

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND INNOVATIVE DECISION-MAKING
AMONG OFFICE MANAGERS IN ONDO STATE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION****Olabisi, Joseph Olumayokun, B.Sc, MBA, M.Phil, PhD¹ & Akindele, Isaac, B.Sc, MBA,
M.Sc, M.Phil.²****¹Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Wesley University, Ondo****²Department of Business Administration, Wesley University, Ondo.***Email:(maybis20032001@yahoo.com)***ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the relationship between knowledge management practices and innovative decision-making among office managers in the Ondo State Ministry of Education. Anchored on the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), Decision-Making Theory, and the SECI Model, the study employed a correlational research design. The population comprised 200 office managers across various departments in the Ministry. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (2021) sample size determination table, a sample of 132 respondents was selected. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the hypotheses. The findings showed a strong positive relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$). The results also revealed a moderate but significant positive relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.547$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the analysis established a strong positive relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.681$, $p < 0.05$). Based on these results, all null hypotheses were rejected, confirming that knowledge management practices significantly influence innovative decision-making in public institutions. The study concludes that ministries of education can improve policy implementation, adaptability, and administrative performance by institutionalizing effective knowledge practices. It recommends continuous training to enhance knowledge acquisition, promoting collaborative knowledge sharing, and leveraging digital platforms for effective knowledge application to strengthen innovative decision-making processes.

Keywords: Knowledge management practices, Knowledge acquisition, Knowledge sharing, Knowledge application, Innovative decision-making, Public administration, Office managers

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary knowledge-driven economy, the ability of organizations to effectively harness, share, and apply knowledge has become a critical determinant of performance and competitiveness. Knowledge management practices (KMPs) involve the systematic process of acquiring, organizing, storing, and disseminating knowledge to improve organizational decision-making and innovation (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2021). Within the public sector, particularly in ministries of education, effective knowledge management ensures that valuable insights, experiences, and best practices are not only preserved but also utilized in making policies and administrative decisions that shape educational outcomes (Abubakar, 2020).

Decision-making is a fundamental responsibility of office managers, who serve as the link between strategic directives and operational execution. Innovative decision-making goes beyond routine administrative choices; it entails adopting creative, evidence-based, and forward-thinking solutions to address emerging challenges in the education sector (Ogbu & Iwundu, 2022). In the context of public service, where bureaucratic bottlenecks often hinder agility, the adoption of knowledge management practices can significantly enhance the innovativeness and effectiveness of office managers' decisions (Okorie, 2021).

In Ondo State Ministry of Education, office managers are frequently confronted with complex challenges such as resource allocation, policy implementation, and adapting to digital transformation

in education. The effectiveness of their decisions depends on how well they can access, interpret, and apply relevant knowledge. Studies have shown that knowledge management practices such as knowledge sharing, knowledge storage, and knowledge application enhance decision quality, reduce redundancy, and promote innovation in public institutions (Igbinoia & Akpojivi, 2021). Thus, integrating knowledge management into the administrative framework of the ministry is crucial for achieving innovative decision-making that supports educational reform and development.

Furthermore, office managers in the ministry are often the custodians of institutional memory, and the strategies they use in managing organizational knowledge determine the efficiency of service delivery. A lack of effective knowledge management practices may result in repeated errors, slow response to change, and limited capacity for innovation (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2020). By adopting practices such as collaborative platforms, digital record-keeping, and continuous learning, office managers can create an environment that encourages creativity and facilitates innovative solutions to educational challenges.

The global trend towards evidence-based administration and the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in governance makes knowledge management more indispensable than ever. Countries that have institutionalized knowledge management in their public administration frameworks report better policy innovation, reduced administrative bottlenecks, and improved stakeholder satisfaction (Alhassan & Abubakar, 2023). Therefore, investigating knowledge management practices and their relationship with innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education is not only academically relevant but also practically significant in addressing pressing educational management issues in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of knowledge management as a driver of innovation and effective decision-making, its application in public institutions, including ministries of education in Nigeria, remains limited. Office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education often encounter challenges such as weak knowledge-sharing practices, inadequate digital tools, and poor organizational memory. These issues result in delays, inefficiencies, and reliance on intuition or outdated information rather than systematically managed knowledge when making critical administrative decisions (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2020; Okorie, 2021).

