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INFORMATION NEEDS OF BANKERS IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF ZENITH BANK PLC IN BENIN, EDO STATE

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Abstract
The need for information has become a critical business resource because its absence could result in poor decisions and ultimately business failure. This research examines the information needs of the Nigerian Banking Industry with specific reference to information needs of Zenith Bank staff of Benin environs of Edo State. The researcher adopted three research questions such as; what are the information needs of the Zenith Bank Staff, what are the sources of information needs of the staff, and what are the challenges associated with information needs of the staff. Judgmental sampling method was used to obtain a representative sample of 85 out of a population of 106 representing (80.2%) of the total distribution. It is observed that accessibility to information can improve banks performance by reducing operational cost and by facilitating transactions among customers within the same or different network. The findings discovered that the status of the bankers, the cashiers and the bulk teller's constitute the highest number in the staff list.The various information needs include social information needs, personal information needs and health information needs etc. Bankers' required professional information for effective service delivery, the commonly identified sources are through friends, customers of the bank, conventional postage, global system and fax machines. The researcher concluded that despite the importance of information, there are lack of consistent and affordable electricity, computing infrastructure for effective banking service, bank informatics, lack of affordable connectivity and bandwidth. The researchers recommended that for Zenith bank staff to meet their various information needs they ought to established

information centers or libraries in their various branches of the banks to provide readymade professional banking information such as selective dissemination of information (SDI) and facilities such as affordable network connectivity, power supply, professional journals, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, reference materials, dictionaries etc., for effective information delivery.

Keywords: Zenith Bank, Information Needs, Information Retrieval, Information Access Tasks.

Introduction

Information is an indisputable fact that no society can exist without valuable and relevant information, information play a vital role in the development of business entrepreneurship, indeed information is very essential in growth of business organization. Benjamin Disbranch, a onetime British prime minister, once said "As a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man with the best information. "The knowledge explosion which started at the 21st century (digital age) has made information so unique and readily accessible for users 'without any restriction'. Mishne, (2011).

The need of relevant and precise information by sector of any society cannot be over emphasized. The importance of information as stated by Stonier (2012) opine information as the most important factors in modern production system as opposed to land, labour and capital because if one possessed enough information one could reduce the requirement of land, labour and capital. Hence the need to investigate and identify the information need of bankers of Zenith bank staff of Benin and its environs.

Statement of the Problem

Information became relevant when it's received at a right time, at a right format, at right channel and at right environment, banking operation can be successfully carried-out when the necessary information for job operation is provided. Despite the importance of information, there are drawbacks that hinder the flow of information to aid easy access to banking information, some of which are, lack of consistent and affordable electricity, lack of computing infrastructure for effective banking service, bank informatics, lack of affordable connectivity and bandwidth are some of the obstacle to the promising commercial industries others are banking application, network problems or connectivity challenges always affects information transaction and services in banking sector.

Objectives of the Study

This study is purposely designed to achieve the following objectives.

1. To determine the information need of Zenith Bank staff
2. To discover the sources of information needs of the staff.
3. To find out the challenges associated with information needs of the staff.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study.

1. What are the information needs of the Zenith Bank Staff?
2. What are the sources of information needs of the staff?
3. What are the challenges associated with information needs of the staff?

Review of Related Literature

Information needs of bank staff according to Lewix, (2010) has to do with identifying the desire or wish for information that is required, i.e. it is a desire to have information on financial transaction; it is indeed basically wants or wish for information that would enable the bank staff to perform their task more efficiently and effectively day to day activities. Information needs of bank staff is one of the valuable assets in financial institution most especially in the banking sectors, so as to achieve desired result and profit, it requires information systems to meet their information needs. Information needs of bank staff which deals with the profit organization / Limited liability companies and its target customers, perhaps the bank staff need to improve on their services in a systematic way. The trends of technologies and ICTs gadget in digital age facilitate access to information transaction electronically save the time of the entire customers rather than the manual operation systems.

