

**INFORMATION NEED AND SEEKING BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF BAZE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS, ABUJA.**

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**Abstract**

The study investigates the information need and seeking behavior of Undergraduate students of Baze University, Abuja. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was analyzed using Simple frequency Count and percentage for easy interpretation. The research finding shows that majority of the students utilize the library, and that Baze University Undergraduate students majorly seek information for the purpose of assignment and research. Library text books, journals, University library Internet, personal collections are the major research resources, majority of the respondents do not utilize electronic information resources. Internet/network failure, inadequate knowledge on the use of electronic resources/OPAC and information scattered in different sources were found as factors affecting information seeking behavior of respondents. The following recommendations were made in line with the findings of the study: Continuous training of student on proper use of electronic resources as well as adequate coverage of information literacy skills in the use of library currently taught in the university, proper management of network and hardware/software related issues, maintaining adequate collections to meet up with the information needs of Baze University Undergraduate students, installation of Rfid to mitigate against theft.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate Students, Information Seeking Behavior, Information Needs, University Libraries.

**INTRODUCTION**

The assessment of information needs and information seeking behavior of Baze University students is vital in supporting them to access and use information resources requisite for ideal

scholarly knowledge, assignment and research. Knowledge generated by users' studies can help to develop information services to meet their information needs effectively.

Information is considered to be an essential part of every human being's existence. Information is a basic need of life which helps in the fulfillment of other needs such as food and shelter. Library patrons seek information because they need it to survive in all aspect of life. Akua, A. A & Richard, B.L. (2016) posits that information plays a vital 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. Information is a necessary tool used in the realization of any objective or goal of the library. Information is an important factor in any library because they are needed by users. Every library user needs information of increasing variety and diversity of levels, frequencies, volumes and with ease.

The term information needs has also been used in a variety of ways. According to Samuel, E.O. & Richard, J.O. (2011), information need could be referred to as the extent to which information is required to solve problems, as well as the degree of expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the information.

Information seeking behavior is an integral research area librarian and information providers strive to understand information needs and how they will fulfil these needs.

The aspect of information seeking behavior in information Science can broadly be defined as that which is concerned with determining user's information needs, searching behavior and subsequent use of information (Julien, 1996). Mahajan, P. (2009) has defined information-seeking behavior as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development. Information-seeking behavior of students, researchers, and professionals has been the focus of enquiry for decades. Information-seeking behavior arises from the perceived need of a user, whereby the individual identifies his or her needs for information, searches for information and finally transfers the information obtained (Ikoja-Odongo and Mostert 2006).

Ellis (1989) in his information seeking behavior model identified six actions when sourcing for information which are starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. 'Starting' is locating the initial materials to search through and selecting them starting points for the search. He further 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 behavior is an area of dynamic interest among librarians, information scientist, communication scientists, sociologist, and psychologists. Information seeking behavior

is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation (Bhatti, 2010).

Information users make active and intentional attempts to seek up to date information from the library resources, including electronic sources. It is worthy to also note that the advent of information technology has revolutionized the field of library and information services and has brought about considerable changes in the information seeking behavior of users. Though there seems to exist many reasons and sources of information to the information user, the academic library occupies a central position in the information seeking process of researcher's in Nigerian libraries.

The 21st century can best be described as an era of information revolution, with the presence of information bearing materials in diverse formats. Libraries and information centers 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 Nigeria library, little wonder then that the library is known as the heart of the university (Odiase, Unegbu, and Haliso, 2001).

Baze University is a privately owned and self-financed university located in the heart of Abuja, Nigeria and was established in the year 2011, with Senator Baba Datti Ahmed as the Pro Chancellor. Its vision is to be a distinctive quality-based educational institution, making difference in the nation history through positive impact of its service and its graduates Output. Baze University is licensed by Nigeria University Commission; it has six (6) functional faculties and each faculty with a well stocked library. The faculties include Management and Social Science, Law, Computing and Applied Sciences, Engineering, Medical Sciences and Environmental Sciences. The library was established to provide strong bibliographical support to its parent organization

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The establishment of every library is for utilization by its targeted users. The Baze university library statistics has shown that the library is not optimally utilized as expected hence the need to carry out this study to understand the academic community information needs and information seeking behavior of the students in other to improve the services been offered by the university library.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH.**

- 1) To determine the information needs of Baze university students
- 2) To identify the extent of library use by students
- 3) To determine the information seeking pattern of Baze university Students
- 4) To find out preferred information resources consulted by Baze university students
- 5) To find out problems faced by Baze university students in seeking information
- 6) To suggest ways of meeting the information needs of the students.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

For the purpose of this research, the following research questions were formulated.

- 1) What are your information needs as a student of Baze University Abuja?
- 2) How often do you visit the library?
- 3) How do you seek for information to meet your information need?
- 4) What are your preferred information resources?
- 5) What are the problems encountered in your pursuit of information need?
- 6) What are the strategies to satisfy the information need and seeking behavior of Baze university students?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

A lot of studies have been conducted on the information need and seeking behavior of Students, information seeking behavior deals with psychology of the seeker, it has to do with searching, retrieving, locating and use of information. (Karunarathna, 2008).

