

KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICES AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM - SCALE ENTERPRISES IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Knowledge has been regarded as one of the strategic resources of any given organisation. Therefore, the successes of these organisations are determined by how much knowledge can be shared, and used, to gain a competitive advantage in the present day digital and dynamic society. This study, therefore, examined the influence of knowledge sharing practices on the performance of small and medium - scale enterprises in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted. Data was collected from 120 SMEs using a structured questionnaire, and also interviews of 15 key informants were conducted. Data were collected and analysed using frequency counts and percentages, as well as linear regression analysis. Interview responses were content analysed. Knowledge sharing practices significantly contributed to the performance of SMEs. Owners of SMEs are aware of the benefits of the knowledge sharing practices, although the different knowledge sharing techniques have been sparingly utilised. The study recommends that government should provide supports through various financial institutions so that SMEs can afford, implement and maintain the digital technologies that enhance knowledge sharing practices, and as a result, improve upon their business performance.

Keywords: Business enterprises, Information technology, Knowledge sharing, SMEs in Nigeria

Introduction

Knowledge is regarded as a fluid mix of framed experiences, values, contextual information and expert insights that provide a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information (Davenport, 1997). It is a strategic resource in organizations, with which they can gain a competitive advantage in today's global and dynamic environment (Mogotsi, Ban and Fletcher, 2011). Although acquiring knowledge is just a means to an end; it is through the harnessing and exploitation of the acquired knowledge that organizations can be competitive and strategic. Sharing this important resource "knowledge" has become essential for organizations to be able to sustain their progress and development (Mohajan, 2017).

Knowledge sharing refers to the process where individuals mutually exchange their implicit (tacit) and explicit knowledge to create new knowledge (Van-Den-Hooff and de-Ridder, 2004). Haas and Hansen (2007) claim that knowledge sharing has been shown to improve individual and organization performance and innovativeness. The authors added that knowledge sharing is a practice that has become increasingly important in a knowledge economy. Knowledge sharing in an organization not only occurs at the individual level but also the collective level (Obembe, 2010). This has caused a shift by the organizations from been traditional into knowledge and technology-based organization. This is because Information Technology (IT) tools play a critical role in knowledge management and knowledge sharing practices within and among organizations. This makes the organization transforms itself into the learning organization that can achieve higher performance. However, achieving this requires commitment from the whole entities in a business organization.

Business organizations are often established to contribute to economic development in a country. The small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) form a sub-sector of the business organizations. Wolfensen (2001) posits that SMEs are recognized as an integral component of economic development and has become a crucial element in lifting countries out of poverty. SMEs are sometimes regarded as the engine of the economy, this because they provide job opportunities to people through entrepreneurial programmes and innovations (Ojo, Akinsunmi & Olayonu, 2015). They are important to socio-economic transformation in societies. Although Mutula and Brakel (2006) are of the opinion that there is no universally accepted definition for SMEs in Africa,

definitions vary from country to country. Small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria have been described by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN, 2013) as enterprises with an asset base (excluding land) of between N5million – N500million and labour force of below 300.

Ogechukwu, Oboreh, Umukoro and Uche (2013) emphasizes the importance of SMEs to a nation as they generate employment, manpower development, production of new goods and services as well as stimulating the nation's economic and social development. Eniola (2014) noted that the importance of SMEs varies with sectors and with the developmental stage of a state. Small and medium scale enterprises are often faced with challenges especially at the initial startup stage owing to some factors. Insufficient capital outlay, use of obsolete business methods and equipment, lack of business planning and also social cultural obstacles are often hindrances to SMEs growth (Ogechukwu et.al, 2013). Agwu and Emeti (2014) identified the challenges faced by SME to include; management problems, financial problems, strategic and planning problems, poor accounting problems, multiple taxations and unusable policy environment. Akinruwa, Awolusi and Ibojo (2013) pointed out challenges that affect SMEs to include finance, politics, education, infrastructures, government policies, raw materials and others. These afore-mentioned studies have left out the role of knowledge sharing practices in the business performance of SMEs in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study, therefore, seeks to examine knowledge sharing practices by the SMEs in Ibadan in relation to their business performance. In this study, knowledge sharing practices was measured with items on knowledge acquisition and transfer. Performance of SMEs was defined in terms of revenue performance and organisational factors

