

**ACCESS TO AND USE OF INFORMATION BY BOOKSELLERS IN THE
WORK SITUATION: A CASE STUDY OF BOOK TRADE ENTREPRENEURS
IN NAIROBI**

BY

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in Nairobi. It examined the experiences of the entrepreneurs in the day to day work situation by identifying information needs, information seeking-behaviour and use, determining information systems, sources and channels available, establishing specific environmental factors both micro and macro that impact on the work situation. The study also considered problems that hamper the smooth flow of information in the book trade; investigated the role of other players whose operations affect or are affected by the book trade and further examined views of informants to the book trade such as the Kenya Booksellers and Stationer's Association, suppliers to the trade and Ministry of Education.

The study used largely qualitative case study approaches with arising quantitative aspects being incorporated as per research parameters that allow for use of both qualitative and quantitative methods irrespective of the dominant method of study. The main theoretical framework for the study was the interpretive social paradigm framework. In giving perspective to the study Glaser and Strauss's 'grounded theory', and Denzin's 'principles of thick descriptions' guided data collection, interpretation and analysis. Wilson's barriers to information-seeking behaviour formed the conceptual model of the study.

Data collection was through the interview method where semi-structured interviews were conducted. These were tape-recorded for most of the entrepreneurs and hand written for those not comfortable with taped interviews. Responses were transcribed, coded, analysed and interpreted for each interview. Book trade entrepreneurs in Nairobi, provided the sample population where non-probability purposive sampling was applied.

Major findings of the research show that book trade entrepreneurs' information needs comprise funding related information, stock and stocking information, market information, supplier information, human resource information and personal development information. Other emerging issues that affected entrepreneur access to, and use of information included information illiteracy, lack of streamlined records systems, manual systems of operation, entrepreneurial oversight, change preparedness inadequacy, information inequalities, poor provision of book information, an unstructured system of book trade communication and ineffective book trade associations.

Recommendations arising from the study for improved access and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs included inculcating professionalism into the book trade, the need for change of attitude towards information among entrepreneurs, the need for training including regular seminars and workshops and the need for an information system that addresses book trade entrepreneurs' unique information needs. A model of the proposed information system depicting possible improved communication flow was created.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	African Books Collective
ADB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIC	African Inland Church
ALA	American Publisher's Association
APNET	African Publishers' Network
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
AU	African Union
CCK	Communication Commission Kenya
CD	Compact Disk
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COMESA	Common Market for East and Central African
DEBs	District Education Boards
DEO	District Education Officer
EAC	East African Community
EALB	East African Literature Bureau
EAEP	East African Educational Publishers
EFA	Education for All
JKF	Jomo Kenyatta Foundation
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KBSA	Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Association
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KLB	Kenya Literature Bureau
KNLS	Kenya National Library Services
KPA	Kenya publishers Association
KSES	Kenya School Equipment Scheme
LPO	Local Purchase Order
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MOEST Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MPND Ministry of Planning and National Development
NARC National Rainbow Coalition
NBP National Book Policy
NEPAD New partnership for African Development
NHIF National Hospital Insurance Fund
NIP National Information Policy
NRBD National Reference and Bibliographic Department
NSC NEPAD Steering Committee
NSSF National Social Security Fund
NGO Non Governmental Organisation
OAU Organisation of African Unity
OUP Oxford University Press
PCK Postal Corporation Kenya
POP Pockets of Poverty
PPPA Periodic Participatory Poverty Assessment
SAPs Structural Assessment Programmes
SOR Sale Of Return
TKL Telkom Kenya Limited
UK United Kingdom
UNESCO United Nations Educational Social-cultural Organisation.
US United States
USA United States of America
WMES Welfare Monitoring & Evaluation Surveys
WWW World Wide Web

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definitions given indicate the meaning of the terms in the context of this study.

- Bookseller:** An entrepreneur, who finances, provides leadership and runs the day to day operations of a bookshop.
- Bookshop:** A major outlet through which books are availed to consumers for perusal and purchase either in single or multiple copies.
- Book trade:** The book distribution process usually carried out in a bookshop setting which brings together authors, publishers, their products and the end consumers through commercial transactions.
- Data:** Data are considered as raw unprocessed messages, facts and figures from which meaning can be derived.
- Entrepreneurs:** Risk takers in business that seek profitable opportunities, and thus venture into the book trade as financiers, decision-makers and facilitators of the process.
- Entrepreneurship:** The process by which individuals either on their own or in partnership with others pursues business opportunities by looking beyond their current constraints.
- Information:** Factual data, advice or opinions, in oral written or electronic format, into which value judgements can be entered.
- Information need:** A state associated with uncertainty coupled with the desire to fill a gap in knowledge.
- Information seeking behaviour:** These are acts that individuals engage in, in their efforts to fill an existing gap in knowledge.
- Modes of analysis:** A qualitative research term used in place of the term data analysis.
- User studies:** Researches where in depth analysis of the underlying needs that result in information-seeking behaviour are undertaken.
- Sound decisions:** These are situations in which decisions made by entrepreneurs enhance chances of profit making.

- Steps:** Refers to actual efforts undertaken to enable data to be meaningful and interpretable.
- Stock:** These are items including books, stationary and computer accessories that a bookseller can put on offer for sale.
- Stocking:** This is the process of acquiring stock that will be available in the bookshop for purchase by customers.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The book trade is a business enterprise that provides a link between publishers and book consumers. Bookselling, the main function of the book trade is accomplished through a variety of outlets with bookshops playing a major role. Other bookselling outlets include supermarkets, petrol station stores, mail order delivery and the Internet. Greater focus and emphasis, however, is put on bookshops since they provide a more structured system through which consumers can purchase books.

Book consumers comprise the target market for book trade entrepreneurs and fall into different categories that include; individuals, groups, institutions, libraries and information centres. Booksellers, as entrepreneurs, come in direct contact with end consumers and have an obligation to ensure that there is adequate and constant supply of books in circulation. They facilitate the day-to-day operations of bookshops through financing and decision making. Bookshops play a major role in the creation of book business. According to (Anzar 2002; Muita, 2001; Waruinge, 1995) bookshops are rightfully regarded as the life-blood of the book industry while the book trade is the arteries which provide the necessary lifeline to the publishing industry.

Observations of the Kenyan book trade by (Muita 2001; Rotich 2000; Makotsi and Nyariki 1997) indicate that a large proportion of the book market is textbook oriented comprising mostly of primary and secondary school publications. These sectors have also received unparalleled attention both from the Government and the donor community.

Acknowledging the pivotal role of the book trade in enhancing access to learning materials and information, the Government of Kenya in the 1998 Revised Policy on Education, which is applicable to date, requires that all textbooks and stationary items for free primary school programme are purchased by respective schools through bookshops (MOEST 2004). The free primary education programmes is now part of the Kenyan Government's strategy of actualising Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and specifically targets the attainment of MDG No. 2, which proposes Education for All (EFA) by 2015 (MOEST, 2007).

The Kenyan book trade though said to be one of the most developed in Africa has a majority of the bookshops not exhibiting signs of a prosperous book trade with many businesses being medium or small in size, have limited stock range and many times lack the books that consumers need (Zell, 2000; Muita, 2001; Chakava, 1996). This discrepancy between expected performance of the bookshops and the inability to satisfy consumer needs is a matter of concern. Makotsi and Nyariki (1997) in a study they conducted concur that Kenyan bookshops do not satisfy their customer book

requirements. This is despite the apparent existence of a captive market as provided by primary and secondary schools.

In seeking to unravel the reasons for the general poor performance of the bookshops in the face of an increasingly favourable trading environment, this study investigated book trade entrepreneurs' access to and use of information in the day to day work situation. The pivotal role of information in business success was considered to be a good starting point. The study took into account the fact that information is today recognised as a factor of production alongside land, labour and capital (Stroemann, 1992). As information experts affirm, information is power and is a forceful tool for personal, organisational and business advancement. Concurring with this fact, Stroemann, (1992) states that:

“Information is a most potent source of value added in services and in administration. Organisations and institutions all over the world are rising to the realisation of the potent power of information and are working at encompassing information in all areas of their operations. A significant realisation in the advent of the ‘information age’ however is the existence of an information divide, where as availability, accessibility and dispensation of information in organisations betrays glaring gaps. While some organisations fully embrace information as the very basis for survival and progression, some still look at information with scepticism as a tool that is driving them fast into an unknown sphere”.

In the research, book trade entrepreneurs' information needs, information seeking behaviour, sources and channels of communication were studied to establish entrepreneur information access use as an impetus to the success of their book business.

1.2 Historical development of the book trade in Kenya

The history of book selling in Kenya can be traced to the 1890s, a period that was marked by the coming of Christian missionaries and European Settlers. It is to this group that early publishing in Kenya is credited. Before this period however, Arab traders, the first arrivals to the East African Coast had brought with them Islamic teachings. They ruled Zanzibar and part of the Kenyan Coast where they remained confined. Their teachings were mostly conducted in '*Madrassas*' through oral means and therefore did not have much influence on the developments in the publishing scene. This was attributed mostly to the fact that the Arab interest was in trade where they engaged in slaves and ivory trading (Ndegwa, 1973).

European interest in East Africa and by extension Kenya was fuelled by many factors. However, the dominant factor that eventually made it possible for them to penetrate the interior of Kenya was the Christian missionary interest (Ndegwa, 1973). The coming of missionaries created the need to have close contact with the local Africans and therefore the necessity of learning their languages and teaching them how to read and write. This led to a need to have books printed in these languages (Ndegwa, 1973).

Dr. Ludwig Krapf, who is said to have been looking for an alternative route to Ethiopia, became the first missionary to explore the Kenyan mainland. He set up a missionary settlement in 1875 near Mombassa Main Island and named it Freretown which was then used to house freed slaves. This settlement developed and later became the head quarters

of CMS work in Kenya whereby a printing press was installed in 1887 (Ndegwa, 1973). Significant work was not reported from the press until 1890 when it began printing translations of the prayer book and hymns in various vernacular languages.

The advent of book selling in Kenya is traced to 1894 when the CMS started a bookshop initially based at the Headquarters in Mombasa but later extended its influence by opening branches and depots in mission stations in different parts of the country. Notably bookshops were opened in Nairobi, Central Kenya, Nakuru, Maseno and Butere in Western Kenya. Other bookshops that opened around the same period and which were not Christian oriented were the East African standard and S.J. Moore Bookshops. While these two catered mostly to the European population and the more educated clientele, the CMS bookshops were interested in the African population and sold mostly religious books and vernacular publications.

The CMS bookshop is thus recognised for its pioneering position in the development of commercial publishing and book trade in Kenya. As the CMS bookshops increased in number and business expanded, a manager, Mr. Charles G Richards was brought in from Britain in 1935 to run its affairs. Richards later became instrumental in the setting up of the first commercial publishing firm in Kenya, the 'Ndia Kuu Press', a corrupted Swahili term for 'Njia Kuu' meaning Highway Press which was started during the 1939-45 war (Ndegwa, 1973). In this pioneering position the bookshop performed the dual functions of publishing and bookselling. Establishing a printing press was meant to ensure a constant supply of books for the bookshops.

Business for the CMS bookshops began to decrease and eventually ceased around 1965 when a new manager, Mr Brown was employed to replace Mr Richards. At around this period, Mr. Richards was appointed by then Colonial Government to start a publishing firm, named the EALB (East African Literature Bureau), now KLB (Chakava, 1996). The CMS bookshops were eventually sold to the Educational Supply Association who did not continue with the bookselling business but instead concentrated on the publishing (Ndegwa, 1973).

Kenya's book-trade, however, survived its relegation to second place and is reputed to be one of the most active in Africa with the bulk of the trade consisting of small-scale businesses, which are urban-based. As Rotich (2000) points out, there are bookshops of various sizes in Kenya, which are concentrated in major urban areas. This situation goes contrary to Kenya's population setup where most people live in the rural areas. Consequently, there is a major imbalance in access to books and other products of the information industry.

Other features of the book trade in Kenya as cited by Odingi (2002) in his contribution in the book 'The book Chain in Anglophone Africa' edited by Roger Stringer, "*The book chain in Kenya*" are:

- *A low level of literacy* - meaning that a sizeable proportion of Kenyans are excluded from readership;

- *The dominance of books written in the English language*- which means that people with basic literacy skills in Kenyan vernacular languages are excluded from using books, sold by bookshops or stocked by libraries as so few of them are available in the vernaculars.
- *The absence of a reading culture*, which results in few individuals buying books and other reading materials.
- *The Kenyan culture*, which encourages people to spend their leisure time in sporting activities, recreational places (bars, hotels), and in churches and mosques rather than spending it reading.

Additionally, the Kenyan book trade is characterised by the high cost of books, especially textbooks. Books are treated like other common commodities and are not regarded as special or unique products. This situation discussed by Makotsi and Nyariki (1997) has limited the ability of many Kenyans to have access to information, knowledge and education. Also, unlike other products which can be purchased according to an individual's taste or class, books in Kenya are of one quality (paperback versions) which both the rich and the poor alike would have to buy. This is in contrast to developed countries where hard cover and paperback editions of books are produced to suit the preferences of the users.

Regarding the types of bookshops, Muita (2001) notes that bookshops in Kenya can broadly be categorised into two as those privately owned and the institutional. He describes privately owned bookshops as businesses run as sole proprietorship,

partnerships or private companies. These are the ones that form the majority and seem to be the most successful. They are, however, limited in the variety of books and other materials on offer and often customers have to find other means of acquiring the books they need. Institutional bookshops, which include university, research and religious establishments, also experience similar problems. In fact, most institutional bookshops rely on the parent institution for financial support.

Bookshops in Kenya can further be categorised as wholesale and retail. The wholesale trade is, however, not clearly defined as these are usually retail bookshops that are able to service other weaker bookshops. Notably, bookshops are found in urban areas throughout the country with most towns both big and small being adequately represented while the rural areas are not adequately provided.

1.3 Development of the book trade in Nairobi

Nairobi City is the capital of Kenya and is located 1° and 16's 36° at an altitude of 1,660 metres above sea level. It derived its name from the Maasai term 'Enkare Nairobi' which means a place of cold water. The City serves as the headquarters of Nairobi Province, which is the smallest province in the country. Unlike other provinces however, Nairobi comprises only one District. Nairobi District is divided into divisions, currently eight (8) in number and comprise fifty (50) locations.

The divisions and locations are in place to ease administrative decision-making. The Province also has eight constituencies, which follow the same boundaries as the administrative divisions (which is not the case with most other districts in the Country). Constituency names do not necessarily tally with division names. Starehe Constituency for instance is in Central Division, Langata Constituency in Kibera Division and Kamukunji Constituency in Pumwani Division.

The City is the commercial, industrial, political economic and social hub of Kenya. As Nyakaana (1996) observes interest in Nairobi as a commercial centre developed as early as 1899 with the commencement of the construction of the Kenya Uganda Railway in Mombasa, a coastal town of Kenya. The unique location of Nairobi also led to the transfer of the then colonial capital from Machakos in 1907 to its present location.

Origins of the book trade in Nairobi can be traced to 1910 when the East African Standard Limited a pioneer newspaper publishing organisation moved its head quarters from Mombasa to Nairobi and opened a bookshop while continuing to produce the Newspaper. During the same period other bookshops opened business in Nairobi among them the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and S.J Moore both of which are no longer in existence.

The East African Standard, however, still carries on with the business of newspaper publishing. At the time of their existence, the Standard and S..J. Moore Bookshops targeted mostly the elite of the time who were mostly of European and Asian origins.

Consequently most of their book stock consisted of foreign publications. The CMS bookshop whose interest was to spread the gospel had as its target clientele within the African population. Since the church had a local printing press, a large proportion of its stock consisted of local publications.

Modern book trade in Nairobi can be traced to the transfer of TextBook Centre, Bookshop from its then location in Murang'a, a town in Central Kenya, where it was established in 1958, to Nairobi in 1964 (Shah, 2005). At present Nairobi has over 300 bookshops of which 287 are registered members of the Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Association (KBSA) (KBSA, 2002). The book trade in Nairobi continues to perform the crucial role of being the link between publishers and the end consumers. As indicated in the KBSA report (2002), the number of bookshops in Nairobi has increased from about 30 in the 1980s to the present figure of over 300 bookshops.

The book trade in Nairobi is supported by the existence of the more than 45 publishing firms with about 30 of them being members of the Kenya Publishers' Association (Muita, 2001). Textbook publishing is still the main area of publishing for most firms making up about 90% of the Kenyan book business. This trend is also exhibited by the book trade.

1.4 The book trade and the larger information market

The book trade is an important component of the wider information services market. As Stroemann (1992) explains, the larger information market comprises other service

producers and organisations embedded in a dynamic heterogeneous environment, which has an influence on, and impacts on the actors. Major actors in the information market in which the book trade operates include:

- *Producers*: these are manufacturers of the products to be offered to the market which in the book trade are represented by publishers.
- *Information distributors*: these are distribution channel agents and network management corporations among others which facilitate the exchange of information between information producers/suppliers and information services and between information services and their customers. They are represented by the various associations of the book trade and bibliographic generation agencies.
- *Clients*: These are customers of the information services and include the book trade and other players.
- *Support services*: These include publishers' sales representatives and information technology and management support services like hardware and software providers, or telecommunication service providers.
- *Competitors*: these comprise other bookshops and organisations that provide similar or related information services or use such services.

The wider environmental context according to Stroemann (1992) also impacts on the operations of the service entity under consideration. It is therefore not possible for players to operate in isolation. Being participants in the larger information market actors in the book trade have to observe a host of market rules and regulations such as government

regulations, competitive behaviour, copyright, privacy, libel and defamation laws among others. They also have to be aware of institutions such as associations and lobbies, either those of the immediate professional environment or of other market participants.

The entrepreneurs would need to liaise with the various associations of the trade including the booksellers', publishers' and library associations. They would also have to observe other laws such as taxation, labour relations and safety standards. Issues of technological developments would have to be monitored as they could have an impact on how services are delivered as well as provide new and innovative ways of service delivery. Other concerns include socio-political changes like changes in consumer tastes and preferences, political reforms and changes in government policies that impact on the trade such as education policies. Economic changes should also be of concern as they impact on the individual and by extension the national purchasing power of the population.

1.5 Statement of the problem

Book trade entrepreneurs work in a highly dynamic environment in which access to information is crucial for business success. The background information to the study indicates a clear need to have an information system that would enhance access to information by book trade entrepreneurs. Considering the role of the book trade in the overall progression of the different facets of national development information access by entrepreneurs that can facilitate provision of materials in bookshops according to consumer requirements is paramount. Further, carrying out business using deficient

information skills and systems means that entrepreneur horizons are limited thus leading to poor customer services and eventually to loss of trading opportunities.

Stock is the lifeline of any bookshop and a great deal of care must be taken in making stock selection. This involves having relevant bibliographic tools and also having the ability to use these tools for business success. Right stocking leads to a good stock turnover and therefore more profits, while wrong stocking can lead to money being tied up unnecessarily which eventually may lead to losses. Since the type and quantity of stock to buy is dependent on individual characteristics of the bookshop and skills and book knowledge of the entrepreneur, successful stocking requires that the entrepreneur understands the market and particularly what the customers want.

In accomplishing these tasks, entrepreneurs require suitable information systems to aid the decision making process. Also crucial for book trade success is the existence of channels that would facilitate efficient and cost effective communication between entrepreneurs, their suppliers and the consumers. As they carry out the bookselling business, entrepreneurs continually need to communicate with the suppliers on issues such as availability of stock, the prices, delivery modes and terms of purchase.

Considering the poor performance of Kenya's book trade in meeting consumer requirements, it is obvious that the existing information services in Kenya are inadequate in meeting the unique needs of book trade entrepreneurs in the day-to-day work situation. It is evident that the information services were not created with the needs of all possible

users taken into account. There seems to be a disconnect between services offered by book trade information service providers and what entrepreneurs need in order to succeed in their businesses.

Since book trade entrepreneurs face numerous problems including under-capitalisation and personal limitations such as low educational levels and inadequate training in information skills, how can they find the needed information and at whose cost? What information needs do entrepreneurs actually have? Could the fragmented nature of information service providers of the industry be harmonised for better information access and use? Have developments in information and communication technology (ICT) helped in bridge the information gap?

As an important component of the larger information market, the book trade remains an essential agent in information acquisition, storage and dissemination both nationally and internationally. Taking into account the central role of information in almost every aspect of individual, organisational, national and global sphere, a study undertaken to investigate access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs is justified. This study therefore sought to investigate access to, and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs by studying their information needs, seeking behaviour and use.

1.6 Aim of the study

This study sought to investigate access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation in Nairobi and examined the extent to which existing information systems met entrepreneurs' information needs.

1.7 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the information needs of entrepreneurs in the book trade in Nairobi.
2. Establish the information seeking behaviour of the entrepreneurs.
3. Determine how the entrepreneurs use the information acquired.
4. Identify the information sources and channels available to book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation.
5. Identify macro and micro environmental factors that impact on an entrepreneur's day to-day work situation.
6. Analyse the communication process among entrepreneurs and between them and their suppliers and consumers and to establish how they are linked.
7. Identify problems that hamper the smooth flow of information in the book-trade.
8. Offer suggestions on how current information services to the book trade could be improved to enhance entrepreneur access to and use of information.

1.8 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What activities in the day-to-day work situation led book trade entrepreneurs to experience an information need?
2. For what purpose did book trade entrepreneurs need information?
3. What type of information did book trade entrepreneurs need to satisfy their information need?
4. How did the entrepreneurs seek for information?
5. What sources of information were available for book trade entrepreneurs to consult?
6. What was the order of preference in use of information sources?
7. To what use was the acquired information put?
8. What main constraints affected access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs?
9. What form of information system and structure was required for optimum information access and use by the entrepreneurs?
10. What suggestions could be made to improve information service provision to book trade entrepreneurs?

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. The value and effects of information in enhancing business progression is yet to be appreciated by players in the book industry including book trade entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, the book trade has not been active in fighting for the enactment of a national book policy and an information policy.

2. Book trade entrepreneurs in Nairobi have inadequate information provision on important factors such as training opportunities, product knowledge, market identification, the prevailing industry rules and regulations, stocking decisions and funding sources. The problem is caused by a fragmented information service.
3. As a result of the inadequate understanding of the information needs and information seeking habits of book trade entrepreneurs, the existing information systems of the book trade industry are inefficient and ineffective in serving the unique needs of the intended users.
4. Due to the existence of an information divide, book trade entrepreneurs in developing countries are disadvantaged in access to and use of information. The inability to access and use information is attributed to lack of information literacy and low educational levels.
5. It is possible to develop improved information systems for the book trade if we have a better understanding of the information needs of the users through the conduct of research.

1.10 Significance of the study

This study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, forms a pioneering work in the study of access to and use of information by entrepreneurs in the book trade in Nairobi. As a user study, it offers an insight into the information needs and information seeking

behaviour of book trade entrepreneurs which can be used as a basis in developing an appropriate information system. Such a system, if created, would take cognisance of unique information needs of book trade entrepreneurs.

Currently, Kenya lacks national information and book policies. As a result, the book trade operates without formal guidelines on the roles of the different players. Through such research therefore, it is possible to formulate policies founded on the true reflection of the needs of beneficiaries.

The book trade plays an important role in the overall information service by bringing together authors, their books, the publishers and book consumers. This function is accomplished successfully when the book trade is able to offer consumers books according to their tastes and preferences. Findings of this study may help in designing an information system that is sensitive to information needs of users, in this case, book trade entrepreneurs.

1.11 Scope and limitations of the study

In investigating the access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation in Nairobi, this research considered the book trade in its distributive perspective of booksellers to end user through bookshops. Bookselling outlets such supermarkets, petrol station convenience stores, institutional bookshops, religious bookshops and book vendors were outside the research scope. Focus was put on

commercial bookshops in Nairobi by virtue of their stocking which gives a more representative picture of the books available in all other bookselling outlets.

Since the aim was to get representative views of issues affecting book trade entrepreneurs in the process of information access and use, efforts were made to reach the furthest possible boundaries of Nairobi which covered the eight divisions of the City namely Central, Dagoretti, Embakasi, Kasarani, Kibera, Makadara, Pumwani and Westlands. Bookshops in the City environs which fell outside the divisions were left out.

The study also focused on entrepreneurs' information needs and did not therefore investigate information needs of employees except from the entrepreneur's point of view. Intricacies of bookselling were also outside the scope of the study as such a focus would have disrupted the in-depth investigation of book trade entrepreneurs and their problems in information access and use.

Owing to the sensitive nature of business, some entrepreneurs declined to be interviewed. Largely therefore, purposive sampling based on an entrepreneur's willingness to be interviewed was used. A lot of time was spent getting someone known to the entrepreneurs to make initial contacts. This, however, did not affect the findings as a majority of the entrepreneurs opened up after they were assured of the confidentiality of the information they gave and discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on important aspects of the book trade including its developments, distribution role and information issues relevant to understanding information needs, information seeking behaviour and use by book trade entrepreneurs. A critique of related studies is offered to give perspective to the present research.

2.2 The book as a product

A product is what one prepares to present to the consumer as a commodity or service that will satisfy the demand for that commodity or service. The book as a product therefore is what the bookseller presents to the customer in exchange for money. The customer enjoys benefits of information as contained in the book while the bookseller expects to make a profit from the sales.

According to the Shorter English Dictionary:

“a book is a collection of sheets - usually paper ones, fastened together and protected by a cover which do form a genuine unit”.

The United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1972) define a book as:

“Sheets of paper of more than 49 pages excluding the covers that do form a genuine unit”.

These definitions while describing the physical aspects of a book fail to recognise intrinsic values most of them intangible that are experienced when individuals come in contact with books. Indeed, in society books are much more than artefacts. Elaborating on this fact, Zeleza (2002) explains that books contain more than useful knowledge or information; they are reservoirs of human activities and fantasies, bequest of a purposeful consciousness. Books can also be described as literary compositions that are used in society for among other things knowledge acquisition and transfer, for education, and for the communication of cultural values.

As products books have an edge over other communication media by the length, overall general convenience, physical attractiveness, status in society and relative cheapness. A book, for instance, has no need for a power source, after sales service or maintenance in the same way an electronic device would require. The versatile nature of books allows for a wide variety of distribution that creates book business. Like other products on offer in the market, however, books compete against different forms and formats of learning materials and processes, entertainment and information sources and channels.

In contrast with other products, however, books have unique factors that make them different. The most outstanding factor arises from the relationship between the author and the publisher. Under normal trading terms, the producer is usually the owner of the end product. Books as products, however, are recognised as ‘property’ of the author under the copyright law. The law recognises the author of a book as the owner of ‘intellectual property’ arising from the publication. Publishers though providing funding in facilitating the totality of the origination and production process cannot be considered or recognised as ‘owners’ of the book. The dealing between authors and publishers is done under contractual terms. Other factors that make books unique include the many forms it can adopt, like, trading in them under selling and buying of rights and possibility adapting to a multiple formats.

2.3 Book trade developments

The book trade has developed over time from oral communication to the present time of information technology. This evolution of information and its communication is as old as the existence of mankind. As a social being man has always devised and found ways of communicating according to the various demands and issues that have come his way. The oldest form through which man communicated is through oral communication. As they evolved, however, and as challenges presented themselves, they began to device means other than oral through which to communicate and being able to pass information.

Discussing orality as a precursor of script, Ong (2002) presents a picture of resistance to change that existed then, and which can still be experienced in the modern world. In his writing, Plato an eminent philosopher and student of Socrates, expresses Socrates's displeasure at the introduction of written forms thus:

“It is inhuman pretending to establish outside the mind what in reality can only be in the mind. It is a thing, a manufactured product. writing destroys memory. Those who use writing will become forgetful relying on an external resource for what they lack in internal resources. Writing weakens the mind” (Ong, 2002).

It is notable, however, that though rejecting the need for written communication, those raising objections presented such objections in writing (Ong, 2002). Like other momentous changes, the move from oral communication to the written form was strong and therefore unstoppable hence the creation of books.

2.3.1 Historical perspectives of the book trade

Since man begun to communicate through means other than oral, there was a need to have communication stored especially for future use or for access by a larger audience (Zelega, 2002). Writing on historical developments of the book trade Feather (1988) explains that books became products of commerce even before the invention of typographic printing. In this regard, booksellers can rightfully be said to have been the earliest forerunners of the book trade. Further elaborating on the pioneering role of the book trade, Feather (1988) states that commercial book trade is known to have taken place in ancient Athens as authenticated in Rome through the sales of publications such as “the Egyptian Book of the Dead” a favourite publication for the high in the society

who had lost loved ones. He elaborates that in these early period scribes working for booksellers made copies of text for individual customers, or for authors to distribute to their friends, or even, speculatively for the book sellers to offer for sale.

The fall of the Western Empire at the beginning of the 5th century AD caused the copying of manuscripts to retreat into monasteries, and it was not until the twelfth century that it emerged again into the public sphere. The re-emergence of the book did not alter the distribution process as booksellers continued to perform all the functions of the book trade which included, reproduction of copies mostly manually through the use of scribes and selling in single or few copies as could be produced.

Information record, its presentation and multiplication of copies improved and changed dramatically with the advent of the invention of typographic printing in the mid 15th century. The change popularly referred to as the ‘book revolution’ is credited to a German Gold Smith, Johann Gutenberg (Feather, 1988). In this invention, Gutenberg realised the letters of the Latin alphabet when manipulated in varying combinations could produce words in most European languages and dialects. These letters are twenty-six in some languages as in the English alphabet and twenty-four in some as in the Kiswahili alphabet. Important outcomes of the invention of typographic printing were the increase in number of copies of books that could be produced, wider circulation and the separation of functions of the industry into publishing, printing and distribution which gave rise to book business.

2.3.2 Contemporary book trade

The period marks the increase in the number of copies produced and provided the possibility of wider circulation. This introduction of mechanised publishing while having the advantage of increased players however, brought with it new problems with regard to distribution. Earlier, booksellers performed all functions of the book-trade which included searching for manuscripts; ensuring multiplication of copies and performing book selling functions.

As demand for books increased there was a need for provision of books to meet the changing consumer tastes and preferences caused booksellers to be overwhelmed leading to libraries becoming focal points for greater access to books. The problem was however only partially solved as there were a large majority of consumers who preferred to own copies of their own. It became imperative therefore to start outlets through which consumers could buy the books they wanted. Bookshops were the result.

The 'book revolution' caused realignment in the industry that led to the creation of defined job roles, as we know them today. Indeed to a large extent, the unwritten law in the modern book trade is for authors to write, publishers to produce, printers to facilitate multiplication of copies, bookshops to distribute and libraries to provide for greater access to books.

The advent of, and greater use of computers from the second world war onwards and particularly the increased access to the World Wide Web (WWW) from the 1990s, opened up an era of life without frontiers. In the book trade, business can be conducted both in the traditional bookshop system and on the Internet. The use of the Internet for business transactions means that consumers have more options when it comes to accessing products of the book industry.

2.4 Environmental contexts of the book trade in Kenya

“Kenya is a land of variety; variety of human beings, of wild fauna and flora, of scenery and climate. It is a land too of great variety of opportunity for those who are not afraid of real hard work and are prepared to venture their energies and capital” (Ncebere 2003).

As with other businesses, the book trade operates within a given business environmental context. The prevailing circumstances within the business environment very much determines whether it would be conducive or non-conducive. Kibera (1996) explains that “for a business to take place, it has got to exist and operate within a context of an internal as well as a larger external environment that presents both opportunities and constraints”. This observation is true of the Kenyan Business Environment, which as is detailed here, consists of unique factors including physical, historical, economic, socio-cultural and technological that affect business processes. These factors are individually examined.

2.4.1 The Physical Environment

Kenya’s physical environment has played a major role in making the Country particularly attractive for investment. In detailing the unique physical characteristics of Kenya,

Ogonda and Ochieng (1992) state that the republic of Kenya today covers an area of some 582,646 square kilometres of which water surface occupies 13,393 square kilometres. Mburugu and Ojany (1988) state that Kenya is situated on the upraised part of the eastern portion of the African continent astride the equatorial latitude, a situation that gives it a warm tropical climate with varying vegetation types. The Northern part of the country is generally dry, characterised by semi-arid conditions. It also has a fairly good inland water supply, the Tana River, Athi, Nzoia, Yala, Nyando, Lakes- Victoria, Nakuru, Turkana, and Magadi Naivasha. The Indian Ocean provides one of the best ports worldwide, and is situated in the Country's second largest city of Mombasa.

Kenya's climatic conditions and physical features provide both opportunities and challenges as far as the book trade is concerned. The Country for example, does not experience extreme weather conditions such as winter and summer making it possible to do business without having to make major adjustments all year round.

2.4.2 The Commercial Environment

The commercial environment is the prevailing business atmosphere in which entrepreneurs trade. Historically, Kenya's business environment is closely intertwined with the history of mercantilism in Africa. In narrating this history, Ochieng (1992) details that Africa was visited and penetrated by representative merchants of ancient Mediterranean civilisations – Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals and Vizantiles between 500 BC and the Christian era. Trade between these merchants and Africans was enhanced by the presence of the Indian Ocean which, particularly opened up routes into

Sub-Sahara Africa. A notable feature about this early trading however was its unequal and generally imbalanced nature. This situation became especially prevalent between 1498 A.D. and the 19th Century when there was increased interest both by the Far East traders and the newly arrived Europeans.

The 19th century is particularly noted as watershed period in Kenya's historical business environment. This period according to Ochieng (1992) was crucial for Kenya in many ways. It was the period during which the European Settlers, Missionaries, and the Arabs began to make their influence felt beyond the Coast by moving inwards to the mainland.

As the exploration of the mainland continued, the relationship between the Europeans and Africans began to change with the Europeans taking control of the land by colonising it. Reasons for colonisation can be deduced from the following quote from (Ochieng 1992):

“It is increasingly believed by historians that of all the factors that led to the colonial form of imperialism, the needs of the emergent industrial capital in the 18th and 19th Centuries were the most crucial. Europe needed markets for her industrial products. Colonies were also profitable because they provided investors and traders with cheap labour and cheap goods. Thus the industrial revolution was decisively the major factor that led Europe to conquer Africa”.

The eventual colonisation of Kenya took place in 1895 when the country was declared a British Protectorate (Salim and JanMohamed 1988). This period also marked the foundation of modern business in Kenya including that of publishing and book trade. During this time the barter system of trade was largely replaced by a monetary system

which in this early period was conducted by use of the Indian Rupee. It is also around this period that formal education was started in Kenya. Since books and education have a kind of symbiotic relationship education has continued to boost the book trade while the book trade supports education.

Features that mark the current business environment in Kenya are the broad categorisation of the sector into formal and informal business sectors (Ncebere, 2003). The formal sector comprises manufacturing, industrial parastatal and service sectors, while the informal comprises of the Jua-Kali and other informal, mostly small businesses. As a sector, the book trade falls into the formal business sector category since a majority of the bookshops observe formal and legal requirements pertaining to starting and doing business in Kenya.

2.4.3 The Economic Environment

The economic environment refers to fiscal aspects of the business environment. Kenya's economic environment is largely a product of structures put in place during the colonial era. As Ochieng (1992) states the Country's economic environment is a legacy of the colonial period with little ideological or structural breaks after it gained independence. Former colonial administrative and economic structures have either been modified or retained in the state in which they were, a situation that often erroneously leads Kenya to be labelled a 'neo- colonial' State. Concurring with this view, Ncebere (2003) explains that in her short history Kenya has been a capitalist state and still projects this image in the social, political and economic spheres.

Kenya has made big strides in efforts to give its peoples a better life. According Travel to Documents Systems (2008) since independence the Kenyan Government has promoted rapid economic growth through public investment and incentives to private industrial investment. The period 1963 to 1973 was one of rapid growth with the economy growing at an average rate of 6.6%. The Country's economic performance during the 1980s and the 1990s however, saw an unprecedented drop below its potential. Between the years 1997 and 2002 Kenya experienced the worst economic slump with the economy growing at just 1.5%. The extreme decline in economic performance was largely attributed to poor policies both for industry and for business, inadequate credit, and poor international terms of trade.

