

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focused on knowledge management and performance of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) in south- south Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to examine the effect of knowledge conversion (KC) on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises; determine the effect of knowledge sharing (KSH) on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises; evaluate the effect of knowledge utilization (KU) on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises, assess the effect of knowledge storing (KST) on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises and to investigate the effect of knowledge acquisition (KA) on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises. Research questions were designed and hypotheses were also formulated and tested accordingly. We employed both primary and secondary sources of data. We have a population size of 7,861 proprietors/proprietresses of selected SMEs (fashion industry) in the area under study. A sample size of 366 was drawn using National Education Association (NEA) sample formula. 366 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants, but, 353 copies were found valid for the study, and data was subjected to Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Results of the analysis revealed that the performance of SMEs is sensitive to knowledge management variables. Again, knowledge management variables: conversion, sharing, utilization, storing and acquisition) positively and significantly influenced performance of small and medium scale enterprises, except knowledge utilization which had a negative insignificant effect on SMEs performance. The study concluded that there was a positive significant relationship between knowledge conversion, sharing, storing and acquisition (independent variables) and dependent variables while negative insignificant relationship existed between knowledge utilization and SMEs performance. Based on the conclusion of the study, we recommended that SMEs should make provision for expertise to guide and educate them accordingly on knowledge codification for efficient performance. Also, for proper sharing of knowledge among employee and employers irrespective of the size of the organization, there should be high level of cooperation. Besides, small and medium scale (SMEs) should come up with policies that can sustain employees involvement in knowledge management practices in order to improve their ability to maintain flexible workforce and gain competitive advantage.

Keywords: Knowledge conversion (kc), Knowledge sharing (ksh) knowledge actualization (ka), knowledge storing (kst)

Introduction

The twenty-first century has been tagged, the “Entrepreneurship age”. This is because nations are being shaped by entrepreneurs, men and women who have taken their destinies in their own hands by risking their resources (time, money, energy etc) in establishing and running their own businesses (Oghojator, Kuye, Sulamon and Okonji, 2009). They further state that the world all over from United States of America (USA) to Asia, United Kingdom (UK) to Africa and Australia and to America, Entrepreneurship has been promoted as an effective means of

stimulating economic growth through knowledge enlightenment and information technology. The gains and successes that are attached to the operation of small and medium scale enterprises all over the world are made manifest through knowledge management, training, orientation and enlightenment campaign. Efficient performance of every organization undoubtedly is based on knowledge acquired and well managed.

Knowledge management is of immense importance to SMEs in attaining the desired best practices as well as the predetermined goals and objectives. The application of knowledge acquired, as well as being able to manage it in order to become expert in the field of endeavour remain critical and fundamental to the success and development of small and medium scale industries in Nigeria. Companies possessing more knowledge are surely successful but companies that use their knowledge in the right way and know what it is in terms of strategy significant to the organization could be more successful (Bierly, W.U., 2013; Hu; Rdzi, Kheivollahpour & Radu, 2013).

Differences in performance of individuals, groups and organizations are based on understanding and knowledge acquired. Furthermore, new knowledge well distributed through the company and incorporated into goods and improvement of technology can cause companies to be successful (Holsapple & Wu, 2013). Knowledge acquired and well managed is an important tool for innovation and creativity. The application of skill acquired in order to become expert in their field of endeavour remains an issue. Skill can be acquired or learned to do manual work, but expertise is based on knowledge acquired after a period of learning with certain aptitude and talents (Alaezi, 2009).

Organizations, especially small and medium scale enterprises for many decades move from bank to bank, from individuals to groups, from one financial house to another seeking for fund, unknowingly to them that their major challenge is not lack of fund (capital), but lack of knowledge management. According to Omotayo (2015), organizations no longer compete solely on the basis of financial capital and strength, rather knowledge is the new competitive advantage in business and in actuality the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate is now gritty, amid other factors by the quantum and superiority of knowledge stock formed harnessed and functional in the construction procedure in the industrialized sector of the nation. Furthermore, many organizations have enough capital and resource that suppose move them to the next level of operation, but the know-how pose as a challenge, because knowledge has to do with experience, operational know-how, insight about an industry and business processes.

Knowledge management is made up of sets of strategies and practices required to obtain/capture, create, store and disseminate experience and knowledge within the confine of the organization. Kianto, Ritala, Spender & Vanhala (2014) state that knowledge is more efficient and valuable than nature assets and the organizations that possess the best information or maintain it will be the most successful in this age. For effective management of knowledge in an organization, Juan and Mercedes (2006) maintain that internal knowledge transfer should be considered so as to provide value for Organizations. The importance of knowledge management as far as the growth of SMEs in Nigeria is concerned can never be overestimated. Infact knowledge management remains a strong tool needed for organization to stand the test of time especially small and medium scale enterprises.

Knowledge has strong relationship with adaptability to business environment. Many scholars have argued that many, SMEs could not cope with the immediate business environment because they lack understanding of the environment. Entrepreneurs are void of the details of

information technology, capacity building, knowledge/experience sharing, knowledge utilization, and provisions of knowledge acquisition. By implication, succeeding in that business environment might not be possible. In other words, having knowledge of business and being able to manage it make provision for proper adaptability to every business outfit. Organization's ability to harness knowledge management in an effective manner to their advantage and continue to learn from its business is highly favoured to effective performance and gain sustainable competitive advantage (Moss, Joseph & Augustine, 2010).

In the past years, different studies have addressed the issue of how knowledge management influences organizational performance and have indicated that there is a positive relationship between efficient and effective application of knowledge management and organization performance (Gold et al, 2001; Hasana N- Hawari, 2003; Lee & Lee, 2007). Most studies and research on SMEs have shown that lack of training and knowledge management is a major cause of failure of these categories of businesses (Berryman, 1983; Dunn & Chea Than, 1993). This necessitates the critical examination of effect of knowledge management on the performance of SMEs especially fashion designing industries with the view of proffering necessary solutions to enhance better performance.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, the challenges of low performance of small and medium scale industries has been attributed to poor and inadequate financing. Several enterprises that are supposed to be flourishing today have closed down not because of lack of finance, human and material resources, good support and assistance, but because of lack of knowledge and how the knowledge should be utilized and managed adequately. According to Zack (2003), knowledge is the most important resources for gaining competitive advantage. SMEs especially fashion industries could not stand the test of time simply because of lack of knowledge. Knowledge management entails strategic activities which ensure that organization have the knowledge to the things which they are responsible for in a rapidly changing environment (Alvesson and karreman, 2001). Most studies and research of SMEs have shown that lack of training and knowledge management is a major cause of failure of these categories of businesses (Berryman, 1983;]. Knowledge flows and networks within organization and between different organizations are the key elements in successful innovation processes (Manley & Mcfallein, 2002). Efficient knowledge management has a positive influence on organizational performance (Drucker, 1994). There is no flow in the performance of organization, inefficient, low productivity, stagnation, lack of employee retention, lack of innovations and abandonment of businesses, all boil down to lack of knowledge management.[Dunn & chea 1993]

Besides, Okeke (2012) & Jelena et al (2012) opine that positive relationship exist between knowledge management and SMEs performance, while Chan and Pan, (2012) have a negative opinion on the relationship between the variables. As a result, there is difference, divergent and inconsistency in the author's ideas regarding to knowledge management and performance. Sequel to that, we are poised to evaluate the effect of knowledge management on the performance of SMEs in South-South Nigeria if there is positive or negative influence.

Theoretical Framework

The study anchored on capability perspective theory which is based on key role of strategy management in suitably adapting, integrating, and reconfiguring internal and external organizational skills, wealth and purposeful competences to match the necessities of a changing environment (Teecaetal, 1997). Because of the abilities and capabilities of the business, the theorist states that provision is made for business to become expert, and superior at one

capability enabling them utilize their asset internally and externally in the most competitive way or manner. The theory embraces all forms of skills and knowledge acquisition management towards achieving organization goal. The capability of an individual, group or organization is dependent on the knowledge acquired and that is well managed. There is no organization that can specialize or become expert of what she does not have knowledge about. Knowledge management pave a very wide door for capabilities which automatically leads to organizational performance. In order words, there inter – relationship between knowledge management and capability principles. Organization competitive advantage is anchored on their knowledge development. Most firms today, solely depends on their knowledge management to penetrate the market succeeding more than their competitors even at the international level. According to day (1994), capability serves as the glue that binds dissimilar resources together and allows them to be deployed to utmost advantage and the predominant view in post reserve work is that capabilities are positively allied with performance. Although a number of studies report that capabilities could turn into core rigidities and might even have a negative influence on some aspects of firm performance (Atuahese – Gima 2005, Hansen, 2005).

