



Information Seeking Behaviour of Lecturers in Private Universities in Oyo State

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ABSTRACT

When planning and providing information services for their clients, librarians and information service providers must take into account users' information-seeking behaviours. This role is also felt in the productivity level of librarians. In other words, when librarians are productive, it goes a long way in bringing about much positivity to the sustenance of that organization. When this is not the case, there is every tendency that, that organization might collapse. It is in this regard that this study therefore deems it fit to investigate the Information Seeking Behaviour (ISB) of Lecturers in Private Universities in Oyo State. Descriptive research design was adopted. Population consists of 520 lecturers in private universities in Oyo state, Nigeria. 217 lecturers served as the sample size after Krejcie and Morgan was applied to determine the sample size. Multi stage sampling technique was used as well as a validated questionnaire was also used to collect data. The reliability coefficient for the variable was 0.72. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that (ISB) had significant influence on teaching, citation, students' project supervision, grant proposal writing and research activities of lecturers. The study concluded that ISB influenced lecturers. The study recommended that academic libraries to organise various seminars for lecturers to boost the use of available sources of information resources and equip them with necessary information retrieval skills to effectively use the databases from where they can obtain quality resources.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Information Seeking Behaviour, Lecturers, Private Universities.

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I. Introduction

Over the years, librarians have been studying the information seeking behaviour of academicians in the various field of life in order to serve them better. Wilson, T.D (2016) affirmed that Information seeking behaviour includes those activities an individual engages in when identifying his or her own need for information, searching for such information in any way and using or transferring of information. Information seeking behaviour is also regarded as an umbrella concept which encompasses information seeking and information use. Reijo Savolainen, (2007) also refers information seeking to a conscious effort to get information in an attempt to fill a

perceived need knowledge gap. Sejane, (2017) explained that scholars have shown that information users can come across information while not actively searching for information or particular Information. This happen through serendipity, chance encounters, or when people share information that they believe may be useful to others. From this perspective, it is clear that an investigation of information seeking behaviour attempts to understand the reasons why individuals seek for information, the kind of information to be sought, and the means and sources by which information needed is being sought. In the context of this study, the focus is on how lecturers behave when they have to use electronic information resources and how this influences their seeking behaviour. This includes their preferred sources of information, information search

strategies, ability to evaluate information and make proper references to information sources.

Wilson, (2000) defined Information behaviour as sum total of human behaviour regarding the sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use. This definition has encompassed both the offline and online information sources as it includes face to face and online communication with others as well as the passive reception of information. Information seeking behaviour refers to how information users come to realise their needs for information and how they pursue and eventually make use of information. It is based on this premise that the study seeks to examine information seeking behaviour of lecturers in private universities in Oyo State.

II. Statement of the Problem

Lecturers play vital role by assisting their institutions to meet the set goals of academic activities through available information resources put in place to achieve their goals to include teaching, learning and research.

Evidence from literature and observation have indicated that there could be deficiencies in lecturers' searching habits, searching requirements, patterns and methods in information seeking while conducting research. Also, it was revealed that lecturers rarely have opportunity to attend formal training programmes that could enhance their use of information resources. The consequence of which is that lecturers possess low information seeking skills which might limit access to relevant information desired as component of research information that may need to be disseminated to their audience in their productivity. In addition, previous studies acknowledged that, despite the provisions of current information resources, lecturers failed to search and retrieve the appropriate resources, even if they had access to information resources, refused to utilise them, thereby led to low turnout of productivity among them. Several studies have been conducted on this research topic but very few have been done in the area of private universities. In order to empirically validate these postulations, this study will therefore examine information seeking behaviour of lecturers in Lead City University, Ibadan and Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo state, Nigeria.

III. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine the influence of information seeking of lecturers in Private Universities in Oyo state. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the purpose of information needs of lecturers in Private Universities in Oyo State;
2. Examine the level of information seeking behaviour of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo State;
3. Determine the information sources of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo State;
4. Study the information search strategies of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo State;
5. Evaluate the information seeking behaviour of

lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo state;

IV. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the purpose of information needs of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo State?
2. What is the level of information seeking behaviour of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo state?
3. What are the information sources of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo State?
4. What are the information search strategies of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo State?

V. Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis will be formulated and tested at 0.05 significance level.

