



Information seeking and job performance of employees in selected consumer multinational organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined information seeking and job performance of employees in some selected consumer multinational organizations in Lagos state. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Population of the study comprised staff across the three levels of management within head offices of 5 selected consumer multinational organizations in Lagos. Convenience sampling was used to select the organizations' head office after which total enumeration sampling technique was used to include all 576 employees. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Out of 576 copies of structured questionnaire distributed, 365 copies were returned and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that workers primarily seek information for news, updating knowledge, better performance of tasks, skill acquisition, work proficiency, current awareness, security, research, and new product development. The factors responsible for information seeking process of workers in their work place included availability of computers and internet facilities, telephone services and cable television, freedom for personal development and access to libraries or information centers. The study also discovered that information seeking promoted job performance by promoting continuous learning, widespread technology use, innovation creativity through research, and improved productivity. However, challenges such as lack of time work overload, absence of library and lack of management's support for research constituted major hinderances towards information seeking. Based on these the study recommended that management of the organizations should create policies that will allow for balanced workload, create time for research and continuous learning. Also, they should be deliberate towards creating healthy information seeking architecture within their work environment to consequently harness better employees job performance and competitive advantage.

Keywords: information, information seeking, job performance, employee's performance, multinational organizations



Introduction

The quest to gain competitive advantage by organizations is on the increase especially in a fast paced and rapidly changing world of business. In order to catch up with the tide of time, organizations are left with no choice than to engage in a purposeful seeking and use of information. Madukoma and Opeke (2013) agreed that information seeking involves searching for, extracting, and using information for specific purpose. This involves understanding the needed information by organizations. To achieve organizational edge, information is needed for task performance such as problem information, domain information, and problem-solving information (Blaising, et al, 2018). Popoola (2024) identified information seeking and use as key facilitators of problem solving ability of manager in a manufacturing organization. Causholli et al (2021) noted in affirmation that the employee who seeks information and knowledge turns out better job performance within accounting organization of their study. While Deng et al (2023) revealed from their work that how information seeking is done by supervisors could negatively or positively impart the job performance of new employees or other workers within the organization. This goes a long way to buttress the fact that information seeking is a vehicle to venture into both the known and unknown skills and better ways of doing things. Studies earlier carried out attested to the importance of information and why seeking it can make for better performance. Osaniyi and Otuza (2010) posited that information seeking is “a fundamental human process...and thus a natural and necessary mechanism of human existence” hence; it is an integral aspect of people’s daily work. No matter how versed a worker is in a field, such employee still needs a variety of information in order to succeed, more so gain competitive advantage within an organization. Information is an asset and a vital resource for development (Asiagodo, 2003). Also, Nwalo (2000) and Aina (2004) identified information as data that is purposeful and of value for decision making which has different meanings to different people. Information is any difference one perceives in an environment or within oneself. Athukorala (2021) established that the progression of information and attendant technology has provided a veritable platform to support quality information seeking activities such as developing information networks, access to wide variety of information sources worldwide, educational information, business and organizational information where employees’ job performance is hinged. This is why information seeking activities cannot be underutilized in organizations.

From a managerial perspective, Drucker (2002) describes information as a tool in the hand of a manager “the manager has a specific tool: information”. From Drucker’s point of view, the manager does not



handle people; he motivates, guides, organizes people to do their own work, he makes all this happen through written words or language of numbers (information). Popoola (2002) submits that information is pivotal to personnel and organizational development at all levels. He argued that workers need access to practical and personal knowledge as well as facts, which helps explain their preference for oral communication and for using people as information sources which support organizational performance and makes economic sense. By implication, workers job performance could be impacted either negatively or positively by the extent to which available information is utilized; and the precision exhibited toward seeking unavailable data. Organizational productivity depends largely on the performance of each worker from different units that constitute the organizational workforce (Postrado & Matildo, 2023). This implies that the performance of workers in any organization is very critical as it defines the performance ranking and corporate image. Uncertainty propels employees to engage in seeking different types of information, using different strategies and sources. When finding the desired information is successful, positive outcomes such as increased job satisfaction, productivity, organizational commitment and job tenure (Blaising, et al, 2018).

