

## Improving Research Productivity of Early- Career Academics through Knowledge Acquisition and Sharing Behaviours

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### Abstract

*Early-career academics face significant pressure to establish themselves in their field through research productivity. For early-career academics, publishing research in reputable journals is crucial for their academic and professional growth. Unfortunately, research that primarily focuses on their research productivity and the factors that influence it has hitherto, been ignored. This study investigates the nature and the interrelationships of knowledge acquisition (KA), knowledge sharing behaviours (KSB), and research productivity (RP) among early-career academics of three faculties which included sciences, social science/management and Engineering. A correlational survey research design was employed for the study. The population comprised 645 early-career academics from three universities in Ogun state. A sample size of 215 was obtained from a population of 675 using a multi-stage sampling technique that involved purposive and census method. 179 properly filled copies of the questionnaire were returned. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis. The findings revealed high levels of KA and KS among the respondents. However, the overall mean level of research productivity was low, despite a high level of publications in learned journals. Correlation analysis results indicated a significant and positive relationship between KA and RP, and between KSB and RP. Multiple regression analysis showed that KA and KSB had a combined effect on the RP of the respondents. The study concluded that KA and KSB significantly influenced the RP of early-career academics in Ogun State, Nigeria. Recommendations were presented based on the study's findings which included among others that funding should be made available for attending conferences where they can present their work and learn from established researchers because this engenders their research productivity by facilitating knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing behaviours that lead to enhanced professional growth.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, Research productivity, Early-career academics, Universities, Ogun state, Nigeria

### Introduction

Research, knowledge generation and knowledge dissemination are the hallmark of universities. Regardless of their geographical setting, they are widely recognised as the epicentre for the creation and dissemination of knowledge, and most research outputs originate from them (Tweheyo, Abaho, & Verma, 2022). Publishing high-quality research is a fundamental practice in academia because it advances knowledge, guides policy, and enhances the reputation and visibility of academics as well as their universities. This is the situation because the performance

and productivity of faculty are the key determinants of the ranking of universities (Syed, Gul, Khan, Danish, & Ul Haq, 2021). The emergence of global university rankings has transformed research from an academic vocation into a strategic resource (Ryazanova & Jaskiene, 2022) that attracts social impact and reinforces the achievements and reputations of academics. Given the significance of research productivity of academics, it becomes crucial for universities to prioritize scholarly research and ensure that factors promoting publication output are thoroughly considered and addressed.

Research productivity refers to the outcomes resulting from research activities. For the purpose of this study, the indicators used to measure research productivity are published articles in refereed journals, conference papers, ongoing research and book chapters. Research productivity and its persistent assessment has become a fundamental feature of contemporary universities, while the significance of publications in the career growth and development of the academics (Okonedo, Popoola, Emmanuel, & Bamigboye, 2015), especially early-career academics cannot be underestimated.

Early-career academics are teaching staff that are in the early stages of their academic trajectory, specifically, those at the grade levels of assistant lecturer, lecturer II, and lecturer I. They are at the forefront of teaching and learning and their research outputs significantly contributes to the universities' intellectual capital. As early-career or emerging academics, it is important for them to attain appreciable levels of research productivity because their promotion and career recognition are tied to it (Okonedo, 2015). Thus, for the purpose of academic and professional advancement, it is essential for early-career academics to conduct research and publish their findings in reputable academic journals. Research productivity holds significant importance for these academics and their universities. However, their potential to produce impactful research is often dependent on some knowledge management practices including knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing behaviour.

