

# Enhancing Small and Medium Scale Enterprises' Work Quality in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: The Role of Knowledge Management

Dr Orok A. Imagha<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr Samuel V. Akpan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Management, University of Uyo, Uyo

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\*Corresponding author: Dr Orok A. Imagha

Department of Business Management, University of Uyo, Uyo

## Abstract

This study examines how knowledge management affects Akwa Ibom State SMEs' work quality. The knowledge management aspects included in the study were knowledge creation and knowledge acquisition. Cross-sectional survey research was used for this study. The study's population included 9,483 SMEs registered in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size was 384 using the Krecjie and Morgan (1970) table. Data was collected with a standardized Likert scale questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The inferential statistics used a simple linear regression procedure. The study's results indicate that knowledge creation had an R-value of 0.571, but knowledge acquisition had an R-value of 0.406 concerning work quality. Thus, it was concluded that knowledge management significantly improves the quality of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. Since knowledge creation is necessary to guarantee the promotion of competitive advantage in their operations, it was suggested at the conclusion that managers of SMEs should make sure that knowledge is created inside the company in order to improve performance. SMEs should also create policies that support knowledge management techniques. Through staff learning and training, their companies will be able to enhance their performance.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Management, Knowledge Creation, Knowledge Acquisition, Work Quality, SMEs.

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## INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) create most new jobs and fuel economic growth in any country. The significance of SMEs in the economy is increasing as larger corporations downsize their workforces and outsource further functions. As the economy persistently declines, an increasing number of individuals and governments are fostering and advocating for entrepreneurship to mitigate and maybe terminate the recession. Business ownership has grown increasingly attractive and competitive due to the rising unemployment rates in both formal and informal sectors. Imagha and Jackson (2023) assert that SMEs and entrepreneurs transcend the limitations of existing laws and resources; they envision more effective methodologies. The business community increasingly recognizes that the paramount factor in a firm's success is knowledge and innovation. This indicates that contemporary enterprises must prioritize their asset management on human capital. The fundamental

competitive advantage of most organizations is the attraction and retention of corporate knowledge (Lee and Choi, 2016).

Knowledge management has emerged as a crucial aspect within contemporary organizations. Organizations must prioritize knowledge to attain success, since it augments their fundamental competencies, similar to any other strategic, essential asset (Felix and Guillermo, 2017; Hayfa and Abdullah, 2018; Akram and Hilman, 2018). Knowledge management improves corporate performance with intellectual resources. Hislop (2023) defines knowledge management as a comprehensive phrase that includes any intentional effort to oversee the information held by a company's personnel. Information and communication technology (ICT) may be used directly to do this, or social process management may be utilized indirectly. This may also arise from the organization's distinctive structure or the implementation of certain personnel management and cultural practices. SMEs must

immediately develop strong knowledge management approaches to compete in marketing (Osayande, 2021).

Making sure that companies are aware of the information that is available to them, both individually and collectively, is one of the goals of knowledge management (Onyango, 2018). For SMEs to operate profitably, they must recognize their opportunities, threats, vulnerabilities, and strengths. This will enhance performance by enabling these organizations to utilize their expertise in the most effective and efficient manner possible. To enhance employee performance and organizational competitiveness, successful organizations consistently seek, choose, and execute various techniques, including knowledge management.

The production, acquisition, application, extraction, and distribution of data necessary for well-informed decision-making to support organizational growth and development are the primary objectives of knowledge management (Omerzel, 2019). This study addresses knowledge creation and acquisition. Knowledge production is generating novel concepts, concepts, techniques, approaches, processes, products, services, and concepts that benefit individuals and organizations (Garfield, 2021). Knowledge generation is essential to the existence of any organization (Osayande, 2021). An organization, industry, or nation may undergo a revolution via the creation of novel products and services, the development of creative methods and processes, and the introduction of novel ideas. According to Garfield (2021), a company may prosper and last by creating fresh customer demand, encouraging organizational and individual development, and reevaluating current laws. Neglecting to do so may lead to the organization's dissolution, deterioration, or stagnation. The process by which an organization gains knowledge, whether internally or externally, is known as knowledge acquisition (Nag and Gioia, 2012 in Ibojo and Mobolade, 2023).