Scholars have argued that the performance of organization which determines its survival, growth and competitive edge depends to a large extent on the productivity, improved skills, knowledge, creativity and innovation of its workforce (Alase & Akinbo, 2021; Showkat et al., 2023; Somuah, Mensah & Gyimah, 2024). In fact, the wealth of a nation as well as the socio-economic wellbeing of its people depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of its various subcomponents. Labour is generally regarded as the most dynamic of all the factors that are employed for the creation of wealth, having the potential to energize and serve as catalyst to all of the other resources. Thus, productivity is of fundamental importance to the individual worker of whatever status, to the organization whether commercial or not, to the national economy at large, and to the upliftment of the welfare of the citizen and the reduction if not total eradication of mass poverty (Al Nahyan et al, 2024; Naqshbandi et al, 2023; Akinyele, 2007).

It was observed that the productivity of labour is low in Nigeria. In a seminar by the National Manpower Board on Worker's Performance and Productivity in Nigeria over the period of ten years, it was asserted that job performance was low, affecting the productivity output in Nigeria. This finding places the job performance of workers in most Nigerian organizations below that of their European and Chinese counterpart on the average. Furthermore, this observation buttresses the need for reconsideration of condition under which workers perform their jobs including information seeking program (Akinyele, 2007; Blaising et al, 2018; Alase & Akinbo, 2021). The crusade for productivity increase in Nigeria



formally began in 1963 when the Morgan Commission recommended the setting up of a National Wages Advisory Council. Since then, the concern for accelerated performance and productivity especially in the public sector has increased with intensity. This culminated in the establishment of the National Productivity Center under the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (Osoba, 1999; Umeh and Usman, 2000). The primary mandate of the National Productivity Center, as stipulated in Decree No. 7 of 1999, is to stimulate productivity consciousness among Nigerian workers and to develop and supply the right technical solutions to productivity problems across all sectors of the National economy.

Could there be any improvement with due consideration to initiating and implementing an effective information system to enhance the information seeking within organizations, with the aim of improving employee's/organizational performance? Productivity which is a measure of performance has been threatened in recent times (Tuffaha, 2020). The problem may not be what to produce, how to produce or for whom to produce, but a problem which stems from being innovative and creative in terms of products and services. The versatility and intentionality given to research in multinationals is inadequate considering their important role in the industrial sector. They provide wider range of services to customers both foreign and local; they have wider network coverage ranging from varying degree of products, class of consumers, to contribution to economic development (Al Nahyan et al, 2024; Alase & Akinbo, 2021). This is why information seeking processes cannot be downplayed.

Statement of Problem

It has been observed that engaging in deliberate information seeking activity provides premise through which an identified problem is resolved, and needs are met. Despite this, it has been observed that most multinational organizations focus mainly on increasing their profit margin, they are not deliberate in giving priority to information seeking programs that is targeted at better job performance. Consequently, workers operate within offices not equipped enough for effective information seeking. Could this condition be contributory to employees' low job performance? Could an improved information seeking condition bring about better job performance for workers and organizational output? It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the information seeking and job performance of employees in selected consumer multinational organizations in Lagos State.

Objectives of the Study

1. Investigate the purpose for which workers in the organizations under study seek information.



2. Identify factors that are responsible for information seeking processes in the studied organizations.
3. Find out ways information seeking of workers can influence their job performance.
4. Identify challenges faced by workers in the studied locales during the process of seeking information.

Research Questions

1. For what purpose do workers in the organizations under study seek information?
2. What are the factors responsible for information seeking process of workers in their work place?
3. In what ways can information seeking of workers influence their job performance?
4. What are the difficulties experienced by workers during the process of seeking information?

