Work-related information-seeking behaviour of janitors at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the information needs and seeking behaviour of janitors working at the University of Dar es Salaam. A descriptive research design with a mixed research approach was used to study the information-seeking behaviour of the janitors. Results revealed that the majority of respondents had a multitude of work-related information needs including financial, health and safety at the workplace, work contracts, workers' rights, and ethical information. The results further revealed that the majority of the study respondents relied heavily on their friends, mobile phones, social media, and relatives to meet their different work-related information needs. Results showed that most respondents had inadequate information literacy skills that limit their ability to comprehend work-related information and identify relevant sources where they could search and obtain reliable work-related information. The findings of this study have practical implications for formulating strategies for providing work-related information to the underprivileged working class such as the janitors. Understanding the information-seeking behaviour of janitors is imperative to meaningfully responding to their information needs. A better understanding of the janitors' work-related information needs, sources, and challenges they face when seeking such information will help to design an appropriate information delivery system that will consider the information-seeking behaviour of this underprivileged working class.

Introduction

Clean and safe learning and research environment is imperative for the academic success of any academic community, including universities. Such an environment tends to help stimulate not only universities' teaching, learning, and research activities, but also students' achievement. Evidence from studies (e.g., Kiplagat *et al*., 2017; Ogbeba & Muluku, 2013; Uleanya, 2020) demonstrates an association between a clean learning environment and academic achievement among students. In an academic atmosphere, cleanliness is essential as it makes the learning and research environment free of health issues. This

consequently reduces absences and sick days for the academic community, leading to increased academic success (Uleanya, 2020). This implies that cleanliness is an imperative aspect that no educational institution can ignore (Kiplagat *et al*., 2017).

Bearing the importance of cleanliness in enhancing the learning and research environment, universities, just like other institutions, tend to outsource cleaning services to private companies (Ilesanmi *et al*., 2014). This is done to allow universities to remain focused and continue with their major activities of teaching, research, innovation, and consultancies. In many cases, contracted private cleaning companies hire janitors to do the cleaning services. These janitors are responsible for keeping the university environment clean to ensure that its community stays in a conducive hygienic and safe learning and research environment. As such, janitors have become pivotal in these universities.

Notwithstanding the crucial role the janitors play, evidence from research (Anderson *et al*., 2022; Egberongbe & Adewuyi, 2011; Elling *et al*., 2022) shows that the majority are marginalized and tend to receive less salaries. This impacts their work experience and performance (Anderson *et al*., 2022; Okpara Izuagba, 2021) as they become less motivated. For the janitors to be able to know their rights and thus demand justice, they need to be informed. However, this can only be achieved if accurate, timely, and relevant work-related information is available to them and if they are actively involved in seeking it. This will help them to make informed decisions that will not only help them to improve their well-being but also enhance their work performance (Egberongbe & Adewuyi, 2011). Research (Donald, 2002.; Mishra *et al*., 2014; Zhao *et al*., 2022) shows that well-informed people are more likely to make informed decisions than their counterparts.

Although access to work-related information by janitors is pivotal in making informed decisions, there is limited information on how this category of information users seeks this information. Recent evidence (Elling *et al*., 2022) reveals that janitors are rarely studied despite being considered frontline workers in ensuring the work environment is clean and safe. To date, there are few empirical studies on the information needs and seeking behaviour of janitors, particularly those working in universities (see, for instance, Chatman, 1990, 1991; Egberongbe & Adewuyi, 2011). Research (see, for instance, Adekunle, 2014; Anmo *et al*., 2021; Mishra *et al*., 2014; Moly, 2014; Mostofa, 2013; Yadav & Singh, 2016) further shows that most studies on information needs and seeking behaviour have focused much on other groups of information users such as students, scholars, and professionals. Making decisions regarding the information behaviour of the janitors based on results from these studies could then be problematic since these results cannot be generalized across different populations and contexts. Furthermore, each person has individual needs that make a blanket recommendation difficult. According to Chen and Lu (2020), the information behaviour of people is intricately related to their work activities. As such, generalizing the information behaviour of different groups of people is wrong. Furthermore, there is evidence (Fidel *et al*., 2004) which suggests that the information behaviour of the underprivileged working class such as the janitors might not be observed among members of a university research group. Similarly, the information needs and seeking behaviour of janitors in a large university might differ from that of the same group in a large corporation because their workplaces are different (Fidel *et al*., 2004).

