

Information Provision for Innovation and Development of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs): An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The state of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs) in Nigeria has been of great concern to the government, citizen, operators, practitioners and organized private sectors. Over the years, MSEs have not played expected significant role in economic growth. To this end, this study explored the role of information provision to innovation and development of MSEs in Nigeria. Four objectives that guided the study bothered on available sources of information, access, its influence on MSEs and challenges confronting MSEs. The study population consisted of eighteen MSE owners selected using stratified sampling technique. Data were generated through the aid of semi structured interview and analysed using content analysis, by thoroughly and without bias identifying specified uniqueness and major themes of participants' messages. Responses to each in-depth interview question were summarized and important quotations were reported verbatim to complement findings in the survey. The study found that mentorship, seminar, television, fashion shows, newspaper, apprenticeship, textbook and the internet were the major sources of information used by MSEs owners for their businesses. Accessibility to relevant information was high to an appreciable extent. Information has influenced entrepreneurial activities in the areas of meeting up with international best practices, creativity and product innovation. However, challenges facing entrepreneurship were in two clusters namely: personal constraint (financial

constraint, inadequate training, hoarding of information and ignorance) and political bottlenecks (non-governmental support, bad road, poor internet access and epileptic power supply). The study concludes that information has been a vital source of innovation and development of MSEs in Nigeria. To forestall the challenges, recommendations were made in the study.

Keywords: *Information, Provision, Innovation, Development, Entrepreneur, MSEs,*

Introduction

The concept of Micro and Small Scale Entrepreneurship (MSEs) is no longer strange to the economic development of nations. In most countries of the world, Micro and Small scale Enterprises provide the largest share of employment. They could be described as the bedrock for innovation and entrepreneurship. They play a lead role in developing new ideas and job creation. Typically, MSEs across the world are geared toward empowerment thereby leading to global development. Osotimehin, Jegede, Akinlabi and Olajide (2012) describe micro and small scale businesses as catalysts in the socio economic development of any country in the sense that they are a veritable vehicle for the achievement of national macroeconomic objective in terms of employment generation at low investment cost and enhancement of apprenticeship training that leads to skills acquisitions. Hatega (2007) and Kauffmann (2005) cited in Kamunge, Njeru and Tirimba (2014) attest that Micro and Small Scale Enterprises cover more than 95% of all firms in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Kenya for instance, the Economic Survey (2012) cited in Kamunge, Njeru and Tirimba (2014) affirm that the Micro and Small Scale Entrepreneurs in Kenya contributes 80% of the total employment and 20% of GDP. In Malaysia, Zambia, Japan, South Korea, and India, MSEs contribute substantially to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP), export earnings and employment opportunities (Gichuki, Njeru & Tirimba, 2014), and in Indonesia, SMEs account for 98% of her enterprises and over 60% of her GNP (Timberg, 2000).

The potential benefits from entrepreneurship and innovation for developing countries are enormous. This probably is why most of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa champion the development of small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as a conduit to the alleviation of poverty, the generation of employment, and the promotion of national economic development (Small and Medium Industries Development Organisation [SMIDO], 2004; Chipika & Wilson, 2006). MSEs though

small and sometimes look insignificant, they contribute to the economy in terms of output of goods and services; creation of jobs at relatively low capital cost; provision of a vehicle for reducing income disparities; development of a pool of skilled and semiskilled workers as a basis for future industrial expansion, among others(Ariyo, 2005).

What then are micro and small scale entrepreneurs (MSEs)? The National Council on Industry (1991) cited in Olajide, Ogundele, Adeoye and Akinlabi (2008) affirms that micro/cottage industry is an industry whose total project cost excluding cost of land but including working capital is not more than five million naira(₦ 500,000:00); while small scale industry is an industry whose total project cost excluding cost of land and including working capital does not exceed ₦ 5m. This definition was further reviewed by the council in 1996, that cottage/micro industry is an industry whose total cost, including working capital but excluding cost of land, is not more than ₦ 1 million and a labour size of not more than 10 workers, while small scale industry is an industry whose total cost, including working capital but excluding cost of land, is over N1 million but not more than ₦ 40 million and a labour size of between 11 and 35 workers. Majority of the MSEs have fewer than 10 employees, while 70 per cent of them are one person, own account workers (Kihonge, In Kamunge, Njeru & Tirimba, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Previous studies have established that the state of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs) has been of great concern to the government, citizen, operators, practitioners and organized private sectors in Nigeria, in that MSEs have not performed creditably well and they have not played expected significant role in economic growth, neither have they influenced apprentice training so as to accelerate employment and poverty alleviation in order to foster Nigerian economic development. If this assertion is true, could it be said that MSEs in Nigeria have access to relevant information that could aid their performance to enhance innovation and development? To answer this question, this study seeks to examine the level of information provision to MSEs in Nigeria and its attendant impact on national development.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore the role of information provision to innovation and development of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises. The specific objectives of the study are to explore:

