

## **Influence of demographic characteristics on artisans' success in meeting their information needs in Nsukka metropolis of Enugu State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The paper examined the influence of demographic characteristics on artisans' success in meeting their information needs in Nsukka metropolis of Enugu state, Nigeria. The study was guided by two specific objectives and descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance. The population of this study consisted of all the registered male and female artisans in Nsukka metropolis with a sample made up of two hundred and twenty eight artisans from eighteen vocations. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Percentages mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that the great majority of the artisans were males, the greater number of respondents were in the age range of 41-50 (51%) while in terms of education, the greatest number, 63 of the respondents, (36.3%) attended primary schools. It was recommended that youth should be encouraged to join these group since the group is dominated by elderly people and more females should be encouraged to acquire the skills of artisanship from various vocations since few female were among the artisans; that state government should provide adult and continuing education centers and programmes to elderly and young artisans for them to acquire more knowledge that will equip them in their search for information in order for them to meet their information needs, that there should be a subsidized training scheme that would attract youth to both theoretical and practical knowledge in various artisans vocations and public libraries should be involved in the provision of information to artisans.

### **Introduction**

Information needs of artisans may vary according to their social group, age, gender, economic status, interest groups and profession but every individual needs information for growth and survival. The importance of artisans has been increasingly recognized all over the world. Cambridge international dictionary of English (1995) defined an artisan as a person who does skilled work with his or her hands. Also Mooko and Aina (2007), defined artisans as those who perform skilled work with their hands. For the purpose of this study, an artisan, also called a craftsman, is a skilled manual worker who works on items that may be functional or decorative. Artisans refers to persons who are engaged in skilled craft works such as hairdressing/barbing, mechanics, refrigerator/air conditioner repairing, masonry, printing, carpentry/furniture making, shoe making, building/construction, electrical work, spraying/painting, fashion

designing/tailoring, vulcanizing, book binding, plumbing, panel beating, welding among others.

Some of the characteristic features of artisans are high labour intensity, low capital requirements, a degree of skill, and small scale of production, simple technologies, self-employment and the use of local raw materials (Pye, 1998). They have different demographic characteristics such as gender, different marital status, different ages with different social and economic responsibilities and different educational levels. They are equipped mainly with vocational education which may be acquired formally or informally. In most cases, they serve as apprentices before they become perfect in their vocation. Some are in urban areas while others are in rural areas. Artisans have been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of their impact on productivity and economic development. They provide essential goods and services for the society

and economy, they engage in income-generating activities to earn a living, thereby reducing unemployment and eliminating poverty in order to improve their standard of living and bring about growth in economic development of the nation. It is the nature of the artisan to express himself through the invention, creation, manufacture, repair, and manipulation of things. These can be artistic masterpieces, technological crafts, or mechanical devices. Virtually everything made by man which you see and use is the work of Artisans. The car you drive, the house you live in, the television you watch, the telephone you talk on, the clothes you wear, the furniture and appliances in your home and the decorations and also the computers — these are things that Artisans have invented, designed, drawn plans for, and built in the developed countries.

Artisans are impelled to make things; they get restless if they do not create something tangible. It is their nature to produce physical objects. They generate an idea, and from within themselves they spew it out into material reality. They take the raw material in their hands and fashion it into things of beauty or function. Gadgets and gizmos are their stock in trade. Information is imperative to artisans; they need information for survival, effective discharge of duties and to develop their businesses. The above mentioned demographic characteristics may influence their success in meeting their information needs. The unmet information needs may affect them adversely since information is an important resource for individual growth and survival. The progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information is needed to be able to take a right decision and also reduce uncertainty.