Statement of the Problem

The SMEs sector plays an important role in its contribution to the nation's economy in terms of wealth creation and employment generation (OECD, 2007). Small and medium enterprises in Nigeria have not performed optimally well and hence, it has not played the expected vital role in the economic growth and development in the country. Reports have shown that SMEs have performed below expectation due to a combination of problems which ranges from attitude and habits of SME themselves through environmental factors, instability of government and frequent changes in government policies.

While some factors have usually been identified as hindrances to the performance of SME in Nigeria, knowledge sharing practices has been conspicuously neglected. Previous studies have shown that knowledge sharing practices are embedded in most SMEs but it is not applied with the right attitude to aid SMEs performance. The non- performance and high rates of failure among SMEs in the country are due to operating of SMEs in a non-conducive financial planning environment through high-interest rate, high-collateral demand, difficulties in accessing information and lack of market exposure. This view was argued by scholars that knowledge sharing within organizations is a critical process affecting knowledge creation and organisational performance. Knowledge sharing practices in firms are suggested by many authors to contribute to competitive advantage. More recently, some studies have empirically discussed the effects of knowledge sharing. It is therefore imperative to assess knowledge sharing practices by SMEs and its contributions to the performance of SMEs.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of knowledge sharing practices on the business performance of SMEs in Ibadan metropolis. The specific objectives include:

1. investigate how SMEs practice knowledge sharing
2. Find out the channels through which SMEs share knowledge

3. Find out the factors that facilitate knowledge sharing practices among the SMEs
4. Ascertain if knowledge sharing practices will contribute to the performances of the SMEs in Ibadan.

Research Question

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. How does SMEs in Ibadan practice knowledge sharing?
2. What are the channels through which SME share knowledge?
3. What are the factors that facilitate knowledge sharing practices among the SME?
4. Will knowledge sharing practices contribute to the performance of SMEs in Ibadan?

Literature Review

Knowledge has been referred to as information, ideas and expertise relevant for tasks to be performed by individuals, teams, work units, and the organization as a whole (Bartol, 2002). It is a key resource in achieving different kinds of goals and aims in organizations (Widen-Wulff and Ginman, 2004). *Knowledge is seen as the most important strategic resource in organisations, and the management of this knowledge is considered critical to organizational success (Ipe, 2005)*. Efficient acquisition, storage, transfer, retrieval, application, and visualization of knowledge often distinguish successful organizations from the unsuccessful ones (Omotayo, 2015). Knowledge sharing is therefore perceived as a key process in knowledge management (Oye, Mazleena and Noorminshah, 2011).

Knowledge sharing can be defined as a social interaction culture, involving the exchange of employee knowledge, experiences, skills as well as reports, manuals and documents relating to user needs, possible innovations, and barriers through the whole department or organization (Lin, 2010). Knowledge sharing can be through informal dialogues, face-to-face meetings, and group discussions (Snyder and Lee-Partridge, 2013); Islam, Agarwal, & Ikeda, 2017). Knowledge sharing is the act of making knowledge available to others within the organization.

Oye, Mazleena and Noorminshah, (2011) in their study of knowledge sharing in workplace: motivators and de-motivators found that technology played an important role in increasing the productivity of knowledge sharing as it plays a critical role in creating, storing, and distributing explicit knowledge in an accessible and expeditious manner. Bartol and Srivastava (2002) identified some rewards system which aids knowledge sharing within organizations which include monetary incentives like bonuses, salary raise and non-monetary incentives like praises, public recognition. Leadership style has also been identified as a critical factor in determining how organizations engage in knowledge sharing (Cunningham, Claire, McGuire, 2015). Liana Razmerita, Kathrin Kirchner, Pia Nielsen, (2016), pointed out that significant drivers to knowledge sharing are: enjoyment in helping others, monetary rewards, management support, management encourages and motivates knowledge sharing behavior.

