



INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF THE STUDENTS OF KADUNA POLYTECHNIC

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Abstract

This study investigates the information seeking behaviour of the students of Kaduna Polytechnic. A structured questionnaire was used for data gathering in the Polytechnic. The data collected were analyzed using frequency table and simple percentages for easy interpretation. The research findings show that the respondents use goggle, social media and e-books mostly as major research resources. Lack of time, poor

Keywords

literacy skills, information seeking behavior, users 'needs

internet facility within the school premises and lack of computer skills were found as factors affecting information seeking behaviour of the respondents. The following were recommended in line with the findings of the study: Provision of infrastructure for internet connectivity

INTRODUCTION

The assessment of information seeking behaviour of the students in higher institutions is vital in supporting them to access and use information resources to meet their required information needs. According to Ajiboye and Tella (2007), information is data that has been processed to be well understood to satisfy the user's query. They go further in their definition to say that 'information is data value in planning, decision making and evaluation of any programme. KOC University Library Glossary (2014) sees information as data presented in readily comprehensible form, to which meaning has been attributed within a context for its use. In a more dynamic sense,

within the school skills, as well as skills in the use of premises, training of adequate coverage of library currently taught students on computers information literacy in the polytechnic.

the message is conveyed by the use of a medium of communication or expression. Bruce (2005) states that, "information plays a significant role in our daily professional and personal lives and we are constantly challenged to take charge of the information that we need for work, fun and everyday decisions and tasks.

Wilson (2000) posited that information needs are influenced by a variety of factors such as the range of information sources available, the uses to which the information will be put, the background, motivation, professional orientation and individual characteristics of the user. While other factors according to Nwagwu and Oshiname (2009), are the sociopolitical, economic, legal and regulatory. There must be a need that would prompt an individual to engage in information seeking. Information Need is an innate desire that prompt an individual leading to a search for information.

Undergraduates have a lot of information needs which prompted their demand for information. When undergraduates are searching for information to meet their needs, they use different sources of information. Akinola, Afolabi and Chinedu (2009) defines information sources as the materials or means through which information can be found to meet a particular need. Case (2002) defines information seeking as a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge. Information seeking behaviour is a key concept in Library and information science profession.

Pettigrew Fidel and Bruce (2001) defined information behaviour as the study of how people need, seek, give and use information in different contexts, including the workplace and everyday living. According to Odongo and Bukenya (2004), information seeking behaviour is the way people go about searching for information. They also observed that students' information seeking behaviour involves purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete course assignments, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, and write final-year research papers. Information seeking behaviour is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to

research and experimentation (Bhatti, 2008). Information-seeking behaviour remains a key research area; academic librarians around the world strive to understand the information needs of undergraduate students and ways of satisfy these needs. Ossai-onah (2013) posit that though there seems to exist many reasons and sources of information to the information user, the polytechnic library occupies a central position in the information seeking process of students in Nigerian polytechnics. Undergraduate students' information seeking behavior was considered the biggest problem to be investigated. Most undergraduate students find it difficult to locate the right sources of information to meet their needs and without adequate information succeeding academically would be a great challenge. This study is therefore aimed at determining information seeking behavior of the students of Kaduna Polytechnic with a view to improving their academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

Studying the Information seeking behaviour of the students will enable libraries and academic librarian deliver standard services which will improve the academic performance of their students. This study sought to establish ways of improving the information-seeking behaviour of students. To attain this goal, the study stipulated the following objectives:

1. To find out the sources of information the students of Kaduna Polytechnic are familiar with.
2. To discover the information needs of the students of Kaduna Polytechnic.
3. To determine Kaduna Polytechnic students' information demand and use.
4. To establish the problems that the students of Kaduna Polytechnic encounter in information seeking.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this research the following questions have been formulated:

1. What are the sources of information the students of Kaduna Polytechnic are familiar with?
2. What are the information needs of the students of Kaduna Polytechnic?

3. How do students of Kaduna Polytechnic demand for information to meet their needs?
4. What are the factors militating against the availability and accessibility of information by the students of Kaduna Polytechnic?

Literature Review

Information Seeking Behaviour deals with the psychological behaviour of the seeker. It involves the searching, locating, retrieving and using of information (Karunarathna, 2008). Wilson (2008) posits that, "Information seeking behavior is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. Information seeking behaviour can be described as an individual's manner of gathering and sourcing information for personal use, knowledge updating and development (Emmanuel, George & Oni, 2010). Ellis (1989) in his information seeking behaviour model identified six actions in sourcing for information, which include: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. According to Ellis, 'starting' is identifying the initial materials to search through and selecting starting points for the search. He explained 'Chaining' as following leads from the starting source to referential connections to other sources that contribute new sources of information. Ellis simply explains 'browsing' as casually looking for information in areas of interest. 'Differentiating', one of the search strategies as explained by Ellis is selecting among the known sources by noting the distinctions of characteristics and value of the information. 'Monitoring' is keeping up-to-date on a topic by regularly following specific sources as well as using small set of care sources including key personal contacts and publications. 'Extracting' is methodically analyzing sources to identify materials of interest. Information seeking behaviour deals mainly with the study of information needs, demand and use by a particular set of people. The behaviour people exhibit while in search of information differs significantly according to background, culture, conditions, needs, and requirements.

