African Research Review

AN INTERNATIONAL MULTI-DISCIPLINARY JOURNAL, ETHIOPIA
AFRREV VOL. 11 (2), SERIAL NO. 46, APRIL, 2017: 223-236
ISSN 1994-9057 (Print) ISSN 2070-0083 (Online)
DOI : http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrrev.v11i2.17

Information Need and Seeking Behaviour of Diploma Students of Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology, Kano

Stores, Farida Sani
College Library,
Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology, Kano
E-mail: faridasanistores@gmail.com
Phone: +2347036273929

Abstract

Understanding information need and seeking behaviour of information users is very crucial. The nature of information behaviour is vigorous thus, information scientist and librarians need to embark on investigation in order to understand the need of their clientele for service provision and improvement. This paper presented the result of an investigation on information need and seeking behaviour of Diploma students of Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology, Kano. A cross sectional survey research method was used for this study. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The investigation revealed that the respondents make maximum utilization of the library; they find the library materials relevant to their information needs. In relation to challenges the respondents faced with the services of the library, the study revealed that some respondents do not know how to find information materials and they do not know how to use the library catalogue. The study also revealed that the students gave some suggestions that will help to improve the library services. Provision of relevant information material and extending the library opening hours were some of the suggestions.

Introduction

Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology, Kano was established by the Federal Government of Nigeria during the time of the former civilian president late Alhaji Umar Musa Yar'adua, in the year 2008. The College was created to train students on how to handle Agricultural produce after harvesting. Thus, it is aimed at enhancing post-harvest technology. Currently the College has seven departments, namely, Agricultural Technology, Animal Science, Horticultural Science, Food Technology, Computer Science, Science Laboratory Technology, and Department of General Studies. The College is only offering courses at the ordinary diploma level (OND), but there is a proposal to run a higher diploma (HND) programme on Agricultural extension, Soil Science, Crop Production and Pest Management.

Information

The word information has been categorically defined in Webster dictionary as "knowledge given or acquired in any given manner." Going by this definition, information can be explained as knowledge transferred from one person to another irrespective of the form, medium and means in which the information is transmitted or disseminated. Thus, the importance of information is to increase the knowledge of the user and reduce the level of its uncertainty. Zeran, Hatch and Raymond (1966) categorized information into three major areas: educational, occupational, and personal/social information. Information is therefore an essential ingredient in today's agricultural, educational, social, economic, industrial, political and technological development (Ronke 2005). Information has been identified as an important factor in improving agricultural production of any nation. It also serves as an essential tool for decision making. Human beings need information to be able to make decision on any meaningful thing. Thus, for any development to take place, relevant, efficient, and effective information need to be sought. This therefore means that the agricultural sector needs timely and up-to-date information (Ronke, 2005).

Aina (1990) maintained that agricultural information encompasses all published and unpublished information on all aspect of agriculture. He further went on to broadly categorize this information into three:

a. Technical/scientific information
b. Commercial information
c. Social/cultural information
d. Legal information.

These categories of agricultural information appeared to represent the need of agricultural user population. The information appeared in different formats such as books, journals, reports, magazines, newsletters, newspapers, annual reports, thesis and

dissertations. This is where the role of library and information scientists come in; they are responsible for generating, organizing, preserving and disseminating such information to its respective users.

Similarly, information need and seeking behaviour of users is fundamental to the provision of successful information services. This is in line with Wilson's (1994) claim that the scope of information seeking behaviour is vast and many new concepts and methods are being developed with the help of researches. Karl (2004) as cited in Asantewaa. (2012) is of the view that understanding information seeking behaviour of information users is very significant to libraries because it helps the information providers to provide relevant services to the users. Moreover, in the course of seeking, the user interacts with manual information system such as journals, books etc. or computer based systems such as the world wide web (www), etc.

Knowledge about the information need and seeking behaviour of users will play a vital role in meeting their information need effectively. Libraries should therefore use this information to re-orient their collections and facilities to fit the needs of the user community.

Information Need: Information need generally refers to the kind of information a particular library user is looking for at a specific point in time. Information need come up when an individual identifies a problem or information gap and develop a desire to solve the problem or bridge the information gap. Such information identified may lead to information seeking and the formulation of request for information (Igwerson and Jarvelin, 2005). Hence, information need simply means requirement for information. It can also be seen as a demand and want. Haruna and Mabawunku (2001) as cited in Yusuf (2012) asserted that information needs are diverse and consistently changing and not agreeable to generalization. Thus it varies among groups, individual and society. Similarly, Wilson asserted that information need is influenced by a number of factors such as the range of information sources available, the use, background, motivation, professional orientation, etc. surrounding the users and consequences of information.

