

MANAGERS' INFORMATION NEEDS AND UTILIZATION BY SMES IN A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This study sought to establish the entrepreneurs' information needs and utilization on the one hand, and the influence of each of these on organizational productivity on the other hand in twelve selected local government areas of Lagos State. Self administered questionnaires were used to gather data from 236 entrepreneurs from 12 local government areas in Lagos State. The findings from this paper enumerate the need for accurate and timely information, proper information utilization and effective communication in the organization. As part of the paper recommendations, entrepreneurs were encouraged to be concerned with dissemination of information, and to create more relationship between communication process and employees' productivity so as to enhance organizational productivity.

Keywords: *Information, information needs, information utilization, entrepreneur and productivity*

Introduction

The entrepreneurial system of today has become increasingly complex. These complexities have brought about increase in the spate of modern computer interconnectivity installation that would enable entrepreneurs achieve communication of data and multimedia over intranets, extranets and with the whole world, over the Internet. It has been realized that management is in dire need of not only computer literacy, but what could be aptly referred to as "information literacy", that is, knowing how to locate, analyze, store and use information.

Organizations have become more complex, global and knowledge-driven. Uncertainty, globalization, and rapid technological change all exert pressure on the organizational environment. Managers

must ensure that their organizations are continuously innovative and improving to achieve a competitive edge. Porter (1985) notes that, competitive ability is at the core of the success or failure of an organization. In this environment, information is an extremely valuable resource (Drucker, 1993). Managers need information to make decisions quickly. Information is a strategic weapon for adapting to the turbulent environment. In an environment of uncertainty, information has a potential competitive advantage for enterprises. Nigerian enterprises, in Lagos metropolitan areas operate in a global market and must withstand the competitive pressure from other producers and from new alternative technologies and products. Managers therefore need an input of competitive information and must manage and utilise this information.

Popoola (2005) postulates the importance of information as being the fifth factor of production. In analysis, utilization, communication, security and retrieval of information, accurate information has become one of the most important attributes and tools of the modern organizational manager.

In addition, information plays an important role in life-long economic sector. This is because of strong reliance on information. In realizing the tasks of the society, individuals and groups need adequate, relevant, timely, accurate and reliable information. A precondition to meeting the above conditions, however, is the knowledge of the users' need in special field of the person to be supplied and when information is to be supplied. This is what Bruce (2002) also calls *anticipated information need*; conjecturing the way the information object will find its use in resolving the information needs of a patron. Thus, if information is to be used, it must be provided with the individual user in mind, not on the basis of what is convenient for the information provider.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Investigate the express and latent information needs of SMEs in Lagos State.
2. Identify the various methods and approaches used in acquiring information.

3. Identify the challenges encountered in the process of acquiring the needed information.
4. Identify the impacts of information utilization on organizational productivity
5. Examine the importance of market research to the growth of SMEs

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to determine the information needs and utilization patterns of SMEs in a competitive economy in Lagos State. It has become imperative that the level and nature of information needs of SMEs in Lagos State, their utilization of information, whether the required information is adequately and appropriately disseminated to the entrepreneurs should be studied. This is even more so knowing fully well that Lagos State is the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria. This is with a view to improving the overall system of information transfer by making available the right information to the right person in the right quantity at the right time. No one can deny the fact that information utilization can contribute to organizational effectiveness and efficiency. It is in the light of above general subject that this work probed, examined and analyzed the information needs and utilization of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Lagos State.

Research Questions

Answers to the following questions were provided within the context of the stated problem:

1. What are the latent and express information needs of SMEs in Lagos?
2. What are the various methods and approaches used in acquiring information?
3. Are there any problems encountered in the process of acquiring the needed information?
4. What are the effects of information utilization on organizational productivity?
5. Can market research be of any importance to the growth of SMEs?

Definition of Terms

Information is interrelated or structured data, including collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, facts, messages, opinions and comments required in order to react knowledgeably as well as to be in a position to take appropriate decisions.

Information need is a condition in which certain information contributes to the achievement of a genuine or legitimate purpose.

Information utilization is the way entrepreneurs use and convey their gathered and processed data to achieve stated organizational effectiveness.

Entrepreneur is a term used to denote the organizing factor in production. The entrepreneur is responsible for such economic decision as determining what to produce and how much to produce.