Considering the aforementioned factors, there is, thus a need for more empirical research on the information needs and seeking behaviour of this category of information users. Knowledge about their information needs and seeking behaviour is crucial for effectively meeting their information needs (Pezeshki-Rad & Zamani, 2005). This study, therefore, was set to investigate the information-seeking behaviour of this group of information users with the view that this will facilitate the development of

strategies to help them access relevant work-related information. This is essential, as it will help them make informed decisions about their well-being and improve their work performance as well. Specifically, the study sought to identify the work-related information needs of janitors working at the University of Dar es Salaam, the sources of information that they use to meet their information needs, and to determine challenges that they face when they want to access such information.

Related Literature

Like other people in different work environments, janitors also need work-related information to inform their decision-making. Information is used to inform decision-making only when it is relevant and that decision-makers are aware of the decisions they are about to make (Tilahun et al., 2021). It has long been established in the literature (Berryman, 2008; Stansfield et al., 2006) that timely, accurate and relevant information is a prerequisite for good and effective decision-making. Specifically, Berryman (2008) opined that for effective and thoughtful decision-making to take place, it should be preceded and inextricably tied to seeking and using information. It is also believed that seeking information improves the knowledge position of a decision maker and increases the effectiveness of the final decision (Voorberg et al., 2021).

Effective provision of information requires a comprehensive understanding of the information needs and seeking behaviour of the information user. This also applies to janitors who require work-related information to enhance their decision-making processes. Therefore, their information needs and seeking behaviour must be well understood to help them get access to relevant work-related information. Despite the existence of extensive research on the information needs and seeking behaviour of different groups of information users, there is a paucity of studies on the information needs and seeking behaviour of janitors. Little attention has been paid to the information needs and seeking behaviour of the janitors, particularly those working in universities. To date, there are only a few studies that have specifically investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of this category of information users. Long-time, prominent studies of the information behaviour of janitors are those of Chatman (1990, 1991) who used alienation (Chatman, 1990) and gratification (Chatman, 1991) theories to understand the information-seeking behaviour of janitors working in a university setting.

Using the alienation theory, Chatman (1990) found that the janitors lack an informal network such as friends and neighbours whom they could use as sources of information. According to her, neighbours and friends were perceived as distrustful, distant, and secretive, and as such, they were not viewed as dependable sources of information. Similarly, in a work environment, the janitors were reported to perceive that they were isolated because of the nature of their jobs that is working in various university buildings. They also perceived that no one cared about them and that they were alienated from a support network (university community) that could enhance an information-sharing process. In these situations, the janitors, therefore, tend to rely mostly on mass media as their primary source of information particularly about events that they thought might influence their sense of well-being and safety (Chatman, 1990).

In the subsequent study, using a gratification theory, Chatman (1991) found rather different results. Firstly, in this study, the janitors were reported to express several areas in which they needed information to facilitate their decision-making processes. Secondly, unlike the first study (Chatman, 1990), in this study, the janitors were found to rely mostly on their social networks, their interpersonal relationships in particular, for the needed information. This was, however, due to the fact that the janitors believed that outside sources of information were not capable of responding to their various information needs (Chatman, 1991).

Another similar study that was also conducted in a university setting was that of Egberongbe and Adewuyi (2011) who found a high information-seeking pattern among the janitors working at the University of Lagos. According to Egberongbe and Adewuyi (2011), the janitors constantly sought information whenever they needed it. To meet their information needs, the janitors were reported to rely much on the University bulletin and staff union. In this study, a lack of access to ICT facilities was reported to constrain the janitors to access other relevant information that they needed. However, it was not clear from this study as to how such lack of access to ICT has constrained the janitors to access the needed information.

More recent studies that paid attention to the janitors are those of Ilesanmi *et al*. (2014) and Elling *et al*. (2022). However, these studies took place in hospital settings and did not entirely focus on the information needs and seeking behaviour of the janitors. In their study, for instance, Ilesanmi *et al*. (2014) focused on the health problems and health-seeking behaviour of the janitors working in a tertiary health facility in South West Nigeria. In their study, Elling *et al*. (2022) on the other hand, focused their attention on the role played by the janitors in making the hospital environment clean. The attention paid by these studies and all those which focused on other professionals (e.g., Esmaeilzadeh *et al*., 2018; Moly, 2014; Yadav & Singh, 2016; Zhao *et al*., 2022) makes the gap in studies on the information needs and seeking behaviour of the janitors working in university settings more apparent. The present study, therefore, apart from intending to shed light on the information needs and seeking behaviour of the janitors working in university settings, also sought to address the apparent gap in the literature regarding the topic in question.