Knowledge acquisition is regarded as knowledge activities geared towards seeking and obtaining knowledge from both internal and external sources and environments. Knowledge acquisition in the context of this study refers to the active processes by which early-career academics gain and integrate new knowledge and skills that contribute to their research and academic development. It is a critical component of research productivity, as it equips academics with the necessary skills and insights to conduct rigorous and impactful research. Knowledge sources for early-career academics could either be tacit and explicit in nature. Knowledge acquisition can occur through formal learning opportunities such as workshops and conferences and informal learning situations such as discussions and reading groups. Although some other terminologies such as seek, acquire, capture, generate, knowledge gathering, skilling, accumulation have been used to depict the process of acquiring knowledge, they all refer to the process of knowledge acquisition. However, the specific term used can vary depending on the research context and focus.

Knowledge sharing is another factor that could influence the research productivity of academics in universities. Sharing what you know helps everyone to learn new things and have access to more relevant resources, increase research performance and problem-solving abilities, and promote professional capabilities. Knowledge sharing behaviour refers to the actions people take to transmit and exchange their knowledge with others. Knowledge sharing allows for the cross-fertilisation of ideas, promotes interdisciplinary research, and enhances the overall quality of research output of academics. Knowledge sharing empowers the learning process in research activities and outputs (Okonedo, 2015). It plays key roles in information dissemination, research,

teaching, and learning and exposes academics to a wide range of endless streams of opportunities, as well as provides academics with channels for communicating research findings.

Despite the importance of research productivity to the development and career progression of early-career academics working in universities, researchers have observed low research productivity among academic staff in Nigerian higher education institutions (Lawal & Olawale, 2020; Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2023; Haruna, Momoh, & Ismail, 2023). It is widely recognised that knowledge acquisition and sharing behaviour are generally presumed to be critical behaviours which guide and inspire academics to achieve the required high research productivity necessary for rapid career progression, particularly for young and mid-career academics. Moreover, studies that have focused on early-career academics as a separate group of academics in Nigeria are rare. Hence, the study investigates the nature and interrelationships of knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing behaviours, and research productivity among early-career academics. The specific objectives of the study include to:

1. Ascertain the level of knowledge acquisition for research activities by early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State
2. Determine the extent to which early-career academics share knowledge in selected universities in Ogun State.
3. Find out the research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.
4. Determine the significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.
5. Establish the significant relationship between knowledge sharing behaviors and research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.
6. Find out the significant combined contribution of knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing behaviors to research productivity of early-career academics.

This study addressed the following research questions.

1. What is the level of knowledge acquisition for research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State?
2. What is the extent of knowledge sharing for research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State?
3. What is the research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State?

Hypotheses formulated and tested in this study include:

- H<sub>0</sub>1: Knowledge acquisition has no significant relationship with research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.
- H<sub>0</sub>2: knowledge sharing behaviours has no significant relationship with research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.
- H<sub>0</sub>3: Knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing behaviours have no significant combined contribution to research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.

## Review of Related Literature

### *Knowledge acquisition of academics*

Liao, Wu, Hu, and Tsui (2010) regarded knowledge acquisition as the first step in the process of developing knowledge and also the gatekeeper of any knowledge management system. Knowledge acquisition acts as the primary channel through which new knowledge is added to the knowledge repository. Pacharapha and Ractham (2012) mentioned that the acquisition of knowledge requires the recipient's willingness, attitude, and ability to use it. Both the source and the recipient should be willing to share and acquire knowledge. Knowledge acquisition is a process involving the gathering and learning of suitable knowledge that utilises a variety of internal and external resources (Gholami, Asli, Salman, & Noruzy, 2013). According to the authors, these resources include expert mentoring, relevant documents, experience, dialogue, education, and training, which are among the most common techniques for acquiring knowledge. Knowledge acquisition can transpire through various methodologies, such as interviews, surveys, observations among other techniques. Knowledge acquisition meticulously examines and articulates the experience of individuals in obtaining information, preserving it, and retrieving it for subsequent use (Wiesen & Bailey, 2020).

