

Business Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Tie and Dye Small and Medium Scale Entrepreneurs (SMSEs)

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Abstract

This study investigates the business information needs and seeking behaviour of tie and dye SMSEs in Ilala and Kinondoni Districts in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It comprised a sample of 50 respondents who were largely 41(82%) females and only 9(18%) males. It used a cross-sectional design for both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The data were collected by using structured questionnaires, and face –to –face interviews. The ones collected through questionnaires were summarised and analysed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel Spread sheet. Data from the in-depth interview were analysed using content analysis. The key findings of the study indicate that: firstly tie and dye SMSE members prefer to seek information through radios, printed materials, television, mobile and landline phones, friends, relatives, neighbours, business leaders, and by consulting the experienced SMSEs so as to share information. Secondly, the mostly needed tie and dye information includes market situation, credit availability from financial institutions, information on business risks, sources of raw materials, and information on external market opportunities. Thirdly, the study identified challenges facing the tie and dye SMSEs in seeking for information. The challenges were: excessive cost of accessing information, format and language problems, lack of knowledge and skills on how to seek information and inaccessible information sources such as libraries and information centers. The study recommends the presence of accessible libraries and information centers containing relevant and simple information materials written in well understood languages on tie and dye business.

Key Words: Information needs, information seeking behaviour, tie and dye, small and medium scale entrepreneurs.

1.0 Introduction

Tie and Dye is an important economic activity for some Tanzanians. First and foremost it contributes to the national income and secondly it creates employment for Tanzanian SMSEs and particularly for women. Studies conducted in developing countries by (Chiware and Arched, 2008; Ikoja-Odongo and Ochalla, 2004; Mead and Liedholm, 1998; Rasheli and Mosha, 2005), to mention a few shows that tie and dye create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and alleviate poverty among vulnerable groups in the society. In addition, tie and dye promotes a country culture and also is a source of markets for raw materials such as cotton and dying stuffs. Likewise, improvement in this business will facilitate poverty reduction strategies and hence improve people's livelihoods in Tanzania.

In order to improve tie and dye business, SMSEs need information (Rasheli and Mosha, (2005). This means that information is a critical resource for socio-economic development because it empowers people to use informed choices for attaining better livelihoods. Olorunda and Oyelude (2003) add that, information is essential for planning, decision making, and the execution of programmes. Additionally, the importance of information has been emphasized by several authors such as (Michael, 1999) and (Rasheli and Mosha, 2005) who argued that, information is an important ingredient for human life cycle such that there would be no life in modern society without information. Information is an essential commodity with economic and social value for human beings to effectively perform their daily activities. Information is a crucial tool in productive economy. Furthermore, Haenel and Cook (1995) add that, information is always needed to solve problems and make decisions for future actions. All organizations need to obtain specific information to meet a wide range of business needs. These needs are largely driven either by the desire for growth and advancement or by the rapidly changing social, political, and economic situations in the society. What is true today is often outdated tomorrow and a good market today is not likely to be the same next year, therefore, to promote economic independence and quality of existence, timely and accurate information is crucial.

One cannot have knowledge unless he/she gets information (Ndenje-Sichwale, 2004). Information equips a person with power to choose and act in an informed manner (Koontz & Weinrich, 1994). Ndenje-Sichwale (2004) argues that, SMSEs need information in all aspects of business activities so as to enable them to identify suitable products, equipment, materials, and suitable suppliers. They also need timely access to information on product standards and the country's industrial requirement and material specifications. This information can be very valuable to SMSEs if it is obtained from relevant sources and in the form that it can reliably support decision-making so as to achieve economic development.

Tie and Dye is an important economic activity for Tanzanians mainly performed by SMSEs in many town centers of Tanzania especially in the City of Dare Es salaam. However, in recent years the business has started to lose its popularity because most SMSEs are faced with many problems and challenges. Among other problems and challenges that SMSEs are facing is the inaccessibility to business information which is a major factor in the development of this business (Ndenje-Sichwale, 2004). Additionally, access to information is not often given the same attention as other constraints facing SMSEs. Rasheli and Mosha (2005) note that tie and dye SMSEs are limited in their capacity to access business information either due to lack of knowledge or technology, low levels of education or because of the nature of businesses they operate. This in turn could lead to other factors such as lack of timely and relevant tie and dye business information as identified by (Ndenje-Sichwale, (2004). Therefore, SMSEs can produce and deliver goods and services as required in the market if they can access and disseminate business information among themselves.

2.0 History and Origin of Tie and Dye

Tie and dye became popular in the United States in the mid 1950s. People used direct dying methods with either natural or grocery-store type dyes randomly folding, twisting, and tying fabric or clothing. The items were then either dipped or put into a dye bath. The results were simple and varied designs; but they were not vibrant and tended to fade quickly. Still everybody loved them. Tie and dye is considered a pre-historic product. Even though fabric was perishable and long ago disintegrated, archeologists still established that a variety of stamps could have been used for printing fabric five thousand years ago in Mesopotamia and India. In one thousand B.C., cloths such as those used to wrap mummies were found in dyed form in Egypt. It is possible that the dying techniques trekked through various trade routes from India to Egypt (Jennings, 2004).

Bright colours have delighted mankind since prehistoric times until today. Dyes were discovered by primitive man through the use of various plant juices, flowers, bark, leaves, etc., and applying the substances to basic cloth. The problem with the early dyes is that they could be easily brushed off, or did not last long through washing. Even though colour was applied they did not consider this dying. It was simply a form of embellishment.

What was considered dying was the art of colour forming a permanent bond with fiber, in a prepared dye bath. In Egypt, China, Mexico, Peru, Greece, and Rome dying became a specialized way of earning a living. These ancient artists found out that some dyes dissolved and gave colour readily to water. Another way was for the fabric to absorb the colour. The problem with the latter was that the fabric was not colourfast. Through time the dyes in the material would fade. If the fabric colour faded before an important ceremony happened, the garment would be re-dipped for a new and bright look.