- * the major sources of information available to micro and small scale entrepreneurs;
- * information accessibility among MSEs entrepreneurs;
- * the influence of information on MSEs innovation and development and;
- * challenges facing MSEs in getting relevant information

Review of Related Literature

In the history of mankind, information has been adjudged to be a basic necessity for an individual to function effectively in a society. Information is a public good which must not be denied anyone regardless of socio- economic factors or political affiliation (Babalola, Sodipe, Haliso & Odunlade, 2012). Right from the Stone Age till now, information has always been perceived as the tool that has shaped the mankind environment for better. This assertion is supported by Robinson (n.d) who opines that provision of information is an essential element of the functioning of any society or community. She stresses that without a means to provide facts and data, citizens would not be able to make well-considered decisions about how their government should operate or other critical areas of their lives.

Therefore, it is an understatement to say that for micro and small scale enterprises to thrive, provision of relevant information is germane to laudable initiatives that would ginger skills acquisitions, growth and empowerment which would eradicate unemployment and poverty in the nation. In an era of globalization accompanied by rapid technology change, a country's competitiveness and relevance in the global economy is increasingly determined by its capacity to effectively use information for design, production and marketing (Dzidonu, 2002). However, availability and accessibility of information is a pre- requisite to its use. Meanwhile, availability of information is one thing, access and use of the available resources is another (Ogbuiyi & Okpe, 2013 In Ezike, 2015). Information may be available and yet remain inaccessible for use. Where access to information is concerned, where and how the information is provided is of great importance. In the views of Okello-Obura and Matovu (2011), entrepreneurs are more likely to value - and use - information that comes from someone close to them who has a track record of practical credibility. They stress that this raises the question of which sources of business information are required for adequate functioning as well as the problems of accessibility to the required business information. They also asked if the sources will only be

restricted to formal sources, like libraries, radio stations, television stations etc., or they will include informal sources, like experienced business managers in the community, customers, and so on. They conclude that the solution should be provision of information in the right form to the right user and using the right means because of the complexity of means of information provision today.

With the realization of the potentials of the MSEs, government at different level in Nigeria have put up a lot of support programmes, such as Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), VISION 20:2020, and Transformation Agenda to promote and sustain their development. It is believed that massive assistance; financial, technical, marketing and managerial from the government are necessary for the MSEs to grow. To achieve maximum result, governments have stepped up efforts to promote the development of MSEs through increased incentive schemes including enhanced budgetary allocation for technical assistance programmes. Suffice to say that all of these may not be achieved except relevant and adequate information is provided to this group of people.

Economic Theories of Entrepreneurship

Several theories have been promulgated to establish the fact that entrepreneurs actually contribute to economic development of nations. One of such is the Israel Kirzner's theory of entrepreneurship which believes that an entrepreneur is an individual who discovers a previously unnoticed profit opportunities and initiates a process in which these newly discovered profit opportunities are acted upon in the marketplace in such a way that market competition that eliminates profit opportunity will exist. Kirzner's idea of entrepreneurship is based on what he refers to as "spontaneous learning". A state of mind he believes will ginger alertness. Alertness will draw an entrepreneur's attention to scanning the market horizon for opportunities and innovations that can result in making better goods, or new goods, or bringing less-expensively manufactured goods to the market place (Mamyrbayeva, 2012).

This is where information provision comes to play. As the entrepreneur scans the market for opportunities, there must be adequate and relevant information to ginger his mind enough to create spontaneous learning that will bring about development in the inner mind of the individual. Since state of mind is part of human nature, access to relevant information will lead to discovering new knowledge

and possibilities that no one has either previously imagined or noticed thereby putting the individual ahead of others in a competitive market. Also applicable to this study is the Mark Casson's economic theory which holds access to information about market conditions as one of the variables of entrepreneurship (Kamau&Ngugi, 2014).