Products and Services Offered by Zenith Bank Plc of Edo State

The bank has different categories of products services which are readily accessible to all customers across the globe such as,the traditional products comprises of personal account, business accounts, corporate accounts, time deposits, the corporate banking products comprise of the loan and overdraft/guaranteed bond, bankers acceptances, commercial papers, project finance syndication, equipment leasing bill, stallion tenor bills etc.

International Banking Products and Services; are sales and exchange of travelers' cheque and foreign money, letters of credit, foreign domiciliary account, bills discounting, opening of off-shore accounts, international money transfer, bureau de change services. Abdullahi, (2001).

E-Banking Products; are internet banking systems and services, alerting

services / GSM banking, mobile banking system, automated teller machines, e-business service, value card, staff salary / contractor payment, revenue collections systems, western union (money transfer), POS, POS FAQS, Zenith web Pay. Zenith Bank of Edo state, is committed to implementation of the corporate governance best practice banking system and it provide efficient services to their customers, and to this it has set up bodies to ensure interiority, credibility and accountability and transparency.

Information Sources of Zenith Bank (Staff)

According to Mishne, (2011) information sources generated by Zenith Bank Staff can be classified into oral information sources or printed information, such as electronic information, Internet where the bank staff obtained relevant information that is readily available and accessible online, Television/ Radio through which they receive information and dissemination same to the general public, The bank acquired information through mass media, this medium enable the staff to promote their services. Information is also receive through newspapers such as daily trust, vanguard, daily times, daily sun, etc., which are some of the sources use by the bank staff.

Challenges of Information Access

The challenges of information access in the 21st century has great influence on the media and change the way individuals communicate and share knowledge. Stone, (2001) opine that Blogs receive a lot of attention in commercial contexts; on top of that, there is flurry of academic research concerning them. In a particular computational approach, approaches to blogs analysis where traditional and new information access techniques are applied to blogs form an increasingly active field.

In an information rich environment such as the blog space, tools providing intelligent access are particularly important. Search engine specializing in blogs, such as technocrat; blog pulse, or sphere are three dimensional space lying the same distance (the radius) that provide simple interface offered for blog search by traditional web search engines such as Google or Yahoo; the blog search engines claim that their users are particularly interested in added value whereby large body of information access task could be addressed in the context of blogs.

According to Lewix,, (2010) google search has changed the way people access the internet in last decades, and the blog space is no exception; but while google search are becoming mature, blog search is in its infancy. The consistent lack of Power challengesand unaffordable electricity is the single greatest

challenging computing infrastructure for effective banking service, bank informatics (or any other application that matter). The vast majority of bank facilities in remote access worldwide, indeed parts of the developing world have no main power and where available, such power is usually extremely unreliable or so unstable that electronic resources poses a threat. Nevertheless bank must have their electrical power, or diesel generators as the most common source of generating light. But increasing fuel cost and ongoing maintenance problems mean that generators are seldom run for more than few hours a day (often only during banking transactions that require power equipment / supply) and are prone to abrupt and unannounced failure.

Lack of affordable connectivity and bandwidth according to Raghava, (2004) is another primary obstacle to the most promising commercial industries such as banking application, network problems or connectivity challenges always affecting information transaction and services in Zenith banking sector of the state. Lack of connectivity also complicates more basic efforts to collect, store, analyze, and disseminate bank information. For instance managing electronic records for transmission of customers' information require some means of accessing customers' information from multiple location which becomes a difficult task due to problems of connectivity and bandwidth.

Adar and Zhag (2004), opines that blogs are a relatively new rich source of information on the worldwide-web. Since blogs are reflections of individuals, they possess a number of unique characteristics differentiating them from other web content: informal, subjective language, complex human like community structure; and dynamic temporal properties. The key challenges is the blogs space, presents in terms of information access on how to exploit these intrinsic properties to enhance existing methods for accessing blogs as well as develop new ones.

Mishne, (2005) Adversarial information retrieval in the web at www. Argue the fact that most of blogs search engines currently offers two ways to sorts search results: by date and by "Popularity". Date based sort (latest first is the more common one, and in most cases the default ranking. Popularity ranking is achieved by associating a prestige value with each blog statically for example by using its link in degree in the early days of the blog space, this was sufficient: searchers wanted to see all results and were particularly interested in recent ones.