Centuries before Christ's birth, safflower was used as a dye in Persia and the Far East. The threads of the safflower (which are also used as very expensive seasoning) dissolved easily, turning water into a soluble yellow. The red insoluble matter was extracted by working an alkaline bath, neutralized with acid afterwards. The herb turmeric was crushed to a fine powder and dissolved in water so that cotton material would be dyed to deep yellows. This colour has been used in India since ancient times and marked the beginning of the art of dying from East to West. China has been creating a form of tie-dying since the sixth century. They knew how to turn, fold, and tie silk or cotton so when the fabric was dipped, different parts of the fabric would absorb the dye. This caused the designs on different parts of the material to show colour more intensely than other areas. The only people that were allowed to wear the "tie and dyed" garments were Priests and the wealthy. You could tell by the colours used what rank or social standing someone was, in the Chinese culture. During the Tangy Dynasty (618-906AD), tie and dyed silks were found in the burial grounds at Astana and at Khotan on the Old Silk Road in Sin kiang, East Turkistan. Another term for Chinese tie and dye is "zha ran". This is an ancient traditional dying method. The ancients called it "jiao xie" dying. It appeared during the Han Dynasty and later it became popular during the Nan Bei Chao Dynasty. People liked it for its simple and ancient taste along with the variety of colours used.

Through Asia, India, and the Far East traders packed tie and dye cloths as part of their merchandise. "Bandhana" is another word for tie and dye work in India. The girls who worked with this art were known as 'bandhanii'. The girls grew the nails of their thumbs and forefingers very long so that they were able to pick up small points of material to bind with cotton, to produce little dots on the fabric. In the Japanese Society, tie-dying was practiced with kimonos using coloured thread to restrict certain areas of the cloth. These items known as "resists", consisted of knots, thread, rocks, sticks, wax, and rubber bands. This way the parts that the dye was able to reach would be changed, but the restricted area stayed the same. This Japanese tie and dye became known as Shibori, and encases a wide variety of dying techniques. The resists used (wax, string, and synthetic resists) give the artist the ability to create very intricate and detailed designs on the fabric. This art form began the change from random designs that are geometric or loose and free flowing to varied combinations of both. Shibori is widely practiced in Asian culture, as well as some artists in the United States and other countries.

Pre-Columbian, Peru, Nigeria, and other countries, especially on the west coast of Africa have enjoyed the art of tie and dye. North African tribes made dot patterns on woolen cloths. The Yoruba women of West Nigeria produce splendid indigo-dyed cloths which are designed elaborately with the folding and tritik (stitching methods). Currently, there is an artist in South Carolina whose studio is dedicated to this ancient indigo dying technique. Tie and dye became all the rage during the Vietnam War period when people craved for peace and freedom from the starched idea of parents and authority. It was a form of artistic expression (as well as protest) for the hippie, psychedelic generation who were free-spirited and uninhibited during this difficult time in American history. These artistic peace-lovers embellished t-shirts, curtains, tapestries, pants, and anything else that would proclaim their individuality. Tie and dye made people happy then, as it does today. It has remained the utmost symbol of the sixties and in all its forms; tie and dye is not only an art of fabric, but a piece of our world history (Jennings, 2004).

3.0 Importance of Information to SMSEs

Information plays a vital role in the operation and eventual success of any business. Therefore, the access and its use are vital ingredients for achieving goals in each sector of any business. Zhao (1990) stated that, the studies on information management in SMSEs of developing countries reveal that there are gaps in the demand and management of business information. Business information encompasses the range of published and unpublished materials which are available to the businessman to aid him/her in reaching commercial judgments and decisions. Campbell (1987) holds the view that, business information assists the entrepreneur in buying and selling of goods and services and the application of economic and managerial techniques. Harrison (1999) states that, information is essential to any organization as it directly support business activities at both the operational and management levels. Over the last decade, the rise in the importance of information and knowledge for business activity has been phenomenal. Globalization has become a reality and competition is more dynamic (Porter, 1998) as firms source materials and manufacture goods in many locations, while innovation is vital for future business growth.

Information is now critical for the management and growth of business value. Knowledge about competitors and customers is essential to understand the future direction of business development. Harnessing this resource is important, and yet difficult. Information is primary management resource. Like finance, operations and marketing, its management cannot be left to chance. Business drivers are not different from small firms than for large. There is still a need to manage the operational activities, identify suppliers, market goods and services, determine customer requirements, and consider the impact of competitor actions. Thus information and knowledge is as important to small firms as their larger counterparts (Powell, 2005).

4.0 Tie and Dye Practitioners and their Information Seeking-Behaviour

Information seeking resembles a problem-solving or decision making process, in which an individual identifies the possible sources, differentiates between them and chooses a few sources, locates and makes contacts with them and interacts with them in order to obtain the desired information (Choo, 1999). Coetzee (2000) views information-seeking behaviour as the actual process of identifying and obtaining information itself. It varies considerably from one user group to another. People in need of information have different approaches when seeking for it. Majid and Kassim (2000) states that, information-seeking behaviour is a broad term which involves a set of actions an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select it, and finally use it to satisfy his/her information needs. Furthermore, Achia (2002) points out that the type of information needed and the information-seeking behaviour of an individual are dependent on place (geographical dimension), technology, economic situation, and social systems.

It is also hypothesized that, if tie and dye SMSEs have access to the right information and use the relevant information in the right format and at the right time, they will be empowered to have the basic abilities for making more rational and effective decisions. Rational decisions and effective decisions have been shown to contribute to higher productivity and better livelihoods. Information seeking may be understood as a more human-oriented and open-ended process than information retrieval. In information seeking, one does not know whether there exists an answer to one's query, so the process of seeking may provide the learning required to satisfy one's information need. Literature on information-seeking behaviour shows that information seeking has generally been accepted as dynamic and non-linear (Foster, 2005 & Kuhlthau 2006) as cited by Hjørland (2007). People experience the information search process as interplay of thoughts, feelings, and actions Kuhlthau, (2006) as cited by Hjørland (2007).