The artisans are a section of the society whose information environment needs to be identified. This is based on the fact that there are few empirical studies so far on them. There by, necessitating a study for urgent need for a documented literature on

this category of societal members. However, it has been observed by researchers who carried out studies on artisans in Ibadan (Mabawonku, 2004) Imo State (Adimorah, 1983) and Botswana (Mooko & Aina, 2007) and (Ezugwu,2010) that the information needs of artisans are often unmet. As a result of lack of information, artisans may suffer untold hardships and stagnation in their job. If nothing is done to address this problem, it may lead to poverty, unemployment, low income and low economic development of the nation. Earlier researchers also observed that artisans find access to authentic information very difficult: this leads to their backwardness in income generation, because they work hard and get less (Mooko & Aina, 2007). As a result of this, young people are not encouraged to join this group of people there by making artisanship going into extension in the near future.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study was intended to determine the influence of demographic characteristics on the artisans' success in meeting their information needs in Nsukka metropolis of Enugu State.

Specifically, the study set out to:

1. Determine the demographic characteristics of artisans in Nsukka metropolis.
2. Find out the influence do demographic characteristics on the artisans' success in meeting their information needs.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of artisans in Nsukka metropolis of Enugu state?
2. What influence do demographic characteristics have on the artisans' success in meeting their information needs?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1.  $H_{01}$  – There is no significant difference in the mean scores of different age groups of artisans on the extent their information needs are met.
2.  $H_{02}$  – There is no significant difference in the mean scores of educational level of artisans on the extent their information needs are met.

### Literature review

Information is indispensable to life. It is among the prerequisites for living. Afoloabi (2003) reasoned that “information is a conveyor, a change agent, a reinforcement of ideas and opinions. Okwuebina (2006), citing Todd also stated “that information has the potential to change what people already know, shape their decisions and actions. Information is a universal concept that is understood by words, sign etc. it improves knowledge and motivates change. Information is data of value in planning, decision-making and evaluation of any programme. Ozioko (2007) viewed that knowledge of every subject to man centers on the availability of information.

Laloo (2002) quoting Flanagan stated that information needs are what people require to solve their problems. Tague (1976) has provided six types of information need which are self explanatory. Social or pragmatic information needs required for coping with day to day life, Recreational information needs, Professional information needs, Educational information needs, Success information needs-for employment opportunities, self improvement (dressing, speech, personal changes etc), Specialized information needs for the physically, emotionally disturbed, geographically isolated and non English speaking groups etc.

Wilson (2000) opined that information needs are influenced by a variety of factors such as the range of information sources available; the uses to which the information will be put; the background, motivation, professional orientation and individual characteristics of user. Other factors are socio-political,

economic, legal and regulatory systems surrounding the users as well as the consequences of information use. The quality of sources of information available to the users is also important because relevant sources are most likely to get useful information.

Furthermore, Cover (1969) and Aboyede (1987) made it clear that information needs relate first to the main characteristic of the people, what they are and what is important to them. The needs reflect the social, cultural, political and economic dimensions of their development and aspiration.

Olanipekun (2010) as cited by Yusuf (2012) described artisans as group of people that migrate to modern cities and rural area to the new town where they settle to trade, they are likely semi-literate and also control petty-trading and activities like carpentry, sewing, hairdressing, photography etc Oxford advanced learner's dictionary defined artisans as a person who does skilled work, making things with their hand.

Mooko and Aina (2004) stated the job related information need of artisans were in finding raw materials for the job, locating government tenders and improving of knowledge. This is in line with the findings of Ezugwu (2010) which states that artisans need occupational information most. Perhaps their information needs maybe influenced by demographic characteristics.

Some demographic characteristics may be an influencing factor to the meeting of information needs of artisans. Such demographic characteristics include age, sex and educational qualifications. The level of literacy or otherwise of the people is also an influencing factor. Hiding of relevant information by the illiterates and fear of being apprehended when certain information is leaked are problematic to the flow of information. The type of job that one does may bring about lack of time for seeking information. Also, environmental factors like language and location of information, poor transportation system and location of the user may affect the flow and acquisition of information (Mooko & Aina, 2007).