The literature review reveals a dearth of empirical studies on knowledge acquisition, but many studies focus on the sources and methods academics explore to acquire knowledge. These findings are often reported under the topics of information needs and information seeking behaviour. Various terms like 'acquire', 'seek', 'generate', and 'capture' are used to describe the process of accumulating knowledge (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001). The study by Shuva and Taisir (2016) at the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, reported that most academics employed journals in their research and teaching practices. In a study conducted by Kaba and Ramaiah (2018) on knowledge acquisition among faculty members, it was discovered that journals, newspapers, books, magazines, and conference proceedings are the primary sources through which faculty members in the UAE acquire knowledge. Ogunmodede and Oniovosa (2019) found that the Internet, e-resources (e-books/e-journals/online databases), print resources (textbooks / journals/ reference books), mass media (TV/radio/newspapers), conferences/seminars/workshops, and interaction among colleagues were the sources of knowledge acquisition by the academic staff of three universities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. In the same vein, Omah and Urhiewhu (2019) reported the results of the information-seeking behaviour of academic staff at Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. Findings indicated that academics at Taraba University acquire knowledge mostly through the internet, workshops, conferences, seminars, and informal academic interaction and these sources were used for their teaching and research activities.

### *Knowledge sharing by academics*

According to Fan and Beh (2024), knowledge sharing has to do with sharing of work-related knowledge and expertise among academics within the same institution. Nguyen (2020) described knowledge sharing as a process of exchanging information, skills, and experiences. Rohman, Eliyana, Purwana, and Hamidah (2020) emphasised that the exchange of skills, and expertise among employees could be across different departments in an organisation. Mustika, Eliyana, Agustina, and Anwar (2022) posited that the cornerstone of successful knowledge management lies in knowledge sharing behaviour. This principle aligns with the understanding

that knowledge management systems, regardless of their sophistication, ultimately rely on individual academics' active exchange and dissemination of their knowledge. Knowledge sharing behaviour refers to group activities that promote learning and enhance the ability of individuals to achieve their goals (Mustika, et al, 2022). This collaborative approach fosters a culture of continuous learning and contributes to overall productivity and innovation within an institution.

Over the years, several research efforts have been made to find out the knowledge sharing behaviours of academics. For instance, Ogunmodede and Popoola (2019) conducted a survey on the level of knowledge sharing among academic librarians in the federal universities in Nigeria and found that the level of knowledge sharing among academic librarians in the federal universities in Nigeria was high. Eiriemiokhale and Idiedo (2020) investigated knowledge sharing practices among lecturers at Kwara State University, Malete and found that academics were most likely to share knowledge with their colleagues in universities. Abbas (2017) investigated the phenomenon of knowledge sharing among academic staff in Bayero University, Kano, the University of Maiduguri, the University of Ibadan, and the University of Port Harcourt. The study indicated that academics in the four universities were sharing knowledge through participation in workshops, seminars, and conferences, membership of professional associations and societies, with a willingness to share knowledge and other resources with their colleagues. Obinyan, Adetona, and Adeniyi (2021) reported a high level of knowledge sharing among LIS professionals in Nigeria

### ***Research productivity of academics***

Research productivity is a key measure of academic achievement and often determines an academic's status among his peers (Oyeyemi, Ejakpovi, Oyeyemi, & Adeniji, 2019). The scholarly achievements of academic staff, which contribute to the prestige of programs and institutions, are emphasized (Simisaye, 2019; Owate, Iroze, & Echem, 2020). In Nigerian universities, commitment to scholarly activities, leading to knowledge and idea production, is a defining feature. Academics regard research activities as a crucial part of their functions which leads to new knowledge and scientific discoveries (Kpolovie & Dorgu, 2019). Research and publication are argued to be the most conspicuous determinants of academic status in universities and other higher learning institutions in many countries, including Nigeria (Albert, Davia, & Legazpe, 2016).

