

Information Needs And Seeking Behaviour Of Commercial Vehicle Drivers In Okigwe Urban, Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Information is a signal that stimulates human experiences and ideas from one person to another. It is a basic resource used by members of the society to improve their conditions of living which is essential for human development. The study was carried out to determine the information needs and seeking behaviour of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban, Imo state, Nigeria. The study was guided by three objectives of the study. A correlational research design was employed for the study. A total of 876 respondents, out of the number, a sample size of 266 was drawn using the Taro Yamane formular for sample size which spread across the major four motor parks in Okigwe urban in Okigwe local government area in Imo state, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend among others that the various governments in Imo state should provide information centres where information will be provided for commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe to enable them to perform their duties effectively. Also, the road safety services in Okigwe urban should provide information on road signs and traffic information that will help them in their transport services.

Keywords: *Information Needs, Seeking Behaviour, Commercial Drivers.*

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I. Introduction

Information has been defined variously by different scholars in different terms, particularly in this era of “Information Age”. Information has become the most important element or resource for progress in the society. Ugocha (2025) defines information as a signal that stimulates human experiences and ideas from one person to another. It could be an accumulation of knowledge by human beings in all areas of endeavor that is used to solve problems and reduce uncertainty. Information is an important resource for individual growth and survival. The progress of modern societies, as well as individuals such as commercial drivers depends to a great extent on the provision of the kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information according to Davis (2024) is viewed as a basic resource used by all people to improve their condition of living and is essential for development.

Information is essential and useful to everyone in the society, because information is a vital resource for development in our fast-growing world. It lifts an individual from a state of ignorance, illiteracy and poverty to a state of enlightenment, prosperity and literacy. Information is central to the teaching and learning process and reduces or eliminates uncertainty, its absence means policy mistakes, educational disparities, slower productivity and growth as it affects the quantity, success and effectiveness of public policy.

Information need is the motivation people think and feel to seek information. Information need traditionally denotes the state for someone seeking information. This involves all sorts of information seeking (purposive information behavior) and the broader aspect of human information behavior. Taylor (2025) views information need as a personal and unconscious conditions. He articulates four levels of information needs that an individual pass through before he or she makes formal encounters with an information professional. These levels are visceral need, conscious need, formalized need and compromised need. Information need is an individual or group desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious need or unconscious need.

Thompson (2024) conceptualizes need as a discoverable matter of fact. He further asserts that needs are objective in the sense that they are what one must look for to support his or her profession. Needs are a matter of priority, what we need is overriding reason. Information needs could be seen as demand (requirement) and want (desire). Needs arise when the state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issues, and

that information need are diverse, consistently changing and not amenable to generalization. The use of information vary among individuals, groups and society.

According to Kirts (2024), information need is the recognition of the existence of uncertainty in decision making. Information need also refers to the extent to which information is required to solve problems as well as the degree of expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the information.

Wilson (2024) contends 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 Problematique

Transportation and mobility are vital elements in the growth and development of any society. No society can develop without transportation of its human and infrastructural facilities in the society. Information provision and utilization to this group of individuals is vital and essential. These commercial drivers in Okigwe needs timely and adequate information to perform their work efficiently and effectively. Without any doubt, the information needs of this target group have been grossly neglected in Nigeria. It is even alleged that most commercial drivers in Okigwe urban, Imo state Nigeria do not know how best to satisfy their information needs. To this end, individual commercial bus drivers exhibit different behavior in satisfying their information needs. It could be as a result of the absence of information centres that cater for the information needs of this category of persons. This situation is worsened by the almost non-availability of any empirical study on the information needs and seeking behavior of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban, Imo state, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this research intends to investigate empirically the information needs and seeking behavior of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban in Imo state, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the information seeking needs and seeking behavior of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban, Imo state, Nigeria.

Specifically, the objectives are;

- i) To identify the information needs of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe Urban.
- ii) To determine the sources of information used by commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe Urban.
- iii) To find out the problems affecting the satisfaction of information needs of commercial vehicle drivers in the area studied.

II. Literature Review

The term information need is often understood as an individual or group's desire to locate or obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. Rarely mentioned in general literature about needs, it is a common term in information science. Crawford (2024) argues that information need is very difficult to define and measure, but it involves cognitive process which may operate at different levels of consciousness and hence may not be clear even not the inquirer himself.

Yeall (2024) opines that as a discoverable matter of fact, information needs are objectives in the sense that they are what one must look for to support his or her profession. Needs are a matter of priority, what we need which overrides reason. Information needs could be seen as demand (requirement) and want (desire). Wilson (2023) opines 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 users.

Commercial drivers according to Ugamala (2023) needs adequate information on certain road signs and also needs information on their security on the road. Drivers will have to watch to ensure safety on the road. Therefore, there is a great need for information that will enable them to cope with their job.