Methodology

This study employed exploratory survey research design with the intention of gaining insight and understanding the role played by information towards innovation and development of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises. The study population consist of MSEs from the following six sub-sectors: production, sales and services, agro allied, chemical and allied, professionals, and the artisan sector in Lagos State, Nigeria. Sample comprised eighteen MSEs selected using the stratified sampling technique. Three participants were selected from each of the aforementioned sectors to constitute the study sample. The breakdown of the sample is as follows: production sector (1 Pure Water Producer, 1 Printer, 1 Cake Baker); sales and services sector (1 Laundry Manager, 1 Business Center Operator, 1 Restaurant Manager); agro allied sector (1 Fishery Manager, 1 Horticulturist, 1 Poultry Manager); chemical and allied sector (1 Soap Maker, 1 Cosmetologist, 1 Pesticide Producer); professional sector (1 Lawyer, 1 Medical Doctor, 1 Data Analyst); artisan sector (1 Auto Mechanic, 1 Fashion Designer, 1 Metal Fabricator). Instrument of data gathering was semi structured interview and data were gathered over a period of two weeks.

Data was collected with the aid of a research assistant. The interview sessions which were captured by audio recording was conducted by a research assistant who met the individuals after the researchers had contacted them. Every interview session with 16 out of the 18 participants covered the four research objectives and lasted for 30 to 45 minutes on the average. Those who were unavoidably absent at the scheduled time for face to face interview were interviewed through smart-phone except for the medical doctor and the soap maker who could not grant their interviews. Some of the interviewee granted their interview in vernacular (Yoruba). All the recorded interview sessions were transcribed into English Language. Qualitative data generated in the study had been analyzed using content analysis, a technique for making inferences, by thoroughly and without bias identifying specified uniqueness and major themes of participants' views. Responses to each in-depth interview question were summarized and important quotations were reported verbatim to complement findings in the survey.

Results

The results are presented in Tables 1-4. The results are structured according to domain, core idea, and category. Data is clustered first by domain. Then, one or more core ideas emerged under each domain. The core ideas attempt to categorize smaller pieces of information within the domains. Under the categories, attention is drawn to unique components of respondents' experience within each domain. Direct interview quotations or paraphrasing in some instances are then used to draw attention to the data. Hill et al., (2005) suggests displaying the cross-analysis of interview findings through frequency of occurrence in the sample. Applying this, categories are labeled. Categories that occurred for one respondent are labeled 'Rare'. Categories that occurred for 2 to 7 participants are termed 'Variant' and those that occurred for 8 to 10 respondents are labeled 'Typical'. A category which occurred for 11 or more respondents would be termed 'General'. Nevertheless, the latter 'Typical' and 'General' frequencies did not emerge in this research.

Sources of Information Available to MSEs

Table 1: Summary of interview results on research objective one

S/N	Domain		Core Idea		Category	N	Frequency
I	Sources of information available to MSEs	A	Non-socio media sources	1	Mentor ship	4	Variant
				2	Seminar	1	Rare
				3	Television	1	Rare
				4	Fashion shows	1	Rare
				5	Newspaper	3	Variant
				6	Apprenticeship	2	Variant
				7	Textbook	1	Rare
		B	Socio-media channel	1	Internet	3	Variant

Source: Authors, 2016

Sources of Information Available to MSEs

Non socio media sources

Two core ideas emerged from the domain of Sources of Information Available to MSEs: Non socio media sources and socio media channel. The first core idea, non socio media sources contained participants report

on the diverse ways through which entrepreneurs in Lagos source for information for business innovation and development as revealed in the interview process. The analysis revealed seven distinct ways in which participants indicated the non socio-media outlets for information sourcing in the entrepreneurship industry. These seven categories are: (1) mentorship (2) seminar (3) television (4) fashion shows (5) newspaper (6) apprenticeship, and (7) textbook.

Mentorship: The first category, mentorship (n=4), was variant in frequency and one of the major means of information sourcing by entrepreneurs in Nigeria. For instance, one man described this in the following ways:

Information like my own case, when you talk about personal information, I have somebody that I learnt this from and anytime I have challenges I always called. Sir (mentor) this is the area I have challenges, what can I do? Or what are the new things that may be involved? Sometimes it may be added advantage to what I have on the ground.

Seminar: The second category, seminar (n=1), was in a rare frequency. The participant in this category highlighted that:

I source information by attending seminars, fashion shows and all those stuff where I get my information, and some time on the internet.

