Information Needs, Use and Seeking Behaviour among Academic Staff in Taraba State University, Nigeria

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Abstract: - **This paper is on information needs and seeking behaviour among academic staff in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. The objective of this paper to know the information need of lecturers, channel or pattern of searching and problems faced by them. The population of this study are academic staff. There was no sample size because the population was not large. Descriptive survey was used for data collection in the study. A random sampling technique was used. Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires at Taraba State University Jalingo, Nigeria. Findings showed that the number of staff in lecturers 1 & (34%) are in higher numbers. The chart shows that specialization information is the most information needs of lecturers in Taraba State University (44.97%). Internet is the most source lecturers used for information (44.49%). Workshops/Conferences/Seminars (6.55%) are another sources of information by lecturers in Taraba state university, Jalingo Nigeria. Another findings showed that non-availability of indexing and abstracting services (34.06%) are the major problems encountered by lecturers when sources for information in the university library. Another problems encountered that lecturers in the university library are up-to- date information (24.45%).**

Keywords: **Information, Needs, Seeking, Behaviour, Academician and Libraries**

I. INTRODUCTION

The era of digital information can best be described as an era of information revolution, with the presence of information bearing materials in diverse formats. Libraries and information centres are not only equipped with materials in traditional formats but also in electronic formats offering users a vast selection. With the array of information sources available in the university library, little wonder then that the library is known as the academic heart of the university (Odiase, Unegbu, & Haliso, 2001). Information, because of its utility value gives certain advantages to the one who holds it. By virtue of the availability of research information in their possession, lecturers keep abreast of current breakthrough in all areas of teaching and research which facilitates better outcomes in research. Lecturers are people that impact acquired knowledge/information to others who need it. Globalization and digital technologies have not only affected the way information is spread but the way information is acquired and how academic staff seek the information needed for their researches.

According to Hornby (2000) information can be taken to mean inform or being informed; to "seek" means to look for; to find, seeking therefore means the process of looking for something by a person. Information seeking behaviour according to Wilson (2000) entails the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information including active and passive information seeking. In the quest for information, different kinds of behaviour are manifested as staff and students(users) of the library have different reasons for wanting information, different levels of search skill and preference for some types of information bearing materials.

The "information need" is another term that has been discussed and approached from many different perspectives. Much of the discussion has been orientated towards the clarification of other related concepts such as "wants", "requests", "demands", and so on. "Information need is a term closely related to the concept of information seeking behaviour. A user recognising an information need, articulates it into a question, or, request which is conveyed through formal or/and informal channels of communication and information systems, in order to receive a response (verbal written, visual) which will satisfy that need. The decisions concerning which communication channels and information systems will be used, as well as in which way and how they constitute the information seeking behaviour of a user. Due to the existence of many internal factors that are concerned with the individual user, the examination of the information seeking behavior becomes very difficult and complicated" (Siatri, 1999)

Information seeking is undertaken a message that satisfy a perceived need(Wright and Guy,1997) cited Ogbomo(2010). This activity may be actively done when taking steps to satisfy a felt need. Everyday each of us is forced to solve many different vital problems connected with working, training, education, etc for decision making in every concrete situation, it is necessary to have complete and recent information about these things."Information seeking is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control

over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker. Information seeking behaviour (ISB) resulted from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the user, who as a consequence makes demand upon on formal system such as libraries and information centres, or some other person in order to satisfy the perceived information need. The information seeking behaviour essentially refers to locate discrete knowledge elements. It is concerned with the interactive utilization of the three basic resources namely, people, information and system. Further in order, to satisfy the information needs, the user actively undergoes the information seeking process. The attempt of the user in obtaining the needed information results from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the user" (Singh &Satija, 2006)

Therefore, information seeking behaviour can be define as the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goals. Information seeking behaviour is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation, scholars, students and faculties actively seek current information from the various resources that available in libraries, e.g. encyclopedias, journals and more currently, electronic media. Furthermore, information seeking behavior refer to the way people search for and utilize information. Information seeking behaviour is also seen as a process in which researchers purposefully engage in order to change their state of knowledge.

