD	
Postdoctoral	

8) For how many years have you worked for your organization?

0-5	
6-10	
11-20	
21-30	
31-40	
Other (Please specify)	

### Organizational Knowledge

***Organizational knowledge is knowledge that is found in documents, papers and in the heads of individual workers.***

9) In as far as you are concerned, is acquisition of knowledge and information a priority in your organization?

Yes	
No	

10 a)What is the ease with which you find and utilize information in your organization?

Easy	
Very easy	
Difficult	
Very difficult	
Don't know	

b) If difficult, please explain briefly in the space provided hereunder

.....

.....

.....

11) What kind (s) of knowledge acquisition activities are there in your organization?

Education	
Training	
Workshops/seminars	
Mentoring	
Projects	
Social media	
Any other (Please specify)	

## **SECTION B**

### **Knowledge sharing**

***Knowledge sharing is the exchange of knowledge between the knowledgeable and the receiver.***

12) What role do managers in your organization play in promoting knowledge transfer and sharing?

Establishing communities of practice	
Promoting professional networks	
Encouraging staff to share knowledge with co-workers	
To attend informal gatherings where knowledge is shared	
Appointing mentors	
Regular meetings with other staff	
Encouraging communicating through intranet	
Inviting experts to give lectures	
Establishing work teams/project teams	
Use of information repositories	
Use of databases	
Any other (Please specify)	

13) In as far as you know does your organization work with other broadcasting organizations in any of the following knowledge management practices? (Please select one or more of the ways?)

Joint research projects	
Joint training programmes	
Joint seminars/workshops	
Exchange of staff	
Exchange of Information	
Any other (Please specify)	

14) What rewards/incentives if any are there to encourage knowledge sharing in your organization? (Please tick as many as may apply)

Promotion at work	
Pay rise	
Monetary rewards	
Any other (Specify)	

15) Which of the following and any other motivations do you consider as reasons for sharing knowledge in your organization?

To get recognition	
To be rewarded	
To satisfy self-fulfillment needs	
To support management strategic objectives	
To enhance my career	
To mentor junior colleagues	
To enhance productivity	
To enhance quality of service	
To impart education	
To impart training	
Any other	

16) In your organization which of the following or any other is commonly used as a tool for sharing knowledge?

Staff meetings	
News letters	
Circulars/memoranda	
Informal interaction	
Briefing sessions	
Use of the notice board	
Email	
Websites/online resources	
Mobile cell phones	
Intranets	
Web portals	
Blogs	
Mail groups	
Communities of practice	
Mobile phones	
Workshops	
Seminars	
Conferences	
Teambuilding exercises	

Written reports	
Face-to-face interactions	
Social events	
Training	
Performance appraisal	
Mentoring programmes	



17) Which of the following do you think is effective in sharing knowledge within your organization? (Please tick as many responses as you can)

Staff meetings	
News letters	
Circulars/memoranda	
Informal interaction	
Briefing sessions	
Use of the notice board	
Email	
Websites/online resources	
Mobile cell phones	
Intranets	
Web portals	
Blogs	
Mail groups	
Communities of practice	
Mobile phones	
Workshops	
Seminars	
Conferences	
Teambuilding exercises	
Written reports	

Face-to-face interactions	
Social events	
Training	
Performance appraisal	
Mentoring programmes	

### **SECTION C**

#### **Knowledge Conversion**

***Tacit knowledge is that knowledge which resides in the brain of an individual whereas explicit knowledge is that knowledge found in documents, databases and objects. Knowledge can be converted from tacit to explicit through employee interaction***

18) Which of the following or any other activities does the Human Resource Department (HRD) use in the sharing of tacit knowledge between individuals? (Please tick your response)

Brainstorming	
Discussions	
Debates	
Learning	
Teaching	
Communities of practice	

19) In your organization, is tacit knowledge distributed and shared through formal socialization such as the following? (Please tick your response)

Apprenticeship	
Mentorship	
Meetings	
On the job training	
Formal communities of practice	
Brainstorming sessions	
Learning	
Writing	
Adding	

20) In your organization, is tacit knowledge distributed and shared through informal socialization such as the following? (Please tick your response)

Sporting activities	
Retreat resort	
Spending time with each other	
Sharing employee experiences	
Informal communities of practice	

## **SECTION D**

### **Organizational culture**

***Organizational culture can be referred to as a set of values, beliefs and behavior patterns that form the core identity of organization help in shaping the employees behavior.***

21) Is there a knowledge sharing culture in your organization?