Mishne (2011), reported that; according to the 1st workshop on stylistic analysis of text for information access, there must be a large body of information access tasks to address in the content blogs. Some of these involve applying known methods to the new domain (for example, sentiment analysis), other are more specialized towards blogging (i.e. blog visualization and mapping) in this section

we survey these tasks, grouping them by top level domain, and discuss their relation to the properties of blogs outlined earlier.

Raghavan (2002), in his opinion sees the amount of information in blogs increase, better ranging mechanism, resembling those use in web search engines, to be needed: searchers can be no longer examine all results, and are interested in the most relevant information on web. The blog retrieval task which will; be evaluated at TREC is likely to give this field a substantial push.

Methodology

Surveymethodswasusedtosurveythepopulationtoproduceaccuratereports. Theadvantageisthatresearcherscanexaminethebehaviorandopinionsofresponden ts,providingthemwithdirectinformationaboutthebehaviorsbeingevaluated.Ques tionnaire is the data collection tools. A total of 106 employees of Zenith Bank Benin environs was investigated. 106questionnaires were distributed and 85 questionnaires were received. This corresponds to (80.2%).The method chosen for data analysis was percentage (%) and the comparison method with the questions answered was used to sort using comparative method to answered questions and interpreting the statement accordingly.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A total of 106 questionnaires was distributed out of which 85 were filled and returned representing (80.2%) of the total distribution.

Categories of Bankers in Zenith Bank

Table 1: Zenith Bank Staff Categories

Topic Management	**Branch Head –Head of Operation**	**e.g. Bank executive bank Manager**
Middle Management	Auditors markets and operations staff	e.g. accountant supervisor
Lower Management	Tellers or cashiers	Front tellers bulk tellers

Table 1 shows that the top management comprises of the branch head, head of operations which are also known as bank executive and bank manager. Middle management are the auditors which also comprises the accountant and supervisor. While Lower Management includes the Cashiers which consist of

Front Tellers and Bulk Tellers.

Response Rate

Table 2: Distribution and Returns of Questionnaires

Bankers	Distribution	Returned	%
Bank Executives	1	1	1.2%
Managers	13	13	15.3%
Accountants	16	14	16.5%
Supervisor	31	26	30.6%
Others	45	31	36.5%
Total	**106**	**85**	**100%**

Table 2 shows the distribution and return of the questionnaire. It also shows the status of the bankers, the cashiers had the majority of the distribution since they constitute the highest number in the staff list. They had 106 of the total distribution and 85 (80.2%) responded. some could not respond due to best reasons known to them. In numerical terms, the supervisor ranked after the cashiers, they had distribution of 31 and their response was also encouraging as 26 (30.6%) of the total returns were for supervisors. Those who failed to respond place the blame on their work load. It was obvious that, the 13 Zenith banks branches, gives 13 managers and 16 Accountants. It is quite encouraging that they all responded with their managers and accountants each making 13 (15.3%) and 14 (16.5%) of the total returns. Regardless of the intricacies experienced in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires a total of 85 (80.2%) of the total distribution was return for analysis.

Type of Information Needed

Since all the respondents need information table 3 center on the type of information, the banker need, consequently these are given below:

Table 3: Information Needed

	Bank Executive	Manager	Accountants	Supervisors	Others	Total
Professional information	1 (1.14%)	7 (7.95%)	10 (11.36%)	21 (23.86%)	15 (17.05%)	54 (61.36%)
Entertainment information	0 (0%)	3 (3.41%)	2 (2.27%)	2 (2.27%)	7 (7.55%)	14 (15.90%)
Current affairs, politics information	0 (0%)	6 (6.82%)	4 (4.55%)	2 (2.27%)	2 (2.27%)	14 (15.90%)
General information	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.4%)	0 0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (3.41%)

From table 3, it is crystal clear that 54 (61.36%) of the respondents needed professional information to keep abreast with the development with professional work. It was also observed that 14 (15.90%) of the respondents both need entertainment information and current affairs and 4 (3.41%) needed general information, the low report of general information shows that most bankers really don't have time for social, health and other relevant personal information due to the nature of their job.

