

Technological Skills and the Performance of Managers of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study was to assess the influence of technological skills on the performance of managers in Small and Medium Scale Enterprise (SMEs). The study was born out of the fact that over the years, one of the major challenges of SMEs managers has been grossly attributed to the absence of inadequate use of technology. The study adopted survey research design. Population of the study was made up of 320 registered SMEs in Uyo. Using Taro Yamene's formulae for sample size determination, 180 was arrived at as the sample size. Source of data was from primary source gotten from copies of administered questionnaire. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the study. The descriptive statistics were percentage and frequency distribution tables which were used to capture respondents' demographic characteristics and frequency distribution of the responses on the study variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used in assessing the relationship between the studied variables. Findings revealed that there exist a positive correlation between technological skill and production output; technological skill and efficiency of SME managers; and technological skill and competitiveness of SME managers. Conclusively, it is established that SME managers possessing effective Technological skill is very important to the performance of their enterprises.*

KEYWORDS: technological skills, SMES, production output, efficiency, competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) plays a major role in the economies of both developed and developing countries. It serves as a mechanism to fight poverty as well as play other significant roles in these economies as evidenced in the literature (Abubakar and Hussaina, 2020; Akande, 2013; Akintoye and Oladejo, 2008; Akanji, 2006). According to Bayarcelik, Tasel, and Apak (2014), one of the most recent contributions of SMEs to the economy is technological innovations. In turn, technology has impacted significantly on SMEs operation. The current wave of technology calls for the attention of SMEs, entrepreneurs, scholars etc to tab into. Bansal and Sharma (2006) opined that technology is rapidly transforming the way business functions

are performed, thereby posing new challenges to the Entrepreneurial profession. This view is further corroborated by Olivier (2000) who asserts that one of the most important current influences on the business operation is the development of new information technology. For instance, prior to the emergence of electronic payment, bank transactions remain the widely accepted mode of payment in business, thus cash payment was only popular where it became inevitable especially in transactions dealing with minimum price such as foods, groceries etc. where electronic payments may not be convenient.

Cashless economy has become the advocacy of most countries of the world where carriage of cash at effecting transactions are utterly discouraged. Money in the traditional sense no longer exists at present times. Today, technology has made the need to carry heavy cash outdated, inconvenient and of no use (Popoola, 2010; Odior and Banuso, 2012; AlGhamdi, Nguyen, Nguyen and Drew, 2012)). It has transformed the twenty first century out of all recognition with its value increasing on a daily basis (Polas and Raju, 2021). Along with the information technology, the Internet high speed development, electronic commerce has caused the current distribution realm significant transformation gradually as observed by (Liang and Yang, 2009).

Experiences from practices of Businesses over the world and hypotheses derived from institutional economics and the theory of collective action, as observed by Manmood and Man (2008); Oladejo and Yinus (2013), suggest that taking advantage of technology diffusion is possible for business organization and adoption of technology can provide organizations with valuable information, improved performance, improve relationships with customers and suppliers, increase efficiency and reduce cost of production among others. Evidence equally illustrates that big organizations have taken the opportunity of technology to gain advantage over their competitors unlike the small and medium enterprises. The influence of technology on SMEs operations for better performance is worthy of exploration in this current move to cashless economy.

In today's growing multifaceted world, SMEs pays more attention on technology to impel growth, client value and market differentiation. As such, these businesses are embracing innovative technologies for breakthrough change and diversification and this is eventually the case in a recovering global economy (Peter, 2011). Technology is an important means to stimulate economic efficiency of SMEs and a source to attain a sustainable development (Laura and Mathias, 2020). Essentially, if the SMEs must adapt to the changing external environment and meet market needs, they must take technological innovation as priority (Laura and Mathias, 2020). Furthermore, progressive development and growth of most successful SMEs depends on continued technological innovation (Sun, 2009).

