

## **INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOURS OF ARTISANS IN UMUAHIA METROPOLIS**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was look at the information needs and information seeking behavior of artisans in Umuahia metropolis. Five distinct aims and five research questions led the study. The literature related to the study was used for the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, the population of the study was 140 artisans. The sample size of the study was 80 obtained using simple random sampling techniques. Questionnaire self-designed by the researcher was used for data collection. The method of data collection was through the administration of 80 copies of questionnaire to the respondents using direct delivery and retrieval method and the entire copies were retrieved filled and used for data analyses. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The obstacles facing the information needs of artisans include language barriers, illiteracy lack of exposure to relevant information sources among others. Strategies that could help ameliorate the identified obstacles include that artisans should be sensitized on the existence of instant agencies available to them, and financial support from the government, among others. It was recommended that: Information professionals such as Radio stations, television stations and public librarians should be proactive by organizing workshops for people who are engaged in small-scale industrial activities (artisans) in Umuahia metropolis to provide them with information needed is promote their businesses.

## **Introduction**

Artisans' value is becoming more widely recognized around the world. A person who is skilful with her hands, according to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995), an artisan, also known as a craftsman, is a skilled manual worker who works on practical or decorative products. Artisans refer to persons who are engaged in such occupations, as hairdressing/hair barbing, mechanics, refrigerator/air conditioner repairing masonry printing, carpentry/furniture making, shoe making, building/construction, electrical work, spraying painting, fashion designing/tailoring, vulcanizing, binding, plumbing, panel beating and welding. Artisans have been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of their impact on productivity and economic development.

Artisans require information for survival, the successful performance of their jobs, and the development of their companies. They need to be educated in technical, vocational, and business fields. According to Mohammed (2011), Information can be conceived as anything that adds to someone's knowledge. It is therefore not surprising that information is needed for awareness. Increased productivity, health, knowledge etc. Artisans in Umuahia metropolis of Abia state are people who struggle with their hands and tools to work. They are located in different parts of Umuahia metropolis of Abia State. Artisans play a vital role in providing essential goods and services for the society and economy. They can a living by engaging in income-generating activities, thereby reducing unemployment and poverty. Their information needs may range from work-related information to health, education, agriculture, social life, work creativity, science, and technology to improve their current practices, raise their living standards, and perform these roles.

There is high demand for the wide range of goods and services provided by artisans. They need information to uplift their standard of living and to upgrade their occupations but this information has not been provided to them at a particular point in Ume to satisfy those needs. Artisans may face endless difficulties and stagnation in their work and the services they provide to society as lack of information the lack of information and methods for gathering information among artisans obstruct effective productivity and production growth. As a result, the researchers are Interested in learning about the information demands and information-seeking behaviour of artisans in Abia state capital of Umuahia.

## **Purpose the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to determine the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of artisans in Umuahia metropolis

The specific objectives of this study were to

- i. Determine the information needs of artisans in the Umuahia metropolis
- ii. Find out the extent information seeking behaviour helps in meeting information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis

- iii. Identify the sources used by the artisan in meeting their information needs Umuahia metropolis

### **Research Questions**

The following are the specific research questions for the study

- i. What are the information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis?
- ii. To what extent information seeking behaviour help in meeting information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis?
- iii. What are the sources used by artisans in meeting their information needs in Umuahia metropolis

### **Literature Review**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

**Information:** Information is indispensable to life it is among the prerequisites for living, KOK University Library Colossary (2014) information as data presented, in a readily comprehensible form, to which meaning has been attributed within a context for its use. In a more dynamic sense, the message is conveyed by the use of a medium of communication or expression Information is not only vital for technological, scientific and economic progress as erroneously seen by some people; it is also a medium of social transformation and communication.

In view of Afolabin (2013) Ta. Information assemblage of data in a comprehending form capable of communication. This information can be described as a process by which we receive the event of the external, allowing us to make informed judgments and decisions. This implies that behaviour change occurs as a result of information acquired. Information can be seen as an agent of change, that is, it can impact changes in persons, communities, groups, and societies Information, according to Kedem (2013) knowledge that is communicated or received concerning a specific subject. The point is that information is not a passive, inert, static, or immovable component. It is data that is transmitted to or received by potential users to meet their individual or group needs.

