

Information Management in Development Organizations in Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study is on information management in Development Organization in Niger state of Nigeria. The study investigates the type of information generated, how generated information are organized and the channels used in disseminating information within and outside the Organizations. Purposive sampling technique was used to select nine (9) Local Government areas and their head office in Niger state. Questionnaire was the method used to collect data from respondents. The indicates among others that information regarding to legal contracts and regulatory, Information linking input and output and Evaluation reports were commonly generated. Information generated was not properly organized and Radio, Interpersonal contact/face to face and Television were commonly used as channels of information dissemination. The study suggests that that Development organization should improve in the generation of information and should have a standard method organizing their information by employing Librarians to effectively manage all information.

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Introduction

Information is a resource for empowerment and sustainable development; and is essential for organizations whose goal is the empowerment of the less privileged or the disadvantaged. It is also essential to development process and an important factor in the sustained development of any nation because it reduces uncertainty and enhances awareness of possible action to be taken to solve problems. It helps in capacity building process and its management facilitates access and sharing of information. Access to it enables people to be informed and influences decision making (Cheemalapati, 2002).

Wilson (2002) sees information management as the application of management principles to the acquisition, organization, control, dissemination and use of information relevant to the effective operation of organizations of all kinds. The major components of information management involve facilitating the generation of information and managing its distribution for use (Davenport, and Marchand, 2000). According to Reade-Fong and Gorman (2004) Information Management is the sharing of information within and outside the organization for sustainable capacity building.

Information Management is therefore a process of generating information and making the information accessible to users at all levels. Information explosion in organization has led most organizations to the challenge of how to effectively control, store, maintain and manage the information resources, especially in development organizations where they seem to generate

a lot of information from projects executed, and yet to be executed and the stakeholders. These need to be coordinated in order to support and guide overall planning, monitoring and evaluation of development projects on one hand and on the other hand, help to achieve the organizational objectives.

International Monetary Fund (2004) defined Development organizations as institutions established to promote democratic values which include social, economic growth and poverty reduction with the aim to improve the environment for business, provide employment and upgrade public amenities.

As non-profit Organizations, Development Organization aims at addressing the impediments to the realization of the potential benefits of agricultural production activities in Niger state. NFDP (2008) enumerate these impediments to include:

- Poor development and rural infrastructure
- Poor storage and marketing facilities
- Low investment in irrigation technology
- Lack of adequate techniques for greater productivity

Research questions

The study was conducted with the following Research questions to guide the investigation

- What type of information is generated in Development Organisations in Niger state?
- How is information processed and organised in Development Organisations in Niger state?

- What are the channels of Information dissemination in Development Organisations in Niger state?

Research Hypotheses

In addition to research questions, the following hypotheses were tested:

- There is no significant difference between the Administrative staff and the field workers in the method used for organizing information.
- There is no significant difference between Administrative staff and field workers on the channels used for dissemination of information.

Research Methodology

Questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data for this study. The population for this study consists of the entire Development Organizations in Niger state, Nigeria. The composition of the population includes administrative staff (coordinator, heads of division, secretary, administrative officers) and the field workers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select nine (9) Local Governments and the state head offices. Three local government areas (LGAs) from each geo-political zone of the state were selected. The entire subjects in the nine (9) LGAs and seventeen (17) in the head office were selected as sample of the study.

Results and Discussion

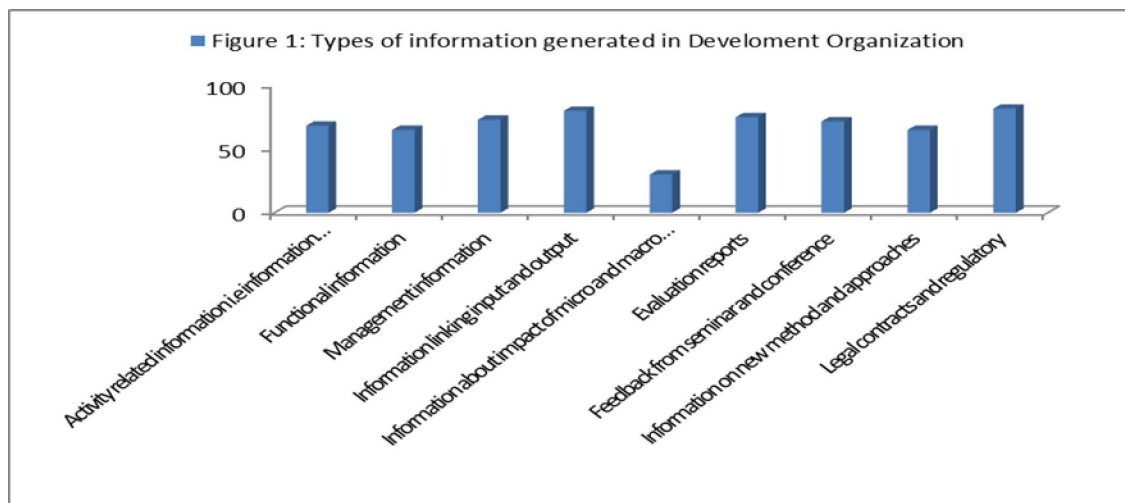


Figure 1: Type of Information generated in Development Organization

Figure Figure 1 discussed the type of information generated in Development Organization. The result shows that legal contracts and regulatory; and Information linking input and output accounted for 49 (81.7%) and 48 (80.0%) respectively. This is followed by Evaluation reports 45 (75.0%), management information 44 (73.0%), Feedback from seminars, conferences and researches management information 43 (71.0%). Activity related information i.e information about work on ground accounted 41 (68.3%). Functional information and information on new methods and approaches scored 39 (65%) each. On the