In advanced economies, SMEs play essential role in driving economic growth through investment in fixed assets, generating exports and promoting technology integration (Ghergina, Botezatu and Hosszu, 2020). It is observed that in some newly industrialized countries like Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea and Singapore, SMEs have powerfully dictated not only on industrial production strategies but also on the export earnings (Ehinomen and Adeleke, 2012). Notably, SMEs constitute the production wheels for the large scale enterprises of these countries, and as pointed out by Adeleke (2002), SMEs act as impetus of accelerated economic growth and development. However, the much anticipated accelerated pace of economic development through SME has not been reached in Nigeria (Awe, 2012).

The Federal Government of Nigeria in its effort to make SMEs more effectual in the economy, and in lieu to ensure balance industrial development has decided to promote SMEs development in domestic industrial activities. This is aimed at repositioning the sector for international competitiveness and to make it source of export earnings in a global economy (Ehinomen and Adeleke, 2012). It is in lieu of this that this study seeks to establish the magnitude and direction of relationship between SMEs managers' performance and their technological skills in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Several years now, Small and Medium scale Enterprises in Nigeria have been faced with management challenges and one of the major challenges has been grossly attributed to the absence of or inadequate use of technology for effective management. The undoubted factor which indicates the improvement of the competitiveness of most enterprises is the usage of technology. In Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, the impact of technology on SMEs operation performance seems not to have been greatly explored as files and folders are still in use for data storage and record keeping. In same manner, some business transactions are still

conducted manually and lots of files and documents are shelved in large cabinets and handed from table to table. In this information age, manual compilation of records with files and folders should not be in vogue, such a database system is prone to alterations and manipulations. Regrettably, most SMEs managers lack the basic technological skills as retrieval of such records becomes a needle in a haystack when the files and folders become voluminous with span of time. As such, this study seeks to assess how technological skills enhances SMEs managers performance comprehensive use of information technology in small and medium scale enterprises

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to assess the influence of technological skills and the performance of Managers in Small and medium scale enterprises. The specific objectives include;

- 1) To examine if technological skills enhances production output of SMEs managers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
- 2) To assess whether the application of technological skills increases the efficiency of SMEs managers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
- 3) To examine if technological skills enhances competitiveness of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

1.4 Research Questions

- 1) How does technological skill enhance production output of SMEs in Uyo Akwa Ibom State?
- 2) How does application of technological skill increase the efficiency of managers of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?
- 3) How does technological skill enhance competitiveness of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State?

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

Hypotheses of this study were formulated in a null form as follows;

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between technological skill and production output of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between technological skill and efficiency of managers of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between technological skills and competitiveness of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology and Technological Skills

Technological Skills are skills developed as a result of the use of the computer and other equipments. It has to do with the continuous growth and the efficient use of technological gadgets. This continuous growth of innovation and the rise of technology in the world today have changed the way organizations compete. Amongst other factors, technology has been recognized as one of the agents of change in the world (Ogbomo and Ogbomo, 2008). Business enterprises in order to gain competitive advantage in their respective industries are making use of information technology which requires managers to harness and implement its uses (Beheshti, 2004). Thus, the revolution of information technology has transformed operations of enterprises that aim to achieve the five R's which according to Rana (2013) is to produce the right product, with the right quality, in the right quantity, at the right price and at the right time. Annan (2002) posits that information society has emerged as human capacity has been expanded, nourished and built up with access to relevant tools and technologies as well as the appropriate training for their effective use.

According to Hansson (2015) the word technology is of Greek origin, based on "techne" that means art or skill and "-logy" that means "knowledge of" or "discipline of". Information technology refers to anything related to computing technology, such as networking, hardware, software, the internet or the people that work

with these technologies (Kumar, 2014). According to Anyakoha (1991) cited in Ogbomo and Ogbomo (2008) information technology is the use of man-made tools for the collection, generation, communication, recording, re-management and exploitation of information. It includes those applications and commodities, by which information is transferred, recorded, edited, stored, manipulated or disseminated. Rendulic (2011) affirms that ICT in everyday life comprises of the following: E-mail, e-commerce, online banking, e-government, online shopping, e-learning, etc.