III. Methodology And Materials

A survey research design was used to select the number of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban in Imo state, Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique is appropriate to this study in the sense that the researchers used purposive sampling to select the number of commercial vehicle drivers in the area studied in order to save cost, energy and time due to security challenges facing the terrain which enables the researchers to easily access and collect the needed data from the respondents studied.

The study has a population of 879 respondents. Out of the number, a sample size of 266 was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula of sample size which spread across the major four motor parks in Okiwe urban in Okigwe local government area in Imo state, Nigeria. The motor parks are Aba park, Okigwe old motor park,

Enugu park Okigwe and Umunneochi park Okigwe. In each of the four motor parks, a convenient sample technique was used to collect data. This method is appropriate to this study because it helped the researchers to collect data from any commercial drivers within the field that gave consent to be part of the respondents for the study.

The instrument for this study was a self-developed questionnaire named Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Commercial Vehicle Drivers in Okigwe Urban in Imo State, Nigeria.

The data collected were analyzed using Linear Regression Analysis for thorough analysis. 266 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, while 251 copies were retrieved and used for further analysis.

IV. Results And Discussion

A total of 266 copies of the questionnaires were administered to the respondents comprising the commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe Urban in Imo state, Nigeria. The drivers are heterogenous in nature and most of them are indigenes of Okigwe communities and some are retired civil servants from the communities in Okigwe local government in Imo state, Nigeria. Out of the 266 copies of the questionnaire administered, 238 were filled and returned, thus amounting to 85% response rate.

Table 1: Summary of the Linear Regression Analysis on the Information Needs of Commercial Vehicle Drivers in Okigwe Urban

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	0.14a	0.18	0.16	204	Positive

Predictor: (Constant), Information Needs

Data presented on Table 1 show the summary of linear regression analysis for the factors responsible for information needs of commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe Urban. The analysis show that the correlation (r) between the predictor variable (information needs) and the criterion variable (commercial drivers in Okigwe urban) is 0.14a. The r of the analysis being 0.18 implies that a positive relationship exists between information needs and commercial drivers' activities in Okigwe urban, showing satisfaction of information needs such as fuel prices, traffic information, road safety signs among others.

Therefore, the implication of this correlation shows that government of Imo state and Okigwe local governments should have channels through which these information should be provided to commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban in order to ensure effective commercial drivers services in Okigwe Urban in Imo state.

Table 2: Summary of the Linear Regression Analysis on the Sources of Information Available to Commercial Vehicle Drivers in Okigwe Urban

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	0.23	0.51	.39	2.19	Positive

Predictor: (Constant), Sources of Information

Information presented on Table 2 show the summary of linear regression analysis for the relationship between sources of information and its use by commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban. The analysis show that the correlation (r) of the analysis being 0.23 implies that a positive relationship exists between sources of information of commercial vehicle drivers and their commercial driving activities in Okigwe urban. This positive relationship reveal that the most affected sources of information available to commercial drivers in Okigwe urban are local radio station, public library, road safety and local government public relation officer amongst others.

Table 3: Summary of the Linear Regression Analysis on the Problems of Satisfaction of Information Needs of Commercial Vehicle Drivers in Okigwe Urban

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Decision
1	0.31a	.041	.40	3.15	Positive

Predictor: (Constant), Challenges/Problems

Table 3 show the summary of linear regression analysis for the relationship between challenges or problems faced by commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban. The analysis show that the correlation (r) between the predictor variable (problems) and satisfaction of information needs is 0.31a. This positive relationship revealed that these commercial drivers have challenges in trying to satisfy their information needs,

but the challenges can be solved through the activities of public libraries and government agencies through adequate provision of information to commercial vehicle drivers in Okigwe urban.

V. Summary Of Findings

Based on the three research objectives posed to guide the study, the following were stated as the summary of findings:

1. The findings of the study revealed that commercial drivers in Okigwe urban needs information for their job.
2. The findings of the study also revealed that there are information centers and institutions where these commercial drivers go to satisfy their information needs, such as public library in the local government, road safety library amongst others.
3. The findings of the study revealed that in trying to satisfy their information needs, these drivers encounter different challenges such as current information materials on transportation, the negative attitude of librarians manning the public library among other challenges too numerous to mention.

Contribution

This study provides empirical evidence for understanding the information needs and seeking behavior of commercial drivers in Okigwe urban. Though studies abound on the topic of the study, geographically to the knowledge of the researcher, none of them is on the information needs of commercial drivers in Okigwe urban in Imo state, Nigeria. This is the gap which this research has filled in knowledge.

VI. Conclusion And Recommendations

From the result of the study, it can be concluded that commercial drivers in Okigwe urban and Imo state in Nigeria in general needs information on transportation business that will help them to render efficient transport services to the public in Imo state, Nigeria.

The paper therefore recommends that government and institutional libraries in Okigwe urban and Imo state in general should acquire in their holdings information materials that will gear towards providing information for commercial drivers in Okigwe urban. Secondly, the road safety in Okigwe urban should be organizing workshop and conferences for commercial drivers so as to give them current information on road signs and other traffic information that will help them in their job.

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