

# KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN BUA SUGAR REFINERY, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines how the knowledge management approach from the perspective of knowledge acquisition, sharing, and retention relates to employees' performance in BUA Sugar Refinery in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design with a survey strategy. Primary and secondary data sources were utilised for the study and were obtained by administering a questionnaire structured in a close-ended format in the case of primary data while the secondary data were obtained through relevant literature. The simple random sampling was employed in sampling the respondents and data were obtained through a questionnaire administered physically to a sample of 164 respondents determined through the Yamane formula from a total population of 280. However, only 110 copies of questionnaire were returned and were utilised for analysis using descriptive statistics involving frequency distribution table and percentage while correlation analysis was employed to test the formulated hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The study findings revealed that knowledge acquisition ( $r = .389$ ,  $p < .05$ ), sharing ( $r = .448$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and retention ( $r = .376$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly relate to employees' performance respectively. The authors, therefore, recommends among others that management should encourage and support employees who attempt to embark on knowledge acquisition through learning and training programmes as such endeavours would help employees to acquire new knowledge that can be deployed to improve services to the organisation.*

**Keywords:** *Employees' Performance, Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Retention, Knowledge Management Approach, Knowledge Sharing.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that human resource commonly described as employees are essential in driving and coordinating other organisational resources to yield the desired outcome. However, the ability of employees to effectively drive and coordinate other resources to actualise the organisational goals depends on the skills and knowledge they possess and how well that knowledge has been enhanced and managed in the organisation, as one of the most crucial assets that enable organisations to attain a competitive edge is the knowledge possessed by the organisation (Abuaddous, Abdullah, Sokkar & Abualodous, 2018).

Knowledge management has over the years gained much attention, as knowledge in today's businesses or organisation is regarded as a core asset (Abuaddous et al. 2018), as well as modern-day lifeline of organisations (Saqib, Udin & Baluch, 2017). This implies that modern organisations today seem to regard knowledge as an asset and also seem to be applying knowledge management further to enhance their employees' creative ability and overall performance.

Employees exiting the services of an organisation with the knowledge and experience they have acquired over the years on the job would no doubt constitute a problem for the organisation if such knowledge is not harnessed, retained and shared among other employees before the exit of such employees particularly where such employees are the talents in the organisation. Although internal knowledge may not easily be imitated, some knowledge can be transferred which implies that knowledge can be lost if employees in possession of such knowledge exit the organisation without sharing it with others (Armstrong, 2020), or without retention of such knowledge through documentation by the organisation.

Organisations in different sectors including the manufacturing sector in Nigeria have in recent times continued to experience the exit of talents and highly skilled employees to other countries of the world in search of better economic benefits including adequate rewards (Okeke, 2024), security and welfare. This has continued to pose some challenges to organisations in terms of time loss due to insufficient knowledge of task operation by existing employees, declining innovation, productivity loss, and declining performance. Therefore, there is a need for knowledge management in the organisation as a way to harness and preserve the knowledge possessed by any talented and highly skilled employees who intend to leave the organisation for the benefit of the organisation.

Knowledge management approaches are part of the strategies organisations may apply to enhance and improve the performance of employees for the overall benefit of organisations, as it is concerned with obtaining knowledge possessed by experienced individuals interfacing daily with different work situations within the company, retaining the knowledge through databases or other forms and sharing the knowledge through different programmes to new or other employees to enhance their performance on the job. Alyoubi, Hoque, Alharbi, Alyoubi, and Almazmomi (2018) pointed out that knowledge management creates a favourable environment for knowledgeable individuals to use and share their expertise and also create new knowledge. Therefore, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Investigate how knowledge acquisition relates to employees' performance
- ii. Determine how knowledge sharing relates to employees' performance.
- iii. Ascertain how knowledge retention relates to employees' performance

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge management has attracted considerable attention in recent times due to the realisation of the relevance of managing knowledge in a knowledge-driven economy (Ali, Selvam, Paris, & Gunasekaran, 2019). The term has been described in different ways by different authors in the literature. For instance, Daud and Yusuf (2018) describe knowledge management as the efforts towards exploring the organisation, group and individuals' explicit and tacit knowledge and converting the same into organisational assets that can be utilised by managers and individuals at various decision-making levels. Bock and Kim (2017) view the concept as the conscious strategy to obtain the right knowledge at the right time and to the right people, and to assist people to share and operationalise information in manners that will aid the improvement of organisational performance.

Gold (2016) also described knowledge management as the broad process employed to locate, organise, transfer and utilise expertise and information within an organisation. The knowledge management approach entails different processes including knowledge capturing or acquisition, production or creation, distribution or sharing, storage and utilisation. From the foregoing, knowledge management refers to an organisational strategy deployed at harnessing an individual's unique talents and effectively utilising and transferring those talents to enhance individuals and organisational operations.

### 2.1 Employee Performance

Performance is a construct that is multi-dimensional and the measurement varies according to various factors (Onuche, 2021). Different authors and researchers have different opinions and perceptions of the concept of performance which has remained a contentious issue among organisational researchers. According to Yang, Lee and Cheng (2016), performance is employees' actions or inaction in terms of what they do or do not do. Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016) view performance as a person's level of success or results as a whole in a given period in performing tasks in relation to various possibilities that have been mutually agreed upon including, targets, standards or predetermined criteria. Hermina and Yosepha (2019) also describe performance in terms of work performance as the quantity and quality of work that an employee achieves when carrying out his functions based on his assigned responsibilities.

