

# Knowledge Management Practices and Employee Productivity of Rice Mill Firms in South East, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The study examined the effect of knowledge management practices on employee productivity of rice mill firms in South East Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: Assess the effect of knowledge sharing on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East. Determine the effect of knowledge conversion on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East. Two research hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives. This study was anchored on the Knowledge-Based View. It adopted the survey method of research. Data were generated through primary and secondary sources. The method for data collection was questionnaire which was administered randomly among the staff of the selected firms. The population of this research work was drawn from the workers in the selected rice mill firms in South East which has a total population of 3401 and a sample size of 654 which was derive from Borg & Gall (1973) formular. In this study both primary and secondary data was used. The hypotheses were tested using the regression method at 0.05% level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that: Knowledge sharing has significant positive effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East. Knowledge conversion has a significant positive effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East. The study recommended that Management of rice firm should imbibe knowledge sharing culture among employee within the organization so that employees can share what they know with others. Rice mill firm should encourage knowledge conversion practices so that their productivity will improve.*

**Keywords:** *knowledge management practices, employee productivity, knowledge sharing, employee efficiency, knowledge conversion*

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## 1.1 Introduction

Knowledge management practices have become a corporate asset that may be the principal competitive advantage in the global economy. The potential for success of the companies is closely tied to their ability to innovate, become creative and to develop their ways of production; all this is based on the knowledge assets possessed by the company (Davenport & Prusak, 2018). The current focus and study of knowledge management is not for the sake of academics only, but a realization that knowing about knowledge and efficient management of knowledge is critical to business growth and business survival. Knowledge, if properly utilized and leveraged, can drive organizations to become more competitive, innovative and sustainable. Knowledge management is complex and multifaceted; it encompasses everything the organization does to make knowledge available to the business, such as embedding key information in systems and processes, applying incentives to motivate employees and forging alliances to infuse the business with new knowledge.

Effective knowledge management practices requires a combination of many organizational elements- technology, human resource practices, organizational structure and culture- in order to ensure that the right knowledge is brought to bear at the right time. Knowledge management initiatives in organization are consequently increasingly becoming important and firms are making significant information technology investments in deploying knowledge management systems (KMS). Weber (2017) agreed that in order for organizations to stay in the competitive race knowledge has to be updated continuously and knowledge management practices attempts to secure and replenish the learning experiences as well as, the work products of the individuals in an organization. In today's technology driven artificial intelligence (AI), business demands a new attitude and approach within organizations, and actions must be anticipatory, adaptive, and based on a faster cycle of knowledge assets. Knowledge management can play an important role to make companies compete productively, it is pertinent to note that knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, value, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms.

According to Spring (2010) to achieve Employee efficiency, organizations must determine their value chain the core organizational processes that create value for stakeholders. Accompanying these core processes will be management and support processes. A process change initiative has to demonstrate some quick wins regarding performance improvements, so it is important to commission process improvement initiatives for those processes, which gain value- added work done for the organization

An emerging knowledge-centric view of the firm describes firms as organizations that know how to do things. This implies that a firm can best be seen as a coordinated collection of capabilities, somewhat bound by its own history, and limited in effectiveness by its current cognitive and social skills. The main building block of these capabilities (or unit of analysis, if you prefer) is tacit and specific to the firm (Winter, 2013). Knowledge management (KM) has aimed at capturing, integrating and using existing organization knowledge and subsequently creating a knowledge asset that can be source of sustainable competitive advantage in the long run (Brooking, 2019; Havens & Knapp, 2019). Knowledge management has been recognized as an essential component of a proactively managed organization. The key concepts include converting data, organizational insight, experience and expertise into reusable and useful knowledge that is distributed and shared within the people who need it.