Information Seeking: Information seeking occurs when a person realizes that the current information he possessed is not sufficient for him to solve some problems or issues. Human beings naturally seek information when the need arises. Afolabi (2003) cited in Ronke (2005), viewed information seeking behaviour as an attitude, such as utterances, gesture, anger, anxiety, eagerness reluctance, zeal, etc. portrayed by information user in his effort to acquire any information that may add to his knowledge. It should also be noted that information seeking behaviour is influenced by users age, occupation, level of literacy, sex, level of enlightenment and culture. Similarly, Wilson asserted that information seeking behaviour is indulged by all people and manifested through a particular behaviour and in the course of this individual interaction with different sources of information.

Statement of the Problem

Information is a very important ingredient, towards human development, and as such it is a critical resource that leads to social, political, economic as well as technical development of any nation. Agriculture serves as one of the most important sector that boosts economic development. Agricultural science students as potential scientists may help in future national development. Their desire to search for information may yield a fruitful result. Librarians and other information scientists find it difficult to fully understand the nature of clientele information need due to the dynamic nature of user's information need and information seeking behaviour. Moreover, investigation reveals that no study on the information need and seeking behaviour of Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology Students have been conducted. It is against this background that the researcher attempted to find out the information need and information seeking behaviour of students of the Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology, Kano.

Research Questions

1. What type of information do the students of the Federal College of Agricultural Produce Technology seek?
2. What source(s) of information do the respondents use?
3. How frequent do they use the library?
4. How do they seek for information?
5. What is the level of satisfaction of the respondents with the services of the College Library?
6. What challenges do the respondents encounter while using the college library?
7. What suggestions should the respondents give to the library for service improvement?

Methodology

Cross sectional survey research method was employed because it is the method that study human behaviour, values and beliefs. Sample was randomly done from all the departments for this study with a population of 560. One hundred and eighty-one (181) respondents were selected across the departments. This selection was backed up by Kregie and Morgan (2006) table of sample size. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into 2 sections - A and B. Section A contains demographic data while section B contains various questions on information need, information source and information seeking behaviour. The questionnaire was distributed in the library and the respondents were asked to fill it

there and then which helped in securing 177 (98%) response rate. The study was conducted between December 2014 and June 2015.

Result and Discussion

Demographic variables

Table 1: Departments and Sample Size

S/N	DEPARTMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Agricultural Technology (AGT)	70	40%
2.	Computer Science	46	26%
3.	Food Technology (FST)	7	3.9%
4	Science Laboratory Technology (SLT).	54	30%
5.	Total	177	99.9%

The College has four main departments with each one offering one or more courses. Agricultural Technology Department, which has the highest population with 70 (40%) respondents, offers three main Agricultural courses: Animal Health Production, Horticultural Science and Agricultural Technology. The second department with the highest population is Science Laboratory Technology Department with 54 (30%) respondents offers only one course. Computer Science Department had 46 (26%) respondents and this department runs two courses - Computer Science and Statistics. Below is a table of the courses and the number of students sampled from each for this study:

Table 2 Course of Study

S/N	COURSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Agricultural Technology	20	11.2%
2.	Animal Health Production	43	24%
3.	Computer Science	23	13%
4.	Statistics	18	10%
5.	Horticulture	6	3.3%
6.	Crop Science	5	3%
7.	Food Technology	7	4%
8.	Science Laboratory Technology	55	31%
9.	TOTAL	177	99.5%

The respondents were randomly selected in accordance with their respective course of study. Science Laboratory Technology had the highest respondents with 55 (31%) respondents followed by Animal Health Production with 43 (24%) respondents. Crop Science and Food Science Technology had the lowest respondents with 5 (3%) and 7 (4%) respectively. The finding is not surprising because those courses with highest

respondents had the highest enrolment and those with the lowest respondents had the lowest enrolment in the College. The students were equally asked to indicate their level of education in the college 101 (57%) respondents were in ND 1 and 76 (43%) were in ND 2. This finding is surprising but does not mean this was a mere coincidence but because the ND 1 students use the library more than the ND 2 students.