Various organisations, however, have varied yardsticks for measuring performance depending on the products and or services rendered by the organisation. Manufacturing organisations are services, quality and quantity oriented and performance is measured based on the quality of services rendered to customers, time spent on production, and the quantity and quality of product or output produced. Thus, employees in manufacturing organisations would be seen as performing optimally when they spent less time with increased production, rendered quality services to customers and produced quality outputs.

Numerous factors can however affect or determine employees' performance in an organisation. For instance, Tuffaha (2020) identified knowledge management, employee empowerment, organisation culture, information and communication technology and innovation and creativity as the determinants of employee performance. Islami, Mulolli and Mustafa (2018) recognise the key elements of performance as positive reinforcement, agreement, support measurement and feedback that shape performance expectation outcomes. Alefari, Almani and Salonitis (2020) maintain that

employee performance is dynamic and can greatly affect the overall performance and sustainability of companies.

## 2.2 Knowledge Acquisition and Employee Performance

Organisational knowledge may be intangible but is now regarded as an asset that can help organisations derive a competitive advantage (Barinua & Bassey, 2022). Knowledge acquisition is enhanced when people engage in learning activities under the guidance or mentorship of a more experienced individual. Organisations must support employees in their quest to develop innovative ideas and obtain knowledge from different legitimate sources that would enhance their operation and help the organisation maintain a competitive edge over competitors. Luca, Lupu and Herghiligu (2016) assert that the difference between an organisation's failure and success can be determined by knowledge acquisition.

Barinua and Bassey (2022) examined how knowledge acquisition enhances the performance of organisations based on a literature review approach and content analysis and found that organisational performance is enhanced by knowledge acquisition. Akpotu and Lebari (2014) examined how knowledge acquisition practices relate to administrative employees' performance in tertiary educational institutions in South-South Nigeria based on a quantitative approach, random sampling, and a survey of 18 Universities and found that knowledge acquisition significantly relates to the performance of administrative staff in the selected tertiary institutions.

Williams (2021) also assessed the linkage between knowledge acquisition, creation and employees' performance in mining firms in the Northern part of Nigeria based on a cross-sectional design and survey of 154 employees in three selected mining companies and found that the performance of employees of selected firms is significantly and positively impacted by knowledge acquisition.

Studies have examined the connections between knowledge acquisition, organisational performance and competitive advantage (Agbim & Zeven, 2014; Eresia-Eke and Makore, 2017; Djangone & Gayar, 2021; Barinua & Bassey, 2022). Also, the connection between knowledge acquisition and employee performance (Akpotu & Lebari, 2014; Khanal & Poudel 2017; Alyoubi et al., 2018; Rahmayanto & Rommy, 2019; Williams, 2021). These studies were however conducted in the steel company, telecommunication, manufacturing and banking sectors and among library staff in Asia as well as in the education and mining sectors in Nigeria respectively. Hence, the relations of knowledge acquisition to employees' performance in the manufacturing sector in south-west Nigeria has remained less examined in the management literature. This study therefore developed the first hypothesis:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Knowledge acquisition is not significantly related to employees' performance.

## 2.3 Knowledge Sharing and Employee Performance

Knowledge sharing is a process of exchanging personal ideas and information between persons or organisations. Grant (2015) views knowledge sharing as the process of transferring knowledge from one person to another, persons to groups, or among organisations. Knowledge sharing has been a long practice in human history since time immemorial. This has been demonstrated in different stages of evolution. For instance, in the Stone Age, the knowledge of how to use stone tools was passed from masters to apprentices, while hunting skills were also passed on to younger

generations among the Paleolithic people in the Stone Age. Farmers before the advent of the Industrial Revolution shared farming knowledge with themselves and family business owners also shared and passed on their knowledge of the business to their children.

Employees need to be encouraged by organisations to share knowledge acquired from diverse learning endeavours or self-directed learning and from experience on the job with others to enhance their competencies, operational capabilities and skills to improve the organisational processes and product quality. Williams (2021) maintains that knowledge acquired and created outside and within the organisation from diverse assets would become ineffective if it is not converted into a profitable practicable structure. This implies that knowledge acquired from different sources needs to be shared among employees to enhance the practicability and performance of employees.

Saifi Siddiqui and Hassan (2018) examine how organisational performance is influenced by knowledge sharing mediated by organisational culture in higher education institutes in Lahore, Pakistan based on convenient sampling, a survey of 123 respondents, correlation and factor analysis of responses obtained and found that a knowledge sharing is positively related to organisational performance. Similarly, Mahfodh and Obeidat (2020) assessed how knowledge-sharing tools enhance organisational performance based on random sampling, a survey of 201 employees at Jadara University in Jordan and the adoption of multiple regression analyses in testing the hypotheses formulated and found that knowledge-sharing dimensions significantly affect organisational performance. Thus, improved organisational performance is the outcome of improved employee performance enhanced by knowledge sharing.

Studies have established the correlation between knowledge sharing and organisational performance (Saifi et al. 2018; Mahfodh & Obeidat, 2020), and job empowerment (Obeidat, Hamzat, Dua'a, Sara, Ahmad & Mohamad, 2021). Also, work and employee performance (Kang, Kim and Chang, 2008; Abeyrathna & Priyadarshana, 2020). These studies were however conducted in the education and public sectors. Hence, whether the outcome is the same in the manufacturing sector in Nigeria requires further investigation. This study therefore developed the second hypothesis which states:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Knowledge sharing is not significantly related to employees' performance.

## **2.4 Knowledge Retention and Employee Performance**

Knowledge retention involves storing or retaining the knowledge obtained from diverse sources in different forms and platforms to permit accessibility and easy retrieval when required and may involve a combination of soft and hard style recording. Knowledge storage however involves the utilisation of technical systems including human processes and modern informational software and hardware, and the identification of organisational knowledge which is thereafter coded and indexed for later retrieval (Edvardsson, 2018).