Methods

The study used a descriptive research design with a mixed approach to study the information-seeking behaviour of janitors working at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). The respondents were drawn from different companies contracted by the UDSM to perform cleaning services. However, the names of these companies were hidden to maintain the confidentiality of respondents. Recruitment of study participants involved a convenience sampling technique to sample respondents for inclusion in the study. This approach was used because of the unavailability of the sampling frame, which could otherwise allow for the use of another approach such as simple random sampling. Overall, a total of 193 respondents participated in the study. In this study, a questionnaire guide was the main instrument that was used to solicit information from the respondents. The guide was composed of both closed and open-ended questions. It contained detailed questions about respondents' demographic characteristics, questions about their work-related information needs, sources that they used to meet such information needs, and whether they were facing any challenges when they seek such information. Trained research assistants were used to collect data from the respondents.

The collected data were descriptively analysed using IBM SPSS version 21. Whilst descriptive statistics were used to describe different variables of the study, inferential statistics, particularly a Chi-square test was used to find an association between these variables and the sources of information the janitors used to meet their different work-related information needs. The variables of interest for this matter were the janitors' demographic characteristics namely their age, gender, level of education, and level of income. In some preceding studies (e.g., Basaleem, 2012; Mtega, 2012), these variables were found to influence access to and use of information among the study's participants. Qualitative data that were collected through open-ended questions in questionnaires were analysed using the content analysis method and presented in narrative form.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents in this study were requested to provide their socio-demographic characteristics. The details of interest were their age, gender, levels of education, income per month, employment status, and work experience. Results as shown in Table 1 indicate that a significant number (86%) of all respondents were aged between 21 to 35 years old with only a few (1%) being aged above 40 years old. Of all respondents, a majority (63%) of them were female.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age group		
18– 20	8	4.1
21 – 25	53	27.5
26 – 30	72	37.3
31 – 35	41	21.2
36 – 40	17	8.8
41 and above	2	1
Gender		
Male	71	37
Female	122	63
Level of education		
Informal education	17	8.8
Primary education	104	53.9
Secondary education	63	32.6
Certificate	9	4.7
Income per month (TZS)		
Below 100,000	55	28.5
Between 110,000 – 150,000	125	64.8
Between 160,000 – 200,000	7	3.6
More than 200,000	6	3.1
Employment status		
On permanent basis	5	2.6
On contract basis	188	97.4
Work experience		
Below 1 year	37	19.2
1 year	73	37.8
Between 2 – 3 years	57	29.5
Between 4 – 5 years	15	7.8
More than 5 years	11	5.7

Results further show that more than half of all respondents had a primary level of education (54%) and had income levels that range from 110,000 to 150,000 Tanzanian Shillings (65%). Results further revealed that almost all respondents (97%) were employed on a contract basis and that about one-third (38%) of all of them had a work experience of one year only.

Work-Related Information Needs

The janitors were further asked to identify their work-related information needs. Such information is considered important in influencing work-related decision-making among janitors. A five-point Likert

scale with pre-determined types of work-related information was prepared to get an insight into the janitors on their different work-related information needs. A scale of five (5) was used for this purpose, where 1 = not important at all, 2 = not important, 3 = not sure, 4 = important, and 5 = very important as Table 2 indicates.

Table 2: Work-related information needs

Type of information needs	Not important at all		Not important		Not sure		Important		Very important	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Employment opportunities	7	3.6	2	1	7	3.6	15	7.8	162	83.9
Salary/wage information	3	1.6	3	1.6	10	5.2	7	3.6	170	88.1
Training related information	6	3.1	5	2.6	25	13	16	8.3	141	73.1
Safety information	4	2.1	2	1	28	14.5	19	9.8	140	72.5
Financial / Loan information	8	4.1	9	4.7	30	15.5	26	13.5	120	62.2
Pension information	7	3.6	5	2.6	34	17.6	14	7.3	133	68.9
Tools/work facilities	2	1	6	3.1	30	15.5	40	20.7	115	59.6
Work ethics information	3	1.6	3	1.6	39	20.2	30	15.5	118	61.1