Due to the rapid changes in a business environment, sustainability of an organization is possible only if the knowledge management practices are utilized. Knowledge management plays strategic role to organizational competitive advantage, productivity, relevance and protection against loss of corporate memory. Over the years, the challenge of low performance of organizations has been attributed to poor and inadequate financing. Several enterprises that are supposed to be flourishing today have closed down not because of lack of finance, human and material resources, good support and assistance, but because of lack of knowledge and how the knowledge should be utilized and managed adequately. According to Zack (2003), knowledge is the most important resources for gaining competitive advantage. Organizations cannot stand the test of time simply because of lack of knowledge. Knowledge management entails strategic activities which ensure that organization have the knowledge to the things which they are responsible for in a rapidly changing environment (Alvesson and karreman, 2011). Most studies and research have shown that

lack of training and knowledge management practices is a major cause of failure for businesses (Berryman, 2013). The main limitations in knowledge management practices are knowledge hoarding among the employees who sees it as a source of power. They withhold their knowledge for the fear of losing control, because they believe that sharing this knowledge with others reduces their level of power (Obeidat, Al-Suradi, Masa'deh, and Tarhini, 2018).

In today's competitive environment, enhancing employee productivity (EPD) is one of the most important goals of several organizations, as higher levels of employee productivity provide an organization and its employees with innumerable advantages. Higher productivity leads to promising economic growth, immense profitability and healthy social headway (Auzina-Emsina, 2012; Soomro, Saraih & Ahmad, 2022). In addition, employees are more productive and obtain better salaries, remuneration, wages, better working conditions, and promising employment opportunities. Although employee productivity is difficult to quantify, it has a direct impact on a company's profits. During the initial job interview, an employer can assess a worker's capabilities and fill his crew with productivity in mind. However, there are a number of elements at work that might assist a person get the most out of their work (Lake, 2017). Many of the tasks carried out by an HR system are intended to influence individual or organizational productivity. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the effect of knowledge management practices on employee productivity of rice mill firms in South East Nigeria.

## **1.2 Objective of the Study**

The main objective is to critically examine the knowledge management practices and employee productivity of rice mill firms in South East Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Assess the effect of knowledge sharing on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East
- ii. Determine the effect of knowledge conversion on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East

## **1.3 Statement of Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated that guide the objectives of the study and strengthen the analysis

- i.  $H_{01}$ : Knowledge sharing has no significant effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East
- ii.  $H_{02}$ : Knowledge conversion has no significant effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East

# **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This work is anchored on Knowledge-Based View

### **Knowledge-Based View**

The knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm thinks about learning as the most deliberately critical asset of a firm. Its advocates contend that since learning based assets are normally hard to mimic and socially perplexing, heterogeneous information bases and capacities among firms are the real determinants of maintained upper hand and prevalent performance of the corporate

(Kitchlew, 2015). This learning is implanted and conveyed by different elements including hierarchical culture and personality, approaches, schedules, archives, frameworks, and the organizational workforce (Kitchlew, 2015). Theorists believe that the knowledge-based view of the firm is the characteristic development of the asset based view on the grounds that the asset with the most supported upper hand is the most profitable, incomparable and fixed of all which is knowledge (Mitra, O'Regan & Sarpong, 2017). The core assumptions of this theory are; firms apply knowledge to the generation of merchandise and administration, information is the most deliberately critical of a company's asset, knowledge is made and held by individual not organizations, and finally, firms exist since business sectors are unequipped for organizing the learning of the individual specialty. This is the part of administration within the organization. The comprehension of information as an asset makes the notional organization with the asset based view (Hughes, Powell, Chung and Mellahi, 2017).

Another explanation behind the information based seem to be an expansion of the asset based view is the impression of associations to be heterogeneous substances containing learning(Mitra, O'Regan & Sarpong, 2017). The knowledge-based view shows a relationship with knowledge management. As explained by Mitra, O'Regan, and Sarpong (2017) the reason for knowledge management is to catch an organization's aggregate aptitude and appropriate it wherever it can accomplish the greatest result. This is by the information based perspective of the firm which recommends that the wellspring of upper hand exists in the business. In this research, the knowledge-based view is used as a management concept which provides the firm with strategies for achieving competitive advantage. It is the approach used to form the basis for the establishment of human capital involved in the basic and routine activities of the firm and further introduces the strategic asset which forms the basis of acquiring competitive advantage for organizations. These strategic assets are difficult to imitate and socially complex of which knowledge can have these characteristics. In this regard, there is a need to manage this vital asset that is, knowledge (Hughes et al., 2017).

