

## **INFORMATION SOURCING AND UTILIZATION AMONG MARKET WOMEN IN SAMARU MARKET ZARIA, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study sought to investigate and analyze information sourcing and utilization among the market women in Samaru market Zaria. The study was done through a descriptive survey using questionnaires for answering some of the research questions. A total number of 255 populations were sampled through the administration of questionnaires; two hundred and three (203) questionnaires were properly completed and returned for analysis. The data was analyzed in an inter-complementary manner, the findings of the study established that information sourcing and utilization among market women in Samaru, Zaria has not been fully appreciated due to a number of factors such as literacy, i.e. not knowing where to source for the information needed, the body responsible for the dissemination of business information, the cost implication, the time to be expanded/spent cetera. Based on the findings, the following were recommended. That market women should be more equipped with business information facilities such as mobile phones, iPad, by various business organizations and stakeholders should be put in place with various economic empowerment program's within the market. Information centers should be set up within the market to educate the market women on the needed information for their various trades.*

*Keywords: Information Sourcing, Utilization, market, Organization, Business Information*

## INTRODUCTION

Markets are created as a source of obtaining goods and services that will satisfy the people's needs and wants, the number of people in a market determines the potential buyers and the size of the market for that item. Markets environment is characterized by high rate of changes in the business world. To survive in the dynamic competitive retail business environment, a retailer must learn to manage change effectively by being capable of making good management decisions, these decisions however are based on the availability of information.

Market women are the traders that directly or indirectly dependent on proceed of the market income for its livelihood on the proceedings of the market sales. They are involved in a lot of activities of which business transaction constitute greater percentage. For market women to effectively and successful carry out business enterprises, information is needed.

### Concept of Information

There are various forms of information; some have identified information with records of facts, others with the content of text, still others with the experience stored in human mind. Debons (2006) tried to distinguish between "data", "information" and "knowledge". Information falls between data and knowledge. Osiobe explain that information as a commodity has to be acted upon by an energy system in order to make it useful in order to be put into action. This conversion of information into useable involves acquisition of events, transmission, processing, utilization and transfer. Abdulsalami et al (2013) Information could be defined as a processed data and figure that are sourced from various sources and are found useable for decision making. It is the communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence; it could also be defined as knowledge obtained from investigation, study or instruction.

Librarian Glossary (1977) defined information as an assemblage of data in a comprehensive form recorded on paper or some other mediums and capable of communication. Information use is a behavior and it is essential to understand the factors that influence it. Those factors include the quality, the availability, accessibility and ease of use materials related to the information resources, while others include educational level and professional orientation of the user's status. The quality of the information determines to what extent the information seeker utilize information received. The availability and accessibility of information also determines the rate at which particular information is being used.

### Nature of Information

Information by nature can be categorized into tangible or intangible. According to Abdulsalami (2013) information can be called tangible when they are in physical form. All information that are

materials in nature and have capacity to provide information that can be considered as tangible. All print media such as journals, periodicals, books, thesis and dissertations, encyclopedia, pictures, paintings etc. are tangible. All these could be referred to as many times as the information is needed; they are gathered and processed, stored in a particular place or form, for easy accessibility whenever they are needed. Tangible information can be preserved and secured for future references. Other tangible information could be in electronic form such as computers, telex and micro forms, all these need some electronic apparatus to disseminate the information that are stored in them. This tangible information could be referred to as permanent information. Intangible information is not physical in nature but equally have the capacity of conveying meaningful ideas.

Natural appearances such as cloud, thunder, sound, wind are intangible information, these phenomenons communicate some ideas to the people who understand them and they inculcate knowledge to the people. Gesture such as blinking or winking, shouting, laughing, facial expression etc. are also intangible nature of information. Any forms of communication that cannot be physically handled are intangible. These intangible information could not be gathered, processed and stored, so it could not be referred to after some time. This nature of information could also be referred to as transient information because it comes and it goes, it is not permanent (Abdulsalami, 2013).

