



Information Searching Pattern of Undergraduate Students in Taraba State University Library, Jalingo

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Abstract: *The article work is on information searching pattern of undergraduate students in Taraba State University library, Jalingo. The aim of this paper was to discovered pattern use to search information materials in the library. During the visitation of the corresponding author to the library in the month of October 2015, he discovered that students do not makes used of the catalogue cabinet, and they search information materials directly on the shelf. They do not known how to use Index at the back of textbooks. Therefore, this paper will help students to know some of the strategies use in the library to locate exact information and it will help management of the school to develop library. Design adopted for this study is a descriptive research method. The population of this research is the entire registered user (students) of the library. Simple sampling technique was used. The research instrument used in this study is a standard questionnaire and total numbers of forty-five (45) students were selected as a sample size for the study. It was discovered that Taraba State University undergraduate students has negative attitude towards information searching with the traditional system library. They preferred using their smart phones and Internet (cybercafés) to search for assignment and others academic activities. Solutions were proffered to the challenge that was discovered by the researchers.*

Key words: *Information, Searching, Undergraduates, Taraba and University*

1. Introduction

The word pattern simply means something set before one for guidance or imitation. In the library parlance guidance is like a pointer that direct library user to where they find

informational materials. According to Karunanayake and Nagata(2014) explained that students behave differently during information searching in libraries according to their patterns of library use, knowledge and perceptions. Because of these differences, some students appear to be better than others in using libraries. The reasons are multifaceted and not limited to a single variable or discrete entity. There is a need to identify these variables which affect individual behaviour in libraries.

However, there are many different variables to consider such as discipline, gender and academic years of learning that may affect the students' library use. The variables of library use, search skills, knowledge of library resources/services, and perceptions/attitudes towards the library are highly correlated at multiple levels with students in libraries. Identifying these correlations provides a basis for identifying groups of students with similar profiles and needs, so that the library can tailor services and resources for different groups to improve the effectiveness of their library use and learning outcomes (Karunanayake and Nagata, 2014).

Librarians have a long and distinguished tradition of services assisting students to find information for research assignments in a variety of courses and in various disciplines (Kuhlthau, 1994). Furthermore, there are two basic library services in which the professional librarian is involved in such intervention: **reference and bibliographic instruction**. Reference is mediation with the student to help in the location and use of sources and information. We might think of mediation as occurring on different levels, from a simple response to a specific question to getting involved in a student's extended search process. Bibliographic instruction is education for learning tools, sources, and concepts of information and strategies for locating and using tools and sources (Kuhlthau, 1994). Bibliographic instruction, also, may be described as occurring on different levels, from general introductory sessions to instruction on identifying and interpreting information to consultation on an evolving problem.

1.1. Modeling human information-seeking behaviour

In this paper, information seeking is defined as information behaviour that consists of an active pursuit of information by scholars through the use of information systems. This definition acknowledges the reliance of searchers on finding information that they do not explicitly specify but that is nevertheless vital to their work tasks. Information-*searching* behaviour is the aspect of information-seeking behaviour that deals especially with active, directed searching in information systems for data that can be specified to some degree (Wilson 1999)



Figure 1: Wilson’s model: from information behaviour to information searching. Modified from Wilson (1999) Cited in Sadeh, (2013).

According to Wilson, information-searching behaviour “is the ‘micro-level’ of behavior employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds. It consists of all the interactions with the system, whether at the level of human computer interaction (for example, use of the mouse and clicks on links) or at the intellectual level (for example, adopting a Boolean search strategy or determining the criteria for deciding which of two books selected from adjacent places on a library shelf is most useful), which will also involve mental acts, such as judging the relevance of data or information retrieved” (Wilson, 2000 cited in sadeh, 2013).

Several models that shed light on the way people look for information have influenced much of the research in the area of information seeking and searching. In 1989, long before

information systems were readily available to the general public, Bates suggested the berry picking model. This model, which applies to a range of search techniques, offers a new perspective on the nature of the query and the search process and embeds the search process in an information territory. Bates explains: Users may begin with just one feature of a broader topic, or just one relevant reference, and move through a variety of sources. Each new piece of information they encounter gives them new ideas and directions to follow and, consequently, a new conception of the query. At each stage they are not just modifying the search terms used in order to get a better match for a single query. Rather the query itself (as well as the search terms used) is continually shifting, in part or whole." (Bates 1989).