5.0 Sources of Tie and Dye Business Information of SMSEs in Dar es Salaam

Choo (1999) defines information sources as the point at which information can be accessed. It can be a place or person, also it can be a primary, secondary, or tertiary source. The sources of information are many, ranging from watching TV, reading newspapers and brochures (printed materials), listening to radio, consulting business fellows, through seminars, workshops, training, oral information, the internet, meetings organized by business associations, women groups, relatives, friends, fellow businessmen and women, and neighbours.

6.0 Information Availability, Accessibility and the Problems Facing Tie and Dye SMSEs

Small scale businesses in most developing countries need help in the area of information management with respect to availability and accessibility of information which could enhance their businesses transactions. Access to information is regarded as a vital resource for an individual to function effectively in a society. Uhegbu (2001) holds the view that, information is a conveyor of knowledge, a change agent, and a reinforcement of ideas and opinion. It is therefore expected that business entrepreneurs should have information available and accessible as a means of playing functional roles in the society. If accessibility and availability of information is regarded as a vital resource for an individual to function effectively in a society therefore, tie and dye entrepreneurs in Tanzania require access to information to function effectively.

A study conducted by Karl, (2000) among Small Scale and Medium Entrepreneurs reveal that, entrepreneurs however highly educated, were not able to differentiate cognitively the extents of their information, absence of a specific place to get the required information and thus taking a lot of time to get correct information. On the other hand, Ocholla (1999) adds that one of the problem facing SMSEs is that the most needed information is written in alien languages which they do not know.

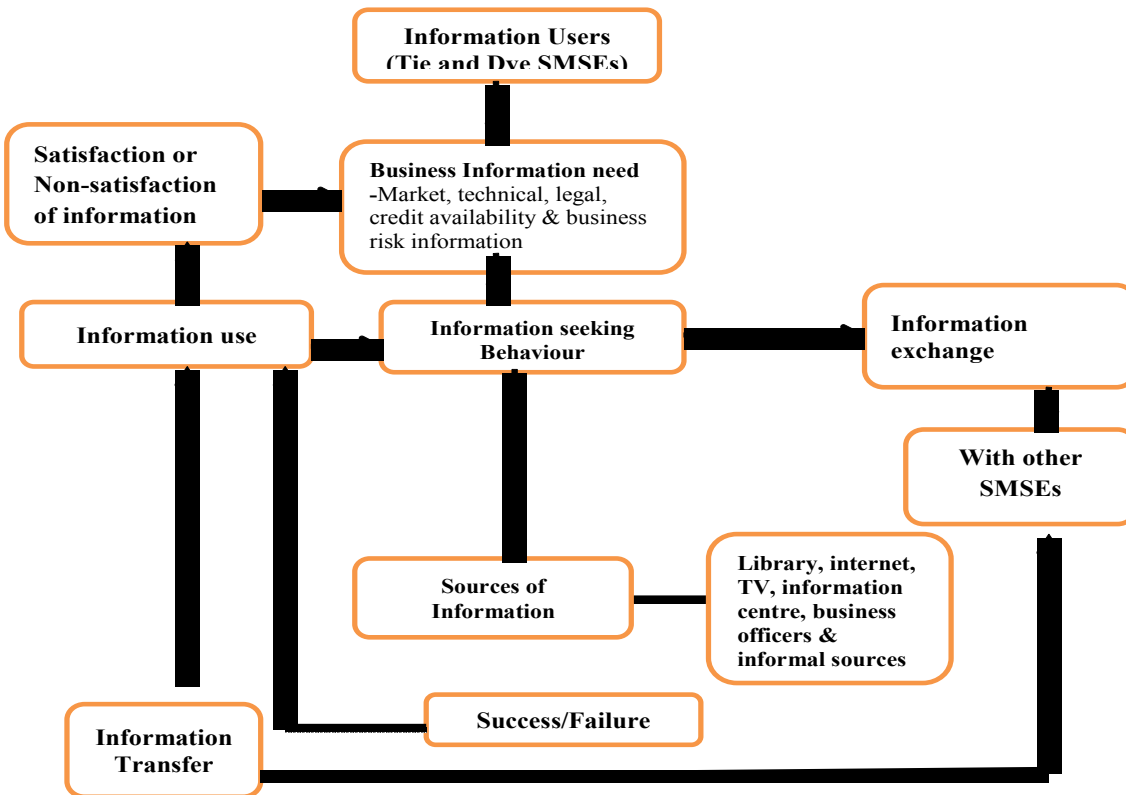
7.0 Tie and Dye SMSEs Business Information Needs

The complex side of information needs, including needs for decision making and other high-level information activities, is rather complicated to fulfil for the reasons that have been mentioned in a number of works such as those of (Keen & Scott-Morton, 1978; Sprague & Carlson, 1982) to more recent work in the field (Melchert & Winter, 2004; Nakatsu, 2004; Reddy & Spence, 2008). Among the most often mentioned reasons are multi-

faceted information from assorted sources, limited time frame, need to decide with incomplete information, and need to adapt to environment changes. The studies by Zhao (1990) and Kinnell, Feather and Matthews (1994) on information demand and business information provision for SMMEs in China shows that SMSEs had limited access to business information. The types of information required were broad and included: new product development, markets, standards, investment opportunities, research and development, technology, economic outlook and finance. Furthermore, the Chinese SMSEs required commercial intelligence on foreign markets, barriers to foreign market entry, patents, product specifications, and sample products.