Results from Table 2 show that only a handful of respondents who participated in the study considered the listed information in the table as not very important to them. In other words, as illustrated in Table 2, a significant number of respondents had a multitude of work-related information needs. Nearly all respondents (88.1%) considered information related to salary as very important to them. This was followed by information related to employment opportunities (83.9%) outside of respondents' current jobs and information related to training to enhance their working skills to improve their performance while at work (73.1%). Other information that was also considered important by a majority of the study respondents includes safety information while at work and financial information, particularly information on the loan. The respondents also considered information regarding pension or benefits that they will get after completing their contract, information on different work facilities to help them perform their daily routine work, and information on work ethics as important information that could help them in enhancing their decision-making processes.

To further solicit work-related information needs of the janitors, an open-ended question was asked. This was done to gather work-related information that was not listed in the table. Results from respondents demonstrate that apart from the information in Table 2, the janitors also wanted information about their rights when they are at their workplace, information on how to secure permanent work contract, and more information on how to secure loans that are either free of interest or those with low interest. The janitors were also concerned about their health and thus expressed interest in information on health insurance while they are at their workplace. Similarly, some of the janitors also wanted to be provided information on how they can be registered in pension schemes such that of National Social Security Fund (NSSF) so that they can easily get their benefits in terms of pension when their contract ends. The janitors also expressed their interest in information on how to prepare and cope with emergencies such as that of Covid – 19 pandemic.

Sources of Information of Work-related Information
To meet various information needs, different sources of information are usually used. Respondents in this study were asked to mention the sources of information that they used to meet their various work-related information needs. A list of sources of information was prepared and respondents were asked to state

whether they used such sources or not in meeting their work-related information needs. Results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Sources of information

Source of information	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	29	15
Television	28	14.5
Newspapers	22	11.4
Social media	73	37.8
Mobile phone	167	86.5
Friends	131	67.9
Relatives	77	39.9

Results as demonstrated in Table 3 show that different sources of information were used to meet respondents' work-related information needs. However, of all the sources mentioned, only mobile phones and friends were used by a significant number of the study respondents (86.5% and 67.9% respectively). Some respondents also indicated using their relatives (39.9%) and social media (37.8%) as their sources of work-related information. Results from the table further show that mass media sources including radio, television, and newspapers were only used by very few respondents as their sources of work-related information. An open-ended question that was designed to capture other sources of information that could be used by the janitors to meet their work-related information needs yielded no answer. This may suggest that the identified sources of information in the table were the only sources used by the studied respondents, though at varying degrees.

Relationship between selected demographic characteristics of respondents and sources of information

The study was interested to find if there is any association between some selected demographic characteristics of the study respondents and the sources of information that they used to meet their different work-related information. The demographic characteristics of interest were the respondents' age, gender, level of education, and income. An inferential statistic, the Chi-square test, in particular, was performed for that purpose. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between selected demographic characteristics and sources of information

Sources of information	Demographic characteristics							
	Age		Gender		Level of education		Level of income	
	$\chi 2$	Sig.	$\chi 2$	Sig.	$\chi 2$	Sig.	$\chi 2$	Sig.
Radio	1.851	.869	5.707	.058	4.427	.219	2.695	.441
Television	2.879	.719	6.656	.036	2.695	.441	4.214	.239
Newspapers	5.375	.372	7.825	.020	1.189	.756	2.573	.462
Social media	4.188	.523	1.832	.400	7.227	.065	1.385	.709
Mobile phones	17.194	.004	3.844	.146	10.989	.012	29.599	.000
Friends	10.138	.007	2.176	.337	1.516	.679	10.738	.013
Relatives	3.251	.661	1.628	.443	7.416	.060	6.077	.108

Results as shown in Table 4 illustrate that there is a significant relationship between the selected demographic characteristics of study participants and some of the sources of information that they use to meet their various work-related information needs. Specifically, results from the analysis indicate that there is a significant relationship between age and mobile phones and friends as sources of work-related

information with chi-square values of 17.194 and 10.138 and significant values of p < 0.004 and 0.007 respectively. No significant relationship was found between age and other sources of information since their significance values were above 0.05. Results further show that there were significant relationships between respondents' gender and sources of information namely television (p < 0.036) and newspapers (p < 0.020) and respondents' levels of education and only one source of information namely mobile phone (p < 0.012) as the rest of the sources of information had significant values that were greater than 0.05. Regarding respondents' levels of income, significant relationships were found with only two sources of information namely mobile phones (p < 0.000) and friends (p < 0.013) with the rest of the sources having significant values that exceed 0.05.