1. Ho1 There will be no significant influence of information-seeking behaviour on research productivity of lecturers in Private Universities, Oyo state.

VI. Research Methodology

This study adopts descriptive survey research design of the cross-sectional through a structured questionnaire as a research technique to collect primary data from population sample. The sample population was selected from seventeen (17) faculties of Lead City University, Ibadan, and Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria consists of 333 lecturers and 187 lecturers respectively. The sample size for this study is two hundred and seventeen (217) lecturers. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample. In the first stage, two universities; Lead City University, Ibadan, and Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo were purposefully selected among the private universities in Oyo State, they are the most developed universities among the rest with many faculties and full-time lecturers. In the second stage, seven similar faculties were selected from the two institutions in the third stage, the sample for the study was selected using the Krejcie R.V and Morgan, D.W. (1970) table for sample size.

VII. Result and Findings

TABLE I
LEVEL OF INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF LECTURERS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES, OYO

	Very True of Me	True of Me	Somewhat True of me	Not True of Me	Mean
Information needs of lecturers					
Information needs on how to carry out good research work.	82 (55.0%)	55 (36.9%)	9 (6.0%)	3 (2.0%)	3.50
Information needs on how to do citations properly.	75 (50.3%)	63 (42.3%)	9 (6.0%)	2 (1.4%)	3.43
Information needs on how to write good proposals for accessing grants.	69 (46.3%)	59 (39.6%)	16 (10.7%)	5 (3.4%)	3.30
Information need on how to teach effectively.	67 (45.0%)	65 (43.6%)	17 (11.4%)	--	3.34
Information need on how to carry out good and effective research supervision.	79 (53.0%)	54 (36%).	16 (10.8%)	--	3.43
Average Mean					3.40
Decision Rule: <2.50					
Information sources of lecturers for research					
Internet.	117 (78.5%)	26 (17.4%)	3 (2.0%)	3 (2.0%)	3.76
Online Databases.	115 (77.2%)	28 (18.8%)	6 (4.1%)	--	3.74
Books, Journals, periodicals, encyclopedia.	107 (71.8%)	34 (22.8%)	8 (5.4%)	--	3.68
Libraries.	75 (50.3%)	41 (27.5%)	29 (19.5%)	4 (2.7%)	3.27
Social media platforms.	59 (39.6%)	34 (22.8%)	43 (28.9%)	13 (8.7%)	2.97
Average Mean					3.48
Decision Rule: <2.50					
Information search strategies					
I use Boolean operators to search for information online.	25 (16.8%)	38 (25.5%)	32 (21.5%)	54 (36.2%)	2.21
I use phrase searching technique when looking for information online.	47 (31.5%)	65 (43.6%)	14 (9.4%)	23 (15.4%)	2.94
I use truncation/wildcards when searching for information online.	22 (13.7%)	32 (21.5%)	42 (28.2%)	53 (35.6%)	2.08
I use an interpolation search strategy when seeking information online.	24 (16.1%)	37 (24.8%)	32 (21.5%)	56 (37.6%)	2.24
I use Google scholar all the time when searching for information online.	69 (46.3%)	50 (33.6%)	15 (10.1%)	15 (10.1%)	3.11
Average Mean					2.44
Decision Rule: <2.50					
Evaluating information					
I always verify any information I come across when carrying out a research work.	88 (59.1%)	55 (36.9%)	4 (2.7%)	2 (1.4%)	3.55
I trust the information sources I use when gathering information for my research work.	72 (48.3%)	67 (45.0%)	6 (4.0%)	4 (3.7%)	3.41

I can categorically say that whatever information comes my way when carrying out a research work is highly reliable.	60 (40.3%)	68 (45.6%)	13 (8.7%)	8 (5.4%)	3.22
Information gathered for my research work is always accurate.	70 (47.0%)	72 (48.3%)	7 (4.7%)	--	3.42
I ensure that information used for my research work is always recent.	64 (43.0%)	73 (49.0%)	11 (7.4%)	1 (0.7 %)	3.34
Average Mean					3.38
Grand Mean					3.18

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

Table 1. presents data on the information seeking behaviour of the respondents. The information seeking behavior was measured by information needs, information sources preferred, information search strategies and information evaluation. The data presented show that the most prominent information needed by the respondents is information on how to conduct quality research. This is followed by information on how to properly record citations and how to effectively supervise research students (3.43, respectively). Other information need include; information on effective teaching methods (3.34) and grant proposal writing (3.30). Overall, the respondents demonstrate the ability to identify their information need as the average mean is 3.40. The table also shows the preferred sources of information among the respondents.

