

INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE LECTURERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ukaeghu, Bernadette C. N. (CIN)

bertodette.ukaegbe@gmail.com

&

Prof Omehia, Anthonia E

aomehta@gmail.com

Department of Library Science and Information Technology,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rivers State.

Abstract

Information and seeking behaviour of Lecturer of the Department of Library and Information Science Smart (UNIPOINT) during the Covid-19 pandemic was investigated. The population comprises 10 lectures. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in line with the objectives and four research questions guided the study. Data was collected and analysed using content and thematic analysis. Lecturers were found to be king information mainly for writing and publishing papers and preparing lecture notes. For recreation and updating their knowledge regarding coronavirus. Most of them subscribed to the internet using their, phones connected to their laptops in their offices and homes and their information needs were sourced through the internet, reviewing people's articles and books. Non-availability of internet and funds data for browsing posed a problem among others University of Port Harcourt Management is therefore recommended to asset the theory in adscription to enable steady internet supply in the library for some lecturers who visit their office during the periods.

Keywords: Information, need, information need, information seeking behaviour

Background to the Study

The 20th century till date witnessed the period of “information explosion” as a result of the rapid growth of materials (publications) scattered all over the world. As the continued to Increase in terms of publications and the abundant data, the problem of managing the information, led to Information overload formation overload refers to the state of having too much information to make a section or remain informed about a topic (Wikipedia, 2007). Hence, the infuriation needed by a particular user at a time is ensured. As time went on the user and his needs came into focus and cognitive science research was applied in the studies. From the above scenario, scholars started studying information needs and seeking behaviour of different user groups.

Information is seen as knowledge which is communicated or received through things, circumstances and news. An instance is information concerning a crime. It is also seen as knowledge gained from a study, communication, research, Instruction etcetera (www.dictionary.com) Information is also regarded as knowledge communicated or recorded

concerning man's accumulated knowledge from different areas of life which helps the user reduce their level of certainty. It is a very crucial tool for lecturers and how they source and use it determines their performance. Such, recognition supports the lecturers' need for access to useful information with the necessary skills for using them (Nwagwu & Oshiname. 2009).

People seek information knowingly or unknowingly for different needs, purposes and from different sources. Such purposes could be educational recreational self-development, etcetera. They seek information through the Internet and libraries, information revolves around man, his environment and controls his dealings in society, without which man will be in the dark. Information adds to men's awareness and understanding of problems. Information is both recorded and oral decision experiences used in making decisions.

Information seeking has been a norm sought by man for his curious sake. Information seeking is the process of locating information and the manner in the seeking process is the seeking behaviour. Man seeks information to answer why what, when and how questions about things he searches through different information sources to satisfy his curiosity. The library is an indispensable information centre meant to be established in all universities around the world. No wonder why Bhatti, (2009) agreed that libraries ensure the maximum use of information sources and services for the good of the users. Thus, the National Universities Commission made it mandatory for all tertiary institutions to set up libraries in the faculties and departments. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the information needs and seeking behaviour of Lecturers in Library of Information Science of the University of Port Harcourt amidst Covid-19.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars have enumerated some problems confronting information needs and seeking behaviour of lecturers in their various research efforts. They vary based on personal reasons for seeking information, the type of information needed, and the ways and sources of needed information. Some mentioned paucity of materials, mutilation of materials, unawareness of available sources, insufficient funding etcetera. Akinola, (2009) inferred that a free lecturer in his studied area is involved in information seeking, while many do not understand the idea concerning specific enquiring of information. Other works were done in different areas but no work has been done concerning LIS lectures of the University of Port Harcourt to the best of my knowledge and this is what prompted the need to analyse the information needs and seek behaviour of LIS lecturers of the University especially during coronavirus pandemic.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to examine the information needs and seeking behaviour of Library and Information Science (LIS) lecturers of the University of Port Harcourt midst Covid-19 pandemic. The objectives are to

- i. Examine the information seeking behaviour of the LIS lecturers during the Coronavirus pandemic
- ii. Identify the sources of information they consulted.
- iii. Ascertain the lecturers' purpose of seeking information.
- iv. Identify the problems encountered by LIS lecturers in their search for information

Research questions

- i. How did LIS lecturers behave while seeking information?
- ii. What are the information sources they consulted?
- iii. What are their purposes of seeking such information?
- iv. What challenges did they encounter while seeking the information needed?