Basic technologies can be used to store, retrieve, organize, transmit and algorithmically transform any type of information that can be digitized into numbers, text, video, music, speech and programs to name a few (Brynjolfsson and Hitt, 2000). Frenzel (2009) observed that technology revolution has created innumerable opportunities as well as some challenges for numerous organizations; therefore, managers must learn to adapt to and maximize advantages offered by information technology in this information-based society while guarding against the threats associated with it. Technology has leveled the playing field (Scumaci, 2010), a world without mobile phones and internet is unimaginable (Schubert and Leimstoll, 2007) as technology has brought buyers and sellers closer together, thereby creating intimacy characterized in earlier eras (Levy and Powell, 1998). Technology can improve efficiency and increase productivity in different ways leading to lower transaction cost, better resource allocation and technical improvements (Olusola and Oluwaseun, 2013). To succeed in this evolving environment, managers must be proficient in the adoption of new practices and improved techniques. Technology saves money and time spent on repetitive tasks in an organization (Chinomona, 2013).

Technology has altered management practices and the nature of work in industrialized nations (Lohr, 2007). Proper dissemination of information via technology empowers governments, institutions and individuals who sufficiently integrate it into their organizational structure. These days, the flow of information across the globe as little restriction, with access to internet, individuals can interrogate gigantic databases on super-information highways which information technology opens up. Woherem (2000) affirms that through internet connectivity business transactions can be carried out around the world without intermediaries or physical acquaintance with the customer. The adoption of computers in organizations has gone through four distinct phases (Scheimann, 2003): Large central mainframes, personal computers and distributed data processing, the networking of microcomputers and the networking of networks. Each phase has added to, rather than superseded, the previous phase.

The availability and cost of information and the way it is utilized shapes a lot of sectors in a nation and the business sector is not excluded. As a result of technological changes and innovation a lot of industries are directly or indirectly subjected to possible restructuring. Many developing Nations have hardly tasted the benefits of modern information technology. Information technology has paved way for platforms such as Electronic Commerce (e-commerce) and e-commerce is a technological innovation that enables Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to compete on the same level with their larger counterparts (Agwu and Murray, 2015).

Importance of Technology in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)

In developing countries of the world, technology plays a critical role in development (Olusola and Oluwaseun, 2013). Adoption of technology in business processes has improved the overall operational efficiency of firms (Barua et al., 2004). In preceding years, the development of technology in areas such as manufacturing, multimedia, communications and electronic service networks as created new opportunities for firms thereby enhancing the way business transactions, processes, payment and delivery services operate. It has affected the business in the following ways:

1. Office Automation: technology is a vital and integral part of a business which has assisted the automation of several industrial and business systems.
2. Stores large amount of data: Business and commercial enterprises need to store, preserve and maintain large records as these records can be used for various purposes such as payroll accounting, inventory control, resources scheduling, sales analysis and generation of management reports to say the least. Availability,

visibility and accessibility to files already stored has been made easier by information technology (Simchi-Levi et al., 2003) and can also be updated as at when necessary.

3. Improves Productivity: Computers have aided the automation of office tasks and procedures with the introduction of word processing software. In manufacturing processes, information technology has enabled shorter lead times and reduced scrap rates (Rana, 2013). This has improved the productivity of various enterprises.

4. Sharing of data and information: Business operations are undergoing drastic changes with the advent of social media which can be used to share data and information. The networking of computers (the connection of a number of computers within the organization to share the data and information) and use of e-mail have also played their part in sharing of information. This helps functional roles of transaction execution, collaboration, coordination and decision Support in supply chain management possible, (Auramo et al., 2005)

5. Competitiveness: Technology proffers a reliable and economical means of conducting business electronically. Routine tasks can be automated. Customer relationships can be built on the platform of information technology with the provision of “round the clock support”. Technology successfully supports competitive strategies (Schubert and Leimstoll, 2007) which have aided the spreading of organizations as there are new strategies to entering markets which has increased their presence in the world.

6. Security: Security is always a critical issue in organizations. In order to prevent unauthorized personnel’s from gaining illegal access to company’s information, virtually every organization has some security programs put in place to prevent such access. The basic attributes of a security program are integrity, availability and confidentiality which grants access to only authorized persons in an organization.

