

## INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the information seeking behaviour of faculty members of the Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE). The Population of the study was the full time faculty member in FUPRE. A structured questionnaire was used for data gathering in the University. The questionnaire data was analyzed using frequency, bar chart and percentage for easy interpretation. The research finding show that the respondents use books (print & online) as their preferred source of information. , while the major information need of faculty members is academic and research need, the research also showed that faculties demand for information via google and other online sources. Poor internet facilities, irregular power supply, poor searching skills, lack of time, while some faculty members said they are not satisfied with the materials in the library were found as factors affecting the information seeking behaviour of respondents. The following were recommended in line with the findings of the study: FUPRE should improve on its internet facilities to assist faculties in their search for information, Faculty should ensure they have sufficient power supply in their homes since they get power throughout their working hours, faculty members should be educated more on the importance and use of information in their academic and research work.

**Keywords:** Faculty Members, Information Seeking Behaviour, Nigerian University.

### INTRODUCTION

The present era is called the “Information era.” Information has become the most important element for progress in society. To thrive in this modern era, one needs a variety of information, no matter how well versed one is in a field or profession (Tahir, 2008).The investigation of the information seeking behaviour of academic staff is vital in supporting them to access and use information resources to meet their required information needs. Information-seeking behavior remains an important research area. It is estimated that the number of publications on information-seeking behavior were more than ten thousand in the 1990s alone (Case, 2002).Libraries and other information providers strive to understand users' information needs and how they try to fulfill these needs. This understanding helps design and offer appropriate user-centered information systems/services (Rafiq & Ameen, 2009).

KOC University Library Glossary (2014) see 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, the message is conveyed by the use of a medium of communication or expression. Information is very vital to every human being, when demanded; it is usually expected to be put into use to solve a particular need. The nature of information is not easy to describe. Bhatti (2009) defined information as recorded experience that is used in decision-making. I see information as already processed data used in quality decision making.

Information is data that has been processed into a meaningful form. This is an assemblage of data in a comprehensible form capable of communication and use; the essence of it is that a meaning has been attached to the raw facts (International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science, 2003).

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.

According to the free dictionary (2012), a faculty member is an educator who works at a college or university. The need for the improvement in the quality of education has become apparent in Nigeria in the higher educational sector. The advent of information communication technologies has brought about the influx of information in diverse formats, which has affected largely the information seeking behaviour of academics in institutions of higher learning.

Faculty members needs information for diverse purposes, getting the required information to meet their needs possess a great challenge for them. This study is therefore aimed at determining the information seeking behaviour of faculty members with a view to improving their searching skills, identify the challenges they face while searching for information and proffer possible solutions to them.

### **Study Area**

The Federal University of Petroleum Resource Effurun (FUPRE) in Delta State Nigeria was established and approved by the Federal Executive Council meeting of 14 March, 2007 and admitted its first set of undergraduates in 2008. FUPRE have two colleges, which are the college of science and college of technology. The study covers all full time faculty members in the Federal University of Petroleum Resources.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Studying the information seeking behaviour of faculty members will enable libraries deliver standard services, which will improve the searching skills, teaching and research output of academics in the community.

This study sought to establish ways of improving the information-seeking behaviour of faculty members. To attain this goal, the study stipulated the following objectives:

- To find out the sources of information faculty members are familiar with
- To discover their information needs
- To determine their information demand and use
- To establish the problems that faculty members encounter in information seeking

### **Research Questions**

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

- What are the sources of information faculty members are familiar with?
- What are the information needs of faculty members?

- How do faculty members demand for information to meet their needs?
- What are the factors militating against the availability and accessibility of information by faculty members?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of information needs and gathering behavior dates back to 1948 when Bernal and others presented a paper on scientific information at the 1948 Royal Society conference (Bernal, 1960). During the past 30 years or so, a considerable body of literature has been produced dealing with information needs and information-seeking behavior of both individuals and groups in a variety of contexts (Anwar, Al-Ansari & Abdullah, 2004). Information seeking behaviour deals with the psychological behaviour of the seeker. It involves the searching, locating, retrieving and using of information (Karunarathna, 2008). An Information need is a gap in a person's knowledge. When a person identifies such a gap, it may be expressed as a question or a search query (LISWiki, 2015). Information needs leads to search and demand for information to meet the required gap.

