
INFORMATION AND ENTREPRENEURS IN NNOBI COMMUNITY IN IDEMMILI SOUTH LGA OF ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The existing variety of activities creates the variety of information needs. We can describe an information needs as a motive to use information required to support people engaged in certain activities. Information related business phenomena has become demanding nowadays. This is because people really need information and relies on it for their daily business decision making. This paper looks at the information needs of the entrepreneurs in Nnobi Community of Idemmili South LGA of Anambra State. It reinforces the significant role information services, particularly public libraries can play in securing sustainable socio-economic development dedicated to improving the general quality of life in the rural sector. The paper tries to outline different strategies for satisfying the information needs of rural people. A rethink of library development in the country as a whole. A total restructuring of public library service in the country with a view to reaching the rural communities was recommended. The problems hindering the provision of efficient information services in the rural communities were discussed. These include among others poor communication infrastructures, widely dispersed rural population, geographical characteristics of the area, illiteracy, poverty arid inaccessibility. Several weaknesses in the rural information delivery system were identified and recommendations to improve accessibility by rural dwellers were made.

Keywords: *Information Needs, Entrepreneurial Information, and Small Business Owners*

INTRODUCTION

An entrepreneur is one who undertakes to start and conduct a business, assuming full control and risks. An individual who initiates and nurses to growth a new and ongoing business where none existed before is an entrepreneur. He is a catalyst for economic change. He works creatively to establish resources that were not existed. He is one who has the ability and desire to establish, administer and succeed in a start up venture along with risks entitlements.

It is in no way an exaggeration that Nigeria is endowed with abundant human and natural resources. However, it is paradoxical that a country so richly blessed lacks the infrastructures for true rapid and sustainable national development.

The bulk of the country's resources particularly land, population,, natural and mineral resources are in the rural areas. Adimorali and Ugoji (2013) specifically noted that rural communities in Nigeria constitute more than 80 percent of the Nigerian population of over 88 million people. Of this percentage, 70 percent are engaged in peasant farming, petty-trading, artisan work or other semi-skilled labour.

This means that most library and information services which are urban based do not reach them. In an apparent desperate bid, the grass root dwellers try to survive by seeking recourse to other forms of information" available in their community for their growth and development process. This was evident in the research results.

If Nigeria is to embark on true national development, it is logical that her primary focus should be on the rural dwellers. It is from that stand point that she can begin to lay solid foundations for rapid economic development and sustainable national prosperity.

When we speak of needs, we refer to things which a human being should have to function effectively". Every individual needs a variety of types of information and receives it from a variety of sources. The level of assimilation of information depends on such factors as age, experience, education, curiosity, general cognitive ability and exposure to related information.

Traditionally, the role of information to the rural communities has been the provision of culture, education, knowledge and recreation. Information remains a crucial component of all community development activities ranging from agriculture, health, industry, business to education.

Despite a steady increase in literacy rate, the problem of information gap between urban and rural dwellers is still very apparent. Equally' disturbing is the information gap between the developed and the developing nations of the world. Today, Japan is a world leader of excellence in manufactured goods. Its progress and prosperity is based on solid Science and Technology Information infrastructure. Nigeria too will become a truly developed nation when she invests consistently and heavily *in* properly planned research and development infrastructure. Public libraries have become an integral part of national socio-economic development dedicated to improving the general quality of life. Library and information services have now expanded to cover all sectors at grassroots level. However, only countries with sufficient financial resources have been able to provide efficient nationwide library services while those with economic constraints have tended to place library development at bottom of the list of government priorities.

INFORMATION NEEDS

Information needs arise when a gap between the existing information and the information called for is recognized, Kassim (2014). Information needs can be defined as the recognition of the existing knowledge being not enough in order to reach the target (Case, 2002). It is the information a person should have in order to perform his tasks or solve a problem in a satisfactory way (Nicholas, 2000). Information needs can be divided into objective and subjective needs. Høglund and Person (1985) stated that an objective information need is what is usually thought to be needed to solve a given problem whereas a subjective information need is something an individual himself thinks she needs to solve the problem in question.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. **The Library** is a primary resource for information. Government agencies have a variety of publication that may be useful. Some colleges and universities have reference libraries that may have a circulation section available to the public.