Table 4: Resources Available in Zenith Bank Information Center

	Bank executive	Manager	Accountants	Supervisors	Others	Total
Text Books	0 (0.00%)	6 (6.82%)	2 (2.27%)	1 (1.14%)	5 (5.68%)	14 (15.90%)
Professional Journal	0 (0.00%)	7 (7.95%)	8 (9.09%)	25 (28.41%)	25 (28.41%)	65 (73.86%)
Reference Materials	0. (0.00%)	0. (0.00%)	2 (3.41%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (2.27%)	4 (4.55%)
Computers	0 (0.00%)	5 (5.68%)	2 (2.27%)	1 (1.14%)	2 (2.27%)	10 (11.36%)
Others Means	1 (1.14%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.14%)

Table 4, professional journals ranked first with 65 (73.80%), it shows that majority needed professional literature in order to keep abreast with the development in their profession. Textbook materials came second with a total respondents of 14 (15.90%), 10 (11.36%) need computer, 4 (4.55%) request for reference materials and only 1 (1.14%) saw the need to have dictionary in their collection of materials to the branch libraries.

Table: 5 Sources of Information Needs

	Bank executive	**Manager**	**Accountants**	**Supervisors**	**Others**	**Total**
Library	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.14%)	5 (5.68%)	0 (0%)	6 (6.82%)
Internet	1 (1.14%)	8 (9.09%)	10 (11.36%)	24 (27.28%)	22 (25.00%)	65 (73.87%)
Discussion with information professional	0 (0%)	2 (2.27%)	2 (2.27%)	3 (3.14%)	7 (7.95%)	14 (15.90%)
Others	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (4.55%)

Those who got their information through the internet scored the highest with 65 (73.87%) while those who obtained their information through discussion with information professionals ranked second with 14 (15.90%) and the response of 6 (6.82%) was recorded for library. With the above result we can see that internet agencies are affordable and can be reached from every part of the world. The internet is mostly used by bankers to source for information, their information is transient and intended for general consumption. Information gotten from information professionals are also valued because banking is a service and public oriented, the respondents also gets information through information professionals.

Table 6: Challenges of meeting the Information Needs of Zenith Bank Staff

	Bank executive	Manager	Accountants	Supervisors	Others	Total
Network Problems	1 (1.14%)	5 (5.68%)	7 (7.95%)	11 (12.50%)	11 (12.50%)	35 (39.77%)
Bandwidth Problems	0 (0%)	8 (9.09%)	5 (5.68%)	13 (14.77%)	12 (13.64%)	38 (41.18%)
Others	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.55%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.14%)	2 (2.27%)	7 (7.95%)

The analysis stresses the challenges of meting information needs of bankers, 38 (41.18%) which ranked the highest opine bandwidth problems, 35 (39.77%) posit Network fluctuation as a hindrance, 11(12.50%) and 11(12.50%) are of the opinion that network is the problem while 7 (7.95%) express that Zenith Staff were the problem themselves.

Table 7: Information service rendered by Bankers

	Bank executive	Manager	Accountants	Supervisors	Others	Total
Normal cash deposit	0 (0.00%)	3 (3.41%)	1 (1.14%)	1 (1.14%)	12 (13.64%)	17 (19.32%)
Safe keeping of valuables	0 (0.00%)	1 (1.14%)	4 (4.55%)	7 (7.95%)	9 (10.23%)	21 (23.86%)
Local & international money transfer	0. (0.00%)	2 (2.27%)	1 (1.14%)	12 (13.64%)	0 (0.00%)	15 (17.05%)
Payment of salaries	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (2.27%)	5 (5.68%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (7.95%)
Others: all of the above	1 (1.14%)	10 (11.36%)	7 (7.95%)	15 (17.05%)	15 (17.05%)	37 (42.05%)