In 1999, the Government took positive steps on reforms aimed at improving the Country's economy which included establishment of Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority and the adoption of measures aimed at improving the transparency of government procedures particularly in procurement (Travel Documents Systems, 2008). The economy begun to recover in 2003 when a new Government came into power and registered growths of 2.8% in 2003; 4.3% in 2004; 5.8% in 2005; 6.1% in 2006 and 7.0% in 2007 (Travel Documents System, 2008).

This upward economic growth, however, was disrupted by the violence that broke out after the December 27, 2007, general election that paralysed the economy in January and February 2008. During this period, the manufacturing and service sectors including the

book trade cut back on operations and were to a large extent grounded. The signing of a reconciliation agreement on 28th February, 2008 put the economy back on track (Travel Documents System 2008). Further strengthening its efforts at economic growth the Government unveiled Vision 2030 that advocates for and spells out structures for improved delivery of government services, addressing structural reforms, investment in infrastructure, especially roads, improved internet access, reduction of chronic instability caused by crimes and improved economic governance.

The book trade being a business industry also recorded poor performance proportional to the general economic situation for the periods in which the economic situation was in decline. A report prepared the KBSA (2002) captured the situation in the book trade in Kenya as the Chairman states:

“KBSA wishes to draw your attention to the intricate problem of under capitalisation experienced by majority of bookshops Kenya-wide. Books unlike consumable items like sugar tiesup a lot of money in the form slow moving stock. Our sales are hinged entirely on education books because our readership habits are far off the western countries reading society. Our annual book turnovers are slow to generate enough working capital to sustain even our basic commitments like staff wages, electricity, water telephones, rents and short term overdraft loans to mention but a few due to borrowed money our profit margins are greatly reduced”.

Anzar (2002) delineates the relationship between economic performance, business progression and education by stating that without economic guarantees, booksellers are the first to feel the brunt of economic recession through the disappearance of reading habits or the changes of mood of the government of the day in textbook policies.

As demonstrated in the MPND (2003) report, education is given prominence as a key determinant of earnings and therefore important exit route from poverty. Education also improves the lives and well being of individuals and by extension that of the larger society. In most cases, high educational attainment for a household reduces the likelihood of a household being poor, likewise, the educational levels of mothers significantly affects the health status of the entire family.

As part of addressing economic challenges facing its people, the Government of Kenya introduced free primary education and substantially revised the curricula to reduce the financial burden of education (MOEST, 2003). Measures were put in place to aid in the attainment of the government objectives. These measures included:

- Optimal staffing (student teacher ratios of 40:1)
- Increase availability of textbooks to achieve a pupil textbook ratio of 3:1 in the early grades and 2:1 in higher grades.
- Sensitisation of communities on the benefits of education

Considering that issues affecting education ultimately have a corresponding effect on the book trade, it was inevitable for the book trade to be looked upon to provide the necessary textbooks to meet the educational objectives as put forth by the Government. Since education is accomplished through schools, booksellers have to place greater emphasis and focus on schools. The spread of schools throughout the country means that the distributive aspect of book trade has to be more targeted and well thought out.

Emphasising the critical role of book distribution, Aznar (2002) argue that book promotion and distribution are in particular arduous and difficult tasks that are undertaken by booksellers. He further suggests that if one is interested in the development of a vibrant and healthy book industry, we have to reckon with the importance of book selling networks at national, regional and international levels.

Kenya has continued to encourage integration with regional and international bodies as part of its strategy at economic growth and expansion. Important organisations in which Kenya is a member are:

- **African Union (AU) formally Organisation of African Unity (OAU)**

The biggest regional grouping among third world countries, of which Kenya is a member is the OAU now AU. Arnold (1994) however observes that such groupings are not always advantageous to member countries. Often a difficult discrepancy to understand, for example, among the African countries is the lack of correlation between a country's size and its economic strengths. According to him, it may seem that the larger the country the weaker its economic abilities. This phenomenon is viewed to have led to the insignificant negotiating power of many African countries in major world bodies such as the UN and the World Bank. The resultant effect has been that many resolutions are passed which, in most cases, are unfavourable to Africa. A case in point that demonstrates Africa's weak bargaining power was the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) by the World Bank in the 1990s. The SAPs were meant

to open up country markets through liberalisation and free market economies. It is largely the introduction of SAPs that have been blamed for slowing down Kenya's overall economic progress in the last decade (GATT, 1994). The situation is captured in the following statement (GATT, 1994):

“Kenya is a low-income developing country with a GDP per capital of US\$ 347 in 1991. In the 15 years to 1980, real growth averaged 6.8 percent a year but slipped to an annual rate of 4.2 in the 1990s as macroeconomic imbalances came to the fore”.

The need for unity among African states, however, superseded any set backs encountered in efforts to come together. This fact became apparent when individual countries realised that gaining political independence led to new challenges more so the challenge of having to sustain the countries economically. Over the years therefore efforts to maintain regional integration became a rallying call to all countries, Kenya being in the forefront.

- **African development bank (ADB)**

The African development bank (ADB) was established in 1964. The bank's stated aims were to contribute to the economic development and social advancement of its members both individually and collectively. It was to promote public and private capital investment and to provide capital technical assistance. The little impact ADB made in member countries was mostly attributed to its exclusive African subscription thus it fell prey to the small size of the economies of most member states. This weakness was addressed when the bank opened membership to non-African countries in 1982.

- **East African community (EAC)**

The East African community (EAC) was established in June 1967 with the membership comprising of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The object of EAC was to strengthen economic, trade and industrial ties between the countries. Its provisions included; a common exercise tariff; no internal tariffs; and the establishment of an East African Development bank (EADB. Problems for the EAC emerged when Tanzania and Uganda began to complain that a majority of the economic benefits went to Kenya due to its then advanced infrastructure and better developed industrial base. Two factors, however, lead to the eventual collapse of the original EAC. These were the coup in 1971, which brought General Idi Amin Dada to power in Uganda with the consequence of the Tanzanian Head of State Mwalimu Julius Nyerere refusing to meet him; and the subsequent quarrel between Kenya and Tanzania in 1977 that led to the closure of their joint borders.

Following the dissolution of the EAC, former Member States negotiated a Mediation Agreement for the Division of Assets and Liabilities, which they signed in 1984. However, as one of the provisions of the Mediation Agreement, the three States agreed to explore areas of future co-operation and to make concrete arrangements for such co-operation (EAC 2007).

Subsequent meetings of the three Heads of State led to the signing of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation on November 30, 1993. Full East African Co-operation efforts began on March 14, 1996 when the Secretariat of the Permanent Tripartite Commission was launched at the

Headquarters of the EAC in Arusha, Tanzania. Considering the need to consolidate regional co-operation, the East African Heads of State, at their second Summit in Arusha on 29 April 1997, directed the Permanent Tripartite Commission to start the process of upgrading the Agreement establishing the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation into a Treaty. During a one-day summit in Arusha, Tanzania on 22 January 1999, the Heads of State of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda resolved to sign the Treaty re-establishing the East African Community (EAC) by the end of July 1999. The community was to take over from the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation (EAC 2007).

In addition to a decision to re-establish the East African Community by the end of 1999, other issues raised at the EAC Summit of January 1999 included the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This included, Foreign Policy Co-ordination; Zero tariff rates to be adopted by 1 July 1999 and the implementation of COMESA's 80% tariff reduction objective at the same time; setting up of a mechanism to deal with terrorism in the region.

A meeting of experts that took place at the EAC Secretariat in Arusha from 28 June to 7 July 1999 resulted in the revision and redrafting of trade provisions of the draft treaty. Members of the three task forces also agreed on the creation of a customs union, the removal of internal tariffs by July 2000 and the removal of non-tariff barriers to importation of goods originating from the partner states within twelve months of coming into force of the treaty. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community

was signed in Arusha on 30 November 1999. The Treaty entered into force on 7 July 2000 following the conclusion of the process of its ratification and deposit of the Instruments of Ratification with the Secretary General by all the three Partner States. The EAC was inaugurated in January 2001.

During the 5th Summit of the Heads of State and Government, held in Arusha, Tanzania on 2 March 2004, the presidents Mkapa of Tanzania (at that time), Museveni of Uganda and Kibaki of Kenya signed a Protocol establishing the East African Customs Union. The Protocol was ratified by all three member states, and entered into effect on 1 July 2004. This will create a common market of 90 million people, with an estimated US\$30 billion market potential (EAC 2007).

- **The Commonwealth**

This is not a regional body though it is unique as it includes members of all continents from both sides of the north-south divide. The aims of the commonwealth is to provide a pattern for co-operation between rich and poor and powerful and weak nations, while its members embrace most of the world's races, religions political systems, ideologies and especially putting emphasis upon encouragement of democracy. A major impact on developing country's education systems by the commonwealth was to be felt through subsidies given to selected British publishers by the British government to produce low priced edition textbooks through the ELBS scheme (Kogos, 1996). The ELBS scheme ended in 1995 though other areas of co-operation with the Commonwealth are on going.

- **New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is also not a regional body; but rather it is a vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal initiated during the 37th OAU summit of October 2001 (NEPAD 2007). The base vision and policy framework document defines the NEPAD vision and lays out a challenge and an appeal to all Africans to rise up to the challenge of bettering their Governance. Member countries are urged to become aware of the seriousness of the African situation and the need to mobilise themselves in order to put an end to further marginalisation of the continent and ensure its development by bridging the gap with developed countries (NEPAD 2007).

The NEPAD framework document calls on the African people to mobilize themselves in support of the implementation of this initiative by setting up, at all levels, structures for organization, mobilization and action. The government of Kenya in responding to this challenge established a national NEPAD steering committee (NSC) comprising a combination of senior government officials, prominent captains of industry, and distinguished leaders from the civil society and academia. NSC serves as:

- A broad based, inclusive platform for debating and setting national priorities within NEPAD framework;
- A vehicle for promoting genuine partnership between the government and the private sector and civil society;
- A mechanism for constructive engagement with development partners, especially in the harmonisation of aid flows and procedures;

- A prominent platform for co-ordinating Kenya's participation in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
- The Kenyan NSC provides oversight to a national NEPAD Secretariat that was established to implement its decisions and to serve as the national focal point for NEPAD in Kenya.

- **Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)**

The Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was established by the Treaty signed on 5th November 1993 in Kampala, Uganda and was ratified a year later in Lilongwe, Malawi on 8th December 1994. Member countries are Angola, Burundi, Comoros, D.R. Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe (COMESA, 2007). It was established to replace the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA) which had existed from the earlier days of 1981. COMESA was established 'as an organisation of free independent sovereign states, which have agreed to co-operate in developing their natural and human resources for the good of all their people.'

The main focus of COMESA is on the formation of a large economic and trading unit that is capable of overcoming some of the barriers that are faced by individual states. In attaining that goal, COMESA recognizes that peace, security and stability are basic factors in providing investment, development, trade and regional economic integration. Experience has shown that civil strife; political instabilities and cross-border disputes in the region have seriously affected the ability of the countries to develop their individual

economies as well as their capacity to participate and take full advantage of the regional integration arrangement under COMESA. It has now been fully accepted that without peace, security and stability there cannot be a satisfactory level of investment even by local entrepreneurs. In pursuit of the aims and objectives stated in Article 3 of the COMESA Treaty, and in conformity with the Treaty for the Establishment of the African Economic Community signed at Abuja, Nigeria on 3rd June 1991, the member States of COMESA agreed to adhere to the following principles (COMESA, 2007):

- equality and inter-independence of the member States;
- solidarity and collective self-reliance among the member States;
- inter-State co-operation, harmonisation of policies and integration of programmes among the member States;
- non-aggression between the member States;
- recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights;
- accountability, economic justice and popular participation in development;
- the recognition and observance of the rule of law;
- the promotion and sustenance of a democratic system of governance in each member State;
- the maintenance of regional peace and stability through the promotion and strengthening of good neighborliness; and
- the peaceful settlement of disputes among the member States, the active co-operation between neighboring countries and the promotion of a peaceful environment as a pre-requisite for their economic development.

In line with the all-embracing co-operation in all economic and social Sectors, and due to resources Constraints, the implementation of activities and programmes by COMESA were prioritized to areas where the greatest impacts could be made. To that end, member states adopted the following five priorities to be the basis of COMESA's focus for the next five to ten years. They are (COMESA, 2007):

- significant and sustained increases in productivity in industry, manufacturing, processing and agro-industries to provide competitive goods as the basis for cross-border trade and to create more wealth, more jobs and more incomes for the people of the region;
- increase agricultural production, with special emphasis on the joint development of lake and river basins so as to reduce dependence on rain-fed agriculture and new programmes on food security at the provincial or district levels, national and regional levels;
- development of transport and communications infrastructures and services with special emphasis on linking the rural areas with the rest of the economy in each country as well as linking the member States

- new programmes for trade promotion, trade expansion and trade facilitation especially geared to the private sector, so as to enable the business community to take maximum advantage of the Common Market, and
- development of comprehensive, reliable and up to date information data bases covering all sectors of the economy including industry, energy, environment, agriculture transport, communications, investment and finance, trade, health and human resources to form the basis for sound investment decisions and macro-economic policy formulation and programming.

2.4.4 The Politico- legal environment

All aspects of business operations in Kenya are governed by respective legislation, which ensures efficient use of the country's resources. They direct and control the economy through measures such as taxation, supply of money and inflation control mechanisms. It also guarantees adequate physical and mental security of workers at their places of work. The laws ensure that workers are treated justly and fairly in respect to terms and conditions of service; consumers are protected from exploitation by unscrupulous traders ensures that Business contracts are made fairly and contractual terms are observed and to protect the business environment from unnecessary destruction by business operations. Among important legislation and regulations that book trade entrepreneurs should be conversant with are:

- **Registration of business**

As Ncebere (2003) explains, formal businesses in Kenya must be registered before or within fourteen (14) days of starting the business. To register a business, the entrepreneur(s) must first decide on the form of business ownership that they will operate. There are numerous forms of business ownership open to entrepreneurs the most common ones being (Globe Africa, 2003):

- Limited Company - private or public
- Branch of a foreign company
- Partnership
- Sole Proprietorship
- Joint Venture
- Co-operative Society

- **Limited Companies**

The provisions concerning limited companies are contained in the Kenyan Companies Act of 1962 which is modelled closely on the UK Companies Act 1948 (with amendments).

Limited companies may be public or private. A private company is prohibited from inviting the general public to subscribe for its shares, it cannot have more than 50 members, and its shares are not freely transferable between members. A public company as its name suggests, may offer its shares to the general public. There is no maximum

number of members and its shares are freely transferable. Such a company is the equivalent of a corporation in many other countries.

- **Partnerships**

The law relating to partnerships is largely contained in the Partnership Act 1962. A partnership is restricted to a maximum of 20 persons, each of whom is jointly and separately liable for all debts incurred. If these numbers are exceeded the partnership must be registered under the Companies Act. A partnership may be formed by any kind of agreement. This need not be formal but is usually in writing. If the partnership does not trade under the names of the partners, these names must be registered under the Registration of the Business Names Act 1962. Partnership agreements do not have to be filed in any public registry nor do partnership financial statements have to be published. Partnerships are not required by law to appoint auditors although many larger partnerships do so in practice.

The death, resignation or retirement of any individual partner dissolves a partnership unless, as is usual, the partnership agreement provides otherwise.

A limited partnership may be formed. The same maximum number of partners applies but at least one partner must be a general partner who is liable for all the debts of the firm without a limit. A limited partner cannot take part in the management. Limited partnerships are governed by the Limited Partnership Act 1962 and under the Act, are subject to registration with the Registrar of Companies.

- **Branches of Foreign Companies**

A company incorporated outside Kenya may carry on business in Kenya through a branch. In order to establish a branch the following documents and details must be submitted to the Registrar of Companies:

- a certified copy of the company's own Memorandum and Articles of Association or equivalent constitution documents
- a list containing the names, addresses, nationalities and occupation of its directors and company secretary
- a statement of existing mortgages and charges created by the company in Kenya, if any
- the names and addresses of one or more Kenyan residents who are authorised to accept legal notices on the company's behalf
- the address of the company's registered or principal office

Financial statements of a branch must be delivered to the Registrar of Companies. Under the Companies Act, there is no requirement for those financial statements to be audited but, in practice, an audit is usually performed since the tax authorities are reluctant to accept un-audited branch accounts for tax purposes.

- **Sole Proprietorship**

This is a form of business ownership where the owner principally runs the business alone.

A sole proprietorship can trade either in the name of the owner, or a legally registered business name.

- **Joint Ventures**

Joint ventures with Government-owned agencies are encouraged. These may be conducted as a partnership or sometimes as limited companies in which all the parties are shareholders.

Once the business has been registered, the sole proprietorship and partnerships have no further legal procedures (Ncebere, 2003). Limited companies however must file annual returns with the registrar general. Failure to file returns over a period of time may lead the registrar to strike the name of the company off the register.

All forms of businesses however are required as a rule to display a copy of business registration certificate or certificate of incorporation in the business premises. The name of the business should appear prominently on the outside of the premises where the business is housed. It should also appear on all business official records, stamps and the company seal and in any communication to the public.

- **Business licences**

Business licences are obtained from the jurisdiction of the local authority in which the business is operating. It is a mandatory requirement for all businesses operating in the

locality. Copies of such licences must be displayed prominently in the business premises. The originals of the licences should be available for scrutiny from local authority officials who demand to see them.

Other regulations that book trade entrepreneurs should be conversant with include:

- **Labour Laws of Kenya**

According to ILO (2004) a Labour Law reform process is currently underway in Kenya.

The major regulations covering employment policies in Kenya are encompassed in the following Acts:

- The Employment Act Cap 226
- The Wages and Regulations of Employment Act Cap 229
- The Trade Disputes Act Cap 234
- The Workmen's Compensation Act Cap 236
- The Trade Unions Act Cap 233
- The Factories Act Cap 514

- **The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) (CAP. 258)**

The fund is established under an Act of Parliament. Every employer with over *five* employees should register with the fund. Employers are expected to register their employees with NSSF within 21 days once the number of employees is *five* and above.

- **National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF)**

It is mandatory for employers with employees earning over Ksh. 1000 per month to register with the fund.

- **Income Tax Act CAP.470**

This tax is administered by the Commissioner of Income Tax under the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) (Globe Africa, 2003).

The income tax law is contained in the Income Tax Act 1973, under which companies and individuals are taxed. It is administered by the Commissioner of Income Tax who has offices in Nairobi, Mombasa, Thika, Nakuru, Kisumu, Nyeri and Eldoret. Taxation changes and amendments to the Act are normally announced by the Minister of Finance in his budget speech delivered in June each year.

Tax returns are made in Kenya pounds although for consistency businesses use the official currency of Kenya shillings. One Kenya pound is equivalent to twenty Kenya shillings.

In general, the tax department is unwilling to give advance rulings on proposed transactions. A foreign investor introducing a major project is of particular importance to the Kenyan economy and may be liable for specific tax concessions, but these would be negotiated with the Minister of Finance, and not with the Income Tax Department.

- **Corporate Taxes**

Kenyan income tax is payable at the corporate rate by companies and also by unincorporated organisations and associations (excluding partnerships) that have taxable income as defined by the Income Tax Act. Exemptions are granted in case of religious, charitable and educational trusts, pension trusts and some other bodies.

- **Taxes on Individuals**

Individuals, like companies, are liable to Kenyan income tax only on income arising in Kenya. However, in the case of income from employment received by a resident individual, the whole of that income is deemed to arise in Kenya, whether the duties of employment are performed in Kenya or abroad and wherever the income is paid. In effect therefore a resident individual is liable for Kenyan income tax on his worldwide employment income.

A resident is liable for Kenyan income tax at the normal graduated rates on income from employment with a resident employer or a Kenyan permanent establishment of a non-resident employer. A non-resident is liable to the various flat rate withholding taxes.

- **Other Taxes include:**

- Value Added Tax
- Customs and Excise Duty
- Stamp Duty
- Estate Duty

- Real Estate Tax
- Motor Vehicles Tax
- Air Passenger Service Charge
- Local Government Service Charge

- **Minimum Wages Guidelines**

These change from time to time and thus employers must constantly monitor with the relevant authorities to keep up to date.

The legal minimum wage for blue-collar workers in the wage sector has 12 separate scales, varying by location, age, and skill level; in many industries, the minimum wage equalled the maximum wage. On May 1 2006, the government increased the minimum wage for workers in both urban and rural areas: the lowest minimum wage in large urban areas was approximately \$60 (4,638 shillings) per month and approximately \$55 (4,279 shillings) per month in rural areas. (The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour 2006).

- **The Company's Act**

The Act regulates the running of a registered Company in Kenya and stipulates requirements including:

- Yearly returns to the registrar of companies where the main items are; business location, names of company directors and annual final accounts.
- Filing income tax returns to the commissioner of income tax.
- **The copyright ACT, Kenya, amended 2001**

Copyright ACT, Kenya commenced 1st April,1996 (laws of Kenya, CAP 1983) since commencement the ACT has undergone several revisions in 1975,1983,1988 and a minor revision in 2001(law of Kenya, CAP, 2001). Basically, the copyright ACT, Kenya is similar to the copyright ACT UK.

As a law, the copyright ACT exists to protect authors from unlawful use of their ‘works’. The term ‘works’ refers to ideas irrespective of artistic quality as put together by the author (laws of Kenya, 1983). Parts of Section 13 of the copyright ACT 2001 that impact on the book trade expressly states:

(1)

- a) a person who at a time when copyright subsists in a work:
- b) sells or lets for hire, or by way of trade offers expose for sale or hire
- c) by way of trade exhibits in public or
- d) imports otherwise than for his private and domestic use,
- e) An article which he knows to be an infringing copy of the work, shall be 1guilty of an offence.

(2)

A person who at a time when copyright subsists in a work, distributes-

- a) For purposes of trade,
- b) For other prejudicially the owner of the copyright,
- c) Articles, which he knows to be infringing copies of the work, shall be guilty of an offence.

- **The Books and Newspapers Act (CAP 111) amended 2002.**

A Portion of the Act that impact on the book trade states as follows (section 4):

“Any person who sells or distributes any book or newspaper the publisher of which has not complied with the requirements of sections 6, 7, or 8 shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding twenty thousand shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both”.

2.4.5 The Socio-cultural Environment

Kenya has a rich cultural variety that provides for an interesting blend of traditional and modern ways of life. A striking characteristic of the population of Kenya is its ethnic diversity as reflected in the 1979 census according to the Official Hand Book Kenya, (1963-1988), 98% of Kenya’s total population is of African origins of which 99% are of Kenyan origin. The Kenyan population had mostly been divided on linguistic basis thus putting a figure of over 42 tribal dialects. Interestingly, the social and cultural

organisation of the various ethnic groups is closely associated with the linguistic classifications. Of note is the further breakdown of the linguistic dialects into sub-dialects which brings Kenya's linguistic dialects to a figure approaching 100 in number.

The rich cultural diversity with the attendant dialects pose a major challenge to the publishing and book trade industry in Kenya due to the splitting of markets into very small and potentially unprofitable units. Further complicating the Kenyan book market is the recognition of Kiswahili a language understood by a large proportion of the population as a National language, and English a language understood only by those who have gone through formal education- as the official language. There is always the possibility of individuals being conversant in Kiswahili yet be unable to read and write in the same. This could be among the reasons for the Kenyan book industry remaining mostly textbook oriented. Other issues arising from the socio-cultural environment is the religious diversity in the Country. Major religions in Kenya include Christianity and Islam with Buddhism and African religious worship making up a small group. At present, it can safely be argued that religious publishing in Kenya takes up a bigger market share compared to general publishing.

2.4.6 The Technological environment

Kenya's telecommunication services are fairly good especially when compared to other countries in Africa. The Country has made big strides in providing an enabling environment for technological advancement. Internet connectivity particularly in Nairobi is fast and power outages are fewer. What is probably lacking is information literacy

among a large proportion of the population a factor that denies them opportunities of exploiting the benefits of technological advancement to the fullest. Kenya presently enjoys the services of two mobile telephone service providers and other wireless services as provided by the Country's Telecommunication provider Telkom.

An aspect of the technological environment that will impact directly on the book trade is the impending advent of e-learning in Kenya. Currently, the Ministry of Education is seeking alliances with ICT providers to come up with strategies and accessories that will aid the implementation of the grand plan.

Top in the plan for e-learning is the provision of e-textbooks. As detailed in the Daily Nation of Friday, 8th June 2007, under a NEPAD initiative, Kenya has already launched a pilot project where an initial number of six schools are involved in the project where students use computers for learning. In the words of the Minister of Education, Kenya, Daily Nation (2007), a shift from traditional teaching methods to e-learning would address the problem of access to the education. The paper further adds that software is being developed to digitise textbooks and to provide for a virtual library with over 15 million textbooks. Since the functioning of ICT is dependent on availability of electricity, which is a major requirement, the Government has enhanced its efforts at rural electrification. Though the availability of ICT services across the Country is still unsatisfactory there is no stopping the move towards technological dependence. As it is today, Nairobi leads in the availability of technology and also with at least 56 percent of the fixed telecommunication network. in the country Daily Nation (2007).

The prospects of implementing e-learning sent shock waves to the publishing and book trade industry with Kenyan publishers expressing concern that the plan should not take force until important issues of policy and copyright were considered (Daily Nation May 31st 2007). Through the Chairperson KPA, publishers explained that while appreciating that the digitisation of textbooks is inevitable and a prerequisite to e-learning, the process has to be systematic to ensure the interests of authors and publishers are preserved. A legal framework that safeguards publishers from losses and which would also guard against digital piracy of textbooks must first be put in place.

It is obvious that dynamism in consumer book needs and especially the fact that different formats of the product are fast becoming part of the considerations of book trade entrepreneurs, the book industry and particularly the book trade requires adequate and efficient access to information as well as the ability to interpret and use such information.

2.5 Book market development

Book market development refers to various ways and means employed in increasing the market share of a book. The existence of a market largely determines the survival of the book trade. Important issues and institutions that play a role in book market development are here presented.

2.5.1 The role of literacy

Literacy is the ability to read, write and comprehend information as presented in a book or other media. Central to reading is literacy, usually the end result of education.

According to Zelega (2002) reading and literacy are essential for critical self-consciousness, for reflexive development and for enlightened citizenship. He further states:

“Reading is one of the most enchanting gifts of human communication across the spatial-temporal divides of history and culture. Written texts have the incredible ability to breathe with new life in climes and context beyond their original creation. Those who read are able to transcend the immediate intimacies of their places and times and acquire the permissive pleasures of imaging other places and times”.

Literature on literacy in Africa, however, largely presents a picture of low literacy levels and reading culture. This situation means that the book trade in most developing countries has remained stagnated or is developing at a very slow rate. In Kenya the expansion of education and even the recognition of Kiswahili - a language understood by a majority of the population - as a national language has not translated to interest by the publishing industry, instead, Kiswahili publications to a large extent remain academic reference materials.

Literacy levels in Kenya have also been hampered by issues such as economic growth that does not trickle down to the poor leading to mass poverty, a general poor attitude to education where focus on white collar jobs discourage youth from viewing education as a route to future survival and HIV/ AIDS pandemic that has affected the productive age groups of between 25years-45years.

2.5.2 The role of Education

World wide book publishing and literacy are anchored on the expansion of the educational system. A literate population however needs to have good reading habits that would lead to ingrained reading cultures which translates into growth of the book industry. It can therefore be argued that the higher the levels of literacy the bigger the book market. This view is supported by Waruingi (1995) as he contends that it is in the interest of any country to develop a reading culture as a literate society provides the market for the book. This in turn brings about increased development and the continued growth of the industry, further leading to the overall growth of the Nation's economy. Underscoring the role of bookselling in economic development Waruingi (1995) notes:

“the more literate and economically empowered the population is, the larger our market is. Since we know the book to be low on the priority rating of the ordinary house hold budget, it is our concern and in our interest that the economy grows faster---, we are not powerless to influence at least the direction of economic change in this Country ”.

This circle of education bringing about literacy and literacy requiring education to be achieved means that education constitutes the dominant market for books while it remains the centre for to creating literacy and by extension reading culture itself essential for the growth of the book industry. Linked to this is the issue of language of instruction which is crucial in determining accomplishment of education.

In Kenya, the bigger share of this market is textbook centred with a large proportion of books being those for the primary and secondary school sectors where the Government and the donor community are putting a lot of resources in support of the free primary education. The tertiary book market in Kenya, comprising of middle level colleges and

the higher education sector depends mostly on specialised materials, which are not readily available in the local bookshops with 90% of books for this sector being imported.

Other sectors that are not adequately catered for by the Kenyan book trade are the professional and general readers' categories. This raises a discordance where market sectors that have a purchasing capacity and whose book requirements could boost professional advancements and by extension the general economic development, are not adequately catered for. Arguments put forward by booksellers for leaving out these sectors in their stocking decisions are the unpredictable nature of the sector, inability to gauge the exact size of the market and the prevalent poor reading habits and culture (Waruingi (1995).

Schools being the main beneficiaries of the book trade Kenya's Ministry of Education over the years has devised various methods of procurement and supply of textbooks. During the colonial period for example, textbook supply was administered by District Education Boards (DEBs) or the churches. This was followed by a centralised system of supply through Kenya Schools Equipment Scheme (KSES) up to 1988. Between 1989 and 2002, textbook supply was supported by parents and the community under the cost sharing policy (Ministry of Education Official, 2005).

Each of these methods has had its own strengths and weaknesses. The KSES for example, faced challenges that included funding, as the Ministry on many occasions delayed in

paying publishers which, sometimes, led to refusal to supply in subsequent orders. These policies also led to the sidelining of the book trade thus bookshops were denied their rightful place as players in the book distribution process. The policy of cost sharing on the other hand led to declining access as many families could not afford the cost of books. Consequently, it became difficult to ensure equity and quality of education in the Country.

As a first step in addressing these disparities, the Government introduced safety nets for poor communities through social dimension programmes (MOEST, 1998). Through the policy on social dimension of development, the Government of Kenya increased budgetary allocation to meet cost of textbooks for schools in what is referred to as Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) and Pockets of Poverty (POP) areas of Kenya between the years 2000 and 2002 (MOEST 1998). This was in addition to donor support through budgetary support to the education sector to augment Government efforts. In efforts to seriously address the need for increased access to books, the Government in collaboration with funding from the Royal Netherlands Government carried out a pilot project to test various methods of textbook supply. At the end of the experiment, one method that was found to be effective, easier to manage and which reduced administrative costs in textbook procurement and supply was adopted.

The pilot project tested three methods of procurement and supply as follows (MOEST 1998):

1. Purchase of books by schools using cash and direct payment by schools to booksellers.
2. Procurement by schools using Local Purchase orders (LPOs) \ vouchers with payment being made-out by District Education Officers (DEOs) through the district treasury.
3. Procurement through schools ordering, consolidation and payment by the DEOs through district treasuries.

Among areas of concern in the proposed methods were:

- Liberalisation of the book trade to enable schools to choose freely.
- Liberalisation of the decision on choice of books which was left open to individual schools though respective District Education Boards (DEBs).

At the end of the experiment period, the first method, which entailed purchase of books by schools using cash and direct payment by schools to booksellers, was selected (MOEST 1998). It is these evaluations that led to the adoption of the present policy of *National Policy on Textbook Publication Procurement and Supply for primary schools* (MOEST, 1998). Under the project, schools are supposed to select booksellers and make payments as provided for in option No. 1. The policy crated in 1998 is still in force. No revisions have been effected to date.

In the forward to the policy document, the Ministry of Education MOEST (1998) declares:

“In a major departure from previous arrangements, where textbook production, procurement and supply were centrally controlled, the new policy guidelines have been developed in response to the current trends to liberalise the book trade”.

The Ministry explains that the older systems where the Government controlled book production were aimed at ensuring high standards were maintained in production of textbooks. In the current dispensation of a liberalised book market, it was necessary to involve all players including publishers and booksellers in the distribution process. According to the Ministry this was to encourage supply of relevant and high quality books and other support instructional materials to schools.

In enabling schools to make informed choices in book selections, publishers and booksellers were urged to make available inspection copies to schools or teachers’ advisory centres for review and possible adoption. The *policy* taking cognition of the declining economic growth and the increasing pressure on parents provides a strategy that relieves the pressure, alleviates poverty as well as ensure equitable access to learning materials and books.

Further streamlining the procurement procedures, MOEST (2000), gave guidelines on the selection of booksellers showing qualities required of the bookseller and also provided booksellers with directions on how to obtain orders from schools and the procedure for servicing of such orders.

Qualities of good booksellers as specified in the Policy document are possession of:

- Adequate relevant stock

- Wide variety of titles
- Is accessible geographically, that is, road infrastructure, good location and secure premises
- Ready to give discounts
- Has clear terms and conditions
- Supplies quickly
- Is up to date on book trade issues

Personal qualities required include:

- The bookseller's negotiation skills
- Approachable
- Knowledgeable

Through these efforts of providing textbooks, the Government felt would help in actualising its overall goal, which is to achieve Education for All (EFA), by 2015 (MOEST 2003). This view follows the realisation that quality education can contribute significantly to economic growth; improve employment prospects and income generating opportunities. The book factor therefore is seen as critical in enhancement and sustainability of access, equity and quality in primary and secondary school education in Kenya.

According to UNESCO (2007) in their country report, "*Towards Education for All*", Kenya is among countries with the highest literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa with

literacy rates as estimated at between 75%-85% in 2006.

Table 1: UNESCO literacy figures for Kenya

Type of institution	No. of institutions	enrolment	Teachers
Early childhood Education	23,344	1,204,606	30,000
Primary schools	17,080	7,900,000	192,422
Secondary schools	3,891	850,000	43,701
Teacher training colleges	30	18,000	11,252
Public universities	7	43,591	5,000
Private universities	13	5,000	8000
Totals	44,365	8.9 Million	290,375

Source: UNESCO Country Report (2007) “*Towards Education for all*”.

In this table, for the period 2003/2006, there were cumulatively approximately 8.9 million children and youth in the country’s formal education sector from early childhood to tertiary level. The figures are an indication that the textbook market in Kenya is large. This is more so when it is considered that textbooks have been recognised as the single most important input to education the world over. The paradox with Kenya according to MOEST, (2002) however is that while the Country’s publishing industry is considered to be one of the most vibrant in Africa, the basic textbook ratio is in most cases below 1:3 on average.

It is even more puzzling as these ratios tend to vary considerably from one part of the country to another. The Government’s decision to improve student textbook ratios is therefore seen as having the mutual effect of boosting the publishing industry as well as the book trade.

Funding for the free primary education programme provides that each child is allocated Ksh. 1, 020 (One thousand and twenty) per financial year. The money is released to schools in batches as specified by the Ministry of Education. Disbursed funds are divided into two major accounts named Account I and Account II. Account I deals with money allocated to be used for instructional materials as follows:

**Table 2: Allocation of funds for Instructional Materials (Account 1)
(Account I)**

Instructional Materials	Amount in K. Shillings
Textbooks	360
Exercise books ¹	210
Supplementary-readers and reference materials	55
Dusters, chalk and registers	5
Pencils	15
Charts and wall maps	5
Total amount	650

Source: Ministry of Education (unpublished report, 2005).

Account II refers to money for general-purpose operation of the schools. The break down is as shown in table three:

Table 3: Allocation of funds for general-purpose operations (Account II)
(Account II)

Money Usage	Amount in K. Shillings
Support staff wages	112
Repairs; maintenance and improvement	127
Activity	43
Quality assurance	29
Local travel and transport	21
Electricity, water, conservancy	10
Postage, box rental, telephone	22
Contingency	6
Instructional Materials & General Funds	650 + 370
Grand Total	1020

Source: Ministry of Education (unpublished report, 2005).

Disbursements as of April \ May –2003 was Ksh. 110 per child, September \ October 2003 it was a Ksh. 185 plus a flat rate of Ksh. 25,000 per school for the provision of book storage. June 2004 was 185 per child plus Ksh 60,000 flat rate per school for provision of improvement of sanitation and water harvesting. Of this 10,000 was for making the environment disability friendly that is, to improve on poor lighting, pavements, stop flooding of classrooms among other improvements. Some schools however thought the money was to help the disabled. March 2005 - 185 per child, May 2005 - 185 per child and August 2005 - 185 per child.