Kakai, et al., (2004) have defined information-seeking behavior as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development. Majid & Kassim (2000) note that, "information needs and seeking behavior of academicians have also been a popular area of research. They studied the law faculty of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and found that they ranked books as the most important information source for teaching and research followed by law reports and statutes. Information-seeking behavior of students, researchers, and professionals has been the focus of enquiry for decades.

A lot of studies have been conducted on the information seeking behaviour of faculty members. Rafiq & Ameen (2009) carried out a study on the information seeking behaviour and user satisfaction of university instructors of the National Textile University (NTU). They discovered that respondents heavily rely on google, yahoo, and MSN, while hotmail and yahoo are preferred email servers followed by gmail.

Mahajan (2009) did a research on information- seeking behaviour: A study of Panjab University, India. In their research, all respondents said ICT has influenced their information seeking behaviour positively and it is highly beneficial to them. Wang, et.al... (2008) carried out a study on the information seeking behaviour of academic researchers in the internet age: A user study in the United States, China and Greece. In this research, the participants in different countries show some differences in use and perception of the IICTs. These differences are likely due to their respective information environments. Shahzad (2007) conducted a survey to find out the information-seeking behavior of faculty members of Government College University, Lahore. He acquired the data from all three faculties, i.e., science and technology, social sciences and humanities.

Khan (2012) carried out a study on the Use of Information Sources by Faculty Members, Research scholars and Students of the Faculty of Commerce, AMU, Aligarh: A Survey. In this research, it was discovered that most of the faculty members as well as research scholars consulted Emeraldinsight.com and Science Direct.com for accessing their required information.

User's studies helps libraries in developing their collections, upgrading facilities, and improving services to effectively meet the information needs of its clientele. A review of the related literature reveals that no comprehensive study on the information needs and information-seeking behavior of faculty members at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources has been conducted.

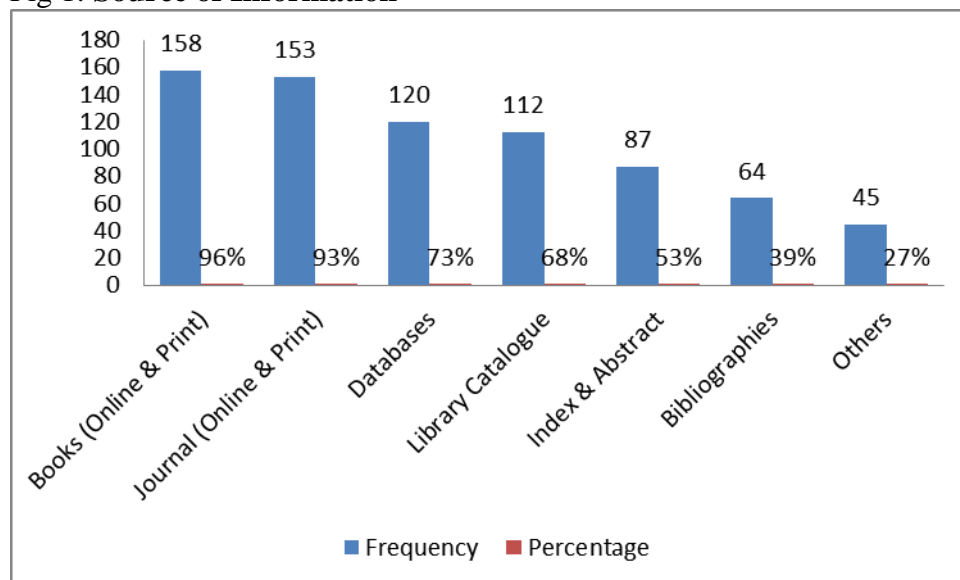
## METHODOLOGY

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. Questionnaires was used for collecting data for this research because Cohen & 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 full time academic staff of the federal university of Petroleum Resources. The total population of the study was 168-faculty member of the federal university of petroleum resources (FUPRE) .Questionnaires was administered to all 168faculties and there was 98% response rate.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