When performance is exemplary, the quality of organizations improves, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of services in reaching or beyond client expectations. Costs decrease when the amount of money or work needed to get solutions that minimize waste decreases. Capability develops when the capacity to undertake more demanding performances or initiatives progresses. They must increase revenue while minimizing costs to sustain operations (Omerzel, 2019). Furthermore, there exists the potential to augment the firm's revenue. As knowledge expands, the capacity to establish goals enhances, leading to greater performance.

### Statement of the Problem

The local economy in Akwa Ibom State relies heavily on SMEs. They generate new ideas, a large number of employments, and economic growth in sectors such as industry, services, commerce, and agriculture. Nonetheless, a lot of SMEs continue to face challenges

including variable product and service quality, high defect rates, complaints from customers, and failure to fulfill regulatory or market requirements. These problems hurt their ability to compete and stay in business in the long run.

These problems with quality are often due to the firms not using their knowledge resources well. Knowledge management (KM), especially through knowledge creation (the creation of innovative concepts, procedures, and inventions), and knowledge acquisition (the gathering of external information, skills, and best practices), is recognized globally as a critical driver of improved work processes, error reduction, and enhanced output quality. Nevertheless, SMEs in Akwa Ibom State generally employ informal or rudimentary knowledge management practices, heavily depending on tacit knowledge, insufficient training, and scarce external learning opportunities due to resource limitations and low awareness.

Despite comprehensive studies in Nigeria showing a positive correlation between knowledge management (KM) and performance outcomes, there is little empirical research on how knowledge creation and acquisition affect SMEs' work quality in Akwa Ibom State. Owners, managers, and legislators struggle to employ focused knowledge management (KM) techniques to improve quality and sustain growth due to this mismatch. The influence of knowledge management—knowledge creation and acquisition—on Akwa Ibom State's small and medium-sized enterprises' output must be examined.

### Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine how knowledge management affects Akwa Ibom State SMEs' work quality. The specific objectives include to:

- i. assess the influence of knowledge creation on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State;
- ii. examine the influence of knowledge acquisition on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State.

### Research Questions

- i. What impact does knowledge creation have on Akwa Ibom State SMEs' quality of work?
- ii. How does knowledge acquisition affect Akwa Ibom State SMEs' quality of work?

### Research Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Knowledge creation has no significant influence on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Knowledge acquisition has no significant influence on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Knowledge Management

According to Wong *et al.*, (2015), knowledge management (KM) is the systematic oversight of knowledge. Knowledge management techniques and

protocols enable information development, dissemination, and interchange to achieve corporate efficiency goals (Yang 2004). According to Nunes *et al.*, (2017), knowledge management (KM) methods help an organization improve its academic functions, such as teaching, research, and administration, while promoting data and information use for decision-making. Knowledge management helps top executives make crucial corporate decisions by making vital information accessible, according to Girard and Girard (2018). Knowledge management involves information generation, processing, storage, usage, and distribution. Knowledge management involves using past and current information in a way that employees can understand for the benefit of the company. This study covers knowledge development, acquisition, and application.

### Knowledge Creation

Fostering new information or replacing outdated material inside a firm's explicit and implicit knowledge is known as knowledge generation (Grant, 2006). In an organizational setting, knowledge is produced, shared, enhanced, amplified, and rationalized via both individual cognitive processes and social and collaborative activities. According to Nonaka (1998), organizational knowledge generation results from the ongoing interplay between explicit and tacit information, resulting in a knowledge spiral that expands at the individual, group, and organizational levels as it moves upward. The four modalities of knowledge creation—socialization, externalization, internalization, and combination—were distinctly articulated by Nonaka *et al.*, (1994). The mechanism via which organizational members transform implicit information into new implicit knowledge through social interaction and collective experiences is referred to as socialization. Combination creates new explicit knowledge by integrating, categorizing, reclassifying, and synthesizing explicit knowledge. The last two phases involve explicit and tacit knowledge interaction and modification. Externalization transforms implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge. Reading and speaking demonstrate internalization, the turning of explicit information into innovative tacit knowledge. Rather than being entirely distinct, the four types of knowledge production are closely interconnected to one another.