## 2.2 Empirical Review

<b>Webometrics-Effect of Knowledge Management on Employee productivity</b>				
<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Major findings</b>	
Akpoyibo, (2021)	Assessed knowledge management and performance of small and medium scale enterprises	Conversion, sharing, utilization, storing acquisition and Organizational performance	Results of the analysis revealed that the performance of SMEs is sensitive to knowledge management variables	

Onyekwelu, Anizoba and Uzodike (2021)	(SMEs) in south-south Nigeria examined the extent of the relationship that exists between knowledge management (KM) and organizational commitment in Private Universities in Anambra State, Nigeria	Knowledge sharing, knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage and organizational performance	The result showed that there is a strong positive relationship ( $r = .939$ ) between the two variables
Forouzan, Mohammad and Paria (2021)	investigated and identified the factors affecting the empowerment and implementation of knowledge management in organizations	structure, culture, leadership, trust and knowledge management	findings showed the positive effects of variables of structure, culture, leadership, and trust on knowledge management in an organization

Edeh, Ugboe go., Azubuike, and Onwuegbul (2020).	examined the role of workplace culture on the relationship between knowledge management and extra-role behaviour	knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, knowledge storage knowledge application and extra-role behavior	This study found that corporate culture moderates the relationship between knowledge management and extra-role behaviour
Akoko, (2020)	explored the influence of Knowledge conversion on sustainability of sugar companies in Kenya	knowledge acquisition, knowledge conversion, knowledge protection knowledge application and performance	The study concludes that Knowledge conversion has significant influence to sustainability and the companies' needs
Evwie rhurhoma and Onouha (2020)	Determined the relationship between knowledge management tools applications and organizational performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.	knowledge acquisition, competitive advantage based on a knowledge-based and resource-based study	The findings showed a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of knowledge management tools applications and the measures of organizational performance.

Akpa, Akinla bi, Asikhi a, and Nnoro m., (2020)	ascertain the effect of knowledge management on the performance of organizations in Nigerian food and beverage manufacturing sector.	knowledge creation, innovation and knowledge sharing	Results showed that knowledge creation had a significant negative effect on innovation and knowledge sharing had a significant positive effect on innovation
Dicks on & Oyein koriki ye (2019)	investigated knowledge management and performance of faith-based organizations in Bayelsa State	Knowledge sharing, knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage and organizational performance	The findings revealed that knowledge management components such as knowledge sharing, knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage are positively related to organizational performance
Edeh & Ukpe. (2019)	investigated the relationship between knowledge management and employee effectiveness of deposit money banks in Nigeria using	knowledge acquisition, knowledge dissemination, knowledge conservation and knowledge retrieval	The study found that knowledge management has positive significant association with employee effectiveness in deposit money banks in Abakaliki.

Opele & Okuno ye (2019)	cross- sectional survey assessed the extent of knowledg e manageme nt practices among Health Informatio n Managem ent Practitione rs in Nigeria teaching hospitals	Conversio n, sharing, utilization, storing acquisitio n and Organizati onal performan ce	Findings revealed that the respondent demonstrated a high level of knowledge management practices in the nine selected teaching hospitals in Nigeria.
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## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1. Research Design**

The study acquire cross sectional design,the cross sectional study involves gathering the data for a particular study at a point in a time to meet the research objectives (cavanna et al 2014). Cross sectional survey was choosen to avoid the long time consumption charaterized by longitudinal research.The area of study consisted of the five States in the South-East geographical zone of Nigeria: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states. The population of this research work was drawn from the workers in the selected rice mill firms in South East which has a total population of 3401 and a sample size of 654 which was derive from Borg & Gall (1973) formular. In this study both primary and secondary data was used. In carrying out this study, the researcher will make use of descriptive statistics such as frequency counts to analyze the bio – data of the respondents multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis of the study. All analyses were done through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 2023 version.