Special schools and special units also received special attention. Disbursement of money to these schools was as follows; July 2004- special schools receive a flat rate of Ksh 153,660 to meet specific disability needs as received 2,000 per child plus the designated 1020 per child. Special units, which are special units in regular schools, received in the

same Ksh 17,400 flat rate and 2000 per pupil plus the 1020.

Table 4: Allocation of funds to Special Schools

Money Usage	Amount in K. Shillings
Special award	153,660
Materials and Operations per child	1020
Special units in regular schools	17,400
Specific disability needs per child	2000
Grand Total	174,080

Source: Ministry of Education (unpublished report, 2005).

The funds are given to schools as per capitalisation that is, as per enrolment. Textbook ratios are 1:3 for lower primary and 1:2 for Upper primary. The allocations are for each child per financial year.

In emphasising the Government's commitment towards achieving the desired textbook ratios, a Ministry Official observed that the textbook ratios would be achieved gradually. According to the Official, some schools had attained the ratios while some had not. Reasons given for the delay in achieving the ratios was the gradual phasing out of the curriculum which affected books for classes 4 and 8.

2.5.3 The role of libraries

Libraries are organised collections of information materials provided for use by specific communities which include schools institutions, organisations and universities. Libraries

provide a large proportion of the book market in terms of quantities and high value books. Zeleza (2002) in supporting this view states:

“Books constitute an important part of the social and cultural capital of society, libraries are the banks where this capital is most productively invested for private and public use and for profit. Thus books and libraries go together, two poles in the chain that links writers, publishers and readers”.

Considering, their cultural, societal and educational roles, libraries are important centres and by extension markets for books. Zell (2001) agrees with this view and says that libraries constitute a large proportion of the audience for new books, and one that is especially critical in the marketing of academic books as some scholarly publications would not succeed were it not for library sales.

Libraries though do face some challenges in their role as book markets. A major drawback to libraries as obvious markets for books, especially in developing countries is the chronic state of under funding (Zell 2001). In elaborating on the issue of funding Zell (2001) explains that most public and academic libraries rely on donations of books to a large extent and the acquisition budgets for libraries in many countries are quite depressing. He further states that due to the problems of under funding libraries may not always constitute a significant component of the potential market for every new book, as they should. Despite the funding shortcoming, libraries still remain a major market for booksellers. In approaching the library market therefore, there is need for booksellers to be conversant with the types of libraries and their acquisition policies. Broad categories of libraries include:

- **Public libraries**

Usually, they serve the local community and their purchases are determined by the broad needs of that community. Zell (2001) elaborates and explains that most developing countries have them as national libraries with branches across the country. Many public libraries have a wide selection of book categories including special collections such as children's sections or may be involved in special community programmes and reading-promotion schemes. Kenya, for instance, has a well-established National Public Library network under the KNLS. As Otike (1989) observes, Kenya does not have a true national library, the KNLS, which is the national public library system, plays the role of National Library. According to Odini (2002) the KNLS Board was established by an Act of Parliament in 1967 to:

- Promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop branch libraries in Kenya;
- Plan and co-ordinate library, documentation and related services in Kenya;
- Advise the government, local authorities and public bodies, on all matters relating to library, documentation and related services.
- Advise the government on library education and training;
- Stimulate public interest in books and promote reading for knowledge, information and enjoyment necessary for comprehensive national libraries;
- Acquire books produced in and outside Kenya, and such other materials and sources of knowledge necessary for a comprehensive national library

- Publish the national bibliography of Kenya and to provide bibliographical and reference services.

Actualising these objectives has not been easy as a recent survey has revealed specific inadequacies and shortages in areas of infrastructure and physical facilities for the provision of library services in Kenya (Odini 2002). First, the existing KNLS libraries do not provide adequate reading space in many regions where they exist. Secondly, quite a number of libraries are in need of repair. Thirdly, the library network does not cover most districts in Kenya. As at the end of the year 2000, there were eight provincial libraries (one in each province), six district or branch libraries and twelve other community-based libraries, giving a total of 26 operational libraries.

- **Academic and Research libraries**

These comprise university libraries, college libraries and libraries at research centre or those serving special teaching programmes. Purchases for such libraries to a large extent are geared towards serving the needs and scope of the academic disciplines and research areas. Acquisition is usually based on recommended reading, lists, selected reference resources and important aids to research. In most cases purchases are made in multiple copies a situation that makes academic libraries offer great business opportunities for booksellers. The advantage of libraries ordering from bookshops arises from the benefit of raising one order instead of many orders to different publishers.

Bookshops in Kenya however have not been able to take advantage of library supply due to their stocking trends which, are skewed towards textbooks for the primary and secondary school sectors. Indeed, Otike (1985) states that university libraries in Kenya acquire most of their materials through overseas book suppliers. The reasons given for this trend is the stock profile in most bookshops which is skewed to textbooks. Another factor is the nature of materials required by academic libraries. To a large extent stock for academic libraries tend to be specialised and rather expensive which makes them slow moving when sold through bookshops (Otike 1985).

- **Institutional / School libraries**

The creation of library sections in schools is currently gaining ground in Kenya. Their potential as major bookshop markets however is yet to be realised due to serious under funding thus low book purchases. Though the Ministry of education has made allocations for textbook purchase in the funds set aside for materials, the funds are not further split to provide for core texts and library texts.

- **Special libraries**

Some organisations such as hospitals, museums, business and industrial concerns, large companies NGOs, professional associations and learned societies among other organisations also run libraries or resource centres usually referred to as special libraries. These purchase materials usually in the specialised fields as per the operations of the parent organisations.

- **Government departmental libraries**

Most government ministries and department have libraries that are stocked within the relevant service offered. They include ministries such as those of information, agriculture, the military and trade and industry among others.

2.6 Types of bookselling businesses

Booksellers fall into various categories depending on the nature of their operations and the services they provide within the book trade. The categorisation of booksellers is not absolute as some perform more than one function at any given time. Types of booksellers broadly include:

- Publishers
- Book shops: these can either be retail or wholesale
- Shops that sell books
- Distributors: these could provide Bookshop services, warehousing or consolidating services.
- Gifts and stationery shops
- Petrol station variety stores
- Book peddlers
- Street vendors
- Super market book sections
- Speciality bookshops: shops selling books related to their non book items
- Non shop book sellers: these are book sellers who have no shops at all but are engaged in book selling, for example book clubs.

2.6.1 Publishers

Publishers are booksellers only at the point when books move from their warehouses by order to distribution outlets. Ordinarily the primary function of publishers is book production. In the publishers' perspective, the book distribution process is undertaken depending on their individual publisher unique situations. A notable observation is the establishment of depots in various major towns, including Nairobi, Mombasa Nakuru, and Eldoret by the State owned Publishing firm JKF that, for a long time enjoyed a near monopoly in the textbook market. This provision enables booksellers in the towns and regions adjacent to the depot to have easy access to books. Other commercial publishers in the Country use selected booksellers that they appoint to act as distributors for their books. They include EAEP, Longhorn, and OUP and Macmillan (K) among others.

2.6.2 Bookshops

Bookshops are major outlets through which books and other published products are availed to the final consumer. Considering the crucial role they play in the book distribution process, a bookshop can be viewed as a commercial enterprise that provides a link between publishers and their publics. In this case publics refer to consumers of the products of the publishing industry. Bookshops are of different types and broadly they fall into the following categories:

- General bookshops
- Institutional/ university bookshops
- Bookshop chains

- Independent bookshops
- Specialists bookshops
- Virtual bookshops

- **General bookshops**

They are the most common types of bookshops in developing countries Kenya included. Typically, general bookshops stock a wide variety of books in many subject areas. The survival of these kinds of bookshops largely depends on the pragmatism of entrepreneurs running them. Particularly, entrepreneurs' ability to identify market opportunities, understand the competition and a general possession of entrepreneurial acumen are of great advantage. Since most of the stock is duplicated in numerous other bookshops success is achieved by a clear understanding of consumer requirements and more so customer needs during the cyclic seasons of the trade.

- **Institutional/ university bookshops**

These are basically specialist bookshops usually located within the confines of respective institutions. Their distinguishing characteristics are the stock which, mostly are reflections of the courses offered by the particular institution. They also tend to depend on a captive market for sustenance.

- **Bookshop Chains**

These are specialist bookshops that have employ a kind of expansionary aggressiveness to create big chains by having branches spread in several parts of a country. Such bookshops are quick to identify market opportunities which they exploit without regard

their effect on competitors. Bookshop chains are not common in developing countries and in developed countries where they thrive they have led to the failure of small bookshops since they are either bought out or lose customers to the newly opened branches.

- **Independent Bookshops**

These are traditional high street bookshops, usually owner-managed. They are more commonly found in developed countries such as the US and the Europe. In the UK for example, only a handful of independents can be considered large, with annual turn over in new books of above £200,000 (Breckman 1988). Distinguishing characteristics of independents are the narrow stock range and the lack preoccupation with profitability for as long as the business is sustainable. Currently, there are no independent bookshops in Kenya.

- **Specialist bookshops**

A specialist bookshop may be either an independent or a general bookshop. Its distinguishing characteristics are the stocking of a broad spread of titles likely to appeal to a cross-section of the general public yet maintaining a limited subject range in depth. The Federation of Radical Booksellers (1984) describes features of specialist bookshops by explaining that many shops include a speciality section within their general range, seeking to get the best of both worlds. It is the general stock that pulls book-buying passers-by off the street and into the shop, while the speciality stock pull enthusiasts in

from further a field. According to Book House Training Centre Manual (1993) a specialist book shop can exist away from a prime site such as a high street since People would go out of their way to find a shop that caters for their particular interests, but they have little incentive to go further than the nearest well-stocked bookshops for their more general requirements. Thus specialist bookshops tend to have a wide customer appeal.

- **Virtual book shops**

These bookshops are set up on the World Wide Web as sites that can be visited by book buyers for their book purchases. A wide variety of catalogues, from which buyers can select titles, which they then pay for, are made available. The bookshops thrive by setting up real life shops on the web that a buyer is able to surf through and place orders. The increased presence of booksellers on the Internet is elaborated upon in a research conducted by (Kipling and Wilson 1999) where they established features that make book selling on the Internet attractive to include the interactive nature of the operations and especially the personalised services. Elsworth and Elworth (1997) further explain that a favourite service to customers is the alerting component where a customer receives an alert by e-mail as soon as a book they had requested for or one on the same subject becomes available. Once the selected books are paid for usually electronically, the delivery is done physically as requested by the buyer.

Disadvantages associated with virtual book selling as represented by Wilson (1997) include:

- Minority access where few users get to read the book

- Cost of access locks out a portion of the market
- Inadequacy of use across the full range of environments
- The need for an energy source as opposed to the conventional book.

2.6.3 Book Peddlers

These are sometimes referred to as briefcase booksellers. For business survival they depend on identifying lucrative book supply opportunities and cash in on large on time orders. They are usually aggressive and exhibit polished communication skills. A major disadvantage of buying books from peddlers is the possibility of them disappearing once a substantial amount of down payment is made; the whole amount is paid for the set book order. Book peddlers are a common feature in Africa where many book projects especially for educational and academic purposes are donor funded.

2.6.4 Street vendors / Second hand book traders

These are small-scale traders who usually sell books along with other wares. They tend to sell single copies of books by obscure publishers that generally are poorly done. The more accomplished street vendors operate from selected street corners and mainly deal in second hand books.

2.6.5 Speciality Shops

In most cases speciality shops are shops that deal in non-book items such as camera shops, health food stores, sports computer hardware and accessory shops among others that sell books related to their non-book items. For example, camera shops can sell books on photography; health food shops can sell books on dieting and cookery, while sports ware shops will sell books on different types of sports.

2.6.6 Non-Shop Booksellers

Booksellers in this category usually have no shop but may sell large quantities of books. Examples are book clubs where whole imprints and sell the same to booksellers yet they have no bookshops. Others are the mail order sales by publishers.

2.6.7 Super Market Book Sections

In a bid to reign in their customers, super markets provide book sections from which customers can get their book requirements under one roof. Though not usually large sections, the cumulative effect of these book sections has impacted by increased competition for conventional bookshops. The books are basically general publications though specialist books can be stocked if the demand is high.

2.6.8 Petrol Station Variety Shops

These shops tend to cater for travellers who want a quick read. Books stocked in the shop are mostly works of fiction and general self-improvement books. According to Zell (2001) petrol stations provide a good opportunity to make money from customers who may not have planned to buy books.

2.6.9 Gift and stationery shops

The book stock in a gift shops usually consist of a specialist titles which are selected for their uniqueness in addressing social issues such as general self-improvement books. The books tend to have attractive colours and emphasis is given to the packaging for customers.

2.6.10 Shops that Sell Books

Unlike bookshops, these shops deal in non-book items as a speciality and only sell books as an additional extra. In most cases the books are considered to be just like any other commodity and no efforts are made to sell them.

2.7 Book distribution process

The distribution process refers to the route that a book follows from the publishers' warehouse to the time it is purchased by the final consumer. It takes into account the various factors that a bookseller should consider before making a decision on how to obtain the stock they require for the bookshop. Booksellers however encounter numerous

challenges in the process of ensuring that the crucial function of book distribution is accomplished.

Among challenges that booksellers face in accessing publications are summarised by Hurst (1985) who explains that book distribution is a complex task as there is always a need to keep a balance between new publications and keeping the back list publications available in circulation as long as possible. Also, there is always the possibility of the need to bring back into print important out-of-print works. He further observes that today in the field of academic publishing, scholarly works less than five years old are frequently left to go out-of-print by their publishers and simply cease to be obtainable. He adds that although storage costs money it is the responsibility of publishers and booksellers to ensure that books are in constant supply in the market. The example is given of OUP who published a Coptic dictionary in the 1790s and sold the last copy (of 500 printed) in 1905 (Hurst 1985).

Problems of book distribution are more prevalent in Africa, which has a relatively young book trade except for Egypt. Milner (1985) cites some of the problems that hamper distribution of African publications as among others, publishers' lack of capital and professional expertise which often contribute to poor production quality and poor packing. This often leads to books being received damaged, while the lack of advance information and information on forthcoming titles and occasional correspondence problems lead to failure to access affected publications. Other problems associated with African produced books is having to compete for space on bookshop and

library shelves against more attractively produced books from large publishing houses. Publishers especially need to be sensitised on the needs of libraries and the book trade in which improvement in format, pricing and promotion can lead to improved sales. Also important especially to booksellers is availability of information on suppliers including their lists, location and terms of trade.

Orimalade & Impey (2005) state that in book selling the selection of an appropriate source of supply is crucial as entering into purchasing decisions without adequate information on the supplier can result in loss making. In upholding this view, Forsyth (1997), explains that books, when they leave the publishers warehouse, follow channel levels as dictated by suppliers in the various channels.

2.7.1 Book distribution channels

A channel of distribution is the process that brings together an organisation and its customers at a particular place or time for the purpose of exchange. These may be wholesalers, retailers or even computer link selling. The American Marketing Association defines channels of distribution as:

“the structure of intra-company organisation units and extra-company agents and dealers, wholesale and retail through which a commodity, product or service is marketed. Ultimately, a channel of distribution is an organised network in the marketing process that bridges the gap between point of production and point of sale” (Forsyth, 1997).

As a link between publishers and book consumers the book trade in its various forms is accomplished through a variety of outlets with bookshops playing a major role.

In the book trade important channels of distribution include book wholesalers, retailers, distributors, and consolidators. Other channels are libraries, and institutional book purchasers. Most distribution however is accomplished through bookshops, which are run by book trade entrepreneurs. This research focused specifically on bookshops, which are considered to be the important channels through which consumers access products of the publishing industry. It was however found necessary to highlight other forms of bookselling as these also contribute to the progression of the book trade as a whole.

Channel levels refer to the players who take part in the onward movement of the book from the time it is published to the point where it gets to the end consumer.

Examples of channel levels:

- 1 P ----- C Zero level channel
- 2 P----- R ----- C One level channel
- 3 P----- W----- R ----- C Two level channel
- 4 P ----- C / A ----- R ----- C Two level (alternative) channel.
- 5 P ----- C /A ----- W ----- R ----- C Three level channel

Key: P - Publisher / Producer; C - Consumer /user; R - Retailer

W - Wholesaler; C / A - Consolidator / Agent.

- **Producer ----- Consumer**

This is the shortest channel of distribution and it entails selling direct to the final consumer. In this case the Producer (publisher) opens up their own retailing outlets thus competing directly with the retailers.

- **Producer ----- Retailer ----- Customer**

This channel incorporates an intermediary who in this case is the retailer. This is a rather expensive channel as the retailer/bookseller has to buy from the different publishers thus not benefiting from economies of scale.

- **Producer -----Wholesaler ----- Retailer ----- Customer**

This channel is ideal when a bookseller is dealing with local publications. It ensures a balanced book trade where all stake holders benefit from the books. In Kenya however, the wholesale trade in books is not fully developed as publishers tend to give small discounts to the wholesalers who in turn give smaller discounts to the booksellers.

- **Producer -----Agent ----- Retailer ----- Customer**

This channel is mostly for foreign book procurement. The difference between a wholesaler and an agent is that while the former owns the goods the latter does not and acts only on behalf of the principal. Distributors on the other hand in most cases own the goods. In the book trade this channel in most cases applies for international trade.

- **Producer -----Agent ----- Wholesaler ----- Retailer ----- Customer**

This channel tends to apply to international book trade. It is rather long and mostly influences the prices of the books higher as every player has to make profits.

2.7.1.1 Evaluating Distribution Channels

Booksellers consider several factors in deciding on what channel options to take. Some of the factors that they take into account include:

- **Customer characteristics**

Important customer characteristics, which the bookseller must evaluate include, the size of the market, the geographical dispersion of the customers, market composition / book requirements of the customers and customer buying habits in terms of quantity purchased. Each of the customer characteristics will determine channel choice.

- **Product characteristics**

In this case the bookseller must consider factors such as book category and speed of requirement. For example if the book is a reference work such an encyclopaedia, then direct sale to the library may be fine. If an institution needs more than ten copies of a title then the publisher may consider direct sale.

- **Company characteristics**

In this case issues such as company objectives, financial status, product mix and past channel experiences should be considered.

- **Intermediary characteristics**

The considerations here are the markets the intermediaries serve, their financial requirements, the services that they provide and their availability.

- **Competitive characteristics**

The channels used by competitors tend to be regarded respecting the collective wisdom of the industry. Thus although the majority is not always right, it is right most of the time.

- **Environmental characteristics**

Economic, political, legal, social and cultural factors also influence channel decisions. For example where economic considerations are depressed, booksellers should move their products through the least expensive channels.

2.8 Terms of trade

In the conduct of business, entrepreneurs have to determine terms in which to deal. Conditions of dealing refer to stipulations of purchase for which bookseller and supplier can trade. Terms offered for the purchase of stock differs from supplier to supplier and even with the same supplier for different orders. Usually conditions for doing business are determined by the quantity of stock purchased. According to Breckman (1988) the key components of trade terms are ownership, discounts and credit. These respectively decide the extent of entrepreneurs' risk in the stocking process. Common terms of trade that entrepreneurs can choose are dictated by issues such as stock ownership.

- **Ownership of stock**

Normally ownership of stock passes from supplier to bookseller at the time of purchase. There are situations in the book trade however when ownership of stock is controlled by the terms agreed upon by the contracting parties.

- **Firm sale**

Under firm terms of sale the stock becomes the property of the bookseller immediately they pay for them. In this case the bookseller cannot return stock that remains unsold. This research established that a majority of the entrepreneurs operated on these terms of trade. In effect entrepreneurs were denied a chance to negotiate in case of sudden changes in demand as may be occasioned by a curriculum change.

- **Sale or return (SOR)**

The bookseller usually pays for goods supplied on SOR basis at the end of the normal credit period. If however any stocks remain unsold at the end of the specified period, the bookseller has the option of returning them for which they can claim cash refund. During the SOR period, the stock is the property of the bookseller. Ownership rivets back to publisher on return. It was established that few entrepreneurs were aware of this option in stock purchase. Some entrepreneurs had used the terms with new up-coming publishers but did not know that they could also negotiate the same with established publishers.

- **See Safe**

Books purchased under see safe terms differ from that of SOR only on the mode of compensation whereby for see safe goods the bookseller benefits from credit as opposed to SOR where a cash refund can be demanded. It emerged that the entrepreneurs did not know of the existence of these terms in the book trade.

- **On Consignment**

Stocks taken on consignment terms remain the property of the supplier for the specified period of the agreement. The bookseller pays for the stock only when a sale is made or at the end of the specified period.

- **Discounts**

Apart from ownership of stock discounts are important when considering terms of trade. A discount is the difference in price between the publisher's price and what the bookseller pays for the book. In Kenya publishers give a minimum of 25% discount. The research established that the issue of discounts was contentious between respective booksellers, wholesalers and publishers. The entrepreneurs blamed lack of transparency by publishers in giving discounts. There were also complaints that fellow booksellers used discounts to undercut others. It is crucial therefore that an entrepreneur negotiates for the best discount terms possible.

- **Credit Sales**

Credit is a facility given by a publisher to a bookseller for a stated period of time usually, 30 days. When goods are bought for credit no cash changes hands. Usually publishers

offer credit facilities to established booksellers whom they have dealt with before. A credit ceiling is given thus a bookseller cannot purchase stock beyond the ceiling.

2.9 Information systems of the book trade

An information system in the book trade is a collection of information sources, organisations and institutions that are available and accessible in an organised manner to facilitate booksellers in their day-to-day activities. Describing Kenya's information system, Odini (1993) observes that they comprise the Nation's libraries, documentation centres and archives and records centres. These systems, he explains, are supported by agencies dealing with the generation, enumeration and transfer of information that include the publishing industry, the book trade, statistical bureaux, telecommunication, informatics and mass media.

As a component of the support agency in the information system, the book trade in performing its business functions requires an information system that would enable it to operate profitably. Important information services, service centres and support agencies available for use by the book trade in Kenya include players in related or complimentary businesses and book trade informants.

2.9.1 Bibliographic information services

Access to bibliographic information is crucial in the initial stages of ordering and stocking in the book business. The book trade is among beneficiaries of organisations that have taken up title bibliographic generation as the main business. These organisations include J. Whitaker and Son's Limited (UK), R.W. Bowker limited (US) and Global Books in Print. These bibliographies come in various levels of details and formats. The formats are both in print and electronic forms. The electronic bibliographies are usually more current than the print formats. According to Zell (2001), J. Whitaker and Son's Limited (UK) for example tends to have bibliographies mostly of books published in the United Kingdom (UK) and most of Europe. R.W. Bowker limited United States of America (USA) and Global Books in Print will compile bibliographies of books published in the United States of America (USA). In this case, books published in Africa tend to miss out of these international bibliographies (Zell, 2001).

In efforts to enhance availability of African publications world-wide African Publishers created the African Publishers Network (APNET) in 1992 (APNET, 2002). The bibliographic compiling arm of APNET prepares an African catalogue under the African Books Collective (ABC) which is then circulated regionally and internationally to publicise titles as well as provide the needed bibliographic details of received books. Publishers qualify to have their books included in the ABC catalogue only when they

meet specified conditions. Notably, none of the entrepreneurs interviewed knew of the ABC.

Kenya on its part lacks a national legal deposit law, a situation that has led the Country not to have a national bibliography. According to Otike (1989), the publication of a national bibliography is generally the responsibility of a national library. He further notes that Kenya does not have a national library, a situation that has led to functions that would ideally be handled by it, to be handled by the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS).

At present, Kenya's National Bibliography is compiled and produced by a national bibliographic agency, the National Reference and Bibliographic department (NRBD) a constituent department of KNLS (Otike 1989). The NRBD according to Otike (1989) was established in 1980 with the sole objective of administering a National Bibliographic control programme. The Department has however been unable to produce regular bibliographies as expected.

Indeed, attempts at creating a collective national bibliography were undertaken by the National Reference and Bibliographic Department (NRBD) and the Kenya Publishers Association (KPA) in collaboration with Kenya Library Association (KLA). This led the production of the first Kenyan Book in Print bibliography in 1997 (KPA and KLA, 1997). The venture however was not sustained thus leaving the country without a

comprehensive bibliography of its own. Reasons for failure were cited as lack of financial support.

According to Anyona (1985), other problems that affect book acquisition by booksellers and libraries in Kenya include lack of book trade journals, inadequate book reviewing media and most important the lack of a national bibliography. This state of affairs remains the same to date, 2008. The book trade in Kenya therefore continues to rely on publisher's catalogues for information on local publications though these too are irregular on issue.

Bibliographies especially when kept up to date act as important sources of book information to booksellers as they enable them to trace back-list titles and facilitate ordering. They are also important to librarians in collection building, book selection and acquisitions.

2.9.2 Publishers and publishers' Catalogues

Publishers are players in the book industry whose main function is to solicit for good manuscripts and turn them into books which customers can buy through bookshops or access through libraries and other information centres. Book trade entrepreneurs sometimes consult publishers directly whenever they need information relating to the particular publisher's book or books. As a rule though, publishers pass on information about their books to the book trade through writing and distributing catalogues. In

essence therefore, publishers' catalogues make up the simplest forms of book trade bibliographies. These may come as complete catalogues showing all titles published by particular publishers or where the list is large, they are produced under specific subject categories. Routinely, catalogues are updated as new titles are produced and the information is provided to the book trade as new book lists.

The main drawbacks of publishers' catalogues as book information sources are the large numbers of publishing houses in existence world wide and thus the almost innumerable numbers of catalogues that an entrepreneur would have to consult.

2.9.3 Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association (KBSA)

The Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association (KBSA) is an association formed by booksellers to assist them as an information centre. The Association was started in 1972 through the initiative of a few indigenous booksellers. Currently the Association has 871 registered members of which 287 are in Nairobi. Countrywide, there are approximately 1200 existing bookshops. Objectives of the Association and which are still prevalent are (KBSA 2002):

- To work for the improvement of terms and conditions of supply of goods to all booksellers and sourcing financial assistance from donor organisations.
- To improve and maintain the status of the book trade and its relations with other trades and the public and to improve and to encourage the improvement of

education and technical qualifications through training of members and their employees with the objective of rendering good service to the community.

- To co-operate for mutual benefit with other organisations concerned with the creation, production distribution of books, locally, regionally and internationally.
- To maintain data through research on book trade in Kenya and neighbouring countries.
- To maintain a secretariat in Nairobi and decentralise Association's activities to commercially based chapters countrywide.

2.9.4 Kenya Publishers Association (KPA)

Kenya Publishers Association (KPA) is the umbrella body for book publishers in Kenya. The Association was established in 1971(Chakava, 1996). Since inception the Association has been concerned with issues affecting its members and the larger publishing industry. Objectives of the Association as revised in 1998 are to:

- Encourage the widest possible spread of printed books throughout Kenya and beyond.
- Promote and protect by all lawful means the interest of the publishing industry in Kenya.
- Protect members by dealing collectively with problems which can best be so dealt with.
- Cooperate for mutual benefit with other organisations concerned in the creation, production and distribution of books and to promote the development of public

interest in books in association with other book organisations with similar objectives.

- Serve as a medium for exchange of ideas with respect to publication, sales, copyright and other matters of interest to book publishers located in Kenya and to form committees to report on such matters.
- Maintain the association in a sound and efficient financial condition.
- Raise and maintain a common fund, including a general reserve, to be applied and used in carrying out the objects herein stated; provided that such portion of the common fund as the Association Council shall from time to time determine or approve shall be allocated to the provision of financial or other services.
- Examine and seek to influence all legislative proposals likely to affect publishers and the book trade, and to take such measures in support thereof or in opposition thereto as may be appropriate.
- Enter into any arrangement for cooperation, joint ventures or reciprocal concession with any other person, firm, company or institution carrying on, or engaging in or about to carry on or engage in any business or transaction which may appear directly or indirectly to benefit the association, and for such purpose to acquire an interest in, and take part in person, firm company or institution, and to enter into any desirable arrangements in the interest of the Association.
- Extend the activities and usefulness of the association as may seem desirable.
- Make and publish regulations and to secure by all lawful means the observance of all such regulations.

- Consult and wherever possible to agree on rates of remuneration, conditions, and hours of work for members' employees.
- Improve or encourage the improvement of the professional, technical and educational qualifications of members of the Association and their staff.
- Initiate or encourage research into the resolution of all technical and other problems affecting the production and distribution of books.
- Discuss and agree an acceptable code of ethics, to ensure good business and other relationships among members of the Association and between the Association and the public.
- Act as a centre for information on the production, marketing, selling and distribution of books.

2.9.5 Kenya National Library Service (KNLS)

The Act establishing Kenya National Library Service was passed in 1965 and gazetted in 1967 (Rosenberg 1993). The functions of KNLS are (KNLS 2005):

- To promote, establish, equip, manage, maintain and develop libraries in Kenya.
- To plan and co-ordinate library documentation and related services in Kenya.
- To advise the Government, Local Authorities and other public bodies on all matters relating to library documentation and related services in Kenya.
- To provide the facilities for the study and training in principles, procedures and techniques of librarianship and other related subjects as the Board may from time to time decide.

- To advise the government on library education and training needs for library, documentation and related services.
- To sponsor, arrange or provide facilities for conferences and services for discussion of matters in connection with library related services.
- To carry out and encourage research in the development of library and related Services.
- To participate and assist in the campaign for eradication of illiteracy.
- To stimulate public interest in books and to promote reading for knowledge.

2.10 Obstacles and hindrances to information flow in the book trade

Information flow may be hindered from being accessible leading to failure by the user to get the needed information. Underscoring the importance of access and the use of good information in business, Ruckl (1992) argues that the information age is characterised by rapid change, a global environment, unprecedented availability of information and the proliferation of information sources and channels of communication. Concern however, as he explains arises from the fact that while many enterprises acknowledge the important role of information in business progression, many others do not know how to find and how to use such information effectively.

2.10.1 The lack of a national book policy

A national book policy (NBP) is a framework that provides guidelines on the role, functions and responsibilities of the various players in the book industry. Major players in

the book industry comprise; authors, publishers, printers and book distributors of which bookshops are predominant. Among important issues tackled by a national book policy are: authors' responsibilities to publishers in terms of manuscript quality, publishers' responsibilities towards authors in terms of royalties, printers' responsibilities to publishers in terms of trust due to their participation in multiplication of book copies and distributors' responsibilities to publishers and book consumers in terms of availability of books Afro-Asian Book Council 1993). The recognition of books as basic tools of education has led to a need to give them a formal framework through which they can play the desired central role. Discussing the importance of having a national book policy, the Afro-Asian Book Council (1993) argued that despite the growing belief that books constitute an essential and vital component of educational expansion, the book development process has still not been able to keep pace with educational expansion, resulting in wide gaps between the demand and supply of essential reading material.

Advocating for national book policies for all Afro–Asian countries, the Afro-Asian Book Council (1993) provided guidelines that framers of the National Book Policy would consider. They included:

- Integrating the national book policy with the national education policy on the one hand and the national communication policy on the other.
- Recognising book publishing as an industry or a priority sector so that books receive preferential treatment in fiscal policies, credit facilities, import regulations and export incentives, supply of raw material and provision of training opportunities.

UNESCO (2008) concurring with this views state that a national book policy is:

A political commitment to consider books as part of a cultural economical and strategic sector.

A global conception of the book industry which constitutes in itself an articulated chain.

A state/private sector consensus in order to:

Stimulate literary creation

Create a fiscal and financial environment favourable to the publisher and graphic arts

Favour trade and distribution of books to foster:

- Preferential postal rates and elimination of customs taxes or other import taxes

- Strengthen distribution mechanism, modernisation of bookshops and support to nearby bookstores.

- Adoption of the sector code of conduct in the field of commercial practices

- Measures to encourage export.

- Adoption of a legal framework containing all measures concerning books.

- Engagement in training for human resources for all book professions.

The book trade in Kenya continues to experience problems that arise largely due to the lack of a national book policy. A common occurrence that undermines the book trade is the direct competition between publishers and booksellers. Publishers have been known to sell directly to book consumers bypassing bookshops especially when they receive big orders (Kenya Times, 1998). Booksellers on the other hand have colluded on some occasions with unscrupulous printers to stock books that were produced without the

publishers' knowledge or permission. Such underhand practices would be reduced if there was in existence a national book policy.

2.10.2 Lack of a National information policy

A national information policy (NIP) is a guideline that specifies players in the field of information at national level, their roles, functions and areas of jurisdiction. Defining NIP, Kamar (2006) states that it is a set of decisions taken by the government through appropriate laws and regulations to orient harmonious development of information acquisition, storage and dissemination activities in order to satisfy the information needs of a country. Ayoo and Otiye (2002) further define NIP as a set of guidelines formulated by a government to streamline information generation, acquisition and dissemination activities in a country. They further explain that the aim of such a policy should be:

- To harmonise information activities to make them more accessible and effective
- Minimise duplication of information activities with the hope of improving existing resources to make them more effective in meeting the needs of users, and;
- Ensure that the limited resources in the country (financial, material or leisure) are fully utilised.

According to (Ayoo and Otiye, 2002; and Kamar 2006) the objective of a national information policy is to provide an effective means of institutionalising systematic flow

of, and access to information and to achieve a progressive enlistment on the socio-economic development of a country. The necessity of an information policy is especially crucial in the 'information age' as information is useful for users if it is structured and organised such that all intending to use it can easily identify relevant information systems and channels that they require.

Players in Kenya's information sector find it difficult to operate since the Country lacks a national information policy. The lack of NIP in Kenya has affected the book trade through poor bibliographic details of titles published in the Country. Among factor listed for the lack of a national information policy in Kenya are (Ayoo and Otike, 2002; and Kamar 2006):

- The unimplemented legal deposit laws
- Lack of funds that have rendered the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS), the official bibliographic generation agency ineffective in service delivery.
- Poor information infrastructure
- Lack of adequate qualified personnel
- Information illiteracy by government and the general public
- Lack of commitment by information professionals
- New information technologies
- Poor understanding of user needs, and
- Discontinuity.

2.10.3 Funding

Funding refers to finances that a business requires from time to time in order to run efficiently. Though most businesses face funding challenges the book trade experiences more difficulties as it is generally considered a high risk sector. The book trade would benefit from active book trade associations since these bodies could act as a source of reference to banks and other financial institutions.

2.10.4 Information illiteracy

A critical requirement for individuals to access and use information is the necessity that users of information must be information literate. According to Kamar (2006) information illiteracy is the inability to recognise an information need, to find appropriate information from a variety of sources, to evaluate it and to apply it constructively. It is also the inability to shift, evaluate, understand and interpret available information and use it productively in order to generate a product/service and communicate effectively.

The American Library Association (ALA) Presidential Committee on Information Literacy in their definition state that (ALA 1999):

“To be information literate, a person must be able to recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate evaluate and use effectively the needed information”.

Viewing information literacy as a learning process, (Mutula 2005; DeMunster 2004; Fink and Kenny 2003; Stratulat 1998; and Ruckl 1992) describe information literate people as those who have learned how to learn. These people know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organised, how to find information and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. Such people can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand since improved access does not only mean knowing where to locate information but also how to understand it and how to use it wisely.

2.10.4 The information divide

An information divide is a situation where there is a wide gap between people who can access information and those who cannot within a society. Outlining the problems of information access and use (Mutula 2005; DeMunster 2004; Fink and Keny 2003; Stratulat 1998; and Ruckl 1992) single out the apparent existence of an information divide, a situation characterised by the phenomenon of ‘information haves’ and ‘information have nots’. To a large extent, the divide pits developed countries against developing countries in terms of availability, access to, and use of information by members of the population. Under the divide, developed countries fall in the category of ‘information haves’ and developing countries in that of ‘information have nots’.

Commenting on the information divide, Line (1992) observes that highly developed countries have embraced information as vital for the present and future progression. In

showing their commitment to information issues, most developed countries have put in place policies and legislation that ensures information is accessible to all their members. Developing economies on the other hand tend to view information with suspicion and consequently are more theoretical rather than practical when dealing with issues of access to information by all.