Television: The third category within the domain of non socio media source is television. It was one of the few information tools used by entrepreneurs in Lagos as revealed by the interviewee (n=1). The participant described that.

... I source information most times from the internet and television. That is where I source for my information apart from what I learnt in school.

Another participant highlighted the reason for gap in information sourcing among entrepreneurs using audio-visual media like television as follows:

It is not everybody that knows how to source for information online and it is not everybody that has access to information even though they have television.

Fashion shows: The fourth category within non socio media sources was fashion shows. Participant described that she source for information sometimes by attending fashion shows (n=1). This approach seemed to have been in existent for sometimes though in rare frequency in this study.

Newspaper: The fifth category is newspaper. The statement below describes a lawyer's indication of newspaper asa source of information for developing his business. This category was in variant frequency (n=3). The participant stated,

...If I need any information concerning any area of business of interest, I source for it in the newspaper. Even when you get to my office there is a section where I kept these and it had become somewhat a heap and I think my chamber clerk would have disposed of them by now because it is almost becoming a refuse site. I also believe that the most literate among these entrepreneurs have sources of information outside the print media unlike my case.

Apprenticeship: The sixth category within non media sources of information describes participants perceived view on the role of apprenticeship as a vital information aid in the entrepreneurial world (n=2). This category was in a variant frequency. One of the participants, a male mechanic emphasized that

.....concerning our job, the source of information are not different from the one I know when I was learning the work from my boss, and it was after the expiration of my apprenticeship and now started on my own that I got the information about all the types of vehicles that are available now".

Textbook: Textbook was another source of information gathering used by entrepreneurs in Nigeria (n=1). This category was in a rare frequency.

Socio Media: The second core idea within the domain of sources of information among entrepreneurs was socio media. This core idea describes the socio media tool used by the participants to gather information to be the internet.

Internet: This category represents the predominant socio media information sourcing tool among entrepreneurs in Nigeria (n=3). One participant described this situation by stating that:

Source of information are various ways through which we get information, it is either you get to meet people who has been in the business but if you don't want to get back to them you source information from the internet.

Another participant who owns a catering firm expressed that:

Most of the time, may be when one is less busy or when you have a job that you don't have experience on the moment you goggle it and you have the information.

Information accessibility of MSEs in Lagos State

Table 2: Summary of interview results on research objective two

S/N	Domain		Core Idea		Category	N	Frequency
II	Information accessibility of MSEs in Lagos	A	Highly accessible	1	Two sources	4	Variant
				2	Three or more accessible sources	6	Variant
		B	Low accessibility	1	One source	3	Variant
				2	No access	3	Variant

Source: Authors, 2016.

Information accessibility of MSEs in Lagos State

High level of accessibility

Two core ideas emerged from the domain of information accessibility of MSEs in Lagos State and these are: high and low level access. Under high level access to information, two categories of participants emerged: (1) two sources and (2) three or more sources.

Two sources: The first category, two sources (n=4), was variant in frequency. One of the participants who is a lawyer by profession reported that he has access to two major sources. He described his means of accessing information this way:

...some entrepreneurs like myself access information from the pages of newspapers while some got information from their immediate environment. For me, the newspaper and my immediate environment are my major way of accessing information. Sometimes I make do with innate information

Three or more sources: The second category, three or more sources (n=6), was also in a variant frequency. One of the participants in this category highlighted that:

Information accessibility is high. This is because the spate of change is rapid. Customers' purchasing behaviours change and so entrepreneurs must seek to move in similar direction in order to stay relevant in business. For instance, somebody might order for a cake which is outside your skill set as a caterer, failure to meet this demand may lead to job loss. So, as a baker you can't just sit down and relax. You just have to keep on. Whenever you have the opportunity, go on TV food channel, you can get some information there, so also the internet or locally from other local bakers.

Low accessibility

The second core idea within the domain of Information accessibility of MSEs is low access to needed information. This core idea contains two categories of participants. There are those that reported one means of access to information while the other reported no access at all.

One source of access to information: This category represent the predominant method used by participants in accessing information among entrepreneurs (n=3). One of the participants described this situation by stating thus:

...well, for me I would say it is okay going on the internet, but for most of the people in this business they don't have any access, it is not everybody that knows how to source information online and it is not everybody that have access even though they have television and all those stuff, it is

not everybody that have access to things like workshop, the fashion shows... they don't even know what to look for in it.