Consequently, innovative decision-making in the ministry is constrained, affecting areas such as policy implementation, curriculum innovation, and overall educational reform. The lack of structured knowledge management practices not only leads to knowledge loss and repeated mistakes but also hampers the ministry's capacity to adapt to emerging educational demands. This situation underscores the need to examine how knowledge management practices influence innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between knowledge management practices and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.
2. Investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.
3. Determine the relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education?

2. What is the relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education?
3. What is the relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Conceptual Review**Knowledge Management Practices (KMPs)**

Knowledge management practices refer to the systematic processes through which organizations acquire, share, store, and apply knowledge to enhance efficiency, innovation, and decision-making. They are essential for ensuring that valuable insights, experiences, and best practices are effectively utilized to solve organizational problems and drive innovation. In public institutions, effective KMPs reduce redundancies, improve service delivery, and enhance adaptive capacity in dynamic environments (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2021). Thus, KMPs provide the foundation for innovative decision-making, enabling office managers to respond creatively to emerging challenges.

Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge acquisition involves the process of identifying, collecting, and accessing relevant information from internal and external sources. It enables organizations to broaden their knowledge base by gathering insights from experiences, research, training, and interaction with stakeholders. For office managers, effective acquisition ensures that decision-making is guided by evidence and accurate data rather than intuition. When knowledge acquisition is systematic, organizations are better positioned to adopt innovative strategies and improve administrative outcomes (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2020).

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is the exchange of ideas, skills, and experiences among individuals or groups within an organization. It facilitates collective learning, collaboration, and the transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge, thereby fostering creativity and innovation. In the context of public administration, knowledge sharing allows office managers to avoid repeated mistakes, learn from past practices, and co-create solutions to emerging challenges. By cultivating a culture of openness and collaboration, organizations can leverage diverse perspectives to support innovative decision-making (Igbinoia & Akpojivi, 2021).

Knowledge Application

Knowledge application refers to the practical use of acquired and shared knowledge in addressing organizational problems and guiding decision-making. It transforms theoretical insights into actionable solutions, ensuring that knowledge is not merely stored but actively utilized to improve outcomes. For office managers in ministries of education, knowledge application is crucial for implementing policies, designing reforms, and adapting to dynamic educational demands. Effective application of knowledge bridges the gap between learning and practice, leading to innovative decisions that enhance organizational performance (Alhassan & Abubakar, 2023).

Innovative Decision-Making

Innovative decision-making refers to the process of adopting creative, forward-looking, and knowledge-driven approaches in solving organizational problems and implementing policies. Unlike routine decision-making, which often relies on established procedures, innovative decision-making emphasizes flexibility, originality, and responsiveness to emerging challenges. It involves applying new ideas, evidence, and best practices to improve the quality of administrative outcomes and organizational performance (Ogbu & Iwundu, 2022). In public institutions such as ministries of education, innovative decision-making is vital for addressing complex issues like resource allocation, policy reforms, and adaptation to technological change. It not only enhances efficiency and effectiveness but also ensures that decisions remain relevant and sustainable in dynamic environments (Alhassan & Abubakar, 2023).

Theoretical Review**Knowledge-Based View (KBV) of the Firm**

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) emphasizes that knowledge is the most strategic and valuable resource of an organization, and its effective management determines competitiveness and performance. Unlike traditional resource-based perspectives that focus on tangible assets, KBV stresses that intangible knowledge assets such as expertise, skills, and experiences are critical drivers of innovation and decision-making (Grant, 2021). In the context of public administration, the theory suggests that when office managers effectively acquire, share, and apply knowledge, they enhance the quality of decisions and promote innovative approaches to solving educational challenges. Therefore, KBV provides a solid theoretical basis for linking knowledge management practices with innovative decision-making in ministries of education.