Productivity is the relationship between valued outputs and valued inputs. The irrelativeness of the term 'productivity' makes the measurement to be viewed along different lines. In this study, productivity is defined in terms of entrepreneurs' performance as measured by the Entrepreneur Productivity Terms.

Literature Review

It is no longer news today that we are in a new information age, characterized by the existence of information techniques. As prominent as information technology is today, it is not equally new that SMEs are confronted with problems, which may be traced back to poor management of information. However, an accurate, timely, availability and use of information would reduce the common problems confronting SMEs. This study sought to establish the pattern of information utilization and information perception and the influence of these on entrepreneurial productivity.

The Concept of SMEs

The concept of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises is difficult to define, because there is no legal or single clear-cut definition of what constitutes SMEs in Nigeria (Ozigbo, 2002). Ekpeyong and Nyong (1992) submit that there is hardly any unique and universally accepted definition of an SME because the classification of business into small, medium or large is a subjective and qualitative judgment. Each country

tends to adopt definition based on the needs of public policy and the level of economic development among others.

Attempts however, have been made at defining SMEs. For instance, the 1992 review by the National Council in Industrial Standard defines SMEs as enterprises with total cost (including working capital but excluding cost of land) above N31 million but not exceeding N150 million with a labour size of between 11 and 100 employees. *This day online* (2003) goes further to show how the Small and Medium Industries and Equity Investment (SMIEIS's) established by the Bankers' committee in Nigeria as any enterprise with a minimum asset base of N200 million excluding land and working capital and with the number of staff employed not less than 10 or more than 300.

Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (2003) in Pakistan sees SMEs primarily from the number of personnel employed and the value of productive assets employed in the enterprise.

Neck and Nelson (1987) state that most definitions of SMEs appear to be governed by the interest of the perceiver, the purpose of the definition and the stage of development of the particular environment in which the definition is to be employed. They further argue that there is no lower limit to the size of small enterprise and that where the problem arises is when attempting to establish an acceptable upper limit for the definition. Oyewole (2004) however, citing European Union classifies SMEs into three groups as follows:

1. Micro-enterprises: between 0 and 9 employees
2. Small-enterprises: between 10 and 99 employees
3. Medium-enterprises: between 100 and 499 employees

Osa-Afiana (2002) reports that the Nigerian National Council on Industry (NNCI) adopted the following classification of SMEs in July 2001:

1. Micro/cottage-scale: between 0 and 10 employees
2. Small Scale: between 11 and 100 employees
3. Medium Scale: between 101 and 300 employees

It is obvious from the above background that there is no specific and generally accepted definition. However, there are various parameters for classifying SMEs (Iheama-Chanma, 2000). Even these parameters are equally not generally accepted as they change

depending on circumstances and specific objectives. The parameters are as follows:

- Financial parameters
- Labour level
- Level of technology and management structure

Pattern of Information Needs by Business Enterprises

An informed mind is an enriched mind. Every rational being needs some information for his day-to-day existence, activities and well-being. No society or organization can grow beyond its level of information awareness, acquisition and appropriation. This informs the existence of SMEs as an indispensable back-bone of any nation's economy, which needs information for its survival.

Okwilagwe (1993) stresses that, research indicates that the average citizen in the community, be it in academics or business, has common needs for information in coping with everyday societal pressure; he is ignorant of what information is available and where to seek it; information available especially in the suburban community is not adequate to meet his needs; and information sources available are not particularly helpful in meeting his information needs. The information may be very simple or complex. But it is a vital ingredient in the process of allocating resources to where they are needed. However, the conceptualization of information need has been a difficult task.

Information needs have been seen differently by different people. McGarry (1981) states that, what constitutes information is decided by people who know the objectives of the organization. In an organisation as SME, all the staff, in different ways, directly or indirectly, help in achieving the goals of the enterprises.

Oladipupo (1993), citing Derr (1983), agrees that information need is a condition in which certain information contributes to the achievement of a genuine or legitimate purpose. Derr maintains that, since it is difficult to pinpoint information purpose because it involves determining values and measuring the extent of contribution of information to any information purpose, the determination of information needs to possess conceptual information needs and utilization pattern of the SMEs. The pattern of their information needs is supported by their anxiety to acquire information to solving problems

posed by the task of the various capacities of an information giver or taker.

Attempts have been made to assess the pattern of information needs by SMEs. Oladipupo (1993), again citing Daniel (1967) makes it clear that the best way to find users' information needs is to separate the information according to the level of decision-making for which it is needed.