According to Armstrong (2020), the storage of operational, procedural and technical knowledge in an organisation can be in databanks and found in libraries and other literature including policy documents, reports, manuals and presentations. This implies that knowledge can be retained in different forms for easy access by individuals who require such knowledge to enhance their work operations. Caroline Mugun and Loice (2015) investigate how knowledge storage and retrieval relates to employee performance in Kenya based on exploratory design, survey and analyses of

responses obtained from 343 employees of public technical institutions in Rift Valley and found that knowledge storage and retrieval is significantly and positively related to employee performance.

Empirical studies have shown how knowledge retention relates to organisational growth (Enakrire & Smuts, 2022), mitigates knowledge loss (Egeland, 2017), employee development (Hanif, Sagheer & Mehak, 2020), and employees' performance (Caroline et al. 2015). These studies were however conducted in the education, telecommunication and oil and gas sectors. Hence, the linkage between knowledge retention and the performance of employees in the Nigerian manufacturing sector has received less attention in the management literature. This study therefore developed the third hypothesis which states that:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Knowledge retention is not significantly related to employees' performance.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

Several theories have been adopted to explain how knowledge management relates to employees' performance. However, this study would be guided by the resource-based view theory advanced by Wernerfelt (1984), and the Knowledge-based view theory proposed by Penrose (1959).

### **2.5.1 Resource-Base View Theory**

The resource base view theory was originally propounded by Penrose (1959) and was further advanced by Wernerfelt (1984), who perceives strategy as a way to strike a balance between the development of new resources and the utilisation of the resources available. The theory posits that the capacity of an organisation to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage is contingent on the capacity of the firm and the available unique resources within the environment of the organisation.

The theory is premised on the idea that organisations can outperform their competitors by effectively utilising the unique resources that are internally available in the organisation. These resources can however be in different forms including the unique and rare knowledge possessed by employees in the organisation.

This theory is therefore relevant to this study in that it explains how the effective utilisation of an organisation's unique and rare resources can result in organisational success which in this context refers to the unique and profound knowledge and expertise possessed by some employees in an organisation and which if adequately utilised and managed can enhance other employees' performance and organisational success.

The strength of this theory is premised on its recognition of the importance of utilising the unique and rare available resources within the organisation to achieve competitive advantage. However, the theory did not state in specific terms what constitutes the unique and rare resources which therefore necessitates the adoption of another theory that addresses the variables of the subject matter of investigation.

### **2.5.2 Knowledge-Based View Theory**

Penrose (1959) developed the Knowledge-Based View theory through the extension of the Resource-based view theory. This theory posits that the success of an organisational is concerned with the production, integration and distribution of knowledge and is measured by the organisation's ability to utilise its resources to develop new knowledge. This implies that

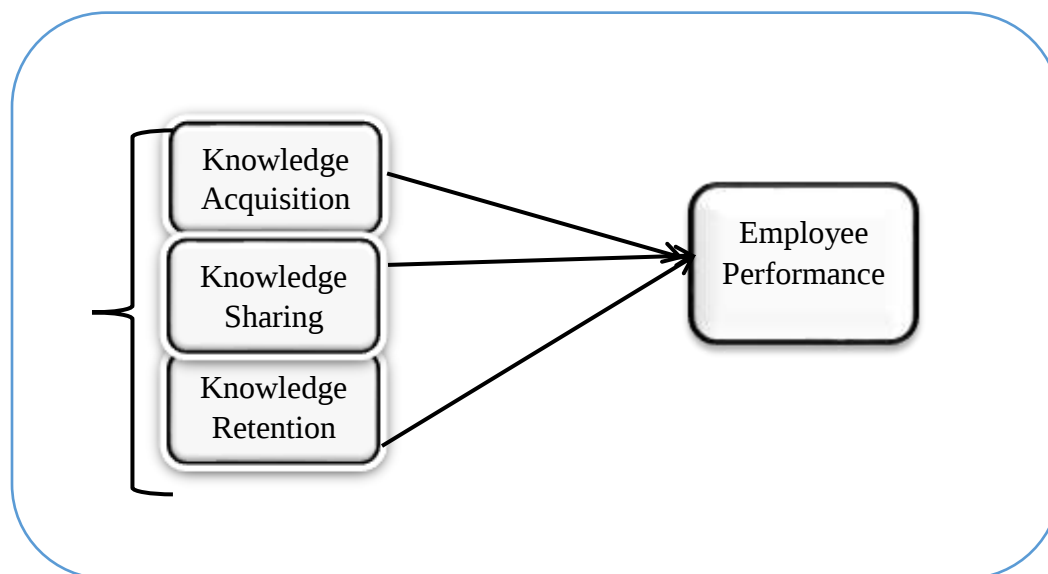
knowledge is considered one of the most valuable organisational resources and a major determinant of organisations competence. This theory is germane to the present economic reality, as it considers knowledge as a special strategic resource that yields increasing returns and does not depreciate like the traditional economic productive factors (Curado, 2006).

This theory is therefore relevant to this study because it considers knowledge as one of the valuable resources that can be leveraged by organisations to enhance their employees' competency and performance. It also explains the role of knowledge management approaches including acquisition, sharing and retention in enhancing organisational success. Thus, organisations that engage and support employees to develop new knowledge or techniques on how to carry out operations or execute projects, encourage the sharing of such knowledge with other employees and store the same to make it assessable when required would enhance their employees' performance which would also contribute to organisational success.