Nonaka *et al.*, (2000) examined the environment and factors conducive to the generation of new knowledge. According to Nonaka *et al.*, (2000), the most important obstacle in the process of knowledge development is the establishment of 'ba,' which is a shared environment for the production of knowledge. Origin ba, interactive ba, system ba, and practice ba are the four "ba" that are related with the knowledge-generating modalities that were previously outlined. The organization of knowledge starts with the inception of knowledge acquisition, according to the socializing model of knowledge formation. The origin source is a communal space where individuals may engage directly

and concurrently exchange experiences. A communication space where people collaborate to turn tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge is an externalization model domain. The interactive virtual environment linked to the development of knowledge is represented by the system ba. Business analytics involves an internalization process that transforms explicit information into tacit knowledge. As a result, the practice room functions as an individual learning space.

### Knowledge Acquisition

This means gathering data from outside sources or members of the organization. According to Nonaka and Toyama (2023), businesses are ignoring the forgetting component of knowledge development and learning processes. One of the most important aspects of effective management of organizational knowledge is the organization and maintenance of knowledge, which acts as the memory of the organization. Collective memory denotes the aggregation of historical events, recollections, and knowledge. Nonaka and Toyama (2012) assert that organizational memory encompasses various forms of knowledge, including documented materials, structured data in electronic databases, knowledge retained in expert systems, archived organizational procedures and processes, and networks of individuals who acquire tacit knowledge. Organizational memory is categorized into two types: narrative and semantic (Nonaka and Peltokorpi, 2016). Semantic memory is universal, explicit, and expressive, while plot memory is context-specific. Effective dissemination and storage of knowledge are not guaranteed by the conversion of information into semantic memory.

### Work Quality

Quality is a crucial determinant of the competitiveness of SMEs, and the quest for complete quality compels enterprises to enhance their processes and products, thereby increasing their market competitiveness. However, at small and medium-sized firms, creating a customer-focused and quality-driven culture might be difficult (Taddese and Osada, 2010). Quality functions as a critical performance metric for SMEs, affecting competitiveness, market viability, sales growth, and customer fidelity. By concentrating on client requirements and adopting quality management principles, SMEs can refine their processes and goods, resulting in diminished waste and complaints, hence augmenting overall performance, profitability, and sustainable growth in competitive marketplaces.

### Theoretical review

#### Dynamic Capability Theory

In 1997, David Teece, Gary Pisano, and Amy Shuen introduced Dynamic Capability Theory. To adapt to quickly changing conditions, the organization must assimilate, cultivate, and rearrange internal and external skills. It examines how firms use their distinctive competencies to cultivate new capabilities for adapting

to or initiating changes in an uncertain business environment. Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) explains the mechanism that connects product markets and resources to competitive advantage and organizational sustainability. The DCT outlines many strategies that companies may use to stay ahead of the competition and endure in competitive, unstable business environments. Three basic assumptions serve as the DCT framework's cornerstone. Above all, the ability to identify and nurture potential. The second is to seize chances. Thirdly, to restructure assets in order to stay competitive (Teece, 2007).

According to Ambrosini, Bowman, and Collier (2009), comprehending dynamic capacities necessitates consideration of managerial perceptions regarding the necessity for change, which are influenced by their views of both external and internal surroundings of their firms. Consequently, a manager may misinterpret the necessity for change and then neglect to implement suitable DCT. The DCT framework assists managers in recognizing essential strategic components and priorities to enhance enterprise performance and mitigate the zero-profit tendency in internationally competitive markets, while also aiding academics in comprehending the principles of long-term business success (Teece, 2007). The framework highlights the essential qualities that management has to have in order to maintain exceptional long-term company success, summarizing the literature on strategy and innovation (Teece, 2007). Easter, Smith, Lyles, and Peteraf (2009) define dynamic capabilities (DC) as enhanced competencies that support knowledge acquisition, rapid response, information sharing, and ongoing improvement of operational procedures, environmental interaction, and decision-making evaluations. These competencies help achieve competitive advantages and improve performance. Esbach (2019) defines dynamic capabilities (DC) as an organization's ability to purposefully improve and change its resource base to gain a competitive edge, notably in knowledge management.