In his 'information needs of female entrepreneurs', Nelson (1987) states that women approach the entrepreneurial experience with disadvantages rooted in education and experience. He further says that a tendency for entrepreneurs to study non-business school subjects and to work as employees in "soft skill" areas has led some researchers to contend that entrepreneurs are hampered by internal barriers to success. This barrier has cost many entrepreneurs' productivity and pains. Nelson further states that, the effect of such barriers might be expected to be greatest during the start-up phase, when knowledge of a vast array of topics is vital to the launching and survival of a venture. Those who lack background in the language and methods of business, he submits, may be doubly penalized by not knowing which questions to ask and whom to ask.

Franklin and Goodwin (1983) submit that small business owners "tend to use and consider most important those information sources that are convenient". These information sources are what the entrepreneurs need to start-up their business. Sourcing for information has been considered "a critical problem" for the SMEs at infancy.

In the perspective of UNIDO (2003), SMEs' need is accessibility to adequate information to enhance productivity and facilitate market access. They agree that the rapid advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs) are having far reaching effects on business organizations. The amount of information available on-line is increasing exponentially. Society today is aptly termed an information society, in which information plays an increasingly important role in all aspects of our lives. When market shifts and technologies proliferate, when activities multiply and become obsolete overnight, successful institutions (SMEs) are those that consistently use information to create and apply new knowledge. When information is strategically handled, decision making and knowledge building in SMEs become less

cumbersome. In fact, it is to be considered an essential resource or need.

More so, access to information is insufficient, SMEs need tailor made information solutions, that is, business information resources that assess, verify and apply information to a specific business problem.

In addition to the above, in most developed countries, business information sources are provided by commercial entities which are predominantly private sector – driven and operated (UNIDO, 2003). They openly compete with one another on quality and are continually tuned to the evolving need of their client. The services are provided to their clients in the form of value-added services, that is, as business solutions, using national or international sources of information.

The advent and influx of mini and micro-computers has brought an opportunity to small businesses, an opportunity that has increased substantially, because of the possibility of computerization of information systems. Through the use of a mini or micro-computer, a small business can develop an information system that will allow better and faster decisions to be made. Computerization of the information system is what Taylor and Meinhardt (1987) cited by Adebayo (2007) refer to as “computer information needs”. They further stress however, that the process of developing an appropriate information system and selecting appropriate hardware usually presents more difficulties for small businesses than large ones. The reasons being that, a small business is unlikely to have an in-house expert. Secondly, a small business usually has fewer resources than a larger firm to allocate and develop a computerized information system.

Management has been said to carry the bulk of the responsibility of any organization. And any organization (SME) that lacks efficient and effective management is preferred to be dead. Alter (1996) sees management as what the SMEs need from the activities of the managers, and links them to both formal information systems and other information sources that managers use. He looks at managers from their types of responsibilities.

Mintzberg (1973) groups into three the roles of managers in SMEs. They are interpersonal, informational and decisional. In interpersonal roles, the manager plays the role of a figure-head for the organizational effort, leads in meetings, and liaises with departments. Informational roles include monitoring activities, disseminating the

principles behind the new organization and serving as organizational spokesperson. Decisional roles could include the entrepreneur defining the new goals, the negotiator resolving conflicts, and the disturbance handler.

In conclusion, the pattern of information needs by SMEs is determined by the managers, by identifying factors that are critical to the success of their contribution to the organisational goals. The pattern backed up with right utilization of the information that will culminate into business productivity.

Information Utilization and Entrepreneurs Productivity

For information to be useful in any SME organization, it must be first of all gathered. Aiyepoku (1980) in his perception on utilization of information by policy makers in Nigeria says that a complete lack of a coordination unit for information gathering, storage and retrieval for use of policy makers made them not to have a high level of information consciousness.

In addition, making information useful for the SMEs in organization, Falola (2003) says, it must be communicated to the right quarters. Communication, in essence, is a process of exchanging information. It is also a process whereby the ideas, images, feelings, emotions, perceptions and opinions of one person are transmitted to another.

Windahl, Signitzer and Olson (2006) define communication as a process in which the participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding. After acquiring information, utilizing it to achieve any stated SME's or organizational goals or to achieve employee administrative effectiveness is very important or vital. However, before information can be used, it must be complete, error-free and adequate. In any organization, a high correlation is achieved between information adequacy and managerial or administrative efficiency.