7. Cost Benefits: Companies now have a relatively large choice of suppliers as a result of the vast availability of internet based information at their disposal which has led to a more competitive pricing. Information technology reduces transaction costs (Kramer, Jenkins and Katz, 2007) and the major class affected by this development is the “middleman” whose service becomes less important as company goods and services can be distributed directly to customers.

8. Marketing: Companies that use e-business platforms to conduct commercial activities can create brand awareness with their respective websites, thus, creating new opportunities for advertising and promotion of their products. Furthermore, superior services such as after sales services can be offered to customer through companies’ websites.

Innovation theory: This theory was propounded by J.A. Schumpeter (1987). The theory opines that entrepreneur is basically an innovator and innovator is one who introduces new combinations. The theory opines that an entrepreneur does not merely conduct business to better their lives alone. Rather, through their activities, they are able to cause development in the economy and the society at large. The inventor of this theory, Joseph Schumpeter, argued that an entrepreneur grows by being creative and having a foresight. One of the creative things that an entrepreneur does is introduce a new product. A new product often comes to solve a certain problem in the society or make it more convenient. Another innovative aspect is that in a bid to achieve growth and have more profits, an entrepreneur introduces a new production method. Notably, enhanced production methods lead to a reduction in the cost of production and an increase in the goods manufactured. Innovation also comes in when an entrepreneur opens a new market. This is often done after the identification of a growth opportunity or a void in the economy. The discovery of new sources of raw materials and establishment of organization are also aspects of entrepreneurs being innovators.

Empirical Review

Agwu (2018) investigated the relevance of information technology in the effective management of selected SMEs in Lagos. The survey involves one hundred and fifty respondents comprising of managers and employees in selected SMEs within Lagos State. Questionnaires were used as a data collection tool. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested using descriptive analysis and regression analysis through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Findings from the data analyzed shows that use of information

technology by managements of SMEs helps to improve productivity and market shares thereby increasing the effectiveness of management. This study recommends proper education and training for managers and employees to create more awareness and improve the e-literacy of SMEs operators.

Chioma (2012) examined the relevance of Information Technology to the Management of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria with reference to Card Centre Nigeria Limited. The research design took both an inferential and a descriptive approach. A sample size of fifty (50) was drawn from the population. A hundred questionnaires were distributed randomly to stratified groups among the staff of De-United Food Industries Plc. A 5 - point likert scale was developed and validated to collect information from the respondents. The data collected was analyzed with basic descriptive statistics such as frequency and simple percentages. Chi-square analysis was also made. The core findings from the results obtained show that that Information Technology play significant role in the activities and operations of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs), that Information Technology has impacted positively on the managerial practice of SMEs and that Information Technology has improved the performance of SMEs

Oluwafemi (2015) conducted a study to assess the general characteristics of (SME) Small and Medium Scale Enterprises and explore the effects of (ICT) Information Communication Technology on (SME) Small and medium scale enterprise productivity in Nigeria. A survey research approach of the data collection was adopted to 80 respondents. Based on the sample results obtained is indicated that SMEs in Nigeria improves its processes and products with the use of Information Communication Technology and also most Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria were operated by men within the age range of 34-40 year old and as well mostly had the least educational qualification of B.Sc. Furthermore, Information Communication Technology enhances the production process in organizations as a monitoring technology which decreases cost, increase organizational capabilities and also assists to shape inter-organizational coordination. Hence, based on the research overviewed it is noted that Stakeholders in the Small and Medium Scale Enterprise industry agree that the introduction of Information Communication Technology in its operations changes its processes and productivity which in turn boost profitability. In the same vein, the use of Information Communication Technology by Small and Medium Scale Enterprise opens up new opportunities, reduces inventories with the use of Information Communication Technology as well as makes their services more tradable.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was adopted since it is a method that requires data collection through the administration of questionnaire, interview and personal observation. The research was carried out in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom state. The population of the study was made up of three hundred and twenty (320) registered SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. This figure was gotten from ministry of commerce and industry, state secretariat Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State (as at December, 2021). From the population of three hundred and twenty (320), the sample size was obtained using Taro Yamene's formulae which is given as thus;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n=sample size