### **Types of Information**

There are various types of information that people need at a particular time for utilization. Welchi (2005) enumerated the information people need as physical information, educational, social, agency/operating /functional information.

1. Physical information gives the idea of things that can be seen such as population figures, water points, location of places, maps, geographical information about places.
2. Social information comprises news on political situations, organizational information, ethnic/cultural considerations, health profile, living and economic conditions.
3. Agency information, give information about an outfit that serves people giving their staff performance, organizational functions, parent agency activities policy and mandate.
4. Educational information gives theoretical information such as theory and practice of humanitarian aid, research development and broader practice information. It inculcates new ideas, experience and technical know-how.
5. Operating/functional information include news about security /stability of workforce, availability of goods, equipment's, government policy, movement in allocation as a result of external factors.

### **Information Sourcing Among Market Women**

Information sourcing could be defined as retrieving information from various medium for the purpose of decision making. Where and how information is sourced is very important. To determine information sourcing, information need and information seeking must be discussed. Itoga (2002) stressed that information need is a situation that arises when one encounter a work related problem that can be solve through some information, while Ikoja- Odogo (2004) expressed that information that will solve a problem at hand. Information seeking behavior has led to determination of various information sources by different people in the business section. Business women, especially market women are faced with continuous flood of information coming from various sources which include, manufactures, wholesales, retailer, consumers etc. it is cleared that many market women prefer using formal and informal sources and channel of information for decision making. Formal sources of information include written and printed information, while informal sources of information include oral and verbal information.

### **Information Utilization by Market Women**

Information utilization is making use of the information retrieved from its source. It is the accurate use and proper dissemination of information to others who will need the information for decision making. This includes information handling such as storing, processing and retrieval for use. The value and impact of information utilization refers to the new conditions that reestablished after the information has been used. The role of information includes ability to make relational decisions and take appropriate actions, it increases the capacity to see things more widely and become focused. Utilization of information is actualizing the information received into a workable knowledge.

According to Itoga (2002) although reading and writing play an insignificant role in rural people life; Use of information and its contribution on how people handle information is relevant, he vividly described on how information is constrained stored, interpreted and communicated in an oral culture as quite illuminating and serves as its standard of comparison with the developers approach. While market women largely depend on oral and translator of written information, the literate people are always accurate in utilization of information and the facts may be misunderstood by the users, thereby the interpretation of the translated facts may be misapplied.

In utilizing the supplied information, education and training is very important, Rogers, (2002) said both formal an informal education is needed, the literate user may easily catch up with the application of the equipment's used for the supply of the information, but for the development of new projects, he still needs to go for training.

## **Statement of Problem**

Samaru market is one of the market in Zaria that is mostly patronized by people from different location within Kaduna comprising Zaria, Sabo–Gari, Giwa, Kudan, Soba, Lare, Ikara and Makarfi local government Areas. The status of this market makes it important that the flow of information in the market supposed to be without hindrance. Samaru as a whole has been home of Academia, there are many educational and academic institutions in Zaria therefore, information is of paramount importance to the market women as to know the needs of their customers so as to transact the right business at the right time.

Like many other Nigeria markets, Samaru market have some seasonal wares and material, if the business women do not have information about particular business, they may enter into a wrong business at a point in time, so information is needed to transact the right business at the right time. Construction and building of stall and shops are done inside the market without adequate information on how and where to build without their shops, thereby causing obstruction and hindrance for flow of transportation and passage, all these needs adequate information. There are always incessant of fire out break within the market and many shops and warehouse are destroyed, these are happening because of inadequate or enough information though ignorance.

However, good business will not grow well without information. Information in trading is supposed to enlighten the market women about the new brand of products, new price, and security availability. It has been observed by the researcher that most market women in Samaru do not have access to information since they have no radio, television, and majority could not read nor write, they have no access to information through newspaper. They only depend on information given by their colleagues orally. Base on this, the study therefore highlight the types of information need and how they will access such information.