other hand, information about impact of Micro and macro activities scored 18 (30.0%). This type of information is the least generated information in the organization. Information available in this organization consist of legal contracts and regulatory, Information linking input and output, management information, activity related information i.e information about work on ground and evaluation reports. This is in line with Schueber, (2003), Powell (2003) and Nicholas (2008) on the types of information generated in Development Organizations.

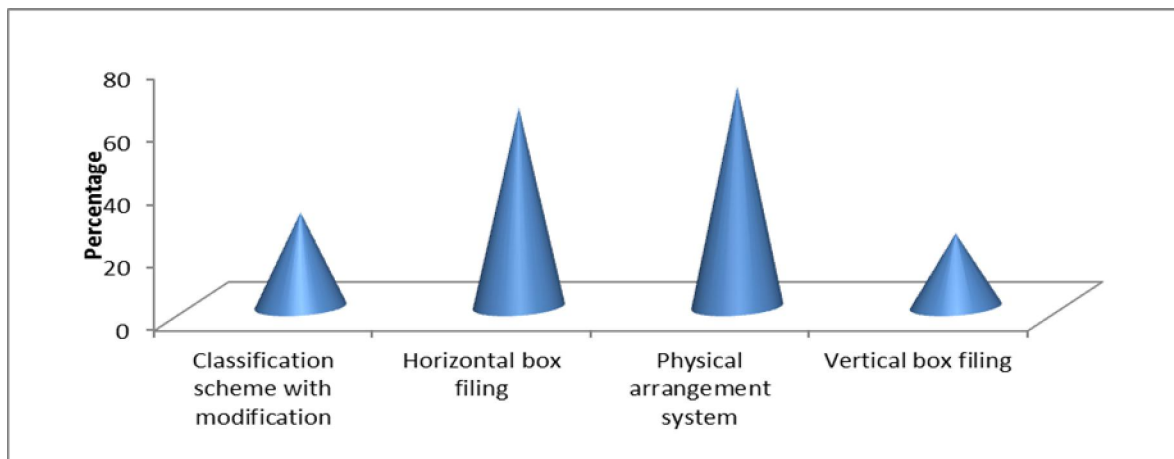


Figure 2: Information Organization in Development Organization

From the results, Physical arrangement system and Horizontal box filing are the dominant methods of organizing information in Development Organizations in the state. These two methods of organizing information account for (70.0%) and (63.3%) respectively in the table. This implies that there is no definite or generally acceptable method of organizing information in this organization. Classification scheme with modification and Vertical box filing methods were not popularly used among the staff. However, Aguolu (2000) asserts that

to organize information, classification scheme such as LC, DDC, UDC, e.t.c should be used. All information material such as books, journals, or cassette should be placed in their appropriate subject area or classes which can be identified by either a class mark or a code.

The implication of this finding is that this Organization lack professional Librarians trained organize information generated using a definite classification scheme.