The quality of any information that will be useful depends on accuracy and verifiability- the two go hand in hand (Falola, 2003). The accuracy of information refers to the degree to which information is error-free. Completeness of information refers to the degree in which it is free from omissions, that is, all information required for a decision should be available. The timeliness of information on its own refers to

the time sensitivity of information; while relevance of information refers to the appropriateness of the information as input for a particular decision.

For any organizational goals to be met there must be free access to information, which will enhance its utilization. Accessibility to information is viewed as an important factor in determining harmonious relationship, which ultimately affects organizational goals. Adimorah's (1977) opinion is that, management needs information at every level to formulate plans, refine decision-making and help makers to anticipate and resolve problems. He further recommends that information should be provided in the form suitable for its use and that it should be stored in such away as to enhance accessibility.

In any organization, SMEs inclusive, a high correlation is achieved between information adequacy (culminating in its use), and managerial or administrative efficiency (the key in productivity) (Falola 2003). The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines productivity as a degree of effectiveness of industrial management in utilizing the facilities for production especially the effectiveness in utilizing labour and equipment.

As quoted by Ndiyo (2003), productivity is a quantitative relationship between output and input (Oyeranti, 2000). As long as the basic concept refers to the relationship between the quantity/quality of goods and services produced, this definition of productivity remains the same, regardless of the type of production system. In other words, productivity is a ratio of some measure of output to some index of inputs used or the ratio between the quantities of resources used in the course of production. Ndiyo (2003) submits that this concept of productivity goes to imply the efficiency with which resources are utilized in production.

And entrepreneur productivity is defined as a product of effective information utilization. This implies that entrepreneur productivity is dependent on the degree to which information is utilized within an organization. One can submit that the inability to adequately process and utilize information would lead to a decline in entrepreneur's productivity.

Productivity is measured by how efficiently resources are transformed from input to output, which can also be measured in

relation to each of the factors of production: Productivity of labour, productivity of capital, productivity of land and productivity of the entrepreneur. This makes productivity an encapsulating concept that is comprehensively distinctive.

It is common, however, in productivity to see emphasis being placed on labour productivity, reveals Ndiyo (2002). Oyeranti (2000) reasons that one justification for the special emphasis on labour productivity may be, because, labour is a universal key resource. But recently, advancement in information technology seems to suggest that labour productivity may actually be subordinate to the productivity of capital and other scarce resources such as energy or raw materials. Therefore, entrepreneur productivity is better perceived as the end result of a complex social process involving science, research, training, technology, management, production plant, trade union, as well as labour among other inter-related factors. It is a comprehensive measure that is concerned with efficiency and effectiveness simultaneously.

SME growth through Market Research in a Competitive Economy

The goal of every business is to make profit, but many businesses make losses even where there are ample opportunities. Conducting a market research before going into the desired line of business helps the business owner to break even and make profit within a short period. Businesses are not likely to miss their profit and growth targets with adequate market research.

Ekwere (2011) defines that market research is the process of gathering and analyzing information to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems, as well as generate sales. Through market research, a business owner can refine and evaluate his marketing activities, monitor marketing performance and continuously improve marketing processes and efforts. Market research basically involves collecting and analyzing information about the target market, which are the potential customers of a business (Ogunkunle, 2011), cited by Ekwere (2011). He says it involves gathering information about your competitors as well as the environment in general. The data may be obtained from a research that has already been done or by getting information directly from people (conducting a survey).

By conducting a market research, a company can gain invaluable information. In turn, the company can make better decisions resulting in a higher degree of success and profit. Since the business environment in Nigeria is becoming more competitive, this kind of research is a high priority for all types of businesses and organizations. Ekwere says that market research can provide answers and guidance to many marketing questions such as:

- Is there demand for your products and services?
- What are the preferences and needs of your potential customers?
- What is the size of your market or pool of potential customers?
- How many other businesses are offering similar products or services?

By the time a business owner can get answers to some of these questions, he is on his way to succeeding in his business.

However, it is pertinent to note that the key to market research is not just gathering data but also knowing what to do with the data that have been collected. Information gathered in this way can be categorized into qualitative which is more investigative and involves a fewer number of people, such as focus groups. The purpose for this is to understand buyers' attitudes and beliefs (Bamkole, 2011). He says that quantitative information, on the other hand, is used to draw specific conclusions and involves a large number of respondents. The researcher makes use of surveys and questionnaires, he says, adding that if the entrepreneur can afford a professional market research, it will work to his advantage.

