



**INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS OF AJAYI CROWTHER
UNIVERSITY, OYO, NIGERIA**

***O COMPORTAMENTO DE BUSCA DE INFORMAÇÃO DE ESTUDANTES DE AJAYI
CROWTHER UNIVERSITY, OYO, NIGÉRIA***

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ABSTRACT: The diversity in people account for how they seek information and this is what has prompted this study. This paper investigated the Information-Seeking behaviour of students of Ajayi Crowther University, a private university in South Western Nigeria. The survey research method was used and questionnaire administered to five hundred (500) students randomly selected from the three (3) faculties in the university. The data gathered from the questionnaire was analysed using the frequency count and simple percentage. It was discovered that majority of the students (66%) sought information for academic purposes and the library (62.8%) was their preferred place of searching and using information resources. Also, that their course of study (47.6) influenced the format (55.4%) they want information in. Majority of the respondents (53.2%) also expressed satisfaction with the library for being able to meet their information needs. Recommendations were then made that the library should increase and improve its stock to meet the demands of the students, provide working internet connectivity to enhance ease of electronic search and databases and train its staff in interpersonal relations to improve staff- user relations. And lastly, that periodic user education should be carried out in the library to educate users on effective and efficient use of the library to get maximum satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Information-Seeking Behaviour, Libraries, User Needs, User Education, Ajayi Crowther University Students

RESUMO: A diversidade nas pessoas é responsável pela maneira como eles buscam informações, e é o que foi proposto neste estudo. Este trabalho investigou o comportamento de busca de informação de estudantes de Ajayi Crowther University, uma universidade particular no sul da Nigéria Ocidental. O método de pesquisa utilizado foi um questionário aplicado aos quinhentos (500) alunos selecionados aleatoriamente a partir dos três (3) em faculdades da universidade. Os dados recolhidos a partir do questionário foram analisados utilizando a contagem de frequência e porcentagem simples. Foi descoberto que a maioria dos alunos (66%) procuraram informações na biblioteca para

fins acadêmicos e a biblioteca (62,8%) foi seu lugar preferido de busca e uso de recursos de informação. Além disso, que o curso estudado (47,6) influenciou o formato como querem informações (55,4%). A maioria dos entrevistados (53,2%) também mostrou-se satisfeito com a biblioteca sendo capaz de atender às suas necessidades de informação. Recomendações foram feitas no sentido de a biblioteca aumentar e melhorar o seu estoque para atender às demandas dos alunos, fornecer conectividade profissional de internet para melhorar a busca eletrônica e bases de dados e treinar seu pessoal nas relações interpessoais para melhorar as relações funcionário-usuário. E, por último, que a educação periódica do usuário deve ser realizada na biblioteca para educar os usuários sobre o uso efetivo e eficiente da biblioteca a fim de obter a máxima satisfação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Comportamento de busca de informação, Bibliotecas, Necessidades do usuário, Educação do usuário, Estudantes Universitários de Ajayi Crowther

INTRODUCTION

User studies is an area in Librarianship that cannot be over researched since the essence of the library is the User going by the five rules of Librarianship. The information explosion and information overload witnessed recently gave birth to the concept of studying the information seeking behaviour of different groups of users. A library needs to do regular user study to examine its holdings and relevance to the institution it is meant to serve. Information professionals have therefore carried out several researches with a view to understand why people seek information, how they seek it, and what influences their information seeking behaviour. According to Wilson (2000), information-seeking behaviour includes those activities a person may engage in when “identifying their own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information”. To carry out their day to day activities, humans need information to enable them make decisions regarding their lives, business/career, family, health, and the generality of life’s actions. This means that humans must get information in one way or the other. Since people are different, they seek for information in diverse ways and this is what has prompted researchers over the years to carry out researches on the different ways individuals and groups exhibit information seeking behaviours.

Many researchers have also defined information-seeking behaviour in different ways. Krikelas (1983), defined information-seeking behaviour as any activity of an individual that is undertaken to “identify a message that satisfies a perceived need”. Mabawonku (2005) also threw light on the information-seeking behaviour of artisans and