Furthermore, marketing capability span those processes established within organization to sense customer needs through effective information, acquisition, management and use to interpret the course of customers needs and preferences. In addition, marketing capability involves the processes that allow a firm to build sustainable relationship with customer through stronger customer interaction with a firm or its brands (DEZ, 1994). Capability is all embracing in the sense that it can be applicable in all sectors. The resource-based view of the firm reason that resource and the capabilities that facilitate the exploitation of these resources are the elementary reasons why some firms execute better than others (Teece et al., 1992). The capabilities of every organization is made manifest through their output and also their know - how.

Foley (2005) carried out a study on the conceptualization and integration of marketing and learning capabilities at the University of Mississippi: implication for organizational performance found that market information, processing and learning capabilities have significant positive effect on dynamic marketing capabilities, which in turn, have a positive effect on customer satisfaction, market effectiveness and financial performance. Capability theory agrees that knowledge and its application is very important in improving performance of organization. Teece et al., (1992) maintain along with Eisenharut and Martin (2000) that capability make up the abilities to create and utilize resources to improve performance. Many enterprises today are void of knowledge which has contributed to their low or non – performance particularly small and medium sales enterprises. Specialization/expertise in an organization that is based on knowledge that is well managed is applicable to all organizations irrespective of the size. The theory further emphasized the utilization and application of the firm specific existing knowledge in the creation of new knowledge to enhance productivity and development, which is the main concern of this study. Also according to the theory, knowledge capabilities include expertise, knowledge documents, application, acquisition, lessons, learned, policy and procedures towards achieving goals.

This study is also based on National Culture theory of small and medium sales enterprises (SMES) management practices by Graham (2014). The theorist analysis on cultural theory and how it applies to organizational culture and developing management practice. He further maintain that for an organization to grow and prosper in any business environment, good management practice must be put in place and management should concentrate on getting

things done through people, and in order to accomplish this, one has to know what need to be done and the people involved (Idemobi, 2010).

The study acknowledges National culture theory because of the complexity attached to factors affecting proper knowledge management in regard to small scale enterprises. Most small business owners are not interested in knowledge management and application and this is because of lack of knowledge. If workers still fail to understand their background to know their likes and dislikes in the work place it really influences performance of the organization. Based on this note, Graham put forth his idea that managers should be able to understand and have the knowledge of their workers background for cooperation, adaptation and organizational growth, within the organization.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

After quantitative data was obtained through questionnaires, it was prepared in readiness for analysis by editing, handling blank responses, coding, categorizing and keyed into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 for analysis. The statistics generated were descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The specific descriptive statistics include percentages and frequencies while the inferential statistics include a multiple linear regression model. Descriptive statistics including the means and standard deviations will used to analyze the data and capture the characteristics of the variables under the study. Inferential statistics was used to test the nature and magnitude of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Simple regression analysis and Pearson's correlations was computed to determine the nature and the strength of the relationship among the variables.

To analyze the effects of Knowledge Management on Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance in South-South Nigeria, the research aimed at evaluating the extent of knowledge conversion, knowledge sharing, knowledge utilization, knowledge storage and knowledge acquisition practices, establishing the level of organizational performance and determining the relationship between organizational performance and Knowledge Management in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance in South-South Nigeria.

Extent of Knowledge Conversion practices in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance

Knowledge conversion among SMEs was measured in two dimensions, that is, respondents ranking effectiveness of their business on improvement to support knowledge management and ranking the extent to which SMEs promote an environment for knowledge conversion to promote new ideas and effective conversion of those new ideas into new services respectively. Tables 1a to 1c shows the responses of respondents' rating in promoting an environment for knowledge conversion to promote new ideas and effective conversion of those new ideas into new services

Table 1a: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge Conversion and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	97	27.4	139	39.3	101	28.6	121	34.2
Agree	94	26.6	60	16.9	79	21.5	160	45.3
Undecided	36	10.1	44	12.4	48	13.5	72	19.6
Disagree	39	11.0	59	16.7	51	14.4	0	0
Strongly Disagree	87	24.6	51	14.4	74	20.9	0	0
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q1 = Knowledge conversion is not a must before performance can be enhanced by SMEs

Q2 = Fashion designing industries are ignorant as far as knowledge conversion is concerned in business environment

Q3 = Most of SMEs business owners are interested in remaining in the old pattern of production/services

Q4 = Codifying of knowledge can enhance efficiency

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 1, when asked about the opinion on knowledge conversion as a pre-requisite for improvement in SMEs performance, majority of the respondents, about 191 (54%) are of the opinion that knowledge conversion is not a must before performance can be enhanced by SMEs as against 126 (35.6%) who were of the opinion that knowledge conversion is a pre-requisite before performance can be enhanced by SMEs. The remaining respondents, about 36 (10.1%) were indifferent. This implies that generally, from the candid responses, the improvement in the performance of SMEs can be attained in the absence of knowledge conversion

Second, from table 1, a whooping number of respondents, about 199 (56.2%) are of the opinion that fashion designing industries are ignorant as far as knowledge conversion is concerned as against 110 (31.3%) who were of the opinion that fashion designing have full information on knowledge conversion as far as their business environment is concerned. The remaining respondents, about 44 (12.4%) were indifferent. This implies that on the average, based on the responses, that fashion designing industries are ignorant as far as knowledge conversion is concerned.

Third, from table 1, a large number of respondents are of the opinion that most SMEs business owners are interested in remaining in old pattern of production/services as against 125 (35.3%) who are of the opinion that SMEs business owners are interested in changing old patterns of production/services, while the remaining 48 (13.5%) are indifferent. This implies that from the responses, SMEs business owners are interested in remaining in old pattern of production/services in South-South sub-region

Fourth, from table 1, about 281 (79.5%) are of the opinion that codifying of knowledge can enhance efficiency as against 0 (0%) were of opposite opinion. The remaining 72 (19.6%) are indifferent as regards the codification of knowledge. This implies that, codification of knowledge, which entails the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, can enhance efficiency, both of the staff and the business.

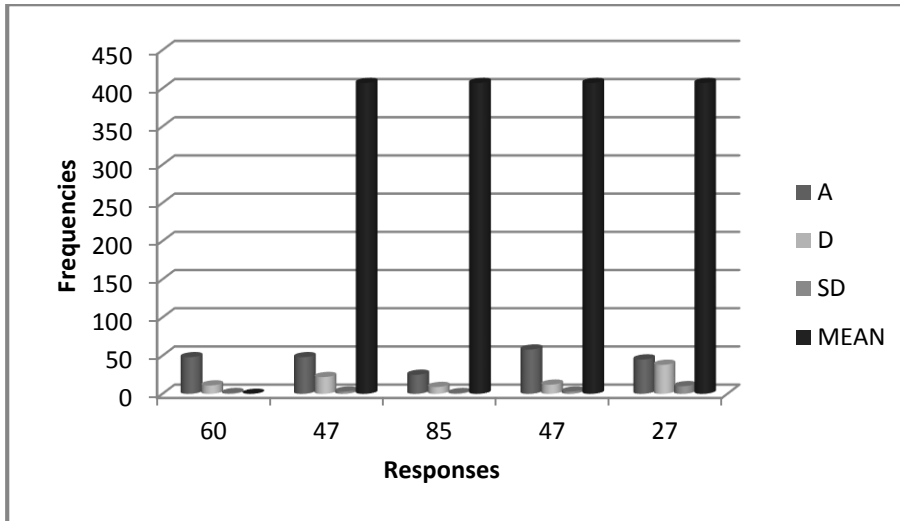


Figure 1a: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge Conversion and SMEs Performance

Table 1b: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge Conversion and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q5		Q6		Q7		Q8	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	101	28.6	71	19.3	158	44.7	73	20.6
Agree	99	27.0	68	19.2	64	18.1	71	19.3
Undecided	20	5.6	72	19.6	19	5.3	71	19.3
Disagree	68	19.2	70	19.6	56	15.8	74	20.9
Strongly Disagree	65	18.4	71	19.3	56	15.8	64	18.1
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q5 = Organizing knowledge can help to discover new talents in employee

Q6 = Because there is no knowledge conversion, there is redundancy among SMEs business owners

Q7 = Codifying of knowledge gives sense of direction

Q8 = Knowledge conversion processes socialization, externalization, combination and internalization encourages creativity among SMEs

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 1b, majority of responses were of the opinion that redundancy among SMEs business owners are never attributed to lack of knowledge conversion as against 139 (28.5%) who were in favour that redundancy among SMEs business owners are attributed to lack of knowledge conversion. On the other hand, a handful of responses constituting 72 (19.6%) were indifferent to the question raised about SMEs redundancy. This implies that SMEs redundancy may be attributed to knowledge redundancy as generated from respondents' responses.