Expounding on the poor attitude towards information in developing countries, Line (1992) observes that information in a majority of the countries rarely seems a high priority. Instead, according to him, it is given a kind of public relations recognition only at world conferences such as UNESCO conferences. In contributing to the debate, Wilson (2006) observes that the information divide is unlikely to disappear quickly, whether within the developed countries or between developed and developing countries.

Further elaborating on the phenomenon of the information divide, Mutula (2005) reviews peculiarities of the information divide in Sub-Sahara Africa as encompassing factors that include: linguistic disparities, inadequate locally published content and ineffective communication channels.

2.11 Enhancing information access in the book trade

In order for the book trade to discharge services effectively there is a need to have information and an information system that would enable entrepreneurs to operate optimally. Making observations on the Kenyan book trade (Muita 2001; Rotich 2000;

Makosi and Nyariki 1997) state that though there are many bookshops in the Country, they cannot be said to be serving the needs of consumers effectively. Among issues of concern pointed out are the limited numbers of books and other materials on offer, incompatibility between what consumers want and what is available in stock, delays in fulfilling customer orders and the skewed stocking in favour of textbooks.

2.11.1 Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is today recognised as a crucial component in enhancing access and use of information. Wamukoya and Mutula (2005) observing the increasing use of ICT in better service delivery and records management in public institutions, argue that there is much to be gained when organisations employ the use of technology in their operations. Commenting on the levels of ICT use, the authors explain that e-readiness, a state in which ICT use is highly developed occurs at multiple levels of ICT development. According to them, e-readiness could include any one or more than one of the following activities: using e-mail as the most preferred communication method; using a web site for internal and external communications; selling goods and/or services using the Internet; making travel arrangements using online Internet services; finding and purchasing computer equipment and software, supplies and even services through a company website; sending electronic invoices to customers and receiving electronic bills from suppliers and electronically paying and receiving payments.

In-line with this commitment, Kenya through the Ministry of Planning and National Development (MPND) prepared an 'Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation' 2003-2006 MPND (2003) in which the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in improving access to information is emphasised. Supporting this view Kemoni, Wamukoya and Kiplang'at (2003) observe that the use of information technology in the storage and retrieval of information would facilitate faster access and use of available data. MPND (2003) recognises the economic value and benefits of ICT as key in the development of rural and urban areas. The Ministry of Planning and National Development singles out the lack of awareness, priority, focus co-ordination, resources and capacity as factors that have slowed down the up-take of ICT access and use in Kenya.

Among proposals put forward towards actualising ICT accessibility by the population, the Government of Kenya committed itself to investing in adequate ICT education and training. It also sought implementation of a targeted tax reduction and /or incentives on both computer software and hardware to make them affordable to micro-enterprises and to low income earners (MPND 2003).

An important component in the operationalisation of ICT is the existence of a stable telecommunication system. The MPND (2003) source document in concurring with the view stresses the fact that the telecommunications sector and services are vital to the economic well being of the Nation. The document, however, notes that inadequate and inefficient telecommunications service has contributed to the high cost of doing business

in Kenya. The situation has further hindered the introduction of modern services such as data transfer, e-commerce and widespread use of credit cards.

In efforts to increase access to telecommunication services in the Country, the Government initiated institutional reforms which saw the splitting of the then Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation into Communications Commission Kenya (CCK) – a regulatory body, Postal Corporation of Kenya (PCK), and Telkom Kenya Limited (TKL) (MPND 2003). Telkom Kenya, the telecommunications service provider was for a while caught up with old technology which, involved provision of services through fixed telephone lines. The result was that as of 2003, fixed line teledensity was 4 lines per 100 persons in urban areas and 0.6 lines per 100 persons in the rural areas (MPND 2003).

Along with making telecommunication services accessible to the population, there is a need to consider the costs of access. In the case of Kenya, cost still plays a big role in hindering large sections of the population from accessing and thus using telecommunication services. Currently, the year 2008, the Country still has one fixed-line telecommunications company, the State owned Telkom Kenya. Recently in efforts to make it relevant, Telkom entered the field of wireless telecommunication provision yet there is little relief for Kenyan consumers in terms of pricing of telecommunication services. Other wireless telecommunication service providers in Kenya are Safaricom Limited and Celtel (Kenya) Limited. The intermittent price wars between these service providers have not been beneficial to individual users.

2.12 Core concepts in the study

This section discusses core concepts of the study giving the viewpoint in which they were used in this study.

2.12.1 User studies

The term ‘user studies’ has been used to describe a wide range of potential research that includes the in depth analysis of the underlying needs that result in information-seeking (Williamson 2000). User studies are conducted in an effort to understand how the service systems available are meeting user requirements and whether improvements can be made to increase service delivery.

According to Ojiambo (1993), research in user studies developed, to a large extent as a response to the growth in science and technology after the Second World War. He explains that the origination of user studies was based on the premise that if one could identify the information needs of a population subset, then one could design an effective information system.

User studies have been defined as empirical studies on the use of, demand and need for information Ojiambo (1993). The term tends to denote investigation designed to gain insight into how, why, when and where people seek information and use of information

resources. It usually includes description of information needs, ease of access to information that is needed, and information seeking behaviour and information flow.

The conduct of user studies however has received criticisms, which according to Oadini (1993) include common and justified complaints of defective methodology and shallow conceptualisation. Wilson (2000) also holds the same view and especially faults the use of quantitative social survey methods which in most cases are used to collect a great deal of data without the researcher having a theoretical or even descriptive frame work into which to fit the data.

2.12.2 Information

Information can be described as processed data that has been organised and can be used for decision making. Access to relevant, timely and cost effective information is crucial in the day-to-day problem solving in business. In supporting this view, Kirk (1999) states that organisations are increasingly aware of the potential of information in providing competitive advantage and sustaining success. However, the term “information” though widely used in contemporary society remains the least understood. Difficulties in understanding the term has been attributed to several factors including its relative newness, its influence and effects in all areas of modern existence and its nature of being intangible.

According to Wilson (2007), the history of research in human information behaviour can be traced to the Royal Society Scientific Information Conference of 1948. Elaborating on the history, Wilson (2007) observes that there existed earlier researches on human information behaviour as early as the 1940s. The Royal Society Scientific Information Conference however marked the real beginning of concern in understanding how people used information in relation to their work and particularly how they used it in science and technology. Initial studies into human information behaviour according to Wilson (2007) were concerned more with issues such as the social class make-up of the clientele rather than the needs that led people to use libraries as a source of information.

The recognition of the importance of understanding human information behaviour and thus information needs has led to numerous researches on the subject. A large proportion of these studies, however, has been marred by being presented without clear definitions of key terms (Wilson 1981; Odini 1993; and Capurro and Hjørland 2003). In emphasising the need to provide definitions of key terms in research, Shenton (2004) states:

“The exploration and definition of terms associated with the concepts under investigation are pre-requisites in virtually all research projects in information science. In most studies addressing information behaviour whether the focus be in information seeking, information use or both, an unequivocal explanation of the way in which the word “information” is understood within the context of the project is essential in the report since it helps the reader to appreciate both the nature of the phenomenon under scrutiny and where the boundaries of the work lie”.

Information science scholars concede that the concept of information is difficult to understand, define, isolate and measure (Levitan 1980; Wilson 1981; Dervin 1986;

Buckland 1991; Oдини 1993; Hord 1995; Vakkari 1997). Commenting on the continuing debate on the matter, the scholars argue that the difficulty in understanding the concept lay in the numerous meanings attributed to it and the concept's relationship to its correlates, such as, knowledge, expertise, the learning process and cognitive psychology.

Singling out the use of the term “information” as a synonym for “data” Callaos and Callaos (2007) argue that information has frequently been defined as ‘interpreted data’ a situation that many times causes confusion since different persons might associate different meanings to the same data. Indeed, there is a lack of unanimity in understanding of the concept resulting in many information science scholars and professionals considering the concept as elusive (Shanton 2004; Oдини 1993).

Contributing to the debate, Lillrank (2003) explains that data are codified and communicable symbolic representation of entities, properties and their states. They have content (representation) and form (record) that allows storage, retrieval and analysis. Data therefore can also be described as facts obtained by observation or research and which are recorded. According to (Callaos and Callaos (2007) and Lillrank (2003) data can turn into information only if they are put into a context and given meaning. For example, data describing business transactions is aggregated and put into a financial context as a statement of business performance. Thus, data can be described as the factual content of information.

Further differentiating “data” from “information” Prasher (1991) argues that whereas data are raw unprocessed meaningless messages, information is organised or processed data, which conveys a significant or specific meaning about something. Thus information is organised data or the meaning derived from the data. In effect therefore, information is generated by manipulation of raw data and their transformation into meaningful data or facts. Information therefore may be defined as data of value to decision making. Upholding this view, Callaos and Callaos (2007) state that information can be defined as “decision-relevant data”. It is data which can be transmitted between individuals and each individual can make whatever use they can of it. In this research Information defined as factual data, advice or opinions, in oral written or electronic format, into which value judgements can be entered.

2.12.3 Information needs

A need can be described as a state of felt deprivation. Thus when an individual experiences a state of need they experience a state of uncertainty. In such circumstances the individual chooses either to work towards reducing the uncertainty by seeking for information or they ignore the need. Concurring with this definition, Hanagan (1995) describes a ‘need’ as a state associated with uncertainty and the desire to fulfil a gap in knowledge. Thus the recognition of a need will often lead an individual into information seeking. Ojiambo (1993) defines a “need” as ‘the value of judgement that some group has a problem that can be solved, where problem is taken to be violation of expectations. In examining the concept of information needs, Wilson (1981) suggests that “information

need” is not a fundamental need such the need for shelter or the need for substance. According to him, “information need” is a secondary order need which, arises out of the desire to satisfy the primary needs.

Describing the attributes of “information needs” Steinerova (2001) explains that such needs are cyclic, socially and cognitively based processes in which knowledge develops. As such, he argues that diagnosis of information needs of users and the users' evaluation of systems; products and services ought to be based on the processes of relevance, quality of service and continuity. These should then be incorporated in information needs research.

In his evaluation of ‘information needs’, Wilson (2000) suggested that the term ‘need’ can better be understood when it is considered in the light of three categorisations proposed by psychologists. These are (Wilson 2000):

- Physiological needs such as the need for food, water and shelter;
- Emotional or ‘affective’ needs such as the need for attainment and domination;
- Cognitive needs such as the need to plan and to learn a skill.

In Wilson’s evaluation, when the three categorisations of needs are considered inturn they are in most cases found to interrelate. In certain circumstances for instance, physiological needs may trigger affective or cognitive needs; affective needs may give rise to cognitive needs, which will either lead to the search for need satisfying solutions or a decision to ignore the needs. If the individual chooses to search for need satisfying

solutions, then they may engage in information seeking behaviour. Indeed Wilson (2000) suggests that the term ‘information need’ should be withdrawn from Information Science literature and instead be replaced by ‘information-seeking’ towards the satisfaction of needs.

In understanding the concept of information needs one notes that apart from the existence of a need, several factors play a role on whether the individual will engage in information-seeking behaviour or not. Some of these factors include: the importance of satisfying the need, the penalty incurred by acting in the absence of full information, the availability of information sources and the costs of using them and above all the information environment in which the individual is operating.

2.12.4 Information seeking behaviour

The action by the user of making a decision to actively seek to satisfy the gap in knowledge is what constitutes information-seeking behaviour. The concept of “information seeking-behaviour” is closely linked to that of needs. As Wilson (1981) notes, information-seeking behaviour results from the recognition of some need perceived by the user. In his barriers to information seeking model, Wilson (2000) considers main factors affecting information-seeking behaviour as personal, interpersonal, and environmental.

Environmental factors that affect information seeking behaviour can be placed into two broad categories as internal and external. The internal environment consists of the personal or individual, physiological, affective and cognitive needs. In the book-trade for example, an entrepreneur would engage in information-seeking behaviour to satisfy the need for a comfortable life, or to eliminate the possibility of making wrong decisions that can lead to being ridiculed. At work role level entrepreneurs may seek information to secure their positions as leaders of the organisation or even better, as leaders in the book trade. They could also engage in information-seeking behaviour to ensure a high accomplishment rate.

Specific tasks that entrepreneurs perform to a large extent determine the kind of information need experienced. Important tasks performed include planning and decision making, which require much thought, thus, more likely leading to the generation of cognitive related needs. The nature of the organisation coupled with the individual personality of the entrepreneur will create affective needs that reflect each personality such as the need for achievement, for self-assertion and even that of self-actualisation. According to Wilson's (2000) particular patterns of needs and the resulting information seeking behaviour are functions of all pre-determined factors plus the organisation's unique 'climate'. Here, an organisation's climate refers to internal factors such as the size of the establishment, levels of stocking, number of employees and relations between individuals.

2.12.5 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship implies pragmatism in business where an individual referred to as an entrepreneur sees a business opportunity seizes it and turns it into a profitable enterprise. According to (Hisrich, 1986; Seierup, 1996; Njeru, 1996) the concept of entrepreneurship is often equated to economic success in business affairs. More commonly however, the concept is used to refer to persons leading firms, manufacturing or general industrial concerns. Indeed entrepreneurs are seen as pioneers of commerce and industry and, of progress and civilisation (Njeru, 1996).

The numerous perspectives, from which the concept is viewed however, cause it to be considered as riddled with ambiguity. This ambiguity has been attributed to scholars in business studies putting emphasis in their respective areas of specialisation when dealing with the concept (Njeru, 1996). As Njeru (1996) explains, the confusion in understanding the concept arises from the failure by scholars to state in advance the perspective from which they view the problem. In effect, scholars are expected to clarify the question of whether the term 'entrepreneur' only refers to individuals operating private business or whether it should be extended to include people in public or state enterprises. Giving his views on the matter, (Njeru, 1996) argues that if all the attributes of an entrepreneur are taken into consideration, it is evident that entrepreneurs are not confined to any one area of business but are scattered in all areas of enterprise, be they private or public.

Referring to Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship, (Brubaker, 1985; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; and Seierup (1996) explain that entrepreneurs' contributions to

economic development can be compared to other factors of production, which include land, labour and capital. Thus the entrepreneur is one who brings development through a 'creative destruction' of existing equilibria as an economy in equilibrium is 'static' not developing. It is only through the innovative activities of an entrepreneur that the equilibrium can be upset so as to bring about change.

The complexity manifested in unravelling the concept of entrepreneurship is also encountered in efforts to define the term. In the Schumpeterian sense, entrepreneurship focuses on individuals' ability to innovate in a dynamic and productive context (Kinyanjui, 1996). According to this line of thought, the entrepreneur makes things happen or causes them to happen through a series of innovations or combinations of inputs. Kilby (1971) as discussed by Kinyanjui, (1996) defines the entrepreneur as a manager who engages in four main functions; including exchange relationships, political administration, management control and technology endeavours. Thus, entrepreneurship is the process by which individuals either on their own or within organisations pursue opportunities without regard to the resources they currently control Kreitner (2000).

This translates to mean that entrepreneurs look beyond current resource constraints when they envision new business possibilities. In considering the qualities entrepreneurs should possess, Njeru (1996) presents them as:

- One who takes risks and uncertainty
- Provider of financial capital
- Decision maker

- Industrialist/business leader
- Manager or superintendent
- Organiser co-ordinator and mobiliser of resources
- Employer of productive forces (physical, human and time)
- Owner or operator of an enterprise
- Contractor.

Since the most critical function of an entrepreneur is that of decision making an important ingredient that is gaining greater recognition in contributing to entrepreneurial efficiency and effectiveness is information. Boyce and Ville (2002) while concurring with this views observe that as decision-makers entrepreneurs are confronted with information related concerns. On one hand they are faced with asymmetric information, that is, they are confronted with different types and quantities of information. On the other, they are afflicted by bounded rationality, which means they have limits of assimilating and using information depending on their unique individual make up. This situation predisposes entrepreneurs to act in economically rational ways by weighing the costs and benefit of their actions, yet experience cognitive limits of the human mind a situation that prevents them from processing all available information. The authors further argue that since information is asymmetric and rationality is bounded, or limited, economic actors are always confronted with uncertainty. Accordingly them therefore, the degree of uncertainty that surrounds decisions depends on the amount and accuracy of processed information available. Thus information and uncertainty are directly related; and information is the antidote to uncertainty.

2.13 A Critique of related studies

The review of related studies gives perspective to the current research in terms of area of investigation, the methodologies used and the emerging issues.

2.13.1 A study on information seeking and communication by rail engineers in their work situation

This study which was conducted by Oding (1995) investigated information seeking and communication by rail engineers in their work situation. Engineers from Kenya, a developing country and Britain a developed country, were studied. The main research instrument was a semi-structured interview schedule, which was administered to engineers. Tape-recorded interviews ranging in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours were carried out. The use of the critical incident technique in interviewing, where a respondent was asked to focus on a single critical incident, improved the quality of responses and data collected.

An interesting finding of the study was that when a user-group deals with highly complex tasks, they tend to devise more elaborate information seeking strategies to satisfy their needs. This is unlike their counterparts who deal with low complexity tasks who tend to employ simple and instantaneous information seeking strategies.

2.13.2 A study on information needs and information-seeking behaviour of medical research scientists

In this research, Kimbwarata (2001) sought to investigate information needs and information-seeking behaviour of medical research scientists. The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) was the case study organisation. A cross-section of scientists who included microbiologists, clinicians, physiologists, public health officers, social scientists among others was investigated.

The study concluded that KEMRI scientists had more or less a uniform order of preference in sources they consulted for information and the reasons for consulting the sources, that is, reliability accuracy currency relevance, affordability, ease of access and timeliness among other considerations.

2.13.3 A study conducted to investigate information needs and information-seeking behaviour of personnel in book publishing firms

In this study, Mbengei (2001) sampled a total of 42 respondents from the case study firm who were put in categories according departments in which they worked. They included publishing, finance, personnel and operations functions.

The findings revealed that publishing personnel relied more on sources of information within or around the firm than on those from external sources. This research however could have been strengthened if staff had been grouped according to their job categories,

that is, managerial or line staff rather than by departmentalisation. The research should also have determined which tasks required more information and from which channels.

2.13.4 A study conducted to investigate libraries and the book trade in Kenya by considering aspects necessary for developing information services in a developing country.

This study conducted by Oman (1985) investigated libraries and the book trade as information service providers that can cater for the needs of the Kenyan people wherever they may be. Notably, just like most studies dealing with the book trade in Kenya, it views the book trade from the publisher's perspective unlike the current study which looks at book trade from the booksellers perspective. In the present study emphasis is placed on bookshops as major books selling outlets and as crucial links between publishers and book consumers.

The methodology of this particular study is not explicit as to whether it is qualitative or quantitative nor is a conceptual or theoretical framework provided. In a brief reference on bookselling, the study showed that a large proportion of bookshops in Kenya traded in textbooks. It also showed that a majority of book trade entrepreneurs are of Asian origin and that the few Africans in the business do not compare with their Asian counterparts in terms of business volume.

2.14 Summary

In the chapter, the literature review traces the move from oral communication being the basic means of information access and dissemination to the period of the late 15th century when the invention of typographic printing revolutionised communication and the information processes.

An analysis of distribution in the book trade considered the various channels of book distribution and singled out the central role played by bookshops. The distribution process is also evaluated where different levels of distribution are discussed. The literature review also examines terms of trade in the book trade ranging from cash sales, credit sales to less commonly used terms such as purchasing goods on consignment.

The book trade benefits from organisations and players whose operations either directly or indirectly affect its progression. Bibliographic generation organisations for instance enables the book trade to process orders faster when they access title information. Libraries on the other hand provide a ready and large market for booksellers. The ministry of education in its informant capacity assists in the survival of bookshops by insisting that books for the free primary school policy are purchased by schools through bookshops. It is also possible to obtain statistics on education from the ministry thus enhancing chances of a more targeted stocking.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and theoretical framework. It also details preliminary research strategies, data collection and management techniques, and data analysis methods and examines the criteria for validation of findings.

3.2 Methodological Considerations

Investigators have two methodological approaches on which they can base their studies. These are the quantitative and qualitative methods. Discussing methodological considerations in user studies, Wilson (2000) argues that the very nature of user studies implies the need for the use of diverse methods and models of research.

While discussing recent trends in user study methods, Wilson (2000) explains that earlier researchers of information use, predominantly used the quantitative methods also referred to as the 'scientific method'. Concurring with this view, (Gephart, 1999; Mclever, 2001; Thomas 2007) argue that during the 1970s and the 1980s prominent concerns were raised about the limits of quantitative data and methods often associated with positivism.

According to Lincoln (1994), positivism is a research paradigm that assumes an objective world-view in which; scientific methods can more or less readily represent and measure casual relations among key variables. Anti-positivist methods on the other hand, are considered to take a subjective view of the world by seeking to understand research subjects in their natural setting thus enabling investigators to study their lived experience (Cresswell, 1994; Silverman, 1997). Elaborating on the paradigms, Gephart (1999) states that anti-positivist researchers raised concerns and asserted that quantitative survey methods impose a view of the world on subjects rather than capturing describing and understanding these world views.

The two methodological choices according to (Hoepfl, 1997; Wilson, 2000; Thomson, 2007) differ in their philosophical views where quantitative research requires that social facts are viewed from an objective perspective while qualitative research follows the idea of facts as subjectively and socially constructed. These authors argue, however, that the methods do overlap to some extent with those of traditional quantitative social research. As Wilson (2000) observes, interviewing, observation and documentary sources can be used as methods of data collection both in qualitative and quantitative research.

Elaborating on the fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative research, Hoepfl (1997) notes that while qualitative research produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedure or other means of quantification, quantitative research does. Additionally, while quantitative researchers seek casual determination, prediction and generalisation of findings, qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding

and extrapolation to similar situations. Arguing on the unique roles played by both methodologies, (Hoepfl, 1997; Wilson, 2000) shows that none of the methodologies is superior or inferior to the other. According to them, a 'paradigm of choices' should be supported in research in order to provide for 'methodological appropriateness' as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality.

Further advocating for the use of multiple methodologies in information needs studies (McIver, 2001; Wilson, 2000) argue that there have been protracted disputes in the social sciences about which research method can best address the research problem. Giving their view in support of multiple methodologies, they insist that a set of methods can be considered for use in a study based not just on their applicability to a given problem, but also the extent to which they provide complimentary benefits on each method's strengths and weaknesses. McIver (2001) further observes that the convergence of results achieved through multiple methods go a long way in validating the findings.

Methodological choices for the conduct of this study therefore was guided by the aim of research which, was to investigate the access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation in Nairobi. The need to investigate the extent to which the existing information systems met entrepreneurs' information needs required a qualitative approach while the inevitable quantification of certain aspects of the data, for example years of experience in the book trade, required a quantitative approach. Consequently, in order to capture the holistic and therefore 'lived' experience of book trade entrepreneurs and at the same time capture important day-to-day aspects that impact

on information needs and information seeking behaviour, the study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.2.1 The qualitative approach

According to (Cresswell, 1994; Silverman, 1997; Wilson, 2000), qualitative research is concerned with developing concepts rather than applying pre-existing concepts. The methodology lays emphasis in understanding through looking closely at people's words, actions and records.

Cresswell (1994) defines qualitative research as 'an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social human problem. The method gives the actors the upper hand in presenting the lived experience. This way, theories are generated as meaning is put to participant pronouncements.

In actualising the aim of this study, eight factors that a researcher must consider in choosing a qualitative methodology as propounded by Creswell (1994) were taken into account. These factors were:

- 1) A qualitative study should be undertaken because of the nature of the research questions. Creswell (1994) notes that in a qualitative study, questions often start with a *how* or a *what*. These type of questions require in-depth probes of the phenomena under investigation to be able to gain the reality which is usually deep within.

Quantitative questions in contrast ask *why* and look for a comparison of groups or a relationship between variables with the intent of establishing an association, relationship or cause and effect. Research questions in the present research consisted basically of the *what* and *how* types of questions which could best be actualised through a qualitative methodology.

- 2) The topic understudy needs to be *explored*. Such a topic usually lacks easily identifiable variables, has no theories to explain behaviour of participants thus necessitating a need to develop theories. In the present research, there was a need to investigate information seeking and use by book trade entrepreneurs by studying their access to and use of information. There were no pre-determined theories thus the factor would place this study under exploratory type.
- 3) The use of qualitative methodology was advocated because of the need to present a detailed view of the topic understudy. This was achieved by focussing on the study problem, which sought to determine existing information systems in the book trade and how they met the information needs of book trade entrepreneurs.
- 4) A qualitative study enables the investigation to take place in the individual's *natural setting*. It involves going out to the setting of field of study, gaining access and gathering material. This advice states that if participants are removed from their setting, it leads to contrived findings that are out of context. In the present study, book trade entrepreneurs were studied in their natural setting that is in their respective work

situations where they felt at ease and in control. In gaining access to the entrepreneurs, the research enjoined the KBSA who were helpful in making initial contacts with the respondents.

- 5) A qualitative approach allows the researcher to elaborate on issues arising from the study by engaging in storytelling form of narration. This handling of qualitative methodology permeates this study as emerging issues were extensively narrated and expounded upon.
- 6) A qualitative study is considered where there is sufficient time and resources to spend on extensive data collection and detailed data analysis. The present study though faced with a limitation of resources was able to have sufficient time for data collection and analysis.
- 7) The use of qualitative methodology is considered where the audience is responsive to the approach. In this study, the audience was especially receptive to the method because as business practitioners they may not have time for the detached approach of completing questionnaires. The use of semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for interaction, which allowed respondents to open up and give their views.
- 8) The use of qualitative methodology emphasises the researcher's role as an '*active learner*' who can tell the story from the participant's point of view rather than as an

'expert' who passes judgement on participants. The present research valued and respected the views of the entrepreneurs and therefore presents those views to closely match the participant's responses.

Another unique aspect of qualitative research that added to its merit as the method of choice is its provision for theory generation as opposed to quantitative research, which requires that a pre-existing theory or theories are either proved or disapproved. Wilson (2000) concurs by stating that qualitative research is concerned with developing concepts rather than applying pre-existing concepts. He adds that qualitative research seems particularly appropriate to the study of the needs underlying information-seeking behaviour because:

The concern is with uncovering the facts of the everyday life of the people under study.

- By uncovering those facts we aim to understand the needs that exist which press the individual towards information seeking behaviour.
- By better understanding of those needs we are able to understand what meaning information has in the everyday life of the people.
- By all of the foregoing we should have a better understanding of the user, be better able to design more effective information services, and be better able to create useful theory of information-seeking behaviour and information use.

3.2.2 The quantitative approach

In defining quantitative research, Creswell (1994) describes it as 'an inquiry into a social or human problem based on testing a theory composed of variables measured with

numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true’.

The quantitative approach looks more at the objective significance of happenings and quantifies the results of the observations mostly from the researcher’s point of view. The present study mostly used the qualitative approach. There were however elements of quantitative aspects that made it necessary to consider issues of quantitative approaches in research.

As Hoepfl (1997) explains, it is not necessary to pit the qualitative and quantitative paradigms against one another in a competing stance. Instead, paradigm choices should be guided purely by a consideration of methodological appropriateness. Further, it has been shown that quantitative and qualitative methods can be combined in the same research project providing greater insights in the findings (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Patton, 1990).

3.3 Theoretical frameworks and conceptual model

Theoretical frameworks and conceptual models are research concepts that seek to orient the study towards designated research paradigms. According to Boragati (1999) a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts, which guides the research in determining what things to measure, and the relationships between them. Conceptual models on the other hand, are defined as summary overviews that provide a working

strategy with a scheme containing general or major concepts and their interrelations (Javelin and Wilson 1997). According to them, when constructed appropriately, conceptual models should map reality, guide research and systematise knowledge.

This study was guided by three theoretical frameworks, namely; the interpretative social paradigm as propounded by Burrell and Morgan (1979), the ‘grounded theory’ as propagated by Glaser and Strauss (1990) and ‘the principle of thick description’ as formulated by Norman and Denzin (1989).

The frame works were chosen by virtue of their suitability at achieving the aims and objectives of the study. In ensuring that all aspects of the investigation received attention, a conceptual model, the Barriers to Information Seeking Behaviour Model by Wilson (2000) was applied.

The following guidelines as listed by Rowland (2005) formed the basis for the choice of framework and conceptual model. They are:

- *The problem understudy* – The first issue to be considered in determining the choice of theoretical framework or conceptual model was the problem understudy. In this research, the problem was to investigate access to, and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation through studying their information needs, information systems and channels available to them and offer suggestions for improvement.

- *Study orientation* – This called for a careful analysis of the problem understudy in order to determine whether to use the quantitative or qualitative approaches. In this research a qualitative orientation was chosen, as there was need to understand the problem from the participant's perspective. Also, qualitative approaches allow for close and in-depth study of respondents.
- *Major issues of concern* – Under this factor, important issues that needed to be tackled guided the researcher. Going by the aim, objectives and research questions of this study a holistic approach as provided for by qualitative methods as opposed to the measurable methods in quantitative approaches was considered. This was found to be appropriate as the results obtained would take into account human feelings and expressions, which are important in designing information systems.
- *The degree of certainty and uncertainty in the problem understudy* – Information is by nature an intangible substance and was therefore not easy to measure in quantifiable terms. In this research, determining certainty and uncertainty of issues under investigation required the use of methods that would give a user's view more closely. The qualitative approach was found to be most suited to getting such personalised views.

3.3.1 The interpretative social paradigm framework

The interpretive paradigm is a qualitative research approach that is concerned with meaning that is sought subjectively through understanding definitions of situations from the participant's point of view. The paradigm provides for two perspectives in which it

can be viewed. First, it represents epistemology of research, where epistemology refers to assumptions about the grounds of knowledge. Burrell and Morgan (1979) explain that epistemology is about how one might begin to understand the world and communicate this as knowledge to fellow human beings. Kelvin and Myers (1999) elaborate further that interpretative research is founded on the assumption that knowledge is gained or at least filtered, through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings. Second, it can be viewed as a methodology, whereby it can be used as a method to develop data collection instruments, influence the data collection process and guide data presentation. Also in terms of methodology, Rowlands (2005) states that interpretative research does not predefine dependent or independent variables. It does not set out to test hypothesis but aims to produce an understanding of the social context of the phenomenon and the process whereby the phenomenon influences and is influenced by social context.

In considering the interpretative paradigm as a theoretical framework, the researcher took into account its multiple usage and especially the five factors cited by Rowland (2005) as intrinsic to the paradigm:

- *Subjectivity*- this factor makes it possible to get the views of the participants rather than those of the researcher. In this way, insight into the entrepreneurs' experiences was gained.
- *Emphasis on socially constructed nature of reality* – this provides an opportunity to study participants through their accounts.

- *An understanding of the social context of phenomena under study* – this aspect provided for gaining of insight into entrepreneur unique circumstances.
- *The view that people socially and symbolically construct their own organisation realities*- enabled the researcher to focus on the work situations of individual entrepreneurs and later relate it to those of the others.
- *The intimate relationship between the researcher and what is being explored* – this was achieved through trust building where entrepreneurs were assured of the confidentiality of the information given.

By reading widely on the functionality of the paradigm, it was possible to approach the entrepreneurs as individuals with feelings and businesses to protect thus the need for confidentiality at every step of the research.

3.3.2 The grounded theory Framework

As a research approach, it is founded on the premise that properties can be ‘discovered’ and categories generated from given data that would ultimately lead to ‘theory’ generation. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that a theory is “a set of well developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational or other phenomenon”. Like the interpretative paradigm, the ‘grounded theory’ can be used in the epistemological sense, that is as a theoretical framework and as a methodology, that is for data collection, reduction, analysis and ‘theory’ generation.

The 'grounded theory' was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and refers to 'theory' that is developed from a group of data that is grounded on what the investigation uncovers. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) a 'theory' is a set of relationships that proposes a reasonable explanation of the phenomenon under study. Thus, a theory offers the best comprehensive, coherent and simplest model for linking diverse and unrelated facts in a useful and pragmatic way. Moghaddam (2006) explains theorising as the process of creating alternative explanations until a 'best fit' which explains the data most simply is obtained. This involves asking questions of the data which will create links to established theory.

Three concepts detailed by Hughes (2000) that are particularly important in the use of 'grounded theory' and which guided this research are:

- *Constant comparative analysis*- this is the procedure that assists in identifying conceptual categories and their properties that eventually lead to the grouping of data.
- *Theoretical sampling* – According to Corbin and Strauss (1998), the quality of data can affect the sample size thus the need for theoretical sampling when using grounded theory. Further elaborating on the point, they explain that theoretical sampling procedure dictates the researcher chooses participants who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomena under study. Corbin and Strauss also explain that theoretical sampling is cumulative with each interview providing the researcher with a slice of data on which he/she can build.

- *Theory generation*- The concept of ‘theory’ is critical to the grounded theory and as

Hughes (2006) notes:

“Theory focuses on how individuals interact in relation to the phenomenon under study; it asserts a plausible relation between concepts and sets of concepts; it is derived from data acquired through fieldwork interviews, observations and documents; the resulting theory can be reported in a narrative framework or as a set of propositions”.

According to Hoepfl (1997) theory is not “a perfect Product” but an “ever- developing entity” or process. By following the steps given by Glaser and Strauss (1967), it was possible to condense data, generate categories and present the findings.

3.3.3 The principle of ‘thick descriptions’

This principle provides that a researcher can make valid conclusions regarding phenomena under investigation by considering the context of the happenings surrounding subjects under study. According to Denzin (1998), contextual knowledge is not only part of the specific situation under investigation, but that a broad general knowledge enriched by specialised sociological and historical insights are also required to fully understand phenomena under investigation. He explains that “a thick description does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context emotion and the webs of social relationship that join persons to one another. Thick descriptions do evoke emotionality and self-feelings and it inserts history into experience.”

In the present research, for example, it was necessary to look closely into the unique situations of individual book trade entrepreneurs to understand the reasons for their

response to information related problems facing them. By way of example, it is possible to safely conclude that an entrepreneur is information illiterate when it emerges that the only means they know of getting book information is through the publishers' catalogue. When asked a question on the existence of CD book banks the response indicates that they don't know what they are or how they are used.

3.3.4 Wilson's Barriers to Information Seeking Behaviour conceptual model

Wilson's (2002) barriers to information seeking behaviours model seeks to show that individuals at any one time experience basic needs which are grouped under three main categories by psychologists as:

- Physiological needs
- Emotional or affective needs
- Cognitive needs

Wilson argues that individuals do not operate under one state of need at all times. Instead, as depicted in the model, there is always a possibility of the needs overlapping as they are essentially interrelated. He further contends that individuals don't necessarily engage in information seeking when they experience needs, since there are usually other factors at play that determine if information seeking takes place or not.