**Artisans:** Artisans, are the temperament with a natural ability to excel in any of the arts, not only the fine arts such as sculpting or the performing arts such as music, theatre, and dance but also the athletic, military, political, mechanical and industrial arts, as well as the "art of the dead" in business (Hemingway, 2009)

All Artisans share the following core characteristics:

Artisans tend to be fun-loving, optimistic, realistic, and focused on the here and now Artisans pride themselves on being unconventional, bold, and spontaneous. Artisans make playful mates, creative parents, and troubleshooting lenders Artisans are excitable, trust their impulses, and want to make a splash, seek stimulation, prize freedom, and dream of mastering action skills.

Artisans are gifted with acute senses and love working with their hands. They appear at ease with a wide range of equipment, instruments, and vehicles, and their activities are usually directed toward getting them where they want to go quickly as possible. As a result, Artisans will go ahead along paths that others may consider dangerous or unattainable, doing whatever it takes rules or no laws, to achieve their objectives.

### **Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Artisans**

Information, as previously defined from many perspectives, needs, seeking, and behavior are all highlighted here. Individual information needs vary, and Information demand is best understood as a broad word that encompasses all types of information need on (2015), on the other hand, defined “need” as a state of lacking or desiring something essential or extremely beneficial. It’s a condition of deprivation or a physical state in which something is missing or necessary and necessitates some sort of action,

Information seeking is the process engaged in humans to change level cognitive process that is part learning or problem solving. Information seeking as a social behavior occurs when an individual realizes the need to acquire contextual information and deliberately takes action to resolve that need (Agarwal, 2018). According to Sultana (2016), information seeking behavior entails a series of actions such as identifying information needs seeking information, evaluating and selecting information, and eventually using it. Information seeking behaviour is expressed in various forms, from reading printed materials, to ask friends or colleagues. It can also be influenced by the source, the Information content, medium and language of presentation, time, and of course nature of information. However, this study considers all these attributes of behaviour of artisans in their search for information and how this behaviour affects their business.

The period of passive librarianship is long gone, according to Utor (2015), citing Uche (1999). They should think of themselves as information gatekeepers, not in a negative way, but positively, because they hold the key to knowledge. Information gatekeepers restrict access to information in the negative sense. Positive Information gatekeeping refers to innovations, change agents, communication channels, link intermediaries, helpers, adaptors, opinion leaders, brokers, and facilitators who have a positive impact on the transfer or usage of information within an organization.

### **Research Method**

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was (40) artisans. A sample size of the study was 80 obtained using simple random sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was the researcher design questionnaire titled: "Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviours of Artisan Questionnaire (INISBAQ)" The instrument is divided into six sections A to F. The instrument was designed using four-point rating scale and indicates the strength of the opinion as Strongly Agree 4, Agree 3, Disagree 2 and Strongly Disagree 1.

Collection of data for the study uses direct delivery and retrieval methods in administering the instrument to the respondents. To ensure high rate of returns, two research assistants were employed and briefed by the researchers to assist in administration and retrieval of the copies of the instrument from the respondents. A total of 80 copies of the research instrument were administered to the respondents and the entire copies were retrieved and filled representing 100% rate of return.

The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the three research questions that guide this study. The mean scores were computed as follows:  $\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$ . The mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as agree while the mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagree.

## Results and Discussions

### The information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis.

Table 1: Mean score of the respondents' responses on the information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT                    | SA | A  | D  | SD | Total | N  | $\bar{X}$ | Rks    | Ranking |
|-----|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|----|-----------|--------|---------|
| 1.  | Occupational matters              | 50 | 30 | 0  | 0  | 290   | 80 | 3.63      | Agreed | 3       |
| 2.  | Loan/credit from bank             | 40 | 40 | 0  | 0  | 280   | 80 | 3.50      | Agreed | 5       |
| 3.  | Grant from banks                  | 55 | 25 | 0  | 0  | 295   | 80 | 3.67      | Agreed | 2       |
| 4.  | Employment Opportunities          | 30 | 50 | 0  | 0  | 270   | 80 | 2.38      | Agreed | 10      |
| 5.  | Product Marketing                 | 38 | 42 | 0  | 0  | 278   | 80 | 3.48      | Agreed | 7       |
| 6.  | Skill development opportunities   | 60 | 20 | 0  | 0  | 300   | 80 | 3.75      | Agreed | 1       |
| 7.  | Scholarship for further education | 30 | 40 | 10 | 10 | 260   | 80 | 3.25      | Agreed | 11      |
| 8.  | Business corporative information  | 40 | 35 | 5  | 0  | 200   | 80 | 3.50      | Agreed | 6       |
| 9.  | Family planning                   | 50 | 25 | 5  | 0  | 285   | 80 | 3.56      | Agreed | 4       |
| 10. | Health matters                    | 44 | 30 | 6  | 0  | 278   | 80 | 3.48      | Agreed | 8       |
| 11. | Social Media                      | 46 | 22 | 10 | 0  | 276   | 80 | 3.45      | Agreed | 9       |