According to Mabawonku (2004), there is also the problem of the appropriateness of the information obtained. In her study many respondents did not find the information content relevant or it was not detailed enough. Okey (2000) supports this by saying that "the key to the provision of information to the rural communities is appropriateness of information source in terms of content, relevance and language to the need of the people. The above statement portrays the problems preventing people from meeting their information needs. Inferiority complex, insecurity, illiteracy, etc also shape their behavioral way of life. As was found by Mooko and Aina (2007), artisans in Botswana often encounter a series of problems in their search for information. These problems include non-detailed information, unreliable and information not in the required language. Adimorah (1983) also had similar findings of encountering problems in search of information. These include: the packaging of the materials not being suitable, the language being technical etc. From all indication, it has been seen that, the major influencing factors are that of demographic characteristic.

### Methods

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of this study consisted of all the registered male and female artisans in Nsukka metropolis. According to Nsukka local government business premises register (2008), there are 2,280 artisans in the 18 vocations identified. The researcher purposely chose those vocations because they are the most commonly found artisans in Nsukka. The sample was made up of two hundred and twenty eight artisans from eighteen vocations of the population for study. One hundred and ninety six are male while thirty two are female. Vocations which male and female practice equally have been divided into two while others that there are more males or females is sampled using two third of the sample. The sampling technique used in selecting the sample is proportionate stratified random sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection for this study was a structured questionnaire. The research instrument was validated by expert and copies of the questionnaire were administered to the artisans at their meeting places. The researcher assisted some of the artisans with limited education to fill the questionnaire. The researcher used percentages, mean and standard deviation in analyzing the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using *t*-test statistics and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

### Results

The results of the study are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses.

**Research question 1:** What are the demographic characteristics of artisans in Nsukka metropolis?

The sex, age, and educational level of the respondents are explored. These are demographic variables that might influence meeting of information needs. The research question 1 sought to find out the demographic characteristics of artisans in Nsukka metropolis..

The gender of the respondents is shown in Figure 1. The figure reveals that a majority of the artisans - 141 (81.0%) - were males, while 33 (19%) of the respondents representing 19.0% were females.

Figure 2 shows that the greater number of respondents were in the age range of 41-50 (51.7%) followed by 50 years and above (24.8%) who were in the older age range. Fewer were in age ranges of 31-40 (13.8) and 21-30 (8.6%). only two of the respondents (1.1%) were under 20 years of age.

From the Figure 3, 8 of the respondents representing 4.6% did not have any formal education but rather non-formal education. the greatest number, 63 of the respondents, (36.3%) obtained first school leaving certificate (FSLC), while 23 of the respondents (13.2) stopped at JSCE and obtained (JSSC) and 59 of the

respondents (33.9%) were Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSSC) holders smaller number had higher education 10 of the respondents (5.7%) are National Diploma/Nigerian Certificate in Education (ND/NCE) holders and another 10 (5.7%) were degree holders, while only 1 of the respondents (0.6%) had a master's degree.

**Research question 2:** What influence do demographic characteristics have on the artisans' success in meeting their information needs? The responses of artisans with regard to research question 2 were analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Table 1 reveals that males have a mean score of 2.53 while females have 2.46 showing that the information needs of males are met slightly more than their female counterparts. A hypothesis generated in line with research question two is Ho1.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant differences in the mean scores of different age groups of artisans on the extent their information needs are met.