Numerous empirical studies have been conducted to understand the research productivity of academics in higher education institutions. While some reported low research productivity, others reported high or moderate level. For example, a study was carried out by Basiru (2018) on the research productivity of academics in private universities in South-West, Nigeria found that the research output of the academic staff in these institutions is moderately low. Also, a study by Haruna, Momoh, and Ismail (2023) on the research and publication productivity of the academic staff at Auchi Polytechnic, Nigeria found that the publication productivity among the staff was low. Abiodun-Oyebanji (2023) surveyed lecturer research output in Colleges of Education, South-western, Nigeria and found that lecturers' research productivity was low. Other research reported high publication outputs among academics. For example, Bamigboye, Adenekan, and Olude (2018) surveyed the research output of 536 academic staff at the Federal University of Agriculture in Abeokuta, Nigeria and found that the level of research output among the staff was high.

### ***Knowledge acquisition, sharing and research productivity of academics***

The literature review has revealed a dearth of studies on the relationship between knowledge acquisition and research productivity, compared to other knowledge management activities like sharing and utilisation. No known studies directly address this relationship, creating a lacunae which made the current study relevant. However, some studies have explored the relationship between knowledge acquisition and other performance outcomes like organisational performance and innovation. Lyles and Salk (2007) found a positive relationship between knowledge acquisition and organisational performance. This underscores the importance for institutions to identify best practices for achieving excellent performance (Zwain, Teong, & Othman, 2012), which is a good indicator of research productivity. Knowledge acquisition is a crucial part of the learning cycle, helping academics continuously develop and expand their knowledge repository. It is therefore assumed that knowledge acquisition can enhance academic research productivity.

Several studies have reported the relationship between the two constructs of knowledge sharing and research productivity in different geographical contexts. For instance, Fauzi, Nya-Ling, Thursamy, and Ojo (2019) investigated the role of knowledge sharing on research productivity of academics from public and private universities in Malaysia and found that academic knowledge-sharing behaviour had a substantial impact on research productivity. In a recent study carried out in Indonesia, Aulawi (2021) investigated the impact of knowledge sharing on research productivity among academic staff at a private university in Indonesia and found that knowledge sharing significantly influenced the university's research productivity. From the home front, Owate, Iroze, and Echem (2020) investigated knowledge sharing and research productivity of academic librarians in the Donald Ekong Library of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that both academic librarians who have publications and those without publications agreed that knowledge sharing among academic librarians is critical to their research productivity. The study conducted by Bamigboye, Adenekan, and Olude (2018) also revealed a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and creative output among the academic staff of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. On the contrary, the finding from the study by Okonedo and Popoola (2012) showed that knowledge sharing was not relatively significant for research productivity.

### **Methodology**

This study employed the correlational survey research design. The population of this study consists of 645 early-career academics spread across faculties/colleges in selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select homogenous faculties/colleges in three universities (Federal university of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Olabisi Onabanjo University, and Covenant University which were federal, state and private universities), which were engineering, science, and social science/management. There were 675 early-career academics across all faculties/colleges in the three selected universities. Out of these, only 372 academics were in faculties with similar disciplines (homogeneous faculties). From the 372 early-career academics in these faculties, 215 were purposively selected from

similar department. A structured questionnaire was instrument used to gather data. The reliability test conducted on 30 pretested questionnaire yielded the following Cronbach's alpha coefficient values:  $\alpha$  Research productivity scale = 0.775, Knowledge acquisition scale = 0.788 and Knowledge sharing scale = 0.788. These coefficient values were considered adequate for the study. Out of 215 copies of administered questionnaire, 179 were found properly completed and used for the study. The collected data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis and Pearson product moment correlation.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State acquire knowledge for research activities?

