

**INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOR AMONG LIBRARY STAFF OF
NIGERIA INSTITUTE OF LEATHER AND SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY LIBRARY,
(NILEST) ZARIA, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This paper investigated the information needs and seeking behavior among library staff of NILEST Zaria, Nigeria. This paper was guided by three research questions namely; what are the information needs of NILEST library staff, what are the sources of information used by NILEST library staff and what are the challenges faced by NILEST library staff while seeking information? This study was a descriptive survey. The population for this study was 30, and the entire library staff of NILEST was used as the sample for the study because the population was relatively small. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data on the information needs and seeking behavior of library staff NILEST. Findings from the study revealed that respondents seek information for presentations with a mean response score of 4.57, respondents source information from journals with a mean response score of 4.63 while epileptic power supply was the major challenge faced by NILEST library staff while seeking information as indicated by mean response of 4.47. It was concluded that the information needs of NILEST library staff are for presentations, Library development, self-study, and lectures, and NILEST library staff source information from journals, Library, the internet, newspapers, and noticeboards. It was recommended among others that alternative power sources such as the use of solar panels to generate electricity should be available to reduce dependence on PHCN as well as power generators that cause a nuisance owing to the noise from the generators set.

Introduction

Information is essential to all human endeavors and fields of study, particularly for human survival, competitive advantage, and expanding the boundaries of knowledge. The foundation of any society nowadays can be said to be information because the more the society get evolved, the more informed it is. As a result, information must be continuously produced and disseminated to improve society and humanity. Information, according to Chinnasamy (2016), is knowledge used by a human. Ideas, facts, and creative works of the human intellect are all acceptable forms of formal or informal communication. The term "information age" was first used to describe the current era because of the extraordinary increase in the amount and diversity of information goods, services, systems, and sources that humanity has seen (Tiamiyu, 2003). Information is the starting point for human decision-making, according to another opinion

(Owie, Ademola & Adams, 2017). It could also be any difference you see in yourself or your surroundings. According to Gray, Klein, Noyce, Sesselberg, and Cantrill (2005), ideas and creativity need information to flourish. Tiamiyu (2003) stated that "if you cannot keep up with information, you are out of the game" while describing the significance of the information. In this context, the term "game" refers to the civilization. Users of information vary so widely that the types of information they need also differ greatly. Every person requires knowledge to meet their needs in the areas of personal, professional, educational, teaching, and learning. Different information-seeking behaviors are used by individuals and groups to discover, collect, organize, and share information to meet conscious or unconscious needs. Information needs are the specific requirements that each user has for the information that they require. Finding the knowledge that contributes to comprehension and meaning is the result of an information need, which is viewed as an increasingly vague awareness of something that is missing (Doraswamy, 2017).

According to Borlund and Pharo (2019), information needs are based on users' analysis of why they are interested in particular information and what they will use the information for. Information needs are described by Bhardwaj (2016) as "a condition in which certain information contributes to the achievement of genuine or legitimate information purpose." A need for information is the first step in information searching. Only when you are driven by the need for knowledge to address a particular issue do you look for a solution. The information you gathered will assist you in resolving the current issue. According to Wilson in Borlund and Pharo (2019), information needs are searches made by a person to satiate their physiological (getting shelter from the rain), emotional (enjoying a movie for two hours), and cognitive (completing a school work) requirements. In conclusion, the need for information can be described as the need or desire for a person to look for sources or resources that can assist him in resolving his current and individual difficulties. As a result, your information needs will depend on the circumstances or setting you are in.

When people feel ignorant, their hunger for information arises, according to Kuhlthau's 1991 model (Kundu, 2017). People seek to fill this knowledge gap by obtaining information quickly, precisely, and easily to become well-informed and make proper use of it. Information can be needed for any issue, challenge, topic research, teaching, or learning situation that arises from a lack of knowledge. People employ a variety of behaviors, methods, channels, and sources to make up for their lack of information. "Information seeking behavior" refers to the process of gathering information. The model of information behavior created by Wilson (Wilson 1997) can be used to define information behavior. Wilson contends that a general model of information behavior must include at least the following three components: an information need and its drivers, which is, the elements that contribute to an individual's perception of need; the elements that influence the individual's response to that perception; and the processes or actions associated with that response. He emphasized that if someone has a desire for information, there must be an accompanying purpose. A person or group has an information need when they want to find and

get knowledge to meet both conscious and unconscious requirements. Any source that informs someone else or a group of people about something, whether formally or informally, by sharing thoughts, facts, or data regarding human activities and events that have been observed or heard about them is considered to be an information source. Information is the reporting of a specific circumstance or event that will educate anyone who uses it. According to Nzewi (2020), a source is any platform or channel that allows people to access or retrieve information.