A one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test Hypotheses 1

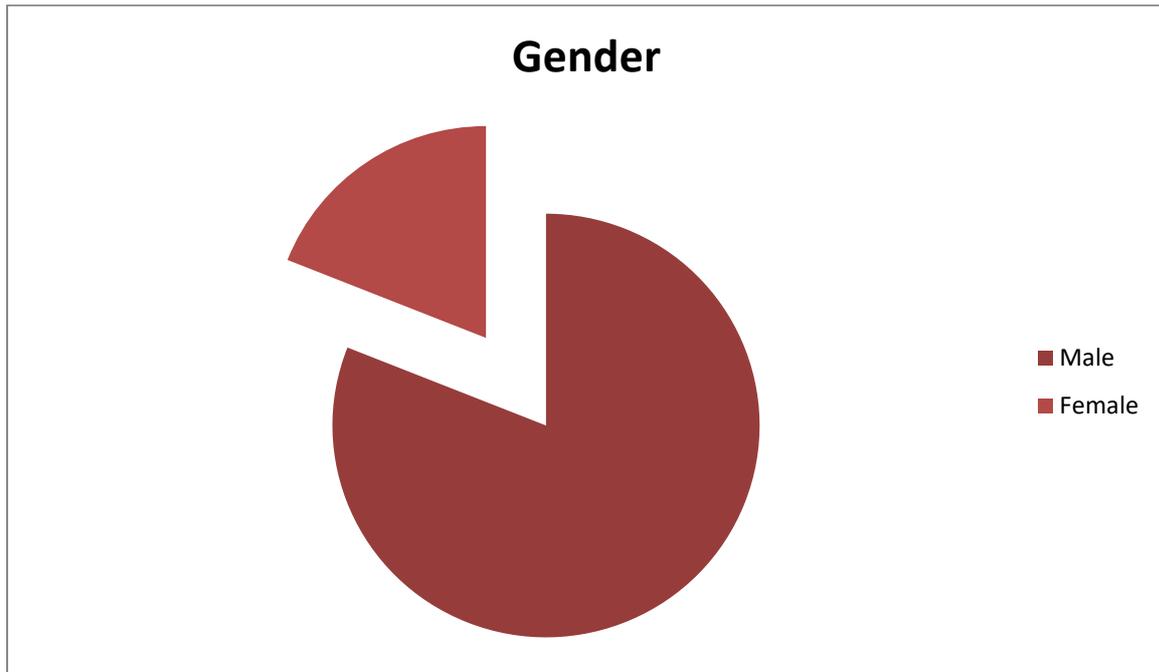
Table 2 shows that those within the age range below 30 years and 31- 40 have mean scores of 2.52 and 2. 53 respectively while those in the age range of 41 and above have mean score of 2.51. It does appear that the information needs of those between age ranges of below 30 years and 30 – 40 are met faster than those between age ranges of 41 and above.

Table 3 reveals lower and higher levels of education among the respondents. Non-formal, and FSLC constitute the lower level of education while SSCE, ND/NCE, bachelor degree and master's degree and above were of the higher level of education. The table shows that those with lower educational qualifications have a mean of 2.48 while those with higher educational qualifications have a mean of 2.56. It therefore shows that the information needs of those with higher educational qualifications are met more easily than those with lower education qualifications.