Age

Table 3: Age

S/N	AGE RANGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	17 - 21	74	(42%)
2.	22 - 26	84	(47%)
3.	27 - 31	7	(4%)
4.	32 - 36	6	(3.3%)
5.	37 - 41	6	(3.3%)
6.	TOTAL	177	100%

The age range with highest frequency is 22–26 with 86 (46%) respondents followed by 17 -21 with 74 (36.10%). Similarly, 37 -41 and 32 -36 had the lowest frequency with 6 (3.3%) each.

Sex:

Table 4: Sex

S/N	SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Male	135	76%
2.	Female	42	23%
3.	Total	177	100%

The respondents were asked to indicate their sex and the response was 135 (76%) Male and 42 (23%) Female.

Frequency of Library Use

Table 5: Frequency of Library Use

S/N	HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THE LIBRARY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	DAILY	87	49.%
2.	TWICE A WEEK	15	8%
3.	TRICE A WEEK	33	17%
4.	WEEKLY	42	24%
5.	Total	177	100%

The respondents were asked how frequent they use the library. The response revealed that 87 (49%) use the library daily, 15 (8%) use the library just twice in a week, 33 (17%) use the library only three times in a week. Similarly, 42 (24%) use the library only on weekly basis. This finding proved that majority of the respondents use the library daily. This finding may not be surprising because the community is an academic environment where teaching, learning and research are the major activities. This is in line with the finding by Asentewaa (2012) on Information Need and Seeking Behaviour of Law lecturers of Kwame Nkrumah University, Ghana which revealed that the lecturers sought information for their research work which enhances teaching and learning

Library Catalog

Awareness of Library catalogue was another research area in which the researcher focused on. The respondents were asked on whether they know about the existence of a library catalogue. 68 (38.4%) responded in the negative while 109 (62%) answered Yes. The respondents were likewise asked on whether they know how to use a library catalogue, 91 (51.4%) responded NO and 86 (47%) responded YES. Similarly, 83 (46%) respondents use the library catalogue to search for information and 94 (53%) indicated that they do not use library catalogue to search for information material. The study therefore proved that those that do not use the library catalogue are higher than those that use it probably because they do not get formal orientation on how to use the library. The respondents were equally asked on whether they find relevant information materials through the use of library catalogue. 94 (53%) said No and 83 (47%) answered Yes. This finding is not surprising because the same number of people that indicated their ignorance on how to use the library catalogue indicated that they do not use it. Probably the respondents might be the same set of people that responded to the two related questions. This finding is not surprising because the highest number of the respondents were in ND 1 and they were not giving practical orientation as at the time of conducting the research.

Relevance of Information Materials

The respondents were equally asked to assess the information materials available in the library in terms relevance. 157 (88%) stated that they are relevant to them while 20 (11.2%) thought otherwise. The finding however revealed that over 80% of the respondents get relevant information materials from the library. The finding is very much encouraging though there is still a gap that needs to be bridged despite the fact that a library cannot satisfy the information need of its users hundred percent; there is still need to do more. The finding got the backing of Oguntuese and Falaiye (2004) that proved that the most effective way to mobilize people into the library is through the provision of required information.

A question with three options was presented to the respondents to indicate how relevant the library materials are 94 (53%) indicated very relevant, 67 (38%) responded as relevant and 16 (9%) responded not relevant. This finding proved that the information materials available in the library are very relevant to majority of the respondents; this might be due to the fact that the library is stocked with current, relevant and up to date information materials.

Type of Information Need

Table 6 Type of Information

S/N	TYPE OF INFORMATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Information on how to write assignment	13	7.3%
2.	How to write assignment, project and current affairs	10	6%
3.	Information on how to write assignment and current affairs	20	11.2%
4.	Information on how to write assignment and pass exams	23	13%
5.	General knowledge	20	11.2%
7.	Information on general and how to write assignment	10	6%
8.	Information on how to write assignment and project	20	11.2%
9.	Information on how to pass exam	18	10.1%
10.	Information on current affairs	10	6%
11.	Information on how to write project	11	6.2%
12.	All of the above	22	12.4%
13	Total	177	100%

The respondents were asked to indicate the type of information they search for in the college library. Numerous options were given with multiple information type on each option and subsequently single options were provided. Information on how to write assignment and pass exams got the highest response with 23 (13%) respondents. The respondents also indicated that they search all of the above information in the library and this was the second highest with 22 (12.4%). Information on how to write assignment, current affairs, general knowledge, project, got 20 (11.2%) respondents respectively. Similarly, the respondents were given single option to choose from and response proved that information on how to pass exams was rated high with 18 (10.1). Information on current affairs got 10 (6%), and information on how to write project got 11 (6,2%) respondents. The finding is not unanticipated because the college is an academic environment and the mission of all the respondents is to graduate from the college with possibly good result.