Thus, information seeking behaviour resulted from the recognition of some needs, perceived by the users, who as a consequence make demand on formal system such as libraries and information centres to satisfy the perceived information needs (Singh & Satija, 2006). And in order to satisfy his/her information needs, the user actively undergoes the information seeking process; and the aim of information seeking is to positively increase the user's knowledge of certainty or to reduce the level of confusion faced by user with a wide variety of sources of information(Singh &Satija, 2006; Edem & Bassey, 1999). Thus in their study, have described information seeking behaviour to include the purposes of information seeking, the means, tools, information sources, approaches and the library facilities use. An exploration of the information seeking behavior of academic staff in Nigerian universities would help academic librarians to see how better and more efficient information services could be provided to ensure optimal satisfaction of their users. Therefore, this present study want to know how academic staff in University needs information and how they seek information. What channel they used to get their needed information quickly?

Statement of the Problem

Teaching and research are two areas that needs constant supply of hard and soft information to meet the academic needs of the people. It is, therefore essential for the lecturers to always keep themselves well informed with current materials and publications that would enhance their work. However, research and observation reveals lecturers sit long hours in the library in the quest for information in area of specialization, however, the type of information sought, the purpose of seeking information, accessibility to the required information and problems encountered during information seeking remains largely unknown. This unknown phenomenon affects the library and the user in the sense that the library may not effectively meet the information needs of the lecturers' waste time in unfruitful search that would have been used for study. Therefore, the researcherswant to investigate the information needs, use and channel problems encounter and strategies used by lecturers to meetinformation needs.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically the objectives of the study will cover the following:

1. To determine number of Lecturers in Taraba State University, Jalingo
2. To know behaviour of Lecturers towards visiting the library to look for information in their area of research.
3. To find out the type of information lecturers needs in their area of specialization atTaraba State University, Jalingo
4. To find out the sources (channels) used by the lecturer to seek information that relate their research at Taraba State University, Jalingo
5. To identify the problems encountered by lecturers seeking information in area of specialization

Theoretical framework

A thorough understanding of this study calls for a review of relevant theories. Hence, the study will be anchored on one theory of Wilson's Model that found to be relevant to the variables of the study.

Figure 1: Wilson's Model of Information Behaviour 1981

The Wilson's model of information behaivour(1981) fits into the researcher's area of focus. Figure 2 shows the model which suggest that an information –user perceived a need which will lead to information seeking behaivour. This behaviour will make the user make demands on information systems and other sources in libraries. The user could also seek information from others through exchange. The demands made on the systems could lead to success or failures. If successful, the information sources will be used. The use might satisfy or fail to satisfy the need of the user. The user could then transfer the information to other people if it would be of relevance to them.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing information need special area of users in the academic library is a very difficult task, because the needs of individuals usually vary from time to time due to several factors. However, described information need as a piece of information, whether recorded or not, which an individual or a member of a group requires for effective functioning in their daily activities. Information needs can be seen as a complete information which enables the user to make appropriate decisions on any related problem facing him or her at a particular time(Ogbomo, 2010). In other words, information is needed because it enables individuals to make a decision that affects their living, just as Opeke, (2004) suggest that information represents an ordered reality about the nature

of the world people live in. The need for information in any society is individualistic. Individuals need information depending on the motive for such information.

Zhang (2001) is of the opinion that a thorough understanding of user information needs and information-seeking behavior is fundamental to the provision of successful information services.Taking the right decisions depends on access to information on all the alternatives and their implications (Ajayi, 2003). Anwar (2007) also reiterates that it is important to understand the information-seeking behaviours of different groups of people, as it helps in the planning, implementation, operation, designing of new information systems and the development of service programmes in the work environment for optimal performance. For instance women are basically involved in trading, full-time housekeeping, artisanship, as well as other activities in the informal sector of the economy; they need information that will mobilize their status and improve their lot.

The concept of information behaviour begins with an individual's need. Authorities have argued that information need is the lack of appropriate information on which to base choice that could lead to benefits or services that may improve people's well-being (Miranda & Tarapanoff, 2007; Lambert &Loislle, 2007). Kebede (2002), conceptualized information need as the uncertainty that arises in the individual, which they believe can be satisfied through information acquisition. Factors that give rise to information need include seeking answers, reducing bridging gaps, solving problems, understanding (making sense) and coping (Case, 2002).

The different characteristics of work environment make one type of information need and seeking different from the other. Therefore, it is beneficial to study each group of information seekers one at a time and use the results to develop user-oriented information systems in order to serve each group better. Beyond this, the assessment of information need and seeking behavior of various groups and individuals is essential in assisting them to access and use information resources for optimal performance and productivity.