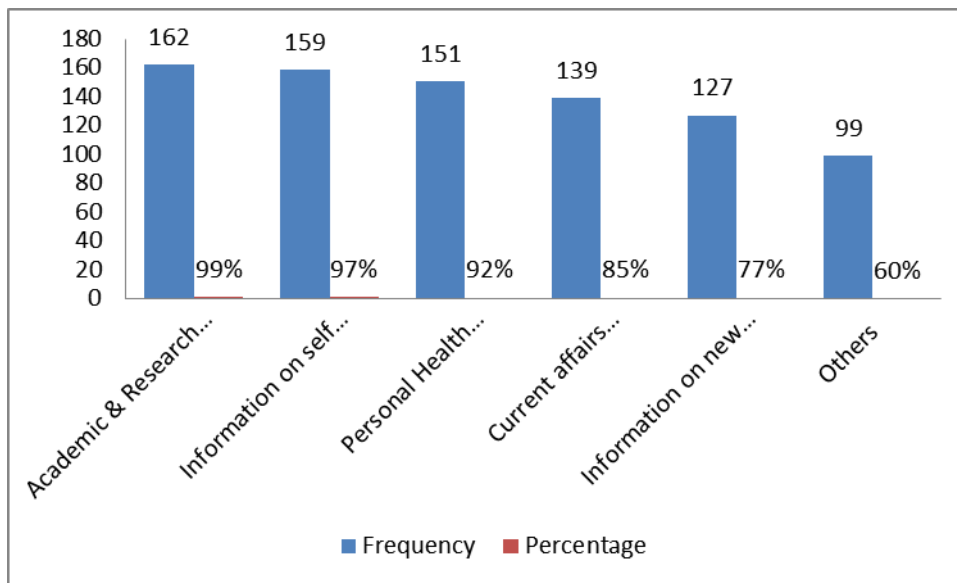
Out of the 168 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the faculty members, 164(98%) were retrieved. The data collected in the study is presented according to the objectives of the study.

Fig 1: Source of Information



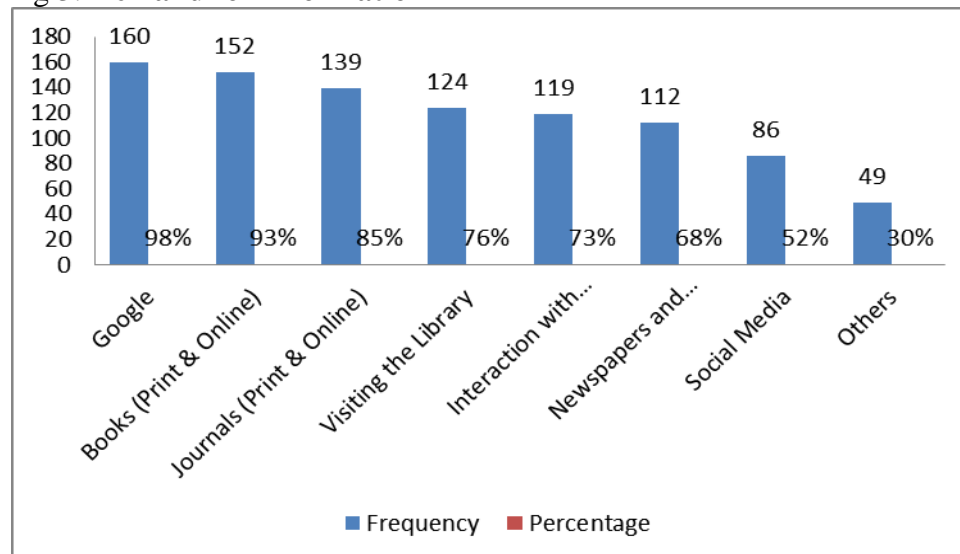
As observed from **Fig 1**, 96% of respondents use books (print & online) 93% Journals (print & online), 73% databases, 68% library catalogue, 53% index & abstract, 39% bibliographies and 27% use other sources.