Bates also emphasizes that the search is taking place in the context of a "universe of interest," which is within the larger context of the "universe of knowledge" (Bates 1989). The behavior of the searcher is the focus of attention in this model, and the "continuity represented by the line of the arrow is the continuity of a single human being moving through many actions toward a general goal of a satisfactory completion of research related to an information need. The changes in direction of the arrow illustrate the changes of an evolving search as the individual follows up various leads and shifts in thinking" (Bates 1989).

1.2. Brief History of Taraba State University Library, Jalingo

Taraba State University is one of the fastest growing University in North-East of Nigeria. In terms of structures, facilities, and human resources the university covered a larger space. For instance, within eight years of establishment, they have almost completed senate building and gigantic library that will contain over one thousand (1000) seating capacity students and other physical structures for various departments with the help of the Governor. The University has two campuses namely: Main and Mini Campuses. The University was established by Taraba State Law No. 4 of 28th February in the year 2008 with Prof. Ahmed Usman Jalingo as pioneer Vice -Chancellor. The University, located in Jalingo the state capital is conventional one approved by NUC programmes and cut cross disciplines in three faculties such as Arts and Social Science, Agriculture and Education. Presently, faculty of science was just added. They are over thirty-three(33) departments; presently, Medicine and Engineering faculties already in pipeline. The present principal officers in Taraba State University, Jalingo are very hard working set of people.

Taraba State University Library System (TSULS) was established at the inception of the University. The TSULS has been a part of the massive expansion and development of academic and infrastructure facilities of the university. Thus, the university library was also established to meet the user's needs for: Information, knowledge, education, research, recreation, aesthetic appreciation and cultural enjoyment. The TSULS presently has a collection of 25,000 volumes, located at Jalingo. The e-library has over (77) computers with subscription to twenty-one (21) databases (such as AGORA, science directory, bioline, EBSCO, BLDs, and HINARI and so on that in both e-books and e-journals. Total numbers of e-resources are over five (5) million. Main library uses **CONCOURSE OPAC** to search by author, title and subject. TSULS is now hybrid library.

University Library Holding

Books:

No. of titles: 5,000

No. of volumes: 25,000

Journals:

No. of Title: 1,316

No. of Volumes: 6,580

E-Library Holding

Over (80) computers

21 Databases

Over 5 million e-resources

1.3. Purpose of the study

The general objective of this paper is to find out information searching pattern of undergraduate students in Taraba State University, Janligo. Specifically:-

1. To find out the information needs of undergraduates
2. To determine information searching/discovering strategies use by students
3. To know problems faced by students while searching for information in the library.
4. To proffer solution to the problems facing undergraduates (Students) when searching for informational materials.

2. Research Method

The design adopted for this study is a descriptive research method. The population of this research is the entire registered user (students) of the library. Simple sampling technique was used. The research instrument used in this study is a standard questionnaire and total numbers of forty-five(45) students were selected as a sample size for the study. This was determined as results of library user recorded on daily basis during the time of the corresponding author visitation to Taraba State University, Library. Data generated from respondents were collated via the tally system to obtain the frequency of occurrence of the scores, and the total score occurrence was computed and analyzed using simple percentage.

3. Discussion and Findings

3.1. Information needs that make you comes to use the library

Information needs	Response	Percentage (%)
information related to my course of study only	22	48.8
Information on health, politics and football	3	6.6

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Information on career development and scholarship	4	8.8
Information on social activities	3	6.6
Information on current issues	5	11.1
Information on self development	8	17.8
Total	45	100%

Table shows that 22(48.8%) students need information related to my course of study only, while 3(6.6%) need Information on self development, while 5(11.1%) are those that need Information on current issues and 8(17.8%) need Information on career development and scholarship. Students are not interested on information on health, politics, and football as well as social activities was 3(6.6%).