**Table 1:** Test of norm showing the level of knowledge acquisition among early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State

Interval	Mean index	Extent of knowledge acquisition	Frequency	Percentage
1-7		Very low extent	-	-
8-14		Low extent	5	2.8
15-21		Neutral	19	10.6
22-28	<b>27.5196</b>	High extent	78	43.6
29-35		Very high extent	77	43.0

Table 1 shows the percentage for the extent of knowledge acquisition among early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State. 5 (2.8%) respondents had low extent of knowledge acquisition, 19(10.6%) respondents were neutral, 78(43.6%) respondents had high extent of knowledge acquisition, and 77(43.0%) respondents had a very high extent of knowledge acquisition. Since the overall mean score ( $\bar{x} = 27.5196$ ) of the respondents falls within the interval 22-28, one can deduce that there is a high extent of knowledge acquisition among early-career academics in the study.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do early-career academics share knowledge?

**Table 2:** Test of norm showing the extent of knowledge sharing among early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State

Interval	Mean index	Extent of knowledge sharing	Frequency	Percentage
1-7		Very low extent	1	0.6
8-14		Low extent	4	2.2
15-21		Neutral	34	19.0
22-28	<b>24.3352</b>	High extent	91	50.8
29-35		Very high extent	49	27.4

Table 2 displays the extent of knowledge sharing among early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State, expressed in percentages. Specifically, 1 respondent (0.6%) exhibited a very low extent, 4 respondents (2.2%) showed a low extent, 34 respondents (19.0%) were

neutral, 91 respondents (50.8%) demonstrated a high extent, and 49 respondents (27.4%) indicated a very high extent of knowledge sharing. Since the overall mean score ( $\bar{x}=24.3352$ ) of the respondents falls within the interval 22-28, it can be inferred knowledge sharing among the early-career academics in the study is to a high extent.

**Research Question 3:** What is the research publication output of early-career academics?

**Table 3:** Research publication output of early-career academics in selected university in Ogun State within the period of 5 years.

In answering research questions 3, the researcher applied the decision rule: 1.5- 2.0=very low, 2.1-2.49= low, 2.5-3.49 =high, 3.5-4.0 =very high.

S/n	Research productivity	None	1-3	4-6	7-9	10 above	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
1	Articles in learned journals	5 2.8%	22 12.3%	31 17.3%	36 20.1%	85 47.5%	3.97	1.182
2	Conferences proceedings	39 21.8%	88 49.2%	39 21.8%	4 2.2%	9 5.0%	2.20	0.972
3	Completed research	25 14.0%	89 49.7%	49 27.4%	6 3.4%	10 5.6%	2.37	0.959
4	Chapters in books	133 74.3%	41 22.9%	4 2.2%	-	1 0.6%	1.30	0.567
<b>Mean =2.46</b>								

Source: Field survey, 2023

In Table 3, 85 (47.5%) academics published over 10 articles in learned journals, 36 (20.1%) published between 7-9 articles in learned journals, 31 (17.3%) published between 4-6 articles, and 22 (12.3%) published between 1-3 articles in learned journals. The majority of academics (48.2%) published between 1 and 3 conference proceedings, and 89 (49.1%) had between 1 and 3 ongoing research, respectively. Articles in learned journals have the highest mean score ( $\bar{x}=3.97$ ), followed by completed research ( $\bar{x}=2.37$ ), conference proceedings ( $\bar{x}=2.20$ ), chapters in books, which had the lowest mean score ( $\bar{x}=1.30$ ). It can be inferred therefore that the research publication output of early-career academics between 2018 and 2023 was low. However, the table also shows that within 2018-2023, 121 (67.6%) of the respondents had published above 7 articles, with the level of their journal articles publication being high. In universities across Nigeria, academic staff are promoted every three years, with the expectation that they will present proof of their published works. If an academic staff member can publish seven or more articles in scholarly journals over a five-year period, their publication output rate can be considered fair.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Knowledge acquisition has no significant relationship with research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.



**Table 4:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between knowledge acquisition and research productivity of early-career academics

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	p-value	Remarks
Research productivity	9.8324	2.45747	179	.351*	<.001	Sig.
Knowledge acquisition	26.8324	5.77041				

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 indicates that knowledge acquisition does have a significant and positive relationship with research productivity of early-career academics ( $r = .351$ ,  $n = 179$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This implies that knowledge acquisition influenced/enhanced research productivity of early-career academics at the selected universities under studied. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected and restated: Knowledge acquisition has significant relationship with research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.