## **Research Question**

1. What type of information do market women need?
2. What are the sources of this information?
3. How are the market women accessing the needed information?
4. How are the market women utilizing the information?
5. What are the effects of using information in business transaction?

## **CONCEPT OF INFORMATION**

Information is needed in all spheres of life to facilitate decision making and engender progress. People need information about new development and techniques on different fields.

Abdulsalami (2013) stated that information is essential to any organization as it directly supports business activities of both the management and operational levels; similarly, O'Brien (2006) observed that information supports every aspect of business activities. For example, marketing managers need information about sales performance and trends. Financial managers need information concerning financial cost and investment returns etc. the life of enterprises depends on its ability to identify fluctuation on new techniques and have the capacity to meet changing demand by the application of those techniques. As such, Abubakar (2008) postulates that current information is needed to make decisions. The business world, he notes is such a competitive type which requires information professionals to generate. Carey (2000) wrote that information is the back-bone of every society, any society without means of communication or where people don't pass out ideas' he said of course such society would have problems of development, Suleiman (2002) also said information for some is knowledge about a subject, something that can be used to improve the performance of other activities; it does not include acts and entertainments for others, he said, information is something that is manually processed and consumed, either to improve other people performance of other activities (such as production) or for personal enjoyment. It would include anything that has to do with sensation. Directives, exposure and ways of doing things made available in records or oral form.

### **Information Sourcing among Marketers**

Information sourcing among marketers: information can be sourced in two major ways; they're formal sources and informal sources. Bouaza (2000) described formal sources of information as the category that includes the printed sources such as books, journal, and report etc. while the informal sources includes conversation with colleague, telephone call, attendance of conference or meetings. Information source refers to person, place or theory from which the information is obtained. Apunachalam (2004) noted that information resources is important ingredient and it use contributes to success while its nonuse leads significantly to failures. Feather and Pratchall (2005) sees information sources as materials in any format, whether in open access or held, or which have been developed either as general or special resources in terms of coverage or depth. Abdulsalami identified information sources in any organization as those materials generated within the organization such as: research, report, technical material collections from external environment, inform of books, pamphlet, patent, trade literature, government report, and newspapers. Aina (2005) identified sources of information to include ephemeral enduring non-scientific, enhancing scientific primary and enhancing scientific secondary. She described ephemeral as constituting local and national press release, whether reports forecast and disease intelligent report.

Information sourcing includes searching through information resources. Information resources are any organized facility or individual willing and able to give authoritative response to scientific or technical inquiries out of an existing store of knowledge or expertise. According to Artifadele (2002) information sourcing include primary source i.e., the original manuscripts contemporary record or documents, which are used by an author and other sources of information such as words of mouth, personal experience, friends, relatives, print media, opinion, orientation, tours, educational institution, religious institutions, cultural ceremonies, libraries etc. The amount of information sourced and utilized determines the amount of goods and services that are produced in an organization, Ozowa (2005) in his research 'the nature of agricultural information needs of small scale farmer in Africa ascribe the low level of adoption of agricultural production technology among small scale farmer as a result of lack of information. In his research no technology information is supplied to small scale farmer but only relied on their traditional crude method, this resulted to small amount of production.

For any marketer to source for any information there must be information seeking behavior. Information seeking behavior is the activity undertaken to identify a message that solves or satisfies a perceived need. Amope (2006) in her study said information seeking is a process which an individual goes about looking for the needed information. It is a complimentary process to information needs. In his own research Ikoja –Odonga (2004) shows that there is already a models and schemes describing human information seeking behavior in his research, the question soliciting information on sources received that entrepreneurs largely depends on their immediate surrounding as a first step for information. Anster (2002) conceptualize information seeking behavior as an area that concerns itself with who needs, what kind of information and or what reasons, how information is found, evaluated and used and how these needs can be identified and satisfied. Krike Las (2006) express that any activity of an individual that satisfy a seeker has to go directly to the person whom the seeker thinks has the knowledge or turn to the use of printed word. In view of the above explanations, information seeking behavior can be seen as the effective use of all avenues, approaches, tactics or ways of acquiring useful information for decision making or achieving any given objectives.