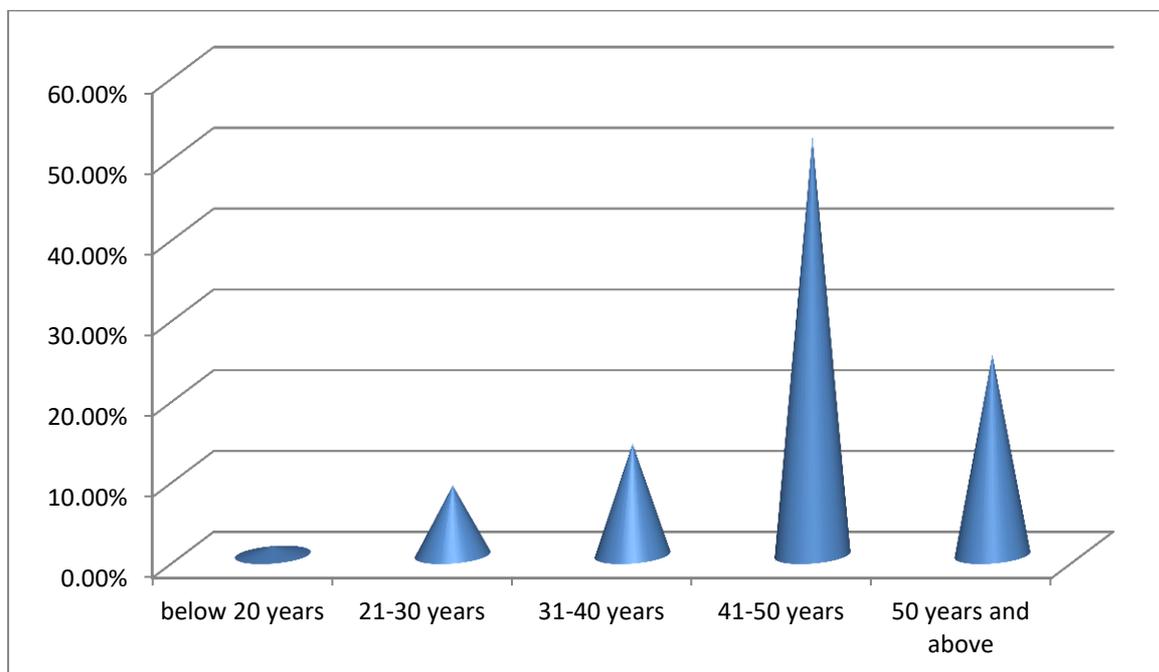
Table 4 shows the result of hypothesis 1 which tested whether there was a significant difference in the mean scores of different age groups of artisans on the extent their information needs are met. The calculated *F* for the groups is .009 which is significant at .991 and therefore not significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses of no significance is therefore accepted.

**Hypotheses 2:** There is no significant difference in the mean scores of lower and higher educational levels of artisans on the extent their information needs are met.

The second hypothesis tested whether or not there is any significant differences in the mean score of the higher and lower educational of artisans on the extent their information needs are met. The *t*-cal. was -1.066 and since this is less than the value of *t*-crit. at alpha 0.05 levels of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted and the alternative rejected.