Information seeking behavior is defined as all of your responses to informational sources and delivery mechanisms that you come across while looking for information (Wilson, 2024). It is a conscious, purposeful action that uses both your physical and cerebral abilities to look up the information you need. The process by which people look for information and use it to perform their assigned work is defined by Tubachi (2018) as information seeking behavior. The steps in this cognitive process include defining one's information needs, looking for the information, assessing and choosing the pertinent information, and then employing it (Sultana, 2016). The goal of information searching is often to improve one's level of knowledge.

One of the most important resources for the academic and research endeavors of the Nigeria Institute of Leather and Science Technology (NILEST) in Zaria, Nigeria, is its library. On the other hand, the staff's information needs and seeking behaviors have a big impact on how effective the library is. There's a rising concern that these needs might not be sufficiently satisfied because there's not a clear knowledge of the precise information that staff members need in order to carry out their jobs. Ineffective resource management, inefficiencies in library operations, and inadequate user services can all result from this gap. Notwithstanding the vital significance of these elements, little study has been done to pinpoint and address the particular information needs and seeking habits of NILEST library staff.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the types of information required by the staff, sources of information used by the library staff, and the challenges they encounter in the process.

Research Questions

Three research questions were formulated for the study. These are:

1. What are the information needs of NILEST library staff?
2. What are the sources of information used by NILEST library staff?
3. What are the challenges faced by NILEST library staff while seeking information?

Review of Empirical Studies

A study conducted by Oluwaseye, Akanni and Busuyi (2017) investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of medical students at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. A descriptive Survey design was used, and the double sampling

method was adopted to select samples of 200 students from the population of 546 students. SPSS output format based on simple frequency count and percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation was used for data analysis. The findings from this study revealed that: the information needs of medical students at the University of Ibadan have many facets with medical information coming first on the list, assignment and academic projects were the main purposes of seeking information, internet was the mostly used by medical students out of other sources; irregular power supply, obsolescence of CD-ROMs, and arrangement of library resources were some of the problems encountered by medical students while seeking for information; areas where Medical students want improvement in the College of Medicine library collections include: Electronic Databases, journals, textbooks, and reference materials. One of the recommendations made was that the Management of the Medical Library at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan should improve on her efforts at increasing the internet bandwidth in the library.

Festus and Oyebola (2019) in their study titled "Information seeking behaviour of clinical medical students of Bowen University Teaching Hospital (BUTH), Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria" investigated information seeking behaviour of medical clinical students of Bowen University Teaching Hospital (BUTH), Ogbomoso, Oyo state, the objectives are to find out information seeking behaviour, established the purpose of seeking information, level of awareness of the available library services ascertained mostly consulted information materials and identified problem hindering seeking information behavior. The population of the study was hundred (100) medical clinical students while the sample size is eighty- eight (88). The questionnaire was used to get the necessary data, SPSS was used for the analysis, and percentage distribution, mean, and standard deviation was adopted for data analysis. The findings from this study revealed that medical clinical students of Bowen University Teaching Hospital Ogbomoso Oyo state always and sometimes seek information based on their class assignments, project works, group discussions, lectures, and for pleasures and internet, was mostly used, while MEDLINE and OPAC are not always and properly used. The unstable internet facilities and sporadic power supply were identified as major problems hindering the free flow of information seeking behavior of medical clinical students of Bowen University Teaching Hospital, the study, therefore, concluded by recommending, the stability of internet facilities, regular power supply, and proper awareness through library orientation should be encouraged.

Humera, and Khushbakht (2021) studied Information seeking behavior of undergraduate students at the University of Karachi, Pakistan. This study aimed o identify information seeking behavior, and information sources to know their searching preferences, and determine the behaviors of undergraduate students in information searching at the University of Karachi, Pakistan. A quantitative approach was applied and a survey method was used. A structured questionnaire was developed and used to collect the necessary information needed. The sample size consisted of (n= 208) undergraduate students at the University of Karachi, Pakistan. A simple Random Sampling method was applied to select participants. Collected data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This study will fill the gap within

existing knowledge because very less current studies have been conducted so far about the information seeking behavior of undergraduate students, especially in respect of Karachi, Pakistan. This study will be helpful to libraries to develop and improve resources and services as per the need of their students. Teachers will be able to identify students' needs and their patterns of information.