the various sources they use to satisfy their information need. To Uhegbu (2007), information-seeking behaviour is the way in which users conduct themselves when searching for information. Kakai et al (2004) defined information-seeking behaviour as an individual's way and manner of sourcing and gathering information for personal use, knowledge updating and development. The emphasis has shifted from user studies to evaluate library collection to studies of the information-seeking behaviour of individuals or groups that would lead to the design of appropriate information systems and services. Line (2000) believed that new studies of information users and their needs are of utmost importance in the age of the internet. The fact that Ajayi Crowther University and its Library, T.Y Danjuma Library is fairly new makes it important for a study on how to meet the information needs of the students to be done.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Researchers in library studies have done a lot of studies on user behaviour in seeking information. Zhang (1998), emphasises that a thorough understanding of information-seeking behaviour of users is fundamental to the provision of successful information services. The library being in the forefront of information provision has it as a duty to ensure that the provision of information is done to suit the needs and behaviour of its patrons. The study of information-seeking behaviour dates back to 1948 when Bernal and others presented a paper on scientific information at the 1948 Royal Society Conference (Bernal, 1960). Since then, a lot of studies have been conducted to investigate the information-seeking behaviour of library users based on their subject interests, occupation, information environment, gender and geographical location.

Knowledge of the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of users is vital for developing library collections, upgrading facilities and improving services to effectively meet the information needs of users especially in a private and fairly new university like Ajayi Crowther University.

Qureshi (2008), investigated the information seeking-behaviour of students in universities in Pakistan. The study concluded that different factors were responsible for students' behaviour in seeking for information. Such factors included;

Educational and cultural background, surrounding environment and student participation, which have high positive impact on information-seeking behaviour of students if surrounding environment is helpful and student participation is active then it will create a culture that enhances the students' information gathering systems (QURESHI, 2008).

Adedibu, et al., (1997), also investigated the information-seeking behaviour of medical students at Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) Ogbomoso, Nigeria and discovered that like other studies shows, the respondents' primary aim for seeking information was for academic reasons while other reasons like networking, socializing and recreation took second, third and fourth place respectively.

Callinan (2005), in a comparative research of information seeking behaviour between first and final year biology students posited that the level of study of a students would also influence how they sought information. It was discovered in the study that final year students made more use of electronic resources than final year students. The paper establishes the importance of a cross-sectional study in understanding the difference in students' information needs in different years of their studies.

Nwobasi et al., (2013), also carried out a comparative study of two universities students' information need and Information seeking behaviour. They discovered that students had high awareness of the information resources in the library, both print and electronic, several challenges such as poor internet facilities, inadequacy of the materials, lack of current and relevant materials and unfriendly attitude of library staff. These factors posed great challenges to the information seeking behaviour of the students of the two universities.

Shokeen and Kushik (2002), report on a study about information-seeking behaviour of social scientists in the universities of Havana. The study revealed that most social scientists visit the library daily. They mainly used indexing and abstracting periodicals and citations in articles coupled with journals and books as their preferred sources of information.

Ajigboye and Tella (2007), investigated the information-seeking behaviour of undergraduates. They discovered that 64.1% of students sought information for academic development while the least number 9.3% sought information to secure employment, 12% of the students sought information for personal development while 11.25% claimed that

they sought information on health issues, their findings being in line with others in the same category.

Clougherty et al., (1998), investigated the purpose of undergraduates' visit to the library and overall user satisfaction at the University of Iowa. Their findings indicated that more than 70% of respondents used the library as a place to study, use photocopiers and borrow information materials. An equal number turned to library staff for assistance.

Steinerova and Susol (2007), conducted a study on user information-seeking behaviour from a gender perspective in Slovakia. Differences in orientation to information, collaboration style, and use of information were discovered, with the conclusion that gender as a variable can be productive for understanding information processing.

All the literature reviewed on information seeking behaviour of students show a corresponding view that majority of students' information seeking behaviour is influenced by their studies, social activities and to some extent, the future. This study intends to see how the student of Ajayi Crowther University conform or deviate from this statistic in their information seeking behaviour

HISTORY OF AJAYI CROWTHER UNIVERSITY

Nigeria's higher educational system suffered a great deal of credibility loss in campus administration and academic management between 1980 and 2003. This led to an outcry of dissatisfaction with the worsening performance of the higher education sector in the country. This was characterised by violent demonstrations, vandalism, hooliganism, malpractices and disobedience to constituted authority on the part of the students at the period. It thus became increasingly evident that the phrase 'found worthy in character and learning' which has been traditionally used while conferring graduates with degrees, diplomas and certificate at convocations had become meaningless rhetoric. Constant strikes and work stoppages became normal weapons of expressing industrial disharmony on campus as academic calendars were routinely disrupted by teaching and non-teaching staff alike. The negative effects of all these included uncompleted or hastily completed course outlines and laboratory practicals and, ultimately, the quality of degrees and diplomas awarded by these institutions. Akangbou (1992), asserts that national educational systems have always seemed to be tied to a life of crisis. Most universities in

the country have consistently inadequate resources, which invariably affects the quality of output they produce.