Also, from table 4.1b, about 222 (62.8%) are of the opinion that codifying of knowledge gives sense of direction to SMEs business as against 112 (31.6%) who disagreed to the stated question on codification of knowledge, while 19 (5.3%) had different opinion as regards codification of knowledge. This response implies that codification of knowledge provides some waves of direction to SME businesses. Similarly, from table 4.1b, about 144 (39.9%) are of the opinion that knowledge conversion processes socialization, externalization, combination and internalization encourages creativity among SMEs as against 138 (37.4%) who disagreed to

the above stated question, while 71 (19.3%) were indifferent. This implies that majority of respondents' were of the opinion that knowledge conversion encourages creativity among SMEs.

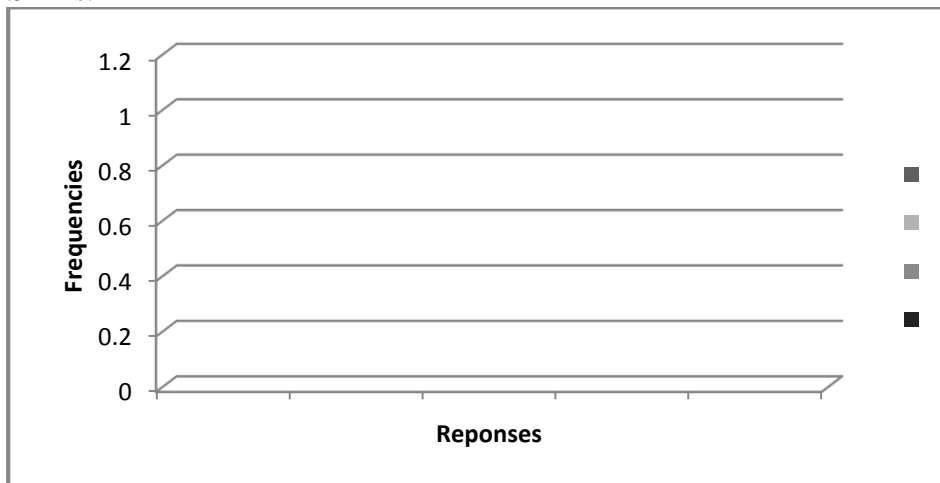


Figure 1b: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge Conversion and SMEs Performance

Table 1c: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge Conversion and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q9		Q10	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	150	42.4	151	42.7
Agree	50	14.1	61	17.2
Undecided	51	14.4	58	16.4
Disagree	51	14.4	41	11.2
Strongly Disagree	51	14.4	42	11.8
Total	353	100	353	100

Q9 = Proper knowledge application anchored on proper knowledge conversion
 Q10 = Is only multinationals that can adopt knowledge conversion processes to achieve goals

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 1c, about 200 (56.5%) were of the opinion that proper knowledge conversion is anchored on proper knowledge application as against 102 (28.8%) who disagreed to the above stated question. The remaining 51 (14.4%) remained indifferent. This implies that majority of respondents' believe that proper knowledge conversion is anchored on proper knowledge application. Also, from table 4.1c, a large number of respondents were of the opinion that only multinationals can adopt knowledge conversion processes to achieve goals as against 83(23%) who were of different opinions. The remaining 58 (16.4%) were indifferent. This implies that a large number of responses are of the opinion that only multinationals can adopt knowledge conversion in achieving goals.

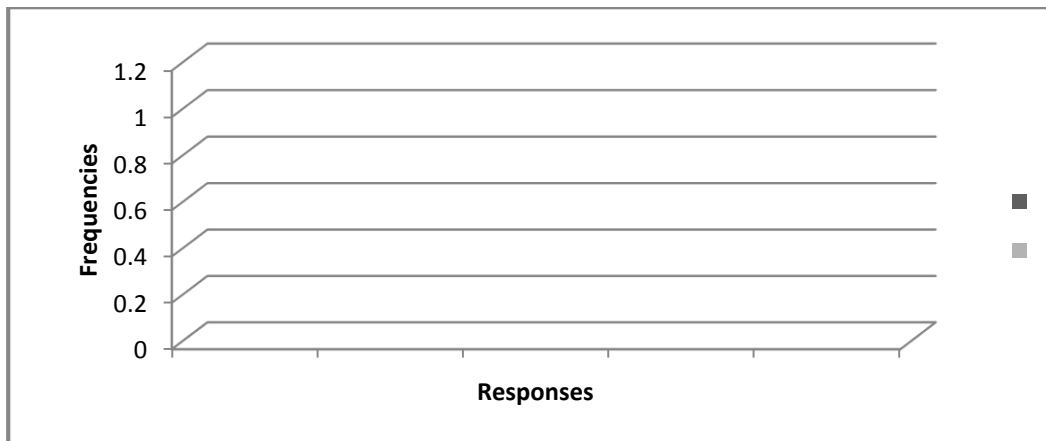


Figure 1c: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge Conversion and SMEs Performance

In summary, as regards response to knowledge conversion as part of knowledge management practices and its effect on SMEs performances, a large number of sampled responses were majorly of the opinion that knowledge conversion is pre-requisite in triggering SMEs performance over time.

Extent of Knowledge sharing practices in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance

The second knowledge management practice is that of knowledge sharing, which is thoroughly discussed below based on sampled opinions generated from the compiled questionnaires.

Table 2a: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge sharing and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	75	21.2	97	27.4	101	28.6	91	25.7
Agree	97	27.4	74	20.9	51	14.4	91	25.7
Undecided	72	19.6	80	22.6	79	21.5	21	5.9
Disagree	39	11.0	70	19.8	51	14.4	76	21.5
Strongly Disagree	70	19.8	32	9.0	71	20.1	74	20.9
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q1 = Expression of individual ideas encourages productivity

Q2: Awareness enhances performances of SMEs

Q3 = Knowledge sharing opens door for team work towards achieving set goals

Q4 = Knowledge sharing build stronger labour force among SMEs business owners

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 2a, about 172 (49.6%) are of the opinion that expression of individuals ideas encourages productivity as against 109 (30.8%) who were of different opinions, while 72 (19.6%) remained indifferent. This implies that a large number of respondents' were of the opinion that expression of individuals ideas encourages productivity to SMEs. Also from table 2a, a total of 171 respondents representing 48.3% are of the opinion that awareness enhances performance of SMEs as against 102 responses representing 28.8%, who had a different opinion on the above question, while a total of 80 representing 22.6% were indifferent. This

implies that a large number of respondents' were of the opinion that awareness enhances SMEs performances. Similarly, in table 2a, a total of 152 respondents' representing 43% were of the opinion that knowledge sharing builds stronger labour force among SMEs business owners as against 122 responses representing 42.4% who had different opinions, while about 21.5% had inconclusive decision about knowledge sharing. This implies that on the whole, majority of responses were of the opinion that knowledge sharing build stronger labour force among SMEs business owners.