Baro, et al (2010) in their study of the information seeking behavior of undergraduate students in the humanities in three universities in Nigeria, discovered that the information needs that make the undergraduate students search for information is academic information with the highest rating 233 (93.2 %), followed by personal information with 10 (4.0%), and sports information with least rating 7 (2.8%). According to the study, undergraduate students need academic information to write their course assignment, seminar papers, prepare for their class discussions, and prepare for their examinations and tests, and information to write their final year research papers more than any other information such as personal and sports information.

In another study conducted by Adekunle oyadeyi .E (2014) in their study of information need and seeking behavior among the students of Ondo State University of Science and Technology Okitipupa The findings revealed that course work and assignment, examination and text, general reading, seminars and workshops were factors that influence students' information seeking behavior. The findings further revealed that internet, lecture notes, test books and handout were the preferred and most used information sources. While complexity and lack of basic understanding of academic database were the major problems associated with the students' information seeking process in the library. The study concluded that it would be appropriate for the undergraduate students to take advantage of the services provided by the library to enhance their information seeking behavior in this ever dynamic information technology driven era and recommended that the library should organize user education/workshop at the beginning of every semester or session for all categories of students.

Owalabi, Jimoh and Okpeh (2010) in their study of information seeking behavior of Polytechnic students discovered that 285 (59.4%) of their respondents need information in relation to their academic. It shows that students use information primarily for academic purposes. The study concluded that students at the polytechnic seek information to improve their academic performance. In another study conducted by Nwobasi, Uwa and ossai-onnah (2013)

on information needs and seeking behavior of two universities in Imostate Nigeria that 70percent of students seek information to update knowledge and development of personal competencies, writing assignment, and that the major militating factor affecting information need and seeking behavior in both universities were inadequate information resources, inadequate qualified librarians and lack of time to access the information resources.

In other parts of the Tahir Muhammad, Mahmood Khalid and Shafique Farzana (2008) in their study of information needs and information seeking behavior of arts and humanities teacher of the university of Punjab Lahore Pakistan, the study reveals that consulting with experts in the subject field was the preferred method of getting information followed by the conversation with colleagues. Reference books were the most important resource for teaching. Consultation with knowledgeable persons or experts in the field was the most important source of information for the research. Most humanities teachers get information sources from their departmental library; they also maintain personal collections and/or personal libraries for this purpose. Most of the humanists prefer information in print, while they least prefer audiovisual material. Results of the study show that a majority of the humanists do their information-seeking activities at home. Meeting personally was the most-used channel of communication, followed by e-mail. Unavailability of required material was the most common problem in information-seeking.

Information use is a fundamental concept, which includes the construction of new knowledge and new meanings, the transformative act of shaping decisions and influencing others, and the movement and exchange of information with colleagues Chun wei choo et al (2008), information use come to mind when information acquired by a person to satisfy an information need is actually put into use.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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. According to Mart hers, etaal (2009) Questionnaires are a useful option to consider when conducting a survey. They can be cheaper than personal interviewing and quicker if the sample is large and widely dispersed. and also Cohen and Morris ion (2012) is of the view that questionnaire 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 undergraduate students of Baze University, Abuja who are registered library users. The total population of Baze undergraduate students is about two thousand (2000). A total of 200 students were selected using simple random sampling technique cutting across 6 faculties from 100 level to 400level which include faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Computing and Applied Sciences, Engineering, Medical Sciences and Environmental Science. The entire200 questionnaires were successfully collected.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages and presented in a tabular form (descriptive statistics) as the investigators approached the students personally cutting across all the six faculties.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	120	60%
Female	80	40%
Total	200	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 shows that 60% of the respondents are male while only 40% are female, this represent gender distribution of undergraduate students involved in the Survey.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents by level of study**

Level of Study	Frequency	Percentage
100 level (first year)	80	40%
200 level (second year)	70	35%
300level (third year)	30	15%
400level (fourth year)	20	10%
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2 Show distributions of undergraduate students by their year of study, majority of the students were in 100 level with 40% followed by 200 level Students with 35% then 300 Level Student with 15% while 400 level Student came Last, this was because 400 level student are not punctual to their lectures anymore due to time frame to meet up with submission of final year Project.

**Table 3: Frequency of usage of Library by respondents**

Library Usage	Frequency	percentage
Regularly	110	55%

Monthly	10	5%
Twice in a Week	30	15%
Once in a week	30	15%
rarely	20	10%
Total	200	100%

(Source: Primary data)

From Table 3 above it was deduced that 55% visit the library regularly 5% monthly 15% twice in a week 15% once in a week 10% rarely.

**Table 4: Purpose of Information Seeking**

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Entertainment	-	-
Personal Development	10	5%
Examination and course Work	10	5%
Research	40	20%
Assignments	140	70%
Total	200	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 4 indicates that assignment ranked first as the purpose of seeking information by undergraduate students of Baze University with 70%, information on research was ranked second as the most needed with 20% of respondent indicating research while 5% indicated personal development and examination and course work as purpose of seeking information While information on entertainment was the least rank as no student indicated entertainment as purpose of information seeking. This result collaborates with ikoja-idongo and kingongo-bukenya (2004) findings that the main information needs of undergraduate students are information on class assignments.