Literature Review

Information is an important resource for individual growth and survival the progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information is needed to be able to make the right decision and also reduce uncertainty. A businessman needs information to be able to improve his existing business just like a specialist also needs information to be up-to-date and well-informed in his area of specialization. If information is this valuable, it must be put to proper use, i.e. made available to people or groups of people who need it; after ascertaining the group information needs and seeking behaviour (Yuruf 2012)

Researchers think that people seek information because of a glaring need or some needs. The responsibility lies on the information seekers to pattern their behaviour in a way that would provide a reciprocal relationship between “need and seek”. Information seeking is for satisfying various needs and the process of the needed information shows the behaviour, which could be made clear and unclear. Therefore, the human mind (information need) quickens the hands and eyes (information seekers) in acting in a manner as to satisfy its curiosity. It is based on this analogy that the researcher considers information needs and information seeking behaviour in agreement.

Identifying the information needs of users is a very important part of any information-related activity. When defining a need for information, there is a useful and important question to ask "Why is the information needed? A way of defining the need for information is always the purpose for which the user needs the information. An example, information may be needed for the users' academic activity for taking particular decision by the user may be needed for an

interest of the user. Information need is a state of or process where one perceives that there is a gap between the information and knowledge available to solve a problem and the actual solution of the problem. Information need therefore, for (Kehinde, Obi Akinade & Anyim, 2016) is the difference between the way information is made available and the way the user would like it to be.

The definition of information needs and seeking is complex and varies from one user group to another (Adelani, 2002). The information needs of Scientists in companies differ from that of lecturer scientists, based on specialization. Information needs according to Akinola (2009), is an individual group's desire to locate and get information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. He thinks that the information needs of lectures are based on the type they want, its purpose, sources to such need, the academic orientation, socio-cultural expression and contexts.

Okogwu & Nnam, (2013) defines information seeking as a conscious effort to acquire information to meet the need/gap in one's knowledge. Here, one recognizes that his knowledge is inadequate to satisfy the need at hand or future need.

With the development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) today, access to information needs and seeking behaviour is made possible Librarians ought to examine the criteria of information seeking and services. There exists much literature on the title and attempts by scholars to synthesize information needs and seeking behaviour in illustrating the academic members' behaviour.

Information, seeking behaviour involves reasons for information type of information being sought, and ways and sources where information is being sought and utilized. Information-seeking behaviour is a purposive seeking of information as a result of the need to satisfy some goals Information-seeking behaviour can be expressed in resting prints of materials to research in experiments, journals, electronic media and encyclopedias.

Omehia: & Lulu-Pokotso, (2014) were of the option that lecturers seek information prepare their lecture notes to support their teaching and for self-development. Some researchers opined that people seek information because they need it. Therefore, information seekers should pattern their behaviour to provide a relationship between need and seek. The process of seeking needed information shows clear and unclear behaviour. Thus, the human mind stimulates human hands and eyes to behave in a way in satisfies its curiosity. This is the point of convergence of information needs and seeking behaviour.

Research Methods

Survey research design wash and questionnaire numbering 10 were formulated from four objectives and distributed to the 10 academic staff in the Department and all were retrieved. The population comprising 10 lectures of the Department was all used for data collection. Table showing demographic data collection, simple percentages and frequency were used to interpret data, while data obtained from research questions were analysed contextually using respondents' answers to the questions.

Data Analyses

Research question 1: How do LIS lecturers behave while seeking information?

Thus: Table 1: Information seeking behaviour of LIS Lecturers

	Respondents	Frequency
Browsing the internet and subscribing to e-journals in the library and at home using personal laptops.	5	50
Discussing with professional colleagues.	2	20
Searching available documents like prints.	3	30
Total	10	100

Source: Fieldwork Study, 2021

This shows that 50% being 5 respondents browse library internet in the library and at their homes using personal laptops for subscribed e-journals and e-books, 2 representing 20% discussing their information needs with their colleagues and 3 representing 30% use print material for their information needs.

Research Question 2: What are the information sources consulted by LIS lectures?

Table 2: Distribution of the information sources consulted

	Respondents	Percentage
Use of personal subscribed internet and e-journals only.	4	40
Use of information from physical books and journals only.	4	40
Use of information from only internet.	2	20
Total	10	100

Source: Fieldwork study, 2021

Table shows 4 representing 40% of respondents (highest) sourcing information from internet and electronic journals, 4 representing 40% sourcing from books and journals while 2 representing 20% sourcing from only internet.

Research question 3: what are LIS lectures' purposes for seeking information?