### **3.2 Model Specification.**

Due to the nature of the objective of the study, the researcher will develop a model, to capture the objective of the study. As a result, the model is specified below,

$$\text{EME} = f(\text{KNS}, \text{KWC})$$

Where



EME = Employee Efficiency

KNS = knowledge Sharing

KWC= knowledge Conversation

f=Functional Notation

The above equation can be put in an econometric form as;

$$EME = b_0 + b_1 KNS + b_2 KWC + \mu$$

Where;

$b_0$  = Autonomous or intercept

$b_1$  = Coefficient of parameter KNS

$b_2$  = Coefficient of parameter KWC

## **PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the questionnaires issued and the ones that were returned to the researcher for analysis. However, the number of questionnaires distributed was six hundred and fifty-four (654), whereas five hundred and seventy-seven (577) filled well and returned in good condition. The number of returned questionnaire will be used for the analysis of the study.

**Table 4.1: Respondents' Demographic Variables**

#### **4.1.1 Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	451	75.5	78.2	78.2
	Female	126	21.1	21.8	100.0
	Total	577	96.6	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2023

The above table reveals that the four hundred and fifty-one (451) of the respondents which represents 78.2 persons were male respondents, while one hundred and twenty-six (126) respondents which represent 21.8% were female respondents. By implication, male respondents were more than female respondents by 56.1 respondents in our selected population sample for this study. The implication of this is to enable us to know the number of female and male that successfully returned their questionnaire.

#### **4.1.2 Status**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	384	64.3	66.6	66.6
	Single	193	32.3	33.4	100.0
	Total	577	96.6	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2023

In the table above, out of the five hundred and seventy-seven (577) respondents, three hundred and eighty-four (384) of the respondents were married, while one hundred and ninety-three (193) respondents which represent 33.4 percent are single. It is therefore glaring that the majority of the respondents are married as at the time of this study. Thus marital status table help us to know the number of single, and married, and respondents that answered the distributed questionnaire

**4.1.3 Level of Education**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	WAEC/NECO	123	20.6	21.3	21.3
	BSC/HND	177	29.6	30.7	52.0
	MSC/MBA	198	33.2	34.3	86.3
	PHD	79	13.2	13.7	100.0
	Total	577	96.6	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2023

The table above indicates that one hundred and twenty-three (123) respondents which representing 21.3% percent maintain to acquired WAEC OR NECO while 30.7% percent of the respondents which represents one hundred and seventy-seven (177) have BSC/HND. However, one hundred and eighty-nine (189) respondents which represent 34.3 percent either have MSC or MBA. More so, seventy-nine (79) respondent which represents 13.7% have acquires PhD. This as the one of demographic item helps us to identify the education qualification of the respondents.

**4.1.4 AGE**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	313	52.4	54.2	54.2
	26-33	132	22.1	22.9	77.1
	34-40	31	5.2	5.4	82.5
	41-50	37	6.2	6.4	88.9
	51-ABOVE	64	10.7	11.1	100.0
	Total	577	96.6	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 4.3 above depicted the age bracket of the respondents. The distribution shows that 54.2% of the respondents are between the age brackets of 18 to 25 years while 22.9% respondents are within the age bracket of 26-33 years. On the same note, 5.4% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 34 - 40 years. On the same note, 6.4% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 41 - 50 years, while the remaining respondents representing 11.1% are within the age bracket of 51 years and above.

**4.1.5 Years in service**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-10	293	39.0	50.8	40.4
	11-15	161	27.0	27.9	68.3
	16-20	80	13.4	13.9	82.1
	21-above	43	7.2	7.5	100.0
	Total	577	96.6	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2023

The table above indicates that two hundred and ninety-three (293) respondents which representing 50.8% percent maintain that they have been in the services for 10yrs or less while 27. % Percent of the respondents which represents one hundred and sixty-one (161) have work in the local government for over 15yrs. However, eighty (80) respondents which represent 13.9 percent either have work for 16-20 years. More so, forty-three (43) respondent which represents 7.3% have work between 21-above. This as the one of demographic item helps us to identify the number of years the respondent has work for.