Khan and Khan (2020) investigated the information seeking behavior of research students at the University of Peshawar, Pakistan. Objectives of the study include identifying information needs, sources, resources, barriers to information seeking as well as factors motivating the use of libraries and quality of research. A quantitative approach was applied to the study. The survey method was used among 300 research students of the university. Results show that researchers need the information to identify research problems, get current information, writing research proposals, articles, and theses. In addition, researchers use the internet and databases to acquire information. Researchers use library resources and services for their research study. Whereas, the study reported internet connectivity, ICT facilities, and unavailability of study rooms in libraries as a barrier to information seeking. Motivating factors include information sources and e-databases to visit the library.

A significant area of research in an academic setting has been the idea of information needs, information seeking, and information use. People have immense information requirements, and there are many different ways they might satisfy them. As a result, it is critical to understand the information demands of NILEST library staff, as well as the variety of approaches taken to address those needs. The pupils' ability to use the knowledge they learn primarily depends on how and where they look for the information they require. There hasn't been a lot of thorough research on the information needs and information-seeking habits of the library staff of NILEST, according to the literature. This is the foundation upon which the study was designed to determine the information-seeking behavior of library staff.

Methodology

This study was a descriptive survey. The population for this study was 30, and the entire library staff of NILEST was used. There was no sample size since the population is small, the entire staff were used as the respondents. A structured questionnaire titled, 'Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Library Staff of NILEST' was used as the instrument to gather data on the information needs and seeking behavior of library staff NILEST. Data obtained were analyzed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 26 using mean point values with benchmark mean of 3.00 and above as agreed and otherwise disagree.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One

What are the information needs of NILEST library staff?

In order to answer the research question, response on information needs of NILEST Library Staff is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reasons NILEST Library Staff Seek Information

S/N	Reasons	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
1	For lectures	3.67	0.96	Agree
2	Personal use	3.37	1.19	Agree
3	Assignments	3.30	1.09	Agree
4	Examinations	3.33	1.40	Agree
5	Writing project	2.60	1.07	Disagree
6	Entertainment	2.90	1.13	Disagree
7	Group discussion	2.47	1.28	Disagree
8	Library development	3.87	1.38	Agree
9	Self-study	3.83	0.95	Agree
10	Presentations	4.57	1.04	Agree
	Cumulative	3.39	1.15	

Benchmark: Aggregate Mean ≥ 3.00 = Agree; Aggregate Mean < 3.00 = Disagree

Table 1 showed responses on reasons NILEST library staff seek information. The table revealed mean response scores between 2.47 to 4.57. The aggregate mean of 3.39 was obtained for all the items which is greater than the benchmark mean of 3.00. This implies that NILEST library staff seek information for different reasons. In particular, the majority of the respondents seek information for presentations with a mean response score of 4.57. Library development, self-study, and lectures are other reasons NILEST Library staff seek information with mean values of 3.87, 3.83, and 3.87 respectively. From the Table, it was also observed that respondents do not seek for information for writing projects, entertainment, or group discussions as these items attracted the mean scores of 2.60, 2.90, and 2.47 respectively which were all below the benchmark of 3.00. This finding disagrees with the findings of Oluwaseye, Akanni, and Busuyi (2017) who found that assignments and academic projects were the main purposes of seeking for information. This disagreement might not be unconnected with the fact that the study of Oluwaseye, Akanni, and Busuyi (2017) was students-based study while the current study is on Library staff who do not seek information for entertainment or group discussions.

Research Question Two

What are the sources of information used by NILEST library staff?

Response on sources of information of NILEST Library Staff was used to answer research question two and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Sources of Information of NILEST Library Staff

S/N	Sources of information	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
1	Library	4.60	0.50	Agreed
2	Internet	4.53	0.51	Agreed
3	Newspaper	4.50	0.57	Agreed
4	Journals	4.63	0.49	Agreed
5	Textbooks	4.30	0.92	Agreed
6	Colleagues	2.60	0.97	Disagreed
7	Radio	3.27	1.02	Agreed
8	Television	3.53	1.01	Agreed
9	Online database	3.77	1.25	Agreed
10	Social media	3.77	0.77	Agreed
11	Notice board	4.50	0.51	Agreed
	Cumulative	4.00	0.77	