No access: This category presents entrepreneurs (n=3) that have no access to business information. A participant had this to say:

This can hardly be measured because some entrepreneurs hardly know where to go for information.

Another participant who owns a mechanic workshop emphasised that:

The role of information is poor and this makes it impossible for people on this job to do the work in the new way. Few of us that are even aware of the information cannot afford the necessary tool needed for our work because of money. Some of us are still doing the work through the old method and we all know that things are changing, I pray that government will come to our aid in order to encourage the younger ones that are not ready to learn the job like us, they would say it is too strenuous, we beg government to come to our aid.

The lawyer has this to say about entrepreneurs access to business information:

.....this is one of the areas where government need to come in to assist the people. I may say that entrepreneurs have little or no access to information. There is not much on business information and the little available information concerning them are not even fully spread around; whether information on new business ideas, financing, among others, the accessibility rate is relatively low.

Influence of Information on MSEs Innovation and Development

Table 3: Summary of interview results on research objective three

S/N	Domain		Core Idea		Category	N	Frequency
III	Influence of information on MSEs innovation and development in Nigeria	A	Information influence MSEs	1	Meeting up with international best practices	4	Variant
				2	Creativity	7	Variant
				3	Service innovation	4	Variant
				4	No influence	1	Rare

Source: Authors, 2016.

Influence of information on MSEs innovation and development of in Nigeria: The analysis revealed three distinct ways through which information have influenced the entrepreneurship industry. These three are: (1) meeting up with international best practices(2) creativity(3) product innovation.

Meeting up with international best practices: The first category which is "meeting up with international best practices" (n=4) was variant in frequency and one of the major ways through which information has influence entrepreneurs in Nigeria. For instance, a participant expressed:

Yes it does, without information you would have remained where you are. We would have remained the old school. In fact, information is very important. Without it you will just realize that you are in a circle moving round, but with information you do not have any problem. You have sources of information locally, within bakers association or internationally through the internet. So without it, there wouldn't have been a standard to measure up with the international standard.

Creativity: The second category, creativity (n=7), was also in variant frequency. A participant in this category highlighted thus:

Well, information increases my creativity. This is because I now do things in different ways and see better ways of using better methods. Sometimes what I learn is different from what is been practiced. Sometimes you do something in one way and that may not even work in the way it's been taught on paper. When you now do it practically you find out that there are other ways of doing the same thing and getting better result and not just one way.

Another participant had this to say:

The influences are enormous. Medium and small scale enterprises are the engine room of a developing economy in Nigeria. Their impact has been greatly felt in some countries of the world and this was as a result of relevant information available to them and I feel this is encouraging. In Nigeria the economy will be better for it. People will no longer depend on the government for jobs. They will be creative and skilful enough to stand on their own when adequate information is available to the people through reliable and functional system. I mean when things are working perfectly, people will

manipulate it to their full advantage positively. We all know that innovation brings about development; government should encourage people in order to eradicate poverty and bring about good well being to the citizenry.

Service innovation: The third category within the domain of information influence affirmed that product innovation was one of the influence highly felt by entrepreneurs (n=4). For instance, the pesticide producer had this to say:

Definitely, information has really helped because when we started, we started little and later we developed to producing 500 litres, 1000 litres and even more per day. We got to know how to repackage our product to make it more attractive and to also improve the quality of the product. More customers began to patronize us and this led us to ensuring that we get our own land and that is the reason for enlarging the business.

No influence: The fourth and last category was a participant who expressed the negligible role of information on his job (n=1), thereby soliciting the help of the government in this regard. According to the participant who is an auto mechanic:

I would say I can't feel any impact of information but if government can come to our aid things will change concerning our work. Majority of us are use to old methods of doing things and we all know that things are changing every day, information on new techniques and methods of vehicle repairs should be made accessible and convenience for us to learn. Government should help us to gain more ideas and knowledge through training because apart from the old method of doing things on our work not many of us know the new method and if we can be trained, it will improve us and the way we are doing the job. It will also encourage the younger ones to learn the job instead of running away from learning the job, and this may even relieve the government of the problem of providing job.

Challenges facing MSEs in getting Information

Table 4: Summary of interview results on research objective four

S/N	Domain		Core Idea		Category	N	Frequency
IV	Challenges facing MSEs in getting Information	A	Personal issues	1	Financial constraint	4	Variant
				2	Inadequate training	1	Rare
				3	Hoarding of information	2	Variant
				4	Ignorance	1	Rare
		B	Government factor	1	Vehicular traffic and bad road situation	1	Rare
				2	Poor internet access	3	Variant
				3	Epileptic power supply	4	Variant

Source: Authors, 2016.