An organization's dynamic capability evaluates its ability to integrate, grow, and rearrange internal and external competences to adapt to changing business conditions. This group of competences include organizational and managerial skills for environmental analysis and the development of business models that respond to emerging opportunities and threats, including knowledge management. Dynamic abilities determine a company's ability to innovate, adapt to changes, and provide advancements that offer customers a competitive edge. DC can be categorized into three primary groups: (1) identifying, developing, co-developing, and evaluating technological threats and opportunities concerning customer requirements (referred to as "sensing" unknown futures); (2) mobilising resources to satisfy needs and opportunities and extract value ("seizing"); and (3) ongoing renewal (known as "transforming" or "shifting"). Although it's not

necessarily sequential, engagement might be either continuous or semi-continuous. The company's long-term viability in the face of changing consumers, rivals, and technological advancements depends on its capacity to perceive, capture, and modify. Although they must be in line with the strategic direction that emerges from the strategy process, dynamic capabilities may be analytically separated from strategy development. Gaining a competitive edge requires not just dynamic talents but also a strategy that is coherent, consistent, and open to innovation. As a result, even while strategy and capabilities may be separated analytically, in reality they must be thought about and implemented together.

### Empirical Review

In research by Mohamed *et al.*, (2018), the importance of information transfer was emphasized as they examined the combined impacts of environmental and quality management on business innovation. Survey research was used in this study. Original sources provided much of the data. The principal source of data was a structured questionnaire. Interesting results were derived from 136 completed questionnaires submitted by enterprises operating in Tunisia, utilizing structural equation modeling. Quality and environmental management, which are interconnected, favorably impact knowledge transmission and innovation. Ultimately, knowledge transfer enhances innovation. It is recommended that enterprises in Tunisia implement knowledge transfer, as our findings indicate that it positively influences the synergistic effect of quality and environmental management on innovation.

Mohammed *et al.*, (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study using convenience random sampling from 194 SMEs in Abu Dhabi, UAE, to determine if environmental awareness mediates the effect of knowledge management dimensions (acquisition, distribution, and responsiveness) on green innovation. A hypothetical statistical induction procedure was employed to adopt the positivist approach, and validated measurement scales were used to evaluate study constructs from earlier research. Statistical analysis was performed using Smart Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling 3.0. Green innovation was positively associated with knowledge receptivity, diffusion, and acquisition, according to the study. The findings also showed that environmental awareness mediates green innovation and knowledge diffusion. Environmental awareness did not seem to act as a mediator in the interaction between knowledge responsiveness and information acquisition with respect to green innovation.

Imagha *et al.*, (2023) conducted a study to assess the influence of technological skills on the performance of managers in Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs). The study was born out of the fact that over the years, one of the major challenges of SMEs managers has been grossly attributed to the absence of inadequate use of technology. The study adopted survey

research design. Population of the study was made up of 320 registered SMEs in Uyo. Using Taro Yamene’s formulae for sample size determination, 180 was arrived at as the sample size. Source of data was from primary source gotten from copies of administered questionnaire. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the study. The descriptive statistics were percentage and frequency distribution tables which were used to capture respondents’ demographic characteristics and frequency distribution of the responses on the study variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used in assessing the relationship between the studied variables. Findings revealed that there exists a positive correlation between technological skill and production output; technological skill and efficiency of SME managers; and technological skill and competitiveness of SME managers. Conclusively, it is established that SME managers possessing effective Technological skill is very important to the performance of their enterprises.