The study by Rufaro, Chiware and Archie (2007) in Namibia stipulate that, business information needs of SMSEs are: finance, marketing, production and training, policies on SMSEs development, sources of raw materials, regulations, technical information, and other types of information. Njoku (2004) study on the information needs of small-scale fishermen in Nigeria examined their needs, sources and information seeking behaviour. The results show that the information needs of fishermen were mostly on: credit facilities, skills training, storage and processing facilities, marketing strategies, sea conditions and the locations of big fish, and government policies. The study by Mchombu (2000) on the information needs of women operating small businesses in Botswana ranked their information needs in order of priority as: business management, business diversification, financial assistance, and information on how to operate nursery schools. Furthermore, Ikoja-Odongo (2001) indicates a variety of information needs, uses, effects, channels, languages, sources, and constraints. The study by Ikoja-Odongo (2001) ranked information needs as: marketing information, the need for raw materials and supply information, seeking advice, looking for contracts, advertising services, and government information regarding policies and regulations, and others.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Adapted from Wilson's information behaviour model 1981

This study used a conceptual framework adapted from Wilson's Behaviour Model of 1981. The model suggests that information-seeking behaviour of tie and dye SMSEs arises as a consequence of a need of information. In order to satisfy that need, tie and dye SMSEs make demands upon formal or informal information sources or services, which result in success or failure to find relevant information. If successful, tie and dye SMSEs will then make use of the information found and may either fully or partially satisfy the perceived need - or, indeed, fail to satisfy the need and have to reiterate the search process. The model also shows that part of the information-seeking behaviour may involve other people through information exchange and that information perceived as useful may be passed to other people, as well as being used (or instead of being used) by tie and dye SMSEs.

8.0 Demographic Characteristics of Tie & Dye SMSEs Information User Group

Factors which influence information needs, seeking, and use have been very central in studies involving the users of information. The reason for this is that it has been found that differences in the use of information sources and types exist among professionals (Robinson 1995). These differences can be seen from the factors that influence information seeking. According to Burkett (1972), information seeking can be influenced by the user's place of employment, occupation, education, age, sex and marital status.

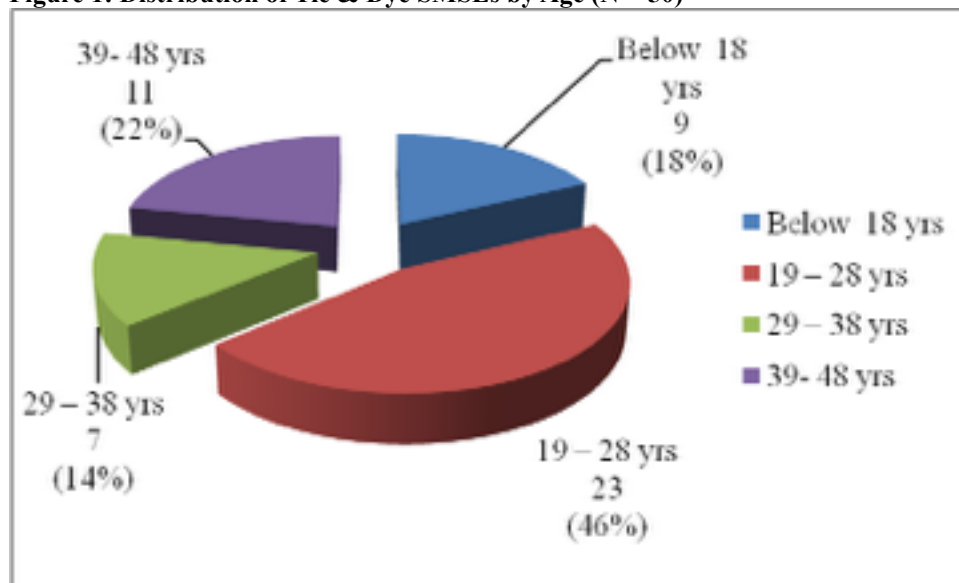
Part one of the questionnaire included questions that collected background information on tie and dye SMSEs. Figures 1&2 and Tables 1, 2, & 3 below depict the following socio-demographic characteristics: age, sex, education level, and marital status of the respondents. In the following sections each of these aspects are being discussed.

8.1 Age and Education Level of Tie & Dye SMSEs

Age of the respondents was important in this study as people of different ages may differ in terms of their information needs and seeking behaviour depending on their ages. Every age group has its own information needs that differ from another age group (Siyao, 2010). The findings indicate that majority of the respondents, that is, 23

(46%) were at the age of 19 to 28 while 11 (22%) of them were at the age of 39 to 48, and 9 (24%) were below 18 years of age and 7 (14%) fell at the age of 29 to 38 years. This distribution of the respondents by age is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Distribution of Tie & Dye SMSEs by Age (N = 50)



The educational levels attained by respondents vary considerably as follows: 23 (46%) had secondary education followed by 11(22%) with primary school education while 7 (14%) of them had education below primary school, 7 diploma holders 5(10%) and 4(8%) degree holders respectively. The results could be judged that people engaged in tie and dye in Dar es Salaam has an average level of secondary school education. This could be partially explained by lack of employment in formal sector.

Table 1: Distribution of Tie & Dye SMSEs by Level of Education (N = 50)

Category of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary Education	23	46
Primary Education	11	22
Below Primary Education	7	14
Diploma	5	10
Degree	4	8
Total	50	100

Based on the findings of the study, it is generally observed that most of the members in tie and dye SMSEs have low levels of education caused by inability to develop themselves educationally because of their low income since education is costly and they do not have income that can enable them to pursue education.

The results of this study however indicate that 23 (46%) of the tie and dye members of SMSEs in the sample had secondary education. The reason given by one of the interviewees was that the nature of this activity does not require much formal education instead it requires more tacit knowledge. Furthermore, the results indicate that the age of SMSEs members range from 19 to 28 years. This is possibly because this age group comprises of