Researching your competitors can also give you valuable insight into your market, including what existing marketing gaps there are. There is also need for consideration of strengths and weaknesses of your competitor's product, price, promotion, innovation and quality of service, and this will help the entrepreneur to draw up conclusions on the best way to handle his business.

Ikemba (2011) however, warns entrepreneurs that a few things could go wrong during marketing research, adding that business owners should, therefore, be careful while conducting their research. He says that financial constraints may limit the amount of research activity, leading to erroneous conclusion, adding that sometimes research activities are put on hold before they are completed due to

lack of funds. It is therefore, important that it is taken into consideration before embarking on the research.

The attempt by companies and firms, most times, to do too much in such a little time is another constraint of market research. According to Ekwere, such entrepreneurs end up taking shortcuts and sometimes make use of out-of-date secondary data, which may produce the wrong results.

Design

This is a survey. The research instrument used to collect data was questionnaire. The purpose was to collect adequate data which would give accurate and vivid description between variables. The population of the study was made of 236 respondents in twelve local government councils out of twenty local government councils in Lagos State. A non-probability sample of these business enterprises was selected using purposive sampling. Bailey (1987) states that purposive sampling entails the researcher using his/ her own judgment in deciding on which participants to use. He picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study.

Research Question 1: What are the latent and express information needs of SMEs in Lagos?

Table 1: Percentage Distribution on Pattern of Information Needs of SMEs

	Yes	No
Do you need formal education for your business?	190 (80.51%)	46(19.49%)
Is computer literacy important for your establishment	189 (80.08%)	47(19.92%)
How much of environmental knowledge do you need?	182 (77.12%)	54(22.88%)
Do you need information to survive?	200 (84.75%)	36(15.25%)
Is information accessibility vital for the survival of your firm?	197 (83.47%)	39(16.53%)
How important is effective and efficient management control system to your business?	207 (87.72%)	29(12.28%)

Do you need good communication to survive in your organization?	202 (85.59%)	34(14.41%)
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Note: Does not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

From the table above, the need for formal education has 80.51% of the respondents, 80.08% think that computer literacy is important for the growth of SMEs, 77.19 believe that environmental knowledge is vital, while 84.75 think that information is most important. 83.47% of the respondents say that accessibility of information is important, 87.71% which is the highest of the respondents say that efficient and effective management system is most paramount and 85.59% conclude that there is no survival in any organization without good communication. From this interpretation, the highest need of SMEs, without which SMEs will fail, is good management control system. This is corroborated by Anthony and Govindarajan (2000) in their "management control system". The control function helps business management in various ways. It guides the management in achieving pre-determined goals. The control process also ensures the efficiency of various functions. The shortcoming in various fields is also reported for taking corrective measures. Control provides basis for future action (Kay,2009).

Research Question 2: What are the various methods and approaches used in acquiring information?

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents on methods of acquiring information by SMEs.

	Yes	No
Daily newspaper.	150(63.56%)	86(36.44%)
Social acquaintances.	203(86.02%)	33(13.98%)
Competitors.	193(81.78%)	43(18.22%)
Agency wire services (e.g. Newswire, Reuters, etc.).	140(59.33%)	96(40.67%)
Press Digest.	136(57.63%)	100(42.37%)
Government publications.	130(55.08%)	106(44.92%)
Radio and television	187(79.24%)	49(20.76%)
Libraries	117(49.57%)	119(50.43%)
Internet	156(66.11%)	80(33.89%)

Note: Does not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

From the above table, 86.02% of the respondents say that, the source of information that is most used is acquaintances, followed by the competitors that rank in 81.78%. The remaining sources are important but none is as important as the acquaintances and competitors. This is what Ifijeh (2010) calls business associates and an important source of information for the managers. The reason for frequently using the personal sources of information may be attributed to the fact that these people are known to the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. Ntsala (2000) in her study found that small businesses rely on personal sources because of their ease of accessibility of information and the fact that they communicate in languages understood by the majority of people. However, one wonder in the above table is the low patronage of the library for information, this could be because of the educational qualification of the entrepreneurs, they are not wholly literate (Nelson, 1987), and there are no libraries or information centers to support and advance them by making business information available to them.