Benchmark: Aggregate Mean ≥ 3.00 = Agree; Aggregate Mean < 3.00 = Disagree

Table 2 showed responses on sources of information of NILEST Library staff. The table revealed mean response scores between 2.60 to 4.63. The aggregate mean of 4.00 was obtained for all the items which is greater than the benchmark mean of 3.00. This implies that NILEST library staff source for information from different sources namely library, internet, newspapers, journals, textbooks, colleagues, radio, television, online databases, social media, and the notice board. Specifically, the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that they source information from journals as this item attracted the highest mean response score of 4.63. Other sources include Libraries, the internet, newspapers, and noticeboards with mean responses of 4.60, 4.53, and 4.50 respectively. The least of the sources of information as indicated by the respondents is sourcing information from colleagues as this item attracted the least mean score of 2.60 which is less than the benchmark mean of 3.00 implying that the respondents disagreed with sourcing information from colleagues. This finding agrees with the findings of Onifade and Bolarinwa (2019) and Oluwaseye, Akanni, and Busuyi (2017) who in their separate studies found that the internet was mostly used as a source of information. This might not be unconnected with accessibility to the internet as virtually all staff of the NILEST library make use of their phones to surf the net for information which could help in building the library itself and the services provided in the library by the library staff.

Research Question Three

What are the challenges faced by NILEST library staff while seeking information?

Challenges faced by NILEST Library staff while seeking information are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by NILEST Library Staff while Seeking for Information

S/N	Challenges affecting the information needs of NILEST staff	Mean	Std. Dev	Remark
1	Irrelevant information on the internet	4.03	0.62	Agree
2	Outdated library materials	3.83	1.09	Agree
3	Epileptic power supply	4.47	0.82	Agree
4	Lack of internet search skills	4.17	0.95	Agree
5	Inadequate library space	4.10	0.96	Agree
6	Poor internet connectivity	3.93	1.02	Agree
7	information on databases	4.07	0.83	Agree
8	Unconducive library environment	4.00	1.15	Agree
	Cumulative	4.08	0.93	

Benchmark: *Aggregate Mean ≥ 3.00 = Agree; Aggregate Mean < 3.00 = Disagree*

Library staff while seeking information are faced with different challenges. Table 3 sought to find out the challenges faced by NILEST library staff while seeking information. The Table disclosed that challenges ranged from poor internet connectivity to epileptic power supply as indicated with means ranging from 3.93 to 4.47. The cumulative mean of 4.08 obtained was greater than the benchmark mean of 3.00 implying that their responses were affirmative. Worthy of note is the epileptic power supply which is the major challenge faced by NILEST library staff while seeking for information as indicated by the highest mean response of 4.47. Other key areas of interest about challenges faced while seeking information by NILEST library staff include lack of internet search skills (4.17), inadequate library space (4.10), and irrelevant information on the internet (4.03). From the Table, it is evident that all the identified challenges affect the information needs of NILEST library staff as all the items had mean responses greater than the benchmark mean of 3.00. These challenges are similar to those found by Onifade and Bolarinwa (2019), and Khan and Khan (2020) who reported amongst others that internet connectivity and irregular/sporadic power supply were the key problems faced by respondents in seeking information which negates the free flow of information been sought for. Challenges with regards to information seeking are inevitable, however, the challenges could be mitigated if the Library management of NILEST can make available power supplies that would be uninterrupted as against power supply from the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) since power was identified to be the main challenge encountered by NILEST library staff while seeking for information. Understanding the information needs and behaviors is crucial for enhancing the library's operational efficiency, as it can inform targeted training programs, improve access to relevant resources, and foster a culture of continuous learning. Addressing these needs can also lead to better resource management, more efficient user services, and enhanced support for the institution's research and educational missions. Additionally, insights into their information-seeking behavior can help identify gaps in the current system and promote the adoption of new technologies and best practices tailored towards NILEST library ultimately improving the library's overall service delivery and impact on its patrons.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that the information needs of NILEST library staff are for presentations, Library development, self-study, and lectures, and NILEST library staff source information from journals, Library, the internet, newspapers, and noticeboards. NILEST library staff while searching for information are faced with challenges such as epileptic power supply, lack of internet search skills, inadequate library space, and irrelevant information on the internet.

Recommendations

In the light of the results of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Alternative power sources such as the use of solar panels to generate electricity should be available to reduce dependence on PHCN as well as power generators that cause a nuisance owing to the noise from the generators set.
2. The NILEST should ensure that the internet search skills of librarians are improved through symposiums to improve their internet search skills for better service delivery.
3. NILEST management staff should make available adequate library work space.

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