**Table 5: Method of Baze university undergraduate information search**

<b>Information Search Method</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Personal Collection	110	55%
Subscribed Baze University Online Database	-	
Library Textbook and journal	30	15%
University Library Internet	60	30%
Other Sources	-	-
Total	200	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

It was discovered that personal collection, library text book and journal, university library internet 55%, 15, 30% respectively are the most preferred method for information search by Baze university undergraduate students. Subscribed Baze university online databases and other sources are not preferred method of information search.

**Table 6: Preferred Undergraduate Information Resource for consultation**

<b>Preferred Information Resource</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lecture Notes	100	50%
internet	80	40%
Textbook	20	10%
Ebooks and journals	-	-
Reference materials.	-	-
Total	200	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

From table 6 above it was discovered that lecture notes is the most preferred information source for consultation with 50% of the respondents indicating it. Second most preferred information source is internet with 40% of respondent followed by textbook with 10% of respondents



indicating it. The least preferred information source for consultation is e-books and e-journals and reference material.

The results collaborates with Adekunle, (2014) findings that internet, lectures notes, text books and handout are the most preferred information sources while reference materials, newspapers prints and e-journals are the least used.

**Table 7: Use of electronic Database**

Yes	45%
No	55%
Total	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

The University library subscribes to electronic academic materials in addition to print information resources in line with its mandate to meet up with information needs of university community. Baze university undergraduate students were asked to indicate whether or not they use academic database to meet up with their information needs 45% said they use electronic database while 55% does not use academic or electronic database.

**Table 8: Problems/Challenges Encountered during Information Seeking**

<b>Problems/Challenges</b>	<b>frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Network Failure/Fluctuation	150	75%
Inadequate Knowledge on use of electronic resource/OPAC	40	20%
Insufficient Librarians in the library	-	-
Nonchalant attitude of Library staff	-	-
Information scattered in different sources	10	5%
Total	200	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 8 shows that the major problem faced by respondents when seeking information is internet network failure/fluctuation with 75% of the respondents indicating it. This is followed by inadequate knowledge on use of electronic resources/OPAC and information scattered in different sources with 20% and 5% respectively.

**Table 9: Strategies and suggestion to ameliorate the problems.**

<b>Strategies/suggestions</b>	<b>frequency</b>	<b>percentage</b>
Student should be trained on use of OPAC and electronic database	70	35%
Improvement on internet networks	110	55%
Qualified librarians should be employed	-	
Information material should be well organized and protected.	20	10%
Library staff should change their approach to work.	-	-
total	200	100%

(Source: Primary Data)

From Table 9 above Baze university undergraduate students were asked to recommend from a list suggestion for improving their access to information. 55% suggested improvement on internet network while 35% suggested that they should be trained on use of OPAC and electronic resources. While 20% suggested information material should be well organized and protected. No indication was made for qualified librarian should be employed and library staff should change their approach to work

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDING**

From the research carried out it was established that majority of the respondents were male, majority of the students visit the library frequently, and 100level undergraduate students make use of the library more in comparison to other levels.

It was discovered that undergraduate students of Baze University have information need that is related to academic activities such as assignments, research, examination and course work and

also information on personal development. This study collaborates with ikoja-idongo and kingongo-bukenya (2004) findings that the main information needs of undergraduate students are information on class assignments. it was also discovered that preferred information resources for consultation by Baze University undergraduate students are lecture notes, information on internet, textbook, the high preference for internet as an information source in table 6 may be connected with free and easy access to internet provided by the library as well as direct answers retrieved from search engines such as Google and the reason for low usage of e-journals and e-book as indicated in table 6 may be unconnected to the inadequate knowledge by students on use of electronic database. This is connected to table 7 where the findings revealed that the use of electronic resources by Baze university undergraduate student is low. The observation at the electronic section in the university library is that most students on the workstation are using Google search engine or Askme.com.

The major challenges encountered by Baze University undergraduate students to satisfy their information curiosity are internet network failure/fluctuation and inadequate knowledge on use of electronic resource/OPAC and solutions suggested were improvement on internet network, students should be trained on use of OPAC and electronic database and that information material should be well organized and protected.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The information need of Baze University undergraduate students is diverse but they rely heavily on library internet connectivity, their personal collection, lecture notes, library textbooks and journals. From the study it was deduced that Baze university undergraduate students are not satisfied with the internet network connectivity and have limited knowledge on use of academic electronic resources when trying to retrieve desired Information.

The following suggestions and recommendations are made to meet the user' expectation which is based on the present study and suggestions given by respondents.

-Library should develop adequate library collection keeping in view the information need of university library.

-Training courses should be organized frequently for awareness and continuous utilization of electronic resources. It should be incorporated as part of Gens 121 Use of Library, ICT and study skills.

-I.T staff in Baze University should be tasked with continuous fixing of the problems associated with internet network, hardware and Software.

-Radio-Frequency Identification (Rfid) should be Installed at the point of entry to mitigate against theft of library Materials.

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