Kerins, (2004) reported that the whole essence of information need and seeking behaviour is for information use and the actual process of using information has to do with the way individuals internalize information content. Having access to relevant and timely information has a role to play in the way the information is used. Johnson (1996) stated that information needs are of various types. Apart from expressed need or articulated needs, there are unexpressed needs which the client is aware of but does not like to express. In order to meet the information needs of individuals, adequate knowledge about information seeking behavior and information use is crucial. This knowledge may also lead to the discovery of novel information behavior and user profiles that can be used to enhance existing information models or even develop new ones. In order for them to be effective information providers, librarians and other information professionals require a fuller understanding of the information seeking behavior needs and uses of individuals (/http://informationR.net/ir/11-4/paper260.html/).

III. METHODS

The descriptive survey was used for data collection in the study. Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires. The population of this study are academic staff. There was no sample size because the population was not large. A random sampling technique was used. Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires at Taraba State University Jalingo. Two hundred ninety-nine of them were randomly selected for the study duly completed and usable questionnaires were retrieved and used for data analysis; and this represents 70%.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS
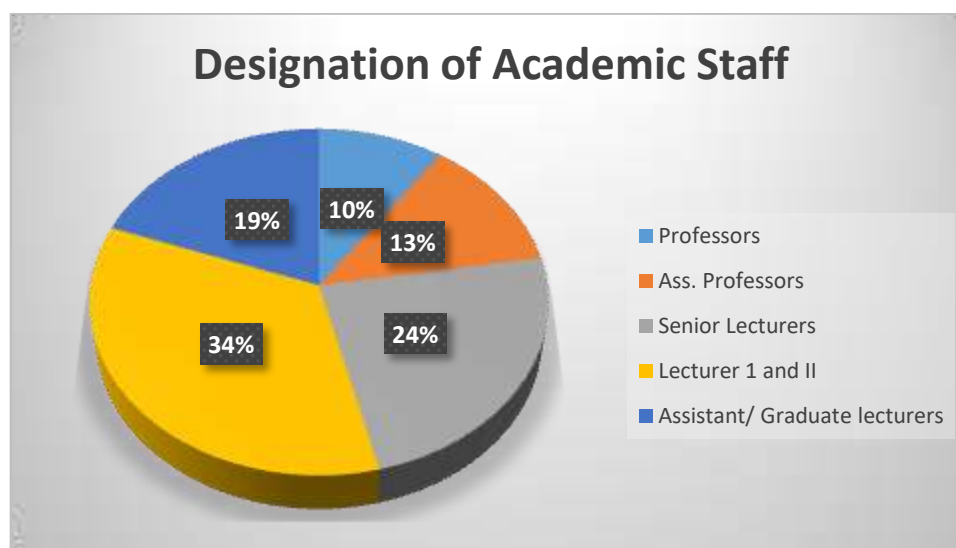
This pie chat shows that staff strength of Professors grade are very low in numbers in various departments in Taraba StateUniversity. The number of Lecturers 1 & 11 are in higher numbers. These shows that the university needs more Professors and readers and senior Lecturers to improve productivity.
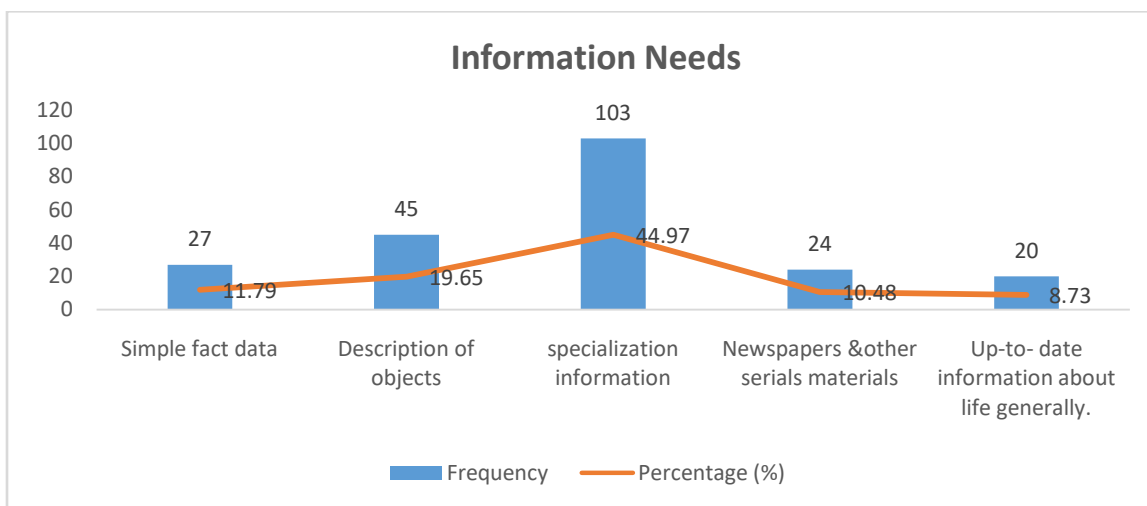