Decision-Making Theory

Decision-Making Theory, particularly the Rational Decision-Making Model, highlights how managers make choices through a systematic process of identifying problems, gathering information, evaluating alternatives, and implementing solutions (Simon, 2020). The theory assumes that effective decision-making is guided by the availability and use of accurate and relevant information. In practice, however, decision-making is often constrained by limited knowledge, uncertainty, and organizational dynamics. This makes knowledge management practices essential for enhancing decision-making, as they provide the structured knowledge base needed for rational and innovative solutions. Applied to office managers, the theory underscores how the quality of knowledge acquisition, sharing, and application influences the innovativeness of administrative decisions.

Nonaka and Takeuchi's Knowledge Creation Theory (SECI Model)

The SECI model, developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (2022), explains how knowledge is created and transformed through four dynamic processes: Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization. This theory emphasizes the interaction between tacit knowledge (personal insights and experiences) and explicit knowledge (documented and codified information) in fostering innovation. In organizational settings such as ministries of education, office managers engage in knowledge creation by sharing experiences, documenting procedures, combining diverse sources of information, and applying lessons learned to new situations. This continuous cycle of knowledge creation and application enhances the capacity for innovative decision-making. The SECI model, therefore, provides a framework for understanding how knowledge management practices directly stimulate creativity and innovation in public administration.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational survey design because it sought to investigate the relationship between knowledge management practices specifically knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application and innovative decision-making among office managers in the Ondo

State Ministry of Education. The design was considered appropriate since it allowed the researcher to examine relationships among variables without manipulating them.

The target population for the study consisted of 200 office managers in the Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Using Krejcie and Morgan's (2021) sample size determination table at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, a representative sample size of 132 respondents was derived. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that only office managers directly involved in administrative and policy-related decision-making were included in the study.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture responses on the dimensions of knowledge management practices and innovative decision-making. The instrument was divided into sections, with items developed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

To ensure the validity of the instrument, experts in educational administration and management were consulted, and their inputs were used to refine the items.

Reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed through a pilot test, and the internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of 0.70 and above accepted as reliable.

In analyzing the data, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were employed to summarize respondents' views, while inferential statistics, particularly Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, were used to test the relationship between knowledge management practices and innovative decision-making at the 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to administering the questionnaire.

RESULTS

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Table 1: Correlation between Knowledge Acquisition and Innovative Decision-Making

		Knowledge Acquisition	Innovative Decision-Making
Knowledge Acquisition	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.612
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	132	132
Innovative Decision-Making	Pearson correlation	0.612	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	132	132

Table 1 result shows a strong positive and significant relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making among office managers ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. This implies that office managers who actively acquire knowledge are more likely to engage in innovative decision-making.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Table 2: Correlation between Knowledge Sharing and Innovative Decision-Making

		Knowledge Sharing	Innovative Decision-Making
Knowledge Sharing	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.547
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	132	132

Innovative Decision-Making	Pearson correlation	0.547	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	132	132

Table 2 analysis indicates a moderate positive and significant relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.547$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected. This suggests that improved sharing of knowledge among office managers enhances their ability to make innovative and effective decisions.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making among office managers in Ondo State Ministry of Education.

Table 3: Correlation between Knowledge Application and Innovative Decision-Making

		Knowledge Application	Innovative Decision-Making
Knowledge Application	Pearson correlation	1.000	0.681
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	132	132
Innovative Decision-Making	Pearson correlation	0.681	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	132	132

Table 3 findings reveal a strong positive and significant relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.681$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected. This indicates that office managers who effectively apply acquired and shared knowledge are more likely to adopt innovative approaches in administrative decision-making.

