
Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Lecturers in the School Of Sciences, Imo State Polytechnic

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the information needs and information seeking behaviour of the science lecturers at Imo State Polytechnic. Four research questions were stated to guide the study. The study adopted survey research method and the population of the study comprises of 54 lecturers of all cadre in the School of Sciences. The instrument for data collection was the rating scale, the data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics particularly frequency count and percentages and presented in table for clarity. The findings of the study revealed that lecturers seek information for educational purposes, -which include for doing research work, for writing and presenting papers and for updating knowledge. The findings also revealed that majority of the lecturer use the internet which they mainly access in their offices and home with modem. The study is recommending information literacy programme in order to create awareness on the resource availability and strategies for accessing them.

Keywords: Information needs, Behaviour, Lecturers, Imo State Polytechnic, Modem, Strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the world over, people consciously or unconsciously seek information for different needs and from varying sources. Their needs could range from educational, research, professional, recreational or for personal development. The library and media seem to be a place for information seeking in contemporary societies. Information seeking is as old as man himself. Man in his natural state is a curious being. Every individual at one time or the other seeks information. This is done in the bid to answer the why, what, when and how questions which prompts man to search through different information sources to satisfy his curiosity, of all the information sources the library is exceptional, as an indispensable information seeking centre, libraries have been established in all tertiary institutions across the globe.

Teaching is a part of many professional responsibilities, as well as a part of everyday life activities. However, for the purpose of this study, "lecturers" are defined as individuals who are responsible for educating students in class rooms. They are also referred to as an individual or a person who delivers lectures or speeches to a group of people especially professionally. They are professionals who play a very important role in society.

There is a great need for a comprehensive study in the field of information science that investigates lecturer's information needs and behaviours. Lecturers need to keep up with new trends in teaching and learn how to use new classroom resources like instructional media, often in ways require them to adapt their teaching practices. Lecturers need to know how to retrieve, evaluate and utilize information derived from various sources. Shanmugam (1999) states that, the proliferation of information and the higher expectations from employees has made education and training a life-long process as a result have to move away from text based approaches of teaching to resources based instructions.

1.1 Objective Of The Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the information needs and information seeking behavior of science lecturers in Imo State Polytechnic.

- To ascertain the reasons why lecturer in science at IMO State Polytechnic, Umuagwo need information.
- To determine the kind of information used by science lecturers in Imo State Polytechnic.
- To find out where lecturers at Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo obtain the types of information they need.
- To identify the challenges encountered by science lecturers in Imo State Polytechnic in obtaining the types of information they need.

1.2 Significance Of The Study

This study on information needs and information seeking behavior of lecturers in sciences in Imo State Polytechnic is imperative; hence the findings will help the library staff (Librarians) to know the challenges and needs of the science lecturers and ways to provide the needed materials to attend to their needs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concepts of Information Needs and Information Seeking Behavior of Lecturers in Sciences

In any educational or research institution, the library plays a vital role. Imo State Polytechnic has a well-equipped and up to - date library. It supports all the subject areas taught in the polytechnic. Academic libraries support the educational, teaching and research needs of the parent institution they serve. These libraries/librarians ensure that the use of information sources, resources and services are maximized to benefit its users. At present, information technology (IT) has developed rapidly and has had a tremendous impact on access to information needs and information seeking. Librarians and library staff have examined and known the criteria of information services to be delivered patrons.

Summer et al. (1983) found that the level of education had a significant effect on information resources lecturers used as well as their attitude towards information. Information seeking behavior is expressed in various forms, from reading printed materials to research and experimentation. Information needs differs according to ones area of specialization. It is also an individual or groups desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need. The nature of information is not easy to describe. Information can be defined as recorded experience that is used in decision-making.

Akusu (1987) opined that information needs is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have. The type of information a user needs depends on the user of information. Thus information seeking arises from the fact that an individual needs information whether to satisfy immediate need or future need, he requires to consult some information sources, the quality and quantity of information available to his disposal.

2.2 Factors That Affect Information Seeking Behavior Include:

1. Personal reasons for seeking information
2. The kind of information being sought
3. The ways and sources with which needed information is being sought.
4. Fund
5. Time

3. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire contains 14 question items which questions on the respondent's bio-data as well as questions that will elicit data to answer the research questions. Out of 62 copies of questionnaire distributed to the respondents, only 54 usable copies were returned to the researcher.