Research Question 3: Are there any problems encountered in the process of acquiring the needed information?

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents on effect of information utilization on organizational productivity.

		Yes	No
1.	Adaptability-flexibility	180(76.27%)	56(23.73%)
2.	Productivity	180(76.27%)	56(23.73%)
3.	Satisfaction	173(73.31%)	63(26.69%)
4.	Profitability	177(75%)	59(25%)
5.	Absence of strain	165(69.92%)	71(30.08%)
6.	Control of environment	164(69.49%)	72(30.51%)
7.	Development	170(72.04%)	66(27.96%)
8.	Efficiency	182(77.1%)	54(22.88%)
9.	Employee retention	182(77.12%)	54(22.88%)
10.	Growth	196(83.05%)	40(16.95%)
11.	Survival	189(80.08%)	47(19.92%)

Note: Does not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

The above table shows the effect of information utilization on the organizational productivity. The highest; growth and survival 83% and 80.1% respectively shows that for any organization to grow and survive, information is important. UNESCO (1979) as quoted by Kamoru (2003) posits that information gives the possessor power and influence over and above the authority he may be legally vested with. De Villiers and DuToit (1995) found in their study that information makes the difference in the enterprise survival against competitors.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents on problems encountered in information acquisition.

	Yes	NO
Poor time management	172(72.88%)	64(27.12%)
Poor organization of information	170(72.04%)	66(27.96%)
Lack of adequate infrastructure	207(87.72%)	29(12.28%)
Bad corporate information policy	189(80.08%)	47(19.92%)
Poor information retrieval skills	197(83.47%)	39(16.53%)
Ineffective corporate library services	188(79.66%)	48(20.34%)
Inadequate current information materials in the library	179(75.85%)	57(24.15%)

Note: Does not total to 100%, as respondents could select more than one option.

From the above table, all the variables that stand as problems encountered in the acquisition of information are present, the highest being lack of adequate infrastructure and stands at 87.71%. With these, SMEs may not achieve much in their ways to greatness. Ozigbo (2000) highlights inadequate infrastructural facilities such as road, water, electricity, communication and security as major constraints to SME development. And until there are "strides in roads, public power (as against generating set) and water supply, I dare say that Nigeria SMEs will continue to run on the spot" (Bankole, 2004).

Research Question 5: Can market research be of any importance to the growth of SMEs?

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents on Importance of Market Research to SMEs

	Yes	No
Do you conduct customer research?	197(83.47%)	39(16.53%)
Do you conduct competitor research?	207(87.72%)	29(12.28%)
Do you audit the market?	170(72%)	66(28%)
Do you carry out industry research?	170(72%)	66(28%)
DO you carry out frequent staff/employee research?	203(86.02%)	33(13.98%)
Is information gathered of any importance to your organisation?	210(88.98%)	26(11.02%)
Do you audit the information gathered?	172(72.88%)	64(27.12%)

From the above table, it is discovered that the respondents reacted positively to how important information gathered is to their organization, and that stands at 210(88.98%). This is because information is representative of a resource which requires effective management (Ellis et al, 1993). In an attempt to make information useful to any given organization, Ajayi (2004), posits that equipment, utilization, space, materials and information can be measured, and this can be done through the frequency of use rather than percentage of use. While the lowest stands at 170(72%) for both audit of market and industry research.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The variables studied are pattern of information needs and utilization by SMEs in Lagos State. From the data collected, it was established that the identified information available, has joint significant effect on organizational productivity. More so, the data collected revealed that pattern of information has a relative impact on organizational productivity.

In view of the results of this study, having the growth of SMEs and development in mind, there is need to make some

recommendations which can enhance effectiveness in information acquisition, utilization and dissemination for SME's productivity.

- The provision of adequate and accurate information technologists (manpower) will ensure greater productivity in the SMEs.
- The entrepreneur should be concerned with the dissemination of information, communication process and they should seek for themselves the possible relationship between communication process and employees' productivity so as to enhance organizational productivity.
- There is need to understand the information needs as regards market analysis for SMEs so as to enhance organizational productivity.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have some implications for SMEs in Lagos and other enterprises operating their businesses in Nigeria as a whole. It is abundantly clear that Small and Medium Scale Enterprises should begin to realize that information is a resource and can be used to gain sustainable competitive advantage.

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