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model shows the connection of the predictor knowledge management approach including knowledge acquisition, sharing and retention with the outcome variable employee performance. Knowledge acquired by employees through different forms including self-directed learning, learning on the job, and off-the-job would enhance their skills which would improve their performance on the job.

Also, knowledge shared by skilled and experienced employees with new, less skilled and inexperienced employees through understudy, mentoring, and coaching programmes as well as the exchange of ideas and information among employees would enhance the skill and knowledge of employees in better job performance. In conclusion, the model showed that retaining knowledge including valuable information and ideas relevant to work operation through documentation and storage systems that can be accessible by employees would enhance the employees' ability to perform better on the job.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model.

**Source:** Authors' Conceptualisation, 2024

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional design because it seeks to investigate the subject matter as it exists within a point in time based on the views of a subset of the study population. The study population comprised 280 employees across units in BUA Sugar Refinery Lagos. However, 164 employees were sampled for the study which was obtained using Yamane's (1967) formula and which therefore formed the sample size for the study. To ensure that each respondent has an equal chance of being included in the survey, the study employed the simple random sampling technique to sample the respondents.

The instrument utilised for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed in a closed-ended format based on a 5-point Likert scale with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. The questionnaire comprised two sections, with the first section designed to collect information on the respondents' socio-demographic data while the second section was made up of 25 items structured to obtain information on the respondents' views on the subject matter of investigation. The 25 items that make up the second section of the questionnaire were self-developed by the researchers and comprised of 6 items measuring knowledge acquisition, 7 items measuring knowledge sharing, 6 items measuring knowledge retention and 6 items measuring employee performance respectively.

The knowledge acquisition construct was measured with items including easy access to finding information for work operation outside the workplace, the organisation carrying out a survey to obtain information that would enhance employees' work operation, employee embarking on self-directed learning to acquire the knowledge required to perform task more efficiently, acquiring knowledge through on-job training, acquiring knowledge through off-the-job training, and significant effect of knowledge acquisition on employee performance.

The knowledge sharing construct was measured with items such as willingness to exchange ideas across the organisation, sharing information with others on how to perform a particular task, learning from others within the organisation how to perform some tasks that are not clear, encouraging individuals to share their expertise to bring new initiatives, encouraging experienced employees to share their knowledge with other employees, easy relations with other employees from other units, and significant effect of knowledge sharing on employee performance.

The knowledge retention construct was measured with items such as encouraging employees leaving to document their knowledge through exit interviews, effective information systems to store existing knowledge, familiarizing employees with tasks through the knowledge that has been retained, documenting solutions employed to tackle previous work issues, making available the solutions employed to tackle previous work issues, and significant effect of knowledge retention on employee performance. Finally, the employee performance construct was measured with items such as employee making minor mistakes in task operation, meeting deadlines for task accomplishment, getting work done with ease, meeting daily work target without difficulty, effective in task performance, and increase in work output.

The choice of questionnaire as data collection instrument is ideal because the study seeks to collect accurate information from the respondents on the subject matter within a minimal time while ensuring the respondents anonymity (Kumar, 2019). Also, because the respondents possess high literacy that would enable them to understand and respond adequately to the questions contained in the questionnaire objectively without the clarification from the researchers.

The questionnaire was validated using content and face validity. The content validity was established through questionnaire items by ensuring all items in the questionnaire were structured to measure each construct based on each objective of the study while the face validity was ensured through validation of the grammatical construction, proper wordings and easy comprehension by a researcher in the field human resource management as well as the human resource officer of the organisation of study who were both expert on the subject matter. The reliability of the instrument was carried out through a pilot test conducted among 20 respondents in the administrative unit of BUA Sugar Refinery and the responses received were analysed using Cronbach Alpha reliability scales through SPSS and no further adjustment was made to the instrument after the pilot test. The result obtained for each construct is presented in Table 1:

| Table 1: Instrument Reliability Coefficients Results |                  |                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Variables                                            | Cronbach's Alpha | Items                                               |
| KA                                                   | .799             | 6                                                   |
| KS                                                   | .872             | 7                                                   |
| KR                                                   | .757             | 6                                                   |
| EP                                                   | .757             | 6                                                   |
| All questionnaire items for the reliability test: 25 |                  | <b>Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></b><br><b>0.932</b> |

Source: Reliability Test Result, 2024

**Key:** KA = Knowledge Acquisition, KS = Knowledge Sharing, KR = Knowledge Retention, EP = Employees Performance

As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach Alpha results exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.7 which indicates that the instrument is considered reliable as maintained by Hargreaves and Mani (2015) that a Cronbach alpha value which is greater than 0.7 is an indication of a reliable factor. Data were obtained for the study using a questionnaire administered physically to all employees across units and cadres in BUA Sugar Refinery with the assistance of one employee in the organisation. However, only 110 copies of questionnaire were returned after several efforts and follow-ups which were then analysed using correlation analyses to ascertain the strength of the association among the variables.

The study in compliance with ethics employed the principle of self-determination rights and confidentiality. The questionnaire contained an introductory note specifying the purpose of the study, voluntary participation request, and a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of information provided. Also, the consent of the human resource personnel of the organisation as well as those of the respondents were obtained before the questionnaire was administered to them physically.

The study was however limited to the sample surveyed in one manufacturing company in Lagos, Nigeria which may limit the generalisability of findings, hence, a further study that would have a broader scope covering the manufacturing sector in Lagos is proposed to determine the variability of findings with current study and more generalisability of findings.