Sources of Information

Table 7 Sources of Information

S/N	SOURCES OF INFORMATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Books	60	24.4%
2.	Journals	40	16.3%
3.	Magasine	30	12.2%
4.	Dictionaries	20	8.1%
5.	Encyclopedia	25	10.2%
6.	Newspapers	20	8.1%
7.	Projects	50	20.4%
8.	Total	245	100%

The respondents choose multiple options.

The respondents were given multiple sources of information to choose the one they use as a source of information. Books got the highest response with 60 (24.4%) respondents. Projects got the second highest response with 50 (20.4%) respondents. Similarly, journals got 40 (16.3%) and magazines got 30 (12.2%) respondents. The finding is not unforeseen because books are generally used as information resources and this was also proved by a study done by Asantewaa and Bruce. (2012) on Information Need and Information Seeking Behaviour of Law Lectures in Kwame Nkurumah University which proved that reference books are their most important sources of information. The respondents also proved that journals are another sources of their information and the least sources of information were general books and text books. Research reports, bibliographies, newspapers, conference proceedings were considered less important. Similarly, 77% prefer print materials and 39% prefer electronic materials.

Information Behaviour

Table 8 Information Seeking Behaviour

S/N	INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	I ask the librarian	20	11.2%
2.	I go direct to the shelf	38	21.4%
3.	I use the library catalogue	24	14%
4.	I ask my colleagues	15	8.%
5.	I use the catalogue and the shelf	10	6%

6.	I ask my colleagues and sometimes I go direct to the shelf	10	6%
7.	I ask the librarian, colleagues, sometimes I go direct to the shelf	20	11%
8.	I use the library catalogue, ask the librarian or go direct to the shelf	20	11%
9.	All of the above	20	11%
10.	Total	177	100%

The respondents were given options to indicate the kind of behaviour they portrayed in the college library while seeking for information. The respondents that go direct to the shelf to search for information were the highest with 38 (21.4%) respondents. Similarly, 24 (14%) indicated that they use the library catalogue to search for information material. Twenty (11.2%) respondents indicated that they ask the librarian, colleagues, use the library catalogue and sometimes they go direct to the shelf. On the same vein however 20 (11.2%) respondents indicated that they use all of the above approach to search for information in the library.

Level of Satisfaction

A Question was presented to the respondents on whether they are satisfied with the library service, 160 (90%) respondents responded Yes and 17 (10) responded No. The respondents were equally asked to rate the level of their satisfaction 88 (50%) rated their satisfaction as high. Similarly, 38 (21%) rated it as very high and 29 (16%) rated low, and 22 (12%) rated it as very low. The finding proved that the students reached a certain level of satisfaction with the library services.

Challenges

The respondents were asked whether they have problem in seeking for information in the college library 90 (50.3%) responded that they do not have any problem with the services of the library, while 86 (49%) responded that they have problem with the services. In a separate question, the respondents were given many options to tick from concerning the possible problems they might face in seeking information in the college library. The result is presented on table 9 below.

Table 9: Problems and Challenges

S/N	CHALLENGES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Difficulty in using the library catalogue	10	4.3%
2.	Relevant materials not available	52	23%
3.	We don't know how to find information	22	10%
4.	The library staff doesn't give us the necessary attention	5	2.1%
5.	Lack of ICT and E- Library	36	16%
6.	The atmosphere not conducive	10	4.3%
7.	The opening hours are not enough	9	4.%
8.	Information materials on Animal Health Production not available	20	9%
9.	Lack of enough relevant journals	20	9%
10.	No enough materials on Food Technology	30	13%
11.	All of the above	15	7%
12	Total	229	

Majority of the respondents 52 (23%) indicated that lack of relevant materials in the library is their major challenge. Similarly, 36 (16%) respondents indicated that lack of E- library section is their major challenge. Students from Food Technology and Animal Health production indicated that there is no relevant information material on their subject area with 30 (13%) and 20 (9%) respectively. The study also found that 20 (9%) of the respondents indicated that there were no relevant journals in their subject area. Fifteen (7%) respondents have all of the above challenges. The finding is similar to a study by Line (1960) cited in Wilson (1994) which revealed that difficulty in finding information material such as books and lack of knowledge on how to use the library were the respondent's main challenge.