Ryan, Windsor, Ibragimova, and Prybutok (2010) in their study identified three categories of core organizational practices that encourage knowledge sharing which are strategic, technology, and decision making. Strategic practices showed that an agile business strategy was significantly related to knowledge sharing. Kristin et.al. (2011) discovered that knowledge sharing, especially through conversation, leads to learning and when people learn they tend to share more. From their research, the value of face-to-face sharing of knowledge or experience is the most clearly supported means of sharing. Knowledge sharing is therefore important because it provides a link between the individual and the organization by moving knowledge that resides with individuals to the organizational level, where it is converted into economic and competitive value for the organization.

The performance and growth of SME is a major driver and indices for the level of industrialization, modernization, urbanization, gainful and meaningful employment for all those who are able and willing to work, income per capital, equitable distribution of income, and the welfare and quality of life enjoyed by the citizenry (Aremu & Adeyemi, 2011) because SMEs contribute to employment growth at a higher rate than larger firms (Farouk & Saleh, 2011).

Performance, as a concept, is a subject open to wide variability as it is a somewhat imprecise word when it functions as a placeholder in research (Folan, & Browne, 2007). According to Akinruwa, Awolusi and Ibojo (2013), performance is measured using diverse parameters by different organisations, while some firms measure it through growth, survival, numbers of employees, capital employed and development to mention but a few. Others do so through profit margin they were able to record, sales volume, the number of branches established and so on. Measuring the performance of SME is done through financial indicators like profits, return on investment, or non-financial indicators like employees' satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Wood, 2006).

A business firm performance is seen to be effective if it attains its sales or market share goals which depend on efficiency, while an organizational performance is said to be effective if it makes use of its resources to attain high level of performance (Adeleke, Ogundele & Oyenuga, 2008). According to Rufaidah (2014), the balance scorecard is a strategic planning and management system that is very often used in a business and industry, government, and non-profit organizations in the world. This tool helps to equate business activities with the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communication, and monitor organizational performance that is tailored to the strategic objectives of the organization. This method is a measurement framework that combines strategic non-financial performance measurement into the traditional financial matrix, to provide a more balanced picture of organizational performance.

The increased importance of knowledge is due to the fact that effective management of knowledge in an organization brings many positive outcomes that lift the organization to the horizon of success and as identified by Witherspoon et al. (2013). According to Witherspoon, Bergner, Cockrell and Stone (2013) knowledge sharing is a building block for the success of the organization and it is being adopted as a survival strategy. The goal of knowledge sharing is to acquire knowledge for use in daily work processes to improve the collaboration and relationships among workers and to enhance the accumulation of knowledge for employees and the organisation as a whole (Lee and Yu, 2011).

As one knowledge-centered activity, knowledge sharing is the fundamental means through which employees can contribute to knowledge application, innovation, and ultimately the competitive advantage of the organization (Jackson, Chuang, Harden, Jiang, and Joseph, 2006). The potential benefits from knowledge sharing include that many organizations have invested considerable time and money into knowledge management (KM) initiatives towards the development of knowledge management systems (KMS) which use state-of-the-art technology to facilitate the collection, storage, and distribution of knowledge.

Very little discussions have contributed to the knowledge sharing practice in SMEs. Research on knowledge management practices in Turkish SMEs, as reported by Mohsam and Brakel (2011) emphasizes the importance of capturing and acquiring knowledge, which is gained by arranging and managing an organization's relationship with its customers, shareholders, suppliers, rivals, the state, the official institutions, society, and so on. Knowledge must be shared to improve learning and performance in organisations.