**KEY: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, N=Sample Size, X-Mean SD- Standard Deviation. Rms. Remarks.**

The data in Table 1.1 above, presents the responses of the respondents on the information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis, the data revealed, that all the respondents that responded to the questionnaire items agreed with all the eleven items to the information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis. This agreement of the respondents is expressed by the mean hems rank as 1.2.3.4.5.5.6.7.8.9, 10 and 11 with respective mean scores: 3.70, 1.67 3.63 1.56, 3.50 3:50.

3.48 3.45, 3.38 and 3.25. These mean values were above 2.50 mean cut-off mark earlier set as an acceptable benchmark, this implies that the respondents accepted the eleven items as the information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis which include: Skill development opportunities, grants from banks, occupational matters, family planning, loan/credit from banks scholarship for further education, product marketing business corporative information health matters, social media, employment opportunities and scholarship for further education

**The extent information seeking behaviour helps in meeting information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis.**

**Table 2: Mean score of the respondents' responses on the extent information seeking behaviour helps in meeting information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis**

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT                                           | SA | A  | D  | SD | Total | N  | $\bar{X}$ | Rks      | Ranking |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|----|-----------|----------|---------|
| 1.  | Promotes their occupational matters                      | 35 | 30 | 10 | 5  | 255   | 80 | 3.19      | Accepted | 8       |
| 2.  | Facilitates loan/credit procurement from bank            | 40 | 25 | 15 | 0  | 265   | 80 | 3.31      | Accepted | 4       |
| 3.  | Enhance grant acquisition from banks                     | 45 | 20 | 15 | 0  | 270   | 80 | 3.38      | Accepted | 3       |
| 4.  | Facilitates artisans employment Opportunities            | 40 | 20 | 20 | 0  | 260   | 80 | 3.25      | Accepted | 7       |
| 5.  | Promotes product marketing                               | 50 | 10 | 20 | 0  | 250   | 80 | 3.13      | Accepted | 10      |
| 6.  | Help skill development opportunities                     | 50 | 12 | 18 | 0  | 280   | 80 | 3.40      | Accepted | 2       |
| 7.  | Provides artisans with scholarship for further education | 32 | 30 | 18 | 0  | 254   | 80 | 3.18      | Accepted | 9       |
| 8.  | Business corporative information                         | 45 | 29 | 6  | 0  | 279   | 80 | 3.49      | Accepted | 1       |
| 9.  | Enhance artisans family planning                         | 28 | 47 | 5  | 0  | 263   | 80 | 3.29      | Accepted | 6       |
| 10. | Facilitates artisans health matters                      | 27 | 51 | 2  | 0  | 265   | 80 | 3.31      | Accepted | 5       |
| 11. | Helps artisans improve their skills                      | 20 | 44 | 15 | 1  | 243   | 80 | 3.04      | Accepted | 11      |

**KEY: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree. N= Sample Size, X=Mean. SD Deviation. Rms. Remarks.**

The data in Table 2 above, presents the responses of the respondents on the extent information seeking behaviour helps in meeting information needs of artisans in Umuahia metropolis, the data revealed that the mean values of the eleven items were ranked as: 1.2.3.4.5.6.7. 8, 9, 10 and 11 with respective mean values of 3.49, 3.40, 3.38, 3.31. 3.31, 3.29, 3.25 1.19. 3.13 and 3.04. These mean values were shoved 2.50 mean cut-off mark earlier set as an acceptable benchmark This implies that the respondents accepted the eleven items information seeking behaviour helps in meeting information needs of artisans in Umuahia as the extent metropolis which includes: business corporative information, help artisans in skill development opportunities, entrance grant acquisition from hanks, facilitates loan/credit procurement from banks, facilitates artisans health matters, enhance artisans family planning, facilitates artisans employment opportunities, promotes their occupational matters provides artisans with scholarship information for further education promotes product marketing and helps artisans improve their skills