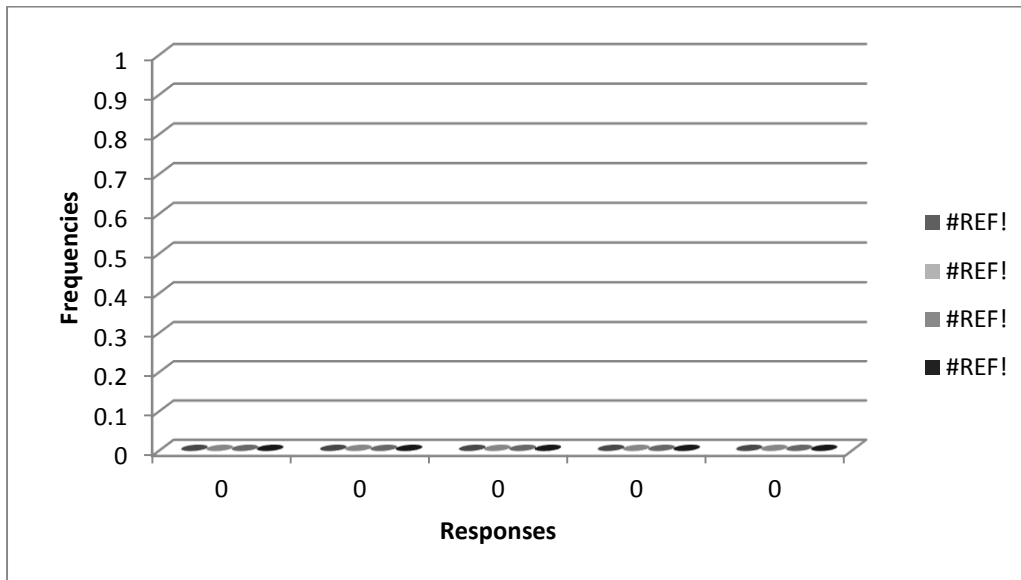


Figure 2a: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge sharing and SMEs Performance

Table 2b: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge sharing and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q5		Q6		Q7		Q8	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	74	20.9	36	10.1	142	40.2	201	56.9
Agree	77	21.8	63	17.8	87	24.6	46	13.0
Undecided	77	21.8	5	1.4	94	24.6	46	13.0
Disagree	61	17.2	146	41.3	14	3.9	11	3.1
Strongly Disagree	64	18.1	101	28.6	16	4.5	29	8.2
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q5 = Lack of knowledge leads to stagnation of business

Q6 = Selfishness will be a common sense when experience is not shared among workers

Q7 = Sense of direction is achieved

Q8 = Availability of new ideas will also be achieved by fashion homes/industries

Source: Field Work, 2019

Responses from table 2b shows that about 151 (42.7%) are of the opinion that lack of knowledge leads to stagnation of business as against 125 (35.3%) who were of different opinion while 77 (21.8%) had inconclusive decisions about the above raised question. This implies that a large proportion of sampled opinions had positive responses that lack of knowledge sharing leads to stagnation of business. From table 2a, about 99 (27.9%) were of the opinion selfishness

will be a common sense when experience is not shared among worker as against 247 (69.9%) who were of a different opinion and about 5 (1.4%) were indifferent. This implies that a large number of respondents' were of never of the opinion that selfishness will be common sense if experience is not shared among workers. On the other hand, about 229 (64.8%) respondents were of the opinion that knowledge sharing provides a sense of direction as against 30 (8.3%) who had different opinions, while 94 (24.6%) were indifferent. This implies that on the average, responses reveal that knowledge sharing provides a sense of direction to SMEs. Lastly, about 247 (69.9%) were of the opinion that availability of new ideas will be achieved by fashion homes/industries as against 40 (11.3%) who had different opinion about the above raised subject, while 46 (13.0%) were indifferent. This implies that a large number of respondents' were of a positive opinion.

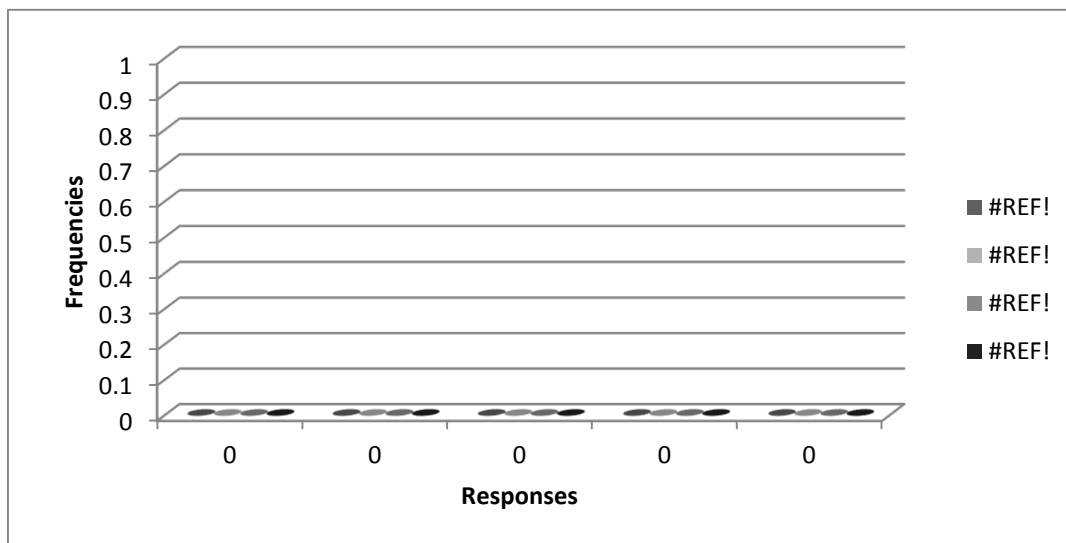


Figure 2b: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge sharing and SMEs Performance

Table 2c: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge sharing and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q9		Q10	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	101	28.6	139	39.3
Agree	81	22.9	60	16.9
Undecided	5	1.4	44	12.4
Disagree	83	23.5	51	14.4
Strongly Disagree	83	23.5	59	16.7
Total	353	100	353	100

Q9 = Ignorance of the impact of sharing experience has affected SMEs over the years

Q10 = Cooperation that leads to effective and efficient performance is achieved through knowledge sharing

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 2c, about 182 (51.5%) were of the opinion that ignorance of the impact of sharing experience has affected SMEs over the years as against 166 (47.0%) responses which were of different opinions, while only 5(1.4%) were indifferent. This implies that a large proportion of respondents were of the opinion that ignorance of the impact of knowledge sharing has affected SMEs over the years. Similarly, about 199 (56.2%) were of the opinion that cooperation that leads to effective and efficient performance is achieved through knowledge sharing as against 110 (31.1%) who has different opinion while 44 (12.4%) were indifferent. This implies that a

large proportion was of a positive opinion that cooperation that leads to effective and efficient performance is achieved through knowledge sharing.

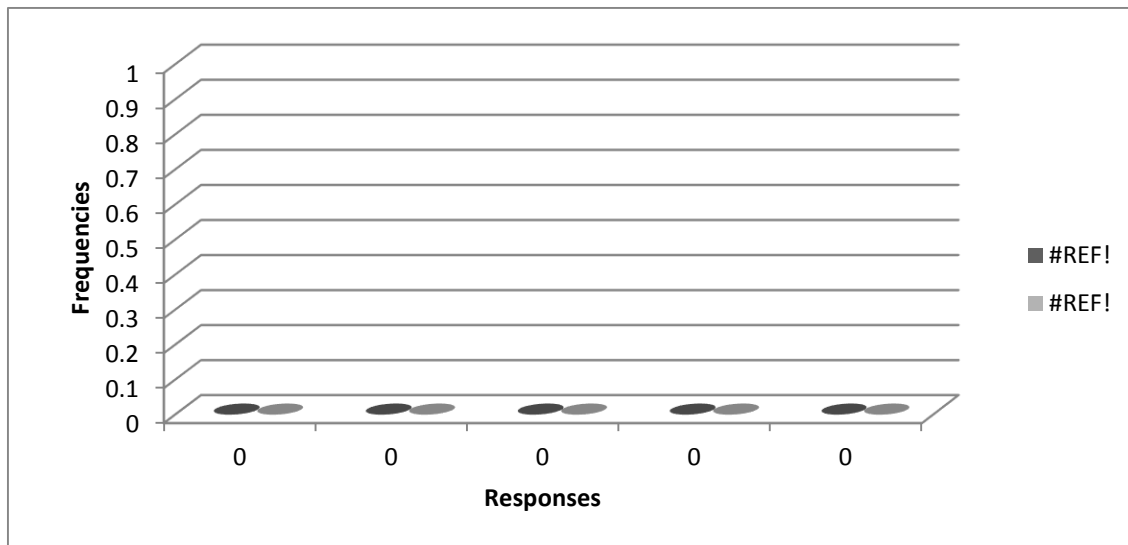


Figure 2c: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge sharing and SMEs Performance

Extent of Knowledge utilization practices in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance

The third knowledge management practice is that of knowledge utilization, which is thoroughly discussed below based on sampled opinions generated from the compiled questionnaires.