Fig 2: Information Needs



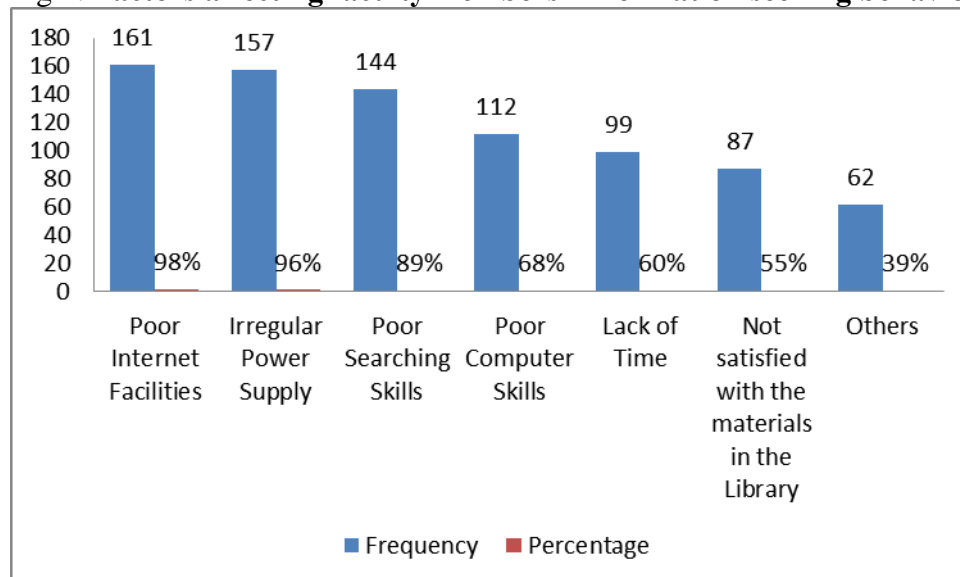
As observed from **fig 2**, that (99%) of respondents information need is academic and research, 97% information on self-development, 92% personal health information, 85% current affairs, 77% information on new trends and 60% has other information needs.

Fig 3: Demand for information



**Figure 3** indicates that 98% of the respondents demand for information from google and other online sources, 93% from books (print and online), 85% journals (print & online), 76% from visiting the library, 73% interaction with colleagues, 68% from newspaper and magazines, 52% from social media and 30% demand for information from other sources.

Fig 4: Factors affecting faculty members' information seeking behaviour



**Fig 4** shows that, 98% poor internet facilities, 96% irregular power supply, 89% have poor searching skills, 68% poor computer skills, 60% lack of time, 55% of the respondents are not satisfied with the materials in the library and 39% other factors.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study in fig 1 indicated that books (Online and Print) were the most used sources of information seeking behavior of faculty members in a Nigerian University. The finding supported by Majid & Kassim (2000) note that books as the most important information source for teaching and research. The findings in fig 2 shows that there is no significant difference between information needs of faculty members in Nigerian University i.e. 99% indicated academic and research while 97% of participants emphasis on self-development whereas 92% personal health information also, 85% current affairs while 77% information on new trends and 60% has other information needs. The findings in fig 3 emphasis that, goggle and other online source were the most bases for information to meet their needs. This finding is in consonance with Rafiq & Ameen (2009) carried out a study on the information seeking behaviour and user satisfaction of university instructors of the National Textile University (NTU). They discovered that respondents heavily rely on google, yahoo, and MSN, while hotmail and yahoo are preferred email servers followed by gmail. The result from fig 4 reveals that, 98% of the participants identified poor internet facilities as a major challenge while 96% indicated irregular power supply, 89% emphasized poor searching skills whereas 68% identified poor computer skills, 60% lack of time while 55% of the respondents are not satisfied with the materials in the library and 39% identified other.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Certain conclusion can be drawn from the study: Just as the faces of individuals are different, information needs of individuals are different in some cases and similar in some. It is obvious that faculty members at the university know the importance of information, given the fact that a majority of them seek information to meet their academic and research needs, personal development, health needs and other information needs. In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:



- That Federal University of Petroleum Resources should improve on its internet facilities to assist faculties in their search for information.
- The library should provide both online and offline databases for the consultation of faculties.
- The University administration should provide more books (electronic and print) and journals (electronic and print) to aid faculties academic and research needs.
- In house training should be conducted frequently for faculty members to improve their computer skills.
- Since power supply is provided for faculty members during the official working hours, they should seek alternative power sources in their homes due to the epileptic power provided by the government.
- Faculty members should be educated more on the importance and use of information in their academic and research work.
- Since it is obvious that faculty members need information for differs purposes, adequate time should be created to search for the required information to meet their needs.
- For health related information, faculty members should visit their physician regular to get health tips and advice.
- Since faculty members also seek information from friends and colleagues, they should always strive to have a cordial relationship with them.

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