## 4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression result was employed to test the effect of independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The result of the multiple regression analysis is presented in the tables below.

### Table 4.2.1 Summary of the Regression Result

The result of the multiple regressions formulated in chapter three is presented in the tables below.

**Table 4.2.1 Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.449 <sup>a</sup>	.202	.198	.64886	.202	48.342	3	573	.000	2.189

a. Predictors: (Constant), KNS, KWC

b. Dependent Variable: EME

Table 4.2.1 shows that  $R^2$  which measures the strength of the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable have the value of 0.202. This implies that 20.2% of the variation in employee efficiency is explained by variations in knowledge sharing and knowledge conversation, this was supported by adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.198.

In order to check for autocorrelation in the model, Durbin-Watson statistics was employed. Durbin-Watson statistics of 2.189 in table 4.3.1 shows that the variables in the model are not auto correlated and that the model is reliable for predications.

### Table 4.2.2: ANOVA Result

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	61.059	3	20.353	48.342	.000b
	Residual	241.246	573	.421		
	Total	302.305	576			

a. Dependent Variable: EME

b. Predictors: (Constant), KNS, KWC

The f-statistics value of 48.342 in table 4.3.2 with f-statistics probability of 0.000 shows that the dependent variables have significant effect on independent variables such as

knowledge sharing and knowledge conversation, can collectively explain the variations in employee efficiency

**Table 3 Coefficients of the Model**

T-statistics and probability value from the regression result are the effect of individual independent or explanatory variables on the dependent variables. The summary of the result is presented in the table below.

**Table 4.3.1 T-Statistics and Probability Value from the Regression Result**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.954	.111		8.610	.000	.736	1.172
	KNS	.383	.102	.218	3.754	.000	.583	.182
	KWC	.184	.089	.120	2.063	.040	.009	.359

a. Dependent Variable: EME

Table 4.3.1 shows the coefficient of the individual variables and their probability values. Knowledge sharing variables have regression t-value of 3.754 with a probability value of 0.00 this implies that Knowledge sharing has a positive but significant effect on employee performance. Knowledge conversation has a regression t-test of 2.063 with a probability value of 0.040 implying that Knowledge conversation variables have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

#### 4.6 Hypotheses Testing

##### Hypothesis One

H<sub>01</sub>: Knowledge sharing has no significant positive effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East

##### Interpretation:

Drawing inference from our regression result in table above, the analysis showed that the t-value of Knowledge sharing (KNS) is 3.754, which is more than 2 while its probability is 0.000 less than  $p < 0.05$  level of significance and at the 95% level of confidence intervals: (lower bound=0.583, upper bound=0.182) Thus, we reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) which said that Knowledge sharing has significant positive effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East

##### Hypothesis Two:

H<sub>02</sub>: Knowledge conversion has no significant positive effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East

##### Interpretation:

From table the coefficient table above, knowledge conversation (KNC) in employee efficiency has shown a statistically positive significant relationship on rice mill firms with t- value = 2.063 which

is more than 2; with  $p=0.040$  less than  $P<0.05$  level of significance. The 95% level of confidence intervals: (Lower bound=0.009, upper bound= (0.359) Thus, we accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) and reject the null hypothesis ( $H_{0s}$ ) which implies that Knowledge conversion has a significant positive effect on employee efficiency of rice mill firms in South East.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5. 1 Conclusion**

The study examined effect of knowledge management on employee productivity of rice mill firm. Knowledge management in Nigeria is under increasing pressure to improve employee commitment. Knowledge is critical in today's global economy because it is the key element to competitive viability in today's business environment. For this reason, knowledge needs to be managed effectively in order to compete successfully in the current business environment which is much more demanding given the advancement in technology and globalisation. This is especially true for the Rice mill firm

### **5.2 Recommendations**

- i. Management of rice firm should imbibe knowledge sharing culture among employee within the organization so that employees can share what they know with others.
- ii. Rice mill firm should encourage knowledge conversion practices so that their productivity will improve.

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