Challenges in Accessing Work-Related Information

This study also sought to identify various challenges facing janitors when they want to access work-related information to enhance their decision-making processes. To achieve this, a list of potential challenges was prepared, and respondents were asked to show whether they agree or not with the challenges listed. Results, as indicated in Table 5, demonstrate that nearly half of all respondents agreed that a lack of work-related information (48.7%), availability of unclear work-related information (48.2%), lack of information on alternative job opportunities (46.1%), and difficult to obtain work-related information (40.4%) as main challenges that affect their access to the needed information.

Table 5: Challenges in accessing information

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of employment opportunities information	89	46.1
Unable to understand the available information	76	39.4
Lack of awareness of the existence of work-related information.	69	35.8
Lack of work-related information	94	48.7
Use of multiple sources of information	46	23.8
Unclear work-related information	93	48.2
Information overload	49	25.5
Difficult to obtain work-related information	78	40.4
Lack of clear sources of information	59	30.6
Lack of experience in searching information	40	20.7
Sources of information too expensive	67	34.7

Of all study respondents, almost one-third of them mentioned being unable to understand the available work-related information, not being aware of whether such information exist, not being able to afford to access some of the sources of information, and lack of clear sources of information where they could get the information that they needed as their main challenges when they want to access work-related information. The finding that some of the respondents admitted not to afford access to some of the sources of information can be related to the one in Table 4 which suggested that access to some of the sources was influenced by respondents' levels of income.

Findings from Table 5 further demonstrate that the study participants had problems finding the needed information quickly and conveniently due to information overload and the availability of multiple sources of information. In addition, some study respondents indicated that they were not accustomed to using online sources of information when looking for work-related information.

Apart from the challenges identified in Table 5, an open-ended question was also developed to help solicit other challenges that the janitors face when they want to access work-related information. This was done purposely to help get the challenges from the perspectives of the janitors themselves. Results from the analysis show that some of the janitors lacked adequate computer skills that could enable them to search for and get the needed information from the Internet by using computers. Results further show that because of low income, some janitors could not afford to have smartphones which in one way or another could help them get the work-related information that they needed using their phones. The janitors were also complaining about delays in the provision of work-related information by their supervisors. Similarly, some of the janitors complained about being denied access to some work-related information, particularly financial information.

Discussion

This paper presents findings from a study conducted to investigate the work-related information needs and seeking behaviour of janitors working in a university setting. Specifically, the study identified janitors' work-related information needs, the sources of information they used to get the needed information, and the challenges that they face when they want to access work-related information to facilitate their decision-making processes. Overall, a majority of the studied population were young, female, had reached a level of primary school, and had an income that was less than 150,000 Tanzania shillings (an equivalent of 64 USD). The finding that a significant number of the study participants were females may suggest that janitorial services at the university are a female-dominated occupation. This can be explained by the fact that in many places cleaning services have been considered a female-dominated occupation (Buckingham *et al*., 2020; Orupabo & Nadim, 2020). This is, however, contrary to what has been observed in other studies that have focused on the janitors (see, for instance, Locke *et al*., 2015) which reported a large number of male janitors compared to that of females in their study. This difference, however, may be because the two studies took place in two different contexts with different socio-cultural settings. However, the results of this study need to be interpreted with caution since the respondents were chosen in a convenient manner something that could have influenced the study's findings. Furthermore, the finding that most of the study respondents had an income that is less than 150,000 Tanzania shillings confirms those from previous studies (Buckingham et al., 2020; Charles et al., 2009; Perri, 2023) that this profession is a low-paying job. Low payment among the janitors can be explained by the fact that many people perceive janitorial work as a low-skilled occupation despite the critical role the janitors play (Perri, 2023) in ensuring that the university environment is clean and safe.