Vajjhala and Vucetic (2013) identified cultural factors as one of the major barriers to knowledge sharing in small and medium enterprises. Organisational leadership in SMEs needs to facilitate the creation of an organisational culture immune from the influence of social factors such as lack of trust and insecurity. **Vajjhala and Vucetic (2013)** further found out that SMEs also need to

focus on motivational issues and identify non-monetary mechanisms to motivate employees to actively participate in knowledge sharing activities in the firms.

Knowledge sharing can also assist SMEs in developing a sustainable competitive advantage by enhancing innovation and productivity in the firms (Vajjhala & Rojba, 2012). According to Mungai (2019) study on knowledge management practice and performance of SME, it was established that knowledge sharing significantly influenced the performance of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study pointed out that SME empress's knowledge sharing as a key driver to innovation, SME firm organized meetings to enable sharing of knowledge and SME encouraged knowledge sharing on current issues to achieve a technological advantage.

Knowledge sharing leads to higher organizational performance especially when knowledge sharing capabilities are combined with organizational resources (Widen-Wulff and Suomi, 2007). Ngah and Jusoff (2009) argue that SMEs should capitalize its internal knowledge which resides within its employees and thus help the SMEs to be creative and innovative, and this does enhance its performance.

Mohsam and van Brakel (2011) found that competitive advantage stems from a company's unique knowledge warehouse. The management of such a unique knowledge base, therefore, has the potential to make enterprises more competitive and profitable. The combination of competitiveness and profitability can lead to high-margin niche markets (REF). SME managers in German-speaking countries have come to realize and appreciate that the inventiveness and uniqueness of each of their knowledge workers would lead to customer satisfaction, as well as the success of the SME (Fink & Ploder 2009). Although these SMEs were often cash-strapped and did not have enough capital to invest in KM initiatives, it was necessary for them that their knowledge was leveraged optimally to achieve most of the goals of the enterprise.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. The target population for this study is Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME) in Ibadan. The study population comprises owners, senior managers, and managers of SMEs operating in the five selected Local Government Area (LGA) in Ibadan. A stratified random sampling technique was employed and a sample size of 150 SMEs was arrived at.

Questionnaire and interview schedule were used as the instruments for data collection. The questionnaire comprised of three sections; section one gathered respondents' demographic information; while section two gathered information relating to knowledge sharing practices and section three gathered information relating to SME performance. One hundred and twenty responses were received from the 150 copies of the questionnaire distributed to various respondents. These indicated that the response rate was 80%. The interview was conducted on 15 key informants. Survey items were developed from a review of the literature and pilot tested with 31 SMEs. The result of the pilot test based on the Cronbach's Alpha for knowledge sharing practices was 0.71, while performance was 0.84. Few changes were made to the final version of the questionnaire. Data collected were analysed using descriptive (frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (linear regression analysis).

Results and Discussion

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises that were into wholesales and service provision make up the majority, 34.2% and 28.3% respectively. All of the SME owners had formal education with the majority (50.8%) having a Higher National Diploma or a Bachelors' degree. Most of the SME had existed for up to 10 years contributing 72.5% of the total population.

Research Question One: How do SME in Ibadan practice knowledge sharing?

The distribution of knowledge sharing practices by SME was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Knowledge sharing practices by the SME

