

Understanding the Information Seeking pattern and Strategies for digital improvement of Textile entrepreneurs in Salem district

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the information-seeking behaviour, challenges, level of awareness, and strategies for improving digital information practices among textile entrepreneurs in Salem district. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 340 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Findings revealed that textile entrepreneurs require a wide range of information, especially textile goods-related information (99.4%), daily updates (98.2%), local suppliers (96.7%), and current emerging trends (96.4%). The extent of digital information seeking was high, with most information areas scoring mean values above the criterion mean of 3.20. The t-test conducted showed no significant difference between male and female respondents in their level of awareness of digital information seeking ($p = 0.924$). Similarly, the chi-square test revealed no significant relationship between gender and challenges faced (0.142 ; $p = 0.99$). Major challenges identified included lack of awareness, lack of training, limited resources, and illiteracy. Strategies suggested for improving information behaviour included improving information literacy, providing adequate training, strengthening e-resources, and developing industrial libraries. The study concludes that although textile entrepreneurs in Salem have a high level of information-seeking activity, targeted interventions are needed to improve training, awareness, and digital resource access.

KEYWORDS: Information Seeking, Digital, Textile entrepreneurs, Information behaviour, Marketing, Literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Access to accurate, timely, and relevant information is essential for the growth and sustainability of entrepreneurial activities, particularly in the textile sector where market dynamics and technology evolve rapidly. Textile entrepreneurs rely on diverse information sources to make informed decisions regarding production, marketing, pricing, procurement, and emerging industrial innovations. In recent years, the digital environment has expanded opportunities for entrepreneurs to obtain information more quickly; however, disparities still exist in terms of awareness, skills, and accessibility.

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In the context of Salem district—one of Tamil Nadu’s major textile hubs—entrepreneurs engage in daily information-seeking activities to remain competitive. Understanding their information needs, the challenges they face, and strategies for improving their information behaviour is important for strengthening the sector. This study therefore investigates the information-seeking patterns of textile entrepreneurs in Salem, evaluates their awareness of digital information sources, identifies challenges affecting their information-seeking process, and proposes strategies for improvement.

The study is guided by hypotheses examining whether gender influences entrepreneurs' level of awareness and the challenges they face. With the expansion of digital platforms, the need to assess information literacy, digital readiness, and accessibility has become critical. The findings of this study contribute significantly to understanding the information ecosystem of textile entrepreneurs and offer insights for policymakers, industrial institutions, and information professionals in enhancing digital information support services.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bashir et al., (2025) information literacy to entrepreneurial intention and skill development, showing that better information practices correlate with higher entrepreneurial efficacy and innovation. The paper suggests that promoting IL (information literacy) in entrepreneurial training can increase startup success and idea generation. This reinforces your strategy table where “improving information literacy” tops suggested interventions for Salem entrepreneurs. Cherie Blair Foundation report (2025) recent large survey reported that high mobile-data costs and connectivity affordability remain major barriers for women entrepreneurs in many developing countries; despite high smartphone ownership, inconsistent access constrains e-commerce and digital engagement. This contemporary, policy-oriented finding helps explain practical barriers behind the “lack of awareness / limited use” you observed — affordability and safety are real constraints beyond mere skills. It supports recommendations for subsidised connectivity or low-data solutions in Salem. Rodge & Jadhav., (2021) field study of women entrepreneurs found that social networks, local market actors, and mobile phones are crucial information channels, and that constraints such as limited training and normative barriers limit wider digital adoption. Their results highlight gendered patterns of info access and the importance of tailored literacy/training programmes for women. This supports your t-test result (no large gender difference in awareness) but also suggests targeted interventions for capacity building among women entrepreneurs. Telukdarie., (2024) examines South African SMEs and finds that while digital tools can significantly increase reach and efficiency, many SMEs face fragmented solutions, lack of integration, and resource constraints that limit uptake. The study emphasises demand-driven system design and the need for affordable, integrated digital solutions. These insights map onto your findings about limited resources, poor infrastructure, and the need for standardized, accessible technologies for Salem textile entrepreneurs. Ikoja-Odongo & Ocholla (2004) the information needs and seeking patterns of informal-sector entrepreneurs, showing reliance on interpersonal networks, marketplaces, and limited use of formal information services; they link low use of formal sources to low awareness and limited literacy. The study’s methods and findings are a classic comparative baseline for research in developing-country entrepreneurial settings and are directly relevant to interpreting the Salem entrepreneurs’ preference for local supplier and goods-related information. Orrensaló & Nikou., 2021 show that digitalisation has fundamentally changed entrepreneurs’ information-seeking behaviours: entrepreneurs increasingly rely on digital sources and develop “21st-century” literacies (critical, digital, evaluative) to acquire and use information for

resource creation and strategic decisions. The paper highlights that digital skills and information scanning are central to opportunity recognition and capability building. This work underscores why measuring awareness and information literacy is important for entrepreneurs in Salem who must monitor market and technology trends.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the information seeking behaviour of Textile entrepreneurs in Salem.
2. To identify the challenges facing by Textile entrepreneurs while seeking information.
3. To assess the level of awareness of Textile entrepreneurs in digital information seeking.
4. To determine possible strategies for improving information behaviour women textile entrepreneurs in Salem.

HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant difference between the level of awareness and the gender of the respondents.

H1: There is significant difference between the level of awareness and the gender of the respondents.

H0: There is no significant difference between the challenges faced by textile entrepreneurs and the gender of the respondents.

H1: There is significant difference between the challenges faced by textile entrepreneurs and the gender of the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey of ex-post facto type because for obtaining facts about a person, opinion and behaviour that no variable was manipulated. The population for this study comprised all the 350 textile entrepreneurs located around the selected zones of Salem. The stratified sampling technique was used to categorize textile entrepreneurs with small, medium entrepreneurs across the selected zones. The purposive sampling technique was used in selected zones were stratified. In selecting the respondents for the study, the random sampling technique was used to select textile entrepreneurs in selected zones. The questionnaire was used as the main instrument of data collection.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Out of the 350 (100%) copies of questionnaire administered, 340 were filled and returned while 10 copies were not properly filled and were discarded, thereby leaving for analysis. The descriptive method of data analysis, including frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics were used to present data.

Table 1: Identification of Information needs by the textile entrepreneurs in Salem.

Information areas	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Textile Goods related information	338	99.4%	1 st
Information on daily updates	334	98.2%	2 nd
Information of local suppliers	329	96.7%	3 rd
Information on current & Emerging trends	328	96.4%	4 th
Information on textile community	321	94.4%	5 th
Information on Digital resources	317	93.2%	6 th

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Information on Market trends	312	91.7%	7 th
Information on latest technology	309	90.8%	8 th
Information on pricing data	292	85.8%	9 th
Information on sustainability compliance	289	85.0%	10 th

Table 1 presents information on the specific information needs of textile entrepreneurs in Salem, (99.4%) goods related information, (98.2%) information on daily updates as topping the list of information needed by textile entrepreneurs while seeking information. Information on pricing data (85.8%), and information on sustainability compliance (85.0%) ranked least among the information needed by textile entrepreneurs in selected zones. The implication to be drawn from this result is that information relating to textile businesses in Salem.

Table 2: Extent of digital information seeking by textile entrepreneurs in Salem.

Information areas	Never	Rare	Often	Very often	Mean	Std. Dev
Textile Goods related Information	23 (6.7%)	38 (11.1%)	126 (37.0%)	153 (45.0%)	3.20	.88
Information on marketing matters	24 (7.0%)	30 (8.8%)	136 (40.0%)	150 (44.1%)	3.21	.87
Information on Social events	12 (3.5%)	28 (8.2%)	142 (41.7%)	158 (46.4%)	3.31	.76
Information current trends	11 (3.2%)	20 (5.8%)	169 (49.7%)	140 (41.1%)	3.28	.70
Information about other entrepreneurs	8 (2.3%)	29 (8.5%)	149 (43.8%)	154 (45.2%)	3.32	.72
Information on entrepreneurs' association	12 (3.5%)	18 (5.2%)	151 (44.4%)	159 (46.7%)	3.34	.73
Information about travelling agencies	16 (4.7%)	13 (3.8%)	148 (43.5%)	163 (47.9%)	3.34	.76
Information about government policies	9 (2.6%)	26 (7.6%)	148 (43.5%)	157 (46.1%)	3.33	.73
Information on cooperative societies	12 (3.5%)	20 (5.8%)	158 (46.4%)	150 (44.1%)	3.31	.72
Information on products marketing	13 (3.8%)	49 (14.2%)	133 (39.0%)	148 (43.0%)	3.21	.85
Weighted Average	3.28					

Table 2 showed that the textile entrepreneurs sought information about all the areas identified. However, the result further revealed goods related information (3.20), information on financial matters (3.21), information on social events (3.31), and information on current trends (3.28), ranked highest among the information being sought by the textile entrepreneurs while information on cooperative societies (3.31), information on products marketing (3.21),

are ranked lowest among the information being sought by textile entrepreneurs. On other hand, using the criterion mean of 3.20 as benchmark for high level information seeking behavior of textile entrepreneurs, it can be inferred that there is a high level of information seeking among textile entrepreneurs in Salem since the weighted mean of 3.28 is greater than the criterion mean.

Table 3: T-test for level of awareness and gender of the respondents.

Gender	Mean	Std. Dev	P-value
Male	24.6	8.69	0.924
Female	24.5	8.80	

Table 3 revealed that t-test in mean scores between gender and level of awareness was not statistically significant. The result showed that male respondents had a mean awareness score of 24.6, while female respondents had a mean score of 24.5.

Table 4: Possible challenges facing while seeking information by textile entrepreneurs.