Findings from the study further demonstrate that the janitors had several work-related information needs. A majority of the study respondents revealed that they need financial information including salary and loans, and information on employment opportunities outside their current work. The need for this type of information may be associated with the nature of the respondents' work which as elucidated earlier, is considered a low-paying job (Buckingham *et al*., 2020; Perri, 2023) and that they were not satisfied with it. Understandably, a well-paid job is generally associated with greater job satisfaction (Rodríguez-Nieto *et al*., 2018), resulting in higher morale at work. Being employed in a low-paying job, therefore, might compel the janitors to seek more financial information for them to increase their income. In the same vein, the need for information on employment opportunities outside their current job may suggest that the janitors are not satisfied with the job and thus look for opportunities outside where they can be paid more. Findings from the study further demonstrate that the janitors considered information on training as

important to them. This may suggest that the janitors want to be provided with job-related training to enhance their skills and job performance. This will help them accomplish their task effectively and efficiently on an ongoing basis, ultimately increasing their recognition in the workplace.

Understandably, access to reliable and credible health information is essential in helping people to make health-related decisions that will lead to positive health outcomes (Ghorbanian Zolbin *et al*., 2022; Kassim & Ndumbaro, 2021; Soleymani *et al*., 2021). Bearing this in mind, the janitors in this study expressed the need to be provided with this crucial information and information on how they can be registered to health insurance schemes to help them protect their health both at work and in times of crises such as that of COVID-19. Research (Chang *et al*., 2012; Charles *et al*., 2009; Domingos & Souto, 2018; Ilesanmi *et al*., 2014; Ng *et al*., 2022) shows that the nature of janitorial work exposes janitors to various health risks such as increasing chances of getting respiratory and dermatological diseases and musculoskeletal disorders. Therefore, ensuring that the janitors have constant access to pertinent health information and safety at the workplace will help them to take precautionary measures to protect their health against these diseases and any other health-related risks while at work.

Findings from the study further show that the janitors also considered information on how to secure a permanent contract for their work as very important to them. The need for this information can be explained by the fact that almost all the janitors involved in this study were employed on a contract basis. Other prior studies (see, for instance, Charles *et al*., 2009) have also observed the same. The need for this information, therefore, may suggest that the janitors wanted to be employed permanently rather than being on contract. Equally, the janitors in this study showed their interest in information on how they can be registered in pension schemes such that they can get their pension benefits at the end of their contracts. These benefits according to prior studies are significant since apart from encouraging positive work-life balance, they also provide security and well-being to employees (Sen & Hooja, 2018), something which may result in increasing morale in the workplace.

As noted in this study, the janitors also considered information about their rights at the workplace as important to them. The need to be provided with such information is perhaps because the majority of them are marginalized by their employers and tend to receive less salaries as evidence from prior studies shows (Anderson *et al*., 2022; Okpara Izuagba, 2021). In such situations, therefore, access to information about their rights at the workplace is essential in helping them to protect such rights. This is because people can exercise their rights only if they are aware of them and know exactly where they can find such information in case there is any problem related to their rights at work. Similarly, the janitors also showed their interest in ethics-related information when they are at their workplace. Work ethics involve doing the right thing, believing in the value of human well-being in the workplace, and treating people with fairness and compassion (Gashgari, 2016). Understandably, the use of the code of ethics is a basic mechanism to ensure professionalism in the workplace (Gilman, 2005). In this regard, regular discussions on ethical issues between employees and even between them and their employers are essential, especially in enhancing awareness of various ethical issues in the workplace as Gashgari (2016) opined. These discussions and access to ethical information from other sources will enable janitors to perform their duties not only in a professional manner but also effectively and efficiently.

Findings from the study demonstrated that the janitors used multiple sources of information to meet their different work-related information needs. The use of multiple sources of information has been considered by many prior studies (see, for instance, Rains & Ruppel, 2013; Ruppel & Rains, 2012; Shieh *et al*., 2009) as active information-seeking behaviour which provides information seekers with the

opportunity to not only check the validity and accuracy of information obtained from different sources but also increases their exposure to a number of the needed information. The findings from this study regarding the sources used, therefore, may suggest that the janitors involved in the study were active information seekers. Specifically, the findings show that a significant number of the janitors relied much on their interpersonal networks, particularly using their mobile phones, friends, and relatives to meet their work-related information needs. These findings collaborate with those from the chi-square analysis which shows a significant relationship between respondents' age and level of income and mobile phones and friends, suggesting that the use of these sources of information was influenced by these demographic factors. In other studies, Chatman (1991) in particular, also observed an overreliance on interpersonal sources of work-related information among janitors working in a university setting. Overreliance on interpersonal sources of information as observed in the present study can partly be explained by the fact that these sources tend to lend themselves to active information-seeking behaviour as they require information seekers to actively engage with them to get the required information unlike the mass media sources (Rains & Ruppel, 2013; Ruppel & Rains, 2012)