Also, research institutes and some large corporations have libraries with sections on specific topics. Libraries are the storehouse of information that may be useful in operating a small business.

Books, periodicals, reports, and newspapers may contain information that can be of help in solving some of the problems in operating a business.

2. **The Internet** can be used to carry out research and to find useful information and data. An example of these search engines is Google. Also E-mail can be used to communicate with and provide information to one who has websites on the internet.
3. **Subscribing to Trade Papers and Magazines.** Desirable entrepreneurs should have time to find articles especially in understanding new trends and developments relating to business.

It is advisable to keep a file of pertinent articles for future reference.

4. **Industrial Data** is helpful in comparing a business to other similar businesses. The data is available from trade associations or government agencies and includes ratios such as; stock turnover, cash discounts, percentage mark-up, etc.
5. **Membership Based Organizations** can provide services such as conducting research, organizing education and training programs, implementing new technology, responding to members' questions concerns, and disseminating information through newsletters, magazines, and special reports.
6. **Training Programmes** can help entrepreneurs to develop formal plans for improving their management skills and ability. Training courses and adult education programs are designed by many institutions, agencies, and associations.

Entrepreneurs should be aware of these personal development possibilities and take full advantage of them. One of such institution is the (CMD.) Centre for Management Development at Magodo area in Lagos (Nigeria).

7. **Employees.** The people who work for a business can provide answers to specific problems in a business. For example, entrepreneurs might ask employees for their advice and assistance about stock display customer attitudes. Employees are in a good

position to give valuable advice provided they know it or their opinions and suggestions are valued.

Also, customers can supply very special information about the products and services they buy. Customers should be asked about their opinions because they are an excellent source of information about the relative strength and weaknesses of a business operation.

8. **Other Business Owners.** Most businesses have common problems and owners are generally willing to discuss their problems with one another.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION, ORIGIN, CULTURE, CUSTOMS AND VALUES OF NNOBI COMMUNITY

Nnobi Community is located in the extreme North of Idemili South Local Government Area in the old Onitsha province of Anambra State. It shares common boundaries with the following towns - Nnewi, Awka-Etiti, Nnokwa, Alor, Ideani, Uke and Ojoto. It is bounded in the North by Nnokwa, in the South by Nnewi, in the East by Awka-Etiti and in the West by Alor, Ideani, Uke and Ojoto.

The only stream in the town, "*Mmili Obiaja*", flows from North to South in the Western boarder thus demarcating Nnobi from Uke, Ideani and Ojoto towns and indicating a steep East-ward gradient. Because the topography is tilted towards the West the terrain is heavily corroded during the rainy season by fast flowing floods whose tributaries empty into the stream with great is marked by numerous gullies "*Ogwu nchabo*" and crevices "*mgbomgbo*".

Unlike in the Northern parts of Anambra State, there are no rocky hills and valleys. The soil is a fair combination of clay sand thus making the lands very fertile and giving rise to the growth of thick forests consisting of very tall trees with huge foliage "*oko chia*". Agriculture is therefore the mainstay of the people's economy. Because of the existence of thick forests and towering trees, the climate of the town is very cool tropical condition. There are no extremities of weather conditions.

Nnobi town is made up of three major villages "*ogbe*" - Ebenesi, Ngo and Awuda. Their origin according to history arose from the three sons of the mythical founder of Nnobi. The villages are further subdivided into quarters "*mkpukpu*" and each quarter is further subdivided into wards "*Mkpukpu*". The "*onukwu*" wards finally give rise to "*umunna*" families and finally to the basic units of "*umunna*" nuclear families.

There is no record of the origin of Nnobi, rather what we have today as history of the beginning of Nnobi are very ancient mythologies transmitted from one generation to another. There are many versions of the genealogical history with remarkable differences in persons, places, times and methods.

The simplest and the most outstanding version is that "*Obi*" migrated from Ogidi with his wife "*Nne*" and both of them settled at "*Aho*" (an ancient historical location in Nnobi and now the seat of the Idol "*Aho*"). They had four sons and a daughter. The four sons whose names are Ebenesi, Ngo, Awuda and Awka-Etiti later gave rise to the four major villages of Nnobi while the daughter was married away to a neighbouring town Nnokwa. "*Awka-Etiti*" later seceded thus leaving Nnobi with three villages and giving birth to another separate town now called "*Awka-Etiti*".