The most preferred source of information according to the mean scores of the responses include; internet (mean = 3.76); online databases (mean = 3.74); printed information resources such as Books, Journals, periodicals, encyclopedia (mean = 3.68); libraries (mean = 3.27) and social media platform (mean = 2.97). The average mean of 3.48 shows that the respondents are well aware of various information sources. This awareness does not however translate to dynamic information search strategies.

The data presented shows that the respondents mostly type in research titles/topics onto google scholar and hope for the best (mean = 3.11) followed by use of phrases to search for information online (2.94). They rarely used advanced search techniques such as interpolation (mean = 2.24); Boolean operators (Mean = 2.21); and truncation/wildcards (mean = 2.08). As a result, the average mean of search strategy is 2.44 which is below the accepted level. This shows that majority of the respondents do not adopt advanced search techniques. This however does not affect their ability to evaluate the information retrieved.

The data shows that majority of the respondents usually verify the information they use for research activities (mean = 3.55). They also ensure that they use only accurate information in their research (mean = 3.42) and access only trusted information sources (mean = 3.41). In addition to these, majority of the respondents indicate that they always try to use recent information sources in their research (3.34). The average mean for

information evaluation is 3.38 which shows that majority of the respondents are effective in evaluating the information resources used in research. The low level of information retrieval skills reported in this study was also found in previous studies. Overall, the information seeking behaviour of the lecturers has a grand mean of 3.18. This is acceptable going by the decision rule. The mean score of 3.18 out of possible 4.00 is high and it indicates that the lecturers are sophisticated in their information seeking behaviour.

VIII. Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the study findings in line with the research question. The discussion is based on the results of data analysed in the study.

Research question two in this study seeks to identify the level of the information-seeking behaviour of lecturers in Private Universities, in Oyo state. The result of analysis showed that the lecturers are capable of identifying their information needs. They are also aware of various relevant sources of information and they are capable of evaluating information obtained from various sources. However, the majority of the lecturers lack information retrieval skills. The study found that the respondents lack even the basic information search strategies such as the use of Boolean Operators and truncation. Related studies have also reported that, while Nigerian lecturers are aware and have a positive perception of electronic information resources, their lack of information retrieval skills often prevents them from making the best use of available resources.

When researchers exhibit poor information search strategies, the awareness of their information needs and sources where these needs can be met may be of little significance. This is because they may not be able to retrieve the needed information resources from available information systems. The implication of poor search strategies is that lecturers may not find adequate relevant information resources for their research which can result in low research productivity or the production of low-quality research output. When lecturers are able to identify the actual information they need and where they can get them, it will save them a lot of time and energy that would have been spent in trial and error. Most importantly, when they are able to deploy effective information search and retrieval strategy, it ensures that

they are able to obtain the needed information resources. This goes a long in easing the way for researchers to conduct research.

IX. Conclusion

The information seeking behaviour of the lecturer has shown that they tend toward the use of information resources. Their ability to identify information needs and information sources as well as evaluate information resources is however tempered by their lack of adoption of advanced search techniques. Effective use of information resources in the information age requires information retrieval skills that surpass the elementary skills. This lack of advanced skills mean that the lecturers are unable to retrieve top quality and relevant information resources necessary for the purpose of teaching, citation, students' project supervision, grant proposal writing, and research activities.

X. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion reached in this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. It is important for academic libraries to organise various seminars for lecturers to boost the use of available sources of information resources and equip them with necessary information retrieval skills to effectively use the databases from where they can obtain quality resources.
2. Academic libraries in private universities in Oyo state should introduce robust research support services staffed by qualified librarians who will help librarians in their efforts to use information resources for research purposes.
3. The study also found that information seeking behaviour is a significant determinant of research productivity. It is recommended that libraries periodically conduct survey to understand the information needs and seeking behaviour of lecturers. This will help them anticipate lecturers' information needs and then design the appropriate systems and services to effectively meet those needs'
4. The study has shown the significance of lecturers' information seeking behaviour. To guide the information seeking behaviour of lecturers and information resources, it is important to develop an information literacy skill program targeted at lecturers.

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