Discussion of Findings

The finding showed a strong positive relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that when office managers actively seek and acquire knowledge from research, training, stakeholders, and professional experiences, they become better equipped to introduce innovative ideas into administrative decisions. This outcome is consistent with the Knowledge-Based View (KBV), which emphasizes that knowledge is the most strategic resource for achieving innovation and competitiveness (Grant, 2021; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2021).

Empirical evidence also supports this finding. Adebayo and Omotayo (2020) highlighted that organizations that adopt systematic approaches to knowledge acquisition are more likely to generate innovative solutions to emerging challenges. Similarly, Alhassan and Abubakar (2023) reported that effective acquisition of knowledge resources significantly improves decision-making quality and innovation in public institutions.

The results revealed a moderate but significant positive relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.547$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that fostering open communication and collaboration among office managers enhances their creativity and collective problem-solving capacity. The outcome aligns with the SECI Model of Knowledge Creation (Nonaka, 1994), which stresses the importance of socialization and externalization in converting tacit knowledge into explicit forms that can drive innovation.

Previous studies affirm this result. Igbinoia and Akpojivi (2021) found that knowledge sharing practices facilitate organizational learning, which in turn supports creative decision-making in public organizations. Okorie (2021) also observed that a lack of robust knowledge-sharing mechanisms often results in repeated mistakes and delays in policy implementation, underscoring its importance in innovative decision-making.

The analysis further revealed a strong positive relationship between knowledge application and innovative decision-making ($r = 0.681$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that office managers who actively

apply the knowledge they have acquired and shared are more capable of designing innovative solutions to administrative and educational challenges. The finding resonates with Decision-Making Theory (Simon, 1979), which posits that effective decisions depend on the ability of managers to apply relevant information to practical problems.

This result is also in line with the findings of Alhassan and Abubakar (2023), who emphasized that knowledge must be put into use through implementation strategies to influence innovation outcomes. Similarly, Adebayo and Omotayo (2020) noted that knowledge application bridges the gap between organizational learning and tangible administrative reforms.

Overall, the findings affirm that knowledge management practices are crucial enablers of innovative decision-making in public institutions. Weaknesses in acquisition, sharing, or application of knowledge can significantly undermine the Ministry's ability to respond to dynamic educational challenges such as policy reforms, curriculum development, and service delivery. By embedding knowledge management into administrative routines, office managers can overcome inefficiencies, reduce redundancies, and create adaptive strategies for sustainable educational reform in Ondo State.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between knowledge management practices and innovative decision-making among office managers in the Ondo State Ministry of Education. The findings revealed that knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, and knowledge application all had significant positive relationships with innovative decision-making. Specifically, knowledge acquisition and application showed strong relationships, while knowledge sharing demonstrated a moderate but significant link.

These results confirm that effective knowledge management practices are essential drivers of innovation in public administration. When office managers systematically acquire, share, and apply knowledge, they enhance their ability to make creative and adaptive decisions, thereby improving the efficiency and relevance of educational policies and reforms. Conversely, weak knowledge management leads to inefficiencies, delays, and reliance on outdated information, which limit innovation. Overall, the study underscores that fostering a knowledge-driven culture in public institutions like the Ministry of Education is vital for sustainable educational reforms and administrative effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Ministry should invest in continuous professional development, workshops, research collaborations, and access to digital knowledge platforms to ensure that office managers are equipped with current and relevant knowledge for decision-making.
2. Regular knowledge-sharing forums, collaborative meetings, and digital communication platforms should be established to facilitate the exchange of tacit and explicit knowledge among office managers.
3. Office managers should be motivated to apply acquired and shared knowledge in real administrative tasks through pilot projects, policy reforms, and innovative administrative practices.
4. The Ministry should adopt digital knowledge management systems, including cloud-based repositories, databases, and collaborative tools, to improve the accessibility, storage, and retrieval of knowledge resources.
5. Policies should be developed to formalize knowledge management processes, ensuring that acquisition, sharing, and application become integral components of administrative decision-making across all departments

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