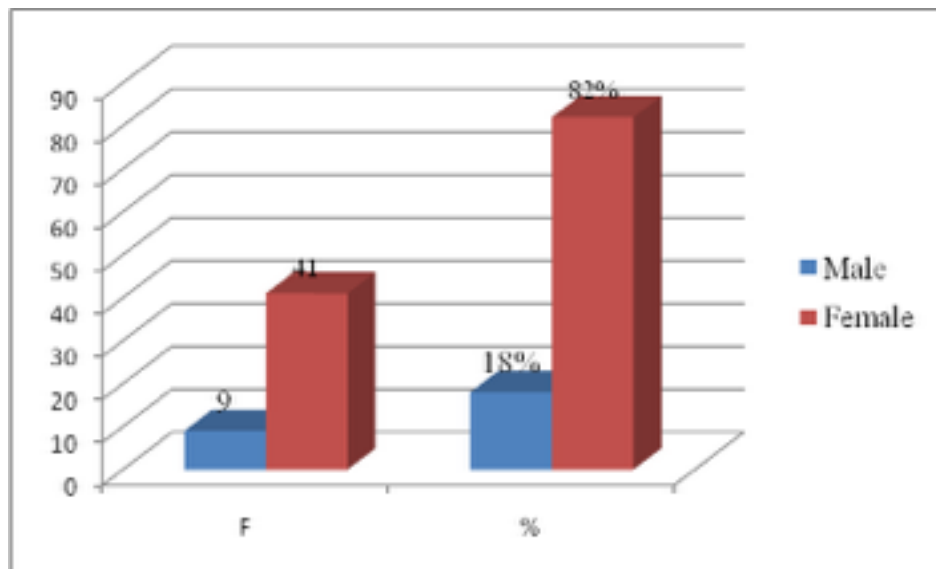
economically active people who are likely to be involved in undertaking family care responsibilities as wives/husbands or mothers/fathers. Furthermore, this is a young group of information users who through education they can be influenced to seek current business information from relevant sources.

8.2 Influence of Sex and Marital Status on Business Information Seeking Behaviour

8.2.1 Distribution of Tie & Dye SMSEs Sex

Information on sex of the respondents is important as men and women in some cases act and behave differently in their information needs and seeking behaviour (Siyao, 2010). In relation to sex the sample was predominantly females ranging to 41(82%) with only 9 (18%) males. Figure 2 below indicates the statistical data of the sex of respondents in frequencies and percentages.

Figure 2: Distribution of Tie & Dye SMSEs by Sex (N = 50),



The findings revealed that there were more females than males, because of the nature of tie and dye activities are regarded as female type activity. Another reason as commented by one of the respondents in an interview is that there is a “greater need of females to earn their own income in order to be able to meet different social responsibilities as women instead of depending on their spouses and remain as housewives”. Lack of alternative employment opportunities in the formal employment sectors due to low level of education was also noted by one of the interviewees as a reason behind.

8.2.1 Marital Status of Tie & Dye SMSEs

The findings indicate that married respondents were 28 (56%), followed by singles 10 (20%), the widows 9 (18%), and 3 (6%) divorcees. The interpretation of results could mean that married respondents who engage in tie and dye SMSEs exceed other category. This could mean that married SMSEs as primary bread earners have to engage in this business so as to generate income that will help to take care of their families.

Table 2: Marital Status of Tie & Dye SMSEs (N=50)

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Divorcees	3	6
Widows	9	18
Single	10	20
Married	28	56
Total	50	100

The findings in Table 2 above show that respondents have decided to engage themselves in this kind of activity because they want to generate income either as primary bread earners for the household or in a supplementary role to support their families.

9.0 Household Communication Assets of Tie & Dye SMSEs

Respondents were provided with items in the questionnaire which required them to indicate the household communication assets they owned. The findings indicate that, 45 (90%) of the respondents own radios and televisions, 43 (86%) had mobile phones while none of them had personal/ home library or even a computer with internet connection. The distribution of the household assets owned by the respondents is summarized as follows in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Household Communication Assets of Tie & Dye SMSEs

Household Assets	Frequency	Percentage
Radios	45	90
Televisions	45	90
Mobile phones	43	86
Computers with internet connection	0	0
Personal libraries	0	0

Possession of radios, television sets, mobile phones and computers with internet connection would enable SMSEs to access business information easily.

10.0 Extent to which Tie and Dye SMSEs Seek Business Information

A frequency at which someone seeks information provides an insight of learning as to what extent these members seek information for their daily business activities. The findings reveal that majority of the respondents, that is, 29 (58%) of the respondents seek information frequently, 10 (20%) rarely seek for information, 6 (12%) seek every day and 5 (10%) do not seek for information at all. Table 4 below summarizes the findings of the extent to which the tie and dye SMSEs members seek information.

Table 4: Frequency of Seeking Information (N=50)

Category of responses	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	6	12
Frequently	29	58
Rarely	10	20

Not at all	5	10
Total	50	100

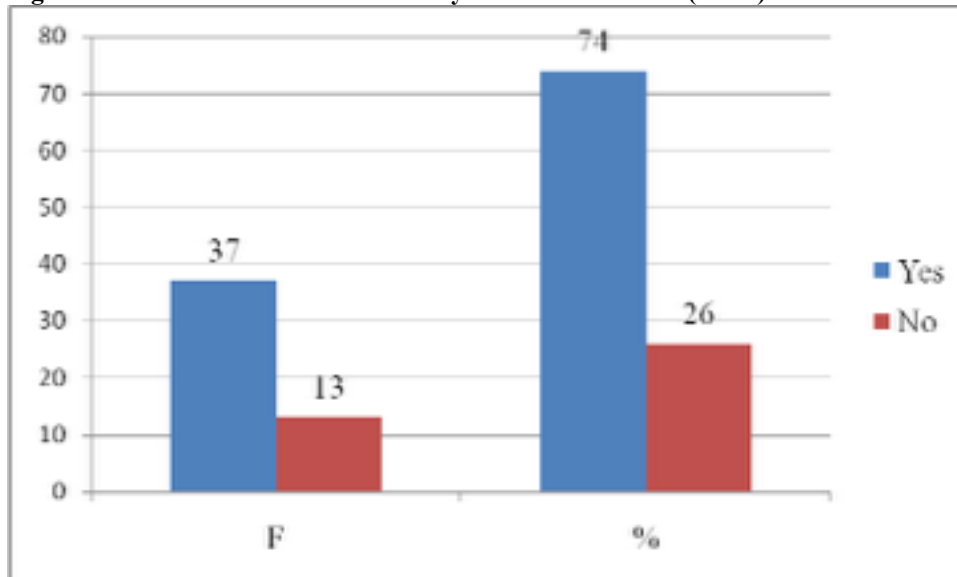
The findings reveal that 5 (10%) of the respondents do not seek business information at all. This could be attributed by their lower level of education and they are still not aware of the importance of information in their day to day business activities. The frequency of information use is therefore seen as a yardstick of measuring information seeking behaviour of an individual.