Literature Review

Information-seeking is a critical factor influencing job performance in multinational organisations. Employees who actively seek information are better equipped to adapt to dynamic work environments, make informed decisions, and enhance productivity (Wilson, 2021). This is particularly relevant in consumer multinational companies, where rapid decision-making and market responsiveness are crucial. In such contexts, employees' ability to source, evaluate, and apply relevant information is directly linked to their performance outcomes. Lagos State, a prominent business hub in Nigeria, provides a unique setting where employees frequently leverage both formal and informal information channels to meet organisational goals. Empirical studies, such as those by Choo, Detlor & Turnbull (2020), underscore that structured information-seeking behaviors, supported by organisational resources like training and technology, significantly improve task efficiency and innovation among employees.

The integration of technology into multinational organisations has transformed how employees seek and use information. Adebayo and Oladipo (2022) revealed that access to advanced technological tools, such as enterprise software and knowledge management systems, positively correlates with improved job performance in Lagos-based multinational firms. These tools facilitate faster information retrieval, collaboration, and problem-solving. Similarly, Davenport and Prusak (2021) noted that technology-



enabled information seeking reduces cognitive load and allows employees to focus on strategic tasks, thereby enhancing overall performance.

Organisational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' information-seeking behaviors. Okeke and Adeola (2021) found that a culture of openness and knowledge sharing fosters proactive information-seeking among employees in consumer multinational corporations in Lagos State. Conversely, organisations with rigid hierarchies or poor communication channels tend to discourage employees from accessing critical information, negatively impacting job performance. Leaders who model effective information-seeking behaviors inspire their teams to adopt similar practices, creating a knowledge-driven work environment.

Motivation is another significant determinant of employees' willingness to seek information and improve their job performance. Johnson et al., (2022) discovered that intrinsic motivation, such as personal growth and career development goals, drives employees to actively seek out information that enhances their skills and performance. In Lagos-based multinational organisations, extrinsic factors such as rewards, recognition, and career advancement opportunities also serve as key motivators for information-seeking behaviors. The research suggests that aligning reward systems with employees' efforts to acquire and apply new knowledge fosters an environment conducive to continuous learning and high performance.

Despite its importance, employees face several barriers to effective information-seeking. Eze, et al., (2023) and Horsfall et al., (2020) identified common challenges such as information overload, lack of access to reliable data sources, and insufficient support from management. These barriers often lead to delays in decision-making, reduced efficiency, and lower job satisfaction among employees. Access to advanced technological tools significantly enhances employees' ability to seek and utilize information effectively. Oh et al., (2020) emphasized the role of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and knowledge management platforms in streamlining information access. In Lagos State, where digital transformation is gaining momentum, organisations investing in technology are better positioned to support employee performance.

While global research on information-seeking behaviors is extensive, studies focusing specifically on Lagos State remain relatively limited. Nonetheless, existing literature provides valuable insights into the unique dynamics of this region. Adeyemi et al., (2021) explored the impact of digital literacy on employee performance in Lagos-based multinational corporations. Their findings revealed that



employees with higher digital literacy levels were more effective in seeking and applying information to achieve organisational objectives. Similarly, Ojo et al., (2019) examined the role of knowledge-sharing practices in enhancing team performance within consumer goods companies in Lagos State. Their study highlighted that fostering a culture of collaboration, trust, and open communication among team members significantly contributes to productivity and organisational success.

However, barriers such as inadequate training on digital tools persist. Adeoye et al., (2020) highlighted that insufficient training can hinder employees' ability to seek and utilize information effectively. The study recommended continuous capacity-building initiatives to address this gap.

On the whole, effective information-seeking behaviors are essential for enhancing job performance in multinational organisations, particularly in dynamic environments like Lagos State. Through a supportive organisational culture, leveraging advanced technological tools, and addressing barriers such as inadequate training or poor communication channels, organisations can empower employees to seek and apply information more effectively.