#### 4. RESULTS

The outcome of the analyses of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics based on responses obtained from the respondents is presented in Table 2:

| <b>Table 2: Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics</b> |                         |                  |                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Socio-Demographic Characteristics</b>                       |                         | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Per cent</b> |
| <b>Respondents Gender:</b>                                     | Male                    | 67               | 60.9            |
|                                                                | Female                  | 43               | 39.1            |
|                                                                | Total                   | <b>110</b>       | <b>100</b>      |
| <b>Respondents Age</b>                                         | Below 18 years          | 3                | 2.7             |
|                                                                | 18 – 30 years           | 74               | 67.3            |
|                                                                | 31 – 40 years           | 11               | 10.1            |
|                                                                | 41 – 50 years           | 16               | 14.5            |
|                                                                | 51 years and above      | 6                | 5.5             |
|                                                                | Total                   | <b>110</b>       | <b>100</b>      |
| <b>Respondents Marital Status:</b>                             | Single                  | 73               | 66.4            |
|                                                                | Married                 | 36               | 32.7            |
|                                                                | Divorced/Separated      | 1                | 0.9             |
|                                                                | Total                   | <b>110</b>       | <b>100</b>      |
| <b>Respondents Educational Qualification:</b>                  | SSCE                    | 23               | 20.9            |
|                                                                | Diploma/OND/NCE/A level | 23               | 20.9            |
|                                                                | Bachelor's Degree/HND   | 61               | 55.5            |
|                                                                | Master's Degree         | 3                | 2.7             |
|                                                                | Total                   | <b>110</b>       | <b>100</b>      |
| <b>Length of Service in the Organisation:</b>                  | Less than 5 years       | 70               | 63.6            |
|                                                                | 5 – 10 years            | 16               | 14.5            |
|                                                                | 11 – 15 years           | 18               | 16.4            |
|                                                                | 16 years and above      | 6                | 5.5             |
|                                                                | Total                   | <b>110</b>       | <b>100</b>      |

**Source:** Survey Analysis Outcome, 2024

Table 3 above shows the domination of male respondents in the sample, as the majority of the respondents (60.9%) are male in relation to 39.1 per cent who are females. The age distribution of the respondents also showed that the majority (67.3 per cent) of the employees are between the ages of 18 and 30 years. However, 2.1 per cent were below the working age of 18 years in Nigeria which could be undergraduate interns, as the organisation also engages undergraduate interns to enable them to acquire relevant work experience before graduation. Also, the data on the marital status of the respondents revealed that a greater percentage (66.4 per cent) was married in relation to 32.7 per cent who were single and 0.9 per cent who were either divorced or separated.

Regarding the respondents' highest academic qualification, the data showed the domination of respondents with a Bachelor's degree/HND, as the majority of the respondents 55.5 per cent had a Bachelor's degree/HND as their highest academic certification. This indicates that the majority of the respondents have the capability to acquire knowledge that would enhance their work performance. Finally, as shown in Table 3 employees' length of service in the organisation

revealed that a larger percentage (63.6 per cent) has been working for the organisation for less than 5 years. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were in the early stages of their careers.

The descriptive analyses based on responses obtained from the respondents are presented below:

| <b>Table 3: Respondents' Statement on Knowledge Acquisition</b>                                                     |                       |                |                  |                |                  |                |                  |                |                          |                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Knowledge Acquisition</b>                                                                                        | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |                | <b>Agree</b>     |                | <b>Undecided</b> |                | <b>Disagree</b>  |                | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |                |
|                                                                                                                     | <b>Frequency</b>      | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b>         | <b>Percent</b> |
| Information required for work operation is easily obtained from sources outside organisation.                       | 26                    | 23.6           | 32               | 29.1           | 18               | 16.4           | 16               | 14.5           | 18                       | 16.4           |
| Conducts survey to obtain information that would enhance employees' work operation to serve customers better        | 35                    | 31.8           | 49               | 44.5           | 18               | 16.4           | 4                | 3.6            | 4                        | 3.6            |
| Embark on self-directed learning to acquire the knowledge required to perform task more efficiently and effectively | 63                    | 57.3           | 43               | 39.1           | 3                | 2.7            | 1                | 0.9            | -                        | -              |
| Knowledge is acquired by employees through on-job training                                                          | 56                    | 50.9           | 48               | 43.6           | 3                | 2.7            | 3                | 2.7            | -                        | -              |
| Knowledge is acquired by employees in this company through off-the-job training                                     | 21                    | 19.1           | 34               | 30.9           | 20               | 18.2           | 28               | 25.5           | 7                        | 6.4            |
| Knowledge acquisition significantly affect employees performance                                                    | 65                    | 59.1           | 35               | 31.8           | 5                | 4.5            | 2                | 1.8            | 3                        | 2.7            |

**Source:** Survey Analysis Outcome, 2024

The views of the respondents regarding knowledge acquisition in BUA sugar refinery is presented in Table 3 which showed that the respondents find the information required for their work operation easily from sources outside their organisation, as greater percentage 29.1% and 23.6% replied positively to the statement in relation to less percentage 14.5% and 16.4% who gave a negative response. Also, the organisation carry out a survey to obtain information that would enhance employees' work operation to serve customers, as revealed by as greater percentage 44.5% and 31.8% replied positively to the statement in compared with less percentage 3.6% who gave a negative response. On whether, respondents do embark on self-directed learning to acquire the knowledge required to perform their task more efficiently and effectively, 57.3% and 39.1%

which are the majority of the respondents gave positive feedback in relation to 0.9% who were negative.

