Exploratory study on Information Needs for Socioeconomic Empowerment of Women Artisans in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria

Adekanye, Elizabeth Adetoun¹, Ph.D.

Abstract

This study explored information needs for social economic empowerment of women artisans in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. A total of 200 randomly selected women artisans drawn from six major economic nerves centers within Ikorodu community constituted the sample. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analysed the data. Simple linear regression was used to determine the link between information usage and socioeconomic empowerment of the women artisans. Results of the study showed that the levels of information usage and that of socioeconomic empowerment of women in Ikorodu were both high to a greater degree. Information usage was significantly related to socioeconomic empowerment of women in Ikorodu ($\chi^2 = 20.886$; p<0.1). It was therefore concluded that the role of information usage in improving the socioeconomic of women artisans in Ikorodu was substantiated in the study. The study therefore recommended that women artisans in Ikorodu should make use of information to empower themselves socio-economically.

Keywords: Information needs, Socio-economic empowerment, Women artisan, Ikorodu, Lagos State

Introduction

Information can be regarded as a natural resource that is needed in all human endeavours. It is also a basic human need which has paramount importance to the everyday life of an individual (Agboola, (2013). According to Okwuebina (2006) information is something an individual needs when he or she wants to make a choice. It is therefore not surprising that information is needed for awareness, increased productivity, health, up-dating knowledge, among others. Information needs of an individual have to be studied in the context of the information environment which includes the information seeking behaviour, access and sources of information used in meeting such information needs.

Studies have shown that information has a great impact on decision making and its value is tied closely to the decision that resulted from its use. Good information not only enhances decision making but it increases efficiency and provides a competitive edge (Badu, Singh and Sachdeva, 2013 and Adeoti-Adekeye, 1997). More so, to carry out day to day activities, humans need and require information in order to enable them make decisions regarding their lives, businesses, careers, families, health, and generality of life's actions. The ability to locate, understand and use information to solve problems is a necessary competence for most occupation in today's society and success in business and other organizations requires the capacity to monitor trends and readily adapt to them (Goad, 2002; Klusek and Bornstein, 2006; Weiner, 2011).

Case (2012) noted that information need is recognition that an individual knowledge is inadequate to satisfy his or her goal. Snunith and Sarah (2007) posited that individual's need is formed by the actual situation and also by the way the individual defines that situation. Furthermore, Shenton (2007) identified that information needs can be divided into five categories which are:

• needs that are known to the individual but not to the information professional

¹University Library, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria. +234 8035884950. E-mail: tounadekanye@gmail.com, eadekanye@unilag.edu.ng

- needs that are known to both parties
- needs that are known to the professional, but not to the individual
- needs that are misunderstood by the individual
- needs that are not known to either the individual or information professional

Information needs of people vary according to their social group, age, gender, economic status, interest groups and professional. However, every individual, including artisan needs information for growth and survival. Artisans are people in a skilled trade which entails them doing their work by hand traditionally or with the use of machinery. According to Ukachi (2016), artisans do not in actual fact acquire their skills through formal education but they are apprenticed to individuals who are already skilful in their work areas of interest. The author further highlighted some of the works done by artisans to include: goldsmithing, hairdressing, vulcanizing, pottery, knitting of cloths, dyeing of clothes, fashion designing, craftwork, petty trading and so on. However, artisans need information so as to be able to take advantage of modern technologies, be more creative and innovative in designing or in carrying out their daily task. Artisans' effort towards attaining their work objective depends largely on their quick access and effective use of information.

Kumar (2008) emphasised that information needs vary from function to function, from environment to environment, from discipline to discipline and from age to age. Similarly, Laloo (2002) provided a related opinion pointing out that information needs and information seeking behaviour of people is influenced by variables such as occupation, gender, age, educational; while Wilson (1994) also affirm that information needs vary in relation to the subject fields of users, their educational background and year of experience or function performed.