This review shows that information need arises when individuals recognize a gap in their knowledge required to achieve a goal or solve a problem. Scholars emphasize that this triggers information seeking, a deliberate effort to fill the gap. Studies reveal that factors like work environment, access to resources, and organizational support significantly influence information-seeking behavior. Research also highlights the importance of tailored strategies for different information needs, as seen in e-government employees and agro-based specialists. Effective information management systems (IMCs) in multinational companies are noted for their ease of access, technological integration, and support from top management. Overall, the review underscores that information needs and seeking behaviors are influenced by individual roles, organizational contexts, and the availability of supportive infrastructure.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of staff across the managerial levels from the head office(s) of Glaxo Smith Kline, Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Procter & Gamble, Patterson Zochonis and Unilever Nigeria Plc respectively. The breakdown are as follows: Nestle = 86, GSK = 77, PG = 87, PZ = 205, Unilever = 121; total = 576. Convenience sampling was used to select the organizations' head offices. This was because each of the five companies has a high concentration of their work force as well as management team in their head offices. Further, total enumeration was used to include all 576 employees. 576 copies of structured questionnaire were



administered while 356 copies were returned as follows: P&G, out of 87 copies of questionnaire, 52 (59.8%) were retrieved; at PZ Cussons out of 205, 122 (59.5%) was the return rate. At Unilever, out of 121, 66 (54.5%) was returned; at Nestlé, 60(69.8%) was returned from a total of 86 distributed. Finally, from GSK, out of a total of 77 respondents, 56 (72.7%) was returned. Hence, out of 576 copies distributed, 356 (61.8%) copies were retrieved and analyzed using descriptive statistics with mean and standard deviation. Research questions drawn from the objectives were the basis for data analysis.

Analyses and Results

Research question 1:

For what purpose do workers in the companies under study seek information?

Table 1: Purpose for which Workers Consult/Seek Information in their Workplace

Reason, Purpose	Yes	No
Religious purpose	130 (36.5%)	226 (63.5%)
Health purpose	174(48.9%)	182 (51.1%)
Political affiliation, politics	175(49.2%)	181(50.8%)
Purchasing items	185(52.0%)	171(48.0%)
Socialization	189(53.1%)	167(46.9%)
Entertainment	212(59.6%)	144(40.4%)
New product development	236(66.3%)	120(33.7%)
Research purpose	249(69.9%)	107(30.1%)
Security purpose	251(70.5%)	105(29.5%)
Current awareness	254(71.3%)	102(28.7%)
Work proficiency	267(75.0%)	89(25.0%)
Skill acquisition	269(75.6%)	87(24.4%)
Updating knowledge	293(82.3%)	63(17.7%)
Better performance of task	292(82.0%)	64(18.0%)
News	303(85.1%)	53(14.9%)

Result in Table 1 above shows that workers primarily seek information for news (85.1%), updating knowledge (82.3%), better performance of tasks (82.0%), skill acquisition (75.6%), and work proficiency (75.0%). These findings indicate that workers prioritize staying informed and improving their professional capabilities to enhance job performance. Additionally, factors such as current awareness, security, research, and new product development also drive information-seeking activities.



Research question 2:

What are the factors responsible for information seeking process of workers in their work place?

Table 2: Factors in the Work Environment that Support Information Seeking

Facilities In Work Environment	Yes [%]	No [%]
Availability of Computers	328 (92.1)	28 (7.9)
Availability of internet facility	304 (85.4)	52 (14.6)
Telephone services	259 (72.8)	97 (27.2)
Cable television	235 (66.0)	121 (34.0)
Freedom of personnel development	186 (52.2)	170 (47.8)
Availability of library, information centre	186 (52.2)	170 (47.8)
Departmental subscription to newspapers/magazines	180 (50.6)	176 (49.4)
Availability of research centre	147 (41.3)	209 (58.7)
Tele/ videoconferencing	147 (41.3)	209 (58.7)
Provision of research allowance	89 (25.0)	267 (75.0)

In table 2 above, the availability of computers (92.1%) and internet facilities (85.4%) are identified as key enablers of information-seeking processes within organizations. Telephone services and cable television also play significant roles in facilitating access to information. Interestingly, freedom for personal development and access to libraries or information centers are seen as supportive factors with average percentage score (52.2%).



Research question 3:

In what ways can information seeking of workers influence their job performance?