Table 3a: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge utilization and SMEs Performance

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Responses	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	145	41.0	69	19.5	101	28.6	161	45.6
Agree	52	14.7	94	26.6	51	14.4	51	14.4
Undecided	52	14.7	69	19.5	79	21.5	0	0
Disagree	52	14.7	52	14.7	51	14.4	23	6.5
Strongly Disagree	52	14.7	69	19.5	68	19.2	118	33.4
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q1 = Knowledge transfer technique is enhanced

Q2 = Knowledge retention techniques is enhanced

Q3 = Utilization prevents waste of ideas and resources among entrepreneurs

Q4 = Senior leadership endorsement is achieved

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 3a, majority of responses were of the opinion that knowledge transfer technique is enhanced by knowledge utilization as against 104 (29.4%) who were of a different opinion as regards knowledge utilization. On the other hand, a handful of responses constituting 52 (14.7%) were indifferent to the above raised statement. This implies that on the average, responses were positive about knowledge utilization. Also, from table 4.3a, about 163 (46.1% are of the opinion that codifying of knowledge gives sense of direction to SMEs business as against 112 (31.6%) who disagreed to the stated question on codification of knowledge, while

19 (5.3%) had different opinion as regards codification of knowledge. This response implies that codification of knowledge provides some waves of direction to SME businesses. Similarly, from table 4.1b, about 144 (39.9%) are of the opinion that knowledge conversion processes, socialization, externalization, combination and internalization encourages creativity among SMEs as against 138 (37.4%) who disagreed to the above stated question, while 71 (19.3%) were indifferent. This implies that majority of respondents' were of the opinion that knowledge conversion encourages creativity among SMEs.

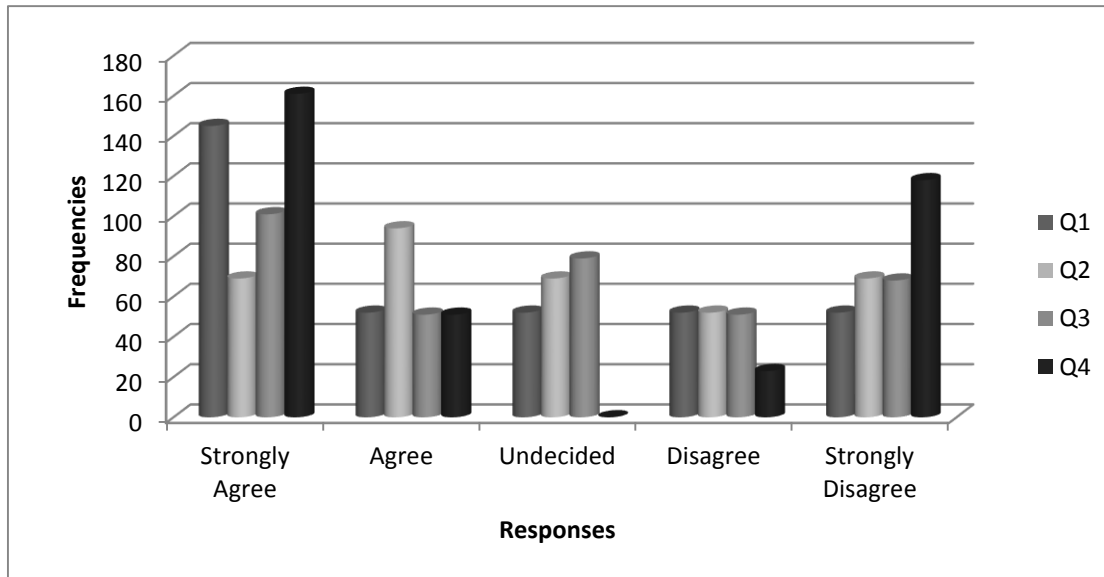


Figure 4.3a: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge utilization and SMEs Performance **able 3b: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge utilization and SMEs Performance**

Responses	Q5		Q6		Q7		Q8	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	72	19.6	134	37.9	142	40.2	66	18.6
Agree	70	19.8	68	19.2	84	23.7	38	10.7
Undecided	70	19.8	50	14.1	97	27.4	9	2.5
Disagree	71	20.1	51	14.4	14	3.9	143	40.5
Strongly Disagree	70	19.8	52	14.7	16	4.5	97	27.4
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q5 = Assessment of performance is made possible through utilization of knowledge

Q6 = Non-knowledge acquired by fashion designers in our business environment

Q7 = Utilization of knowledge acquired by fashion designers will generate best performance by SMEs

Q8 = There is proper guide on utilization of knowledge acquired

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 3b, 142 respondents representing 39.4% are of the opinion that assessment of performance is made possible through the utilization of knowledge as against 141 respondents who were of a different opinion, while 70 respondents representing 19.8 are indifferent to the above statement. This implies that more respondents agree that assessment of performance is made possible through the utilization of knowledge. Similarly, over 202 respondents representing 57.1% are of the opinion that non-utilization of knowledge is a common scene among fashion designers as against 103 respondents who were in opposite agreement with the

above statement, while 50 respondents representing 14.1% were indifferent. This implies that from the responses, a larger proportion of respondents were of the opinion that non-knowledge utilization is a common scene among fashion designers. From table 3b, 226 respondents representing 63.9% are of the opinion that utilization of knowledge acquired by fashion designers will best improve the performance of SMEs as against 30 respondents who had were had opposite agreement to the above statement while 111 respondents were indifferent. This implies that on the whole, a large proportion of respondents are in agreement with the above statement. On the other hand, 104 respondents representing 29.3% are of the opinion that there is no proper guide on the utilization of knowledge acquired by SMEs as against 240 respondents representing 67.9% who were not in favour of the above statement while 9 respondents were indifferent. This implies that a large proportion of respondents disagree that there is no proper utilization of knowledge acquires.

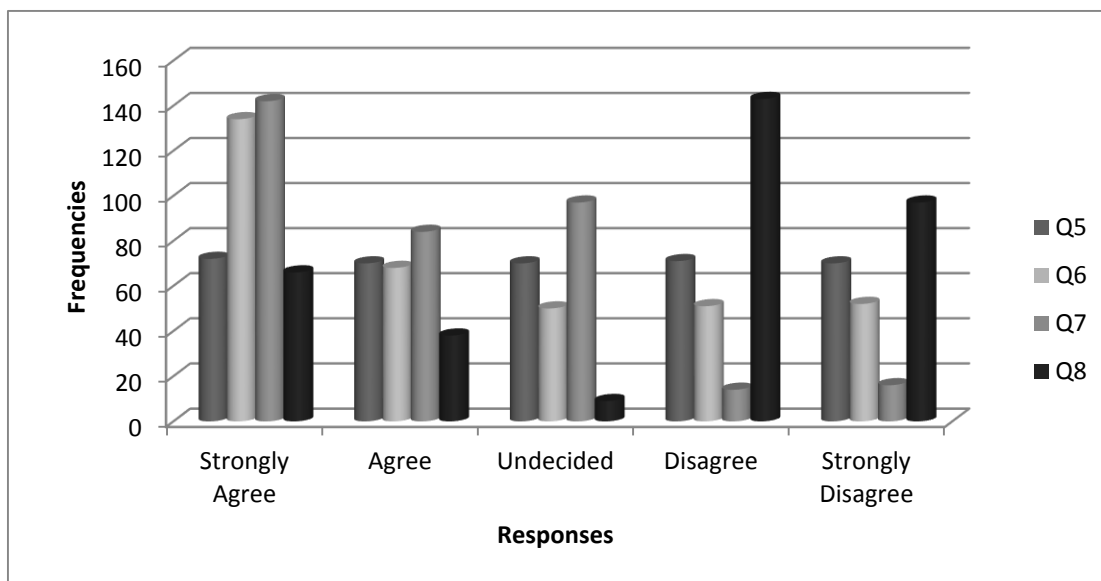


Figure 3b: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge utilization and SMEs Performance

Table 3c: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge utilization and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q9		Q10	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	178	50.4	178	50.4
Agree	53	15.0	41	11.6
Undecided	41	11.6	41	11.6
Disagree	41	11.6	50	14.1
Strongly Disagree	40	11.3	49	13.8
Total	353	100	353	100

Q9 = More investment is encouraging among SMEs business owners when knowledge is utilized
 Q10 = Environment is not encouraging knowledge utilization through non-appreciation of skill among fashion industries

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 3c, 231 respondents representing 65.4% are of the opinion that more investment is encouraged among SME business owners when knowledge is utilized as against 81 respondents who were of a different opinion, while 41 respondents representing 11.6 are indifferent to the above statement. This implies that more respondents agree that more investment is encouraged among SME business owners when knowledge is utilized. Similarly, over 219 respondents

representing 62% are of the opinion that the environment is not encouraging knowledge utilization through as against 99 respondents who were in opposite agreement with the above statement, while 41 respondents representing 11.6% were indifferent. This implies that from the responses, a larger proportion of respondents were of the opinion that the environment is not encouraging knowledge utilization.