**Hypothesis 2:** Knowledge sharing has no significant relationship with research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.

**Table 5:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between knowledge sharing and research productivity of early-career academics

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	p-value	Remarks
Research productivity	9.8324	2.45747	179	.334*	<.001	Sig.
Knowledge sharing	23.9665	5.45142				

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows knowledge sharing do have a significant and positive relationship with research productivity of early-career academics ( $r = .334$ ,  $n = 179$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The result in Table 5 depicts that knowledge sharing is related to research productivity of early-career academics at selected universities in the study. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and restated: Knowledge sharing has significant relationship with research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.

**Hypothesis 3:** Knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing have no combined contribution to research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.

**Table 6:** Multiple linear regression analysis results showing the combined contribution of knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing to research productivity of early-career academics

(a) Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.407 <sup>a</sup>	.166	.156	2.44876

**a. Predictor: (Constant), Knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing**

<b>(b)</b>							
<b>A N O V A<sup>a</sup></b>							
<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1	Regression	209.465	2	104.732	17.466	.000 <sup>b</sup>	Sig.
	Residual	1055.373	176	5.996			
	Total	1264.838	178				
<b>a. Dependent Variable: Research productivity</b>							
<b>b. Predictor: (Constant), Knowledge Acquisition, knowledge sharing</b>							
<b>(c)</b>							
<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>							
<b>Model</b>		<b>Unstandardized Coefficient</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficient</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig. p</b>	
		<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta Contribution</b>			
	(Constant)	2.775	1.003		2.766	.006	
	Knowledge acquisition	.118	.035	.256	3.379	.001	
	Knowledge sharing	.111	.037	.226	2.981	.003	
<b>a. Dependent Variable: Research productivity</b>							

The multiple regression analysis result presented in Table 6 (a & b) indicates that knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing have combined contribution to research productivity of the early-career academics [ $R = .407$ ,  $F(2, 176) = 17.466$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. With the Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.156$ , the model implies that 15.6% of the variance in research productivity is explained by the variation in the two predictor variables, knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing when taken together. This implies that the remaining 84.4% of the variance, which is not explained by the two predictor variables in the model, can be attributed to other extraneous variables. Accordingly, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) is rejected. Thus knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing had a significant combined effect on the research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State.

Further, Table 6 (c) presents the results of individual multiple regression analyses. The relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable is expressed as beta weights, viz., knowledge acquisition ( $\beta = .256$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and knowledge sharing ( $\beta = .226$ ,  $p < .05$ ), respectively. Hence, knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing were significant, i.e., they could independently and significantly predict the research productivity of early-career academics in the study.

## Discussion of Findings

Based on the results, the study revealed a high extent of knowledge acquisition among early-career academics. This is in line with Kaba and Ramaiah (2018) who posited that regardless of the nature of an academic institution, academic staff members are continuously involved in activities related to knowledge acquisition. To carry out quality research work, they must engage in the process of knowledge acquisition.

Result pertaining to the knowledge sharing behaviour of early-career academics indicated that there is a high extent of knowledge sharing among the early-career academics in the study. This is in agreement with the study by Ogunmodede and Popoola (2019) who found that the level of knowledge sharing among academic librarians in the federal universities in Nigeria is high. This finding is supported also by Obinyan, Adetona, and Adeniyi (2021) who reported a high level of knowledge sharing among LIS professionals in Nigeria.