Al-Koliby *et al.*, (2022) explored how knowledge acquisition and dissemination affect SMEs’ long-term performance. It also examines knowledge

application as an intermediate. Surveys were employed for the study. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used to examine 428 Malaysian manufacturing SMEs. The findings indicate that the substantial influence that knowledge acquisition has on the long-term performance of manufacturing SMEs is partially mediated by knowledge application. Understanding new products and services, competing suppliers, consumer preferences, and similar topics is easier when knowledge is broadened from internal and external sources.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study used a cross-sectional survey research technique, requiring data collection via questionnaire administration. 9,483 registered SMEs (last checked in 2024) from three senatorial district headquarters in Akwa Ibom State—Ikot Ekpene, Uyo, and Eket Local Government—made up the target population for this research. These companies operated in the manufacturing, marketing, service, and agricultural sectors (AKS Ministry of Investment, Commerce, and Industry, 2024).

The population was summarized thus:

LGA	Population
Uyo	5,161
Ikot Ekpene	2002
Eket	2,320
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,483</b>

**Source:** Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Investment, Commerce and Industry (2025). The sample size was calculated to be 384 using the approach established by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). To calculate local government sample sizes, a sample proportion formula by Chebyshev was applied, thus;

where N represents the entire population, n denotes the overall sample size, w indicates the population of each stratum and K is the sample percentage.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{For Uyo} &= \frac{5161 \times 384}{9483} = \frac{1981824}{9483} = 209 \\
 \text{For Ikot Ekpene} &= \frac{2002 \times 384}{9483} = \frac{768768}{9483} = 81 \\
 \text{For Eket} &= \frac{2320 \times 384}{9483} = \frac{890880}{9483} = 94
 \end{aligned}$$

As a result, 209 SMEs were sampled in Uyo, 81 SMEs in Ikot Ekpene, and 94 SMEs in Eket. Using the main data source, it consisted of copies of the circulated questionnaire. The data was collected with a standardized Likert scale questionnaire mostly derived from Ibojo and Mobolade (2023). A simple random sampling approach was used for this investigation. This technique ensured that all research participants had an

equal probability of selection. The study used descriptive and inferential statistics. Demographic information and research variable response frequency distributions were recorded using descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution tables and percentages. For linear regression, inferential statistics were used to test hypotheses. The study employed SPSS Version 26 and tested all hypotheses at 0.05.

**Presentation of Data, Analysis and Interpretation****Table 1.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate**

Description	No of questionnaire forms	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire returned	291	75.8
Questionnaire not returned	93	24.2
<b>Total Number of Questionnaires Administered and Returned</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 1.1 indicates that out of 384 distributed questionnaires, 291, representing 75.8%, were fully completed and returned in a useable state, while 93, accounting for 24.2%, were either inadequately filled or not returned. This indicates that 291 copies of the

questionnaire were returned, which amounts to 75.8% of the total number of questionnaires sent. Therefore, it was thought that the % was sufficient for generalization and may be dependable and adequate.

**Table 1.2: Analysis of Demographic**

Gender	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	169	58
Female	122	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>
Age bracket	Number	Percentage (%)
18 - 25	48	16
26 - 34	89	31
35 - 44	96	33
45 - above	58	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>
Qualification	Number	Percentage (%)
WASC/ SSCE	74	25
OND/ NCE	59	20
DEGREE/ HND	85	29
M.SC/ MBA/ MA	57	20
PhD	16	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>
Options	Number	Percentage %
Production	139	47.8
Services	102	35
Production/services	50	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>
Years of operation	Numbers	Percentage %
1 - 4	108	37
5 - 9	92	32
10 - 15	51	18
16 - above	40	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2026)

As shown in table 1.2, 169 respondents, or 58% of the sample, were males, and 122 respondents, or 42% of the sample, were women in Uyo. The results of the aforementioned investigation showed that women made up the minority of responses while males made up the majority. Forty-eight individuals, or 16% of the sample, were aged 18 to 25; eighty-nine participants, representing 31%, were aged 26 to 34; ninety-six participants, accounting for 33%, were aged 35 to 44; and fifty-eight participants, or 20%, were aged 45 or over. The predominant age group of registered respondents was between 35 and 44, as shown by the