In addition, information need is a desire to locate and acquire information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need of individual or groups. Needs arise out of a set of primary needs in everyday life and can be classified based on the motives behind them. As observed by Crawford (1987) and Laloo (2002), information need is a difficult concept to define as well as to measure because it involves a cognitive process which operates on various stages of consciousness.

According to Utor (2008), need is a condition of lacking or wanting something necessary or useful while Aninweze (2004) described needs as an imbalance or lack of adjustment between the present condition and a new or changed of condition which is seen to be more desirable. Obidike, (2007) opined that, it is something which is lacking and which an individual cannot do without. In addition, Marice, (1998) noted that information needs is what an individual ought to have for his or her work, research and the information needs of an individual have to be studied in the context of the information environment.

Therefore, the type of information an individual needs at a given point in time depends on the problem he or she wants to address. Thus, the purpose for which the information is needed would lead to the source for which such information could be located. Hence, the information obtained would be used by the women artisans to satisfy their information needs and thereby boosting their socio-economic empowerment in carrying out their day to day business activities.

Socio-economic empowerment according to Blomkvist (2003) is concerned with developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence to act individually and collectively to change social relationship, institutions and discourses that exclude poor people and keep them in poverty. The concept of empowerment can depict strengthening somebody that lacks the ability to control his/her circumstances socially, economically or politically. It can also be traditionally through relevant materials, services, knowledge or opportunities so as to improve his situation by himself or herself (Ndu, 2009). When women are given opportunity they will be able to contribute meaningfully to the overall development of their communities. The involvement of women in socio-economic activities cannot be underestimated, even though the work and the contributions of women have remained largely unnoticed and taken for granted. This remains the fact, because societies have traditionally failed to recognize the contributions of women to the national development of the nation (Ekesionye&Okolo, 2012; Nwagwu&Ifeannacho, 2009), Fiann& Oldham, 2007, Ukachi 2007; Afolabi, 2005).

Artisans play an important role in producing essential goods and services for the society and economy. This is because they engaged in income generating activities so as to earn a living thereby reducing unemployment and poverty in the society. Every individual has information needs in respective of their occupation or profession.

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Literature has shown that lack of access to information could make the artisan suffer untold hardships and stagnation in carrying out their daily tasks which could result into poverty, low income and low socio-economic empowerment or economic development of women artisans in the society. As observed by Mooko and Aina (2007), access to authentic information by the artisans has resulted into backwardness in income generation because artisans work hard and get less income. However, recent observations have shown that many of the women artisans in Ikorodu area of Lagos state irrespective of their levels of education are becoming more creative and innovative in carrying out their daily business activities and they are also contributing to the socio-economic development of their family and the society at large.

Given the importance of women artisans in the economic development f any society, there is need for them to have access to the various information they need from government, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as from the public libraries around Ikorodu area. The need to empirically explore the information needs of women Artisans in Ikorodu area of Lagos state cannot be over-emphasised. This is because this group of people have specific information needs based on their work activities just like other specialised professionals. In addition, women artisans are involved in various vocations and a great number of them have low level of education.

The outcome of this study would be of benefit to the governments, NGOs, public library management and information agencies by creating awareness on the challenges confronting women artisan's information needs in relation to their socio-economic empowerment. The study would highlight the most accessible medium of information needs of women artisans which would enable the government and NGOs to be equipped with vital information that would help them to address the issues squarely. The study would also provide an insight for government to know the need for adequate funding of public libraries and other information agencies in order to enable them meet up the challenge and provide a better approach to address the information needs of the artisans. On that note therefore, this study examine information needs for socioeconomic empowerment of women Artisans in Ikorodu, Lagos State. The study specifically sought to:

- find out the information needs of female artisans in Ikorodu
- identify the sources of information usage among women artisans
- examine women artisans' level of socio-economic empowerment
- determine challenges affecting the information needs of women artisan