3.1 Personal Data

1. Department
2. Gender of lecturers
3. Highest academic qualification
4. Years of working experience.

Table 3.1: Distribution of department in the school of sciences

Departments	Respondents	Percentages
Nutrition and Dietetics (NUD)	12	22.3
Food Science and Technology (FST)	8	14.8
Science Laboratory Technology (SLT)	12	22.2
Computer Science	12	22.2
Mathematics & Statistics	10	18.5
Total	54	100

Table 3.2 Distribution according to designation

Designation	Respondents	Percentages
Chief lecturer	-	-
Principal lecturer	8	14.8
Senior lecturer	10	18.5
Lecturer 1	10	18.5
Lecturer II	10	18.5
Lecturer III	5	9.2
Assistant Lecturer	11	20.3
Total	54	100

3.3 Distribution of Respondents according to their academic qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentages
Ph.D	10	18.51
M.SC	30	55.55
B.SC	14	25.92
Total	54	100

Table 3.3 revealed that 18.5% of the respondents in our study have Ph.D as their highest qualification, while 55.5% are M.SC holders and 25.9% are B.SC holders.

3.2 Information Sources

3.4 Types of reading material for academic and research need

Types of material	Adequate	To some extent	Inadequate
Books	44%	24%	56%
Periodical	28%	40%	32%
Indexes	11%	43%	
Abstracts	27%	38%	
Bibliographic	19%	07%	
Year books	16%	11%	
Encyclopedia	34%	37%	29%
Non book materials	09%	16%	36%
Internet	76%	34%	40%

Table 3.5: Purpose

Purpose of Library Use	Responses
Teaching	88%
Research	54%
Writing and presenting papers	20%
Borrow books or journal articles	43%
Guiding students and researchers	22%
M. Phil and Ph.D.	37%
Renewing their knowledge	43%
Recreational purposes	27%

3.3 User Awareness of Library Services

Users were asked about the provision of services. The responses do not show a positive picture. 70% complained about the lack of indexing and abstracting services. The library does not offer inter library loan. 30% of the lecturers had a positive view of library service.

4. DISCUSSION

The discussion is made in terms of our findings. Thus the study made some interesting findings.

4.1 Sources of Information Seeking

The types of information lecturer needs determine his or her sources of seeking such information. All the 54 respondents in our study have more than one sources of information seeking, even though their preference or choice varied.

4.2 Purpose of Seeking Information

This subheading unravels some of the purposes of seeking information by science lecturers; it is obvious from the findings of this study that our sample has several purposes for seeking information. A vast number of them seek information for mainly three reasons in order of priority; for doing research work, for writing and presenting papers and for updating knowledge. Relative number of them sought information to assist them in preparing class lectures and doing their Ph.D, the least number seek information for guiding researchers.

4.3 Place of Information Seeking

Although the institution has a very well equipped library, the findings of this study revealed that most of the respondents do not seek information in the library. Majority of them preferred e-library which they accessed at home or office with a mobile phone or laptop.

4.4 Types of Materials Lecturers Seek For In the Library

The purpose of seeking information were central determinants of the type of materials lecturers sought for. Journals were the highest materials they sought according to the findings of this study. Research-able number of them also sought information from reference books followed by newspapers.

4.5 Tools Used In Accessing the Information

This subheading reveals some important features among our respondents in School of Sciences in Imo State Polytechnic. The findings revealed that greater number of the science lecturers, used Google website and e-library catalogue in searching for information.

4.6 Problems Encounter by Lecturers While Seeking Information

The research revealed that the lecturers in the school of science in Imo State Polytechnic encounter some problems while seeking information. Greater number of them experience poor system network and sometimes, total network failure. Others however encounter non availability or inaccessibility of materials. All the 54 respondents stressed on lack of time as a problem they faced in seeking for information.

5. CONCLUSION

The objectives of this research as highlighted earlier in the work have been achieved following the findings as analyzed above. The study was aimed at examining the information needs and information seeking behavior of science lecturers in Imo State Polytechnic.

The information seeking behavior of lecturers has been expressed in different forms. Lecturers seek information for educational purposes, which include for doing research work, writing and presenting papers and for updating knowledge.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. Needs assessment should be carried out by librarians for the type of information resources so as to ensure effective resources provision.
2. Information literacy programme should be intensified to create awareness on the resources availability and strategies for accessing them.
3. Lecturers in the school of science should see library as place to be hold.

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