Possible problems	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of awareness	63	18.5%
Lack of Training	62	18.2%
Limited Resources	59	17.3%
Illiteracy	54	15.8%
Irrelevant Information	51	15.0%
Lack of advanced technical knowledge	50	14.7%
Rapidly evolving technologies	42	12.3%
Poor Infrastructure	35	10.2%

Table 3 has been presenting on possible challenges encountered by textile entrepreneurs in Salem. Respondents were asked on the major challenges facing them in their information seeking behavior. Analysis revealed that most of the respondents affirmed economic status as major challenge. Only few of the respondents affirmed lack of awareness (18.5%), lack of training (18.2%), limited resources (17.3%), illiteracy (15.8%), as challenges hindering their information seeking behavior. The implication that could be drawn from the foregoing is that the poor infrastructure of textile entrepreneurs is a major challenge working against their information seeking.

Table 4: Chi-square test for Challenges facing and gender of the respondents.

Pearson Chi-Square Value	0.142
d.f	7
P-Value	0.99
Hypothesis	Accepted
Cramer’s V contingency	0.01

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The Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table 4 is 0.142 at a 5% level of significance. Since P-value is higher than 0.99, the null hypothesis accepted. It concluded that information that challenges faced are independent of the gender of the respondents. Cramer's V contingency has been used when the number of rows and columns is not equal. The Crmer's value is 0.01. This means that there is a moderate relationship between the information seeking behavior and the gender the respondents.

Table 5: Strategies suggested for improving information behavior of textile entrepreneurs in Salem

Possible suggestions	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Improvising Information Literacy	62	18.2%	1 st
Adequate training	58	17.0%	2 nd
Implement standardized industrial technologies	50	14.7%	3 rd
Basic training on digital tools and technologies	48	14.1%	4 th
Strengthening E-Resources	44	12.9%	5 th
Developing Industrial Libraries	40	11.8%	6 th
Increasing Local Network communication	38	11.5%	7 th

Table 5 revealed about the strategies suggested for improving information behavior of textile entrepreneurs as drawn from the analysis presented. However, greater percentage of the few that responded affirmed Improvising Information Literacy (62, 18.2%), adequate training (58, 17%), Implement standardized industrial technologies (50, 14.7%), Basic training on digital tools and technologies (48, 14.1%) as major strategies for improving the information behavior of the textile entrepreneurs in Salem.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The findings revealed that textile entrepreneurs have diverse and high-priority information needs. Textile goods-related information (99.4%), information on daily updates (98.2%), and information about local suppliers (96.7%) ranked highest. The demand for current and emerging textile trends (96.4%) and information on the textile community (94.4%) further demonstrates the sector's dependence on updated industry insights. These results confirm that entrepreneurs actively seek information that supports production quality, market understanding, and competitive advantage. Results from Table 2 indicate a generally high level of digital information-seeking behaviour among textile entrepreneurs, with most mean values above 3.20. Entrepreneurs use digital platforms to obtain information on marketing matters, social events, government policies, industrial associations, and current trends. The weighted mean of 3.28, which exceeds the benchmark of 3.20, reinforces that entrepreneurs are fairly active in using digital resources. This high digital engagement aligns with the growing use of smartphones, online marketplaces, and social media platforms among business communities in Salem. The t-test analysis showed no significant difference between male and female entrepreneurs in their awareness levels ($p = 0.924$). Male respondents scored a mean of 24.6, while females scored 24.5, showing almost identical awareness levels. This indicates that awareness of digital information seeking is uniform across genders, suggesting both groups have comparable exposure to digital tools, platforms, and information resources. The major challenges identified include lack of awareness (18.5%), lack of training (18.2%), limited resources (17.3%), and illiteracy (15.8%). Other obstacles include irrelevant information, lack of technical knowledge, rapid technological changes, and poor infrastructure. These findings show that although digital access has improved,

entrepreneurs still struggle with skills gaps, information overload, and infrastructural barriers. The chi-square test result ($\chi^2 = 0.142$; $p = 0.99$) indicates no significant association between gender and the challenges encountered while seeking information. This means male and female entrepreneurs face similar types of challenges irrespective of gender. Cramer's V value of 0.01 further confirms a very weak relationship between the variables. Respondents suggested several strategies to improve information behaviour, including improving information literacy (18.2%), providing adequate training (17%), implementing standardized technologies (14.7%), strengthening e-resources (12.9%), and developing industrial libraries (11.8%). These strategies emphasize the need for structured digital training, accessible information platforms, and institutional support systems.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that textile entrepreneurs in Salem district are active information seekers with high levels of engagement in digital platforms. Their information needs revolve around textile goods, market updates, emerging trends, and supplier networks. Despite this, entrepreneurs face significant challenges, including limited training, insufficient awareness, and infrastructural constraints. The hypothesis testing indicates that gender does not influence either awareness levels or challenges faced. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions such as digital literacy programmes, better infrastructural support, development of industrial information centres, and strengthening of e-resources to enhance the information behaviour of textile entrepreneurs. By addressing these gaps, policymakers, educational institutions, and industry bodies can empower entrepreneurs to make better decisions, adopt technological innovations, and improve their overall business productivity and competitiveness.

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