### **Information Utilization by Marketers**

Information utilization can be referred to as a situation where the user make use of information made available in the market places such as Samaru market, the market women needs to utilize the information made available to them in order to make any tangible progress in their day-to-day trading life. The success of any business largely depends on how well and effective the people make use of the information source and services available to them. Therefore the use of

information in any community brings about success and progress to those that use the information.

Information utilization or use is a behavior, it is essential to understand the factors that influence it. Isa (2000) listed the factors that influence information use as the quality of information, the availability, the accessibility and ease of use of the materials as related to information system, while others include educational level and professional orientation of the users status. Ford (2003) advocated that accessibility and quality are two principal factors that determined the utilization of particular information.

Allen Gersberg (2006) found that accessibility and ease of use is a better determinants than a technical quality information while Haris (2007) found that improved exposure leads to increase of use of information for market women such as Samaru marketers, the quality and accessibility of information would be their major factor this is because the quality of information sourced will go a far distant in helping them to have the required profit in their business. By the quality of information, it simply means, the authenticity of the information, how factual and accurate the information received is and how easy are they accessing the information is very important.

In another development Palmer (2006) observed that most of the great achievement made in medicine, science, technology, education and industries can be attributed to intensive use of information. And these developments largely depend on the nature, quality, relevance, accuracy and accessibility of the information disseminated to the users in the particular community.

Abdulsalami, 2013 remarked that if providers of information are to manage information properly, there will be a flow of information to information users and to the decision makers, this call for establishment of a partnership communication process to identify, understand and to satisfy the needs of the users. Specialization was found to be an important factor that influence the utilization of information, Salami reported that farmers made greater use of information on agriculture than the teachers. The same concerning the use of radio and newspapers, thus can be attributed to the specifically of the information needed and requirements of each specialty in the different area of knowledge.

Conclusively, information is generally viewed as the basic human resources which enable the integration of individuals into the large social unit, as Aguolu (1994) said that information increase our awareness, revise our reason, educate us, accelerate progress and provide the source of data required for the solution of or our increasingly conflux, scientific and social problems.



## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method adopted for this study is the survey research. Survey research according to Harrod (2007) account some research examination or enquiry which has been done by a scientific organized method. It usually involves sampling the opinion of the population to reach conclusion in the study. This method is used in this study in order to get a reliable conclusion with ease.

Survey method is used also because it is flexible, many questions are asked on a given topic, given considerable flexibility in the analysis. It is used because of its economy and the amount of data that can be collected. The population of this study therefore comprises of 225 market women in Samaru market. This includes people selling all sort of wears in the market since the whole market women are not reachable at the time of the study, only two hundred and three 203 representing 80% of the population where randomly selected for proximity needs.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Sample is a sub-set of the total population. It is a small representative unit of the large group which is of interest to the study. The sample and sampling method used here is a simple random technique where by the researcher selects sample in such a way that each member has chance of being sampled. By so doing the researcher randomly select women in Samaru market who sells different kinds of commodities. Those selected sells materials ranges from food stuff to clothing and other household wears. On the whole two hundred and three market women were randomly selected for this study.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection for this study is structural questionnaire. The type of questionnaires used in the study is close ended questionnaire whereby predetermined answers are provided and the respondent will chose. The advantage of using questionnaire is that its less expensive, it avoids bias and gives the respondents opportunities to think about the questions asked.

### **Procedures for Data Analysis**

Data analysis refers to the technique which the researcher extracts from the data of information that were not apparently there before the study was made, the collected data were presented in tabular form, the proceedings are converted to percentages and the average were made and summary and conclusion were derived.