Main factors identified as affecting information-seeking behaviour as shown in the model are:

- personal

- interpersonal and
- environmental which considers:

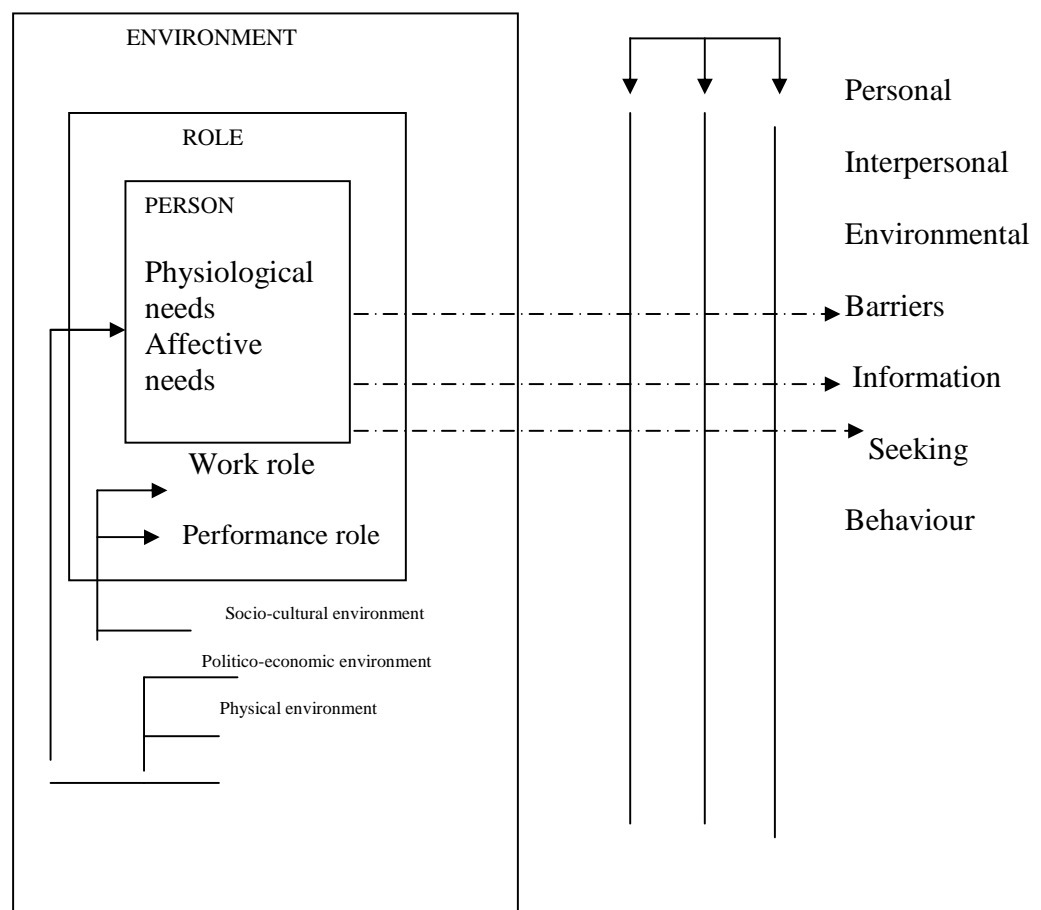
Work environment

Socio-cultural environment

Politico-economic environment

Physical environment

Figure 1: Wilson's (2000) Barriers to Information seeking Behaviour conceptual model:



Source: Wilson, (2000) Based on Wilson 2000.

The conceptual model guided this research in looking beyond immediate needs as narrated by the entrepreneurs to consider other factors that affected their information seeking behaviour.

3.4 Preliminary research strategies

Prior to the conduct of the study, it was necessary to ensure that regulations pertaining to research in the Country were complied with, data collection tools were capable of giving the required responses and additional assistants were carefully selected.

3.4.1 Permission to do research

A research permit was obtained from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) as required for conduct of research in Kenya. In addition to the MOEST permit, a clearance letter was obtained from the Provincial Commissioner Nairobi, the study area in which the research was to be carried out. A copy of the letter from the Provincial Commissioner was then circulated to all district officers in the eight divisions of Nairobi.

3.4.2 Validation of interview schedule

As earlier mentioned a pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the interview schedule. The purpose of the pilot study was to:

- Allow the researcher to determine the completeness of the sampling frame.
- Test the relevance of the collected data.
- Test the suitability of the data collection instrument with particular reference to the adequacy of the instrument.
- Assess the probable cost and duration of carrying out the study.

3.4.3 The pilot study

A preliminary study to test the comprehensiveness, adequacy and effectiveness of the data collection instrument was conducted. Three bookshops were selected at random and the semi-structured interview schedule administered. Pre-testing of the instrument proved to be useful as the respondents raised issues on areas that were not coming out clearly. A question, for example, in the pre-field interview schedule read, ‘Do you *know* of any organised system that can give staffing information?’ Some respondents looked confused and they wondered aloud whether the terms ‘*knowing*’ and ‘*using*’ meant the same things. This prompted the rephrasing of the question where the word ‘know’ was replaced by the word ‘use’. It therefore read - ‘Do you *use* any organised system of acquiring staffing information?’ In another instance questions on the section of ‘marketing’ had to be reduced as respondents felt they had responded by explaining how they reach out to consumers. Under the section of ‘the market’ the corrected schedule was then used for the main fieldwork.

3.4.4 Training of a research assistant

A research assistant was identified through inquiries of known contacts. The chosen assistant was considered mainly due to her background as a graduate of BSc. Information science, having an MBA and by virtue of being an employee of an NGO where regular research is conducted of which she heads the research section. The assistant was inducted into the requirements of this research, which she grasped quickly due to her experience. She was particularly encouraged to use probes to get deeper responses from interviewees. There was a practical session where the assistant was inducted by the researcher and asked to conduct two interviews in the presence of the researcher. The sessions were satisfactory, thus, the assistant carried out some of the interviews on her own successfully.

3.5 Data collection methods

This section discusses the various methods, tools, sample frame and sampling procedures used in the course of the study.

3.5.1 The case study methodology

The case study methodology is one of the most commonly used in the conduct of qualitative research. The method allows a researcher to focus on a single phenomenon and utilises a wide range of data gathering methods. The overall purpose of the case study is to obtain comprehensive information about the study object. In carrying out this study,

the method was found to be suitable in understanding phenomena from the perspective of the lived experiences.

Case studies provide for opportunity for in-depth study of research subjects. Bell (1993) describes a case study as an 'umbrella' term for a family of research methods having in common the characteristic to focus on inquiry around a phenomenon. She emphasises that the great strength of the case study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation to identify or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work. In using the case study methodology, the research was able to look at book trade entrepreneurs as a user group yet at the same time it was possible to focus on the unique experiences of individual entrepreneurs.

Apart from entrepreneur experiences, the method provided for generation of theoretical assumptions about current information systems in the book trade. Among other generated theories, it was discovered that entrepreneurs operated independently of each other and rarely consulted even when issues arising were of collective concern.

This view corresponds with that of Fidel (1992) who explains that the case study attempts on the one hand, to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the event under study, but at the same time to develop more general theoretical statements about regularities in the observed phenomena. Case studies, he says, prepares the investigator to deal with unexpected findings and indeed requires him/her to reorient the study in the light of such developments.

An interesting unexpected finding in this study was the lack of concern by the entrepreneurs on technological developments that impacted on the book trade such as the emergence of e-books. The reorientation undertaken involved including in the suggestions and recommendations the need to educate entrepreneurs on the role and benefits of embracing information technology. Busha and Harter (1980) observe that the overall purpose of the case study is to obtain comprehensive information about the research object as the method allows for close examinations of unique problems of individual groups or situations.

Since the focus of this study was to analyse the information needs and information seeking behaviour of entrepreneurs in the book trade, the case study approach was found to be appropriate especially due to its unique quality of allowing for the in depth examination of the research object.

3.6 Study population

The study population comprised book trade entrepreneurs in Nairobi, Kenya. As already stated, there are approximately 287 bookshops that are registered members of the Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Association. With the exception of about 20 large bookshops, a majority of the bookshops are small to medium business which exhibited to a great extent similar set up characteristics. The researcher stopped after interviewing 32 respondents when it was apparent that no new information was being gained. Interviews for 13 entrepreneurs were tape-recorded while interviews of 19 entrepreneurs were

written down. The businesses studied comprised 4 large bookshops, 9 medium sized and 19 small.

3.7 Sampling Methodology

Sampling is the strategy of selecting a smaller sub-group of people to represent the population the research can focus on (Hoepf, 1997; De Paulo, 2000). There are two basic methods of sampling; probability and non-probability sampling.

3.7.1 Probability sampling

Probability sampling also known as random sampling is when every member of a given population has an equal chance of being selected. This method is often preferred when quantitative research is being undertaken since it is most likely to produce a representative sample which allows conclusions about the whole population drawn. Wilmot (2006) points out that in probability sampling, groups are represented in the sample in their true proportions; or where unequal probabilities are used and the data are re-weighted back to the true proportions. The aim is to produce a statistically representative sample, suitable for hypothesis testing. This method however, was not employed in the present study since it was a qualitative investigation in which the lived experiences of the respondents was crucial in arriving at holistic conclusions. There was also the need to select respondents that were found ‘purposefully’ to exhibit a true reflection of the lived experiences.

3.7.2 Non-Probability sampling

Non-probability sampling methodology is when the chance of a member of a given population or universe being selected is unknown. Essentially, the selection of subjects is dependent on the researcher's discretion. The method is mostly suited to qualitative studies. Wilmot (2006) explains that qualitative research use non-probability sampling, as it does not aim to produce statistically representative samples or draw statistical inferences. Qualitative methodologies are instead aimed at drawing holistic or the wholesome responses.

Determining needs of people is much more possible if the totalities of their experiences are reviewed. As already detailed in the section on methodological considerations, non-probability sampling fitted with the objectives of this study as it allowed for selection of respondents on account of their length of stay in the lived experience.

Through purposive sampling, the researcher was able to select participants subjectively. The approach was found to be particularly suitable for application to the present research due to its qualitative nature and the target audience. As Hoepf (1997) states, purposive sampling is the dominant strategy in qualitative research since it seeks to investigate information rich cases that can be studied in depth.

3.8 Rationale for sample size

The issue of an appropriate sample size in a study is largely determined by what the researcher is seeking to unravel. In this study the aim was to investigate information needs, seeking-behaviour and use by book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation. According to De Paulo (2000) a qualitative sample must be big enough to assure that most or all of the important responses from respondents are captured. The point at which 'all responses are represented' and no new information can be gained though continued interviewing is known as 'theoretical saturation' (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998). Studies have shown that in most cases 'theoretical saturation' occurs at between 10 and 30 interviews (De Paulo, 2000). Theoretical saturation is said to occur when:

- a) No new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category
- b) The category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and
- c) The relationships among categories are well established and validated.

(Strauss and Corbin 1998).

In this study, theoretical saturation was attained at the sample size N=32. A precaution was taken to ensure that indeed such a sample size did not affect the results presented. Taking into consideration the fact that the cornerstone of qualitative research is determined by the richness generated by the collected data, the views of (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998) which stated that the key to grounded theory is to generate enough in-depth data that can illuminate patterns, concepts, categories,

properties and dimensions of given phenomena was closely monitored in the process of data coding and analysis. Justification for the sample size was also compared to that attained in related studies. Thomson (2007) in a review of fifty research articles of studies from different disciplines that used grounded theory found that only one study had a sample size of 350 with the rest of the studies having average sample sizes of 24. Findings of the study revealed that the average sample size at which theoretical saturation was attained was 31. This average it was pointed out included the one study in which 350 respondents were interviewed.

The conclusion is that sample size for grounded theory relies on the point of theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Though on average saturation occurs at the 10th interview, Strauss and Corbin (1998) advice that researchers test the level of saturation by conducting a few more interviews. This precaution was exercised in this study.

3.8.1 The use of interview data collection method

The interview is considered one of man's oldest and most used device for obtaining information (Kerlinger 1986). It has been argued that when used in a well-conceived schedule, an interview can yield information that no other method can match. This is because the interviewer can know whether the respondent does not understand the question and can, within limits repeat or rephrase the question.

The interview method was especially found suitable for the conduct of this study, first due to the qualitative methodological consideration, which allows for the study of

phenomena in their natural setting. Secondly, the method allows for systematic and guided probability in respondent / researcher interaction which other methods like the questionnaire or observation don't achieve (Kerlinger 1986).

Miller and Glaser (1997) concur that interviews enable the capturing of knowledge of social worlds through inter-subjective depths and mutual understandings. The use of this method in the current study therefore allowed the respondents to give their views rather than the views of the researcher. Where the entrepreneurs were willing the interviews were tape-recorded. In other instances, the interview responses were written down.

3.9 Management of the data

Data in this study was managed according to requirements of interpretive studies in general and the grounded theory in particular. In order to ensure order and quality of the collected data therefore, notes on interview schedules were re-written and expanded the same day. Recorded tapes were labelled straight away with details of the bookshop, the interviewee, the date and time of the interview. Where the assistant conducted the interview, the same procedure was strictly followed. The interview tapes collected from the assistant were verified at the end of every two days. The transcribed notes were labelled clearly and assigned a serial number and then filed. The serial numbers were later used to denote the respective bookshops so as to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality of the information provided. In further ensuring the confidentiality of the bookshop's identity, the bookshops as listed in *appendix 2* are not serialised.

3.10 Procedure of data analysis

Data was analysed by use of grounded theory method as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) revised (1990) and the principle of ‘thick description’ as proposed by Denzin (1989).

The grounded theory method proposed by Glaser and Strauss holds that by following stated guidelines and procedures, a researcher is able to ‘discover’ conceptual properties and categories from qualitative data (Hughes, 2006). This premise was found suitable for this research especially considering that the study used a qualitative methodology with the interpretive social paradigm as the theoretical framework. The method made it possible to ‘discover’ the lived experiences of book trade entrepreneurs.

According to (Patton, 1990; Strauss and Corbin 1990 and Hoepfl, 1997) qualitative data analysis refers to “working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns , discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what to tell others”.

In qualitative data analysis the researcher begins by the identification of themes emerging from the raw data, a process referred to as coding (Strauss and Corbin 1990). According to Moghaddam (2006), coding consists of naming and categorising data. The nature of coding in grounded theory requires going back to the data for diverse pieces of information at different times during the analysis process. Coding therefore is defined as

the analytic process through which 'data' are fractured, conceptualised and integrated to form theory (Moghaddam, 2006). As Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain, the aim of coding is to recognise, develop and relate concepts that are building blocks of theory. In grounded theory coding is a kind of content analysis to find and conceptualise the core issues from within the huge pile of data (Moghaddam, 2006).

Data analysis was conducted following the following procedures as provided for in the grounded theory:

- **Open coding stage**

This is the first step in the grounded theory methodology and involved identifying, naming, categorising and describing collected data that had been transcribed and expanded. Open coding is the process of breaking down the data into separate units of meaning (Moghaddam, 2006). According to Goulding (1999), the main purpose of open coding is to conceptualise and label data. During this stage, the coding of data is basically 'unfocused' and thus open.

In this study, open coding was initialised at the end of every interview. Tape recorded interviews were first transcribed at the end of each day verbatim onto paper. The transcription was noted down in the question-answer format. The same procedure was applied for all 32 interviews of the study whether these were tape recorded or hand recorded on paper. In each case, key words and phrases as expressed by the respondents were noted down..

- **Axial coding**

This is the second step in grounded theory data analysis. This stage involves relating categories to each other through inductive and deductive thinking. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), axial coding involves re-examination of categories identified to determine how they are linked. Moghaddam (2006) describes axial coding as the step in which identified concepts are explored in-depth and emerging characteristics dimensionalised in terms of their strength or weakness. During this step, data are subsumed into a core category which the researcher has to justify as the basis for the emergent theory (Moghaddam, 2006). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) the core category is “the central phenomenon around which all other categories are related”. They further add that a core category unites all the strands in order to provide an explanation of the behaviour under study. As Moghaddam, (2006) states, in axial coding, four analytical processes are occurring:

- a. continually relating subcategories to a category
- b. comparing categories with the collected data
- c. expanding the density of the categories by detailing their properties and dimensions, and,
- d. Exploring variations in the phenomena.

The axial coding stage enabled the researcher to acquire new understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. It was at this stage that the information needs of book trade entrepreneurs began to take shape. The details are provided in the categorisation summary given at the end of this chapter.

- **Selective coding**

This is the final stage in data reduction, which involves choosing one category to be the core category. According to Moghaddam (2006) selective coding can be described as the process by which categories are related to the core category. In supporting this view, Strauss and Corbin (1990) define selective coding as “the process of selecting the central or core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships and filling in categories that need further refinement and development”. It is through selective coding that categories are integrated and developed into the theory. In this study, selective coding led to presenting identified categories and sub categories that aided in the writing up of the findings in the categorisation as shown. The categorisation is tackled in the research as individual chapters to bring out the real picture of entrepreneur responses.

- **Core category**

Entrepreneurs’ information needs

Sub-categories

- Funding information needs
- Stock and stocking information needs
- Market information needs
- Supplier’s information
- Human resource information needs
- Personal development information needs

- **Core category**

Information systems in the book trade

Sub-categories

- Internal Information systems
- External information systems

- **Core category**

Information seeking behaviour

Sub-categories

- Information seeking prompts
- Information seeking process
- Information source and channel of choice
- Information use
- Environmental influences in information-seeking behaviour

- **Core category**

Micro environmental factors affecting information access and use

Sub-categories

- Employee inefficiency
- Entrepreneurial oversight
- Records keeping deficiency
- Operations inadequacy
- Information illiteracy
- Change preparedness inadequacy

- **Core category**

Macro environmental factors affecting information access and use

Sub-categories

- Unstructured competition
- Information inequalities
- Regulations deficiency
- Associations' inadequacy
- Information poverty

After determining the various data categories and sub categories, analysis was undertaken in which each main category was tackled as a chapter.

3.11 Ethical issues in the research

This research involved interviewing book trade entrepreneurs whose immediate concerns all the times was the assurance that the information given would be treated with outmost confidentiality. Efforts were made to win the trust of the entrepreneurs by showing them letters of permission to do research and other times having an official of KBSA seeking an appointment in advance. In the process of data reduction, bookshops were assigned serial numbers so that their identities were protected.

Interviewees were openly requested to have interview tape-recorded and they therefore had the option to accept or decline. Where respondents were not comfortable with the tape-recorded interview, the verbatim transcription option was used. A small sized tape recorder was especially chosen to help reduce the tension of having the conversation

recorded. The tape recorder was always placed at a position where the interviewee could see the process.

3.12 Summary

This chapter discussed study methodology, the research paradigm, data collection and data analysis methods. The methodological choices are elaborated upon and the choice of qualitative approach as the dominant research paradigm is discussed. Preliminary research strategies that included permission to do research, validation of interview schedule, the pilot study and the training of the research assistant are explained. The theoretical frameworks of the research are expounded upon where the interpretive social paradigm and grounded theory were the main basis for construction of the data collection tool, the interview schedule, data coding, analysis and interpretation. Ethical issues in the study are also presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 BOOK TRADE ENTREPRENEURS' INFORMATION NEEDS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings on book trade entrepreneurs' information needs. Responses of the entrepreneurs who were interviewed formed the basis of the identified information needs. Through the use of the grounded theory method, the core category 'entrepreneur information needs' was identified while sub-categories included funding, stock and stocking, market, suppliers, human resource and personal development information needs. Each sub-category is tackled in detail. In giving a perspective to the various identified needs of the entrepreneurs, a history of each of the businesses was first determined as herewith represented.

4.2 Businesses' history and forms of ownership

As a step towards determining book trade entrepreneurs' information needs, the study first established a brief history of each business. These are presented in the tables shown.

Table 5: Years of business establishment

Year of Establishment	1940 - 1949	1950 - 1959	1960 - 1969	1970 - 1979	1980 - 1989	1990 - 1999	2000 above
Number of Bookshops	1	2	1	3	4	18	3

Table 5 shows that of the entrepreneurs currently in the book trade the earliest started business between 1940 and 1949. It was further realised that the book trade business experienced a slow growth from the 1950s up to 1980 with the establishment of only 5 new bookshops. It was noted that the period 1940–1959 was the pre-independence period

in which the book trade was in the early stages of development in the Country. It also notable that during this period Africans had not ventured into the bookselling business and Asians owned whatever bookshops had been established. Further, considering that a large proportion of the book trade comprises of school textbooks, it was noted that book distribution at the time was managed by the Colonial Government through the then Curriculum Development Agency. Indeed, in the early years after independence few Africans were literate thus the book market was still small.

A faster growth in the number of bookshops is noted from the 1990s right up to the year 2000 when 21 bookshops were established. This scenario is attributed to increase in literacy levels, the general expansion and liberalisation of the book market and the entry of locals into the book trade. The 1980s was also a period in which the Country had been independent for about twenty years and thus had greater literacy levels among the population. As is mostly the case, greater literacy leads to greater demand for books and thus bookshops.

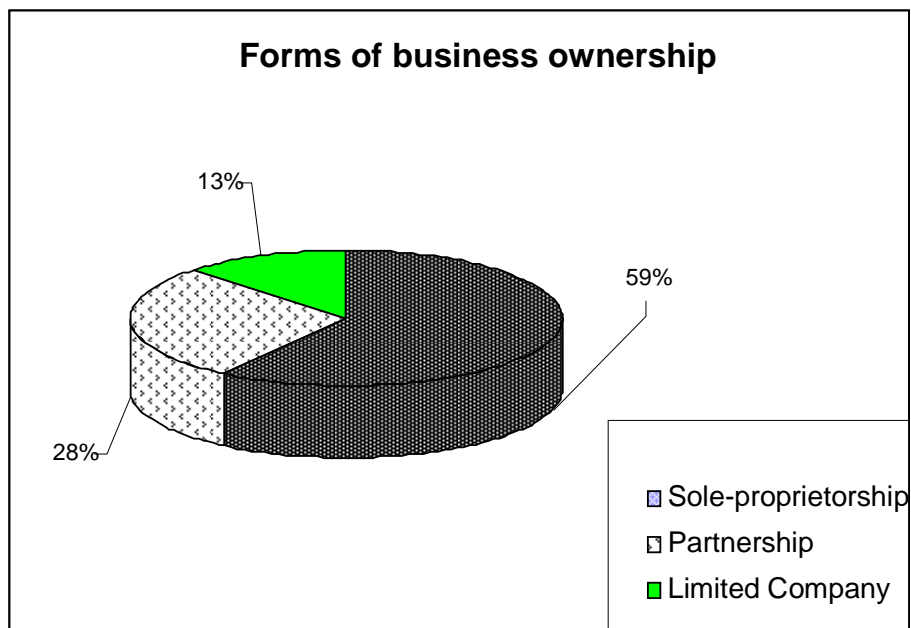
Table 6: Forms of Business Ownership
N=32

Form of Business Ownership	Number of Bookshops	Percentage of Total -%
Sole-proprietorship	19	59
Partnership	9	28
Limited Company	4	13

Table 6 shows findings on forms of business ownership. It shows that a majority of the bookshops, 19 in number, representing 59% of the businesses, are sole proprietorship businesses. This is followed by partnerships, which are nine bookshops representing 28%

and limited company ownership standing at four bookshops representing 13% of the businesses. The percentages of forms of business ownership are represented in pie charts one.

Pie chart 1: Forms of business ownership



When probed on reasons for opting for sole-proprietorship, most entrepreneurs explained that their businesses were small and thus could be only be run by an individual. Those who favoured partnerships said that businesses were family enterprises and needed to remain within the family. Those whose business ownership were limited companies explained that business had expanded and could no longer be run efficiently as sole proprietorships or partnerships. They observed that it was easier to deal with other stakeholders in the industry such as publishers and other financial institutions when a business was a limited company.

Table 7: Reasons for entering the book trade
N=32

Reasons for entering the book trade	Number of Bookshops	Percentage of total %
Existing family business	16	50
Saw a gap in the market	13	41
Seemed like a good option	3	9

Responding to why they ventured into the book trade, entrepreneurs' reasons as shown in table 7 varied. In the analysis, sixteen entrepreneurs comprising 50% of the respondents ventured into the book trade because it was an ongoing family business. It was realised that this response tallied with entrepreneurs whose businesses have been in existence for up to 20 years. Thirteen respondents making up 41% said they saw a gap in the market, a response that tallied with entrepreneurs of bookshops that had been in existence for less than 20 years. Three respondents comprising 9% of the respondents said they saw venturing into the book trade as a good option. Bar chart one shows the representation of respondent reasons for venturing in the book trade.

Bar chart 1: Reasons for venturing in the Book trade
N=32

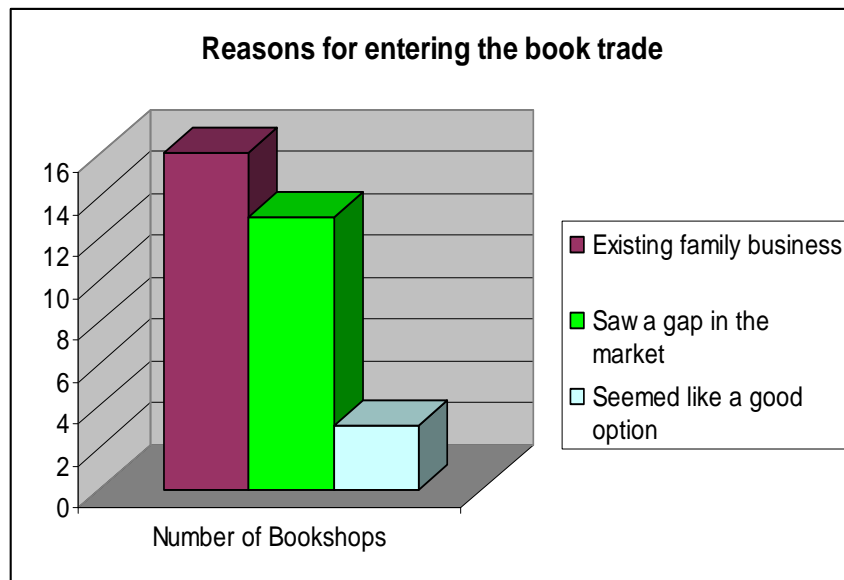


Table 8: Reasons for a Location
N=32

Reasons for choice of location	Number of Bookshops	Percentage of total %
Business already existing in the place	13	41
Flow of human traffic	11	34
Closeness to related business	5	16
Convenience of location	3	9

In response to reasons for choice of location thirteen entrepreneurs representing 41% of the respondents said the business was already situated there. Eleven entrepreneurs comprising 34% said the existence of large human traffic was the driving force for their choice of location. Five respondents making up 16% of the respondents considered

closeness to related businesses while three comprising 9% felt that the location was convenient for their use. The percentages for reasons for choice of location show very small margins in difference of reasons indicating that there is a possibility the entrepreneurs had more than one reason for choosing the business location. Bar chart 2 shows the representation of respondent choice of location.

Bar chart 2: Reason for choice of location
N=32

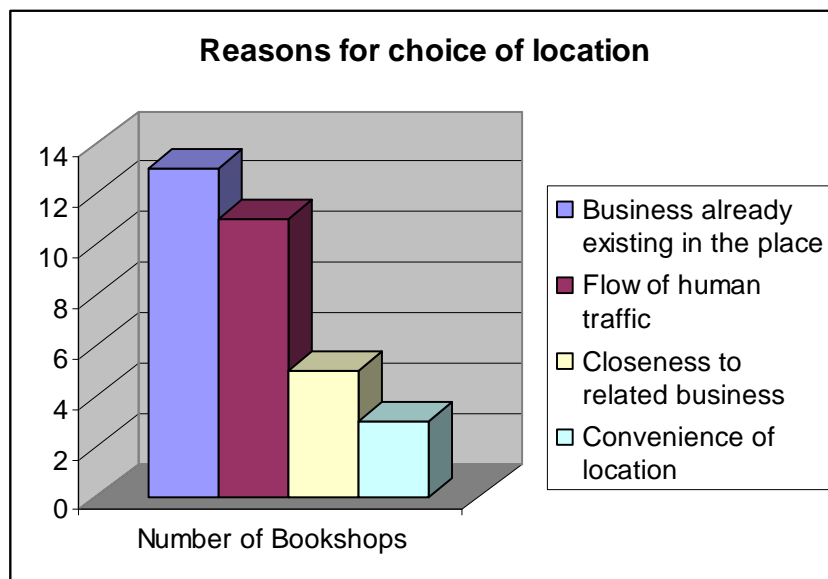


Table 9: Reasons for Choice of Premises

N=32

Reasons for choice of premises	Number of Bookshops	Percentage of total %
Suitable for intended use	14	44
Affordable	9	28
Available	8	25
Spacious	1	3

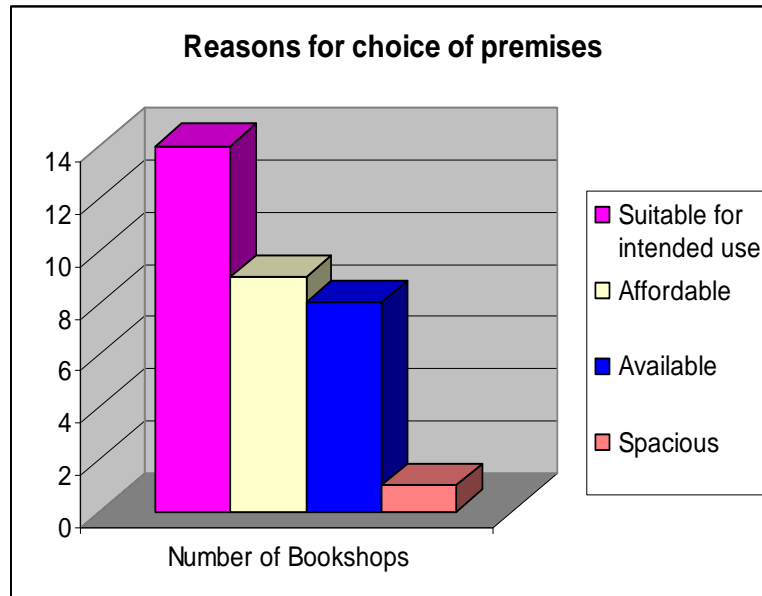
Table 9 shows that premises were chosen mostly on the basis of suitability a response given by fourteen respondents representing 44% of the respondents. Nine respondents comprising 28% cited affordability, eight respondents making up 25 % gave availability as the reason for choice of location, while one respondents representing 3% gave spaciousness as the reason for choice of premises. Again reasons for choice of premises just like those for choice of location show that there were no strong reasons preference for premises since none of the reasons attained the 50% mark.

Indeed, sentiments of the respondents centred on a desire to have larger more spacious premises, but due to financial constraints *'well I have to make do with this one'* and *'I think I am happy with the way things are my space can accommodate eighty thousand square feet of stock'*. *'I am okay.'*

Bar chart 3 shows a representation of reasons for choice of premises.

Bar chart 3: Reasons for choice of premises

N=32



This review of background information on the respective bookshops made it possible to more closely identify the information needs of the book trade entrepreneurs. The unique circumstances of the respective entrepreneurs it emerged largely influenced their experienced information needs.

4.3 Entrepreneurs' information needs

This section discusses the entrepreneurs' information needs as established from the research findings in the following areas: funding; stock and stocking; market; marketing and human resource.

4.3.1 Funding information

In this research, the most pressing information need was that of funding. Through the interview method and by use of probing techniques, responses showed that whereas entrepreneurs required funds either for stock replenishment, to meet overhead costs or for general business improvement, their greatest handicap was knowing where to source the funds. They needed information on institutions other than banks that could offer them funding even if it was on loan basis.

All the entrepreneurs N=32, were agreed that to carry out their activities effectively, they required information on funding organisations. Guided by the interpretative paradigm, which calls for an understanding of meanings from the participant's point of view, the entrepreneurs were probed first, to determine how they obtained the initial funds to start their businesses, the uses into which these initial funds were put and also to establish whether they had need for additional funds and how the funds sourced and utilised.

Analyses of the responses are presented as follows:

- *Information on Sources of initial funding*
- *Information on Uses of initial funds*
- *Information on the need for, and uses of additional funds*
- *Information on first source of choice for additional funding*

4.3.1.1 Information on sources of initial funding

The results shows that majority of the entrepreneurs, 26 in number started their business using personal savings, mobilisation of resources from relatives, previous employment payments and from retirement benefits. Four used funds from other existing businesses

they own while two obtained bank loans. Typical responses for each chosen sources of funding are represented here as follows:

“Er--we started with some of my relatives, we contributed. My contribution was higher that is why I run the business”. “We preferred to pool our resources together as family because this way you are sure no one will follow you around asking for their money.” In fact my greatest fear is having to borrow money from a bank and then fail to pay because the repayment period begins before I make anything”.

(Entrepreneur No. 4.)

“Well, from my personal savings”. “I know of nobody who can lend you a large amount of money just like that”. “I would rather have a few books in my bookshop that to be followed for delaying to pay”.

(Entrepreneur No. 7.)

“This was money saved from my retirement benefits”. “I preferred to use my benefits in a way I can remember for life”. “Using my own money also saves me from having to be followed later either by someone or a bank who can even auction my goods”. “No, I better survive with the little that I have and which, I can call mine”.

(Entrepreneur No. 15)

Four entrepreneurs said they got their initial funding from their other businesses unrelated to books. This is exemplified by the following responses:

“You see, we had a business that was doing very well and decided to invest the profits in starting a bookshop”. “We looked around and decided a bookshop would be the best way to invest our extra finances”. “You see, with textbooks you can’t go wrong and you can easily recover your money”. “Of course if things don’t work out then too bad”.

(Entrepreneur No. 2)

“We put money from our other business in a bookshop in order to enter the textbook supply market”. “Books will always be in demand”. “After all, education cannot happen without books”. “Now you see even the Government is interested to make sure children get books”.

(Entrepreneur No. 12)

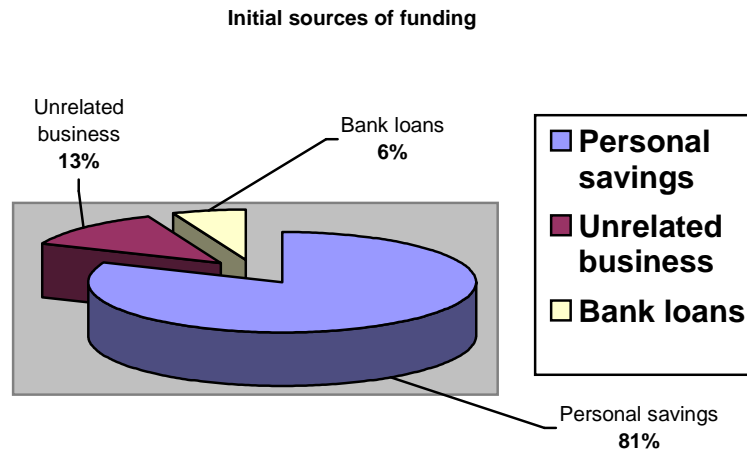
Two entrepreneurs said they obtained bank loans. Their typical response for going for a bank loan was:

“I preferred to go for a bank loan because I have stayed with my bank for so long that they trust me”. “Again if things are hard and I cannot pay, then I use money from other sources like disposing of an asset like a car”.

(Entrepreneur No. 1)

Respondents were continually probed to ascertain reasons for not seeking for funding from banks which are the obvious institutions from which funding could be sought. It emerged that bank needs for collateral and other stringent requirements were an impediment to the entrepreneurs. This was particularly pronounced for new entrepreneurs venturing into the book trade who could not meet the requirements. Other reasons for not going for bank loans were lack of information on how to go about it and the general lack of formal set up in the operations of the businesses that caused banks to be cautious in dealing with Booksellers.

Pie chart 2: Initial sources of funding



The pie chart shows the sources of initial funding in order of priorities. In the chart, 81% of the respondents used personal savings and resources mobilised from relatives to start the business. 13% got funds from their businesses unrelated to the book trade while 6% obtained bank loans.

4.3.1.2 Information on uses of initial funds

The initial funds for the majority of the entrepreneurs were used in fixtures, purchase of stock and for payment of leases and initial rent. Typical responses are here represented:

“The funds were used for fixing premises, that is, partitioning, building shelves and buying of stock”.

(Entrepreneur No. 9)

“Most of the funds went to the purchasing of stock while the remainder was used for paying six months’ advance rent”. “I used the money this way as a matter of priority”. “In these early times of starting what one really needs is where to place the books and the books themselves”.

(Entrepreneur No. 22)

Two entrepreneurs had enough funds to buy the premises, fit fixtures and buy stock.

Their response reflected this situation thus:

“We thought it was better to have premises of our own which we could set up the way we wished”. “Since we had the money we saw no reason to rent a place and after all you save a lot when the premises are yours”.

(Entrepreneur No. 12)

It was noted that the two entrepreneurs who bought premises are among those who used funds from their businesses unrelated to the book trade to start up.

4.3.1.3 Information need for and use of additional funds

The book business like any other has a need for working capital, which arises once the business is ongoing. The responses showed that the entrepreneurs always had need for additional funding for replenishing stock, for maintaining cash flow and for meeting other additional expenses.