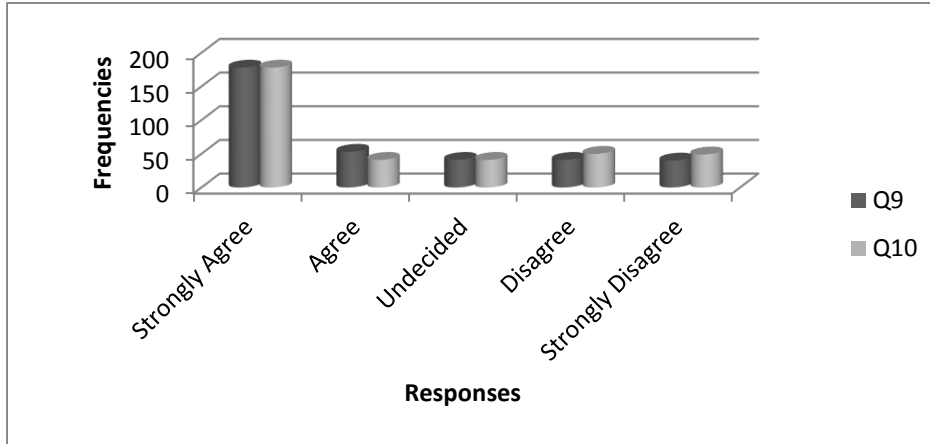


Figure 3c: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge utilization and SMEs Performance

Extent of Knowledge Storage practices in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance

The fourth knowledge management practice is that of knowledge storage, which is thoroughly discussed below based on sampled opinions generated from the compiled questionnaires.

Table 4a: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge Storage and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	164	46.4	292	82.8	97	27.4	70	19.3
Agree	127	35.9	61	17.2	94	26.6	72	20.3
Undecided	1	0.5	0	0	87	24.6	70	19.1
Disagree	27	7.6	0	0	39	11.0	71	19.3
Strongly Disagree	34	9.6	0	0	36	10.1	70	19.1
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q1 = Most fashion design industries are not conversant with the trend of knowledge storage

Q2 = Knowledge storing enhances innovation of SMEs

Q3 = Many SMEs consider knowledge storage as challenging because of the cost of involvement

Q4 = Performance of SMEs can be enhanced through storing of knowledge

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 4a, 291 respondents representing 82.3% are of the opinion that Most fashion design industries are not conversant with the trend of knowledge storage as against 61 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 1 respondent representing 0.5% are indifferent to the above statement. This implies that more respondents agree that most fashion design industries are not conversant with the trend of knowledge storage. Similarly, 353 respondents representing 100% are of the opinion that knowledge storing enhances innovation of SMEs. From table 4a, 191 respondents representing 54% are of the opinion many SMEs consider

knowledge storage as challenging because of the cost of involvement as against 75 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 87 respondents representing 24.6% are indifferent to the above statement. This implies that more respondents consider knowledge storage as challenging because of the cost of involvement. Also, 142 respondents representing 39.4% are of the opinion that performance of SMEs can be enhanced through knowledge storage as against 141 respondents who had different opinion about the above subject matter, while 70 respondents remain indifferent. This implies that majority of respondents agree to the fact that performance of SMEs can be enhanced by knowledge storage.

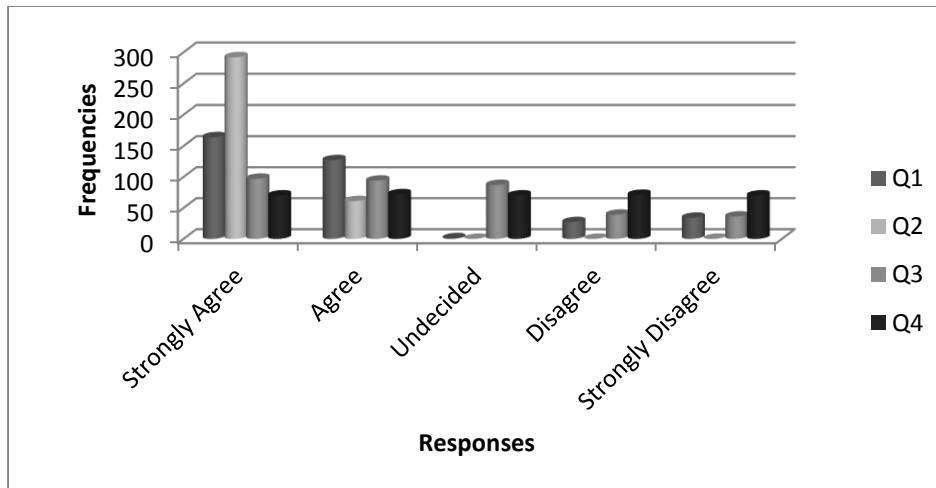


Figure 4a: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge storage and SMEs Performance

Table 4b: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge Storage and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q5		Q6		Q7		Q8	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	71	19.3	301	85.2	200	56.6	142	40.2
Agree	70	19.1	15	4.2	30	8.4	52	14.7
Undecided	71	19.3	1	0.2	12	3.3	50	14.1
Disagree	74	20.9	1	0.2	55	15.5	59	16.7
Strongly Disagree	67	18.9	35	9.9	56	15.8	54	15.2
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q5 = Reports is an essential tool for effective for business direction

Q6 = Documentation is an essential tool for effective planning that can bring efficiency and effectiveness

Q7 = Databases is an essential tool for advancing performance of SMEs in the contemporary environment

Q8 = Lack of knowledge storage leads to improper planning

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 4b, 141 respondents representing 38.4% are of the opinion that reports is an essential tool for effective for business direction as against 141 respondents representing 39.8% who were of a different opinion, while only 71 respondent representing 19.3% are indifferent to the above statement. This implies that more respondents disagree that reports are essential tools for business direction. On the other hand, 316 respondents representing 89.4% are of the opinion that documentation is an essential tool for effective planning that can bring efficiency

and effectiveness as against 36 respondents who were in disagreement with the above statement while only 1 respondent was indifferent. From table 4b, 230 respondents representing 65% are of the opinion that database is an essential tool for advancing performance of SMEs in the contemporary environment as against 111 respondents who had different opinion about the above statement while only 12 respondents were indifferent. Lastly, 194 respondents representing 54.9% are of the opinion that lack of knowledge storage leads to improper planning as against 113 respondents who had different opinion on the above subject matter, while 51 respondents representing 14.1% were indifferent.

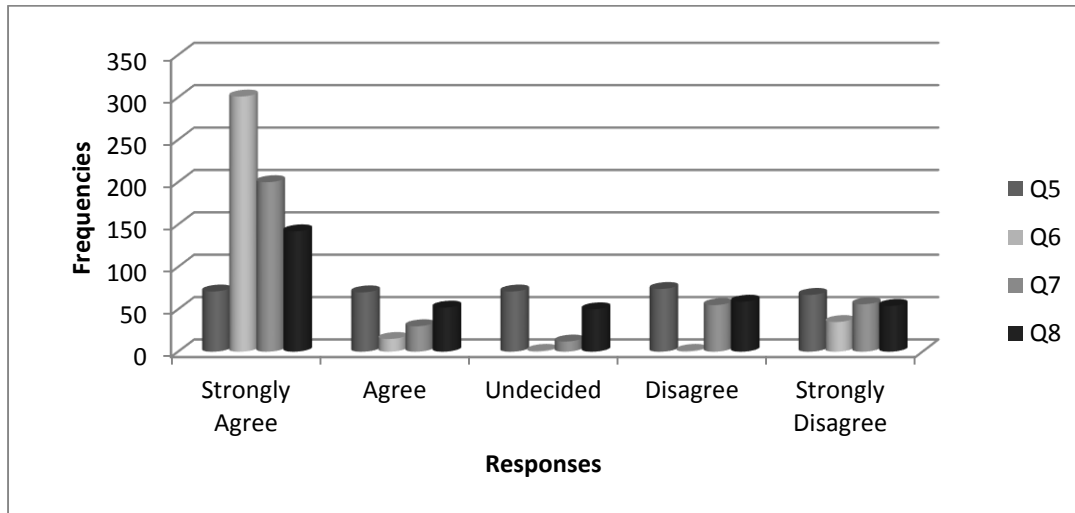


Figure 4b: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge storage and SMEs Performance

Table 4c: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge storage and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q9		Q10	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	150	42.4	151	42.7
Agree	50	14.1	58	16.4
Undecided	51	14.4	61	16.6
Disagree	51	14.4	41	11.2
Strongly Disagree	51	14.4	42	11.8
Total	353	100	353	100

Q9 = SMEs business owners are not interested in knowledge storage
 Q10 = Knowledge storage encourages business forecasting

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 4c, 200 respondents representing 56.5% are of the opinion that SME business owners are not interested in knowledge storage as against 83 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 51 respondent representing 14.4% are indifferent to the above statement. This implies that more respondents agree that SME business owners are not interested in knowledge storage. Similarly, 209 respondents representing 59.1% are of the opinion that knowledge storage encourage business forecasting as against 83 respondents who were in disagreement with the above statement while only 61 respondents were indifferent.