Consequently, the Federal Government of Nigeria issued licences authorising the establishment of private universities in the country. The objective was to project a new hope for the academia in Nigeria and to provide credible alternative paradigms of university management and campus administration. According to Oyebade (2005), "the license given to private investors in university education is meant to address the problem of excessive demand over supply".

In response to this new window of opportunity, the Supra Diocesan Board (West) of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), as a moral agent, established Ajayi Crowther University (ACU), Oyo, to provide a living and learning environment which is influenced by Christian ethics and principles by focusing the vision of its graduates on spirituality, moral rectitude and academic excellence. The school is situated on what used to be St. Andrews College of Education (SACOED) Oyo, with the permanent site at Ofa-Meta along Oyo- Ogbomoso road

The university presently consists of three faculties;

-Social and Management Sciences with the following departments:- Economics, Accounting and Finance, Communication and Media Studies, and Business Administration.

- Humanities with the following departments:- English Language and Literary studies, History and International Relations and Religious Studies

- Natural Sciences with the following departments:- Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Earth Sciences and Physical sciences.

Academic development is seriously dependent on the quality of the library. Ajayi Crowther University has a standard building that is imposing and for years to come will be most suitable and adequate for all forms of expansion that are bound to take place as the university grows in number of academic programmes, staff and students. Presently, the library can sit 1,500 users conveniently. The book holdings in the library have also increased from 3000 in 2007 to over 12,000. The virtual library, a critical tool for research in these modern times is an important feature of the T.Y. Danjuma Library with over 50 computer systems, working internet connectivity and several electronic databases.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To discover the information needs of students of ACU
2. To discover the format students of ACU source for information.
3. To discover the most preferred source of the information sought.
4. To determine the factors that influence students' information-seeking behaviour.
5. To determine user satisfaction with the source and type of information obtained.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the survey research method. Questionnaire was prepared in line with the research objectives with well structured questions which identifies the important variables. 200 respondents were selected from the faculties of social and management sciences and the faculty of natural Sciences because of their large number while 100 respondents were randomly selected in the faculty of humanities because it has fewer numbers of students. In all, a total of 500 questionnaires were administered to the students using the simple Random Sampling technique. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires and was able to retrieve 462 fully completed ones which amount to 92.4% of the population. The frequency count and simple percentage table were used to present the findings of the research.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	295	63.9
Female	167	36.1
TOTAL	462	100

This table shows that the respondents consisted of more males (63.9%) than females (36.1%). Though there is a huge disparity in the number of gender with males being more than respondents, the study did not aim to investigate the information seeking behaviour of students in relation to their gender. However, various studies have been done on how gender influences information seeking behaviour. Steinerova and Susol (2007),

conducted a study on user information-seeking behaviour from a gender perspective in Slovakia. Differences in orientation to information, collaboration style, and use of information were discovered, with the conclusion that gender as a variable can be productive for understanding information processing.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on Information Needs

Information Needs	Frequency	Percentage
Academic	305	66
Current Affairs	72	15.6
Industrial Attachment	35	7.6
Recreation	28	6
Social	22	4.8
TOTAL	462	100

Table two supports the first objective of the study and it is observed that majority of the respondents seek information for academic purposes (66%), followed by those who seek information to be abreast of happenings in the society (15.6%). Others seek information to get where to go to for their Industrial Attachment (7.6%). The least number of respondents seek information for social purposes (6%) and those who seek information just to meet their social needs (4.8). This corresponds with previous literature on Information Seeking behaviour of students and the factors that influence this search as posited by Ajigboye and Tella (2007), Qureshi (2008) and Callinan (2005) that the primary influencing factor in students search for information was their studies. They strive to get relevant information that would boost their academic performance. The fact that academic need was the major reason influencing the information seeking behaviour of students of Ajayi Crowther University conforms to the theory that students' information seeking behaviour will focus more on their academic needs.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on Format of Information Preferred

Information format	Frequency	Percentage
Textbooks	256	55.4
Internet	138	29.9
Journals	16	3.5
Thesis	8	1.7
Newspapers	44	9.5
TOTAL	462	100

Majority of the respondents seek information from textbooks (55.4%) followed by the internet (29.9%), then from newspapers (9.4%). Journals are also a preferred source of information (3.5%) while the least number of respondents seek for information from thesis (1.9%). The findings in this table support that of Nwobasi et al (2013) and Ajiboye & Tella (2008) that students preferred source of information was the textbook. This is not surprising considering the fact that internet connectivity is a problem in developing countries thereby making the internet not easily accessible to users. This is followed by the internet (search engines) and electronic databases.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents Sources of Acquiring Information Materials.