A supplementary probe question on how often additional funding was required received a general response of ‘*all the time*’. When asked as to what use the additional funds were put, the responses were also similar; ‘*to buy additional stock and to meet other unexpected expenses*’. Further probing to ascertain the sources of the additional funds elicited different responses.

Fourteen entrepreneurs said they got credit facilities from publishers though not always. When asked what they meant by the statement ‘*though not always*’ the entrepreneurs

explained that once they reached their credit limit, publishers would not give them further credit. Nine entrepreneurs used funds from profits made in the business. Eight indicated that sometimes they borrowed from friends while at times they approached banks when they had firm orders. One entrepreneur always went for a bank over draft.

A majority of the entrepreneurs, however, wished that there were ways of finding information on organisations that could provide them with additional funds. As can be deduced from the responses, only one entrepreneur always went in for a bank overdraft.

The collective feelings of the entrepreneurs are summed up in the following response:

“Many times I have to buy stock for cash as publishers are very rigid in their appraisal of small booksellers. Also, even if you get credit, when you reach your credit limit, any additional stock has to be bought in cash. Some banks may consider giving you credit but only when they see a firm order mostly from a school”. “The banks always make sure that payments will be made to the bookseller through their branches”. “It is very hard to know whether there are other sources of funding apart from banks”.

(Interview No. 7)

4.3.1.4 Information on first source of choice for additional funding

Respondents were asked to give sources of choice for additional funds in the order of priority. The results showed that the first source of choice for additional funding in order of preference was seeking facilities from publishers. This source was cited by fourteen respondents. The second source of choice in seeking for additional funding were profits made from the business as represented by responses from nine respondents. The third source of choice was borrowing from friends and occasionally from banks as cited by

eight respondents. The least used source for additional funding was the Bank overdraft or bank loan. Most entrepreneurs, 23 of them, expressed disappointment that the majority of banks did not cater for booksellers when credit was needed. The study established that entrepreneurs would turn to banks only if all other means of acquiring additional funding was unavailable. For the majority of the entrepreneurs the following statements held:

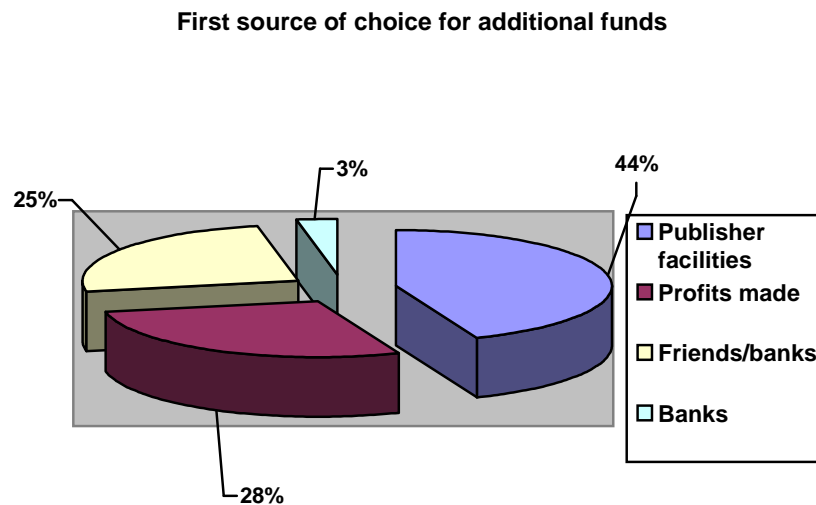
“I use the profits made from sales to plough back to the business. When sales are poor, we experience big problems in getting stock”. “You know the book business is a high risk business and banks are not quick to fund it”. “Our best option always is to plead with publishers to give us the books on account basis”. “We do our best to pay publishers on time”.

(Entrepreneur No. 15)

“I don’t try banks because my earlier efforts failed. They need security or a logbook, which I don’t have. They refused to accept my stock as security”. “Usually I go to publishers, so when they do not give me stock I just stay”.

(Entrepreneur No. 6)

Pie chart 3: first source of choice for additional funds



The Pie chart shows the sources of choice for additional funding in order of priorities. In the chart, 44% of the respondents used publishers' credit facilities. 28% got funds from profits made, 25% borrowed from friends, while 3% obtained bank loans or overdrafts.

The analysis shows that there was general disappointment among entrepreneurs who complained that banks were not sensitive to their financial needs. The findings were surprising since banks are main players in financial lending sector yet they were not readily accessible by book trade entrepreneurs. The stringent collateral requirements are what has proved to be a major hindrance to access to credit.

4.4 Stock and stocking information

In the study findings, stock and stocking information was considered significant information need. Responses from this category showed that there was a notable high

incidence of '*dead*' stock', where 'dead' stock refers to books that failed to sell and were no longer needed. When probed as to the reasons for this occurrence, respondents cited sudden changes in the curriculum, which left entrepreneurs with unsold books of a changed subject. It would seem that the booksellers had no system in place that would give them an early warning of impending changes. The responses also showed that book stock bibliographic information was not easy to come by, thus, many times entrepreneurs lost sales because they could not get stock.

Further probing to determine other underlying reasons for stock and stocking information deficiency responses indicated that majority of the entrepreneurs were not conversant with book trade terms. This came to the fore when respondents were probed on issues of stock size and stock range and variety.

4.4.1 Stock size

At any one time, a bookshop is only able to stock a selection of available titles but never all titles. Usually, the individual bookshop trading policy, entrepreneur judgements, available space and financial considerations govern title and quantity of decisions.

In this study, a majority of the entrepreneurs, twenty nine, expressed the stock size in monetary terms. Two entrepreneurs simply said that their stock was 'very small' which would be interpreted to fit within the below Ksh. 300,000 category. one entrepreneur could not give the stock size all.

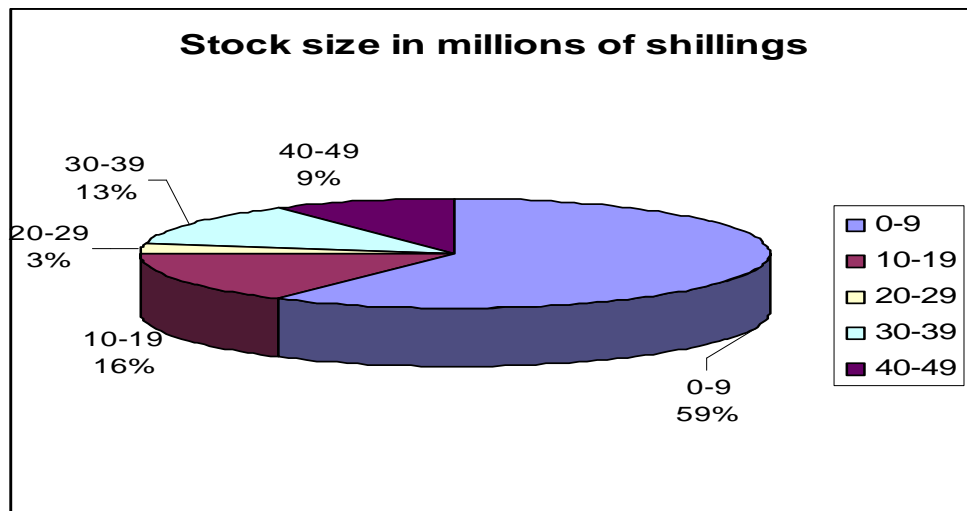
The research showed that the largest stock size was estimated to be worth between 40 to 49 million, while the smallest was worth approximately Ksh. 300,000. Most medium sized enterprises had stock worth between Ksh. 2.5 million and Ksh 9 million.

Table 10: Stock size in millions of Shillings

Stock size in millions of shillings	Number of Bookshops
0-9	19
10-19	5
20-29	1
30-39	4
40-49	3

The table 6 shows that of the 32 respondents interviewed, nineteen had a stock size of between 0-9 million, five had between 10-19 million, one had 20-29 million, four had 30-39 million, three had 40-49 million. The following chart provides a representation of the information in percentages.

Pie chart 4: stock size in monetary terms



The chart shows that a majority of the bookshops comprising 59% had a stock size worth up to 9 million which, from the categorisation earlier presented, places them as medium sized enterprises. Larger bookshops making up 16% had a stock size of between 10 –19 million shillings worth. 3% of the bookshops had a stock size of 20-29 million. 13% had a stock size of 30-39 while 9% had a stock size of 40-49 million. None of the bookshops had a stock size exceeding 50 million shillings.

Notably, the preference to express stock size in monetary terms as opposed to volumes was interpreted as an indication that the entrepreneurs may not be sure of the number of titles they have in stock at a particular time. It could also show a lack of training in the book trade and thus inability to understand the stock in terms of titles on sale. This view stems from observations in the first part of the interview schedule where a majority of the entrepreneurs have some background training in accounting while a few have training in marketing.

4.4.2 Stock range and variety

Stock range is also known as stock profile and defines the number and variety of books in a bookshop. In most cases, stock has been known to tie up to 85%-90% of capital. Book trade entrepreneurs therefore depend for survival on the ability to make good title and quantity decisions. Each title requires special consideration on whether to buy or not to buy and the number of copies to buy. In this study, it emerged that the entrepreneurs were extremely cautious in their stocking decisions which, as shown in the table below, led to over dependence on one type of stock thus leading to a limited stock range.

Table 11: Stock range in the bookshops

Stock range in the bookshops	Percentage %
Textbooks	90
General publications	9
Others	1

Among the 31 entrepreneurs, Textbooks formed 90% of the stock. General publications made up 10% of the stock while publications that did not fall in the category of textbooks or general book stock made up one percent. Entrepreneurs explained that it was only the textbook that they could consider stocking more than three copies per title.

The entrepreneurs explained that the reason for the inclination to textbooks was the fact that these were fast moving and ensured quick returns. This is captured in the expression:

“We stock books from nursery to university level and we also stock general books such as novels and the like. We however put emphasis on textbooks as they move faster and bring better results”.

(Interview No. 3)

The entrepreneurs further explained that they lacked a system that would provide them with information on new areas for which they could stock books without the risk of being caught-up with '*dead*' stock.

4.4.3 Information on sources of book stock

The book trade like other businesses exists by buying products from suppliers at one price and selling them to consumers at a profit. In choosing sources and suppliers of stock, entrepreneurs have to know in advance the type of customer expected to the bookshop and the kinds of books they need. This information will enable them to choose suitable suppliers who can offer the most advantageous terms.

The findings showed that all entrepreneurs source their local publications directly from the respective publishers. It was only when the publishers did not have the books that they consulted other booksellers. This sourcing of stock directly from publishers meant that there were far too many orders reaching publishers. When foreign publications were stocked, they were bought through foreign book distributors. A majority of the entrepreneurs however, did not stock foreign publications and when they had to, when for example a customer wanted a book, they bought them through foreign book distributors.

4.4.4 Sources of book information

Finding book information is critical for successful stocking. Important bibliographic book information includes; book title, author, price, publisher, edition, and extent and subject

category. In the table provided below, common sources cited in acquiring book information were in order of priority publisher's catalogues, publisher's sales representatives and fellow booksellers.

Table 12: Priority sources of book information

Publications	1st Source of choice	2nd Source of choice	Other Sources
Local	publisher's catalogues	publisher's sales representatives	Fellow booksellers
Foreign	Large local bookshop	CD-book bank	Fellow booksellers

Those who stocked foreign publications got book information from a large local bookshop. The large bookshop however obtained information through the CD book bank. The proprietor happily responded:

“We have invested in a CD book bank sometimes we even use the Internet to look for book information”.

(Interview No. 2)

This response provided a good indicator that the book trade in Kenya is slowly embracing information technology though the numbers are still minimal.

Most entrepreneurs of a medium sized bookshop in typical responses said:

“When I can't get information about a book I just call Text Book Centre”. “Since TBC is an established and well stocked bookshop that also provides wholesaling services we go to them when we need books that we can't trace”.

(Interview No. 11)

It therefore emerged that TBC was central to serving the needs of booksellers who had problems reaching publishers or tracing book information.

As to whether the entrepreneurs encountered problems in acquiring and accessing book information, a majority of the entrepreneurs, thirty in number, expressed concern that they encountered numerous problems typically expressed thus:

“Local publishers are not prompt in advancing catalogues when the book season starts”. “Sometimes you can’t tell who the publisher of a book is so you spend a lot of time calling all possible publishers to know who published the book you want”. “When a title does not appear in any catalogue it is very frustrating”. “When publishers don’t have the required books or when book information is not readily available as when you can’t identify the publisher easily you waste a lot of time and sometimes even lose customers”.
(Interview Nos. 28)

The respondents were generally agreed that much as the problem of inadequate book information affected most local publishers, it was more pronounced among self-publishers. They argued that in most cases self-publishers did not have catalogues of their publications. Entrepreneurs also complained that such publishers did not make available their catalogues to booksellers yet in some cases their books were in great demand.

The established publishers on the other hand were blamed that many times they ran out of stock just when the book season was at its peak. This situation led to suspicion where entrepreneurs thought that books were being hoarded for favoured bookshops. This view is echoed in the following comment:

“This is a sensitive matter but you see there is cut throat competition and the publishers favour some bookshops for whom they keep stock”. “For some of us they tell you the stock is finished”.

(Interview No 16)

4.4.5 Information to guide stocking decisions

Ideally, stocking decisions should be based on what the market wants. This means the entrepreneur should have information on changing trends in consumer tastes, preferences, and purchasing power.

This study established a lack of in-house information systems that could be used to guide on re-order for each title. The systems which could either be manual or computerised were lacking. It emerged that entrepreneurs did not pay attention to issues like the time lapse between order placement and receipt of the stock. Understanding the delivery lead-time, which is the shortest time possible to order for and receive stock, is important. Thus in stocking decisions, a title’s rate of sale and the supplier’s delivery lead-time are critical.

The findings showed that a majority of the entrepreneurs based their stocking decisions on the list of recommended books as made by the Ministry of Education and not on any market intelligence feedback as can be seen from the following statement:

“From experience we can gauge the demand and also by customer requests and books recommended by the Ministry of Education”.

(Interview No. 10)

It is clear that none of the entrepreneurs based their stocking decisions on standard professional tools such as having a stocking reminder system in place. Such lack of information systems tends to lead to lost sales as books that are in high demand can run out of stock without being noticed on time.

4.4.6 Preferred form/format of book information

The entrepreneurs were then asked the preferred form in which book information should be given. A majority of them, thirty, advocated for regular release of catalogues and new title information from the publishers, regular circulars from the KBSA on book industry issues and especially on developments in the education sector. These views are summed up thus:

“Tracing the location of some publishers and their agents can be difficult and time consuming; KBSA should produce a directory to help booksellers”. “In fact KBSA has been rather a let down to booksellers since they communicate with us irregularly.” “They need to communicate with us frequently and especially inform us on what is going on”.
(Interview No 22)

4. 4.7 Information in determining book prices

The price of a publication can make a difference on whether it will sell or not. In most cases a customer’s perception of the pricing of a publication will affect their decision to

buy. In Kenya local publications are usually sold at the publisher's recommended retail price that appears in the respective catalogues.

Though the book market is liberalised, the industry has managed to stick to publisher's prices due to the stiff competition. Foreign publications on the other hand are normally marked up with costs incurred during the procurement process such as freight charges, inspection fees and transportation charges.

In response to questions on the credit period given to them by publishers, the entrepreneurs were unanimous that they ranged between 30-90 days for local publishers. Some publishers they said insisted on dealing in cash. For foreign purchases pre-payment before delivery was the norm.

Asked how they determine book prices, all entrepreneurs were agreed that they based pricing on the publisher's recommended retail price (RRP). They however revealed that on many occasions they did not benefit from price adjustments due to lack of an information system through which price changes can be communicated quickly. Foreign publications were priced according to the respective publisher's price and marked up with shipping and other costs.

4.4.8 Stock delivery to the bookshops.

When entrepreneurs were asked how stock was delivered to their bookshops. Twenty six, of them replied that being in Nairobi, they were happy with the book delivery as most publishers delivered by own vehicles to the bookshops. Six of them however explained that they purchased books in small quantities and therefore collected their books at their cost from the publishers. Thus delivery of books by the publishers depended on the size of the orders. The feeling of most entrepreneurs is expressed in these words:

“When the order is big the publishers bring, when it is small you collect for yourself”.
(Interview No 15)

4.5 Market Information

Entrepreneurs were required to identify market segments that they served and also to state whether they encountered market-related information needs in the work situation. Findings established that all the entrepreneurs had problems in accessing information on what the market wanted. The sentiments held were that, although schools formed the largest portion of their market there were always problems in matching books with individual school requirements. Their views are summed up in the following response:

“It is usually difficult to know what books every school has recommended”. “You know the Ministry of Education gives a recommended list of six titles per subject from vetted publishers and schools are expected to choose one or two titles which they use as textbooks”. “It would be better if there was a way we booksellers could get information on what each school in the country has selected”.
(Interview No. 13)

4.6 Marketing Information

Any business that expects to attract consumers to its premises must make efforts towards creating awareness about their existence, location and what they have to offer. In this research, entrepreneurs were required to explain promotional activities that they undertook how they went about it and any notable benefits of the marketing efforts.

Of the thirty two entrepreneurs interviewed only four carried out a formal form of marketing. They explained that their bookshop displays were the main form of marketing and that efforts were taken to make them attractive. These entrepreneurs also produced calendars annually, periodically gave competitive discounts to customers and made visits to schools. Entrepreneur responses were typically as follows:

“Display is our greatest marketing. We also offer special discounts to our customers some times”. “We visit schools to market the bookshop”. “We produce a catalogue for our bookshop and I believe we are the only ones”. “I show the funds in the budget but they are not available”.

(Interviews Nos. 9)

Findings showed that only one entrepreneur produces a catalogue, has a sales van and advertises in the local media. Regarding a marketing budget, only three entrepreneurs had one in place. It emerged from the study that there was no system in place to keep sensitising the entrepreneurs on the benefits of marketing their business.

4.7 Human resource information

The human resource component is the most expensive yet very necessary aspect of the book trade. Employees can use up a large portion of the bookshop income and they must be paid whether sales take place or not. It is therefore one area that must be monitored closely to be sure of the benefits of having any chosen number of employees.

In the research, the human resource section was approached in two parts: part one considered the number of employees in the bookshop, their academic and professional qualifications, sources from which they are acquired, the means through which they reach the sources and the entrepreneurs' first source of choice.

It also looked at information systems, if any, that are in place to ease employee acquisition. Part two tackled issues on length of service and problems encountered in dealing with employees.

Interviews for part one revealed that the number of employees in a bookshop varied according to the size of the organisation. Two bookshops, which were also the largest in terms of size and number of outlets, had 150 and 80 employees respectively. Twenty one bookshops, which were also of medium size, had between 10 to 15 employees while nine bookshops had between 2 to 9 employees.

Most of the bookshops had employees with 'O-level' (school leaver's) qualifications. The two large bookshops, with two other outlets within Nairobi had managers who were graduates.

On professional qualifications, all bookshops had at least an employee who had done accounting courses with some having CPA 3 level. When asked why they were content with such low levels of qualifications among their employees the respondents said they were concerned about the higher pay they would be required to offer if employees had better qualifications. As some entrepreneurs stated:

“There was no need for higher qualifications as we are okay this way. Also higher grades means more pay which the bookshop cannot manage”. “Why have highly qualified staff and pay higher salaries?”

(Interview Nos. 7)

Regarding the sources of getting employees, the research established that the most common sources in order of priority were family contact, friends, staff members and job seekers that called in. When probed on how they actually went about seeking for the employees it turned out that none followed the formal means of acquiring employees. Employee acquisition was mostly done by oral means.

“Most of the recruitment is just done by asking our family or friends. Other times when people come in and they ask for a job we find if we have a suitable place for them we offer”.

(Interview No. 5)

On the first choice of source for employees a majority of entrepreneurs cited family contact then existing employee and lastly friends. In fact, in most cases all the above sources were contacted simultaneously and what mattered is who responded earliest.

Regarding an organised information system for employee recruitment, the entrepreneurs were unanimous that to the best of their knowledge none existed.

Part two of the human resource factor considered the rate of employee retention length of service and problems encountered in dealing with employees.

On the rate of employee retention, a majority of the entrepreneurs said some of their earliest employees were still in their employment. The research established a correlation between the length of the existence of a bookshop and rate of employee retention. Older bookshops that had been in existence for ten years and above reported a higher retention rate. Newer bookshops showed a tendency of high rates of staff turn over. In particular, bookshops established from 1990 have experienced high employee turn over, as employees don't stay beyond three years. The views of most respondents is captured in the words:

“Well, you can start with me, I have been here from the beginning but there are several people who joined and they have never gone. Some people have been here for forty and some thirty years some have begun to retire now after working for over thirty years. I think we have had six, seven retirements in the last year who have done over thirty years here, so when they reach that level they retire. So people who we employed at the beginning have done very well with the company lasting throughout their lives, but in the recent past we find that people are not lasting that long. May be they have the ambition to

go further and many other things but we also find dishonesty and that sort of thing is also bad now but in the past it wasn't there."

(Interview No. 3)

On the issue of incentives given to employees, a majority of the entrepreneurs said they considered better pay a strong incentive. They were however not convinced that it helped retain the employees. There appeared to be a case of discontent with employees in general. Representing a typical response was the statement:

"Incentives are not even an issue because they leave no matter what you do". "Most of the employees come to us because they have not found employment elsewhere. So, as soon as they find what they believe is a better job, they just leave". Also, most of them think that running a bookshop is easy, so when they get little experience they tend to go and start their own". "Usually those businesses don't last".

(Interview No. 8)

On whether they had problems getting suitable employees, a majority of the entrepreneurs responded that they had no problems. This response provided a contradiction in that on one hand they had no problems acquiring employees while on the other they were dissatisfied with their length of stay. Further probing pointed to the issue of trustworthiness as being the cause of the low retention rate. It is also a pointer to the lack of information on where to source trained personnel. For most entrepreneurs the feelings were expressed as:

"Even after selecting a suitable employee through the oral interview, you still find them with a lot of short comings." "You have to teach them work from scratch yet after they have learnt they start being unfaithful". "They can sometimes engage in shop lifting or even collude with other people to steal from you". "Some of them go to the extent of making you loose sales by telling a customer to buy a book which you have in stock from your competitors claiming that they offer a better price".

(Interview No. 20)

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented findings on book trade entrepreneurs' information needs. Being basically a qualitative study in which findings were arrived at through the 'grounded theory' framework and methodology, it was imperative that the respondents' lived experiences were clearly identified. It was for this reason that a background of the entrepreneurs' business was evaluated. The first part of this chapter therefore presented a historical background of respective respondents' businesses.

On core issues of information needs, findings showed that the most prevalent information needs among the entrepreneurs were funding, stock and stocking, market, suppliers, and human resource. It was established that lack of access to or even inability to interpret or use information sources and channels generally led to inadequate use of available information in their business enterprises.

The findings showed that the earliest book trade in Nairobi occurred between the periods 1940-1950. During the same period, the book trade experienced a slow growth rate up to the 1980s when faster growth was experienced. This was attributed to the fact that the 1940s and the 1950s literacy had just been introduced by the missionaries. The 1980s is a period in which the Country had been independent for about twenty years and there had also been considerable population increase hence corresponding growth in the book market. Changes in educational systems from seven year in primary, four years secondary ('O' level) two years form five and six ('A' level) and three years at university to the present eight years in primary, four years at secondary and three years at the

university changed the market equation in the production of educational books. During the same period, the Government implemented what was referred to as structural adjustment programmes in which retirees used their dues to start book businesses

The research showed that overtime there was a generational family book business in which family businesses changed hands with new management taking over. This showed that book business is a good investment.

Human resource information needs were found to also affect an entrepreneur's business performance. Untrained personnel led to lost sales while entrepreneurs' personal limitations such as limited training levels meant businesses could not grow at anticipated rates.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 INFORMATION SYSTEMS AVAILABLE TO BOOK TRADE ENTREPRENEURS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings on the types of information systems available to the book trade entrepreneurs. It discusses these information systems and how entrepreneurs interact with them in the course of searching for information. In the study, identified information systems were found as intra-organisational (internal systems) and extra-organisational (external systems).

5.2 Intra-organisational information systems

Responses revealed that the intra-organisation information systems that book trade entrepreneurs had in place consisted of two types:

- The Manual information system and
- The Computerised information system

5.2.1 The manual information system

This research established that book trade entrepreneurs to a large extent operated a manual information system. Basically the entrepreneurs used cash sales for daily sales which are hand written. Most of the respondents said they made notes on pieces of paper or on exercise books for items that customers wanted but which were out of stock. Such notes formed the basis for placing the next orders. There was no evidence of maintenance of ledger books as would be expected of a business. Orders were made based on intuition and not on evidence from past sales.

5.2.2 The computerised information system

Findings of this study showed that only five bookshops had automated systems of conducting sales. However, none of them had in place a system that would act as a reminder for the transactions undertaken. The computers were mostly used for sales and not for stock monitoring.

5.3 Extra– organisational information systems

The research established extra-organisational information systems as publishers through their catalogues, the book trade associations both the Publishers' and the booksellers' bibliographic generating agencies and the Ministry of Education.

5.3.1 Publishers' Catalogues

Publishers pass on information about their titles (books) to the book trade through preparing and distributing catalogues. In essence therefore, publishers' catalogues make up the simplest forms of book trade bibliographies. These may come as complete catalogues showing all titles published by particular publishers or where the list is large, they are produced under specific subject categories. Routinely, catalogues are updated as new titles are produced and the information is provided to the book trade as new book lists.

The main drawbacks of publishers' catalogues as book information sources are the large numbers of publishing houses in existence world wide and thus the almost innumerable numbers of catalogues that an entrepreneur would have to consult. Due to the underdeveloped information system in the book trade in Kenya however entrepreneurs still have to keep and use catalogues as the main book information references.

Responses revealed that publishers were inconsistent in providing book information to the entrepreneurs. Majority of the entrepreneurs expressed disappointment that catalogues were either obsolete or sometimes were unavailable all together.

5.3.2 Book Trade Associations

These are associations or groups of persons having interests in book business. They come together with the aim of facilitating one another in solving their problems. The problems

could be information on new book markets, financial information and the general business interactions concerning the book industry.

5.3.2.1 The Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association (KBSA)

This research was conducted at a time when the Association was undergoing change of office holders. It emerged that there was no continuity in the affairs of the Association especially in a case where most members are replaced. New members tend to come with new and sometimes radical ideas.

It was no wonder then that entrepreneurs were disappointed with the performance of KBSA in responding to their information needs. All were agreed that there was a need to radically change the way the KBSA operated. Presently, they felt it only served as a source of reference to the Ministry of Education for book orders but did not assist in important matters such as sources of finances. The current policy of the Ministry of Education specifies that booksellers are included in the textbook supply project only if they are members of KBSA.

5.3.2.2 The Kenya Publishers Association (KPA)

The KPA is mainly concerned with issues touching on publishers. In Kenya however, some functions of the KPA, as advisers to publishing firms impact on booksellers who perform the distributive functions of the industry.

This study established that situations arose where information regarding textbook supply reaches the KPA and does not get to the KBSA thus causing booksellers to remain in the dark. The time lag in getting such information to entrepreneurs caused loss of sales and sometimes lowered profits.

5.3.3 Bibliographic generation organisations

This study established that most entrepreneurs were not aware of the existence of bibliographic generation agencies. Publishers' catalogues proved to be the most frequently used bibliographic source because of their simplicity and availability. Asked whether they would consider subscribing to bibliographic generation agencies, the responses showed that entrepreneurs did not know of their existence or how they are operated.

5.3.4 Ministry of Education as a component of Book trade information system

Since the book trade in Kenya is to a large extent education based it is inevitable that the Ministry of Education would get involved in certain issues of the book industry.

The involvement of the Ministry comes in the form of specifying book requirements according to the country's curriculum. It also performs the function of textbook vetting through panels as selected by its curriculum development body KIE. An even more

crucial involvement is the establishment of textbook procurement and distribution policy as set up in 1998.

This policy has put the book trade at the centre of supply of textbooks to primary and secondary schools. Bookshops qualify for inclusion into the programme by virtue of being members of the KBSA and by having established premises and addresses, usually schools should verify memberships and by physically visiting the premises. Funding however has been a major handicap for most booksellers who end up missing out on the lucrative business.

Responses revealed that most entrepreneurs could not access information on recommended texts on time. Informant interview with the Ministry of Education official established that information on book issues were passed on to the Kenya Publishers Association (KPA) since they were the producers of the books. The KPA was then expected to pass the information to the KBSA who were expected to communicate to individual booksellers who were members of the association.

A time lapse always arose between the Ministry's communication with KPA and the subsequent communication with the KBSA. On their part, a majority of the entrepreneurs complained that they hardly ever get communication from the KBSA. Response from a KBSA executive established that the association frequently experienced financial constraints due to irregular subscription from the members. The members however expressed dissatisfaction with the association on grounds that the benefits of being a

member were minimal. There is therefore a need to reconcile members with their association to bring about increased access to information.

The study further established that there were a number of agencies that could provide funding for book procurement and supply. Some of the agencies named included the World Bank who provided support for consumer based textbook funding (STEPS) among other educational related assistance. The Department of International Development, (DFID)(UK), provides support for construction of school libraries and assists in book supply to schools through the SPRED programme. Other book support agencies are the Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA), German Technical Corporation (GTC), Dutch Development Agency (DDA) and the European Union.

The outcome showed that only two entrepreneurs accounting for 6% of the entrepreneurs were aware of the existence of such agencies. However, it also emerged that the agencies do not deal with any of the book trade players directly. Instead any funds were made available through the Ministry of Education and were only paid out to book shops after books and stationery had been supplied to the designated recipients. Book trade entrepreneurs therefore are still left without a definite source to fund their business.

5.4 Summary

Information systems are critical for the optimum operation of the book trade. Systems whether internal or external should provide for easy access and thus use of information by entrepreneurs. In the research the overall book trade information system was found to

be inadequate in meeting the information needs of book trade entrepreneurs. The few available like the Kenya Booksellers' and Stationers Association requires to improve on understanding the needs of their members guiding them on availability of information systems and other developments in the industry.

As an information agency the book trade requires its own information system that would facilitate its smooth functioning. Internal information systems considered were the manual information systems entailing manual maintenance of records and other operations. The other was a computerised system which was basically partial automation of bookshop operations. External information systems comprised external players in the book trade who included publishers through their catalogues, bibliographic generation organisations, book trade associations the KBSA and the KPA and the Ministry of Education as an informant.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 COMMUNICATION IN THE BOOK TRADE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the present form of communication in the book trade. Specifically it considers communication among entrepreneurs, between entrepreneurs and their suppliers and between entrepreneurs and their consumers.

6.2 General communication in the book trade

A majority of the entrepreneurs felt that overall, communication in the book trade was very poor. This was exemplified by responses, which were quick and short, whenever entrepreneurs were asked what they thought of the current communication in the book trade. Such responses are an indication of exasperation among the entrepreneurs on the difficulty of getting the information they needed. A majority of the respondents' views are captured here as follows:

“The communication is disjointed”. “Others get informed while others don’t”. “Something needs to be done”. “We have a booksellers association but it is weak and does not understand the needs of the booksellers. It does not represent us”.

(Interview No. 5)

Frustrations of the entrepreneurs in accessing information were also echoed in the following response:

“We have Chapter Book Associations in almost every province, like Nairobi has its own while Rift Valley has its own but all these are not functioning according to how we need them to function. Every body has their own agenda ... they don’t look at it as development of booksellers or bookshops. So that is why things are not working smoothly.’

(Interview No.3)

Probed further as to how exactly they expected the communication flow to be, responses showed that entrepreneurs would prefer regular and coordinated information updates probably in the form of a newsletter and even workshops and seminars that would enlighten them on current trends in the book trade business. This view is echoed thus:

“Our Association should be more proactive in getting us informed about what is happening in the industry.” “We don’t perform as well as we could because many times we discover about changes from the Ministry of Education months after they are released yet sometimes one would have stocked the wrong books.” “In such instances you have no where to turn to for compensation. Once you loose you are on your own.”

(Interviews No. 17)

6.2.1 Communication among entrepreneurs

Consistent with the findings of the general poor communication in the book trade, the study established that entrepreneurs rarely communicated among themselves. The few occasions, on which they consulted, it was mostly to inquire on a book or other item that had run out of stock in their bookshop.

Though all entrepreneurs were dissatisfied with the state of communication in the book trade, there was no evidence of a concerted effort to reach out to each other on issues pertaining to the trade. The little communication that took place was always done by use of telephone communication.

The use of the telephone as a channel of communication by the entrepreneurs is tied down to the findings that showed that book trade entrepreneurs were information illiterate thus tending to use the channel that was accessible to them and one that they could identify with.

6.2.2 Communication between entrepreneurs and their suppliers

The analysis of communication between entrepreneurs and their suppliers revealed an unstructured form of communication. Individual entrepreneurs consulted suppliers using various methods and channels. The mode of communication chosen depended on the issue that was being pursued and the entrepreneur's situation. Common reasons for consulting with suppliers were purchase of stock, follow-up on orders and general inquiries. These also depended on whether local or foreign suppliers were being contacted.

When dealing with locally available stock, entrepreneurs were unanimous that they communicated directly with respective suppliers. In placing orders, specially prepared forms by respective publishers were used. Where the forms were not available, orders

were hand written on paper. Follow-up on order progress was made by phone, in most cases the cell-phone.

The communication process with local suppliers is usually direct to the respective publisher. The communication is generally unstructured and uncoordinated.

Communication with foreign suppliers was mostly done by e-mail. As stated early in the research, only three entrepreneurs dealt directly with foreign suppliers. The entrepreneurs explained that most of the time follow-up on order progress was done by use of the telephone.

6.2.3 Communication between entrepreneurs and consumers

The study established that communication between entrepreneurs and consumers was poor. Unusually for business practitioners, book trade entrepreneurs did little by way of communication with consumers. The general response given for the inaction was that they largely served a textbook market and therefore consumers would naturally seek for books from the booksellers. Through probing, the respondents explained that they believed that the publicity carried out by the publishers was sufficient. When probed further, however, most respondents explained that their profit margins were too small to allow for a publicity budget.

“There is no way I can spare money for marketing my profit margin is too small.” “Since publishers carry out publicity for their books, I don’t think it is necessary for me to do double publicity.” “Further more, my profit margin is too small for me to spare money

for publicity after paying employees and meeting other urgent issues such as replenishing the stock”.

(Interview No. 6)

6.3 Information flow in the book trade

This code as established through the grounded theory tackled the general communication process within the book trade. The entrepreneurs were asked questions touching on communication among them and with other players in the industry including the kind of communication and how it was transacted. Through probing techniques such as wording the same question differently, entrepreneurs were asked how they communicated with other players in the book industry. They were, for example, asked how they dealt with players like libraries and other information providing agencies. Responses obtained formed a basis of drawing the current information flow in the book trade and how the same could be improved.

On how they related with other players in the industry, the entrepreneurs were in agreement that their first contacts outside the bookshops were publishers for book information, purchases, order follow-ups and general inquiries. They also concurred that they related with other booksellers mostly when they ran out of stock and the publishers did not have the stock.

When probed on mode of communication with the publishers all were agreed that it was by telephone. There was little evidence of writing of letters as a way of communication.

A majority of medium sized and small bookshops comprising twenty six bookshops (81%) communicated by use of cell phones. The larger bookshops used landlines. None used the e-mail as a means of communicating with local publishers.

Regarding subscribing to book trade associations, all entrepreneurs (N=32) said they belonged to the KBSA. While the entrepreneurs enumerated what they expected the KBSA to do for them they all felt that currently there were negligible benefits to them for being members of the Association. Though entrepreneurs acknowledged that KBSA acted as a reference for them to the MOEST to enables them to get school orders they felt more needed to be done to enhance communication between them.