**Figure 1 – Gender of the respondents**



**Figure 2: Age range of the respondents**

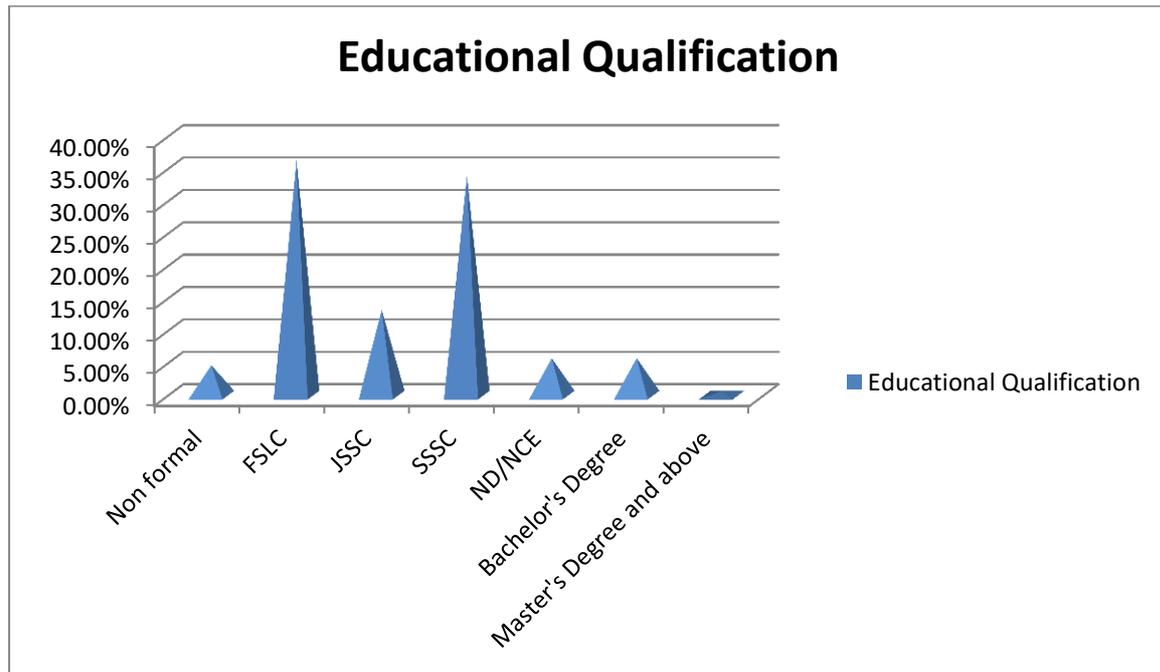


Figure 3 – Educational qualifications of the respondents

Table 1 – Gender of the respondents

S/N	Gender	N	X	SD
1	Male	141	2.53	.50039
2	Female	33	2.46	.45379

Table 2 – Age of the respondents

S/N	Age range	N	X	SD
1	30 and below	27	2.52	.52520
2	31-40	51	2.53	.42852
3	41 and above	96	2.51	.51701

Table 3 – Educational levels of the respondents

S/N	Educational levels	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
1	Lower	91	2.48	.51406
2	Higher	83	2.56	.46452

Table 4: Difference in the mean scores of different age groups of artisans on the extent their information needs are met

Groups	Sum of squares	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Between groups	.004	2	.002	.009	.991	Accepted
Within groups	41.747	171	.244			
Total	41.751	173				

Table 5: Difference in the mean scores of lower and higher educational levels of artisans on the extent their information needs are met

Levels of education	N	$\bar{X}$	t-cal.	df	Sig	Decision
Lower educational level	91	2.48	-1.066	172	.288	Accepted
Higher educational level	83	2.56				
Total	174					

## Discussion

A majority of the respondents were males and their information needs were slightly more easily met than those of their female counterparts. The reason for this could relate to type of occupation, greater mobility and freedom of males; more time due to lack of domestic responsibilities by some of them.

The age groups of the respondents varied from less than 20 years to over 50 years. However, those within the age group of 41-50 and 50 years and above were more in number. A majority of respondents were in the age group of 41-50 years and above which constituted the elderly age groups. Most of the elderly had never attended any form of school. Some of the respondents attended primary school whereas some of the respondents stopped at junior secondary school; regarded as the lower level of education, while those of the higher level were from senior secondary up to master's degree and above. It was discovered that the information needs of those with higher education were met more easily than those with lower education. This result was expected because this group of people is those who can boldly speak out in the libraries or other information providing agencies and even search through the internet for information, instead of depending on informal conversation. In the result of the hypothesis that aimed at testing whether there is any significant difference in the mean score of different levels of education of artisans on the extent their information needs are met, discovered that the information needs of those between the age range of 30 and below and 31-40 are met faster than 40 years and above. The reason for this is not very clear because when asked the reason, they said that those groups are at the peak of the vocation and thereby so inquisitive to know all about the vocations. The result of the hypothesis aimed at testing whether there is any significant difference in the mean score of different age groups of artisans on the extent their information needs are met, shows that the null hypothesis was accepted.

## Conclusion

The influence of some selected demographic characteristics such as (age, gender and levels of education) of artisans in meeting their information needs were identified. It was revealed that there are age differences in artisans' success in meeting their information needs. Gender differences are also a barrier as female artisans are the most vulnerable group, while educational levels constitute the major differences in meeting their information needs.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Young people should be encouraged to acquire the skills of artisanship from various vocations since majority of the artisans are ageing and thereby needs young people to take their place.
2. There should be a subsidized training scheme that would attract youth to both theoretical and practical knowledge in various vocations.
3. Females should be encouraged to join artisans as they constitute the

majority of the population but are very few in that sector.

4. The state government should provide a functional adult and continuing education programmes mainly for artisans that will update and equip them necessary knowledge and skills in searching for information in order to meet their information needs.
5. Public libraries should be involved in the provision of information to artisans through effective dissemination of information.

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