## ANALYSIS

Table 1: Trade Engage by Women in Samaru Market

Trade	No of questionnaire administered	No of questionnaire returned	% percentage
Provision seller	37	36	17.73
Cosmetic	37	35	17.24
Children wear	36	34	16.49
Textile	36	28	13.79
Household utensils	36	25	12.32
Boutique	36	23	11.33
Food stuff	37	22	10.84
Total	225	203	100

The table 1; above recorded the questionnaire administered and collected. The table shows that 36(17.73 %)of the respondents are provision sellers, 35(17.24%) trade in cosmetics, 34(16.49%)trade on children wears, 28(13.79%)trade on textile wears, 25(12.32%) trade on house hold utensils,23(11.33%)trade on Boutiques while 22(10.84%) trade on foodstuff. On the educational background of the respondents, those who are school certificate holders are 45% while those who are primary school certificate are 33%, OND/NCE holders are 16% and those with HND or bachelor degree are 6%, even though not shown.

Table 2: Types of Information Required by the Traders

Response	No	%
Products credit facilities	33	16.26
New product	41	20.20
Bank loans	54	26.60
Customers' needs	53	26.11
Sources of materials	22	10.84
All of the materials	-	-
Total	203	100

In table 2, 33 (16.60%) of the market women needs information on how to obtain credit facilities either from their trade partners on their traded goods. 41 (20.20%) need firsthand information on new products produce by their trade partners (companies/manufacturers). 54 (26.60%) need bank loans to improve their stocks/business. 53 (26.11%) need the company credit facilities to satisfy customers' needs/wants while 22 (10.84% ) need information on sources of materials produce by their business partners to help strengthen their trade.

Table 3: Information Needed by the Traders

Response	No	%
Price adjustment	62	30.54
Development of new strategy of production	59	29.06
Market forecast	76	37.44

From the table 3, 76 (37.44%) of the traders needs constant information market forecast, to help traders knows constantly how much to invest on their business. 62(30.54%) need information on price adjustments while 59(29.06%) need information on the development of new strategy of production i.e. whenever their business partners wants to undertake new development.

Table 4: Which Type of Information do you Need?

Response	No	%
market information	63	31.04
Mass media	71	34.98
Print media	32	15.76
Company bulletin, handbills	25	12.32
All of the above	12	5.91
Total	203	100

The table 4, shows that 71 (34.98%) of the market women advocate information on mass media while 63 (31.04%) need constant verbal or market information from their co-partners in business. 32 (15.76%) needs print media information, 25 (12.32%) needs the company constant bulleting, handbills, flyers, pamphlets etc. while 12 (5.91%) of the respondents opined that all of the above informational options put together will help the women marketers in their transactions.

Table 5: How do you Access the Needed Information?

Response	No	%
Rumors	48	23.65
Communication media	56	27.59
Market association	92	45.32
All of the above	7	3.45
Total	203	100

In table 5, 92 (45.32%) of the market women access the needed information through market association, 56 (27.59%) access needed information through communication media, 48 (23.65%) access needed business information through rumors, 7 (3.45%) access needed information through all the listed option medium given above.

Table 6: How often do you Seek Information?

Response	No	%
Weekly	43	21.18
Monthly	12	5.91
Daily	49	24.14
Anytime I have need for information	99	48.77
Total	203	100

Table 6, shows that 99 (48.77%) of respondents seek for information any time they need information, while 49 (24.14%) seek information daily. Some of the market women seek information weekly express by 43 (21.18%) respondents while seek information weekly while 12 (5.91%) seek information on monthly basis.

Table 7: Satisfaction Derive from Information Received

Response	No	%
No satisfactory	-	-
Undecided	14	6.90
Satisfied	69	33.99
Highly satisfied	120	59.11
Total	203	100

In table 7, 120 (59.11%) of the respondents are highly satisfied with the information they received, 69 (33.99%) express satisfaction, while 14 (6.90%) remain undecided. From the analysis the researchers could draw a simple analogue from the respondent respond that majority of the women marketers were satisfied with the information received from their co-partners manufacturer/ companies.