Table 3: Information seeking Influence on Workers Job Performance

S\N	IS And job performance	SD	D	UD	A	SA	Mean	S.D
1	Promotes continuous learning	34(9.6%)	6(1.7%)	7(2.0%)	110(30.9%)	199(55.9%)	4.22	1.21
2	Widespread use of technology	29(8.1%)	8(2.2%)	28(7.9%)	81(22.8%)	210(59.0%)	4.22	1.20
3	Innovation, creativity through research	33(9.3%)	2(.6%)	23(6.5%)	105(29.5%)	193(54.2%)	4.19	1.20
4	Improved productivity	31(8.7%)	4(1.1%)	21(5.9%)	114(32.0%)	186(52.2%)	4.18	1.18
5	Ability to compete with counterpart	23(6.5%)	6(1.7%)	30(8.4%)	133(37.4%)	164(46.1%)	4.15	1.08
6	Collaboration, networking of workers and units	32(9.0%)	6(1.7%)	22(6.2%)	114(32.0%)	182(51.1%)	4.15	1.20
7	Better management of resources	27(7.6%)	8(2.2%)	20(5.6%)	141(39.6%)	160(44.9%)	4.12	1.13
8	Brings about proactivity	31(8.7%)	18(5.1%)	30(8.4%)	96(27.0%)	181(50.8%)	4.06	1.26
9	Ability to solve identified problems	25(7.0%)	8(2.2%)	27(7.6%)	164(46.1%)	132(37.1%)	4.04	1.08
10	Knowledge sharing, transfer	52(14.6%)	-	9(2.5%)	131(36.8%)	164(46.1%)	4.00	1.34
11	Leads to globalization	39(11.0%)	4(1.1%)	65(18.3%)	72(20.2%)	176(49.4%)	3.96	1.31

Result in table 3 above revealed that Information behavior significantly influences job performance by promoting continuous learning (mean=4.22), widespread use of technology (mean=4.22), innovation and creativity through research (mean=4.19), and improved productivity (mean=4.18). The ability to compete with counterparts and better management of resources are also notable outcomes of effective information-seeking behavior.



Research question 4:

What are the difficulties experienced by workers during the process of seeking information?

Table 4: Difficulties Encountered During Information Seeking

S\N	Difficulties/ Challenges	Yes	No
1	Lack of internet facilities	72(20.2%)	284(79.8%)
4	Lack of management support for research	108(30.3%)	248(69.7%)
2	Obsolete materials	85(23.9%)	271(76.1%)
3	Poor information search skills	105(29.5%)	251(70.5%)
5	Unavailability of materials	120(33.7%)	236(66.3%)
6	Do not know where to locate materials	124(34.8%)	232(65.2%)
7	Lack of motivation	136(38.2%)	220(61.8%)
8	Absence of library	143(40.2%)	213(59.8%)
9	Work overload	226(63.5%)	130(36.5%)
10	Lack of time	232(65.2%)	124(34.8%)

Result shown in table 4 indicates that work overload (63.5%) and lack of time (65.2%) are major challenges faced by workers during the information-seeking process. Despite these challenges, the availability of internet facilities minimizes difficulties related to accessing information. Other potential setbacks such as obsolete materials and poor search skills are not perceived as major hindrances by most respondents.

Conclusion

The study concluded that information seeking plays a crucial role in enhancing job performance within the selected multinational organizations. Employees primarily seek information to stay informed, improve their knowledge, and enhance their professional skills, which are essential for better task performance and overall work proficiency. The availability of technological resources like computers and internet facilities significantly supports this process, although challenges such as work overload and lack of time can hinder effective information seeking.



Recommendations

1. Organizations should invest more in information seeking infrastructure, ensuring that employees have access to necessary information seeking tools such as relevant online databases, current print and digital library for access to current information.
2. Proactive information-seeking activities has a positive impact on organizational productivity and efficiency. Therefore, management should enhance supportive information seeking culture by providing libraries, research centres, research allowance and increased tele/video conferencing facilities within the multinational organizations.
3. Management of the multinational organizations should be intentional in creating modern information seeking environments that sustains healthy promotion of continuous learning, widespread use of technology, innovation and creativity, and improved productivity. Knowledge sharing and transfer that enables workers compete globally should given attention as well.
4. Management should implement policies that support balanced workload, create time, motivate employees towards research and innovation, collaborate with colleagues and relevant stakeholders.



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