Yes	
No	

22) Which of the following or any other are cultural impediments to knowledge sharing in your organization? (Please tick those which apply)

Beliefs	
Values	
Norms	
Dress	
Lack of participation	
Not willing to share knowledge	
Lack of trust	
Lack of rewards/recognition for knowledge sharing	
Lack of training	

23) Are employees free to share knowledge in your organization?

Yes	
No	

24) Are employees free to share knowledge with the following? (Please tick as many options as possible)

Downward with juniors/subordinates	
Upward with superiors (e.g. messenger sharing with the Organization director)	
Horizontally with colleagues	

25) If your answer to the above question is NO, which of the following or any other may be the reasons? (Please select as many answers as may apply)

Limited sharing of knowledge because of superiority complex	
Lack of trust among organizational members	
Those in privileged positions hoard knowledge for fear of losing privileges	
Culture of secrecy within your organization	
People's attitudes towards knowledge sharing	
Any other? ..... ..... .....	

### **Knowledge Retention**

***Knowledge retention is the capture of critical knowledge and expertise that is at risk of loss when employees leave an organization***

26) Which of the following or any other is utilized for knowledge storage in your organization?

Databases	
Lessons-learned archives	
Case bases	
Paper records	
Audio tapes	
Video tapes	
Any other (Please specify)	

27) Which of the following is used as a method/way of retaining organizational knowledge?  
(Please tick as many as can apply)

Documentation processes
Use of software to capture work processes
Interviewing retirees and recording their experiences
Mentoring new/younger talent
Work processes knowledge capture through advanced software
Any other (Please specify)

28) Which of the following experts have left your organization within the last five years? (Please tick as many as you can)

Accountants	
Public relations manager	
IT Specialists	
Marketing Specialists	
Technician	
Researchers	
Engineers	
Librarians	
Archivists	
Information officers	
Editors	
Documentalists	
Communications manager	
Any other (Please specify)	

29) Of those who left the organization is there anyone who was interviewed by the organization in order to capture their knowledge? (Please tick as many as you can)

Accountants	
Public relations manager	
IT Specialists	
Marketing Specialists	
Technician	
Researchers	
Editors	
Librarians	
Archivists	
Information officers	
Engineers	
Documentalists	
Communications manager	
Any other (Please specify)	



30) How is the HRD in your organization tapping into retaining and capturing retiree's know-how and experts' best practices so that the information can be passed on to current and future workers?

Interview employees and keep written records	
Experts mentor other staffers	
Experts remain on call after their departure dates	
Retirees are invited as consultants' e.g. to conduct trainings.	
Conducting exit interviews	
Archive the knowledge	
Any other (Please specify)	

31) Who is responsible for the retention of knowledge in your organization?

Chief Executive/Director	
Human Resource Department	
Section Managers	
Knowledge officers	
Librarian	
Archivist	
Any other	

32) Which of the following is your organizational policy on reusing knowledge?

Recalling retirees	
Extracting from company archives	
Data mining	
Any other (Please specify)	

33) How is knowledge retained/preserved in your organization? (Please tick those that apply)

Retirees teaching new employees	
Recording retirees on video/audio tapes	
Conducting interviews	
In organizational archives	
Any other (Please specify)	

34) Which are the major sources of knowledge that have to be retained in your organization?

Those approaching retiring age	
All experts in various sections	
All the experienced workers	
Managers	
Directors	
Critical knowledge	
Any other (Please specify)	

## **SECTION E**

### **Role of Information and Communication Technologies in knowledge retention, transfer and sharing**

***Information technology makes it possible for the connections that enable knowledge transfer, sharing and retention in organizations.***

35) Do you consider yourself computer literate?

Yes	
No	

36) Which of the following or any other Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) do you have access to in your organization? (Please tick)

Intranet/electronic mail	
Virtual conference rooms	
Fax	
Internet	
Computers	
Telephone	
Cellphone	
Electronic bulletin boards	
Discussion forums	
Knowledge directories	
Groupware	
Databases	
Intelligent search engines	
Libraries	
Wikis	
Skype	
Websites	

37) If your organization has internet connectivity is the internet freely accessible to every employee?

Yes	
No	

38) If **yes** how often do you access the internet?