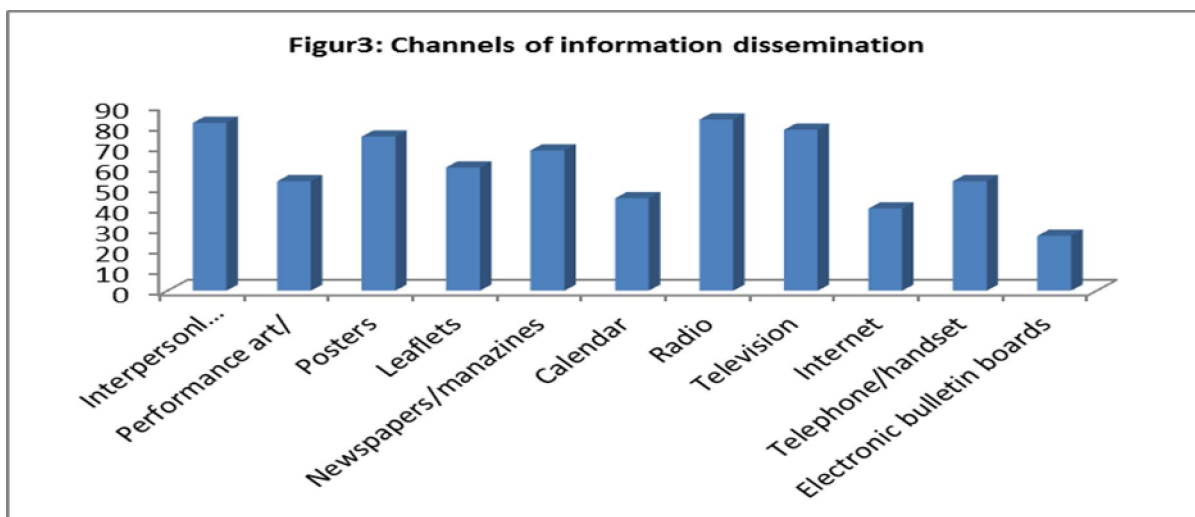


Figure 3: Channels of Information Dissemination

Figure 3 indicates that Radio (83.3%) is the most used channel of information dissemination. This could be attributed to the fact that a good number of people live in rural areas where there are no adequate telecommunication facilities. Radio can reach such areas helping them to get informed. Interpersonal contact/face to face (81.7%), Television (78.3%) are

also commonly used for enlightenment programs. Posters, Newspapers/magazines, Leaflets, performance art/demonstrations, Telephone/Handsets and Calendar have been identified as media used in disseminating information in the state. **Hypothesis I:** There is no significant difference between the Administrative staff and the field workers in the method used for organizing information.

The opinion of the administrative staff and field workers were compared in regard to the system of organization of information in. The chi-square

procedure was used for the test and the result is summarized in Table I.

Table I: Chi-square test on the organization of information

| Organization of Information | Admin. Staff | Facilitators | Total |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Classification scheme with modification | 21(21.90) | 19(18.10) | 40 |
| Horizontal box filing | 12(10.95) | 8(9.05) | 20 |
| Physical arrangement system | 26(22.45) | 15(18.55) | 41 |
| Vertical box filing | 10(13.69) | 15(11.31) | 25 |
| Total | 69 | 57 | 126 |

Chi-square = 3.742, DF = 3, P-Value = 0.291

Critical value at 3 DF = 7.81

The result of the chi-square test in the table did not indicate significant difference in the opinions of the two groups on the system used to organize information. The observed chi-square value (X^2) for the test is 3.742 compared with the critical value which stood at 7.81 at the same degree of freedom (DF). The observed level of significance is 0.291 ($P > 0.05$). This means that the two groups have the same opinion on the organization of information. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between administrative staff and field workers on method used for organization of information could not be rejected rather. It was retained.

Hypothesis II: There is no significant difference between Administrative staff and field workers on the channels used for dissemination of information.

This hypothesis was tested with the data collected from Administrative staff and field workers on the channels of information dissemination in the state. Chi-square procedure was used for the test the data. The use of this procedure was necessitated by the nominal scoring of the questions used in the assessment of information dissemination in the study. Only the positive scores by both Administrative staff and field workers were used for the test. The result of the chi-square test is summarized in Table II: In the table the expected counts are printed below the observed counts

Table II: Chi-square test on the differences in the channels used for dissemination of information

| Dissemination of Information | Admin. Staff | Facilitators | Total |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Interpersonal contact/face to face | 25(24.67) | 28(28.33) | 53 |
| Traditional media/performance art | 21(21.41) | 25(24.59) | 46 |
| Posters | 21(22.81) | 28(26.19) | 49 |
| Leaflets | 18(18.62) | 22(21.38) | 40 |
| Newspapers/magazines | 22(20.95) | 23(24.05) | 45 |
| Calendar | 11(14.90) | 21(17.10) | 32 |
| Radio | 27(24.67) | 26(28.33) | 53 |
| Television | 25(22.34) | 23(25.66) | 48 |
| Internet | 17(13.96) | 13(16.04) | 30 |
| Telephone/handsets | 15(15.83) | 19(18.17) | 34 |
| Electronic bulletin boards | 7(8.84) | 12(10.16) | 19 |
| Total | 234 | 260 | 494 |

Chi-square = 5.372, DF = 10, P-Value = 0.865

Critical value at 10 DF = 18.3

The administrative staff and field workers did not differ significantly on the channels used to disseminate

information within and outside their organization in the state. This is indicated with an

observed chi-square value of 5.372 when compared with the critical value (18.3) at the same degree of freedom (DF) and observed level of significance (P) which is 0.865.. By these observations, the null hypothesis is therefore retained.

Conclusion

Activity related information i.e information about work on ground, Feedback from fields; seminars, conferences and researches are basically the type of information generated through their daily activities. Proper generation, organization and dissemination of this information are required for effective functioning of development organization and to achieving its goal.

Recommendation

Arising from the finding of the study, the following recommendations are made in order to improve information management in development organizations in Niger state:

1. Development organizations should improve in the generation and organization of information. This will assist in rendering effective services. Without the assistance of a qualified librarian, pooling all the information materials together and ensuring they are well organized will be ineffective.
2. Standard policy or use of a conventional system with modification can be used to organize all generated information. To implement this system professional Librarian should be employed to effectively organize and facilitate the process of information dissemination within and outside the organisation information.

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