Challenges facing MSEs in getting Information

Personal Issues

Two core ideas emanated from 'challenges facing MSEs in getting information'. The ideas are categorised into: personal issues and government factor. The core idea, personal issues contains participants report on personal factors militating against MSEs. The analysis revealed four distinct personal challenges. These are: financial constraint, inadequate training, hoarding of information and ignorance.

Financial constraint

The first category, financial constraint (n=4), was variant in frequency and seemed a major challenge among entrepreneurs in Nigeria. For instance, a participant expressed that:

There is no business without challenge. To get this information sometimes require money. For example, if you want to log onto internet you have to make sure your phone is connected otherwise there is no way.

Inadequate training: The second category, inadequate training (n=1), was in a rare frequency. The participant in this category highlighted that:

We have many challenges some of which are finance, training, and lack of encouragement. We don't have the money to buy relieve tools, I mean modern tools that are being used for our work today. It is the old methods of vehicle repair that many of us are use to and we can see that some of our people that we are on the job together have improved on it due to awareness about new technology of detecting faults in vehicles. Like I said, some of us lack adequate training that can complement today's method of vehicle repairs and that is why it is only minor repairs we are able to do. We suppose to have gone far on the work if there is encouragement both to us and the younger ones.

Hoarding of information: The third category within the domain of personal factor facing entrepreneurs is hoarding of information (n=2). A participant described that:

There is hoarding of information concerning this business. What I mean is that whenever information concerning our business is available, it is usually hoarded making it difficult to be accessed by the majority of the people in this business. This has been a challenge and solution must be found to it. Take for instance; we heard about distribution of fertilizers to farmers during Jonathan era only few got to know about it. This is bad and something must be done to it.

Ignorance: The last category was ignorance (n=1). A participant expressed that:

One and most importantly, ignorance is a major problem. Some people don't know the importance of going online to get information, some don't even know that they can get relevant information on the internet and some don't even know how to use it.

Government factor

The second core idea which is government factor contains participants view on some basic infrastructures that have constituted a clog in the wheel of information progress of entrepreneurs. Three distinct factors were identified. They include: vehicular traffic and bad road situation, poor internet access and epileptic power supply.

Vehicular traffic and bad road situation: The first category which is vehicular traffic and bad road situation in the country(n=1), was rare in frequency and emerged as one of the challenges facing entrepreneurs in Nigeria. For instance, a participant expressed:

...sometimes you have to move from one place to another. Take for instance, I called the person who taught me how to make cake to solicit for guidance on a challenge on a particular cake design and she asks me to come to her place at Ikorodu. Even when you have the transport fare, traffic jam and bad road challenges may be an obstacle in obtaining the information as at when due.

Poor internet access: The second category, poor internet access(n=3), was in variant frequency and a major challenge. A participant in this category highlighted that:

There is inadequate access to internet concerning this business.

Another participant expressed that:

.....most of the times when you want to go online to check for information about your business; there may not be connection to the net.

Epileptic power supply: The third category within the domain of government factor is epileptic power supply. It was also found to be a major constraint facing entrepreneurs as revealed by the interviewees (n=4). Participants described that.

People can get information from TV and even internet but most time there is no electricity to access it. Electricity is a major problem to medium scale businesses. Apart from that, some of our work entails the use of electricity but when there is no light, you cannot do much and you will not be able to meet up with customers demand. Electricity in Nigeria is a big challenge.

Discussion

This study explored the role of information provision for innovation and development of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises. In the course of this study, findings revealed the major sources of information available to micro and small scale entrepreneurs. These sources though

categorised into non social media and social media channels fall under the following themes: mentorship, seminar, television, fashion shows, newspaper, apprenticeship, textbook and internet. This should not come as a surprise. We are in information age and as expressed by Dzidonu (2002), in an era of globalization accompanied by rapid technology change, a country's competitiveness and relevance in the global economy is increasingly determined by its capacity to effectively source for and use information for design, production and marketing. What was deduced from the interviewees is that MSEs source for business information from their mentors and even fellow businessmen whenever there is need for it. It could be information on how to carry out a particular task or a new technique of doing things. This is in agreement with Okello-Obura and Matovu (2011) which affirmed that entrepreneurs are more likely to value - and use - information that comes from someone close to them who has a track record of practical credibility.