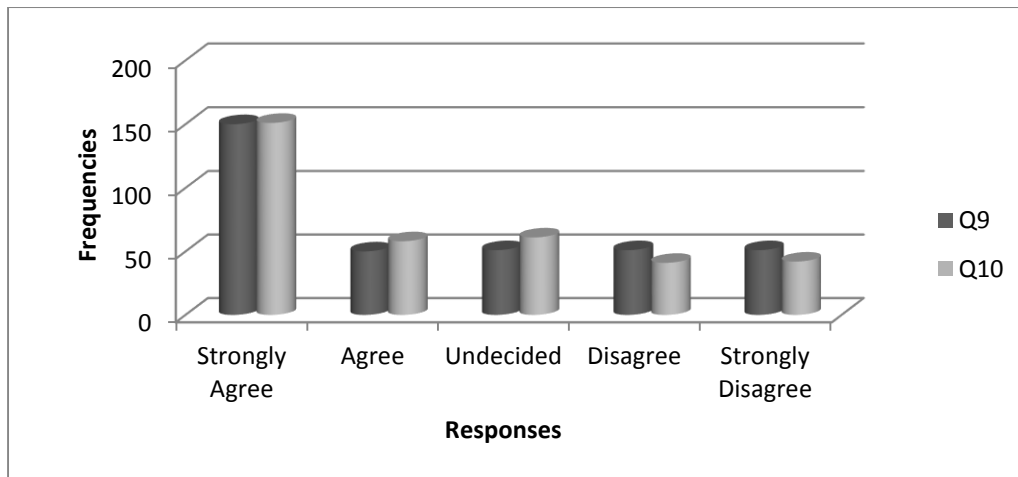


Figure 4c: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge storage and SMEs Performance

Extent of Knowledge acquisition practices in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) performance

The fifth knowledge management practice is that of knowledge acquisition, which is thoroughly discussed below based on sampled opinions generated from the compiled questionnaires.

Table 5a: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge acquisition and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	94	26.6	73	20.6	101	28.6	91	25.7
Agree	72	19.6	97	27.4	51	14.4	91	25.7
Undecided	37	10.4	70	19.1	79	21.5	21	5.9
Disagree	71	19.3	39	11.0	51	14.4	73	20.6
Strongly Disagree	36	10.1	67	19.5	71	19.3	77	21.8
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q1 = Acquisition of knowledge is paramount to enhance fashion industrial performance

Q2 = Acquisition of knowledge among SMEs is dependent on interest

Q3 = Negligence among SME business owners has resulted to poor performance

Q4 = Fear that after acquisition through training/seminar that trainees will leave is a challenge toward acquiring knowledge

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 5a, 166 respondents representing 46.2% are of the opinion that acquisition of knowledge is paramount to enhance fashion industrial performance as against 107 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 37 respondent representing 10.4% are indifferent to the above statement. Similarly, 170 respondents representing 48% are of the opinion that acquisition of knowledge among SMEs is dependent on interest, as against 106 respondents who had a different view about the subject matter while 70 respondents remained indifferent. From table 5a, 152 respondents representing 43% are of the opinion that negligence among SME business owners has resulted to poor performance as against 122 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 79 respondents representing 21.5% are indifferent to the

above statement. Also, 182 respondents representing 51.4% are of the opinions that trainees leaving portend a challenge toward acquiring knowledge as against 150 respondents who had different opinion about the above subject matter, while 21 respondents remain indifferent. This implies that majority of respondents agree to the fact that performance of SMEs can be enhanced by knowledge storage.

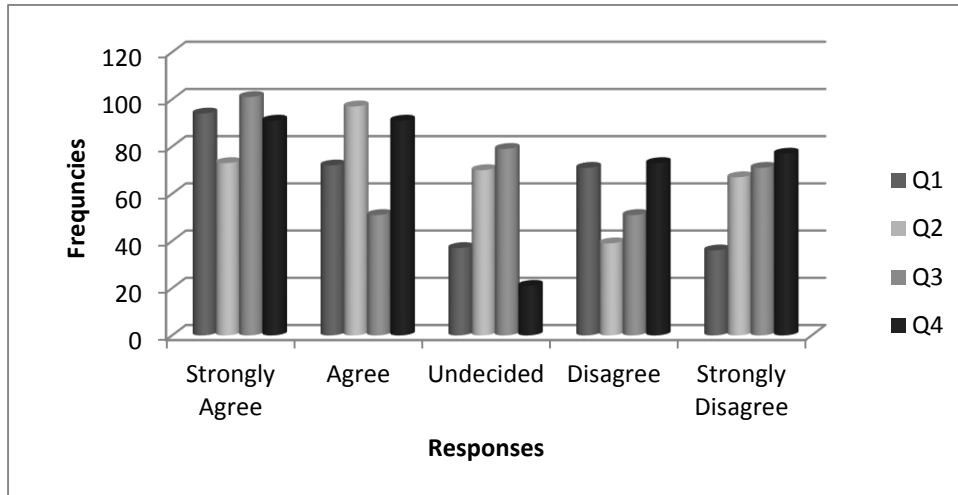


Figure 5a: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge acquisition and SMEs Performance

Table 5b: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge acquisition and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q5		Q6		Q7		Q8	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	74	20.9	36	10.1	141	40.2	201	56.9
Agree	77	21.8	66	18.6	87	24.6	46	13.0
Undecided	77	21.8	5	1.4	97	27.4	43	12.1
Disagree	61	17.2	143	40.5	14	3.9	11	3.1
Strongly Disagree	64	18.1	101	28.6	13	3.6	32	9.0
Total	353	100	353	100	353	100	353	100

Q5 = After training, the retention cost is also a challenge to SMEs

Q6 = Wrong acquisition of ideas has affected performance of SMEs (fashion industries)

Q7 = Level of literacy affect the means and method of knowledge acquisition

Q8 = Knowledge acquisition is a threat to many fashion industries because of modern technology

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 5b, 153 respondents representing 42.7% are of the opinion that retention cost is a challenge to SMEs after training as against 125 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 77 respondent representing 21.8% are indifferent to the above statement. On the other hand, 102 respondents representing 28.7% are of the opinion that wrong acquisition of ideas has affected performance of SMEs, as against 244 respondents who had a different view about the subject matter while 5 respondents remained indifferent. From table 5b, 228 respondents representing 64.8% are of the opinion that the level of literacy affects the means and method of knowledge acquisition as against 27 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 97 respondents representing 21.5% are indifferent to the above statement. Also, 247 respondents representing 69.9% are of the opinions that knowledge acquisition is a

threat to many fashion industries as a result of modern technology as against 43 respondents who had different opinion about the above subject matter, while 43 respondents remain indifferent.