11.0 Need for Information in Daily Business Activities by Tie and Dye SMSEs

The study intended to find out whether the tie and dye SMSE members need information in order to improve their business activities. The results reveal that 37(74%) of all SMSEs members indicate that they need information.

Figure 3 below summarizes the findings on the need for information in daily business activities of the tie and dye members in SMSEs.

Figure 3: Need for Information in Daily Business Activities (N=50).

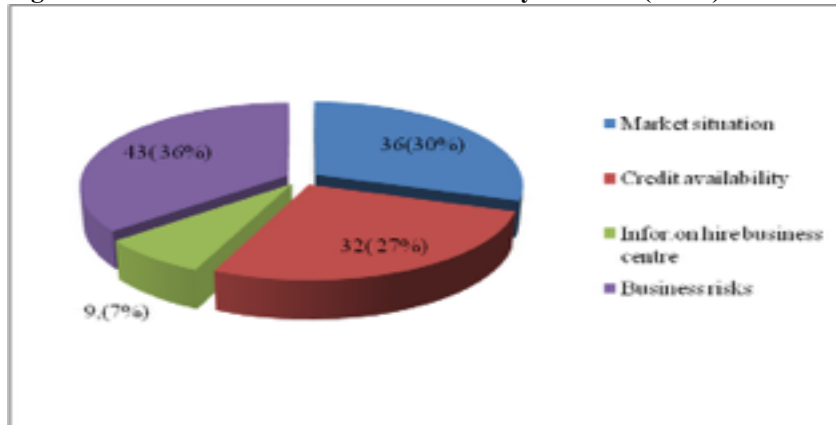


Through an in-depth interview with some SMSEs members indicated that they do not need information, they do not have time and they are not knowledgeable in seeking information related to their business. This could be due to their lower level of education and lack of awareness of the importance of information and its contribution to their daily business activities.

12.0 Business Information Needs by the Tie and Dye SMSEs

Information is a major resource in any progressive business activity. The findings show that 36 (72%) of the respondents' information needs are in the areas of market situation, 32 (64%) information needs are on the availability of credit facilities from financial institutions such as banks, Savings and Credit Cooperatives Society (SACCO), 9 (18%) of the respondents' information needs were on how and where to hire business centers and 43 (86%) on business risks. These results are summarized as indicated in Figure 3 below.

Figure 4: Information Needs of the Tie and Dye SMSEs (N=50)



The mostly needed information by tie and dye SMSEs include information about market situation, availability of credit facilities from financial institutions, as well as information on business risks while information on how and where to hire a business center was slightly needed. The study also revealed that information such as sources of raw materials, newly attractive designs of Tie and dye products and information on how to make quality and standard goods in order to conquer external market opportunities. This shows that SMSEs seek information according to their priority. Information on: market situation, credit availability and business risks will enable SMSEs to make informed decisions. For instance when tie and dye SMSEs are well informed on market situation they will easily decide where to sell their products at reasonable profit or where to buy raw materials at an affordable price. Information of credit availability will enable SMSEs to decide where to get loan facilities at lowest interest rate. On the other hand, information on business risk will enable tie and dye SMSEs to minimise risk levels in their business.

13.0 Accuracy and Timely Delivery of the Business Information to Tie and Dye SMSEs

The study intended to find out whether tie and dye SMSE members get accurate and timely the needed information. The findings revealed that 31 (62%) of the respondents did not get the information required accurately and timely and 19 (38%) of the respondents could get required information accurately and timely.

Table 5: Accuracy and Timely Delivery of the Business Information to Tie and Dye SMSEs. (N=50)

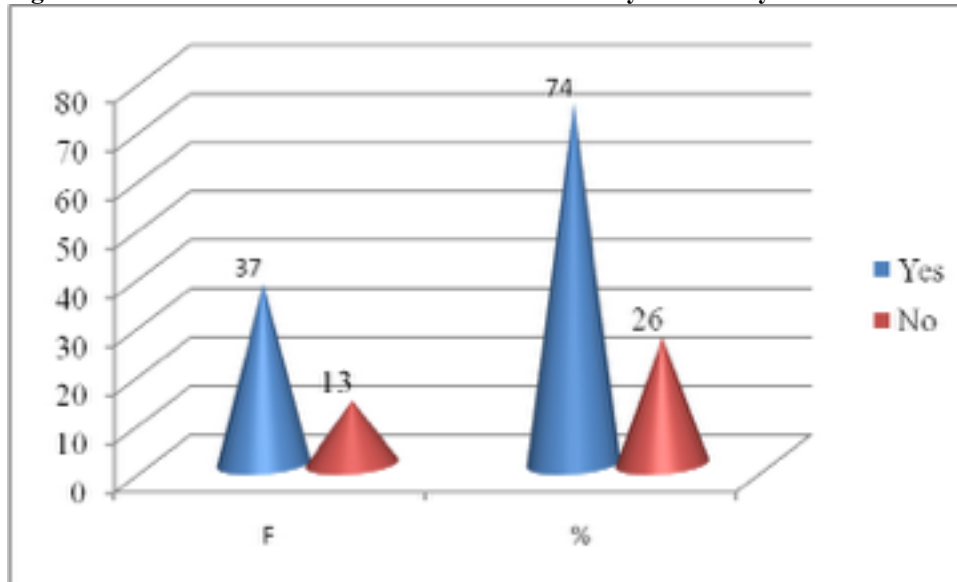
Category of Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	62
No	19	38

Majority of SMSEs were of the opinion that business information providers should be creative in designing and using other easily accessible methods of disseminating information such as: cellular phones, leaflets, radio and TV so that Tie and Dye SMSEs can get required information accurately and timely.