It is an undeniable fact that many people are now using social media as their sources of information. According to Nawazkhan *et al*. (2022), social media plays a significant role in searching for jobs and recruiting employees across the world. Similarly, as observed in this study, more than one-third of the studied population was using social media as their source of work-related information. As opposed to prior studies (Chatman, 1990; Egberongbe & Adewuyi, 2011), this study's findings further demonstrate that mass media sources namely newspapers, television, and radio were used by only a few respondents as their sources of work-related information. No significant relationship was found between these sources of information and respondents selected demographic characteristics. This may suggest that these sources are losing their popularity in the dissemination of work-related information or that the studied population no longer relies on the mass media as their source of work-related information. Furthermore, as elucidated earlier, these sources are considered passive (Rains & Ruppel, 2013; Ruppel & Rains, 2012) and perhaps that is why they could not attract the attention of many janitors to use them as sources of work-related information.

Access to information can sometimes be difficult as information seekers may face challenges. Identifying these challenges is critically important to help the information seeker get the needed information. Findings from this study reveal that the study participants were facing a multitude of challenges that affected their information-seeking behaviour. These challenges can be grouped into two broad categories namely personal and systemic challenges. Personal challenges as observed in this study are those that come from the janitors themselves and thus affect their information-seeking behaviour. Generally, findings from the study revealed that most of the janitors studied had inadequate information literacy skills, which negatively affected their information-seeking behaviour. Such skills are important to any workforce as they help in locating, evaluating, and effectively using work-related information for work-related decision-making. Specifically, findings from the study demonstrated that some of the janitors were not aware of whether work-related information existed while some lacked important search skills to enable them to get such information from different sources. The study also noted that some of the respondents had problems comprehending the available work-related information. This, however, can partly be explained by the fact that most of the study participants had a lower level of education thus making it difficult for them to seek and understand the provided information. This finding, however, has not been reported in other prior studies (Chatman, 1990, 1991; Egberongbe & Adewuyi, 2011).

There were also systemic challenges that similarly affected the information-seeking behaviour of the janitors. These were challenges related to sources of information that would provide work-related information to the janitors. These include the availability of multiple sources of information, unclear work-related information, and information overload. These challenges make it difficult for the janitors to find the needed information quickly and conveniently. This, however, maybe because most of them had low levels of education and that they had inadequate information literacy skills that could enable them to locate reliable information from relevant sources. It was also noted from the study that some of the sources of information were too expensive such that the studied population could not afford to get the required information from them. This, also, can be attributed to the fact that the majority of the studied population were low-income earners as earlier observed in this study. This finding may explain why certain sources of information, in particular radio, television, and newspapers, were used by only a handful of the janitors involved in the study.

Limitations of the Study
This study has some limitations. Firstly, the use of convenience sampling to select respondents to participate in the study makes generalization of its findings difficult. This is because the selected sample might not be representative of the other janitors working at the University. Secondly, this study was conducted at one university only. The experiences of the janitors working at this university might be different from those working at other universities. Therefore, the findings from this study may not apply to other universities. A large study that will involve more than one university and a more representative sample is required to allow comparison of the janitors' experiences across the universities and for more generalization of the study's findings.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The investigation of the information needs of janitors involved in the study indicates that janitors have a variety of work-related information needs. It is, thus, imperative to provide them with this important information to help them improve their work-related decision-making processes. Furthermore, the fact that most of the janitors relied on their friends, mobile phones, social media, and relatives for the needed information and that they had inadequate information literacy skills raises questions on whether they can evaluate and effectively use the information received from the identified sources.

This study has important implications for cleaning agencies contracted by the University and other similar institutions. The findings could inform the agencies about the work-related information needs and seeking behaviour of their employees. This will help the agencies to ensure that their employees have consistent access to work-related information through appropriate sources of information. Similarly, the findings could also inform the agencies about the need to enhance the information literacy skills of their employees to ensure that they always get access to reliable sources of information and that they can evaluate the information obtained from the identified sources.

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