N= Population

e= margin error 0.05

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{330}{1 + 330 (0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{330}{1 + 330 (0.0025)}$$

$$\frac{330}{1 + 0.825} = \frac{330}{1.825}$$

n = 180

Sources of data were from both primary and secondary sources. Primary source was from copies of administered questionnaire while secondary source was from textbooks, published articles and internet. A structured modified Likert scale questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Simple random sampling technique was used for this study. This method was necessary to ensure that every member of the study was provided an equal chance of being selected for the study. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the study. The descriptive statistics were percentage and frequency distribution tables which were used to capture respondents' demographic characteristics and frequency distribution of the responses on the study variables. Inferential statistics was used to assess the relationship of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was the inferential statistics used. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 was used to aid the analysis.

A total number of one hundred and eighty (180) copies of questionnaire were administered directly to the registered entrepreneurs in Uyo, out of the one hundred and eighty (180) numbers only one hundred and fifty (150) were filled and returned in a usable form. The one hundred and fifty consist of eighty-seven (87) male and sixty-three (63) females.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution/Responses Rate

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Questionnaire completed and returned	150	83
Questionnaire not returned	30	17
Total	180	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 4.1 shows that out of 180 copies of questionnaire administered, a total of 30 questionnaire representing 17% response were not returned to the researcher while a total of 150 questionnaire representing 83% response rate were returned. Thus, this 16% response rate now represents 100% of the instrument upon which subsequent analysis in this work is centered.

Table 4.2: Analysis of Responses on Respondents' gender

Sex	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	87	58
Female	63	42
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 4.2 above shows that 87 SME managers representing 58% were male while 63 representing 42% were female in Uyo. From the results of the above analysis, majority of the respondents are male while minority of the respondents are female.

Table 4.3 Analysis of Responses on Age Bracket in Uyo

Age bracket	Number	Percentage (%)
18-25	29	19
26-34	41	27
35-44	48	32
45 and above	32	22
Total	150	100

Sources: Field survey, 2023

The analysis in Table 4.3 indicates that 29 respondents representing 19% were between the ages of 18-25, 41 respondents representing 27% were between 26-34 age, 48 respondents representing 32% were between 35-44 age, while 32 respondents representing 22% were 45 and above. From the above analysis, it shows that majority of the registered SME managers were between the age bracket of 35-44.

Table 4.4: Analysis of responses on Educational Qualification

Qualification	Number	Percentage (%)
WASC/SSCE	36	24
OND/NCE	27	18
DEGREE/HND	60	40
M.SC/MBA/MA	19	13
Ph.D	5	5
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

The respondent's qualification as shown on table 4.4 shows that 36 respondents representing 24% are holders of WASC/SSCE, 27 respondents representing 18% had OND/NCE, 60 respondents representing 40% are Degree/HND holders, 19 respondent representing 13% had M.SC/MBA/MA while 5 respondent representing 5% had Ph.D. From this analysis, it shows that greater numbers of registered SME managers were degree/HND holders seconded by WASC/SSCE and OND/NCE respectively.

Table 4.5 Analysis of Responses on Type of Business

Options	Number	Percentage %
Production	38	25
Services	47	32
Production/services	65	43
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 4.5 indicates that 38 respondents representing 25% are involved in production, 47 respondents representing 32% were involved in services while 65 responses representing 43% were involved in production/service. This shows that a greater number of respondents are involved in production/services.

Table 4.6 Analysis of responses on the number of years

Options	Numbers	Percentage %
1-4	38	15
5-9	47	31
10-15	42	28
16 and above	23	16
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 4.6 indicates that 38 responses representing 15% were in operation within the period of 1-4yrs, 47 responses representing 31% were in operation within the period of 5-9yrs, 42 responses representing 28% operated for 1-15yrs while 24 responses representing 16% was in operation for 16yrs and above. It therefore shows that the numbers of SMEs that have operated above 16 years are very low in Uyo.