Knowledge sharing practices	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std.
The continuous interaction with customers creates a platform for knowledge sharing	54 (45.0%)	31 (25.8%)	18 (15.0%)	15 (12.5%)	2 (1.7%)	2.99	1.12
Training of employees is done to give them the knowledge required for the work	50 (46.6%)	30 (25.0%)	22 (18.3%)	15 (12.5%)	3 (2.5%)	2.92	1.16
Workplace encourages interaction between members of staff to foster knowledge sharing	44 (36.7%)	33 (27.5%)	22 (18.3%)	15 (12.5%)	6 (5.0%)	2.78	1.21
There is access to a dedicated knowledge repository in which employees can get knowledge for their work	26 (21.7%)	39 (32.5%)	40 (33.3%)	6 (5.0%)	9 (7.5%)	2.56	1.11
There are reports from past activities which gives employees the idea of work to be done	27 (22.5%)	35 (29.2%)	36 (30.0%)	17 (14.2%)	5 (4.2%)	2.52	1.16
Internal meetings are organized from time to time to update the knowledge needed for the work	27 (22.5%)	31 (25.8%)	40 (33.3%)	17 (14.2%)	5 (4.2%)	2.48	1.16
Master and apprentice relationship is created for the flow of knowledge in the organization	35 (29.2%)	31 (25.8%)	26 (23.3%)	18 (15.0%)	8 (6.7%)	2.44	1.24
Employees are given an avenue to ask questions and seek knowledge when they need it	27 (22.5%)	32 (26.7%)	33 (27.5%)	18 (15.0%)	10 (8.3%)	2.40	1.23
Mentor and mentee relationship is encouraged in the organization to aid knowledge sharing	27 (22.5%)	32 (26.7%)	29 (24.2%)	21 (17.5%)	11 (9.2%)	2.34	1.26
Division of employees into groups/teams to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing	30 (25.0%)	23 (19.2%)	41 (34.2%)	11 (9.2%)	15 (12.5%)	2.34	1.29
Avenue to network with experts is provided within the organization	19 (15.8%)	39 (32.5%)	31 (25.8%)	19 (15.8%)	12 (10.0%)	2.28	1.20
The organization creates opportunities for employees to attend seminars, workshops and conferences	23 (19.1%)	20 (16.7%)	23 (19.2%)	32 (26.7%)	22 (18.3%)	1.90	1.39

Table 1 indicates the knowledge sharing practices by SME. This was achieved following a scale of “Very often” to “Never” on a 5-point scale. The analysis based on the mean score revealed that the continuous interaction with customers creates a platform for knowledge sharing (2.99), training of employees (2.92), the interaction between members of staff (2.78), access to a dedicated knowledge repository (2.56), and reports from past activities (2.52) were the most commonly used mode of knowledge sharing. The organization creates opportunities for employees to attend seminars, workshops and conferences (1.90), an avenue to network with experts is provided within the organization (2.28) are the least used mode of knowledge sharing practises.

The interview result showed that knowledge sharing practices by the SME in Ibadan metropolis are by training of apprentice or employees, seminars, pep talk, online training and others.

To corroborate this, a manager in a cryptocurrency business during the interview stated that,

“...of course, this is a digital currency and it is not everyone that knows about it yet and we are the people promoting digital currency. For example, we admit students who want to know about cryptocurrency, give them knowledge, teach them about

how these things work, trade on it and how they can make money from it. Then we conduct seminars weekly to let people know what we do. We allow knowledge sharing so people know what we are doing ... ” (Male, 33)

A hairstylist also said,

“...no one is an island of knowledge, you can't know it all, they can't know it all, what you know, you give out, give onto others and it shall be given onto you. I make my apprentice understand that when am working, they stay and see what I am doing. I also share my knowledge with them, discuss some vital information to make the organization go forward... ” (Female, 29)

Research Question Two: What are the channels through which SME share knowledge?