forementioned research. Of those who responded, 74 (or 25%) had a WASC or SSCE, 59 (20%) had an OND or NCE, 58 (29%), had a degree or HND, 57 (20%) had an M.S.C., MBA, or MA, and 16 (5%) had a Ph.D. This data showed that a greater percentage of registered SME managers had degrees or HNDs, with WASC/SSCE and OND/NCE coming in second and third, respectively. 139 respondents, or 47.8%, indicated that they are engaged in production, 102 respondents, or 35%, in services, and 50 replies, or 17%, in both production and services. This suggests that a greater number of respondents are involved in production. 108 respondents, or 37%,

reported having been in business for 1–4 years, 92 respondents, or 32%, for 5–9 years, 51 respondents, or 18%, for 10–15 years, and 40 respondents, or 13%, for

16 years or more. The fact that relatively few SMEs in Uyo have been operating for more than 16 years is evident from this.

**Table 1.3: Analysis of Responses on Knowledge Creation**

Knowledge creation	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
Being innovative could bring about new techniques that gives the firm edge over its competitors	11 (3.8%)	131 (45.0%)	85 (29.2%)	37 (12.7%)	27 (9.3%)	291 (100%)
Knowledge creation reduces redundancy	49 (16.8%)	131 (45.0%)	99 (34.0%)	12 (5.0%)	0 (0%)	291 (100%)
Creation of knowledge increases productivity	34 (11.7%)	122 (41.9%)	96 (33.0%)	22 (7.6%)	17 (5.8%)	291 (100%)

Source: Researcher's Computation, (2026)

From table 1.3, results indicate that 11 respondents, or 3.8% of the total, strongly agree that being innovative could bring about new techniques that gives the firm edge over its competitors. 131 representing 45.0% agree, 85 representing 29.2% were undecided, 37 which represents 12.7% disagree while 27 representing 9.3% strongly disagree that being innovative could bring about new techniques that gives the firm edge over its competitors. The highest response rate being 45.0% shows that the respondents agree that being innovative could bring about new techniques that gives the firm edge over its competitors. Also, 49 respondents representing 16.8% strongly agree that knowledge creation reduces redundancy. 131

representing 45.0% agree, 99 representing 34.0% were undecided while 12 representing 5.0% disagree that knowledge creation reduces redundancy. Redundancy is decreased by knowledge production, as shown by the response with the highest percentage of 45.0%. 34 respondents, or 11.7%, strongly agreed that productivity rises with knowledge development. According to 122 respondents (41.9%) who concur, knowledge generation reduces duplication, whereas 96 respondents (34.0%) are ambivalent, 22 respondents (7.6%) disagree, and 17 respondents (5.8%) severely disagree. Redundancy is decreased by knowledge generation, according to the maximum answer rate of 41.9%.

**Table 1.4: Analysis of Responses on Knowledge Acquisition**

Knowledge acquisition	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
There is a necessity for innovative knowledge from external sources.	42 (14.4%)	129 (44.3%)	87 (29.9%)	24 (8.2%)	9 (3.1%)	291 (100%)
knowledge is shared through proper procedures	52 (17.9%)	107 (36.8%)	92 (31.6%)	19 (6.5%)	21 (7.2%)	291 (100%)
there is need to get new knowledge for my organisation	42 (14.4%)	129 (44.3%)	87 (29.9%)	24 (8.2%)	9 (3.1%)	291 (100%)

Source: Researcher's Computation, (2026)

From table 1.4, analysis shows that 42 respondents, or 14.4%, strongly believe that new information from outside sources is necessary. 129 respondents, or 44.3%, agreed that new information from outside sources is necessary, 87 respondents, or 29.9%, were unsure, 24 respondents, or 8.2%, disagreed, and 9 respondents, or 3.1%, severely disagreed. The respondents' agreement that new information from outside sources is necessary is shown by the highest response rate of 45.0%. Additionally, 52 respondents, or 17.9%, strongly agree that appropriate methods are used to transfer information. 107 respondents, or 36.8%, agreed that information is exchanged via formal

methods, 92 respondents, or 31.6%, were unsure, 19 respondents, or 6.5%, disagreed, and 21 respondents, or 7.2%, strongly disagreed. The fact that the highest response rate was 36.8% suggests that formal methods are used to exchange information. Forty-two respondents, or 14.4%, strongly agreed that my organization needs to acquire new expertise. 129 people, or 44.3%, agreed that my organization needs to acquire new information, 87 people, or 29.9%, were unsure, 24 people, or 8.2%, disagreed, and 9 people, or 3.1%, severely disagreed. Redundancy is decreased by knowledge production, as shown by the highest response rate of 44.3%.