Table 4.7 With the use of computers and similar devices, inventory control is achieved better in the enterprise

Options	Number	Percentage %
Strongly agree	73	49
Agree	35	23
Disagree	21	14
Strongly disagree	21	14

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 4.7 indicates that 73 respondents representing 49% strongly agree that With the use of computers and similar devices, inventory control is achieved better in the enterprise, 35 respondents representing 23% agree, 21 respondents representing 14% disagree. While 21 respondents representing 14% strongly disagree. From the highest respondents, it therefore shows that with the use of computers and similar devices, inventory control is achieved better in the enterprise.

Table 4.8 Ability to use the Internet has provided relevant information that has enhanced SMEs managers' productivity

Variables	Number	Percentage %
Strongly agreed	70	47
Agreed	55	37
Undecided	18	12
Disagree	7	4
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey 2023

From the table 4.8 above, 70 respondents representing 47% strongly agreed, 55 respondents representing 37% agreed, 18 respondents representing 12% were undecided, 7 respondents representing 4% disagreed while Zero respondent indicating (0%) strongly disagree. Therefore, it was concluded that the ability to use the internet by SMEs managers has provided relevant information which has enhanced their productivity.

Table 4.9 Technology has enhanced work speed

Variables	Numbers	Percentage %
Strongly agreed	119	79
Agreed	29	19
Undecided	2	2
Disagree	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	150	100

Sources: Field survey 2023

From the table above, 119 respondents representing 79% strongly agreed technology has enhanced work speed, 29 respondents representing 19% agreed, 3 respondents representing 2% were undecided while Zero respondent representing (0%) strongly disagreed. Therefore, it was concluded that technology has enhanced work speedily.

Table 4.10 Technology has reduced stress and work load

Variables	Numbers	Percentage
Strongly agreed	120	80
Agreed	15	10
Undecided	2	1.3
Disagree	10	6.7
Strongly disagree	3	2
Total	150	100

Source: Field survey, 2023

From table 4.10 above, 120 respondents representing 80% strongly agreed Technology has reduced stress and work load, 15 respondents representing 10% agreed, 2 respondents representing (1.3%) were undecided, 10 respondents representing (6.7%) disagreed while 3 respondents representing (2%) strongly disagreed. It is therefore concluded Technology has reduced stress and work load

Table 4.11 With the use of technology, customers prefer our goods/services to that of our competitors

Variables	Numbers	Percentage
Strongly agreed	110	73.3
Agreed	20	13.3
Undecided	7	4.7
Disagree	10	6.7
Strongly disagree	3	2
Total	150	100

From table 4.11 above, 110 respondents representing 73.3% strongly agreed With the use of technology, customers prefer our goods/services to that of our competitors, 20 respondents representing 13.3% agreed, 7 respondents representing (4.7%) were undecided, 10 respondents representing (6.7%) disagreed while 3 respondents representing (2%) strongly disagreed. It is therefore concluded with the use of technology, customers prefer their goods/services to that of our competitors.

Table 4.12 With the use of technology and similar devices, our goods/services gets wider reach

Variables	Number	Percentage %
Strongly agreed	90	60
Agreed	35	23.3
Undecided	10	6.7
Disagree	7	4.7
Strongly disagree	8	5.3
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From table 4.12 above, 90 respondents representing 60% strongly agreed With the use of technology and similar devices, their goods/services gets wider reach, 35 respondents representing 23.3% agreed, 10 respondents representing (6.7%) were undecided, 7 respondents representing (4.7%) disagreed while 8 respondents representing (5.3%) strongly disagreed. It is therefore concluded with the use of technology and similar devices, their goods/services gets wider reach.