Table 8: Effect of Information on Business

Response	No	%
No effect	-	-
Little effect	13	6.40
Much effect	92	45.32
Greater effect	98	48.28
Total	203	100

In table 8 the information received has greater effect on the daily activities of their business transactions 98 (48.28%) gave the expression, 92 (45.32%) opine that much effect was noticed as they continue their business operations. Only a neglect able numbers of the respondents 13

(6.40%) expressed having little effects while there was no response for “no effect.” This summarizes the important of information in business transactions.

Table 9: Information Sourced in the Market?

Response	No	%
Through organized association	76	37.45
Through personal market research	82	40.39
All of the above	45	22.17
Total	203	100

The table 9, express the channels through which information is sourced in the market 82 (40.39%) affirmed that information is source through personal market research this could probably be market colleagues/trade partners, friends, families, etc. 76 (37.45%) source information though an organized association, while 45 (22.17%) agreed that they source information through all the option given above. This simply brings the important of information in the business to bear.

Table 10: The impact of Information in Business

Response	No	%
Creates competitive environment	34	16.75
Creates awareness	61	30.05
Brings new innovation and ideas	76	37.44
All of the above	32	15.76
Total	203	100

Table 10, expresses the impact of information in business. 76 (37.44%) opine that information bring new innovation and ideas, 61 (30.05%) adduce that information create awareness to both the marketers and their consumers, 34 (16.75%) in their response postulate that information help traders to know more about competitors in their business areas within the environment they operates while 32 (15.76%) express that all the above options has impact on their business transactions.

Table 11: Accessing Information Medium

Response	No	%
Books/bulletins/newspapers	21	10.35
Colleagues/ friends	63	31.04
Mass media	95	46.80
Total	203	100

Table 11, accessing information medium 95 (46.80%) of the respondents express that the means through which they access information is through mass media, 63 (31.04%) access information through colleagues/ friends while few respondents 21 (10.35%) access information through books /Bulletins and newspapers.

The study about information sourcing and utilization among marketers face the challenges of information sourcing and use among market women in Zaria metropolis. It is a study whose investigation revolves around the market women of Samaru Zaria. The study established that hardly can a business survive without information, the research came to the conclusion that authorities in charge of information provider especially manufacturing companies should make available business information available to their esteem traders in their areas of jurisdictions. Small scale business should leased with local government authorities in order to help in setting up information centers within the market areas to assist the business market women.

## **FINDINGS**

The study mentioned various ways information could be sourced by market women; it also studies the need for use of information by the market women. The study which is a survey uses questionnaire as instrument and the data collected where presented and analyses accordingly the findings: The findings reveals thus:

That market women in Samaru market should generate information for their business activities from different source. It was discovered that some women source information for their business transaction.

The type of information needed by market women are business information such as information on new products, source of materials, customers need government policy on trading and exchange rate.

Market women need information to make plan and to develop new strategy of business, Market women can access the needed information through market women association, communication, media and even verbal.

It was discovered that the information sourced by the market women are highly satisfactory and it has greater effect on their business.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Market women should endeavor to register themselves in literacy education programs, especially those who have less than secondary education.

2. Market associations should try to have an office where members will access information
3. Various business organization and stake holders should put in place various economic empowerment programmes to assist market women.
4. Information center should be established around the market areas so that information seekers can go and sourced for needed information.

## CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study examined the information needs of Samaru market women in Zaria, based on the numerous findings, the study concluded that market women sourced for their information from various media such as Radio, Television, Newspaper and Magazine, Human Source etc. Market women use information to make decision on how to develop their business plan.

Further Studies can be conducted on the following areas: Information accessibility of Credit facilities for market women in Samaru market, The economic benefit of Information in business transaction etc.

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