3.2. Information searching strategies used by undergraduate students for information materials

Information searching strategies	Response	Percentage (%)
Using references at the back of textbooks	23	51.1
Browsing collection	5	11.5
Recommended reading list by lecturer	-	-
Searching directly on the shelves	1	2.2
Browsing the Internet	2	4.4
Searching cataloguing cards	3	6.6
Inquiring from library staff/course mates	3	6.6

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Total	45	100%
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This table shows that almost all the strategies were used by students. Searching by cataloguing cards cabinet 3(6.6%) browsing the internet 2(4.4%) while recommended reading list followed by inquiring from library staff/course mates 3(6.6%) and using reference at the back of textbooks 23(51.1%).

3.3. Problems faced by students while seeking information

Problems of information seeking	Response	Percentage (%)
Materials not available on the shelf	16	35.5
Outdated reading materials	11	24.4
Lack of awareness of the source to get information materials needed	5	11.5
Lack of time by student	1	2.2
Non-supportive behaviour of library staff are not willing/unfriendly to student	5	11.5
Unavailability of internet facility in the library	5	11.5
Shortage of computer	2	4.4
Total	45	100%

The table above shows or identifies the problems faced by students while seeking information which. Outdated reading materials 11(24.4%) followed by materials not available on the shelf 16(35.5%). The next is non supportive behaviour of library staff or library staff are not willing/unfriendly to students 5(11.5%) while the last is unavailability of internet facility in the library 5(11.5%). We can now see the problems faced by students while seeking information in the library

3.4. Solution to information seeking and needs to students

Solution to the problems	Response	Percentage (%)
Library guide	2	4.4
Library facilities/information in all formats	10	22.2
Digital library 24/7 on campus	10	22.2
Trained professional librarians	3	6.6
Acquisition of current information resources	20	44.4
Total	45	100%

Table shows that solution to information seeking and needs to students include digital library services 24/7 on campus 10(22.2%), trained professional librarians in the library 3(6.6%) Library guide provision for students 2(4.4%) and library facilities/ information materials should be provided in all formats10 (22.2%). Therefore, researchers can conclude that the solution list above should be carried out by library management in Nigerian universities.

4. Findings

The findings from the study are quite revealing. It was discovered that few Taraba University undergraduate students has negative attitude towards information searching with the traditional library. Findings are in line with Ajiboye and Adeyinka (2007) examined the information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in the University of Botswana. The result of the study revealed that the internet is the most consulted source, followed by students' class notes and handouts. This finding is further confirmed by Valentine (1993) who conducted a similar study and found out that undergraduates looked for the fastest way that would lead to satisfactory results when doing research by going for electronic information sources first. Table 1 shows that 22(48.8%) students need information related to my course of study only, while 3(6.6%) need Information on self development, while 59(11.1%) are those that need Information on current issues and 8(17.8%) need Information on career development and scholarship. Searching by cataloguing cards cabinet 3(6.6%) browsing the internet 2(4.4%) while recommended reading list followed by inquiring from library staff/course mates 3(6.6%) and using reference at the back of textbooks 23(51.1%). Findings were in line with Chikonzo and Aina (2006) researched into the information needs and sources of information used by

veterinary students at the University of Zimbabwe. Findings from the study revealed that writing assignments and studying for tests or examination were the primary tasks for which they required information and the major sources used to obtain information were books, videos, lecture notes, handouts, the internet, projects, CD-ROM database and journals.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study investigated information searching patterns among undergraduate students in Taraba University library, Jalingo. Conceptualizing information need is a very difficult task. This is because the needs of individuals usually vary from time to time due to several factors. However, 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. Based on the findings the researchers which to recommend the following to management of library of higher institutions in Nigeria especially in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

- ❖ Academic Library should provide a guide for students on how to use the library,
- ❖ Management of the school should provide library facilities/information materials in all formats up to date,
- ❖ Digital library services should be provide 24/7 on campus
- ❖ Taraba State university Library management(TSULM) carry out awareness about library services twice in semester,
- ❖ Taraba state university library management should trained professional librarians and placed them at technical department, circulation department, reference and serial department of the library and;
- ❖ Library visit should be carrying out for both new and old students twice in semester, this will help students know the information searching pattern better.

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