Methodology

The correlational survey research design was used to conduct the study. The study was carried out in Ikorodu Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State. Ikorodu is an ancient town in the North-East, Lagos State, Nigeria. It is located along the Lagos Lagoon and shares a boundary with Ogun State Ikorodu is the fastest growing exurb near the Lagos metropolis, owing in part to the influx of people from Ikorodu's surrounding towns and villages attracted by the town's proximity to Lagos. Ikorodu has developed significantly over time; in fact, it has become the political nerves of Lagos State, having its Senatorial District at the Federal Level of Nigeria. The town is divided into 16 minor towns and these areas make up Ikorodu Division. Ikorodu Division has large industrial areas containing several factories and main occupation of the inhabitants are trading, farming, fishing and manufacturing of goods and services. Ikorodu have are 57 public primary schools and 12 secondary schools with several private nurseries, primary and secondary schools. Two tertiary institutions are situated within the environment.

The study population comprised of women artisans who have their shops located at designated areas of Ikorodu LGA, Lagos State. The sample size comprised two hundred (200) respondents selected from the study population. The availability of data on women artisans in Ikorodu would have made it possible to use a probabilistic sampling technique for the study. Nevertheless, the lack of information on the study population prompted the use of convenience sampling in choosing the respondents who participated in the study.

Based on thorough review of literature, a questionnaire was designed for the study. The questionnaire consisted of five parts. The first part elicited data on demographic variables while the second section was constructed using a 4-point Likert to elicit data on information needs. Section C of the instrument was on the sources of information need; Section D of the instrument was based on socio-economic empowerment such as women artisans have roles in income generation and the last section elicited data on the challenges to information needs. The researcher ensured that the instrument used for data collection in the study was validated by giving it to colleagues who made comments and suggestions on faulty items.

Their comments were infused into the new questionnaire used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Crombach's Alpha reliability coefficient and the value obtained (0.927) showed that the instrument was highly reliable. Out of the two hundred copies of questionnaire administered, one hundred and seventy six were retrieved and found useful for data analysis.

Statistical tools used to process the data were descriptive and inferential techniques. Descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation provided a statistical summary of the data collected. On the other hand, inferential statistic of Linear Model was used to determine whether a statistically significant relationship existed between the independent variable (information usage) and the outcome variable (socio-economic empowerment).

Data Analysis

Analysis of Participants' Demographic Data

The demographic data on participants' location, occupation, marital status, age group, religion, income level and highest educational qualification were analysed using frequency and percentage. It was important to assess the demographic importance of the study population in order to validate the quality and reliability of information received.

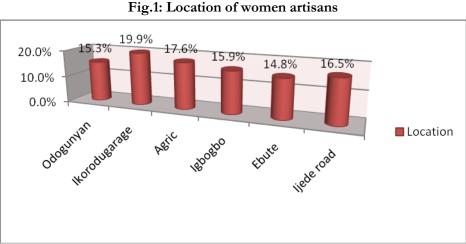


Figure 1 show the frequency analysis of participants by location. The study revealed that women artisans in Ikorodu garage participated more than any other group in the study. This is because a higher percentage of women

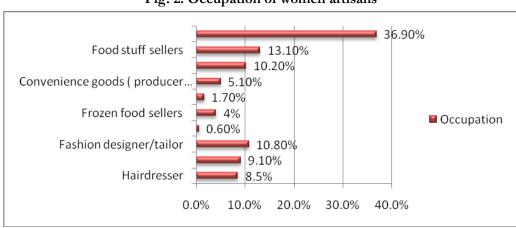


Fig. 2: Occupation of women artisans

artisans operate in Ikorodu garage and it is the hub of the community, central of attractions and commercial nerve

with high concentration of commercial activities and bus terminal to every destination.

Figure 2 shows that majority of the women artisans involved in the study sold daily consumable goods like provisions, toiletries and so on which was represented by 36.9%. Other occupations identified in the study were food (13.10%), cement and building material (10.20%), convenience goods (5.10%), fruits and vegetables (1.7%), frozen foods (4.0%), farming (0.6%), fashion design/tailoring (10.80%), cosmetics (9.10%) and hairdressing (8.5%).