The study also revealed that while the overall mean for research productivity was low early career academics demonstrated high research productivity in terms of scholarly journal articles between 2019 and 2023. However, conference papers and book chapters showed lower productivity during the same period. In universities across Nigeria, academic staff are promoted every three years, with the expectation that they will present proof of their published works. If an academic staff member can publish seven or more articles in scholarly journals over a five-year period, their publication output rate can be considered fair. This finding aligns with researches conducted among academics in universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education for example studies by Basiru (2018), Haruna, Momoh, and Ismail (2023), and Abiodun-Oyebanji (2023) similarly found the research productivity of academic staff to be low. Consistent with the results of this current study, they also found a high number of publications in scholarly journals. This study supports the findings of Bamigboye, Adenekan, and Olude (2018), who found articles

published in scholarly journals to be high among academic librarians. Most academic staff are not sponsored for conferences and only a few who attend have conference papers.

Based on the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis, knowledge acquisition was found to have a significant and positive relationship with research productivity of early-career academics. This aligns with Kaba and Ramaiah's (2020) findings, where they emphasise knowledge acquisition as essential for intellectual development and innovation. This finding also aligns with expectations, suggesting that actively seeking and acquiring new knowledge is a crucial factor for success in research endeavours. Early-career academics who engage in continuous learning are likely to identify novel areas of inquiry and formulate innovative research questions and enhance methodological expertise among other things.

This study revealed that there is a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and research productivity. This is in line with the findings of Aulawi (2021) and Fauzi, Nya-Ling, Thursamy, and Ojo (2019) who found a significant relationship between knowledge sharing and research productivity of academic staff. The research findings specifically indicated that knowledge sharing through expert groups, knowledge-sharing agendas, and collaborative research enhanced early career academics' capacity to generate ideas and actively engage in research endeavours.

The multiple regression analysis revealed that knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing had a significant combined effect on the research productivity of early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State. The study revealed that the knowledge acquired through tacit and explicit sources (mentorship, focus group discussions, internet/online webpages, workshop/conferences/training/ symposium, informal academic interaction with colleagues, community of practice, journals, books, and databases), together with other practices of sharing knowledge, contributed positively to the research productivity of the junior academics in the context surveyed. This result may not have empirical literature supporting it, as no previous study has examined both knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing's relationship with research productivity. Nevertheless, the findings of this study demonstrate a statistically significant joint effect, insinuating a crucial interplay among these variables. The study's results will serve as a foundation and reference point for future research.

## **Conclusion**

This study has provided valuable insights into the relationship between knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, and research productivity among early-career academics in selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this research, these academics acquire knowledge extensively from both tacit and explicit sources, and they showed a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing, primarily through face-to-face interaction. In spite of the results which shows that the overall research productivity seemed low, the publication of articles in scholarly journals was notably high, possibly due to the fact that their promotion is largely based on these publications. However, their contributions to conference proceedings and book chapters remained low. These findings underscore the critical role of knowledge acquisition and sharing in enhancing research productivity, particularly in the publication of articles in scholarly journals. Future research could further explore the factors hindering the

research productivity of early-career academics. Additionally, these findings could serve as a foundation for future studies investigating these relationships in different contexts and among other academic groups. This would contribute to a more holistic understanding of the dynamics of research productivity in academia.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations:

1. University management should intensify effort to promote knowledge acquisition opportunities among early-career academics by providing access to a wide range of academic journals and databases through institutional subscription, as well as funding for attendance to conferences where they can learn the ropes of research writing and presentation from established researchers as they present their own works for enhanced research and professional growth.
2. To further improve on the knowledge sharing behaviours of early career academics, management should institute formal mentoring practices such as pairing early-career academics with experienced researchers who can provide guidance and support for their knowledge-sharing activities. Providing platforms like online forums and communities of practice (CoPs) to facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing. Promoting a culture that values knowledge sharing and collaboration which is reflected in the university's mission statement, policies, and practices is a step in the right direction.
3. The university management should take steps towards considering the inclusion of conference papers and book chapters as promotion criteria to encourage a more balanced publication portfolio for mid-career academics.

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