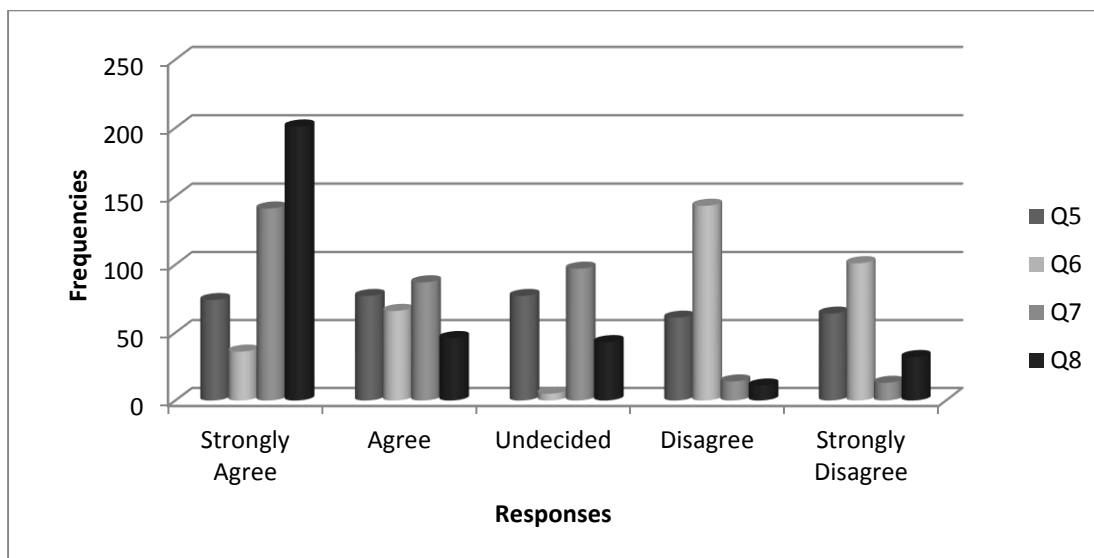


Figure 5b: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge acquisition and SMEs Performance

Table 5c: Respondents responses on specific questions on Knowledge storage and SMEs Performance

Responses	Q9		Q10	
	N	Percent (%)	N	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	101	28.6	136	38.5
Agree	84	23.7	60	16.9
Undecided	5	1.4	47	13.3
Disagree	80	22.6	51	14.4
Strongly Disagree	83	23.3	39	11.0
Total	353	100	353	100

Q9 = Most of the local fashion designers are not ready to advance items of acquiring new knowledge

Q10 = Acquisition of knowledge is not a must in the fashion designing industries in Nigeria

Source: Field Work, 2019

From table 5c, 185 respondents representing 52.3% are of the opinion that most local fashion designers are not ready to advance items of acquiring new knowledge as against 163 respondents who were of a different opinion, while only 5 respondent representing 1.4% are indifferent to the above statement. Similarly, 196 respondents representing 55.4% are of the opinion that acquisition of knowledge is not a must in the fashion designing industries in Nigeria as against 90 respondents who were in disagreement with the above statement while only 47 respondents were indifferent.

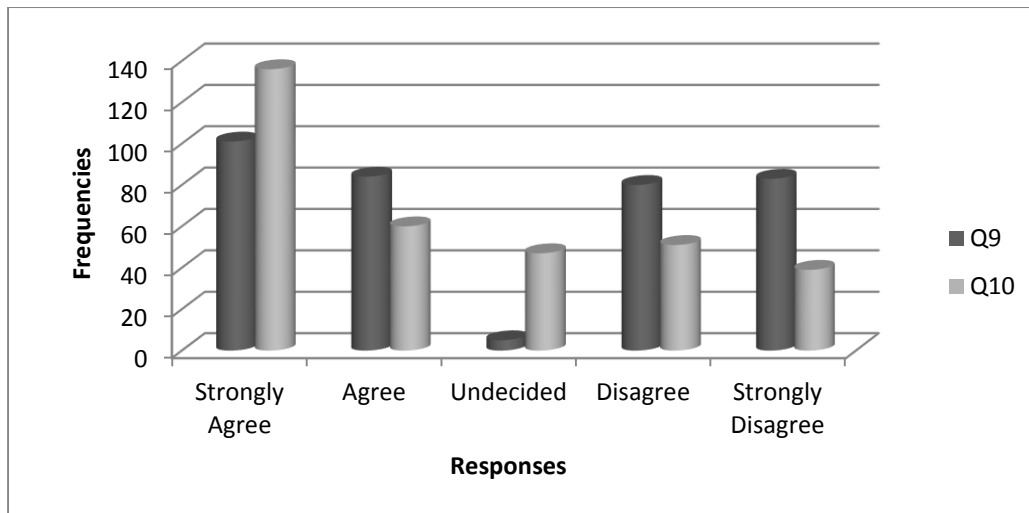


Figure 5c: Graph representing respondent responses on specific questions on Knowledge acquisition and SMEs Performance

Inferential Statistics

This study sought to establish the association among the study variables. The results are as presented in Table .6

Table 6: Descriptive statistics and correlations between knowledge management processes and firms performance

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Knowledge Conversion	2.57	1.46	1.00					
2 Knowledge Sharing	2.71	1.48	.742**	1.00				
3 Knowledge Utilization	2.65	1.53	.880**	.826**	1.00			
4 Knowledge Storage	2.26	1.45	.742**	.731**	.769**	1.00		
5 Knowledge Acquisition	2.75	1.50	.866**	.899**	.838**	.712**	1.00	
6 Firm Performance	1.96	1.80	.019**	.013**	.010**	.175**	.036**	1.00

NB: ** Significance at 5% level; SD = standard deviation

Source: Author’s Computation using SPSS 22

Table 6 presents a descriptive analysis for all variables used in the study. Based on the 5-point Likert scale, the mean value for firm performance was 1.96, indicating that the overall level of firm’s performance was good. The mean values for knowledge management processes were in the range of 2.26 to 2.75, with knowledge acquisition having a higher mean value than the other four knowledge management processes. Table 2 also shows that all of the independent variables had a positive correlation with knowledge management practices and firm’s performance. The findings also show that the coefficient correlation values were below 0.9, which showed that there was no multi collinearity in the study variables.

Conclusion

Knowledge management has become a vital and veritable tool toward the development of entrepreneurship activities in our business environment upon the findings of this study we can conclude that knowledge management practices knowledge conversion (KC), knowledge

sharing (KSH), knowledge storing (KS) and knowledge acquisition (KA) is significantly and positively correlated to the performance of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). In other words, improper management of knowledge process negatively influences performance of SMEs, which leads to – low produce-dorrs for inefficiency among small and medium.

Again, when there is proper knowledge management SMEs irrespective of the size will be motivated and right placement of workers which makes provision for better methods of operation among workers, hence leading to improved job quality and also avoid wastage of materials and biannual resources will be achieved. It was further discovered that there was insignificant positive relationship between knowledge utilization and performance of SMEs. Put in another form, there is a negative correlation. We conclude that inefficiency will continue to thrive among SMEs business owners if proper attention is not given to knowledge implementation. Moreso, we can also conclude that performance and growth of SMEs especially in fashion industries is dependent and sensitive to knowledge management practices – knowledge conversion, knowledge sharing, knowledge storing and knowledge acquisition. In our contemporary world, organization no longer compete solely on the basis of financial capital and strength, rather knowledge is the new competitive advantage in business and in actuality the cross domestic product (GDP) growth rate is now gritty, amid other factors by the quantum and superiority of knowledge stock formed harnessed and functional in the construction procedure in the industrialized sector of the nation (Omotayo, 2015). Because performance is sensitive to knowledge management processes total and holistic adaptation to modern knowledge process and technology be advised for better results among small-sized business owners.

Finally, good knowledge management bring about harmony, team work exchange of ideas and unity at workplace which yield good results among SMEs.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of the study, it was discovered that positive significant relationship exists between knowledge management processes and performance of small and medium scale enterprises in the area under study. But most of the small and medium scale enterprise business owners are ignorance of the role that knowledge management plays regarding their effective and efficient performance. On that note, we make the following recommendations.

1. Knowledge conversion has to be with knowledge codifying and organizing in a way that it profits the organization and individual. Majority of SMEs (fashion industries) has acquired knowledge, but arranging it in a profitable manner is the biggest challenges. We recommend that SMEs should them a right on how this knowledge should be edify for efficient performance and to avoid waste.
2. According to Syed- Ikhassam and Rowland (2004) knowledge transfer requires the enthusiasm of a group or individual to work with others and share knowledge to be transferred to another person or group. Knowledge transfer can only take place in an organization where its employee exhibits a high – level of co-operative behavior (Goh, 2002). For knowledge sharing to become a realistic process or exercise among SMEs we recommend that there must be high-level of corporation among organization members and employees.
3. Small and medium scale business owners should try come up with policies that will sustain employee's involvement in knowledge management practices in order to improve their ability to maintain flexible workforce and gain competitive advantage.

4. SMES especially fashion designing industries should be enlighten, expose and encourage on the need for them to be attending seminars, and workshop on modern knowledge storage approach by the government and non-governmental organizations.
5. We also recommend that the government and non-governmental organizations create enabling environment (modern-technology) that can encourage SMEs business owner on the need to acquire knowledge that can keep them in the competitive market.

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