1.4. Sources of Information Used by Tie and Dye SMSEs

The findings reveal that 37 (74%) agreed positively that they consulted different sources of information to get business information and 13 (26%) of the respondents showed that they did not consult any source of information. The results are summarized in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Consultation of the Sources of Information by Tie and Dye SMSEs in Getting Information (N=50)



The findings in Figure 5 above indicate that as many as 37 (74%) of the tie and dye SMSE members consulted different sources of information, especially the informal sources of information. This is an indication that this group of people understand the importance of information and its contribution towards improving their tie and dye businesses. However, in order to access the most current and relevant information tie and dye SMSE members should try to consult formal sources of information as well.

The respondents were requested to portray the sources of information they consulted or accessed. In identifying the information needs of the tie and dye SMSEs it was very important to know the sources of information used by the members. The findings show that 43 (86%) of the respondents use radios in accessing information, 47 (94%) access it on televisions, 4 (8%) use leaflets, 37 (74%) access it from newspapers, 5 (10%) through seminars and workshops, 7 (14%) attend association meetings and women groups, 43 (86%) through relatives, friends, and neighbours, 47 (94%) through cell phones, 7 (14%) through Facebook, 47 (94%) through their fellow businessmen/women, 10 (20%) use business officers, 15 (30%) attend trade fair shows, 6 (12%) use libraries, 6 (12%) use internet and 9 (18%) use books. Table 6 below portrays the statistics:

Table 6: Sources of Information Preferred by Tie and Dye SMSEs (N=50)

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Library	6	12
Newspapers	37	74
Radio	43	86
Television	47	94
Internet	6	12
Leaflets	4	8
Seminars and workshops	5	10
Association meetings and women groups	7	14
Relatives, Friends and Neighbours	43	86
Journals	0	0
Cell phones	47	94
Twitter	0	0
Fellow businessmen/women	47	94
Brochures	0	0
Trade fair shows	15	30
Blogs	0	0
Facebook	0	0
Books	9	18
Business officers	10	20
Training programmes	0	0
Magazines	0	0

The findings in Table 6 above indicates that cell phones, radios, televisions, newspapers, relatives, friends, and fellow businessmen/ women are the mostly used sources of information utilized by the tie and dye SMSEs. Another revelation is that other information sources are not mostly utilised by majority of the tie and dye SMSE members; instead only a small number utilizes them. As a result it seems that radios, televisions, newspapers, cell phones, fellow businessmen/women, as well as relatives and friends are the major sources of information utilised by the tie and dye SMSE members . These sources are mainly utilised by SMSEs probably because they are affordable and easily accessible by the members in their daily activities unlike the internet which requires time, money, skills, as well as facilities. In case of libraries, the problem is that they are not easily accessible by tie and dye SMSE members. Probably this could be attributed by the fact that most libraries are nowadays charging user fees to the library users and the lack of reading habit by SMSEs. These make it hard for the SMSE members to visit libraries to access information and instead most of them prefer to use the affordable sources of information such as radios, televisions, relatives, friends, as well as their fellow businessmen/women since they can access it while proceeding with their work and free of charge.

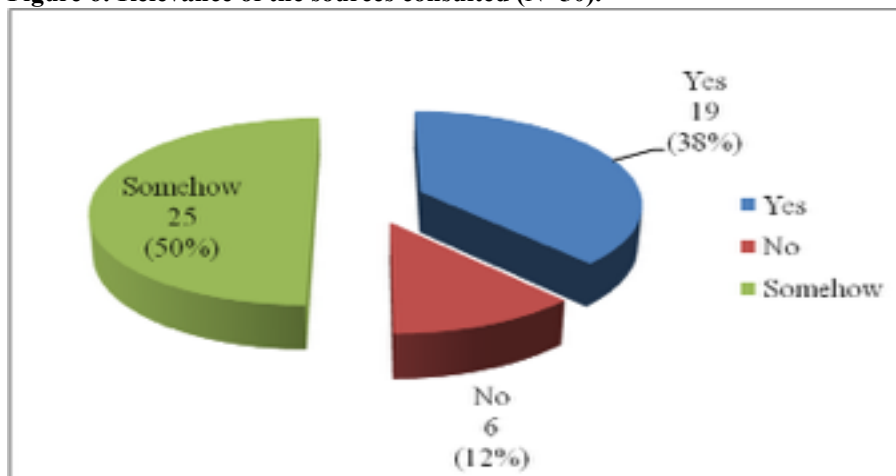
Consequently, radios, televisions, cell phones, friends, and fellow business partners were noted to be among major sources of information to the tie and dye members instigated by technophobia, lack of information searching

skills and techniques of accessing it via electronic devices such as internet, CD-ROMs, etc. Therefore, because they lack skills and techniques of information searching on the internet, they mostly then resort to sources that do not require them to have much skill on searching techniques.

15.0 Relevance of the Sources of Information Consulted.

The respondents were requested to reveal the relevance of the sources of information in meeting their information needs. The findings reveal that 19 (38%) of the respondents noted that the sources consulted were relevant in meeting their information needs, 6 (12%) stated that the sources were not relevant, while 25 (50%) said that the sources consulted were somehow relevant. This shows that the SMSE members are not quite satisfied with the sources they consulted. This is because those sources could not meet much of their information needs. The findings are summarized in Figure 5 below.

Figure 6: Relevance of the sources consulted (N=50).



Wilson model of information seeking behaviour states that if successful, the information seeker will then make use of the information found and may either fully or partially satisfy the perceived need - or, indeed, fail to satisfy the need and have to reiterate the search process. This means that information seekers should despair when they fail to get relevant information from a certain source they should rather opt for other sources of information.

16.0 Preferable Languages in Seeking for the Business Information

The respondents were asked to indicate their language preference in seeking information. The findings show that over three quarters, that is, 43 (86%) of the respondents prefer Swahili language, 8 (16%) both Swahili and English languages whereas 4 (8%) prefer English Language. (See Table 7 below).

Table 7: Language Preferred in Seeking Information (N=50)

Category of Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Swahili	43	86
English	8	16
Both Languages	4	8

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents, that is, 43(86%) prefer Swahili to any other language in accessing information because this is the language that is commonly understood by many Tanzanians (the national language). English is only used by few people especially foreigners.