Once in a day	
Twice a day	
2 to 5 times a day	
I have unlimited access	
Infrequent access	

39) What kind of technologies do you use in your organization to retrieve, share and disseminate knowledge? (Please tick those that apply)

Intranet/electronic mail	
Virtual conference rooms	
Fax	
Internet	
Computers	
Telephone	
Cellphone	
Electronic bulletin boards	
Discussion forums	
Knowledge directories	
Groupware	
Databases	
Intelligent search engines	
Libraries	
Wikis	
Skype	

## Recommendations

40) What do you propose should be done to improve any of the following in your organization?

a) Knowledge sharing

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b) organizational knowledge retention

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## Appendix 3: Interview guide with managers

### **SECTION A**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **Background Information**

- 1 Name of the broadcasting organization.....
- 2 Your job designation/position .....
- 3 Department/Section.....
- 4a) Your gender (To be used for statistics.)..... (b) Age.....
- 5) What is your highest level of formal education.....?
- 6) How long have you worked for your organization.....?

##### **Section B: Organizational Knowledge**

***Organizational knowledge is knowledge that is found in documents, papers (explicit) and in the heads of individual (tacit) workers. Tacit knowledge is that knowledge which resides in the brain of an individual whereas explicit knowledge is that knowledge found in documents, records, databases and objects.***

- 7a) Of the two (tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge) which one do you think is the most important in your organization? Explain.
- b) What are the risks of losing strategic tacit knowledge in your organization?
- c) Do you think there is need to retaining such knowledge? Explain.

##### **Knowledge Retention**

***Knowledge retention is capturing and preserving knowledge in the organization for reuse in the future***

- 8) How do you determine the important knowledge to be retained in your organization?



9) Do you think knowledge sharing assists in retaining knowledge in the organization? If so how?

10) How do you capture and retain knowledge in your organization?

11) Which critical knowledge do you capture for retention purposes in your organization?

### **Knowledge sharing**

***Knowledge sharing is the exchange of knowledge between the knowledgeable and the receiver.***

12) Do you have a culture of sharing knowledge in your organization?

13) Are employees free to share knowledge with their juniors, superiors and colleagues i.e. upward, downward and horizontally?

b) Do employees form or belong to some formal and informal professional groups of their trade?

### **SECTION C; Learning Organization and Knowledge Conversion**

***A learning organization is an organization that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself.***

14) Do you think yours is a learning organization? Why?

15) How does your organization acquire and generate knowledge? (E.g. Through education, training, seminars workshops and mentoring, apprenticeship)

### **SECTION D; Organizational culture and knowledge retention**

***Organizational culture can be referred to as a set of values, beliefs and behavior patterns that form the core identity of organization and helps in shaping the employees behavior.***

16) What values, beliefs and behaviour patterns support knowledge sharing for retention purposes?

17) What cultural aspects do affect knowledge sharing in your organization?

18) How does your dress code (if you have any) at your organization affect knowledge sharing?

### **SECTION C; Role of Information and Communication Technologies in knowledge retention, transfer and sharing**

***Information technology makes it possible for the connections that enable knowledge transfer, sharing and retention in organizations***

20) How do you use ICTs to retain organizational knowledge?

21) If your organization has branches separated by geographical dimensions which ICTs are used by employees to share knowledge with workmates in other branches/provinces?

22) Does your organization have a website? If so, what type of knowledge is posted on your website?

## Appendix 4: Observation guide

### **A Use of notice boards for communication and sharing knowledge.....**

.....

### **B Manager and subordinate relationship**

How do managers and their subordinates relate at work?

.....

.....

How juniors and seniors conduct themselves?

.....

### **C Dress**

Observe the dressing by all employees

.....

.....

### **D Canteen/food cafes**

Do seniors and juniors use the same facilities?

.....

.....

Do they discuss work issues during tea and lunch breaks?

.....

.....

.....

### **E Library**

Observe the use of library facilities by employees

### **F Use of ICTs in offices for sharing storing, transferring preserving knowledge**

.....

.....

.....

.....

### **G General Observations**

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.....