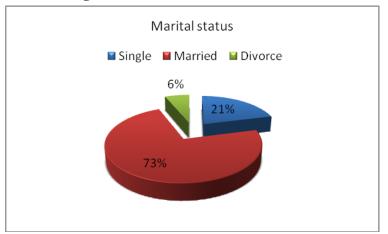
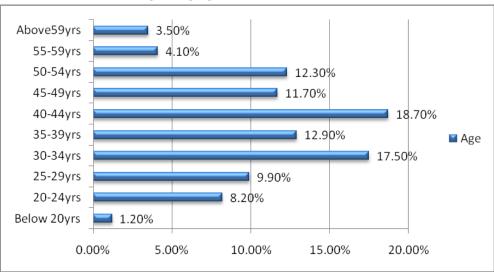


Fig. 3: Marital status of women artisans

Figure 3 revealed that majority (73%) of women artisans in Ikorodu were married while single and divorced women artisans were represented by 21.0% and 6.0% respectively. The implication of this is that there is relatively stability with possibility of concentration on their trading activities which in turn give them the opportunity to build on a stable family life which in turn add values to their status and enhance their profitability.



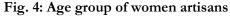


Figure 4 shows that 1.2% of women artisans were below 20 years, 8.2% were within (20-24) years, 9.9% were within (25-29) years, 17.5% were within 30-34 years, 12.9% were within (35-38) years, 18.7% were within (40-44) years, 11.7% were within (45-49) years, 12.3% were within (50-54) years, 4.1 were within (55-59) years and 3.50 were above 59 years of age. The above is clear representation of different age groups such as: younger age, middle age, and older age that fitted into any work force and also is an indication of an active age to support the trading activities.

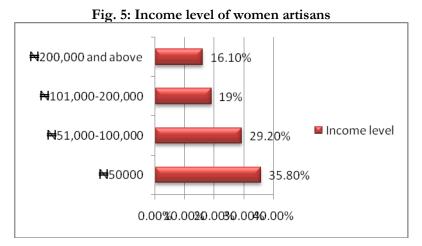


Figure 5 revealed that 35.80% of women artisans earn \$50,000 monthly, 29.2% earn between \$51,000. \$100,000, 19.0% earn \$101,000-200,000 and 16.1% earn above \$200,000. This an indication of a positive and rewarding activity, not selling at a loss.

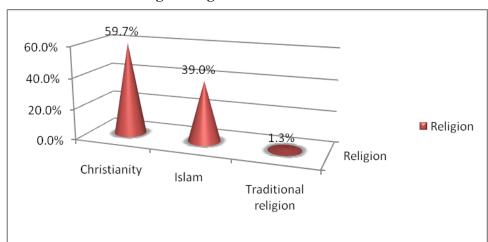
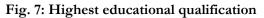


Fig.6: Religion of women artisans

Figure 6 shows frequency analysis of the participants by religion and findings revealed that majority of women artisans in Ikorodu are Christians, 39% are Muslims while 1.3% are traditional worshippers. This counted for socialization of the respondents and an indication of wholesome relationship among them.



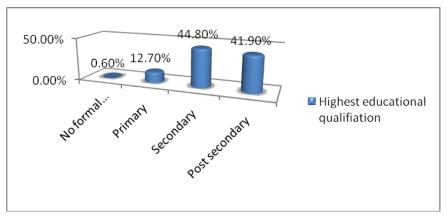


Figure 7 showed that majority (44%) of the respondent have secondary qualification while 41.9% have postsecondary qualification. Figure 7 further revealed that 0.6% of the respondents have no formal education while 12.7% have primary education qualification.

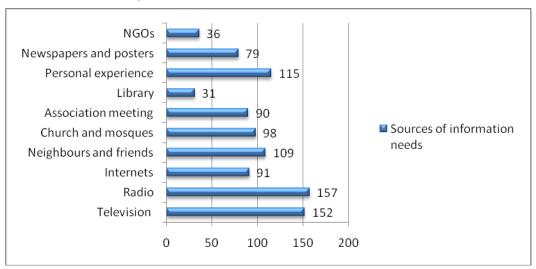


Fig. 8: Sources of information needs of women artisans

Figure 8 indicates the frequency analysis on the sources of information needs for women artisans in Ikorodu. Findings show that radio (n=157) and television (n=152) ranked the highest sources of information needs among the responses while Non-governmental organisations (NGO) and library ranked the lowest sources of information needs among the respondents.

