



Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Students in College of Nursing and Midwifery Gombe, Gombe State

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Abstract

This paper discusses the information need and information seeking behaviour of students in College of Nursing and Midwifery Gombe. A total of number of three hundred (300) copies of Questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Out of which 287 were returned. A simple percentage and frequency count was used for data analysis. The study revealed that majority of the students seeks information in various ways and sources in order to update their knowledge. The respondents identified various problems mutilating against effective information seeking and at same time offered suggestions for improvement. Among others, it is recommended that the library should provide ICT facilities in order to encourage and enhance information seeking behaviour of the students.

Keywords: *Information need, behaviour, information seeking, nursing students*

1.1 Introduction

The concept of information has been given different meaning by different writers most especially the information professionals or specialists in the field. Information is an indispensable and essential ingredient in today's agriculture, education, economic, social, industrial, political and technological development without information; no significant development can be achieved.

Aguolu (1989) and Rawley (1992) define information as "embodying interrelated structural data which are required to enable one to read knowledge as well as take appropriate decision" Ucak and Kurbanugui(1998) denote that information as a factual data or advice or opinion, a physical object such as book or journal or channel through which a message is conveyed, for example oral or written communication. Ajala (2004) described information as the total series of mental activities that can be grasped

and assimilated in order to realize a new technology development.

According to Wilson (1999) "Information seeking behaviour is what a user of a library information centre does when he needs information and how he goes soliciting for those information resources". Thus, the availability of information resources is what determines the quality of information at the user disposal. Therefore, the provision of achieving, relevant and timely information resources to user meet especially student by college library is a necessary requirement for excellent academic pursuit. Student must be updated with various information resources to effectively undertake their academic pursuit.

Information need could be seen as demands or requirement of what user need in a particular situation while information seeking is undertaking in order to identify a message that can satisfy a perceived need. Anderson (2001) on the other hand believes that

information seeking research looks at how individual go about finding the materials that they need in order to satisfy information need the may be both professional and recreational. This implies that both information need and information seeking behaviour are concepts that are used in order to identify and provide relevant and timely information that are indispensable for research and study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The college of Nursing and Midwifery Gombe which was established in 1995 and has one of the newly established Nursing library stated its full operation in 1996. Since then, the college library has been battling with its meager resources to provide the necessary facilities and service in order to satisfy the immediate requirement of the students. However, it is disheartening that only few students appear to engage in active information seeking and many of them do not understand process of the information seeking due to their lack of understanding of the existence of information resources.

This therefore poses a great challenge for the library and its staff. The information need and information seeking behaviour of student are the point of interest in this study. Importantly the way and names student search for an information resource is very crucial for the overall performance of students. So the problem that this paper seeks to address as important to librarians as user increasingly depend and relevant and timely information transmission, hence the lack of such shows the place of this research and study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research effect focused on the identifying the information need and information seeking behaviour of students in College of Nursing and Midwifery Library Gombe. This study specifically attempts to:

- i. Identify the information need of those students

- ii. identify the information seeking pattern of the students.
- iii. Determine the way and source of used by students to acquired information, and
- iv. Investigate the problems faced by the students when seeking information.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will attempt to provide answer to the following questions.

- i. What are the information needs of these students?
- ii. What is the information seeking patterns of these students?
- iii. What is their purpose of seeking information?
- iv. What problem do the students encounter in seeking information?

2.1 Review of Related Literature

According to Afolabi (2013) Information is defined as the data for decision making .It is said to be resources that must be acquired and used in order to make decision. Information seeking behaviour which results from the recognition of some need is defined by Ucak and Kurbanagiu (1998) as any activity of individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfied a perceived need. In order word information seeking begins when someone perceive that the current state of possessed knowledge is less than that needed to deal with some issues or problems. Afolabi) (2013) regarded seeking behaviour as attributes, utterances, gestures, eager, anxiety, eagerness, reluctance, zeal's, or any other displayed by an information user in his effort to purchase, acquired, or receive news, data, storing, or anything that may inform or misinform his knowledge or understanding of something.

It is to be noted that information seeking behaviour of people varies according to their age, gender, occupation. Location, education, exposure and enlightenment, region and even culture. It can also be

influenced by source of information, content, medium and large of communication, time and nature of information (Afolabi, 2013). Inadequate libraries and information centres which inadequate qualified step in getting their information needs met. Other factors are economic squeeze, lack of relevant and up to date information materials, lack of knowledge on how to obtain information needed, and lack of ICT facilities.

In their research work Odusanya and Amusa (2013) investigated that information need and information seeking behaviour of faculty of science lectures of Olabisi Onabayo University, they identify that information needs of lecturer are in area of jobs, professional and social issues influence their information seeking behaviour. Their information seeking behaviour shows that they want personalized and specialized information services as such they make use to indexes, abstracts, subject bibliographies.

Similarly, Oyediram (2014) in her work information needs and seeking behaviour of library users at Yaba College of Technology, indicate a barometric measure of the extent to which a library is meeting the users. Her study reveals that there is low patronage of the library focused by student's user which is attributed to unavailable of desire information resources, accessibility problems, absolute and absence of online facilities. The study recommends the need for the library management to consider users input in their acquisition process and policy among others and concluded that user studies are essential for prescription, improvement and efficient of information services. Adelani (2012) lamented that many libraries and information service in

Nigeria started without first determining empirically the information needs of those to be served.