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix 5: Letter of introduction from the supervisor

**Department of Library & Information Science**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities**  
2nd Floor, Psychology Building, Alice Campus  
Tel: 040 602 2211/2122/2737 | Fax: (086) 628 2533/2449  
OR 086 622 1359 |  
Mobile: 0825938334/0822004728/0798461418  
| Email: [kmokwatlo@ufh.ac.za](mailto:kmokwatlo@ufh.ac.za) OR [fkhayundi@ufh.ac.za](mailto:fkhayundi@ufh.ac.za)  
OR [eondari@ufh.ac.za](mailto:eondari@ufh.ac.za) |



15/10/2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir,

**RE: INTRODUCING MR. P. DEWAH (REGISTRATION NUMBER 2000907344)**

This serves to formally introduce the above named as a full time Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Fort Hare, Alice. Mr. Dewah has proposed to conduct research on a research project titled "*Knowledge retention strategies in national broadcasting organizations: a study of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and Botswana Broadcasting Service.*"

Mr. Dewah's research proposal has been approved by the Higher Degrees and Research Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and duly registered by the University of Fort Hare as a research project. As the student's supervisor, I am very satisfied that the topic is researchable. Knowledge is now considered a strategic resource that makes a difference between success and failure of profit and non-profit corporations all over the world.

Mr. Dewah would like to collect data for the research project by way of interviewing staff who have specialized tacit knowledge and skills in different areas of specialization in your corporation. We request that you assist Mr. Dewah to distribute questionnaires and/or conduct face-to-face interviews. Any other assistance given to Mr. Dewah would be highly appreciated. Please do not mind that you do not have a structured knowledge management programme in your organization. Knowledge flows with or without a structured knowledge management programme in a corporation. For any further information about Mr. Dewah, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Sincerely,

**Dr EM Ondari-Okemwa,**  
**Senior Lecturer and Head, Department of Library and Information Science.**

## Appendix 6: Research Permit Botswana

Telephone: 3653000

Fax: 3653347

REF: BS 1/21/1 I



DEPARTMENT OF BROADCASTING SERVICES

PRIVATE BAG 0060

GABORONE

March 26, 2010

Att: Mr. Peterson Dewah

University of Fort Hare  
Private Bag X1314  
Alice  
5700  
South Africa

### RE: APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH PERMIT- YOURSELF

We acknowledge receipt of your application documents for a research permit. Permission is hereby granted for you to carry out the research based on the following conditions:

1. The research is carried out according to the proposal submitted
2. The research is carried out according to the time period stipulated in the proposal
3. Resulting publications should be deposited with the following
  - Permanent Secretary – Ministry of State President
  - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, P/Bag 005, Gaborone, Botswana.
  - The Director, Department of Broadcasting Services, P/Bag 0060, Gaborone, Botswana
  - Director, National Library Services, P/Bag 0036, Gaborone, Botswana
  - Director, Botswana Archives and Records Services, P.O. Box 239, Gaborone, Botswana.

We take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neoyame Shirima'.

Neoyame Shirima

For/Director-Broadcasting Services

## Appendix 7: Research Permit ZBC

19/08 2008 14:11 FAX 263 4 792385

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

001



ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING HOLDINGS (PVT) LTD  
THE BROADCASTING CENTRE  
P.O. Box HG 444  
HIGHLANDS  
HARARE  
ZIMBABWE

18 August 2009

The Director  
National Archives of Zimbabwe  
Private Bag 7729  
Causeway  
Harare

*Approved*  
*28/09/10*

Att: I.M Murambiwa

Dear Sir

RE: PETERSON DEHWA: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO USE ZBH AS A CASE STUDY

Your letter dated 6 August, 2009, addressed to our Chief Executive Officer, on the above subject refers.

I am pleased to advise that your request has been approved. The student is free to contact me on when he intends to commence his research. My direct line is 498629, and my cell number is 0912544300.

We hope that his research will benefit both the student and ZBH.

Yours sincerely

Sivukile Simango (Mr)  
Public Relations Manager

Telephones: +263 4 496646/7 Fax +263 498606/611

## **Appendix 8: List of SADC/SABA member states and their broadcasting organizations**

- i. Angola -Televisao Publica de Angola, Radio National de Angola
- ii. Botswana – Department of Broadcasting Services of Botswana
- iii. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) - Radio television Nationale du Congo
- iv. Lesotho- Lesotho National Broadcasting Services
- v. Madagascar (*NB At the time of study Madagascar was on suspension*)
- vi. Malawi- Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
- vii. Mauritius- Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation
- viii. Mozambique- Radio Mozambique, Televisao de Mozambique
- ix. Namibia - Namibia Broadcasting Corporation
- x. Seychelles - Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation
- xi. Swaziland- Swaziland Television Authority
- xii. Tanzania-Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation
- xiii. South Africa - South Africa Broadcasting Corporation
- xiv. Zambia-Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation
- xv. Zimbabwe- Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation