

**INFORMATION SHARING AND UTILIZATION FOR RESEARCH
PRODUCTIVITY AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN LIBRARY SCHOOLS
IN RIVERS STATE**

By

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between information sharing and research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools in Rivers State University (RSU) and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE), using a correlational research design. It was guided by three objectives, three research questions, and one hypothesis focusing on key variables—willingness to share, participant trust, and communication medium. The target population comprised all 34 postgraduate students enrolled in the Library and Information Science program for the 2023/2024 session. Due to the small size, census sampling was used to ensure complete representation. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire titled Information Sharing and Utilization for Research Productivity among Postgraduate Students in Library Schools in Rivers State (ISURPPSLSRS), based on a 4-point rating scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to analyze the variable relationships, and the hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 significance level using SPSS version 25. Out of the 34 questionnaires administered, 30 were returned and found valid, resulting in an 88.2% response rate. Findings revealed a significant correlation between willingness to share, participant trust, communication medium, and research productivity. These results underscore the importance of fostering a culture of trust, open communication, and information exchange to enhance academic collaboration. It is recommended that faculty promote training on resource sharing, department heads strengthen trust among students, and IT support staff maintain reliable communication platforms to boost research productivity.

Keywords: Information sharing, research productivity, sharing willingness, participant trust, communication medium

Introduction

Information sharing and utilization are critical components that directly impact research productivity among postgraduate students, particularly in library schools where access to academic resources is essential for scholarly achievement. Sharing willingness, or the inclination of students to exchange valuable academic information with their peers and

faculty, is a key driver of collaboration and research output (Nguyen & Lee, 2020). Studies have shown that when students actively share information, they cultivate a collaborative environment that not only fosters innovation but also enhances the overall quality and productivity of research (Miller & Clark, 2023). Furthermore, participant trust is a fundamental factor in this process, as students are more likely to share and utilize information when they trust their peers to handle the shared resources responsibly (Smith & Patel, 2022). Trust among participants encourages open communication and cooperation, which ultimately leads to more effective academic exchanges and greater research productivity. The symbiotic relationship between sharing willingness and participant trust creates an environment conducive to higher levels of academic engagement and success, highlighting the importance of these factors in improving research outcomes.

The communication medium plays a significant role in determining how effectively information is shared and utilized for research productivity. The choice of communication channels—whether digital platforms or traditional methods—can either facilitate or obstruct the efficient exchange of information among postgraduate students (Miller & Clark, 2023). Digital tools, for instance, offer the advantage of real-time collaboration, enabling immediate access to shared resources and promoting seamless interaction among students. In contrast, traditional communication methods may limit the speed and scope of information dissemination. As such, the selection of the appropriate medium is crucial for fostering a productive research environment. In library schools, where the exchange of academic resources is vital to research success, understanding the interaction between sharing willingness, participant trust, and the communication medium is essential for enhancing research productivity. By optimizing communication methods, academic institutions can create a more efficient and collaborative atmosphere, ultimately improving the research outcomes of postgraduate students.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing need for improved research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools has drawn attention to how knowledge is shared and utilized within

academic communities. In recent years, there has been growing concern that despite the abundance of academic resources and technological tools, many postgraduate students are unable to fully harness these opportunities due to gaps in information sharing practices. This observation has raised critical questions about the extent to which willingness to share information, trust among peers, and access to effective communication platforms influence the research performance of students. It is this concern—about the disconnect between available knowledge resources and their optimal use for collaborative academic work—that forms the basis of this study. Understanding how these factors shape research engagement is crucial for fostering a more productive and collaborative academic culture. Therefore, this study was undertaken to investigate how information sharing and utilization impact the research productivity of postgraduate students in library schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between participant trust and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between communication medium and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools in Rivers State?

Null Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.5 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Information sharing is a fundamental aspect of academic success, particularly within postgraduate research environments, where the exchange of ideas, resources, and findings can significantly enhance scholarly work. Sharing willingness, which refers to the openness of individuals to share valuable academic resources, research data, and information, is influenced by a range of personal, professional, and institutional factors. Research has shown that the willingness to share among students is a key driver of academic performance and research productivity, with numerous studies indicating its strong impact on the quality and efficiency of academic work (Adeoye & Olowokudejo, 2021). In library schools, this willingness is often associated with the perceived benefits of collaboration, such as improved research quality, better access to resources, and enhanced learning experiences (Ogunyomi, 2020). When postgraduate students perceive the act of sharing information as an opportunity for both personal and professional growth, their willingness to engage in collaborative sharing increases, which in turn leads to improved research output and greater academic success (Umar & Adeyemi, 2022). Thus, fostering a culture of sharing among students can contribute significantly to their research productivity and overall academic achievement.

Participant trust is a critical element in academic collaboration and research productivity, playing a central role in the willingness of individuals to engage in information sharing. Trust, both in the quality of the information being shared and in the participants involved, significantly influences the effectiveness of academic cooperation (Akinyemi & Oloyede, 2023). When students trust the reliability and accuracy of the information and the individuals they are collaborating with, they are more inclined to share their resources and make use of others' contributions. This trust is particularly important in library schools, where students are more likely to share and utilize academic resources when they trust their peers or faculty members (Bello & Adebayo, 2021). Conversely, in environments where trust is lacking, students may withhold valuable information or fail to engage with shared resources effectively, resulting in diminished research productivity (Fagbemi, 2021). Therefore, fostering a culture of trust among participants is essential for enhancing collaboration, improving the quality of academic exchanges, and ultimately boosting research productivity in academic settings.

The communication medium used in information sharing also significantly affected research productivity among postgraduate students. With advancements in digital technologies, communication platforms evolved, offering both traditional and modern means of sharing information. Adedeji and Oluwole (2022) emphasized that the choice of communication medium—whether face-to-face, email, or online collaboration tools—affected the ease, speed, and quality of information exchange. According to Yusuf and Ajayi (2020), digital platforms like collaborative online tools and email facilitated quicker and more efficient sharing of research materials, while face-to-face interactions remained important for establishing trust and rapport among students. These varying mediums, depending on their suitability for the task at hand, could either enhance or hinder the sharing process. Additionally, using the right medium for communication could increase the likelihood of timely responses and feedback, which was crucial for research productivity (Okunade & Ojo, 2021).

The intersection of sharing willingness, participant trust, and communication mediums formed the foundation for effective information-sharing practices in academic settings. Researchers found that these elements did not function in isolation but rather interacted to shape the collaborative behaviors of postgraduate students. For example, when students were willing to share information but lacked trust in the recipient, the exchange might have been less effective (Ogunbanwo, 2023). Similarly, when an effective communication medium was available but participants were unwilling to share or distrust the information being shared, the full potential of these tools could not be realized (Omolade, 2020). Consequently, studies suggested that a balanced approach, addressing all three factors—sharing willingness, trust, and communication medium—must be adopted to optimize information sharing and enhance research productivity in library schools (Taiwo, 2022).

Methodology

The research utilized a correlational design to explore the link between information sharing and its use in enhancing research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools within Rivers State. This design was considered suitable for identifying relationships among variables—such as willingness to share, trust among participants, and the mode of

communication—without altering any natural conditions of the study. The study focused on all 34 postgraduate students registered in the Library and Information Science program for the 2023/2024 academic year. Given the small population size, a census sampling method was adopted to include every student. Data collection was carried out using a structured instrument titled “Information Sharing and Utilization for Research Productivity among Postgraduate Students in Library Schools in Rivers State (ISURPPSLSRS),” which employed a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). To analyze the relationships between the variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was applied, and hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level using SPSS version 25. Out of the 34 questionnaires administered, 30 were completed and returned, resulting in a valid response rate of 88.2%. This strong rate of return reflected high participant involvement and added to the reliability and validity of the research outcomes, despite minimal dropout.

Results and Findings

The findings revealed that sharing willingness, participant trust, and communication medium play a crucial role in research productivity among postgraduate students in library school

Table 1: PPMC analysis of the relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools

		Sharing willingness	Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools
Sharing willingness	Pearson Correlation	1	0.721
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	30	30
Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools		0.721	
	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 presents the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) analysis examining the relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools. The correlation coefficient ($r =$

0.721) indicates a strong positive relationship, suggesting that as the willingness to share information increases, there is a corresponding rise in the effective utilization of information for research productivity among the students. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.001), which appears twice due to the symmetrical nature of the correlation matrix, is highly significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). This statistical significance confirms that the relationship observed is unlikely to have occurred by chance. The "2-tailed" significance test accounts for the possibility of a relationship in either direction, providing a more comprehensive analysis. The sample size ($N = 30$), also repeated due to the matrix format, confirms that the analysis was based on responses from 30 postgraduate students, thereby reinforcing the validity and reliability of the result. Specifically, sharing willingness exhibited a strong positive correlation with research productivity ($r = 0.721$), aligning with Adeoye and Olowokudejo (2021), who highlighted that when students are more inclined to share academic resources, they tend to engage more actively in research activities.

Table 2: PPMC analysis of the relationship between participant trust and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools

		Participant trust	Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools
Participant trust	Pearson Correlation	1	0.821
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	N	30	30
Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools		0.821	
	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	
	N	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 presents the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) analysis assessing the relationship between participant trust and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.821$) indicates a very strong positive relationship, suggesting that higher levels of trust among participants are associated with increased utilization of shared information for

research productivity. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.004), which appears twice due to the symmetrical structure of the correlation matrix, is statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$), confirming that the relationship observed is meaningful and not due to random variation. The "2-tailed" test ensures that the analysis considered both possible directions of the relationship, offering a balanced interpretation. The sample size ($N = 30$), listed for both variables due to matrix formatting, affirms that the findings are based on the responses of 30 participants, thereby enhancing the credibility and generalizability of the results. Participant trust also showed a robust positive correlation ($r = 0.821$), supporting Akinyemi and Oloyede (2023), who emphasized the critical role of trust in fostering a collaborative environment conducive to research productivity.

Table 3: PPMC analysis of the relationship between communication medium and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools

		Communication medium	Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools
Communication medium	Pearson Correlation	1	0.728
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	30	30
Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools		0.728	
	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 presents the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) analysis exploring the relationship between communication medium and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.728$) indicates a strong positive correlation, suggesting that the more effective and accessible the communication medium, the greater the likelihood that postgraduate students will utilize shared information to enhance their research productivity. This finding implies that platforms such as academic forums, digital libraries, messaging

apps, and email systems play a significant role in facilitating information exchange and, consequently, in improving research outcomes. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.002) is highly significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$), which confirms that the observed relationship is statistically significant and not due to random chance. The significance value appears twice as a standard feature of the correlation matrix's symmetrical format. The sample size ($N = 30$) is also consistent across both variables, demonstrating that the analysis was based on a complete and uniform dataset from 30 postgraduate students, which supports the reliability of the results and the validity of the conclusions drawn from the correlation. The communication medium was positively correlated with research utilization ($r = 0.728$), in line with Adedeji and Oluwole (2022), suggesting that effective communication platforms enhance information exchange, thereby improving research outcomes.

Result of Tested Hypothesis

Table 4: PPMC analysis of the relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools

		Sharing willingness	Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools
Sharing willingness	Pearson Correlation	1	0.721
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
	N	30	30
Utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools		0.721	
	Pearson Correlation		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	
	N	30	30

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 presents the result of the hypothesis testing on the relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools. The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.721$) indicates a strong positive relationship, suggesting that an increase in students' willingness to share information is associated with higher levels of information utilization for research productivity. This means that students who are more open and ready to share academic resources are more likely to benefit from collective knowledge and apply shared information effectively in their research

work. The relationship is statistically significant, as shown by the p-value of 0.001, which is below the 0.01 threshold ($r = 0.721$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$). Therefore, the null hypothesis—stating that there is no significant relationship between sharing willingness and utilization for research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools—is rejected. It can thus be concluded that a significant and strong positive relationship exists between the two variables.

Recommendations

1. Faculty Members and Program Coordinators should implement training programs and workshops to encourage postgraduate students to share academic resources openly and collaboratively, emphasizing the value of knowledge exchange for research productivity.
2. Program Coordinators and Department Heads should foster an environment of trust by promoting ethical standards and transparency in interactions, encouraging postgraduate students to build stronger professional relationships based on mutual respect.
3. IT Support Staff and Program Coordinators should invest in and maintain effective communication platforms, ensuring students have access to reliable tools for collaboration and information exchange, thus enhancing the overall research experience.
4. University Libraries and Academic Support Services should provide centralized repositories and digital platforms where postgraduate students can easily access and contribute research materials, ensuring equitable and efficient knowledge dissemination.
5. Institutional Administrators and Research Directors should monitor and evaluate the impact of information-sharing practices on student research output, using data-driven insights to continuously refine policies that promote collaborative academic engagement.

Conclusion

This study underscores the pivotal role that information sharing and utilization play in enhancing research productivity among postgraduate students in library schools. The findings demonstrate that sharing willingness, participant trust, and communication mediums are all significantly associated with improved research outcomes. A strong positive correlation between sharing willingness and research productivity indicates that when students are more open to sharing academic resources and knowledge, they tend to engage more in research activities. Similarly, the high correlation between participant trust and research productivity emphasizes the importance of fostering an atmosphere of trust among students, as it encourages collaborative research efforts and the exchange of ideas. Furthermore, the effective use of communication mediums, which was positively correlated with research utilization, highlights the necessity of reliable and accessible platforms for information exchange. These platforms enable students to collaborate more efficiently, share valuable resources, and ultimately contribute to the advancement of their research. The study's findings suggest that library schools should focus on creating a supportive environment that promotes sharing willingness, builds trust among students, and incorporates effective communication channels. By prioritizing these factors, academic institutions can significantly enhance the research productivity of their postgraduate students, leading to a more collaborative, innovative, and resourceful academic community.

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