Table 3: The Respondents' purposes of information seeking

	Respondents	Percentage
For writing and publishing papers.	6	60
For updating knowledge.	1	10
For preparing their class lecture notes	2	20
For news and watching sports.	1	10
Total	10	100

Source: Fieldwork survey, 2021.

Table 3 shows that 6 respondents, representing 60% purpose of seeking information for writing and publishing papers, 1 representing 10% for updating knowledge, 2 representing 20% of respondents use it to prepare their lecture notes and 1 representing 10% respondents use it for watching sports and listening to news. Thus, most of the respondents attest that LIS lecturers use information for educational purposes while very few use it for news and sports (entertainment).

Question 4: What challenges do LIS lecturers face in seeking information?

Table 4: Challenges encountered by the LIS Lecturers.

	Respondents	Percentage
Poor systems network.	4	40
Lack of sufficient funds for data purchase.	5	50
Inaccessibility of materials due to locking of some areas in the library and material in PTDF.	1	10
Total	10	100

Source: Fieldwork Study, 2021

From the table above. 4 representing 40% of the respondents complained of experiencing poor network, 5 representing 50% complained of lack of fund for data purchase for browsing and 1 representing 10% complained of inaccessibility of locked up library materials.

Information Needs and seeking behaviour of Lecturers before and during COVID-19 Pandemic.

We are going to look at the following pattern of sourcing, gathering and utilizing Information Normally, LIS lecturers seek information by consulting e-library in their offices through connecting to library access points like Hinary Ebscohost, Agora etcetera; using library desktops and also connecting their modems to their laptops. From the study, it was deduced that most lecturers used Google website, e-library catalogue and physical journals, books, indexing and abstracting tools. Electronic books and journals were the highest materials they sought after, while information from newspapers and government publications was scarcely used.

During COVID-19 pandemic, there were movement restrictions and school closures. LIS lecturers buy data and use their laptops for their research. This time mark their high patronage of the websites as their pattern of sourcing their Information needs. They also use their personal books, journals and newspapers.

Information gathering before the pandemic was through library internet, use of library access points and print materials. The coronavirus pandemic period made internet the highly patronized source of gathering information. Hence, the buying of data to browse the internet for LIS lecturers' information needs.

Information utilization before the COVID-19 pandemic was done using print and non-print resources, which comprise the library internet connectivity and the physical prints in the library During the COVID-19 era, the information sources of those lecturers who live on campus remained almost the same, except that they could not access the library prints. They still made use of their prints that were in their offices and at their homes and library Internet resources, when available For those LIS lecturers who do not stay on campus and did not have access to the library, their information sources and utilization were restricted to the use of their prints and that of internet through personal data purchase. That could be expensive, coupled with economic hardship that engulfed the majority of the Nigerian population.

Discussion and Findings

From the above data analysis, it has been established that Lecturers in general and Library and Information Science lecturers in particular have information needs that centre on the dissemination of their duties to the students, the university and themselves. As a result of these numerous responsibilities, they make use of a wide range of information sources in their daily work. This is because their varied information needs cannot be satisfied with only one source, Their information needs and purposes for which they seek such needs determine their sources and are many: The sources revealed the lecturer's" purpose of seeking information to be for the fulfilment of their university mandate of teaching, learning research and community service. This would be actualized by delivering lectures to their students, preparing their notes, ensuring that they learn improving themselves through research and Making sure that the university communities are positively affected: Sources the books, electronic material journals encyclopedias, dictionaries, and bibliographies, government publications on current issues and

archival materials are frequently used by the LIS lecturers. To make room for effective library use and to satisfy their Information needs, their libraries ought to have good collections, Revealed also was that the majority of LIS lecturers do not visit their library regularly. Among the findings are the lecturers' hindrances, like the skills, to get the needed materials inadequate library sources and services among others.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Information needs arise whenever people find themselves being faced with a situation requiring knowledge to deal with. Here, the LIS lecturers are confronted with the information needs of fulfilling their University mandate of teaching, learning, research and community development: which is tied to the quality of information and its sources. The study showed UIS Lecturer specific areas to be the training of students in diverse specialties to produce enough manpower for the development of the country and the world at large. The LIS Lecturers obtain their information needs from the library through different print and non-prints and non-print sources and they provide useful information concerning current events. Therefore, some of their problems are inadequate information sources among others and the following recommendations are made:

- There should be resource sharing among academic libraries for sufficient resources.
- There need to organize user education programmes for the lecturers in the libraries by the management to train them on how to make use of some library resources and sources.
- Sufficient budget should be allocated to the library for such training and other needs which includes internet subscription by the university management. This would cause them to work more in the office and less at home.

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