A lot of studies have been conducted on the information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students. The study by Barakutty and Salih (1999) cited by Owolabi (2007) at Calicut University, India, shows that the students used the Internet as the major source of information for their academic development. Kakai, Ikoja and Kigongo (2004) in their study observed that most students

concentrate on using particular materials recommended by either their lecturers or colleagues who have used them before, rather than searching to find the most appropriate document to use. Ajiboye and Tella (2007) maintain that the way students organize their learning and search for information is crucial to their overall performance. Wilberley and Jones (2000) asserted that, though undergraduate students in the humanities do turn more frequently to librarians, they do so with some reluctance.

According to the findings of Kim, Joanna and Yoo- lee (2013), almost all participants (98.6%) reported using Wikipedia as an information source, while (95.7%) of the participants reported that Face book is an important source of information to them. These researchers agreed that social media is an important source of information for undergraduate students. Mabawonku (2005) highlights ways in which students can seek for information, which include colleagues, the Internet, library, friends, family members, recognized institutions, agencies, and private organizations. Mann (2003) posited that most researchers, even with computers, find only a fraction of the sources available to them. He explained that undergraduates tend to work within one or another mental framework that limits their basic perception of the universe of knowledge available to them. Students according to him use a subject-disciplinary method that leads them to a specific list of sources on a particular subject. He points out that while this method allows students and researchers to find more specific sources, it is limiting in that they may not realize that work of interest to their own subject appears within the literature of many other disciplines.

He also observed that users want 'good enough' sources, not necessarily the best sources available. The evaluation of 'good enough' is based on a number of factors, the most important being ease of access and availability of full-text sources. The sources chosen follow the principle of Least Effort; they tend to choose perceived ease of access over quality of content in selecting an information source or channel. Ajiboye and Tella (2007) find out from their research on university undergraduates that 12 percent of the students required information for their personal development, while 11.25 percent claimed that they sought information on health matter, and 64.1 percent sought for information for their academic development, 9.3 percent to secure employment. Baro and Fynman (2009) in their study pointed out factors such

as: information illiteracy among library users; absence of computer systems with Internet connectivity in the university libraries; poorly conducted user education programmes; reliance on manual information retrieval tools which leads to poor filing and slow retrieval; and limited sensitization of the library information resources and services as factors that hinder the effective utilization of library resources and services. This makes it difficult for undergraduate students to meet their information needs. Zondi (2002) in her study established that a majority of students show a very low level of competence in the use of a library and display poor information seeking patterns. It could be assumed that students could be experiencing technical problems in accessing information resources; being card catalogues, the library catalogues do not provide adequate access to the libraries' collections; or students are information illiterate and lack the required library literacy skills. Mellon (2006) concluded in his study that undergraduates encounter technical problems trying to locate materials from university libraries. Beyond the problem of facilities is the inability of students to use different search strategies to source information and how to source the academic information needed for them to excel. Meyers, Nathan and Saxton (2006), found out that information barriers transcend access to information to constraining forces which affects the information search of students. Hartmann (2001) concluded in his study that undergraduate students experienced difficulty in locating items from the library collection and do not understand the processes for retrieving journal articles. According to the study of Kakai, Ikoja-Odongo and Bukenya (2004), undergraduates face the following barriers in their access to information; limited borrowing of the most relevant books in the closed access section; insufficient copies of the relevant information materials (books); out-dated (old) information materials dominating the stock; poorly conducting user education; reliance on manual information retrieval tools which lead to poor filing and slow retrieval; and, limited sensitization of the library information resources and services.

Research Method

A Survey research method was used to carry out this study because of its large population. The instrument used for data collection in this study was

questionnaire. Questionnaires was used for collecting data for this research because Cohen and Morrision (2012) is of view that the questionnaires is widely used and it is a useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often comparatively straight forward to analyze.

The target population of this study comprises the students of Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna State, Nigeria. A total of 130 students were selected out of the total population. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents across all the colleges of the Polytechnic. The researcher administered and collected the questionnaire from the respondents. Thus there was 90% rate of return distributed.

Presentation of Findings

Out of 130 copies of the questionnaires administered to the undergraduate students, 117(90%) were retrieved. The data collected in the study is presented according to the objectives of the study.

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	68	58.1
Female	49	41.9
Total	117	100

Table 1 shows that (58.1%) of the respondents are male while (41.9%) are female. This represents the gender distribution of students involved in the survey.

Table 2: Level of Respondents:

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100	23	19.7
200	35	29.9
300	22	18.8
400	37	31.6
Total	117	100

It is obvious from Table 2 that majority (31.6%) of the respondents are students in their final year while 29.9% are second year students, 19.7% are first year students, 18.8% students in their third year.