“Our Association has been a big let down”. “Many times things that would benefit booksellers such as revised book prices is not passed on to us in time”. “Sometimes you learn about changes after trading for over one month using the wrong prices”. “We would be happy if KBSA tackled the issue of differentiated discounts and negotiated return of dead stock to the publishers as well as address the issue of unfair competition”.
(Interview No. 18)

On whether they related with other players like libraries and information agencies, it emerged that they hardly communicated. Indeed, only four bookshops supplied books to libraries regularly. The entrepreneurs expressed a need for regular updates on new titles from the publishers and the creation of a system of sharing information with other book trade players. A common complaint was that sometimes book information came when customers had given up. They emphasised the need for co-operation and the need to see the book trade as a profession and not any other business. The entrepreneurs pointed out that a major obstacle to accessing and using information was the lack of up to date

publishers' catalogues and the general communication breakdown between the entrepreneurs and Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association.

“There is need for networking and greater consultation between players and mostly the need for KBSA and KPA to work jointly and produce a newsletter”. “A customer asks for a book you have never heard of only to learn it was published almost a year ago”. “The book trade lacks a unified system of communication so that it is not clear who is supposed to do what”. “Cost is a major hindrance in accessing information most of us can't afford to computerise”.

(Interview No.24)

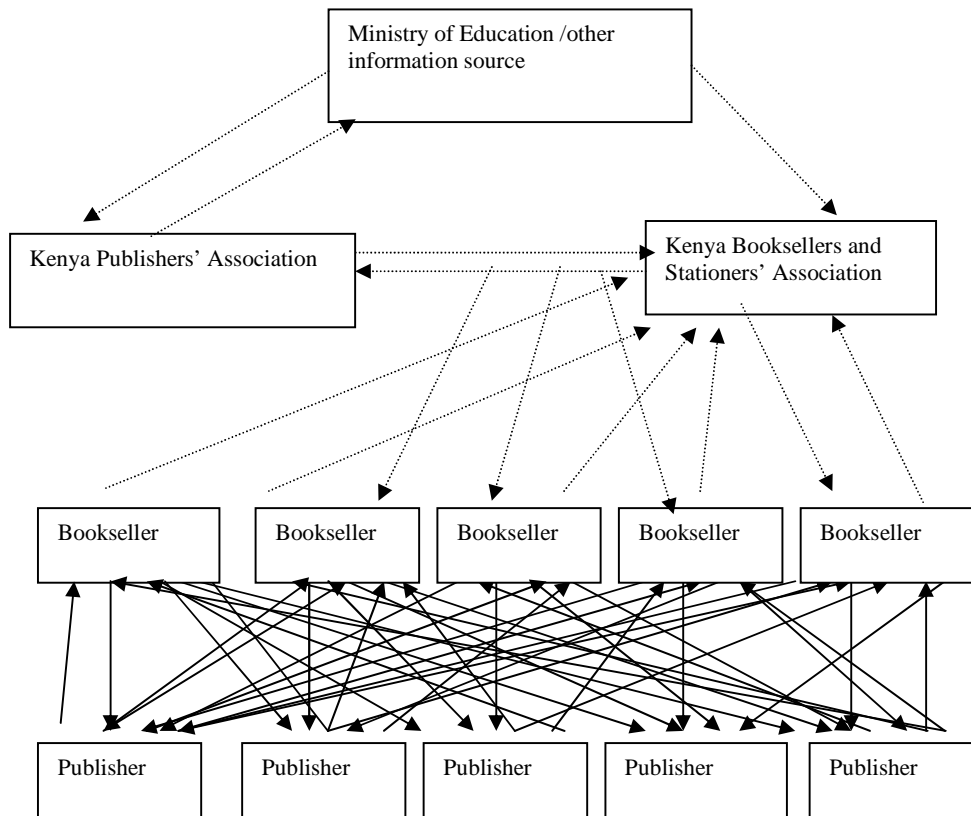
On the preferred mode of communication the respondents overwhelmingly recommended the use of regular seminars by KBSA and the need for publishers and the Ministry of Education to communicate directly with KBSA as opposed to the present method where most book trade information is first passed to the KPA. Many entrepreneurs expressed a need for KBSA to come up with a centralised form of communication whereby communication to book trade entrepreneurs would be done simultaneously.

The entrepreneurs also felt that KBSA should set rules and regulations to govern the book trade in the Country. When probed further on what they thought about the impact of IT (Information Technology) in enhancing book trade communication, the responses were startling as most entrepreneurs responded that IT has not been meaningful to the trade as it was mostly beyond their reach. Only two entrepreneurs acknowledged that IT had made it easy to transact, that it was time saving and reduced errors.

6.3.1 Current information system in the book trade

Findings of this study confirmed the second assumption of the research which stated that existing information sources, channels and system did not meet the unique information needs of book trade entrepreneurs. It was established that the structure of the existing information system did not fully address the information needs of book trade entrepreneurs. The information system as it exists at present can be said to be chaotic as booksellers communicate with the various publishers without any systematic procedure. In the process, cross-communication occurs making it difficult both for the booksellers and publishers to follow-up on orders. A diagrammatic representation of the current information system is shown:

Figure 2: A diagrammatic representation of the current information flow in the book trade showing the role of other players



The diagrammatic representation of the current information flow in the book trade shows the unstructured communication process in the book trade. Communication with other players in the industry particularly between publishers and booksellers is too congested. Dotted arrows represent the communication between book trade entrepreneurs and the associations, which shows that the communication is irregular. The diagram also depicts the occasional communication between the two associations.

6.4 Summary

This chapter considered general communication in the book trade. The entrepreneurs it was realised did little by way of communication among themselves, their suppliers and even with their customers. The information flow was mostly hampered by poor communication between the entrepreneurs and the Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association. The need to have an information system that would serve all entrepreneurs efficiently and effectively was prevalent.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 INFORMATION ACCESS AND INFORMATION USE BY ENTREPRENEURS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines entrepreneurs' information access and information use which, emerged as a core categories in the data analysis process. The chapter also discusses findings and analysis of objective No. 3, which was to establish entrepreneur information-seeking behaviour and research questions Nos. 2 and 3 on how entrepreneurs seek and use information. Wilson's (2000) barriers to information seeking behaviour conceptual model was used in guiding the findings.

In accordance with the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1990), core-categories 'entrepreneur information seeking behaviour' and information use had the following sub-categories:

- Information seeking prompts
- Information seeking process
- Information sources and channels of choice
- Information use by entrepreneurs
- Issues affecting entrepreneur information-seeking behaviour

7.2 Information-seeking prompts

In the day-to-day work situation, book trade entrepreneurs encounter varied information seeking prompts. This study defines ‘information prompts’ as circumstances or situations that cause entrepreneurs to engage in information-seeking acts where, ‘acts’ refers to actions and efforts put towards accessing information.

The research considered the ‘acts’ from the perspective of a typical day in an entrepreneur’s work situation.

Entrepreneurs were asked semi-structured questions to which they were required to respond according to their own personal experiences. The questions asked included the following:

- “What activities do you perform in your bookshop on a day-to-day basis?”
- “Which ones require urgent attention?”
- “What information do you require in each case in order to make quality decisions?”
- “Is there a specific place/point from which you could easily access the needed information?”
- “What obstacles do you encounter in accessing and using information?”
- These prepared questions were reinforced by follow up probe questions.

The study established that on a typical day entrepreneurs place orders for stock that have sold out or for those where levels are low and are in demand. Other activities performed are, monitoring progress of earlier orders; checking credit levels with respective publishers and where credit limits have been exhausted they engage in a re-negotiation process. If the negotiations fail, as most publishers are strict with the allowable limits, they seek alternative sources of funding. All entrepreneurs also conceded that they monitor goings on in the market at all times in order to keep abreast with any new pronouncements especially from the Ministry of Education.

The findings further showed that activities that required urgent attention were stock order processing and the monitoring of the progress of orders. In response to the kind of information they required in making quality decisions, it was first necessary to determine what entrepreneurs understood by 'quality decisions'. It emerged that the entrepreneurs equated 'quality decisions' with profitability. This view was formed after a large proportion of the entrepreneurs explained that they knew a decision was of quality when it led to increased sales, better customer service and increased their profit margins.

It was further established that the information acquired became of quality to decision making especially if it was timely, was complete and easily accessible. An interesting finding was the fact that none of the entrepreneurs considered cost as a hindrance to their access to information. This observation was viewed against the fact that entrepreneurs found cost considerations to be a hindrance when computerisation was contemplated.

On the issue of a specific place / point from which information could easily be accessed, responses showed that the determining factor was the nature of the information need. When confronted with stocking needs for example, the entrepreneurs had a specific point / place to consult, that is the publishers' catalogue or the respective publishers. Funding and market information provided situations where the entrepreneurs were not certain or clear about the sources of information to consult.

Basically however, it emerged that entrepreneurs experienced two 'information prompters'; the need for greater profitability, and competitiveness which is, considered a 'positive prompter'. Such positive prompters led entrepreneurs to seek for information on issues ranging from need for restocking, need for funding, and market information among other information needs.

The other prompter was that of fear of failure which was considered to be a 'negative prompter'. Negative 'prompters' were exemplified by expressions of discouragement on the performance of the Kenya Booksellers Association, complaints about sudden changes in curriculum that would leave them with 'dead stock' and the general complaint on undercutting within the book trade. These findings largely showed that whatever the reasons for information seeking, the most prevalent information prompters were 'positive prompters'.

7.3 Information seeking process

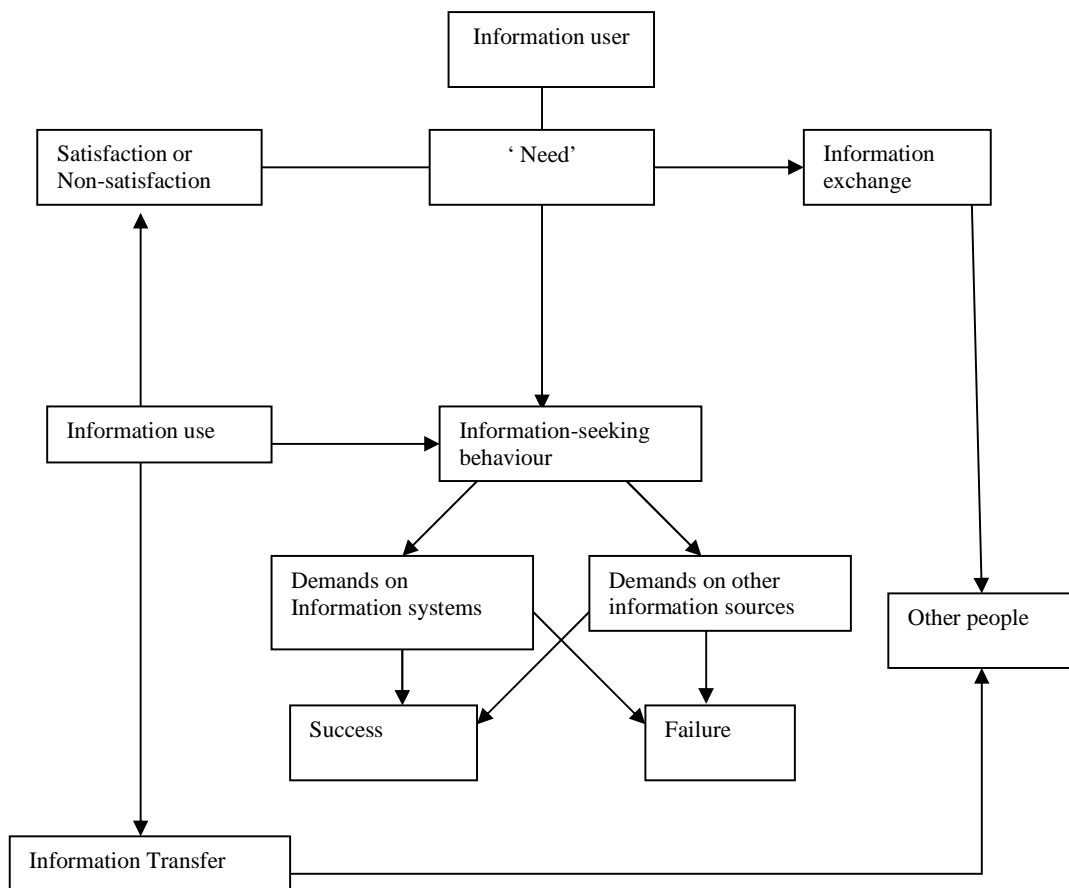
Information-seeking behaviour results from the recognition of some perceived information need by the user. The user's decision to actively seek to satisfy their knowledge gap is what, according to information science experts constitutes information-seeking behaviour. Jarvelin and Ingwersen (2004) view information-seeking behaviour as the acquisition of information from knowledge sources. According to them the sources could include both formal and informal channels. This observation was also made by Wilson (1981), a leading researcher in information seeking behaviour who explains that user behaviour is capable of taking several forms that include making demands upon formal systems that are customarily defined as information systems.

In the case of book-trade entrepreneurs these systems would comprise the use of relevant bibliographic tools, reaching out to financing entities and consulting with informants. He further states that users may also make demands upon systems, which may perform information functions or those that perform non-information functions. In the book trade these could include dealing with publisher's sales representatives, getting information from government agencies such as taxation agencies and even from United Nations bodies such as UNESCO on trends in education related issues.

As information seekers and users, book trade entrepreneurs exhibited peculiar behavioural actions in the information seeking process. This study adopted the

information-seeking behaviour model proposed by Wilson (1981), which he refined in the year 2000, in arriving at entrepreneur information seeking process.

Figure 3: Wilson's modified information seeking behaviour model



Source: Wilson T.D (1981) <http://informationr.net/papers/1981infoneeds>

The model shows that users may seek information from formal or non-formal Systems. In some instances however, users may seek information from other people rather than from systems. It also provides for an alternative source of information as depicted by the

use to the information exchange which is intended to draw attention to the element of reciprocity, a factor recognised by sociologists and social psychologists as a fundamental aspect of human interaction. The model completes the process of information-seeking by showing that in engaging in information seeking, the user may either experience success or failure.

In its modified version Wilson's model indicates that other factors that may affect a user's behaviour are the importance of satisfying the need, the penalty incurred in acting in the absence of full information and the cost of accessing and using the information among other reasons. These factors are further affected by the state of need in which the user is operating in at a particular moment in time. The needs are based on three categories suggested by psychologists, which are:

- Physiological needs –such as the need for food, water and shelter.
- Emotional or affective needs- such as the need for attainment and for domination.
- Cognitive needs such as the need to plan, to learn a skill etc.

In accordance with Wilson's model, this research established that when entrepreneurs were confronted with information related concerns, they first sought information from available formal systems. The system consulted depended on the nature of the problem. Whenever entrepreneurs were confronted by book stocking information needs, they first checked with their records to establish the publisher of the book. They then consulted the respective publisher.

Entrepreneurs hardly used the publishers' catalogues to place the orders since the catalogues were irregular in availability and in most cases prices changed at short notice. If as happens occasionally they are unable to establish the publisher of a book or if the book is out of stock with the publisher, they consult a re-knowned book retailer-cum-wholesaler within Nairobi thus bringing an element of the informal information system. If they failed to get information from the retailer-cum-wholesaler then they would consult among other booksellers known to them but always within Nairobi.

In situations where funding was the problem, the first moves would be to try and get credit facilities from publishers. A majority of the entrepreneurs particularly expressed helplessness with regard to funding, as there seemed to be little information as to how they can access funds for their business. Sentiments of the entrepreneurs are summed up as follows:

“Many times we have to buy stock for cash as publishers are very rigid in their appraisal of small booksellers. Also, even if you get credit, when you reach your credit limit, any additional stock had to be bought in cash”. “Some banks consider giving you credit when they see a firm order mostly from a school”.

When seeking for market information all entrepreneurs agreed that in most cases the information was acquired informally through acquaintances. According to them the formal structure for market information would have been provided by the KBSA. They however expressed disappointment that their Association was inactive as far as providing them with much needed information was concerned. All the entrepreneurs shared the feelings:

“There is nil help or information from KBSA, in fact to me it is redundant.”
(All entrepreneurs)

The main informant for the book trade in Kenya as earlier explained is the Ministry of Education thus any information touching on the curriculum is of utter importance to the entrepreneurs. It emerged however that in most cases, they read about Ministry pronouncements from the local press, which in this case falls under an informal system of communication.

7.4 The information source and channel of choice

As already stated, book trade entrepreneurs perform a variety of tasks on a day-to-day basis and thus their use of information sources and channels are determined by the nature of task being carried out.

This research established that the entrepreneurs consulted three major information sources and used one main channel of communication. Stocking information, which was also the most frequently required information, was obtained from the publishers' catalogues. As the entrepreneurs responses showed, they consulted publishers' catalogues if they were available. Even so, all were agreed that before placing any orders, they had to make phone calls to respective publishers to confirm the pricing and availability of the stock.

In response to how they obtained funding information, a majority of them said they had no way of getting any information. All the entrepreneurs depended on their own efforts and personal connections. Regarding how they kept abreast with current on goings in the industry and the market, the entrepreneurs were unanimous that they consulted among fellow booksellers. Asked how they communicated with each other, all gave the telephone as their channel of choice.

The entrepreneurs were probed to establish whether they consulted other sources of information. A majority said they sometimes got useful information from the regular press. Asked whether they subscribed to any book-trade journal, it emerged that none of the entrepreneurs subscribed to a trade journal. Only three respondents knew that such journals existed but did not subscribe to any. Information services such as libraries and information centres were never consulted. In fact none of the entrepreneurs saw the need of using libraries as an information source.

The Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) for example, is the National library charged with the responsibility of compiling a national bibliography. Since it has not compiled a bibliography for a long period of time, a crucial information source for booksellers is lacking. As the responses revealed there is a complete lack of connection between libraries and book trade stake holders.

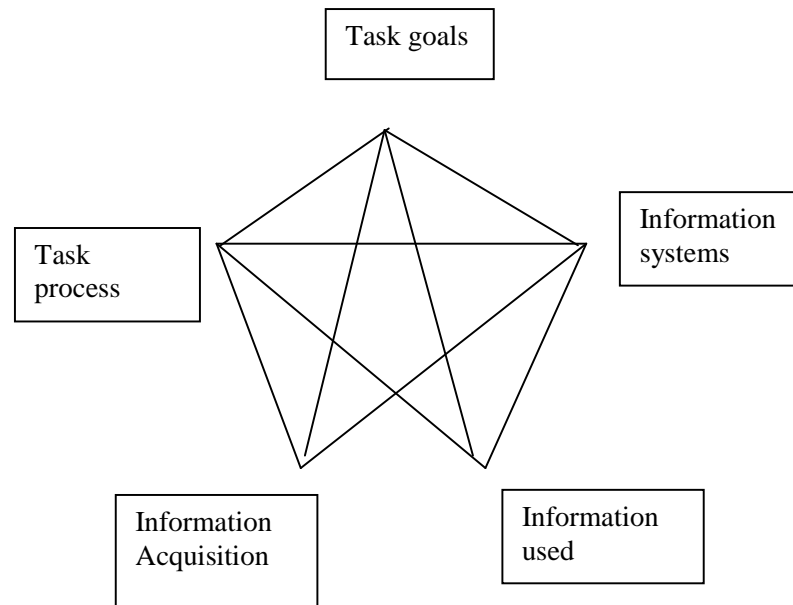
When asked if they used other channels of communication, the responses showed that only three entrepreneurs had e-mail facilities and which they explained were used for

communication with foreign suppliers. None of the entrepreneurs used e-mail for local communication or other business transactions. A part from orders, which were placed in writing most of the communication, was done through the telephone.

7.5 Information use

This research defines the term ‘information use’ as the value, benefits and enlightenment that an entrepreneur gains by having access to relevant information. The relevance of the information is here determined by the expression of satisfaction as experienced by the entrepreneur. This view is upheld by Odongo and Ocholla (2004) who state that the value and impact of information use refers to new conditions that are established after information has been used. By use of a metaphor, they explain that an information user who has been shown where information is may or may not find it. Finding information, they say, may sometimes depend on the searcher’s luck than their knowledge or skills in information seeking. Once a user has managed to access information, either by luck or through skills, its influence on the user remains and their enlightened states cannot be reversed. They will henceforth know how to acquire the required information.

Figure 4: Interaction of task components in information seeking environmental context



Source: Jarvelin and Ingwersen (2004) Interaction of task components in information seeking environmental context

Responses in this study showed that entrepreneurs satisfied their immediate needs by consulting simple sources and channels of information. This meant that they did not see a need to put in place more sophisticated information systems that could be accessed and used in future. They seemed content to start the process afresh with every search.

As established through out the research, the entrepreneurs performed simple tasks that did not require elaborate information to accomplish. The tasks included establishing books that consumers wanted, determining the publishers of these books, placing orders for the books, paying for the books or seeking for credit facilities and having the books

delivered to the bookshop. These tasks however when successfully executed led to profitability and when failure occurred led to poor business performance. The survival of the entrepreneur therefore depended on how well they executed their information seeking tasks and the use of such information for business success. It was determined that access to timely and accurate information was crucial for success despite the fact that they operated in an environment that is not information intensive.

In investigating information use by entrepreneurs, it was found that they consulted very few sources and used a limited channel in seeking for the needed information. This in turn had the effect of limiting the entrepreneurs' search scope thus leading to general dissatisfaction in the course of information search. In seeking for book information for example, entrepreneurs would normally consult the publisher's catalogue. Many times however the catalogues would be out dated meaning that price, an important component in bookselling might have been changed. There was always a situation where the book ordered for through information given in the catalogue may be out of print. This meant that that particular order would have been a waste of time for the entrepreneur. Since 'information use' is the value, benefits and enlightenment that an entrepreneur gains by having access to relevant information it can be deduced that in most of the searches entered into, entrepreneurs did not get the 'value' of use.

Book trade entrepreneurs depend on the textbook market for the bulk of the business survival. The study established that the Ministry of Education which controls the textbook vetting and recommendation process would normally pass information on

selected textbooks to the Kenya Publishers Association (KPA). While KPA would inform successful publishers of the verdict, the same information does not reach booksellers. In the process situations occurred where book trade entrepreneurs stocked books that were no longer in the recommended book list. In this way, information use resulted in failure as entrepreneurs ended up with 'dead' stock.

7.6 Summary

The findings as presented in this chapter showed that book trade entrepreneurs used both formal and informal systems of information in information access and use. It was established that in the information seeking process, entrepreneurs first consulted formal systems such as publishers' catalogues. When the catalogue was not available the entrepreneurs consulted with fellow booksellers. The study revealed that the most frequently used channel of communication was the telephone. Regarding information use, responses showed that in most cases information use resulted in failure especially when publishers' catalogues were out dated or where information on recommended textbooks was late in reaching entrepreneurs.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 CONSTRAINTS TO ACCESS AND USE OF INFORMATION

8.1 Introduction

Constraints refer to limitations that would hinder entrepreneurs from accessing and using information. Such constraints could either be internal or external. This chapter examines constraints in entrepreneur access to and use of information. It specifically considers constraints that emerged in this research. The study established that environmental factors at play affect access and use of information. Responses showed that information available to entrepreneurs affects the quality of decisions that entrepreneurs make in the day-to-day work situation. In this study, sound decisions are defined as situations in which decisions made by entrepreneurs either enhance chances of profit making or diminish such chances.

Viewing factors that affect access to and use of information on the basis of quality of decisions is supported by Goedegebuure and Stroetmann (1992) when they submit that the information market is embedded in a dynamic heterogeneous environment which has an influence on, and impacts on the actors. They further explain that among the key actors in the information market is the book trade, which falls under the larger functional area of distribution. Others are producers as represented by authors and publishers, the competitors as represented by fellow booksellers, service providers such as libraries and clients who are the customers. Support service providers who include

telecommunications and hardware and software providers also constitute the larger environmental context.

More support for this position is seen in a survey conducted by the Estonian Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises which set out to determine problems caused by the business environments in which organisations operate. Among other findings, access to information emerged as one of the problem areas for the entrepreneurs in Small and Medium-Sized Estonian enterprises (Tibar 2002). The study concluded that entrepreneurs could influence the micro environmental factors but could only scan the changes in the macro-environment and use them to advantage.

In this study factors affecting access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs are presented in two main categories as *internal* and *external*.

8.2 Internal constraints to information access and use

The internal constraints as earlier explained are limitations that affect access to and use of information and which are within the limits of the entrepreneur control such employee inefficiency, entrepreneurial oversight, records deficiency, operations inadequacies, information illiteracy and change preparedness.

8.2.1 Employee inefficiency

Employees also referred to as human resource play a crucial role as a link between the entrepreneur and the customers. When employees have skills that are relevant to the job functions that they perform, they become real assets to the business enterprise. In this research skills are defined as practical and professional capabilities which endow employees with the competence of performing a given task. The study established that the respective entrepreneurs ran the bookshops on a day to day basis.

In essence the entrepreneurs performed the managerial functions of decision making. Only two large bookshops, which had four branches each within Nairobi, had managers in-charge of each branch. Responses from the managers showed that they did not make any decisions and had to consult the entrepreneur on a continuous basis. Issues like stocking and staff recruitment were done centrally usually from the main branch, which was personally run by the entrepreneur.

Depending on the size of the bookshop, employees mostly performed the function of shop attendants. Larger book shops had record clerks and accounts personnel. Employees who came in direct contact with customers are the shop attendants. Necessary skills required to deal with customers are stock knowledge, ability to use book-trade bibliographic tools and human relations.

The study found that most of the bookshops had employees with KCSE school leavers' qualifications. None of the employees had done a professional course and mostly learnt work on the job. They were therefore mostly unskilled. The general feeling is captured in the following comment:

'Sometimes customers are turned away just because an employee did not know the book was in stock or was simply unable to trace its location.' "From a business perspective, employee ignorance leads to lost sales." "Many times you have to correct the employee yet they keep repeating the mistake."

(Interview No. 4)

8.2.2 Entrepreneurial oversight

Entrepreneurial oversight is a situation where processes that can impact on the business are side stepped leading to failure. Examples include maintenance of stock ledgers which could act as internal information systems. Having the right product at the right time, in the right place, for the right customers, at the right price marks entrepreneurial efficiency.

In responses as to the types of records they kept, it emerged that apart from cash sales which are issued for cash transactions there was little evidence of other forms of records being maintained. There were for example no stock ledgers maintained on a regular basis. Bin cards which are use to control the movement of books were not maintained. Eventually stock was reordered when it ran out or when cumtomers asked for them and they were not available.

In a world that has embraced technology entrepreneurial oversight was also evident from the fact that none of the entrepreneurs had a web site or presence on the Internet. Results of the study showed that none of the entrepreneurs stocked non-book materials such as CD-ROM books and the conventional audio and videotapes. It also emerged that e-book trade did not seem to be among their immediate plans. Essentially the entrepreneurs have left themselves to being controlled by forces within the environmental contexts in which they operate.

8.2.3 Records keeping deficiency

Records keeping deficiency refers to a situation where entrepreneurs are unable to keep crucial records due to the enormous paper work involved especially due to employee inefficiency. Records are an organisation's means of monitoring transactions, streamlined records systems makes it possible to access, retrieve and use information contained in the records whenever required. Most entrepreneurs complained that they could not cope with the number of records that they were supposed to keep.

The responses showed that during the peak season, there were instances where sales were made and cash sales not issued. Thus they lacked accurate records on cash transactions. In some cases customer's orders were not placed since scraps of paper on which they were recorded could not be traced. On many occasions, entrepreneurs said they ran out of stock as they lacked a system of monitoring stock levels.

8.2.4 Operations inadequacy

Operations inadequacy refers to a situation where systems have not been put in place to aid the totality of bookshop operations. The research established that a majority of the bookshops had a manual system of operation. It was determined that even where the system of operation was manual, several important records and processes were left out. Where for example delivery of orders was made, Goods Received Notes (GRNs) were not raised. This made it difficult to trace the transaction in future. Sometimes entrepreneurs could not remember the quantity ordered thus leading to disputes with publishers over the quantity of stock that should be paid for. Also only four bookshops had a semi-computerised system. The system was generally used for cash transactions and not for stock monitoring. Responses from the entrepreneurs showed that just a few records were maintained. Usually once books arrived the records were discarded and not particularly kept for future reference.

8.2.5 Information illiteracy

Information literacy is a state associated with knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner. The subcategory code information illiteracy was arrived at in this research based on the concept of information literacy. Other definitions that informed this sub-category included that of the American Library Association which states that 'to be information

literate, a person must be able to recognise when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.

Webber and Johnston (2003) define information literacy as the adoption of appropriate information well fitted to information needs, together with a critical awareness of the importance of wise and ethical use of information in society. The UK-CLIP (2006) explain that to be information literate, the skills or competencies required includes an understanding of:

- A need for information
- The resources available
- How to find information
- How to work with or exploit results
- Ethics and responsibility of use

Based on this evaluation of the concept of information literacy, the research findings indicate that book-trade entrepreneurs were to a large extent information illiterate. Important instances that support the presented view were on areas of staffing, stocking, financing, trade trends awareness and market information.

On staffing, it emerged that in all the bookshops studied, a majority of employees had lower level qualifications and were therefore not skilled in carrying out the various tasks in the bookshops. The entrepreneurs lacked information or an information source which

they would consult whenever staffing needs arose. The entrepreneurs if they were aware of their information needs and especially the existence of these institutions would have approached them when seeking for employees.

Regarding stocking, which is a crucial aspect of book selling, the responses showed that the entrepreneurs did not seek for book information outside the publishers' catalogues. Modern book trade tools such as CD-book banks were not consulted.

As regards trade trends awareness, the research established that entrepreneurs expected the KBSA to be their main information provider. They seemed unaware of the possibility of using resources such as book trade journals and other sources such as the Internet to get the information needed.

8.2.6 Change preparedness inadequacy

Organisations are dynamic entities that operate in a dynamic environment. Change, which is almost always inevitable, must never find an entrepreneur unprepared. Change preparedness is characterised by an organisation having strategic plans in place and having pro-active organisational intelligence. In this research strategic plans are courses of action that an entrepreneur can fall back to in-case of change. Organisational intelligence refers to information that the business enterprise gathers that would give advance warning of change thus cushioning the business from the effects of unexpected change.

The study established that none of the entrepreneurs had structures in place that would prepare them for sudden changes. Since the Kenyan book trade was largely textbook based, the greatest threat to an entrepreneur would be a sudden change in the curriculum or syllabus. The entrepreneurs had no system of information that would warn them of impending changes. All entrepreneurs complained of always being caught with 'dead stock' when changes occurred which held up capital unnecessarily. They explained that almost always they learnt of changes from the conventional press.

8.3 External constraints to information access and use

External constraints are limitations that affect access to and use of information and which are outside the limits of the entrepreneur control.

8.3.1 Competition deficiency

Competition is important in ensuring maintenance of quality service by players in the book trade. Structured competition occurs when players in similar businesses are able to communicate and agree on issues affecting the business environment. Findings of this study however showed that book trade entrepreneurs mostly operate individually and many times made decisions that brought a situation of unstructured competition.

The issue of discounts offered to customers who buy in bulk such as schools was particularly contentious. On average publishers give booksellers, 25% discount for purchases of at least five copies of a title. The 25% given is expected to cater for the business expenses. Book trade entrepreneurs therefore hardly gave any discounts to the customers.

In the findings, all the respondents, (32) felt that from the 25% given to them by the publishers, giving a customer 5%- 7% discount would be reasonable. Responses however showed that some entrepreneurs gave a discount of between 12%-17% in order to win more customers effectively undercutting their competitors. This unstructured competition impacted on the overall performance of the book trade by leaving entrepreneurs with small profit margins and bringing about unrealistic pricing of the books.

8.3.2 Information inequalities

Information inequalities occur when information that is meant for all players in a similar business is passed on or reaches a few players leaving out the majority. This situation was revealed when it emerged that some entrepreneurs are able to get information on issues affecting the book trade while others remained uninformed.

Responses obtained from two large bookshops with four branches each indicated that the entrepreneurs were capable of getting information they needed in the shortest time possible. When for example changes in curriculum were anticipated, they easily got the

information, mostly, informally from the Ministry of Education. The majority of the entrepreneurs however, did not have access to the Ministry thus, remained in the dark about impending changes and were often caught up with ‘dead stock’.

8.3.3 Regulations deficiency

Being a business, the book trade operates in an environment of myriad regulations that govern business enterprises in Kenya. This study established that the entrepreneurs knew little about regulations governing the book trade. It also emerged that there was no forum for educating the entrepreneurs on regulations that they should observe as players in the book industry. A respondent indeed explained that their bookshop suffered a Ksh. 10 million penalty on a libel case filed against it for stocking a book, which was later said to contain defamatory statements.

8.3.4 Association’s inefficiency

This research was conducted at a time when the Kenya Booksellers and Stationers’ Association was undergoing a change of office holders. It emerged that there was no continuity in the affairs of the Association especially as happened in this case where most members were being replaced.

Interviews of KBSA employees who had been with the association for three years, revealed a dire need to run the Association in line with associations in more developed

economies. In developed book trade industries, executive secretariats are employed to run the day to day affairs of the association thus unnecessary changes in operations is avoided. Indeed responses from the entrepreneurs all pointed to a general dissatisfaction with the performance of KBSA in responding to their information needs. The study established that new office bearers tended to come with new and sometimes radical ideas. In most cases whatever programmes the previous office bearers had put in place were ignored and new ones instituted.

8.3.5 Information inadequacy

Current book information instruments like the Kenyan Books in Print and even most publishers catalogues do not give the ISBN of some titles. Whereas KNLS is the ISBN allocation body in Kenya, there seems to be a break down in communication between them and the publishers. The lack of ISBN in local titles means that the books cannot be marketed internationally, as they are not listed in major international catalogues such as the CD Book Bank. The Kenya books in print the country's foremost consolidated publishers' catalogue therefore has incomplete information as far as local titles are concerned. The catalogue has also not been revised since 1997, yet any revision without the incorporation of ISBNs by publishers would be a futile exercise. The findings further showed that books produced by individual (self) publishers formed the biggest number of local titles that lacked ISBNs.

8.4 Summary

In this chapter constraints in information access and use are discussed. The constraints were identified in the data analysis stage based on the grounded theory method. These were grouped as internal and external. Internal constraints comprised employee inefficiency, entrepreneurial oversight, and information illiteracy among others and were found mostly to be within the entrepreneur's control. External constraints were to a large extent beyond the control of the entrepreneur and included competition deficiency, information inequalities, regulations deficiency and associations' deficiency.

CHAPTER NINE

9.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

9.1 Introduction

This chapter presents discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Main findings of the research were derived from data analysis as guided by the aim, objectives, research questions and study assumptions. These are tackled under the headings of information needs, seeking behaviour, sources, channels and systems in the book trade and information access and use. Study conclusions are presented arising from findings and recommendations are made for noting and possible future action.

9.2 An overview of the research Aims, Objectives and research questions

This research set out to investigate access to, and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation. Nairobi, Kenya's capital city was selected as the area of study by virtue of its location larger customer bases, proximity to the publishers and the general better infrastructure especially in communication. The purpose of the study of the study was to investigate book trade access their effectiveness in meeting entrepreneurs needs and make suggestions for improvement.

The objectives, research questions and assumptions of the study were:

a) Objectives of the study

1. Identify the information needs of entrepreneurs in the book trade in Kenya.
2. Identify the information systems including sources and channels available to the entrepreneurs in their work situation.
3. Establish the information seeking behaviour of the entrepreneurs.
4. Determine the types of information that entrepreneurs require for quality decision making.
5. Identify macro and micro environmental factors that impact on an entrepreneur's ability to make sound decisions.
6. Analyse the communication process among entrepreneurs and between them and their suppliers and consumers and to establish how they are linked.
7. Identify problems that hamper the smooth flow of information in the book-trade.
8. Provide possible suggestions on how they can be solved.

b) Research questions

1. What type of information do book trade entrepreneurs require in the work situation?
2. How do entrepreneurs seek the needed information?
3. How do the prevailing environmental conditions affect the communication process in the book trade?
4. How do book trade entrepreneurs use the information obtained?

5. How have the existing information systems affected the work situation of the entrepreneurs?
6. What form of information system and structure is required for optimum information acquisition and use by the entrepreneurs?
7. What suggestions can be made to improve the communication process among entrepreneurs and their publics?