Test of Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between technological skill and production output of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Table 4.11 Correlations

		Tech Skill	Prod Output
HRS	Pearson correlation	1	.970
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.002
	N	150	150
Development	Pearson correlation	. 970	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	150	150

The table 4.11 shows the correlation coefficient r for human relation skills to be 0.970 and the p value resulting to 0.02 show that p value is less than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis H_0 which states that there is no significance relationship between Technological skill and production output in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State is rejected and the alternate is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between technological skill and efficiency of managers of SMEs in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Table 4.12 Correlations

		Technological skills	Efficiency
Technological skills	Pearson correlation	1	.833
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.001
	N	150	150
Efficiency	Pearson correlation	. 833	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	150	150

Table 4.12 shows the correlation coefficient r for planning to be 0.833 and the p value resulting to 0.01. This shows that p value is less than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance relationship between technological skills and the efficiency of SMEs managers in Uyo, Akwalbom State is rejected and affirmative is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between technological skills and competitiveness of SMEs in Akwalbom State

Table 4.13 Correlations

		Tech skill	Competitiveness
Technological skill	Pearson correlation	1	.798
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.001
	N	150	150
Competitiveness	Pearson correlation	. 798	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	150	150

The table 4.13 shows the correlation coefficient r for financial plans to be 0.798 and the p value resulting to 0.01 show that p value is less than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis H_0 which states that there is no significance relationship between Technological skill and Competitiveness of SMEs managers in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State is rejected and the affirmative is accepted

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the first analysis, it shows that there exist a positive correlation between technological skills and production output of SMEs managers in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State. This is in line with the findings of Agwu (2018) which shows that having technological skill is vital for smooth performance of management functions which this will bring about increase in the production output of the enterprise and better communication in the organization. This simply means that when SME managers have effective technological skills like ability to use computers and modern technologies for production, the firm's production capacity will increase thereby leading to higher production output for such enterprise

In the second analysis, it was also revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between technological skill and efficiency of SME managers. This finding disagrees with the findings of Oluwafemi (2015) which it was revealed that the use of Information Communication Technology by Small and Medium Scale Enterprise managers does not lead to greater efficiency for the enterprise. Efficiency happens in various ways including opening up of new opportunities, reduced manual inventory taking, reduced cost of production, increased sales, etc. From the findings of this study, Information Communication Technology has a direct relationship with the efficiency of SMEs managers. This means that technological skill will lead to managers being able to maximize more profit for the firm through reduced cost of production and taking advantage of new opportunities. Also, it enhances the effectiveness of decision making and also facilitates the accomplishment of goals and objectives of the organization. The reason for this variance in findings could be as a result of different statistical tool used. The third analysis equally revealed that there exist positive correlation between technological skill and competitiveness of SME managers. This finding is in line with the findings of Zaridis (2009) which found out that possessing a good technological skill a great tool for having competitiveness advantage over its competitors. Technological skill is a unique competence which is require of SMEs managers to possess. Unique competencies help a firm stand out in its markets when its competencies are superior to its competitors

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the data undertaken, it is has been established that SME managers possessing effective technological skill is very important to the performance of their enterprise in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. For SMEs to be successful and be ahead of their competitors, its managers must be technologically inclined. Being that SMEs has been recognized as the backbone of the economy, it has the characteristics of a catalyst that can propel the growth and development of the nation by providing employment, poverty alleviation, improving local goods and increasing GDP to name a few. Therefore, major investments should be diverted to the acquisition and implementation of technology with a proper structure to facilitate adequate training for SME managers, employees and all other stakeholders so as to ensure e-literacy. Furthermore, SMEs who have adopted technology also have their own challenges as human beings are the main threats to information technology in an organization. Manipulation of devices and gadgets can be used to commit fraud. The obstacles confronting the spread of technology are not technical but rather behavioral and in the cause of rejection of technology, the human system is the one that resist change. However, from the survey results, the disadvantages of using technology surpass the disadvantages. Finally, it is safe to draw conclusion from the results of this research that technological skill is relevant to the performance of SME managers in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Recommendation

Based on the summary of findings and the conclusion drawn from this study, the following recommendations were made:

SME managers that are not technologically inclined should be encouraged to take up courses in Information Communication Technology to help develop their skills in this area. Owing to the fact that it has been established that possessing an effective technological skill can help increase productivity, improve efficiency and enhance competitiveness.

SMEs have been noted for their contribution to development, therefore there is a need for government to provide the necessary infrastructures to assist the adoption of technology in SMEs which will in turn improve their participation in development

SMEs in Nigeria should do well to adopt and implement information technology in their business process to enhance the overall wellbeing of the sector in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State by extension Nigeria.

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