This study also established the fact that sometimes relevant information is gotten from television programs, attending professional seminars, searching through the pages of newspapers, attending fashion shows and even from textbooks. The implication of this is that the more the sources of information available to entrepreneurs, the better informed they become and the more insightful they get to develop and expand their business scope.

However, availability of information is not the same as accessibility. Availability of information is one thing, access and use of the available resources is another (Ogbuiyi&Okpe, 2013 In Ezike, 2015). Information may be available and yet remain inaccessible for use. Where access to information is concerned, where and how the information is provided is of great importance.

The above assertion prompted the researchers to further explore the rate at which MSEs access business information; and it was established that while some entrepreneurs have access to various sources of information relevant to their businesses, some are not so lucky. Though it is evident that to an appreciable degree, MSEs have access to business information, even so, the challenge of lack of access to information as expressed by some of them cannot be wished away. Socio economic and political factors such as finance, ignorance, erratic power supply, hoarding of information and inadequate training have constituted obstacles to MSEs access and use of business information. Others include poor or lack of internet connectivity, vehicular traffic and bad road situation.

Nonetheless, information provision has tremendously influenced MSEs in the area of innovation and development. It is obvious from the study that in the area of measuring up with international best practices, creativity in service delivery and new innovations in product packaging, MSEs have experienced some positive turn around. This finding has further buttressed Casson's economic theory which holds that access to information about market condition is one of the variables of entrepreneurship (Kamau & Ngugi, 2014).

Conclusion

This study explored the role played by information in business development and innovation of micro and small scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria. This is because the state of MSEs in Nigeria has been of great concern to the government, citizenry, operators, practitioners and organized private sectors, in that MSEs have not performed creditably well and they have not played expected significant role in economic growth. Four objectives that guided the study focused on MSEs major sources of business information, information accessibility, influence of information on MSEs innovation and development and challenges encountered. It is evident that diverse sources of information are available to MSEs. Apart from that, accessing relevant business information is no problem for many of them. As a result of this, their businesses have witnessed tremendous change especially in the areas of product innovation, creativity, as well as meeting up with international best practices. This has led to business expansion for MSEs in Nigeria. However, every industry has its unique challenges and MSEs are not exempted from this. Some socio economic and political factors still serve as impediments to accessing required information as at when needed. Conclusively, this study has succeeded in bringing to the fore the role of information to MSEs in charting national progress. It is obvious that MSEs can be a vital source of generating employment thereby reducing poverty rate in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In view of the ongoing, it is therefore recommended that:

- * Stakeholders should create more awareness on how MSEs can get business information relevant to their needs. Libraries especially the public library should organise enlightenment programmes that would bring together MSEs in their communities. This would help to broaden their business knowledge about where, how and when to access information for improved business performance.

- * Also, MSEs should take deliberate and conscious actions in leveraging on information technology. We are in the digital age and there is hardly anything one wants to do that technology cannot be applied. Where knowledge and skills acquisition are concerned, the internet is a perfect partner. In addition to other sources of information in use by MSEs, socio media outlets such as Facebook, tweeter, Instagram, 2go, Whatsapp and others should be embraced in learning, publicising and improving their businesses.
- * Since the study has established that information has substantial influence on MSEs innovation and development, it is advised that MSEs take more time to acquire relevant information by attending entrepreneurial seminars and conferences in order to improve their information acquisition skills and infusing what they have learnt into their businesses for upside leverage.
- * Relevant trainings and shows on various areas of MSEs should be organised by stakeholders such as the government, non governmental organisations (NGOs) and PPS. Such trainings and shows should be given mass publicity, if possible in various dialects so that the non literates could benefit from it. Also, information resources bearing information that bothers on MSEs should be translated into the various languages so that all and sundry would benefit from it.
- * Federal government should make efforts in providing stable electricity in the nation. It is a known fact that without electricity, not much could be achieved. Accessing information through electronic media (like the internet), radio and television will be almost impossible without electricity. Performing some business task may also be hindered if there is no power supply.
- * Lastly, MSEs should be encouraged in the area of finance. Credit facilities should be provided to MSEs. Aside this, conditions attached to getting it should not be too stringent for the beneficiaries.

It is believed that the if these measures are put in place, not only would MSEs experience a turn around on individual bases but the nation at large would witness mass employment, poverty alleviation, and economic development.

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