Variables	Mean	Std	Rank	Remark
Information on goods and services	3.47	0.57	1 st	Agree
Information about my occupation and business	3.44	0.61	2^{nd}	Agree
Information on health and family planning	3.37	0.68	3 rd	Agree
Information about trading space/place rate and fees	3.37	0.66	4 th	Agree
Information on how to get loans from cooperative societies and banks	3.34	0.68	5^{th}	Agree
Information on security of lives and properties	3.33	0.78	6 th	Agree
Information about administrative rules, laws and policies	3.32	0.73	7 th	Agree
Information entertainment, welfare and social amenities	3.24	0.77	8^{th}	Agree
Information on acquisition of lands and properties	3.15	0.82	9 th	Agree

Table 1: Information needs of women artisans in Ikorodu

Table 1 shows that majority of women artisans indicated high level of agreement to information on goods and services (mean=3.47). This is followed by information about occupation and business (mean=3.44), information on health and family planning (mean=3.37), information about trading space/place rate and fees (mean=3.37), information on how to get loans from cooperative societies and banks (mean=3.34), information on security of lives and properties (mean=3.33), information about administrative rules, laws and policies (mean=3.22), information on entertainment, welfare and social amenities (mean=3.24) and information on acquisition of lands and properties (mean=3.15). Subsequently, the information obtained suggests that the level of information usage of women artisans in Ikorodu is high to a great extent.

Variables	Mean	Std	Rank	Remark
Women artisans have roles in income generation	3.43	0.61	1 st	Agree
Most women artisans provide for their families as bread winners	3.41	0.67	2^{nd}	Agree
A great number of women artisans have control and take decisions over cash expenditures, savings and transfer from their businesses	3.37	0.65	3rd	Agree
Women artisans have control and decision making on reproductive matters and children's education	3.34	0.69	4^{th}	Agree
Women artisans participate in providing access to services and infrastructure	3.29	0.69	5^{th}	Agree
A great number of women artisans participate in leadership roles and have influence in the community	3.26	0.75	6 th	Agree
Women artisans have access to credit and other financial services	3.16	0.76	7 th	Agree
Women artisans are in social network platforms	3.16	0.81	8 th	Agree

Table 2: Socio-economic empowerment of women artisans in Ikorodu

It can be observed in Table 2 that women artisans agreed that they have roles in income generation (mean=3.43), provide for their families as bread winners (mean=3.41), have control and take decisions over cash expenditures, savings and transfer from their businesses (mean=3.37), participate in providing access to services and infrastructure (mean=3.29), participate in leadership roles and have influence in the community (mean=3.26), have access to credit and other financial services (mean=3.16) and engage in social network platforms (mean=3.16). Consequently, the information obtained suggests that the level of socio-economic empowerment of women artisans in Ikorodu is high to a great degree.

Table 3: Challenges to information needs of women artisans in Ikorodu (N=176)

Variables	Mean	Std	Rank	Remark
Inability to access library and information centres	3.40	0.73	1 st	Agree
Lack of internet connectivity and accessibility	3.35	0.68	2^{nd}	Agree
Lack of adequate and efficient information delivery network	3.35	0.71	3^{rd}	Agree
Doubt of the women artisans towards government and its information	3.32	0.72	4 th	Agree
organization				_
Unfriendly governments attitudes towards its citizens	3.22	0.84	5^{th}	Agree

Table 3 shows challenges to information needs of women artisans in Ikorodu. Findings revealed that the highest challenge is inability to access library and information centres (mean=3.40) followed by lack of internet connectivity and accessibility (mean=3.35), lack of adequate and efficient information delivery network (mean=3.35), doubt of the women artisans towards government and information organization (mean=3.32) and unfriendly governments attitudes towards its citizens (mean=3.22). As a result, this result suggests that women artisans experience some major challenges to information needs in Ikorodu.