Furthermore, knowledge is acquired by employees in the company through on-job training, as majority 50.9% and 43.6% gave positive responses un relations to less respondents 2.7% who disagreed with the statement, In addition, knowledge is acquired by employees in the company through off-the-job training, as affirmed by 30.9% and 19.1% who replied positively to the statement in compared with less 25.5% and 6.4% who gave a negatively reply. Finally, as in revealed in Table 4 is that knowledge acquisition significantly affect employees' performance, as affirmed by 59.1% and 31.8% who gave positive feedback regarding the statement compared to less 2.7% who did not concur.

| <b>Table 4: Respondents' views on Knowledge Sharing</b>                                               |                       |                |                  |                |                  |                |                  |                |                          |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Knowledge Sharing</b>                                                                              | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |                | <b>Agree</b>     |                | <b>Undecided</b> |                | <b>Disagree</b>  |                | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |                |
|                                                                                                       | <b>Frequency</b>      | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b>         | <b>Percent</b> |
| colleagues are willing to exchange ideas across organisation                                          | 64                    | 58.2           | 41               | 37.3           | 5                | 4.5            | -                | -              | -                        | -              |
| Information is shared on how to perform a particular task in the organisation.                        | 59                    | 53.6           | 39               | 35.5           | 5                | 4.5            | 4                | 3.6            | 3                        | 2.7            |
| Learning from others within the organisation on how to perform some tasks that are not clear.         | 73                    | 66.4           | 31               | 28.2           | 2                | 1.8            | 2                | 1.8            | 1                        | 1.8            |
| Individuals are encouraged to share their expertise to bring new initiatives or projects to fruition. | 56                    | 50.9           | 45               | 40.9           | 6                | 5.5            | 3                | 2.7            | -                        | -              |
| Experienced individuals are encouraged to share knowledge with other employees.                       | 61                    | 55.5           | 42               | 38.2           | 3                | 2.7            | 4                | 3.6            | -                        | -              |
| Easy relating with other employees from other units on task operations                                | 38                    | 34.5           | 60               | 54.5           | 7                | 6.4            | 3                | 2.7            | 2                        | 1.8            |
| Knowledge sharing significantly affect performance                                                    | 56                    | 50.9           | 45               | 40.9           | 6                | 5.5            | -                | -              | 3                        | 2.7            |

**Source:** Survey Analysis Outcome, 2024

The views of the respondents regarding knowledge sharing is presented in Table 4 which showed that colleagues are willing to exchange ideas across the organisation, as affirmed by 58.2% of the respondents who agreed strongly to the statement in relation to 4.5% who were indifferent. Also, employees share information on task performance in the organisation, as greater percentage 53.6 strongly agreed with the statement in relation to 3.6% and 2.7% who disagreed. Furthermore, the analysis showed that employees learn from others on how to perform unclear task, as affirmed by 66.4% and 28.2% of the respondents replied positively in relation to less respondents 1.8 who replied negatively.

On whether individuals are encouraged to share their expertise to bring new initiatives or projects to fruition, majority 50.9% of the respondents strongly concur while 2.7% disagreed which indicates that individuals are encouraged to share their expertise to bring new initiatives or projects to fruition. In addition, the outcome of the analysis showed that experienced individuals are encouraged to share their knowledge with other employees, as 55.5% of the respondents strongly concur with the statement, as opposed to 3.6% who did not concur.

The view of the respondents also showed that employees find it easy to relate with employees' from other units on task operations, as 54.5% of the respondents strongly concur as opposed to lesser percentage 2.7% and 1.8% who replied otherwise. Finally, the analysis revealed that knowledge sharing has a significantly affect employees performance, as majority 50.9% of the respondents concur strongly with the statement in relation to 2.7% who did not concur.

| <b>Table 5: Respondents' Views on Knowledge Retention</b>                                                                     |                       |                |                  |                |                  |                |                  |                |                          |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Knowledge Retention</b>                                                                                                    | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |                | <b>Agree</b>     |                | <b>Undecided</b> |                | <b>Disagree</b>  |                | <b>Strongly Disagree</b> |                |
|                                                                                                                               | <b>Frequency</b>      | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Frequency</b>         | <b>Percent</b> |
| Employees that intend to leave the company are encouraged to document their knowledge through exit interviews                 | 15                    | 13.6           | 37               | 33.6           | 41               | 37.3           | 10               | 9.1            | 7                        | 6.4            |
| There are effective information systems to store existing knowledge in the organisation                                       | 26                    | 23.6           | 61               | 55.5           | 20               | 18.2           | -                | -              | 3                        | 2.7            |
| Employees are usually familiarised with tasks through the knowledge that has been retained and stored within the organisation | 48                    | 43.6           | 49               | 44.5           | 10               | 9.1            | 2                | 1.8            | 1                        | 0.9            |
| Solutions employed to tackle previous work issues and                                                                         | 36                    | 32.7           | 56               | 50.9           | 15               | 13.6           | 1                | 0.9            | 2                        | 1.8            |

|                                                                                                                                    |    |      |    |      |    |      |   |     |   |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|----|------|----|------|---|-----|---|-----|
| projects are well documented in the organisation                                                                                   |    |      |    |      |    |      |   |     |   |     |
| Solutions employed to tackle previous work issues and projects are readily available when required by employee in the organisation | 38 | 34.5 | 54 | 49.1 | 16 | 14.5 | 2 | 1.8 | - | -   |
| Knowledge retention in the organisation significantly affect employees' performance                                                | 43 | 39.1 | 55 | 50.0 | 10 | 9.1  | - | -   | 2 | 1.8 |

**Source:** Survey Analysis Outcome, 2024

The views of the respondents regarding knowledge retention is presented in Table 5 which revealed that employees that intend to leave the company are encouraged to document their knowledge through exit interviews, as affirmed by the majority 33.6% in relation to 37.3% who were neutral as well as 9.1% and 6.4% who did not concur. Also, there are effective information systems to store existing knowledge in the organisation as 55.5% of the respondents were affirmative in relation to 2.7% who said otherwise. Furthermore, employees are usually familiarised with their tasks through the knowledge that has been retained and stored within the organisation, as affirmed by majority 44.5% in relation to lesser percentage 1.8% and 0.9% who replied negatively.