1991 census gave the population of Nnobi as 40,000. Today it is being estimated at 70,000 taking into account prevailing demographic variables like settlement of migrant workers, government workers, petty traders, craftsmen and artisans.

Nnobi is endowed with high literacy rate of over 80%, plus a large population of students, petty-traders, micro-businessmen, rural farmers, health workers, teachers, and practitioners of diverse trades and professions.

A well conceptualized rural development information system is a must for this type of community if we want to lay a solid foundation for rapid economic growth and development, overall emancipation, and overall democracy dividends. This is what informs this study. Information is needed for empowering rural dwellers economically and politically, sensitizing them to be politically conscious, creating general awareness, tackling human right issues, primary health cares, rural agricultural issues and championing the cause of poverty alleviation and democracy dividends.

The major problem facing information professionals is lack of knowledge about the information needs of rural communities. Equally important is the fact that majority of rural dwellers lack access to development information which they could use to accelerate their own development and thus improve their ability to reap democracy dividends.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine the perceived information needs of entrepreneurs in Nnobi and the sources they employ in meeting those information needs. Access to and awareness of information sources available to these grassroot dwellers will also be found out. Respondent's demographic characteristics leading to differences between responses of various groups within the community will also be analysed. Geographic locations of users and non-users of information sources will also be determined.

Information professionals will do a better job of information management if they have a good idea of the information needs of rural dwellers, the sources they use in satisfying their information needs and factors that promote or impede access to information. This is the significance of the study.

ASSUMPTIONS

The study was based on the assumptions that:

1. Entrepreneurs in Nnobi have information needs that have not been adequately met by standard and official information services.
2. Access to information by entrepreneurs is crucial in ensuring that they participate in and benefit from economic growth and development of their entrepreneurship.
3. Rural Development Information will empower the entrepreneurs of Nnobi to take control of their needs and make informed decisions on development issues affecting their trade in general.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was designed with a view to collecting data from the three villages that make up Nnobi viz Ngo, Awuda and Ebenesi. Questions and pre-coded responses were designed and formulated for this purpose. Questions were arranged in a logical pattern of flow. The questions were designed to determine individual perceptions of their information

needs, how they meet such needs and what sources they usually use for information or help for their problems and questions. Other details concerning the respondents were also demanded e.g. age, name, address, occupation, geographical location, etc. The questionnaire in all contained 32 questions. 200 questionnaires were distributed to selected citizens from the three component villages that make up Nnobi. A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the participants.

Of the 200 questionnaires that were distributed, only 128 were answered and returned; a response rate of 64%.

Very useful data was generated from the answered questions in the questionnaire. The data was carefully analysed by use of tables and percentages. The results that emanated from this analysis were discussed and recommendations were finally made.

ANALYSIS

Demographical Characteristics of Respondents

TABLE I:
Gender Characteristics of Respondents

NAME	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Mate	46	36%
Female	82	64%
TOTAL	128	100%

TABLE II: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
17-39	64	50%
40-64	60	46.9%
65 and above	4	3.1%
Total	128	100%

Table I clearly shows that 64% of the respondents were females and 36% were males. This corroborates the age long culture of Nnobi people where the males migrate to distant lands in search of greener pastures while wives and children remain at home practicing agriculture and petty-trading.

In Table II, the different age groups were represented although there was an excessive bias towards the adult age group in the productive segment of their lives. The findings indicate that majority of the respondents were within the (17-39) and (40 - 64) age groups. Migrant settlers and stranger elements who reside at Nnobi practicing one type of occupation or the other also helped to swell this group.

TABLE 111: Trade Classifications

Respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
Medical field	20	15
Engineering field	11	8
Trade	40	31
Industrialists	10	8
Artisans	20	15
Hair dressers	11	8
Service provides	10	8
Agriculture	10	8
Total	128	100%

The table III above showed the respondents' trade classification. 15% of the respondents engage in medical field (chemists, hospitals), 8% of the respondents engage in engineering field (builders, welders, etc). 31% of the respondents engage in trading (all kinds of traders), 8% of the respondents engage in Industries (Manufacturing, purewater, Poultry feeds, carbonate makers etc.), 15% of the respondents engage in Artisans, 8% of the respondents engage in Hair dressing (Salons, Babing salons), 8% of the respondents engage in service providers (Mechanics, brick layers, etc). 8% of the respondents engage in agriculture (Poultry, dogry, goat raring, etc).