Table 3: Sources of Information

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Google or other Search engine	35	29.9
Social Media	32	27.4
Printed Text Books	7	6.0
E-books	17	14.5
Library Materials	5	4.3
Google Scholar	7	6.0
Wikipedia	4	3.4
Friends and Family	10	8.5
Others	0	0
Toatal	117	100

As observed from Table 3, 29.9% of the respondent use goggle or other search engines and social media, 27.4%; e- books, 14.5%; friends and family, 8.5%; Printed text books and Google scholar, 6%; and 3.4% use Wikipedia.

Table 4: Use of Information Obtained

Use of Information Obtained	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academics	5	4.3
Final Year Research	35	29.9
Assignment	29	24.8
Relationship Issues	1	0.9
Personal Development	3	2.6
Health improvement ethics	2	1.7
To read ahead of lectures and classmates	3	2.6
Current happenings	34	29.1
Inventions	0	0
Entertainment	5	4.3
Total	117	100

As observed from Table 4, that (29.9%) of the respondent use the information obtained for final year research, 29.1% for current happenings, 24.8% for Assignment, 4.3% for Academics and entertainment, 2.6% to read ahead of

lectures and classmates, 1.7% for health improvement ethics and 0.9% for relationship issues. Invention recorded 0% response rate.

Table 5: Demand for Information

Use of Information Obtained	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Course note (print and non print)	35	29.9
Visiting the library	5	4.3
Printed text books	1	0.9
E-books	29	24.8
Journal Articles	10	8.5
Lecturer or Tutor	34	29.1
Electronic database	3	2.6
Interactions with librarians	0	
Newspaper/Magazine	0	0
Others	0	0
Total	117	100

Table 5 indicates that 29.9% of the respondent demand for information from course notes, 29.1% lecturer or tutor; 24.8% from e-books, 4.3% from visiting the library; 2.6% from electronic database and 0.9% from printed text books. Interactions with librarians, newspapers/magazines all received 0% response rate journal articles, 14% from Wikipedia, 53% from lecturer or tutor, 17% from electronic database, 19% from newspaper/ magazines, 48% from interaction with librarians and 5% demand for information from other sources.

Table 6: Factors Affecting Undergraduate's Information Seeking Behaviour

Use of Information Obtained	F	(%)
Lack of computer skills	10	8.5
Lack of infrastructure	0	0
Lack of time	40	34.2
Irregular electricity supply	0	0
Lack of good search skills	28	23.9
Do not know where to go and satisfy their information needs	3	2.6
Poor internet available within the school premises	36	30.8
All Others	0	0
Total	117	100

Table 6, shows that, 34.2% lack of time, 30.8% Poor internet available within the school premises, 8.5% lack of computer skills while 2.6% Do not know

where to go and satisfy their information needs. Lack of infrastructure and irregular electricity supply received 0% response rate.

Discussions and Analysis

Findings revealed that most of the respondents source for information through Google. It was found to be the most popularly used information channel, followed by social media. These findings correlate with the findings of Garcia and Silicia (2003) , Oyewusi and Oyebobe (2009) and Okoh and Ijiekhuamhen (2014). Google was found to be the major search engine used by the students in higher institutions. Finding also reveals that majority of the respondent use the information obtained for final year research, currents happenings and assignment. This explains the information seeking of behavior of this generation especially in Nigeria. They are only interested in the certificate not personal development academically. Findings also indicates that students of Kaduna Polytechnic demand for information from course notes, e-books and lecturers. Generally, Nigerian students give more regards to course notes than text books. That is why some lecturers in higher institutions take the advantage of that and extort students by asking them to buy their lecture notes popularly called “handouts” by the students. Findings also revealed that lack of time, poor internet facility within the school premises and lack of computer skills are the major factors encountered by the students in information seeking. This is in line with Baro and Fynman (2009) in their study which pointed out factors such as: information illiteracy among library users; absence of computer systems with Internet connectivity in the university libraries; poorly conducted user education programmes etc. as factors that hinder the effective utilization of library resources and services. This makes it difficult for undergraduate students to meet their information needs. The students find it difficult to satisfy their information needs properly due to the absence of infrastructure for internet connectivity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that most students of Kaduna Polytechnic know the importance of information especially when it has to do with their grades, but the sources through which the information needs are satisfied are wrong. In view of this, the following recommendations are made:

1. Kaduna Polytechnic Admin should as a matter of urgency provide the necessary infrastructure to enable the students have free access to internet connectivity all around the school premises.

2. The Use of Library currently taught in the Polytechnic should be made a 3 credit unit course to enhance more seriousness and the course outline should be reviewed.
3. The management of Isa Kaita library, Kaduna Polytechnic should market the information resources in the library to the students to increase more patronage.
4. The students should be educated on the importance and use of information in their academic pursuits.
5. Training programmes should be organized for the library staff so they can be more effective in meeting students' information needs. Information sources should be well-organized, classified accurately, and entered in the catalogue.
6. Computer related courses offered by Kadpoly students should be boosted with real and adequate practical exercises to enable the students have computer knowledge and skills.

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