Regarding whether solutions employed to tackle previous work issues and projects were well documented in the organisation, majority 50.9% were affirmative while lesser percentage were 0.9% and 1.8% replied negatively. In addition, the outcome of the analysis revealed that solutions employed to tackle previous work issues and projects are readily available when required by employees in the organisation, as greater percentage 49.1% and 34.5% concur with the statement in relation to lesser percentage 1.8 who did not concur. Finally, as revealed in the outcome of analysis is that knowledge retention significantly affects employees' performance, as greater percentage 50% and 39.1% of the respondents affirmed the statement compared with lesser percentage 9.1% who were indifferent and 1.8 percent who strongly disagreed.

| <b>Table 6: Correlation analysis result</b>                                              |           |           |           |           |                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Variables</b>                                                                         | <b>EP</b> | <b>KA</b> | <b>KS</b> | <b>KR</b> | <b>P value</b> |
| <b>EP</b>                                                                                | 1         | .389**    | .448**    | .376**    | -              |
| <b>KA</b>                                                                                | .389**    | 1         | .501**    | .502**    | .0000          |
| <b>KS</b>                                                                                | .448**    | .501**    | 1         | .399**    | .0000          |
| <b>KR</b>                                                                                | .376**    | .502**    | .399**    | 1         | .0000          |
| <b>**.</b> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). <b>*(p &lt; .05)</b> |           |           |           |           |                |

**Key:** KA = Knowledge Acquisition, KS = Knowledge Sharing, KR = Knowledge Retention, EP = Employees Performance.

The result of the correlation analyses in Table 6 indicates that a weak and positive relationship exists between knowledge acquisition and employees' performance ( $r = .389$ ). Also, between knowledge sharing and employee performance ( $r = .448$ ), and between knowledge retention and

employee performance ( $r = .376$ ). The p-value as revealed in Table 4 for all the independent variables is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge retention significantly relate to employees' performance.

### Discussion of Findings

The study found based on the outcome of the analysis in Table 4 that knowledge acquisition significantly relates to employees' performance in the organisation. This finding supports the findings of Williams (2021) which revealed that knowledge acquisition has a significant and positive effect on the performance of employees in selected mining firms in the Northern part of Nigeria.

The study also revealed based on the outcome of the analysis that knowledge sharing significantly relates to employees' performance, as ( $p = .000 < .05$ ) which resulted in the null hypothesis being rejected. This finding corroborates the findings of Abeyrathna and Priyadarshana (2020) which revealed that knowledge sharing positively relates to employee performance based on their investigation of how knowledge sharing influences the performance of employees in the public sector in Sri Lanka. Also, the finding is consistent with the findings of Mahfodh and Obeidat (2020) which revealed that knowledge-sharing dimensions significantly affect organisational performance at Jadara University in Jordan.

Finally, the findings of the study showed that knowledge retention significantly relates to employees' performance in the organisation ( $p = .000 < .05$ ). This finding corroborates the finding of Caroline et al. (2015) which revealed that knowledge storage and retrieval have a significant and positive relationship with employee performance in Kenya. Also, the finding is in line with the finding of Enakrire and Smuts (2022) revealed that knowledge retention aids the creation of new knowledge among the respondents and has also helped them to strive to perform tasks in workplace learning.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study revealed that knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and knowledge retention have a significant relationship with employees' performance respectively. This implies that the knowledge acquired by the employees both within and outside the organisation through on-the-job and off-the-job sources aids and enhances the employees' overall knowledge towards improved performance. Also, the willingness of employees to exchange the knowledge acquired and ideas across the organisation and learn from others within the organisation on how to execute projects and carry out tasks would contribute to their improved performance. Furthermore, the practices of familiarising employees with tasks through the knowledge that has been retained and stored within the organisation would enhance and improve the performance of the employees in the organisation. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Employees who intend to embark on knowledge acquisition through learning and training programmes should be encouraged by the management, as such endeavours would help the employee to further acquire new knowledge that can be deployed in improving services to the organisation.

- ii. Programmes and social interactions that would facilitate the sharing of knowledge and ideas between experts or experienced employees and other employees to bring new initiatives or projects to fruition in the organisation should continuously be promoted by the management of the organisation.
- iii. Employee exit interviews should be made mandatory in the company policy and employment contract as a condition for employees to access their exit benefits, as this would enable the organisation to acquire and document knowledge possessed by employees who intend to leave the company to enable other employees to access such knowledge obtained when needed to solve different issues in the organisation.
- iv. The management of the organisation should institutionalise an understudy, mentoring and coaching programme that would enable new and inexperienced employee to obtain adequate knowledge from the skilled and experienced employees' to enhance continuous operation when the experienced employees exit the organisation.

### Contribution to Knowledge

This study has contributed to knowledge by establishing that employees' acquisition of knowledge through different learning programmes, sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience among colleagues on task execution would enhance the employees' performance.

The study has also established that storing and documenting the knowledge acquired from skilled and experienced employees on the verge of leaving an organisation through employee exit interviews as well as those that have been deployed in executing a previous task and project and making it assessable to other employees when required would enhance employees' performance.

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**APPENDIX****UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS.****DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT****FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

Dear Sir/Madam.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

This is a questionnaire designed for academic research titled “Knowledge management and employees’ performance: A study of BUA Sugar Refinery” With respect to your membership as an employee and experience in this organisation, you have been selected to fill out this questionnaire. Please note that the survey will require 10 minutes of time and participation is not mandatory. However, be assured that all information provided by you will be used solely for study purposes, and be treated strictly as confidential should you choose to participate.