**Table 1.5: Analysis of Responses on Work Quality**

Work Quality	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total
My firm is capable of offering clients high-quality service.	63 (21.6%)	117 (40.2%)	87 (29.9%)	16 (5.5%)	8 (2.7%)	291 (100%)
my firm delivers the same high level of quality	11 (3.8%)	143 (49.1%)	97 (33.3%)	26 (8.9%)	14 (4.8%)	291 (100%)
my firm adapts to changes without comprising quality consistency	33 (11.3%)	113 (38.8%)	101 (34.7%)	31 (10.7%)	13 (4.5%)	291 (100%)

Source: Researcher's Computation, (2026)

According to the analysis in table 1.5, 63 respondents, or 21.6% of the sample, strongly believe that their company can provide client's high-quality service. 117 respondents, or 40.2%, agreed that their company can provide clients high-quality service, 87 respondents, or 29.9%, were unsure, 16 respondents, or 5.5%, disagreed, and 8 respondents, or 2.7%, severely disagreed. The respondents' agreement that their company can provide consumers high-quality service is shown by the highest answer rate of 40.2%. Additionally, 11 respondents, or 3.8%, highly agree that my company does work of the same caliber. Of those surveyed, 143 (49.1%) agreed, 97 (33.3%) were unsure, 26 (8.9%) disagreed, and 14 (4.8%) strongly disagreed that their company provides the same high level of quality. With the highest response rate of 49.1%, my company

continues to provide high-quality work. 33 respondents, or 11.3%, strongly agreed that their company adjusts to changes without sacrificing consistency in quality. 113 respondents, or 38.8%, agreed, 101 respondents, or 34.7%, were unsure, 31 respondents, or 10.7%, disagreed, and 13 respondents, or 4.5%, strongly disagreed that their company adjusts to changes without sacrificing consistency in quality. The highest response rate of 38.8% suggests that their company adjusts to changes without sacrificing consistency in quality.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Ho1:** Knowledge creation has no significant influence on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State

**Hi1:** Knowledge creation has a significant influence on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756 <sup>a</sup>	.571	.570	1.35115
a. Predictors: (Constant), knowcreat				

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	702.956	1	702.956	385.054	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	527.600	289	1.826		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1230.557</b>	<b>290</b>			
a. Dependent Variable: wrkquality						
b. Predictors:(Constant), knowcreat						

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.982	.393		7.596	.000
	knowcreat	.724	.037	.756	19.623	.000
a. Dependent Variable: wrkquality						

The regression analysis results demonstrated a robust association between the dependent variable and R=0.756. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.571$ ) and corrected coefficient ( $R^2 = 0.570$ ) are also provided. Knowledge creation in Akwa Ibom State accounted for 5.7% of the difference in the quality of work generated by SMEs. The regression model has a statistical significance of  $P < 0.0005$ , below 0.05, as per the ANOVA table. So it is significant. The coefficient table shows the beta coefficient to assess the dependent variable's importance to the independent variable.

Knowledge creation was significant with a p-value of 0.000 and a normalized coefficient of  $\beta=0.724$ . 1 unit of knowledge creation changes work quality by 0.72, according to this finding. Since 0.000 is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis. Thus, it can be said that the quality of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State is greatly influenced by knowledge generation.