Table IV Needed Information on

	Information need	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	To prepare Business plan	Yes No	128 -	100% -
2.	Financial plan	Yes No	128 -	100 -
3.	Registration, licenses and permit	Yes No	128 -	100 -
4.	Marketing plan	Yes No	128 -	100 -
5.	Operation	Yes No	128 -	100 -

Table iv above indicates that all the entrepreneurs at Nnobi needs information to formulate business plan, financial plan, Registration, licencing and permit. Also they require information to forecast market trends and operations.

TABLE V: Sources of information for the Respondents

SOURCE OF INFORMATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Textbooks	62	26.5%
Library	26	11.1%
Neighbours	25	10.7%
Learned Journals	19	8.1%

Magazines	19	8.1%
Radio	18	7.7%
Television	18	7.7%
Newspapers	16	6.8%
Computerized information (Internet)	10	4.3%
Solicitors	7	3%
Audio- Visuals	6	2.6%
State Education Commission	2	0.9%
Monographs	2	0.9%
Ministry of Health	1	0.4%
Nnobi Welfare Organization	1	0.4%
Doctors	1	0.4%
Evangelists	1	0.4%
TOTAL	128	100%

This study indicates that textbooks 26.5%, library 11.1% and neighbours 10.7% are the prime bulk of information for the majority of the respondents. This was **closely** followed by radio 7.7%, learned journals 8.1%, Magazine 8.1%, television 7.7%, newspapers 6.8%. These findings confirm those of Aamik and Kingma (1992) who observed that rural dwellers have developed their own ad hoc ways of gaining information mainly from friends and relatives. This is mainly due to the fact that information is exchanged during routine communal activities such as firewood gathering, water collection.

TABLE VI: Use of the Library by the Respondents:

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Never	64	50%
Occasionally	51	40%
Frequently	13	10%
TOTAL	128	100%

The findings of this study indicate that only 50% of the respondents use the library. This is abysmally low, very low indeed. Out of the 50% who use the library, 40% use them occasionally while only 10% use them frequently. This trend is probably due to the fact that there is no branch of the State public library at Nnobi. Equally, the mobile library services which were started by Kalu Okorie in the 70s have collapsed due to severe under-funding of

the public library in the State and also the deplorable State of our rural roads and other infrastructures.

TABLE VII Respondents' Choice of Information Service to be Provided to them.

TYPE OF INFORMATION SERVICE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Well equipped public library with internet facilities	52	43%
Computerized Information service	25	20.7%
Phoning service	16	13.2%
Radio	10	8.3%
Television	8	6.6%
Newspapers & Magazines	6	5%
Community Information Bureau	4	3.3%
TOTAL	128	100%

When the respondents were asked to choose which information service they would like to be provided to them, their preferences came out in the following order - well equipped public library with internet facilities 43%, computerized information service 20.7%, phoning service 13.2%, radio 8.3% television 6.6%, Newspapers and magazines 5% and lastly community information bureau 3.3%.

The researcher assumed that the respondents were in the best position to choose what information service was best for them. The findings of this study tended to justify that assumption. Their preferences appear to have catered with those of Professor Aboyade in her recommendations for Rural Development Information Service. In reality, what the rural people need most in Rural Information Service is well equipped public library. The Governor of Anambra State Professor Chukwuma Soludo should take lead in making *every community in Anambra State to have a branch of the State Public Library*. This is a step in the right direction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has clearly demonstrated the information needs of entrepreneurs at Nnobi community, the sources they employ in answering those needs and their use or non-use of various information sources.

This study has confirmed that the rural dwellers have real and genuine information needs and that information remains the most crucial component of all entrepreneurship development activities.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that well equipped branch of the State Public Library with internet facilities be established in every rural community by each state government in Nigeria. Government should also ensure that adequate budgetary allocation is made to the public libraries to support their services. Finally, the 21st century librarians must be well trained in computerized information services to be able to cope with the challenges of this new computer age.

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