Discussions of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to studies conducted in the past and structured under the following titles: information needs of women artisans in Ikorodu, socio-economic empowerment of women artisans in Ikorodu, sources of information needs of women artisans and challenges of information needs of women artisans in Ikorodu. Findings from the study as presented in Table 1 revealed that majority of women artisan indicated that level of information usage on goods and services, occupation and business, health and family planning, trading space/place rate and fees, obtaining loans from cooperative societies and banks, security of lives and properties, administrative rules, laws and policies, entertainment, welfare and social amenities, acquisition of lands and properties were highly sufficient. Previous studies conducted have recognized the importance of information needs and usage among women (Adekanye, 2013; Mabawonku, 2004; Mooko&Aina, 2007; Adetoro, 2004).

Findings from the study in Table 2 show that the level of socio-economic empowerment of women artisans in Ikorodu was also high. This is because the level of information awareness is equal with the degree to which information is available and used (Jamali, 2009; Raveendran, 2010). The study also revealed in Figure 9 that radio and television were the main sources of information identified among women artisans in Ikorodu. The reason for this could be that in a semi-urban location like Ikorodu where there is poor access to the internet, it is expected that women artisans would have to rely on other information sources like television and radio for their business activities and survival. These tools are effective and affordable in disseminating information with little or no cost to everyone in the community. Radio is also considered the most powerful mass media for broadcasting information most quickly which can reach larger number of people irrespective of their locations (Familusi and Owoeye, 2014).

A similar study conducted by Clopman et al (2003) has shown that the growth of rural radio stations reflected on the improvements of information and communication technology and the shifting of development paradigm towards a more participatory style of information and knowledge transfer.

Likewise, Stefanyshn and Kendell (2012) submitted that radio and television were among the early contributor to new form of mass media and has played critical roles in affecting world political views, and religion belief in contemporary world.

Finally, in the order of importance, challenges to information needs among women artisan in Ikorodu as presented in Table 3 include inability to access library and information centres, lack of internet connectivity and accessibility, lack of adequate and efficient information delivery network, doubt of the women artisan towards government and information organisation and unfriendly government attitudes toward citizens. This study confirms the report of Dibyendu et al (2017) who discovered that inadequate training and access to information, lack of awareness about government programmes and work-family interface were the major challenges experienced by women artisan in PanchlaZari. Equally, Ghouse (2012) highlighted marketing, financial, labour, and power supply as the problems evident among women artisans. The report of Aina (2004), Igwe and Onah (2013) have also shown the information challenges facing women artisans in rural areas as poor state of existing public library, absence of community libraries and information centers, inadequacy of human infrastructural and resources in existing libraries, poor state and absences of libraries, passive library and information practitioners.

Conclusion

The importance of information in improving the business practices, success and productivity of women artisans in the 21st century cannot be overstated and should be taken very seriously. The information age has brought about a paradigm shift to how business across the globe is done. It is based on this reason that the study examined the role of information needs in empowering the socio economic status of women artisans in Ikorodu area of Lagos State. The result from the study shows that women artisans in Ikorodu are satisfied with their present socio-economic state. This is based on the fact that majority of the participants indicated that their level of socio-economic empowerment was high to a greater degree. Similar result also shows in the area of information usage. The role of information usage in improving the socio-economic life of women artisans in Ikorodu was also substantiated in the study.

Recommendations

Government should provide library and information centres for people in Ikorodu this will help to improve the level of information accessibility and usage among women artisans in ikorodu. It was also recommended that telecommunications companies should come to the aid of women artisans in Ikorodu in order to improve the erratic internet connectivity and accessibility in the area. Furthermore, the level of socio economic empowerment and information usage among the women could be improved by providing information services such as, how to access loans from cooperative societies and banks, occupation and business, trading space rates and fees, health and family planning, entertainment, welfare and social amenities, security of lives and properties, acquisition of lands and properties. These services help to improve the women artisan socio economically.

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