**Ho2:** Knowledge acquisition has no significant influence on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State

**Hi2:** Knowledge acquisition has a significant influence on work quality of SMEs in Akwa Ibom State.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.637 <sup>a</sup>	.406	.404	1.59075
a. Predictors:(Constant), knowacquis				

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	499.251	1	499.251	197.296	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	731.306	289	2.530		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1230.557</b>	<b>290</b>			
a. Dependent Variable: wrkquality						
b. Predictors:(Constant), knowacquis						

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.063	.469		8.655	.000
	knowacquis	.614	.044	.637	14.046	.000
a. Dependent Variable: wrkquality						

The regression analysis findings indicate a substantial correlation between the dependent variable and R=0.637. The coefficient of determination, R<sup>2</sup>, is 0.406, whereas the adjusted coefficient of determination, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, is 0.404. Knowledge acquisition accounted for 4.0% of the variance in the quality of work generated by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. The statistical significance of the regression model is P < 0.0005, which is below 0.05, according to the ANOVA table. Consequently, it is well-suited. The beta coefficient is presented in the coefficient table to evaluate the relative significance of the dependent variable concerning the independent variable. The p-value for knowledge acquisition was 0.000, accompanied by a significant standardized coefficient of β=0.614. This research indicates that for each unit variation in knowledge acquisition, job quality will fluctuate by 0.61. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected as the p-value is 0.000, which is below the threshold of 0.05. The quality of work in SMEs in Akwa Ibom State is substantially influenced by knowledge acquisition.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The initial objective of the study was to determine how knowledge creation affected the quality of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. Knowledge creation was thought to have little bearing on the quality of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. The results indicated that knowledge generation possessed a substantial standardized coefficient of β=0.724 and a p-value of 0.000. This conclusion indicates that for each unit variation in knowledge generation, the quality of the job will fluctuate by 0.72. Consequently, since the p-value is below 0.05, namely 0.000, we reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, we ascertain that the caliber of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State is significantly influenced by knowledge generation. The investigation's findings align with those of Obuba and Onuoha (2020). Measures of

knowledge management (knowledge generation and sharing) and small company competitiveness (innovativeness and firm resources) were shown to be significantly correlated. As a consequence, small company owners may use an effective knowledge management system to maintain their competitiveness and make the most of their human resources. The competitiveness of small enterprises served as the dependent variable in this research, whereas the performance of SMEs is the dependent variable in the current study.

The study's second objective was to investigate how knowledge acquisition affected the quality of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State. It was assumed that the quality of work performed by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State was not significantly impacted by knowledge acquisition. A notable standardized coefficient of β=0.614 with a p-value of 0.000 was identified for knowledge acquisition. This study indicates a 0.61 change in work quality for each unit change in knowledge acquisition. Consequently, since the p-value is smaller than 0.05, namely 0.000, we reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, we ascertain that the caliber of work produced by SMEs in Akwa Ibom State is significantly influenced by knowledge acquisition. This result aligns with the findings of Al-Koliby *et al.*, (2022) and Mohammed *et al.*, (2023). Their study's outcomes revealed a significant and favorable association between green innovation and knowledge responsiveness, knowledge diffusion, and information acquisition. The data analysis confirmed that the association between knowledge diffusion and green innovation is mediated by environmental consciousness. Their study considered knowledge acquisition on green innovation while the current study considered knowledge acquisition on SMEs' performance.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of knowledge management is to enhance an organization's comprehension of its own knowledge and that of its members. Knowledge offers clients superior solutions at competitive pricing. Organizations that lack key competences are unable to provide value. Competencies are created by organizational knowledge. Organizations may get a competitive edge by properly managing the information. By generating a competitive advantage, knowledge management helps a business outperform its competitors. Competitive advantage threatens and undercuts the work of competing organizations. Employing effective knowledge management strategies enables firms to attain a competitive edge and enhance their performance in the marketplace. The business will also boost marketing, enhance risk management, reduce administrative costs, and provide its customers with superior service. As recommendations, SMEs in Akwa Ibom State should foster a culture of continuous learning by documenting internal successes and failures. This will aid create a knowledge repository that will help refine processes and boost overall operational efficiency. Also, there should be encouragement of employee participation in webinars and certifications to bring in fresh insights on process automation. This may help cut costs and enhance efficiency in resource constrained environments.

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