Table 10: Suggestions

S/N	SUGGESTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Acquire more books on research method	34	18%
2.	Acquire more relevant materials	25	13%
3.	Provision of E-library	27	14%
4.	Provision of more Animals Health Production materials	20	10%
5.	The Library should improve it service	30	16%
6	Extend the library opening hours	25	13%
7.	Provision of more relevant journals	10	5%
8.	Provision of more relevant information materials on Food Technology	10	5%
9.	No suggestion and okay with the present service	20	10%
10	Total	191	

The respondents chose many options.

The respondents were asked to provide suggestions that can be used to improve the services offered to them by the college library. Provisions of books on research method were ranked highest with 34 (18%) respondents. Improvement of library service was the second highest with 30 (16%) respondents. Similarly, 25 (13%) suggested that the library opening hours should be increased. Provision of more relevant materials on Food Technology and journals was the least with 10 (5%) respectively.

Conclusion

In view of the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

Majority of the respondents were from Agricultural Technology and Science Laboratory Department. The students fall within 22 – 26 age group. The Library materials are relevant to the student's needs. The information needs of the students are majorly on assignment, project, passing exams and current affairs.

The sources used to get the information include: books, journals, magazines, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, newspapers and projects. The students' seeking behaviour involves directly approaching the librarian, colleagues, the library catalogue and the book shelf.

The challenges the students encountered are: lack of relevant materials, lack of enough relevant journals and lack of knowledge on how to use the library catalogue. The respondents' Suggested that the library management should provide them with books on research methods, improve library opening hours and Provide more relevant materials on Food Technology and journals.

References

Aina, L. O. (1990). Informing African formats: Some obstacles to information flow. *Information Development (6)* 4, 201 – 203.

Ansari, M. A. & Suneth, S. (2014). Agricultural information need of farm women: A survey in state of north India. *African Journal of Agricultural Research 9 (19)*, 1454 -1459.

Asantewaa, A. A. (2012). Information need and information seeking behaviour of law lecturers in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. *International Research Journal of Arts and Social Sciences 1 (4)*, 75 – 80.

Christopher, N. (2005). Information literacy in education and national development: Libraries as an anchor. *Journal of Library and Information Science,* (2), 1 &2, 3.

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., Airasian, P. (2006). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*, (8th ed.) New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

Igwerson, D. & Jarvelin, K. (2004). Information seeking research need extensinon towards task and technology. *Information Research*, (10) 1, 212.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (6th rev ed.). India, New Delhi: New Age International.

Krejie, V. R. & Morgan, W. D. (2006). *Determining sample size for research activities. Education and psychological measurement.*

Oguntuase, F. S. & Falaye, A. O. (2004). New technology for information handling in academic libraries: In *current trend in information technology: A book of reading.*

Preez, D.M. (2008). *Information need and information seeking behaviour of consulting engineer: A qualitative investigation.* A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Library and Information Sciences, University of South Africa, in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Information.

Ronke, A. S. (2005). The information need and information seeking behaviour of academic staff in the College of Agricultural Science Olabisi, Onabanjo

University, Ogun State: *Journal of Library and information Science*. (2) 1 & 2, 26 – 28.

Shertzner, B. & Stone, S. C. (1980). *Fundamentals of guidance.* Boston: Houghton.

Tahir, M., Mahmood, K., Shafiq, F. (2008). Information need and information seeking behaviour of arts and humanities teachers: A survey of the University of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. *Library Philosophy and Practise*, 1 – 11.

Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia (2013). Information need. Retrieved from en.wikipedia.org.//informationneed on 24/09/2016.

Wilson, T. D. (1994). Information need and uses: Fifty years of progress. In Vickery, B.C. (ed.). Fifty years of information progress. *Journal of Documentation Review*, pp.15-51.

Wilson, T. D. (2005). Evolution of information behaviour modelling: Wilson model. In Fisher, K.E, & Kechnie, M. C. (eds.). *Theories of Information Behaviour* (pp. 31-36), Medford, NJ: Information Today.

Yusuf, T. B. (2012). Information needs, sources and information behaviour of women artisans in Offa metropolis. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, (10) 10.

Zeran, F, Hatch, R. F., Raymond, N. (1966). The information service in guidance occupational educational, social. (2nd ed.). Chicago: Rand McNally.