Table 7; enumerates the information services rendered by the respondents. It indicates that those who perform other functions including the ones listed have the highest number which is 37 (42.05%), safe keeping of valuables has 21 (23.86%), cash deposit has 17 (19.32%), local and international money transfer has 15 (17.05%) and Payment of salaries has only 7 (7.95%). It was however observed that there are other services rendered by the bank such as; Television / radio: **-** the bank render such services to customers who are waiting on the queue or waiting to be serviced by the staff of the bank. This will keep them abreast with information

such as breaking news, recent happening etc. Receptionist: **-** the function of the receptionist as part of the services rendered by the bank is to attend to the enquiries of the coming customer as far as he / she is informed and also direct customers to relevant offices for further assistance. Notice board:- the notice board is used to disseminate information to customers coming into the bank such information are exchange rates, interest rates, latest updates etc. This helps the customers to be informed and also reduced the turnaround time of enquiries from the bank. Bulletins / newsletter: - this is also another form of service rendered by the bank where information are spread just by print; like flyers or magazines which are distributed to the staffs and customers of the bank. Other services are archivist, information officers/Librarians etc.

Findings

From the summary of the findings of the data analyzed in the research, it was discovered that the status of the bankers, the cashiers and the bulk teller's had majority of the distribution, they constitute the highest number in the staff list of 31 (35.23%).

1. The various information needs include social information needs, personal information needs and health information needs etc. those who have free time use it in various ways including discussion with friends, leisure reading, professional reading, listening to music etc.
2. The type of information required by bankers' is their professional work journal presenting 54 (61.36%) responses this just to be current and updated in their professional work which presented 62 (70.44%) responses. Bankers get their information needs through oral, printed and eclectic sources; the information stressed vividly that 38 (41.18%) get information mostly in printed sources while the channels for information dissemination are identified through friends, conventional postage, global system and fax machines. Fax machine was rated the highest for easy retrieval presenting 43(48.86%) while service provided by bankers are normal cash deposit, safe keeping of valuables, local and international money transfer and payment of salaries
3. The sources of information is professional journals with 65 (73.80%), this was followed by textbook materials with total respondents of 14 (15.90%), and computer with 10 (11.36%).
4. Some of the challenges were lack of low bandwidth, 38 (41.18%) expresses, 35(39.77%) blamed it on network while 7(7.95%) express that Zenith bank Staff were the problem themselves.

Conclusion

Despite the importance of information, there are drawbacks that hinder the flow of information to aid easy access to banking information, some of which are, lack of consistent and affordable electricity, computing infrastructure for effective banking service, bank informatics, lack of affordable connectivity and bandwidth are some of the obstacle while challenges always affects information transaction and services in banking sector couple with lack of connectivity which complicates more basic efforts such as to collect, store, analyze, and disseminate bank information.

Way Forward

To enable the bankers of Zenith Bank Benin meet various information needs as discovered in the research, the need to established information centers or libraries in the branches of the banks becomes paramount with professionals' librarian employed to provide readymade professional banking information such as:

1. Recruiting well skilled and professionals in handling information sources and resources for easy accessibility to save time of the customer,
2. Provision of a standard power supply systems and cooling systems (air conditioner) a conducive business place for their customer.
3. Provision of affordable network connectivity to facilitate access to information globally.
4. Adopt mutual understanding of customers' enquiry and suggestion about their information services delivery and monitor their ways / techniques of consulting information resources.
5. Adopt selective dissemination of information (SDI) to their customers and enhance remote access information delivery and support standard computing hardware / software and other ICTs facilities for use to reduce cost.
6. The Information center/libraries should be established to comprise all necessary information materials, e.g. professional journals, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, reference materials, dictionaries
7. The libraries or information centers should be established and automated on the onset to prevent future troubles of conversion of information to machine readable format
8. Because of the dynamic nature of ICT couple with innovations workshops and seminars should be provided to information managers, occasionally for effective services

The increasing diversity of customers and increasing brand network of banks necessitate the bank staff of Zenith bank Benin, Edo state to involves systems that would ensure not only speedy access to information resources, but to allow business extend to remote areas, for access banking information used and dissemination.

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