The channels of the knowledge sharing practices by SME were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Channels of Knowledge Sharing by the SME

Channels of Knowledge Sharing Practices	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	Std.
Phone calls	68(66.6%)	22(18.3%)	15(12.5%)	15(12.5%)	0(0.0%)	3.18	1.08
Face-to-face instructions	68(56.6%)	23(19.2%)	12(10.0%)	15(12.5%)	2(1.7%)	3.16	1.14
Text messaging such as SMS, Whatsapp chat	52(41.3%)	32(26.7%)	17(14.2%)	15(12.5%)	4(3.3%)	2.93	1.18
Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	34(28.3%)	30(25.0%)	24(20.0%)	24(20.0%)	8(6.7%)	2.47	1.27
Official reports	23(19.1%)	27(22.5%)	29(24.2%)	22(18.3%)	11(9.2%)	2.36	1.30
Use of e-mails	26(21.6%)	33(27.5%)	23(19.2%)	26(21.7%)	12(10.0%)	2.28	1.30
Memo	23(19.1%)	25(20.8%)	28(23.3%)	22(18.3%)	22(18.3%)	2.03	1.37
Use of Company specialised Portals	27(22.5%)	19(15.8%)	24(20.0%)	18(15.0%)	32(26.7%)	1.91	1.51
Video files	11(9.1%)	20(16.7%)	29(24.2%)	20(16.7%)	40(33.3%)	1.50	1.33
Audio Files	10(8.2%)	17(14.2%)	30(25.0%)	22(18.3%)	41(34.2%)	1.42	1.30

Table 2 indicates the channels of knowledge sharing practices by SME. This was achieved following a scale of “Very often” to “Never” on a 5-point scale. The analysis based on the mean score revealed that phone calls (3.18), face-to-face instructions and directions (3.16), text messaging (2.93) and social media platforms (2.47) the most used channels of sharing knowledge practices. The result further illustrated that audio files (1.42), video files (1.50) and use of company specialised portals (1.91) rarely used.

The interview result showed that the channels of knowledge sharing practices by the SME in Ibadan metropolis are by face to face training, watching of video tutorials online, phone calls and social media platforms among others.

To corroborate this, a fashion designer during the interview stated that,

“...I train my employees all the time. They are always around me watching and learning how I sew. I also engage them in watching some videos online and also pictures in which we use to practice. If anyone has a new idea or has seen a new style, I encourage them to share it... ” (Female, 28)

A hairstylist also said,

“...no one is an island of knowledge, you can't know it all, they can't know it all, what you know, you give out, give onto others and it shall be given onto you. I make my

apprentice understand that when am working, they stay and see what I am doing. I also share my knowledge with them, discuss some vital information to make the organization go forward...” (Female, 29)

Research Question Three: What are the factors that facilitate knowledge sharing practices among the SME?

The various factors promoting knowledge sharing practices by SME were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Factors that Promote Knowledge Sharing by the SME

Factors that promote Knowledge sharing	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std.
Leadership style	36(30.0%)	52(43.3%)	20(16.7%)	10(8.3%)	2(1.7%)	2.92	0.96
Performance improvement	27(22.5%)	64(53.3%)	21(17.5%)	7(5.8%)	1(0.8%)	2.91	0.84
Organisational growth	25(20.8%)	63(52.5%)	25(20.8%)	5(4.2%)	2(1.7%)	2.87	0.85
Attitude towards sharing	25(20.8%)	59(49.2%)	26(21.7%)	6(5.0%)	4(3.3%)	2.79	0.94
Willingness to share	25(20.8%)	58(48.3%)	24(20.0%)	9(7.5%)	4(3.3%)	2.76	0.98
Organisational structure	20(16.7%)	59(49.2%)	34(28.3%)	6(5.0%)	1(0.8%)	2.76	0.82
Monetary incentives (bonuses, salary raise)	31(25.8%)	43(35.8%)	31(25.8%)	11(9.2%)	4(3.3%)	2.72	1.06
Non-monetary incentives	18(15.0%)	32(26.7%)	35(29.2%)	27(22.5%)	8(6.7%)	2.21	1.15

Table 3 indicates the factors promoting knowledge sharing practices by SME. This was achieved following a scale of “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree” on a 5-point scale. The analysis based on the mean score revealed that all the factors promoting knowledge sharing in the SME cut across from leadership style, performance improvement, organisational growth, attitude towards sharing, and willingness to share among others.