Thank you.

Researcher

**SECTION A: INFORMATION ON SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Please tick your response from the available options or write out your responses as you deem fit.

| <b>S/N</b> | <b>Questions on Socio-Demographic characteristics</b> | <b>Response</b>                                                                                             |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.         | What is your sex?                                     | ( ) Male<br>( ) Female                                                                                      |
| 2.         | What is your age on your last birthday?               | ( ) Below 18 years<br>( ) 18 – 30 years<br>( ) 31 – 40 years<br>( ) 41 – 50 years<br>( ) 51 years and above |
| 3.         | What is your marital status?                          | ( ) Single<br>( ) Married<br>( ) Divorced/Separated<br>( ) Widowed                                          |
| 4.         | What is your highest level of education?              | ( ) SSCE<br>( ) Diploma/OND/NCE/A level<br>( ) Bachelor’s Degree/HND<br>( ) Master’s Degree<br>( ) Ph.D.    |
| 5.         | How long have you been working in this organisation?  | ( ) Less than 5 years<br>( ) 5-10 years<br>( ) 11-15 years<br>( ) 16 Years and above                        |

|   |                                          |                                                                    |
|---|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6 | What is your level in this organisation? | ( ) Director<br>( ) Senior Staff<br>( ) Junior Staff<br>( ) Intern |
|---|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

**SECTION B**

**SA = Strongly Agree      A = Agree      U = Undecided      D = Disagree      SD = Strongly Disagree**

| S/N | Statements on Knowledge Acquisition                                                                                                 | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 7   | I find the information required for my work operation easily from sources outside my organisation .                                 |    |   |   |   |    |
| 8   | My organisation do carry out a survey to obtain information that would enhance employees' work operation to serve customers better. |    |   |   |   |    |
| 9   | I do embark on self-directed learning to acquire the knowledge required to perform my task more efficiently and effectively.        |    |   |   |   |    |
| 10  | Knowledge is acquired by employees in this company through on-job training.                                                         |    |   |   |   |    |
| 11  | Knowledge is acquired by employees in this company through off-the-job training.                                                    |    |   |   |   |    |
| 12  | Knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on the performance of employees in this company                                      |    |   |   |   |    |

| S/N | Statements on Knowledge Sharing                                                                      | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 13  | My colleagues are willing to exchange ideas across this organisation.                                |    |   |   |   |    |
| 14  | I do share information with others on how to perform a particular task in this organisation          |    |   |   |   |    |
| 15  | I do learn from others within the organisation how to perform some tasks that are not clear to me.   |    |   |   |   |    |
| 16  | Individuals are encouraged to share their expertise to bring new initiatives or projects to fruition |    |   |   |   |    |

|    |                                                                                                            |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| 17 | Experienced individuals are encouraged to share their knowledge with other employees in this organisation. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | I find it easy to relate with other employees from other units in the organisation on task operations.     |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | Knowledge sharing among employees in this company has a significant effect on their performance            |  |  |  |  |  |

| S/N | Statements on Knowledge Retention                                                                                                       | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 20  | Employees that intend to leave the company are encouraged to document their knowledge through exit interviews                           |    |   |   |   |    |
| 21  | There are effective information systems to store existing knowledge in this organisation                                                |    |   |   |   |    |
| 22  | Employees are usually familiarized with their tasks through the knowledge that has been retained and stored within the organisation.    |    |   |   |   |    |
| 23  | Solutions employed to tackle previous work issues and projects are well documented in this organisation                                 |    |   |   |   |    |
| 24  | Solutions employed to tackle previous work issues and projects are readily available when required by any employee in this organisation |    |   |   |   |    |
| 25  | Knowledge retention in the organisation has a significant effect on the performance of employees.                                       |    |   |   |   |    |

| S/N | Statements on Employee Performance                                                  | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 26  | I only make minor mistakes when carrying out my task.                               |    |   |   |   |    |
| 27  | I usually meet the deadlines stated to accomplish my task                           |    |   |   |   |    |
| 28  | I usually get my work done with ease                                                |    |   |   |   |    |
| 29  | I do meet my daily work target without difficulty.                                  |    |   |   |   |    |
| 30  | I have been very effective in the manner I perform my task.                         |    |   |   |   |    |
| 31  | My work output has increased steadily since I started working in this organisation. |    |   |   |   |    |

**Thank you.**

| Correlations                                                 |                     |                      |                       |                   |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
|                                                              |                     | Employee Performance | Knowledge Acquisition | Knowledge Sharing | Knowledge Retention |
| Employee Performance                                         | Pearson Correlation | 1                    | .389**                | .448**            | .376**              |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                      | .000                  | .000              | .000                |
|                                                              | N                   | 110                  | 110                   | 110               | 110                 |
| Knowledge Acquisition                                        | Pearson Correlation | .389**               | 1                     | .501**            | .502**              |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                 |                       | .000              | .000                |
|                                                              | N                   | 110                  | 110                   | 110               | 110                 |
| Knowledge Sharing                                            | Pearson Correlation | .448**               | .501**                | 1                 | .399**              |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                 | .000                  |                   | .000                |
|                                                              | N                   | 110                  | 110                   | 110               | 110                 |
| Knowledge Retention                                          | Pearson Correlation | .376**               | .502**                | .399**            | 1                   |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                 | .000                  | .000              |                     |
|                                                              | N                   | 110                  | 110                   | 110               | 110                 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |                     |                      |                       |                   |                     |