The changing information environment, therefore calls for continued research to ensure the knowledge generated by users' studies can help to develop information professional expertise and plan for the future. There is need for "Identifying information need and seeking behaviour of users". This is very vital link in the chain of operation from information gathering to dissemination.

3.1 Research Methodology

The questionnaire method was used for this study. (Questionnaire is not research method. It is just one the instruments used for data collection. So state your research method well.) survey research method was used and questionnaire was design to sought information on information needs, places and location of information, information sources consulted, source of acquiring information in the library and reasons for seeking information in the library, this was because knowledge gathered using this method can be use to make acceptable generalization about the whole population from which sample had been drawn.

Three Hundred (300) questionnaires were administered while Two Hundred and Eighty-Seven (287) were returned given a response rate of (95.7%) while 13 (4.3%) could not be collected, (were not returned). The choice of this study vis-à-vis College of Nursing and Midwifery was based on fact that nothing of such has been done in the field of library and information science in the college. Descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages was used in analyzing the data.

4.1 Result and Discussion of Findings

Table 1. Information Needs

S/No	Information Needs	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Information on general knowledge	70	24.4%
2.	Information reciting to my course or field	161	56.1%
3.	Information on specific area	35	12.2%
4.	Information for leisure	15	5.2%
5.	Others	6	2.1%
	Total	287	100.00%

Table 1 above shows that majority of students 161 (56.1%) sought information reciting to their courses or field of specialization. 70 (24.4%) sought information in general knowledge, while 35 (12.2%) sought information in specific field, 15 (5.2%) sought their information for leisure while 6 (2.1%) were undecided. This implies that majority of student visit library to seek information related to their courses. Students generally seek information need on their course or field. Only few of them seek information for leisure.

Table 2. Places and location of information

S/No	Location/place of information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Circulation/open Access Unit	133	46.3%
2.	Reference Unit	30	10.5%
3.	Reserve Unit	57	19.9%
4.	Serial Unit	46	16.0%
5.	Research Unit	21	7.3%
	Total	287	100.00%

Table 2 indicate that majority of the students 133 (46.3%) use the Open Access Unit in locating their means sources of information, 30 (10.5%) indicate that they used reference unit, 57 (19.9%) indicate that they used reserve unit, 46 (16.0%) used serial unit while any 21 (7.3%) use research unit in locating their information needs. The above table implies that majority of the student access information in circulation unit called Open Access Unit. This is due to the fact that circulation is consider a library centre of activity.

Table 3. Information Sources Consulted

S/No	Information Sources	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Textbooks	168	58.5%
2.	Reference Materials	35	12.2%
3.	Journals	24	8.4%
4.	Project	56	19.5%
5.	Research Materials	4	1.4%
	Total	287	100.00%

Based on table 3 above majority of the student 168 (58.5%) consulted textbooks for acquiring the needed information, 56 (19.5%) consulted project most especially final year students, while those who consulted reference materials 35 (12.2%), 24 (8.4%) consulted journals and only 4 (1.4%) of student consulted research materials. This implies that textbooks are probably the most important known source of information to majority of the students which means that students used textbook as their primary source of information.

Table 4: Information Seeking Behaviour

S/No	Seeking Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage %)
	Visiting the library	125	43.6%
	Consulting library staff	103	38.9%
	Consulting colleagues	30	10.4%
	Visiting other libraries	19	6.6%
	Others (Undecided)	10	3.5%
	Total	287	100.00%

Table 4 shows that the majority of students 125 (43.6%) seek their information source by visiting the library, this was followed closely by 103 (38.9%) of the student who consulted the library staff for seeking their information sources, while 30 (10.4%) consulted their colleague, 19 (6.9%) of them visited other libraries for seeking their information. Only 10 (3.5%) were rated as undecided. This result indicates that majority of the student prepared to use the college library to seek information rather than using other sources.

Table 5: Reasons for seeking information in the library

S/No	Preferred reason of seeking information in the library	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	To update	84	29.3%
2.	To study for examination	72	25.1%
3.	Reading/research	91	31.7%
4.	To do assignment	40	13.9%
	Total	287	100.00%

Table 5 shows that majority of the students 91 (31.7%) sought information for reading and research, 84 (29.3%) for information to keep update with the current happening, 72 (25.1%) for the purpose of writing exams while 40 (13.9%) sought information to write their assignment. The result indicates that most of the students visit the library for reading and research which is the most important aspect of their study.

Conclusion

The study identifies the information needs and information seeking behaviour of the student in College of Nursing and Midwifery Gombe. This means that understanding the actual information need and information seeking behaviour of student enable the College Library take necessary steps in providing effective and efficient service to users. This also will enable the library to map out strategies to improve their services.

Recommendations

Based on the findings on this paper a lot of things need to be put in place for conducive learning and of course for effective and efficient information seeking. The library should provide Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in order to allow students access to information through the internet. The library budget must be increased to provide more volumes of both soft and hard copies of information resources in order to promote information seeking activity of users. Similarly, in conjunction with providing ICT facilities, and more volumes of books and journals, recruitment of professional staff is needed in order to provide more professional services to information seekers.

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