17.0 Challenges Facing the Tie and Dye SMSEs in Seeking Business Information

Tie and Dye SMSEs face different challenges in Seeking for the Business Information. The findings of this study reveal that 34 (68%) of the respondents indicated format and language problems, 12 (24%) noted lack of business officers within their vicinities, 33 (66%) indicated lack of knowledge and information searching skills, 39

(78%) complained that sources of information such as libraries are not accessible, while 37 (74%) lamented on excessive cost of accessing information. The findings are summarised in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Challenges Facing Tie and Dye SMSEs in Seeking Information

Challenges faced	Frequency	Percentage
Format and language problem	34	68
No business officer in my business location	12	24
Do not understand information delivered	0	0
Lack of knowledge and skills on information searching	33	66
I can't afford to buy communication media such as radio, television, magazines, leaflets etc.	0	0
Sources of information such as libraries are not easily accessible	39	78
Domestic chores	0	0
Excessive cost of getting information	37	74
I fail to make time to listen to appropriate programmes on my radio and television	0	0

In a nutshell, the findings show that the major challenge facing the tie and dye SMSEs groups is that sources of information such as libraries and information centers are not accessible.

Another challenge which was ranked high by the tie and dye SMSE members is the excessive cost of accessing information because of the low income of the tie and dye SMSEs which makes them fail to afford cost of accessing business information.

Findings also reveal that format and language problems are among the challenges facing tie and dye SMSE members.

Lack of knowledge and skills also affect the information seeking among the tie and dye SMSE members. Majority of the members do not have knowledge and skills on how to seek information especially using electronic devices such as internet, CD-ROMs etc. They are technologically backward and they are even afraid of using advanced sources of information such as computers and its facilities.

Therefore, with these findings this study indicates that the tie and dye SMSE members prefer informal sources of information such as relatives, friends, fellow businessmen/women. This is because these sources are cheap, well understood in terms of language, and easily accessible as indicated in Table 6 above.

18.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

18.1 Conclusion

Information is critical resource for socio-economic development as it empowers people to make informed decisions to enable them attain better living standards. It is a strategic resource, a commodity and an instigator of success in every human activity. For that reason, it has a key role to play in the development of tie and dye entrepreneurship. It is an inseparable factor in tie and dye practices as it can assist the tie and dye SMSE members to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

Based on the findings of this study, it can therefore be concluded that, the extent of seeking information by the tie and dye members is high since majority of them, i.e., (58%) seek information frequently. Furthermore, the information needs of the tie and dye groups are on market situation, (72%) availability of credit facilities from financial institutions such as banks, SACCOS, etc. (64%) on business risks and (86%) on how and where to hire a business centers. (86%) use radios, (94%) televisions, (74%) newspapers, (94%) cell phones, (86%) relatives, friends and neighbours, (12%) libraries, (12%) internet, (10%) seminars, workshops, and association meetings and (14%) women groups, (8%) leaflets, (20%) business officers, (30%) trade fair shows, and (18%) books. Furthermore, the study also concludes that the challenges facing the tie and dye SMSEs in seeking information are

format and language problems (68%), lack of knowledge and skills on information searching (66%), inaccessible sources of information such as libraries (78%), excessive cost in getting information (74%), and lack of business officers in their business locations (24%).

Therefore, in order to speed up development of tie and dye entrepreneurship in Tanzania, crucial and important business information needs such as the mentioned above have to be accessible accurately and timely, understood and used by the needy, that is the tie and dye SMSE groups. Barriers in accessing sources of information like libraries should be eliminated. One way to eliminate barriers in accessing libraries is the elimination or reduction of high user fees. In so doing SMSEs and other categories of users will be encouraged to visit libraries and information centers to seek information.

18.2 Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are therefore being provided to different actors in SMSEs business:

18.2.1 Recommendations to the Government.

It has been revealed in the findings in this study that 43 (86%) of the tie and dye SMSE members own mobile phones, 45 (90 %) own radio and television sets. The mobile phones, radio and television sets are information and communication technology (ICT) household assets which when used effectively can help SMSEs to access relevant and current tie and dye business information. Through mobile phones for example, SMSEs can easily get information about the potential customers, credit availability, where to get raw materials and their prices. However government intervention is therefore needed to create a competitive environment to ensure reduction of costs in the use and the costs of buying of mobile phones, radios and television sets through subsidies and the elimination of import taxes. In so doing the excessive costs of getting information (74%) which has been cited as barrier in accessing business information will have been reduced and more people will afford these communication ICTs. Furthermore, government should facilitate the establishment of more libraries and information centers which will contain relevant and simple information materials such as leaflets tie and dye activities magazines, books and research reports that are written in non-technical and well understood languages to tie and dye SMSEs. Additionally, government should train enough business officers.

18.2.2 Recommendations to Tie and Dye SMSEs.

Tie and dye SMSEs should change and learn how to seek information from the formal and reliable sources of information such as business officers instead of totally depending on informal sources of information such as relatives, friends and neighbours. Business officers can communicate accurate, relevant and current information business information.

The tie and dye SMSEs should develop reading habits so that they can get timely and accurate business information that will make their business successful.

18.2.3 Recommendations to Information Providers.

They should do repackaging of relevant information to tie and dye SMSEs. This should be done in the appropriate formats and languages so that it can be well understood and used effectively by tie and dye SMSEs.

They should also develop a habit of conducting visits to the tie and dye SMSEs business areas so as to conduct seminars and training that will create awareness of the importance of information as well as training SMSEs information searching skills and techniques in various sources especially in the electronic sources such as internet and CD-ROMs so as to enable them to become conversant and competent business information seekers. This may also bring changes in tie and dye business activities and performance as they may eventually realize the importance of information and make effective use of it and as a result being able to make informed decisions and information governed actions.

Tie and dye SMSEs should formulate and register their own association. The association will bring tie and dye SMSEs together so that they can share business information. Additionally, association will facilitate the launching of their own website that will help them to access internet based information easily.

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