Information Sources	Frequency	Percentage
The Library	290	62.8
Colleagues	28	6.0
Internet	96	20.8
Personal Collection	48	10.4
TOTAL	462	100

Table 4 supports the third objective of the study and it shows that majority of respondents (62.8%) depend on the library to acquire information resources followed by the internet with 20.8% of respondents. 10% of respondents depend on their personal collection for information materials while the least number of respondents; 6.0% depend on colleagues for information materials. This finding supports those of Ajiboye and Tella (2007), Nwobasi et al (2013) and Onuoha and Awoniyi (2011) that the library is usually the primary source of information to students. Students in the universities will first visit their university or faculty libraries to satisfy their information needs before considering other sources of information. However, it should be noted that students are swinging more towards the internet in satisfying their information needs and this is why the library should be proactive in fulfilling its obligation of carrying out information dissemination.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents on Factors that influence their information-Seeking Behaviour.

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Course of Study	220	47.6
Proximity of information source	138	29.9

Availability of information material	of 104	22.5
TOTAL	462	100

This table supports the fourth objective of the study as it reveals the factors that influence students' information seeking behaviour. It is revealed in this table that course of study (47.6%) is a major factor that influence the Information seeking behaviour of the respondents followed by the proximity (29.9%) of the information source and lastly the availability (22.5%) of information materials. The findings of Ajigboye and Tella (2007), Nwobasi et al (2013), Clougerty et al (1997), Adedibu et al (1997) and Qureshi et al (2008) support the findings in this study, that students' information behaviour will first be influenced by their course of study before any other factor. The way and manner a science student will seek for information will be quite different from the way an art student will seek for information. It is the course of study that will determine the proximity and availability of the information seeking behaviour.

Table 6: Challenges faced by Respondents in seeking for information.

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Unavailability of materials	38	8.2
Lack of awareness of availability	45	9.7
Information scattered in too many sources	125	27.1
Unavailability of internet facility	146	31.6
Non-supportive behaviour of library staff	72	15.6
Outdated information materials	36	7.8
TOTAL	462	100

Table 6 shows that lack of internet connectivity is a major challenge faced by respondents (31.6%) while seeking for information. 27.1% of the respondents are of the view that information scattered in too many sources was also a challenge to information seeking. 15.6% of respondents posit that non-supportive behaviour of library staff was a

challenge while the least number of respondents, 7.8% considered outdated materials as a challenge to seeking information. The findings support those of Unouha and Awoniyi (2011) and those of Nwobasi et al (2013) that unavailability of internet connectivity, inadequate and irrelevant library materials and unsupportive attitude of library staff were the major challenges facing students in trying to satisfy their information needs. Outdated materials also accounted for some of the challenges faced by students in searching for information.

Table 7: Degree of Satisfaction of Respondents with Sources of Information in ACU Library.

Degree of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	246	53.2
Partially satisfied	142	30.7
Not satisfied	74	16.1
TOTAL	462	100

This table supports objective five of the study as it looks at whether or not the students are satisfied with the sources of information sought. Majority of the respondents are very satisfied with ACU library as a source of information while 16.1% were not satisfied. The research of Ajigboye and Tella (2007) that majority of the students were satisfied with the efforts of the university in trying to fulfil their information needs. However, they posit that the library need to improve in provision of online electronic resources and databases.

FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents are males.
- Majority of the respondents seek information for academic purposes. To add to what is learnt in class, for further studies and for exams.
- Majority of the respondents preferred consulting textbooks as an information source.
- Majority of the respondents also prefer to go to the university library while seeking information.

- Course of study was a factor for majority of the respondents while seeking information. Respondents in the Natural sciences preferred e-resources as format of information while those in Humanities and Social Sciences preferred the print format of information.
- Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the information sources in ACU library though believed that there was room for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above, the following recommendations are made;

- More relevant books and journals should be made available to users of the library.
- Internet connectivity should always be available in the library to enable students make use of the available electronic databases.
- More databases should be subscribed to by the library.
- Library staff should be trained on interpersonal interaction for effective and efficient delivery of their duties.
- Students' demands for information sources should be given importance in order to improve existing services in the library.
- Information sources should be well-organized, classified accurately and properly filed to enable ease of access.
- Adequate user education should be done to educate users on how to find information materials with ease in the library.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study show that information-seeking behaviour of students of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Nigeria may be influenced by a wide variety of needs which may be personal, professional, academic, leisure and/or recreational. This study shows that the importance of information to educational advancement cannot be overemphasized. Also, that the successful operation of a library depends to a large extent on the choice of library collections, availability of modern ICT facilities and possession of good interpersonal communication skills by the staff of the library.

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