The interview result showed that knowledge sharing practices by the SME in Ibadan metropolis are driven by a few factors which include promotions by the organisation, feeding allowances from the boss, and words of encouragement, bonuses and raises.

To corroborate this, a manager in a cryptocurrency business during the interview stated that,

“...there's a lot of money you can make from the internet. In our company, we deal with cryptocurrency and if you transact business with me on a particular one, no matter how much the money you are paying me, I will give you a 50% or 20% depending on the package you are trading with ...” (Male, 33)

The coordinator at an educational training centre stated that,

“...What I do is that I increase the staff salary if I see they are hard working. Also, I do organize opportunities after their class to buy them snacks and soft drinks. We give them gifts for their birthday if you have been working well with us...” (Male, 35)

A fashion designer also said that,

“...Most times in the afternoon I can give my apprentice soft drink or other things that I have so that they will be able to do more. Because children of nowadays are not interested in learning but if you appraise them well, they will come to learn from you ...” (Female, 28)

Research Question Four: Will knowledge sharing practice contribute to the performance of SMEs in Ibadan?

Table 4 presented information on the contribution of knowledge sharing practices on the performance of SMEs in Ibadan.

Table 4: Coefficient Table for Research Question Four

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficient (B)	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	5.369	0.433		12.387	0.000
Knowledge sharing	0.033	0.012	0.246	2.750	0.007

Table 4 revealed that knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.246, p < 0.001$) has a direct and positive contribution to the performance of SMEs in Ibadan.

Discussion of Findings

Interaction with customers, training of employees, the interaction between members of staff, reports from past activities, master and apprentice relationship, access to a dedicated knowledge repository are the major practice of knowledge sharing in Ibadan. This aids knowledge flow in the organization. The result aligns with that of Ipe (2005) which shows that SME practice knowledge sharing in their business was a strategic resource in organizations and the management of this knowledge is considered critical to organizational success. Also, the study by Islam, Agarwal, & Ikeda (2017) also points to the direction of the finding.

Besides, sharing knowledge by SME requires various channels to be employed which ranges from face-to-face instructions and directions, phone calls, text messaging, social media platforms, official reports to the use of emails. This in line with the views of Jason and Lee-Partridge (2013) who also identified channels through which knowledge is shared to include; face-to-face interactions, telephone and e-mail.

The finding also showed that almost all the factors identified promoted knowledge sharing: leadership style, performance improvement, organizational growth, attitudes to owner and employees to sharing, willingness to share and monetary incentives. This is line with the study by Liana, Kathrin and Pia (2016) which identified various factors that promote knowledge sharing in the SME as monetary incentives, non-monetary incentives, leadership styles, management support, and willingness to share.

There was also a positive and significant contribution of knowledge sharing practices to SME performance. This is in line with the works of Widen-Wulff and Suomi (2007); Mugani (2019) whose studies found knowledge sharing to increase organizational performance. Also, Ngah and Jusoff (2009) asserted that knowledge sharing does enhance the performance of SMEs. It is therefore important for these SME to imbibe knowledge sharing practices as part of their business activities as it is a tool for performance improvement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Knowledge sharing was practised through interaction with customers, training of employees and interactions between members of staff. The channels through which knowledge is shared included face to face instructions and directions, phone calls and text messaging with leadership styles, performance improvement and organizational growth among the factors that promote knowledge sharing. Also, knowledge sharing contributed to the performance of SME in Ibadan.

In line with the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. SME should be provided with more financial support by various financial institutions so that they can afford, implement and maintain the technologies for performance.
2. Government and other information providers should engage the SME in enhancing their information retrieval skills as it will enable them to retrieve the right information.
3. SME owners should encourage knowledge sharing in their organization as it has the tendencies to influence performance.
4. Incentives should be made available to ensure there is a flow of information in the organization.
5. SMEs should imbibe knowledge sharing practices as part of their business activities as a to improve an organisation's performance.

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