9.2.1 Information needs of book trade entrepreneurs

Data obtained through analysis of responses of book trade entrepreneurs in the work situation in Nairobi established that the entrepreneurs experienced information needs. The different operations of the book trade required relevant decisions to be made which needed specific information that was on many instances not available.

Information needs of entrepreneurs were deduced from the data analysis process and are summarised as:

Funding information

Stock and stocking information

Market information

Human resource information

- **Funding information**

Book trade entrepreneurs often needed information on sources of funds. Most of them did not rate banks as important sources and looked out for alternative sources. The findings show that 81% of the entrepreneurs who used their personal savings to start their business would have wished to know if there were other sources of funding apart from banks.

The entrepreneurs singled out the banks as being insensitive to their needs. They complained that the majority of banks turned down any funding request citing the book trade as being too risky to fund. The reason for this was that most book trade entrepreneurs lacked the mandatory collateral that would act as security to the banks. In addition to this a majority of bookshops operated without a formal set up hence lacked business plans which would have been a guide as to the future direction of the business.

This almost universal lack of business plans among the book trade entrepreneurs was most puzzling. Where as the book trade is viewed as being an important link in the book distribution process, it seems little attention has been given to sensitising or training the entrepreneurs on the importance of business plans in successful business practice.

- **Stock and stocking information**

The second most important type of information need that the entrepreneurs experienced was that of stock and stocking. The entrepreneurs expressed dismay that many times they find themselves incurring heavy losses due to 'dead' or non-moving stock. They explained that since the Kenyan publishing industry was largely textbook oriented, the

same trend was exhibited in the stocking of bookshops. The research confirmed this by findings that showed that 31 out of 32 bookshops studied had 90% of the stock comprising of textbooks.

Among difficulties encountered by the entrepreneurs stemmed from the fact that there was no easy or quick way of getting information on impending changes in the curriculum. As a result they would buy stock only to learn immediately after that a major or minor change had occurred in the curriculum rendering the books they had purchased were rendered obsolete. The other serious information need related to stocking was the lack of bibliographical sources that would provide up to date book information. This state caused entrepreneurs to experience lost sales as time was wasted calling up possible publishers or distributors of a title required by a customer or customers.

It was established from the research that book information sources were fragmented and also not easy to come by. Publishers compounded the problem by not availing catalogues regularly. This scenario brings to the fore disturbing factors with regard to the book trade in Nairobi. Entrepreneurs are greatly disadvantaged by not having easy access to book information. It is worth noting that publishers' catalogues can easily be misplaced leaving the entrepreneur having to ask for a replacement. In many instances also, publishers fail to produce annual catalogues thus leaving the booksellers with inadequate information on the true position of their title list.

Considering the central role book information plays in aiding the successful stocking of the bookshop, respondents were probed to establish how they managed to obtain book information without publisher's catalogues. A majority of the entrepreneurs said they consulted fellow booksellers. Only 2 out of the 32 entrepreneurs studied had any knowledge of the existence of alternative comprehensive bibliographies such as global books-in print, Whittaker's books in print and the CD book bank compiled by the British firm, Whittaker's. There is therefore a need to train the entrepreneurs on book information sources as it is the basis on which bookshops are stocked.

- **Market information**

Market information needs also became apparent among important information needs of book trade entrepreneurs in Nairobi. The entrepreneurs were unanimous that while they know that schools comprised the largest portion of their market, they always experienced problems in matching textbooks to the needs of a particular school. Findings showed that the ministry of education recommended a selection of six textbooks pre subject from which schools could choose one as a core text. The problem therefore arose in getting information regarding the core text selected by individual schools. This situation calls for the setting up of a system that would enable the entrepreneurs access Information on books that respective schools have chosen.

- **Human resource information**

Another area of information needs established by this research was that of human resource information. It emerged that a majority of the employees in the book trade were 'O' level school leavers. The few qualified employees with higher education were in most cases relatives of the entrepreneurs. Reasons given for employing staff with little or no experience and training was that it enabled the entrepreneur to have a low wage bill. All were however agreed that some times the indirect costs incurred due to engaging inexperienced personnel were enormous. Such costs included lost sales due to an employee's poor stock knowledge and poor customer relations skills that annoy and even lead customers to walk out on a bookshop. Other reasons as established by the findings showed that book trade training was not widespread. The only course offered in book trade in Kenya was that of the School of Information Sciences at Moi University. This course was offered at degree level and may therefore not fit in with the needs of bookshops which for most part require bookshop attendants. This level of employees would do with certificate or diploma level training which is currently being developed at the School.

Personal development information needs were deduced from the entrepreneur's general lack of knowledge in book trade specific issues such as bibliographic sources, alternative terms of trade open to them and technological advancements affecting and impacting on the book trade such as the internet and e-books. It emerged that while KBSA held seminars, entrepreneurs complained that they were irregular and for most part not

beneficial. There was an expressed need for other venues for refresher courses in the book trade.

9.2.2 Information access and use by the entrepreneurs.

In determining the information access and use by the entrepreneurs it became necessary to establish what caused the entrepreneur to engage in information seeking. This was tackled in the research first by looking at information seeking 'prompters'. 'Prompters' were seen as situations or circumstances that led to an entrepreneur to experience a gap in knowledge and which propelled them to acts of information seeking.

This study showed that on a typical day the entrepreneur places orders for stock that were sold out or that were running low. Other activities were, monitoring progress of earlier orders, checking credit levels with respective publishers, negotiating new credit terms where necessary, monitor market goings on and searching for additional funding.

The research further established that the entrepreneurs information-seeking behaviour was prompted either by the desire for greater profitability (positive prompter) or by the fear of failure (negative prompter). It emerged however that the prompter for information seeking did not affect the sequence of information search. Whenever entrepreneurs experienced an information need, they first sought information from available formal systems.

The systems consulted were determined by the nature of the problem that required the entrepreneur's attention. If for example, an entrepreneur was confronted by a stocking need, the first course of action was to check from their records to determine the publisher of the book. They would then consult the particular publisher's catalogue. They however had reservations even while looking for information from the catalogues as they complained that they were incomplete and almost always not up to date in price details. If they were not successful in getting information from the catalogue, they next resorted to calling up the publisher. Should the publisher be out of stock, they would consult a well-known retailer-cum-book wholesaler. If this avenue also failed they would then consult other booksellers within Nairobi.

In cases where entrepreneurs experienced funding needs, they first approached respective publishers for credit facilities. When such moves failed, a majority felt helpless as they complained that there was little information regarding alternative funding sources. In most cases, they sought help from friends and acquaintances and when not successful they resigned themselves to fate.

With regard to market information needs, information was always sought from fellow booksellers and through acquaintances. A notable feature of the book trade entrepreneur information seeking behaviour was the fact that none of them reported to have consulted the Bookseller's Association when faced with a problem. The information seeking behaviour exhibited by book trade entrepreneurs betrayed a lack of a formal system within the book trade.

9.2.3 Information sources and channels most commonly used by entrepreneurs

Information sources and channels used by entrepreneurs were to a large extent determined by the nature of task being carried out. Findings of this research showed that the tasks all entrepreneurs regarded to be most important were those of stock selection, stock ordering and selling. It was around these tasks that the rest of the operations revolved.

In carrying out the stock selection process, the information need experienced was that of book bibliographic information. Usually, the first source of choice when seeking for book information was the publisher's catalogue. The catalogue played a pivotal role as an information source when stocking was considered. Once the publisher was identified all entrepreneurs were agreed that the most prevalent channel used in placing the orders was the phone. This could either be mobile or landline telephone. The main reasons for making phone calls were to confirm stock availability and the pricing.

Funding information needs were also considered as important information prompters. The information source of choice when seeking for funds was the entrepreneur's personal connections. This was also done through phone contact or by personal visit. In keeping a breast with developments in the industry and market in general, entrepreneurs were unanimous that they consulted among fellow booksellers and also made sure that they read newspapers. Communication with fellow entrepreneurs was through phone conversations.

The research established that information sources and channels used by book trade entrepreneurs were limited. In most cases information was obtained from fellow entrepreneurs who themselves have limited options. There is therefore the ever-present danger of decisions being made based on inadequate or inaccurate information. This view was arrived at when it emerged that a majority of the entrepreneurs showed ignorance and non-use of conventional book trade sources and channels like searching bibliographic tools besides the publishers' catalogues.

They also did not consult book trade journals and information service providers such as libraries and information centres. Indeed, the study established that only three entrepreneurs used the Internet as an information source and e-mail as channels of communication. The use of e-mail was confined to correspondence with foreign suppliers. It was surprising to note that none of the entrepreneurs use e-mail for local communication.

9.2.4 Internal and external constraints to entrepreneur Information access and use

Sources and channels of information consulted by the entrepreneurs were inadequate. This fact projected on the entrepreneurs' capacity to access and use information. A lot of frustrations were exhibited searching for, and accessing required information. The use of telephone is itself costly and though few entrepreneurs mentioned it, there was a possibility of losses occurring due to the heavy usage. Since information use is gauged by

the value, benefits and enlightenment that an individual gains by accessing relevant information and the satisfaction experienced, it was deduced by this research that a majority of the entrepreneurs were dissatisfied and had difficulty accessing relevant information and had limitations in information use.

Further, the findings show that access to and use of information was affected by the environmental context in which entrepreneurs operated. These factors could emanate both from the internal and external environment. The internal factors that emerged in this research as discussed in Chapter Eight of the study were:

Internal factors:

- Employee inefficiency
- Entrepreneurial oversight
- Records keeping deficiency
- Operations inadequacy
- information illiteracy
- change preparedness inadequacy

External factors:

- Competition deficiency
- Information inequalities
- Regulations deficiency
- Association's inadequacy
- Book information inadequacy

- lack of a streamlined system of book trade communication

It will be noted that the factors take on a negative perspective thus clearly depicting the great difficulties experienced by book trade entrepreneurs in accessing and using information. Suggestions given to remedy the constraints included the need for training for entrepreneurs and their employees. The nature of training could cover areas of book trade and those of information literacy. Other constraints could be addressed especially through respective associations providing guidance, publishers as main suppliers giving full bibliographic information, and the development of an information system suited to the unique information needs of book trade entrepreneurs. A proposed model is given in chapter ten of this study.

9.2.5 Existing information systems and book trade communication

The current information system in the book trade in Nairobi can be described as highly unstructured. It portrays an individualistic rather than collective approach in business operation. This way of conducting business especially in issues of information access and use causes the exercise to be costly both in terms of money and time. The bargaining strength of the operators is also reduced. Though all entrepreneurs in the study were agreed that they subscribed to the KBSA, there was a general feeling that the Association did little besides acting as a source of reference to the Ministry of Education.

As a central body of the book trade, the KBSA is supposed to be in a position to act as a link between book trade entrepreneurs and the rest of the industry on most information

related issues. Under normal circumstances, KBSA should be able to gather and disseminate information from the rest of the players in the industry including publishers, the Ministry of Education and the larger market for the benefit of the book trade. As it stands however, the findings show that the information system is fragmented with players acting independent of each other. The lack of a streamlined system means that entrepreneurs are left to rely on their own ingenuity and personal connections in information seeking, access and use.

CHAPTER TEN

10.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Conclusions

The study showed that information needs of book trade entrepreneurs arose from the difficulty in matching an experienced information need with a specific information source. When a stocking need was encountered for example, an entrepreneur may not access information as they may not be sure of the publisher of a book.

Another difficulty in stocking is that of determining market/customer needs. The general complaint was that publishers' catalogues were irregular and sometimes incomplete with newer titles rarely included. Due to this inadequacy of the publishers' catalogues entrepreneurs lost sales, as they were mostly ignorant of other bibliographic sources from which book information could be obtained. The situation is compounded by the fact that local publications which form the bulk of the stock selected do not appear in major bibliographies such as Global Books in print or Whitakers Books in print. Reasons for the failure by publishers to have their titles included in such renowned bibliographies is attributed to plain failure to register their titles with the respective bibliographers and the lack of proper ISBNs, which are crucial book identifiers.

Entrepreneurs also consider market information needs as a factor impeding their ability to serve the book market effectively. Since a large proportion of the market for book trade

entrepreneurs comprised of schools and other learning institutions such as collages, they complained of experiencing difficulties in matching selected core text to individual institutional consumers. This was especially in view of the current system where Kenya's Ministry of Education selected a set of six core texts per subject taught at primary and secondary school levels. Respective schools were therefore required to select one text, which would be used in the particular school as a core text. The findings showed that entrepreneurs had no way of knowing which texts which school or institution selected.

On employee and personal development information needs, entrepreneurs were agreed that they had no knowledge of any courses or training facilities available locally that targeted the book trade. They therefore relied on in-house training, which was mostly inadequate, since the entrepreneurs themselves lacked any background training in the book trade. It emerged that the selling techniques used in the bookshops were no different from those used in the sale of other non-book commodities. As established through literature review, books are unique products that require those handling them to be conversant with respective bibliographic details such as, author, publisher, title, year of publication ISBN and extent among other details. Two entrepreneurs who had some form of training in the book trade acknowledged that sometimes sales were lost as a result of an employee failing to understand what book a customer wants or worse still fails to locate it within the book shop.

In investigating information systems used by book trade entrepreneurs, this research established that the current information system in the book trade could be placed into two

broad categories as internal and external. The internal information system common to all bookshops was a manual system of operation. These comprised mostly hand written records that consisted of cash sale books for daily sales and small notes usually in exercise books that acted as a reminder for books or other items that were out of stock.

There was no evidence of maintenance of ledger books for stock monitoring. A majority of the entrepreneurs claimed to know what was wanted through intuition. The second category of the internal information system was the semi-computerised system. The findings show that only seven bookshops had some form of computerisation. In these bookshops the computers were used to record sales but not for stock monitoring.

The second category which is the external information system, as determined from the findings, comprised of publishers' catalogues from which entrepreneurs would obtain book information. These however had the shortcomings of being irregular and sometimes incomplete. It was found that in most cases, entrepreneurs had to make phone calls to publishers both in the placing of orders and in confirming of the same.

Other external information systems that this study established were the book trade associations, KBSA and KPA, which formed the local external information system and bibliographic generation organisation organisations which were mostly foreign. The Ministry of Education was seen as part of the external system which, however acted on informant basis. The study findings exposed a deep seated discomfort whereby all entrepreneurs felt let down by KBSA the booksellers' association that they complained

had relegated itself to being a source of reference to the Ministry of Education for book orders leaving all other functions unattended. KPA, which is the publishers' association only, related with KBSA when the Ministry of Education was passing on new regulations regarding textbooks. Bibliographic generation organisations were the least consulted book information source. This was mostly due to ignorance of their existence by a majority of entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneur information access and use was investigated by studying entrepreneur information seeking behaviour. This code served to answer research questions Nos.2 and Nos. 3. This sought to establish how entrepreneurs accessed and used information and the environmental contexts in entrepreneur information seeking behaviour. The findings show that the entrepreneurs had difficulty accessing required information due to the few sources consulted and the limited channels used. Specifically, the entrepreneurs depended on publishers for book information and used the phone as the channel of choice.

Regarding the effects of environmental contexts in information access and use, this study established that book trade entrepreneurs performed simple tasks in the day to day work situation. The main tasks were seeking for funds, stock ordering and monitoring, in this sense the entrepreneurs did not see the need for elaborate information search and were largely content with the simple sources consulted and channel used. A notable paradox was that the entrepreneurs were not active information seekers yet they operated in a highly competitive environment.

The environmental contexts in which entrepreneurs operated were found to affect their access to and use of information. Objective no.5 dealt with macro and micro environmental factors that impact on entrepreneur ability to actively seek information and thus make sound decisions. The research-defined decisions as situations enhanced chances of profit making for the business. These factors are discussed in detail in chapter seven of the research. It is these factors that serve to explain the passive behaviour exhibited by book trade entrepreneurs in the process of information seeking, access and use.

Communication within the book trade was found to be generally poor. This was seen by the almost universal responses from entrepreneurs when asked how they viewed the present flow of information in the book trade. While some bluntly said that communication was disjointed, others complained of discrimination in the dissemination of information. The majority of entrepreneurs blamed KBSA, which they said, did not understand the needs of the booksellers. The study established that entrepreneurs who communicated with foreign suppliers did so by way of e-mail. Occasionally order follow up was done by phone.

There was little communication between the entrepreneurs and their customers, the general response given for the inaction was that since their stock comprised largely of textbooks the publicity done by publishers was enough. When pressed further the entrepreneurs owed up that their profit margins were too small to allow for publicity. On the whole current information flow in the book trade was disjointed and fragmented.

Entrepreneurs were limited in their access to information and in turn used limited options of communication. This situation constantly left them in states of frustration as they sought for alternative information sources.

This study therefore established that the current information system in the book trade was inadequate and needed improvement. The positive side of it is that the components that would be used to improve information flow do exist and only require re-organisation and re-orientation. These are elaborated upon in chapter eight which looks at the proposed information system for the book trade.

10.2 Recommendations

The recommendations given in this study are suggested based on the findings and conclusions arrived from the research. The first set is derived from the objectives of the study guided by the study's research questions. The later set is general recommendations with suggestions targeted directly to stakeholders of the book trade and policy makers whose decisions directly impact on the book trade.

10.2.1 Need for employee and entrepreneur training

Most of the arising information needs of book trade entrepreneurs were a result of lack of relevant skills in information access. The issues ranged from poor information handling skills, a situation that impeded the abilities of the entrepreneurs in information access and use, to active participation in the book trade association that would have helped to give voice to the problems that beset the trade. The use of seminars and workshops would enable the entrepreneurs to keep up with issues and trends in the book trade which would in turn increase their awareness levels consequently sharpening their entrepreneurial competitiveness. Further more, such seminars would also provide a forum for updating entrepreneurs on latest events in the trade. There was also a need to offer short courses that would enhance entrepreneur knowledge and skills in information handling and use. Book trade entrepreneurs are encouraged to actively seek to project and maintain a professional outlook in the day to day operations. Training of bookshop employees would further boost entrepreneur business performance.

This view is borne of the fact that their counterparts in the library profession have succeed in projecting an image of professionalism and libraries are today seen and accepted as information service providers that are run by trained professionals. As exposed in the findings, book trade entrepreneurs expect their association to attend to problems affecting their operations yet, little effort was portrayed of any attempts to influence the management and running of the association.

10.2.2 Need for sensitisation of entrepreneurs on importance of information

There is a strong need to sensitise the entrepreneurs on the importance of information as a way of strengthening the book trade. Collaboration would be required between information training institutions and the Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Association (KBSA) to spear head-training sessions. The entrepreneurs would also benefit from exchange programmes where arrangements are made for interactions with their counterparts elsewhere in the world.

10.2.3 Promotion of the use of Information technology in enhancing information access

As revealed in the study, book trade entrepreneurs largely used a manual system of operation. While such a system was tedious, it was also ineffective in the management of the day-to-day transactions of a bookshop. The efficiency and effectiveness of information technology would greatly improve bookshop operations. Computerisation that incorporates an information retrieval system in which the ISBN is central would greatly improve book information communication.

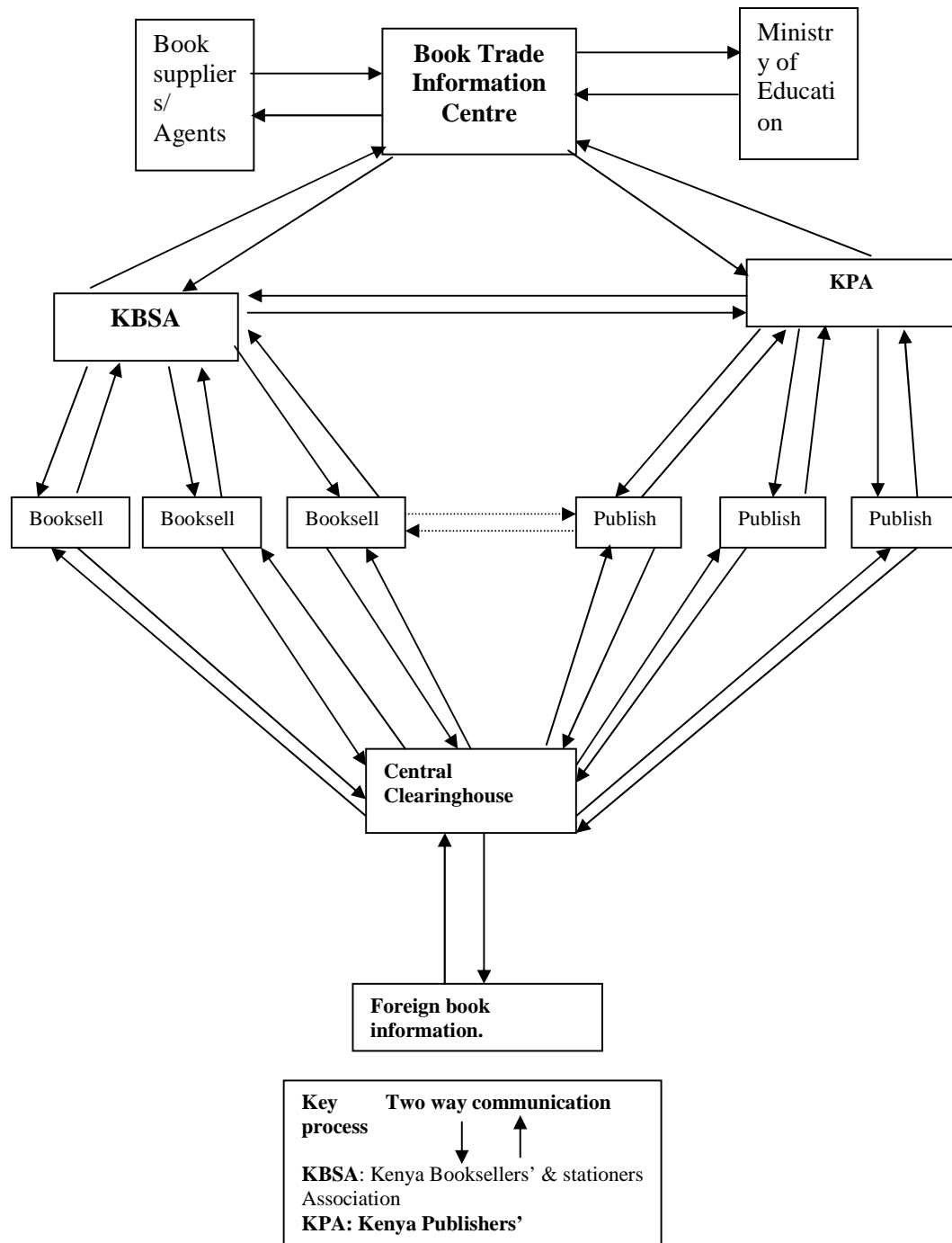
It would also open up horizons for entrepreneurs to go beyond the current traditional form of carrying out the book trade. Virtual bookshops and trading on the Internet should become a reality to Kenya book trade entrepreneurs.

10.2.4 Development of an information system that addresses book trade entrepreneurs' unique information needs

A major finding of this study was that the current information flow in the book trade was unstructured and therefore fragmented. The result was that there are no clear communication structures that would provide for ease of information seeking, access and use by the entrepreneurs. As presented in chapter eight, entrepreneurs make too many inquiries to too many publishers as they seek to replenish their stock. This study came up with a proposed system that is hoped would reduce the number of transactions between an entrepreneur and the different publishers of books. The suggested system would make use of information technology and would therefore also assist to streamline general book trade operations. The proposed system is designed to recognise and incorporates other players of the industry. It specifies functions of respective players and particularly would reduce communication time and costs.

Proposed model of the book trade information system

Figure 5: The proposed diagrammatic representation of information flow in the book trade showing the role of other players



The current information system in the bookshop as seen in illustration 4 is rather chaotic with different booksellers communicating with the various publishers in an almost Christmas-crossing pattern. During the peak season there is near mayhem as entrepreneurs communicate with publishers or other book suppliers.

The proposed information system is expected to reduce transactions across the board and also cut down the communication costs of the entrepreneurs. It is also intended to make book trade associations active and more sensitive to the needs of their members.

The inclusion of the clearinghouse will enable entrepreneurs to concentrate on the day to day running of the business instead of worrying over the state of the orders. In developed book industries, clearing houses process orders from the booksellers at the end of each day to respective publishers and give a feed back on the state of the order by the following day. The proposed system provides for the possibility of widening stock range, as the entrepreneurs would easily access information on foreign books. The clearinghouse would initially be operated as an arm of the KBSA.

The proposal to have a Book trade Information Centre is aimed at creating a central communication centre where informants to the book industry such as the Ministry of Education can pass on information which would be diffused to the players whether they are booksellers, publishers or even book suppliers. In the proposed information system transactions between booksellers and respective publishers is reduced leading to reduction of delivery time.

The proposed information system will encourage the use of IT in the book trade as communication between the various players will be via a computerised system. The system advocates for automatic communication to all members of the Association bringing about an inclusive rather than exclusive and disjointed method.

In the proposed information system the respective associations KPA and KBSA will have to play a central role in the industry communication process. This way, it is hoped that members will benefit from the increased interactions

10.2.5 Suggestions to stakeholders of the book trade

- **To Publishers**

As the manufacturers and therefore suppliers of books, this study did not find much interaction between book trade entrepreneurs and the publishers. There a need for much closer cooperation and interaction especially in matters of providing information on titles, training on book handling skills and generally ensuring that the entrepreneurs keep abreast with developments in the industry.

- **To Associations of the book trade**

The associations that have a direct bearing on the book trade are the Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Association (KBSA) and the Kenya Publishers Association (KPA). Since the findings showed that there was little communication

between the two associations, an opportunity is lost as the book trade could benefit from the combined efforts of the associations in providing the needed information.

- **To Kenya National Library Services (KNLS)**

The role of KNLS as the national bibliographic generation body has a direct impact on book information access by book trade entrepreneurs. There is an urgent need for KNLS to receive the necessary support and funding to enable it to perform the function of bibliographic generation. Up to date bibliographies are crucial tools for stock replenishment in the book trade. When updated bibliographies are prepared, booksellers would have fewer sources of book information to consult which would save on time and costs.

- **To the Ministry of Education**

This study confirmed the often held view that the book trade in Kenya is largely textbook oriented. As the curriculum setting and monitoring agent and as the Ministry vested with the function of textbook vetting and recommending its involvement with the book trade is more or less direct. To its credit, the Ministry of Education recognises the role of bookshops in book distributions and in the general economic development. Worthy of mention is the Ministry's directive through its textbook policy that all books for supply to schools should be purchased from bookshops. The weak link however is the relaying of information on recommended textbooks to book trade entrepreneurs. In the proposed model of information system given in chapter

eight, the Ministry would be able to give recommended textbook information simultaneously to publishers and booksellers through their respective associations.

- **To The Government**

The eventual success of the book trade as an industry depends on Government policies and good will towards the industry. The Government of Kenya has through the years recognised the important role of the book trade and through the Ministry of Education ensured that the book trade receives due support. An important aspect however in streamlining operations of the book industry in general is the enactment of a national book policy and the national information policy. Through liaison with the Government, the National Book Development Council (NBDC) should be able to draw drafts of the respective policies which would then be passed into law.

10.3 Suggestions for further research

The present research investigated access to and use of information by book trade entrepreneurs in Nairobi. An understanding of the information needs and seeking behaviour of book trade Associations:

- Kenya Publishers Association (KPA) and;
- Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association (KBSA) would lead to better service delivery to booksellers.
- A study could be conducted to establish training needs of book trade entrepreneurs and those of their employees

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APPENDIX 1

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Thank you for taking your time to respond to the interview questions provided which is part of the conduct of the research on the topic:

Access to and use of information by book-trade entrepreneurs in the work situation: a case study of Nairobi, Kenya.

It is expected that the findings of this research will help highlight issues that affect the smooth performances of the book trade in Kenya and offer solutions.

PART 'A'

1.0 Respondents' Bio-Data

1.1 Name: _____

1.2 Designation: _____

1.3 Professional Qualifications: _____

1.4 Academic Qualifications: _____

1.5 Nature of work engaged in: _____

1.6 Period of experience: _____

1.7 Period in the present Bookshop / Business: _____

PART 'B'

2.0 Information about the Bookshop / Business

2.1 Name of the enterprise: _____

2.2 When the bookshop / business was established: _____

2.3 Form of business ownership: _____

2.4 Why did you choose the book-trade business?

2.5 Why did you choose the particular location?

2.6 What was your criterion for choice of premises?

PART 'C'

3.0 Information on Entrepreneurship

3.1 What new ideas / changes have you introduced to the business in the recent past?

3.2 How did these changes improve your business performance?

3.3 How much time do you put in the bookshop / business?

3.4 When you are not there who is in-charge?

3.5 What kind of decisions is she / he allowed to make?

3.6 In your view, what advantage do you have over your competitors?

3.7 Apart from selling over the counter, which are your other outlets?

PART 'D'

3.0 Information Issues

4.1 Needs, sources / channels, access, use and systems

4.1.0 Funding

4.1.1 How did you source your initial funding?

4.1.2 To what uses did you put these funds?

4.1.1 Do you sometimes need to increase your working capital?

(i) If yes, please explain.

4.1.2 Where do you get such funds?

4.1.3 What sources do you consult when looking for additional funds?

4.1.4 Which sources come to mind first whenever you realise that you need extra funding?

4.2.0 Human resource

4.2.1 How many employees do you have?

4.2.2 What are their academic qualifications?

4.2.3 What are their professional qualifications?

4.2.4 How do you recruit your employees?

4.2.5 Do you encounter any problems in finding suitable employees?

(i) _____

(ii) If yes, which ones? _____

4.2.6 What sources of information do you consult when looking for employees?

4.2.7 What source do you consult first when staffing needs arise?

4.2.8 Which are the other sources in the order of priorities?

4.2.9 Do you know of any organised system that can give you staffing information?

(i) If yes, which ones?

(ii) If no, what advice would you give?

4.2.10 On average, how long do you retain your employees?

4.2.11 What incentives do you give your employees in order to retain them?

4.3.0 Stock and distribution

4.3.1 What is your stock size in terms of book volumes?

4.3.2 What types of books do you stock?

4.3.3 How do you source your local book stock?

4.3.4 How do you source the foreign book stock?

4.3.5 What financial terms do you get for local purchases?

4.3.6 What financial terms do you get for local purchases?

4.3.7 What problems, if any, do you encounter in stock purchases?

4.3.8 What guides your decision to stock a particular book?

4.3.9 How do you determine the quantity of each title to be stocked?

4.3.10 Who makes the stocking decision?

4.3.11 How do you get local book information?

4.3.12 How do you get foreign book information?

4.3.13 What problems, if any do you experience when looking for book information?

4.3.14 How do you determine the pricing for books?

4.3.15 What is your stock size in terms of stationery?

4.3.16 How do you source your stationery stock?

4.3.17 How do you determine the pricing for stationery?

4.3.18 How does your bookshop get book information?

4.3.19 Do you experience frustrating moments in your search for the necessary information?

(i) If yes, please explain.

4.3.20 How would you like the information to be provided?

4.3.21 How do your suppliers get the stock to your bookshop?

4.3.22 Who meets the freight charges?

4.3.23 Please explain how you factor the charges into the cost of the stock?

4.4.0 Accounting, Stock control, Records and financial management

4.4.1 Who keeps your books of accounts?

4.4.2 What is your view about preparing a budget for the bookshop?

4.4.3 Do you prepare a cash flow statement for your business?

(i) If yes, what are the benefits?

(ii) If no, why?

4.4.3 Who prepares your final accounts?

4.4.3 When does your financial year-end?

4.4.3 Are your accounting records manually maintained or computerised?

4.4.4 Are you satisfied with the method?

(i) If not, please explain

4.4.5 What method of stock control do you maintain?

4.4.6 At what level do you re-order stock?

4.4.7 What problems, if any do you encounter?

4.4.8 When stock is slow moving or does not move at all, what action do you take?

4.4.9 What suggestions do you offer for improvement?

4.4.10 When do you do your stock- taking?

4.4.11 What system of records and financial management do you operate?

4.4.12 Why did you choose your particular system?

4.4.13 In what ways does the system satisfy your needs?

4.4.14 What advice would you give other booksellers with regard to records and financial management?

4.5.0 The market

4.5.1 Who are your customers?

4.5.2 How do you identify them?

4.5.3 How do you reach out to them?

4.5.4 What problems, if any do you encounter in reaching your customers?

4.5.5 In your view, what factors make customers to choose your bookshop?

4.5.6 When a customer wants a book that is not in stock what action do you take?

4.5.7 Other than customers who visit your bookshop, who are your other customers?

4.6.0 Environmental issues – Micro and Macro

4.6.1 In your view, what internal factors affect the smooth operation of your bookshop?

4.6.2 Which factors are within your control?

4.6.3 Which factors are outside your control?

4.6.4 How do you think the problems can be addressed?

4.6.5 In your view, what external factors affect the smooth operation of your bookshop?

4.6.6 Of these factors, which ones can the book trade solve?

4.6.7 Which factors would require Government attention?

4.7.0 Marketing

4.7.1 What promotional activities do you undertake to publicise your bookshop?

4.7.2 How much money do you set aside for promotion?

4.7.3 In which book trade promotional activities do you participate?

4.7.4 What do you think about money spent on promotion?

4.8.0 Book trade communication:

4.8.1 In your opinion, what can you say about the present form of communication in the book trade?

4.8.2 What obstacles hinder you from accessing required information?

4.8.3 Which obstacles do publishers cause?

4.8.4 Which obstacles do wholesalers cause?

4.8.5 Which ones do the booksellers cause themselves?

4.8.6 How would you like communication in the book trade to be carried out?

4.8.7. In your opinion, what impact has the emergence of Information Technology had on communication in the book trade?

4.8.8 As a bookseller, on what issues if any, do you relate with other players in the book industry?

4.8.9 In your opinion are such consultations beneficial?

4.8.10 Does your bookshop subscribe to any association of the book trade?

(i) If yes, which ones?

4.8.11 In your view, of what benefit are the associations?

4.8.12 In your view how can information flow in the book trade be improved?

APPENDIX 2

Respondent bookshops and informant interviewees

Bookshops whose proprietors agreed to participate and were interviewed are:

- Book Point Ltd.
- Prestige Bookshop.
- Textbook Centre Ltd.
- Makinon Bookshop.
- Bliss Book Centre.
- Zanto Books.
- Chaka Bookshop.
- Premier Bookshop.
- Umoja Educational Supplies.
- Chaka Bookshop.
- Solution Educational Suppliers.
- Liberty Enterprises.
- Book Distributors Ltd.
- Johari Investments.
- Laxmi Booksellers and Stationers.
- Ndemi Bookshop.
- Savannis Book Centre Ltd.
- Sidhivinayak Book Centre.
- Vista Office and School Stationers.
- Safeways Bookshop.

- Mwicha Stationers.
- Zamto Books.
- Stega Printers and Stationers.
- Chania Bookshop Ltd.
- Fotana Book Services.
- Frontier Book Men.
- Kairi Bookshop.
- Ndemi Bookshop.
- Sunrise Educational Merchants.
- Books First Ltd.
- Chyeni Bookshop.
- Rowamu Enterprises.

- **Key book trade informant persons interviewed**

In planning for the research, it was apparent that there was a need to interview informants, that is players who impact on the book trade but may not necessary perform book trade operations directly. Informants interviewed included:

- Executive Officer Kenya Booksellers and Stationers' Association. The interview gave an insight into operations of KBSA and its relations with booksellers. *9/11/2005*
- Proprietor and Managing Director Textbook Centre Limited by virtue of experience in the book trade in Kenya. *7/12/2005*

- Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST) Senior Official. The interview gave details of communication between the Ministry and the larger book trade industry. It also highlighted on how the free primary education funds were allocated to individual pupils and its disbursement to schools. *6/12/2005*
- The Director SMI Book Distributor's Limited – United Kingdom. The interview gave a glimpse of how little bookshops in Kenya stocked tertiary level publications. *11/11/2005*
- Warehousing Manager, Kenya Literature Bureau. The interview gave a publisher's perspective of distribution to the book trade and especially the servicing of booksellers' orders including the problems arising and how they were resolved. *7/12/2005*