### **The sources used by artisans in meeting their information needs in the Umuahia metropolis.**

**Table 3: Mean score of the respondents' responses on the sources used by artisans in meeting their information needs in Umuahia metropolis**

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT                        | SA | A  | D  | SD | Total | N  | $\bar{X}$ | Rks    | Ranking |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|----|-----------|--------|---------|
| 1.  | Neighbours                            | 41 | 30 | 90 | 1  | 271   | 80 | 3.39      | Agreed | 7       |
| 2.  | Fellow workers                        | 39 | 30 | 11 | 0  | 268   | 80 | 3.35      | Agreed | 9       |
| 3.  | Supervisor (boss)                     | 40 | 40 | 3  | 0  | 280   | 80 | 3.50      | Agreed | 3       |
| 4.  | Customers                             | 38 | 42 | 0  | 0  | 278   | 80 | 3.48      | Agreed | 4       |
| 5.  | Family members                        | 35 | 30 | 10 | 5  | 255   | 80 | 3.19      | Agreed | 11      |
| 6.  | Friends                               | 50 | 30 | 0  | 0  | 290   | 80 | 3.63      | Agreed | 1       |
| 7.  | Information extension workers         | 40 | 20 | 20 | 0  | 260   | 80 | 3.25      | Agreed | 10      |
| 8.  | Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) | 50 | 12 | 18 | 0  | 280   | 80 | 3.40      | Agreed | 5       |
| 9.  | Schools                               | 32 | 30 | 18 | 0  | 254   | 80 | 3.18      | Agreed | 12      |
| 10. | Libraries                             | 50 | 10 | 20 | 0  | 250   | 80 | 3.13      | Agreed | 13      |
| 11. | Watching television                   | 50 | 12 | 18 | 0  | 280   | 80 | 3.40      | Agreed | 6       |
| 12. | Listening to radio                    | 41 | 30 | 8  | 1  | 271   | 80 | 3.39      | Agreed | 8       |
| 13. | Social Media                          | 50 | 30 | 2  | 1  | 290   | 80 | 3.63      | Agreed | 2       |

**KEY: SA Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, No Sample Size, X-Mean, SD-Standard Deviation, Rms. Remarks.**

The data in Table 3 above, presents the responses of the respondents in the sources used by artists in meeting their information needs in Umuahia metropolis, the data revealed that all the respondents that responded to the questionnaire Hems agreed with the thirteen items as the sources by artisans in meeting their information needs in Umuahia metropolis. This agreement of the respondents is expressed by the mean values rank 12.3.4.5.6.7.8.9 10.11.12 13 with



respective mean values of 161. 3.63, 3.50 3.48 3.40 3.40 3.39.3.19 1.35 3.25.319 318 and 11. These mean values were above 2.50 mean cut-off mark carrier set as an acceptable benchmark this implies that the respondents accepted the thirteen items as the sources used by artisans in meeting their information needs in Umuahia metropolis, these items include. Friends, social media, supervisors (bosses) customers, non-governmental organizations (NGO) watching neighbours, listening to radio, fellow workers, information extension workers, family members, schools and libraries Ngulube (2016) reported that artisans in rural areas do not make use of the library as a source of information but instead listen to radios and information from other informal sources because of their easy accessibility.

## **Conclusion**

As crucial to remember that knowledge is power and artisans who want to flourish in their business need to know everything there is to know about their professions, ongoing education, bank loans and credit, and product promotion. Another Interesting finding from the study is that artisans get their information primarily froth then customers, family members, coworkers, and friends. Illiteracy among some artisans, language difficulties, a lack of exposure to essential Information sources, and a lack of sufficient orientation of craftspeople on the relevant information to their business are all prominent among these, it is past time for libraries to collaborate with media outlets and other government information organizations to package and communicate knowledge to various interest groups, including artisans.

## **Recommendation**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study

1. Workshops for people engaged in small-scale industrial operations (artisans) in Umuahia metropolis should be organized by information experts search as radio stations, television stations, and public librarians to give them with information needed to market their companies.
2. Government of Abia State and other business organizations should develop programmes encompassing more generous support for artisans through training on proper business operations such as business planning, record keeping and product.
3. As part of a strategy to encourage small and medium-sized businesses, Information centers should be established to provide useful information about businesses and to address the information needs of artisans.

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