The chat shows that specialization information is the most information needs of lecturers in Taraba state university103 (44.97%). While description of objects 45(19.65%, simple fact data information are common with science-based lecturers. Up-to-date information about life generally 20(8.73%). From the results it can be deuced that lecturers used the university library for the purpose of area of specialization information needs.
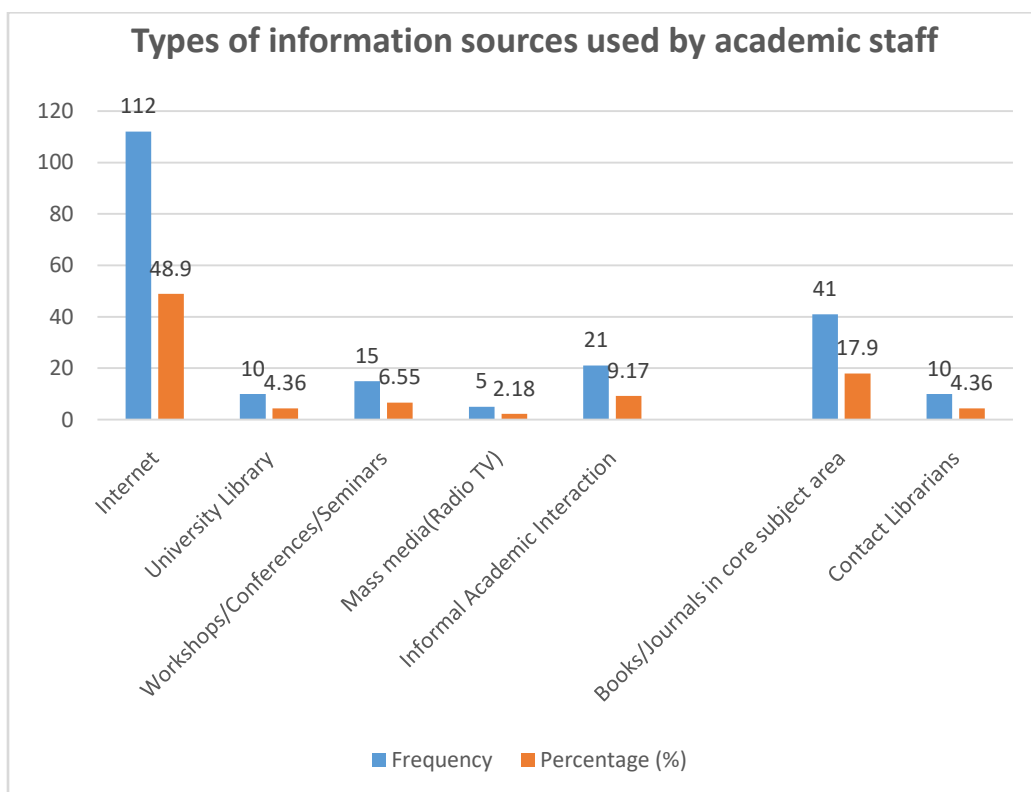
The chat shows that sources of information Internet 112(48.90%). Another sources of information books, journals in core subject area are the sources of information by lecturers 41(17. 90%). Workshops/Conferences/Seminars 15(6.55%) are another sources of information by lecturers in Taraba State University, Jalingo Nigeria. From the results presented Internet is the most sources of information by lecturers. This is great challenges to e-library in the University.
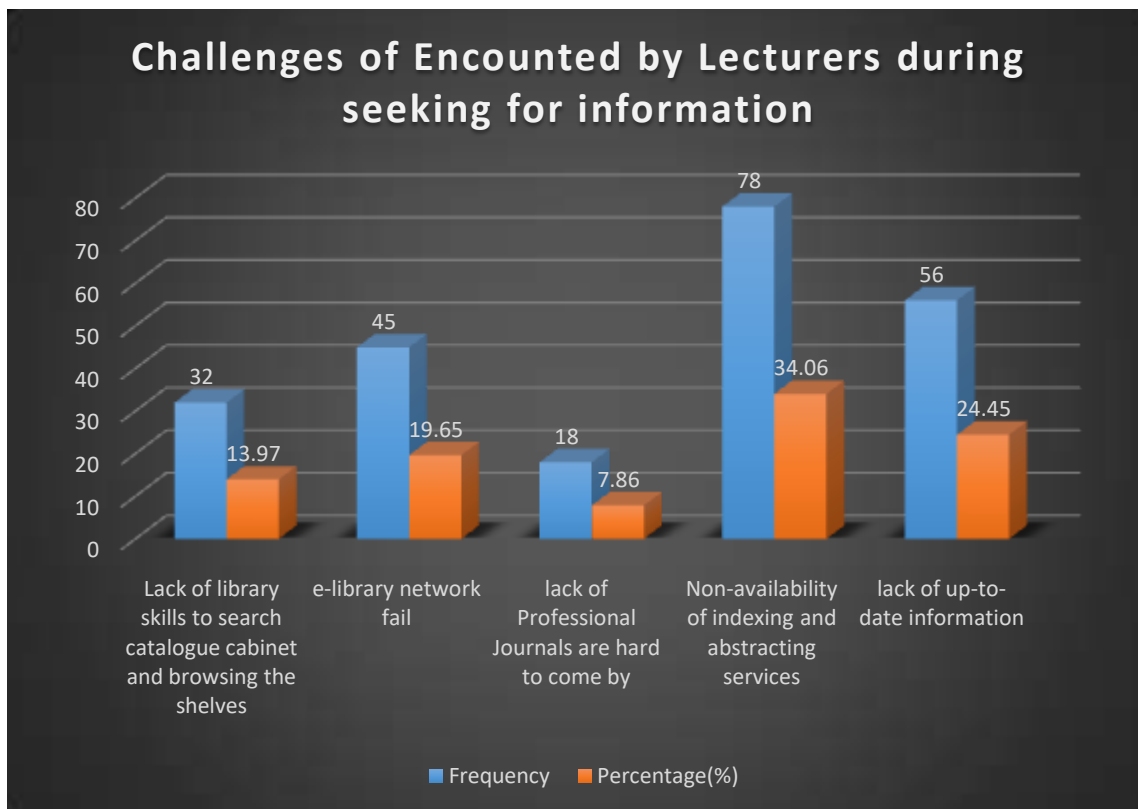
The results shows that non-availability of indexing and abstracting services 78(34.06%) are the major problems encountered by lecturers when sources for information in the university library. Another problems encountered that lecturers in the university library are up-to- date information 56(24.45%). The e-library network fail 45(19.65%) another problems and most of the lecturers lack of library skills to search catalogue cabinet and browsing the shelves.

V. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

This study was to find out the information needs and seeking behaviour among academic staff in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. From the study it shows that Professors grade are very low in numbers in various departments in Taraba State University. The number of staff in lecturers 1 & 11 are in higher numbers. The chat shows that specialization information is the most information needs of lecturers in Taraba state university. Description of objects 45(19.65%), simple fact data information are common with science-based lecturers. Lack of up-to-date information about life generally of information Internet. This findings correlates with Madu(2007) which found out that the higher sources of information are information technology(Internet).

The findings also conferred with, Ahiahu and Ani(2015) they found out Internet is a reservoir of academic resources. Another sources of information books, journals in core subject area are the sources of information by lecturers. Workshops/Conferences/Seminars are another sources of information by lecturers in Taraba state university, Jalingo Nigeria. Another findings showed that non-availability of indexing and abstracting services are the major problems encountered by lecturers when sources for information in the university library. This findings is lines with Urhiewhu, Aji, Omah, and Gogmin, (2015)they carried study on information searching pattern of undergraduate students in Taraba State University Library, Janligo. Another problems encountered that lecturers in the university library are up-to- date information. The e-library network fail another problems and most of the lecturers lack of library skills to search catalogue cabinet and browsing the shelves

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper is on information needs and seeking behaviour among academic staff in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria From the investigations carried out it showed that professors and readers in Taraba State University, Jalingo are few in various departments. The findings also indicated that lecturers lack skills to browsing catalogue and the shelves. Some of the lecturers don't come the university library for research. This is what cause their information seeking behaviour very low. On the basis of the findings, the researchers recommend that the university lecturers should abreast of the development in their subject areas through internet connectivity. The library catalogue be improved upon by updating it and also provide means of teaching users for them to consult it with easy. There should be high level of current awareness services such email alert services and selective dissemination of information to identify lecturers needs and satisfy them.

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