

Information Needs of Junior Employees and their Seeking Behaviour in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the Junior Employees' Information Needs and their Seeking Behaviour in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consists of six hundred and ninety (690) Junior Staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka which were on pay-roll at the time of the study. One hundred (100) junior employees were selected from main campus in Awka through purposive sampling technique. Two research questions guided the study. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Mean rating was used to answer research questions. The major findings of the study identified the information needs of junior employees of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka to include civil service information, information on promotion requirement, social information, information for career development, health information, employment information and academic information. Their information seeking behaviour includes discussion with colleagues within school, visiting library/information centre and browsing the Internet. They also preferred locating information especially in library independently and with help of a Librarian. Based on the findings, the conclusions were made and it was recommended that: adequate and relevant information materials should be acquired so as to meet junior employees' information needs; seminars and conferences should be held for the junior employees at regular intervals to keep them abreast of latest happenings in the University and orient them on the right attitude to seek and use information.

Keywords: Information, Information need, Information seeking behavior, Junior employees', Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria.

Introduction

Information is an indispensable and essential ingredient in today's social, economic, industrial, political and technological development. Information is so pervasive that there is hardly any endeavour in which it is not an important component. It is very apparent today that without information, no meaningful development can be achieved. The progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. The more information, the better an individual or business can anticipate, and therefore make informed decision.

The term information despite its wide usage as observed by Owusu-Ansah (as cited in Anunobi & Udem, 2014) is not devoid of definitional controversy, from its more general and widely used context in which it evoked communication. The universally accepted definition of information as observed by Omekwu (2003) may still be debatable. In this regards, Aina (2004) noted that the term information is difficult to define because it has several dimensions. To some people, information is news, while others refer to information as facts, and yet to others, it is essentially data. While telecommunications engineers associate information with bits and data, librarians associate information with recorded knowledge, and the microbiologist consider information as genes in DNA, which is transmitted from one generation to the other. In an attempt to provide universally accepted definition of information, Ojedokun (2007) opined that information is statements of facts, figures, ideas and creative works of the human intellect, which are logically or by way of reasoning interrelated, and have been communicated formally or informally in any formats. Ifidion and Ifidion (2007) perceived information to be a data presented in a readily comprehensively form to which meaning has attributed to the context of its use. The term information from the aforementioned can be seen as any communication or representations of knowledge such as facts, data or opinions in any form that is meaningful to the recipients which will be used in making adequate decisions.

The use of information is dependent on the need for that information. In other words, information is the key factor that necessitates information need which is often understood in the science as evolving from vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning. The term information needs has been used in a variety of ways. According to Ehikhamenor (1990), 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. Emmanuel and Jegede(2011) posited that information need arise whenever individuals find themselves in a situation requiring knowledge to deal with the situation as they deem fit. Nnadozie (2008) stated that information need differs from one gender to another, or from one organization to another, even those that belongs to the same profession may need different information. Igwe (2012) categorized the information needs into the following: educational and academics information needs; political information needs; job opportunities and business information needs; economic information needs; social and entertainment (arts) information needs; agricultural, geographical and environmental information needs; medical and health information needs; scientific and technological information needs; religious and cultural information needs; legal and human rights information needs; international and global information needs. Wilson, (1997) pointed out that there must be an attendant motive when a person experiences information needs. This attendant motive is what prompt the individual involve to take necessary steps to locate and

identify resources required to meet his/her need when it arises which prompted the concept of information seeking. In other words, an information need is a requirement that derives people into information seeking.

Information seeking behavior refers to the way people search for and utilize information. Information seeking behaviour as noted by Wilson (2000) entails the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information including active and passive information seeking. In the quest for information, different kinds of behaviour are manifested as individuals have different reasons for wanting information, different levels of search skill and preference for some types of information bearing materials. Onuoha and Awoniyi, (2011) affirm that information seeking involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Wilson further stated that information seeking behaviour deals with the way an information user conducts his/herself or acts when looking for, receiving or acquiring information. The utterance, gesture, anger, anxiety, eagerness, reluctance, zeal or any other attribute displayed by an information user in his efforts to purchase, acquire or receive news, data, stores or anything, that may inform or misinform his knowledge or understanding of something. All these constitute seeking behaviour. Information seeking behaviour of people varies in respect of their age, occupation, where they work, educational level, the social status, religious belief, cultural background and orientation. It is also of important view that interest in information sought, an authenticity of the source motives and past experience in similar content do affect seeking behaviour.

Every locality, group and individual needs information for survival. Junior employees {which are those junior staff that possessed qualifications ranging from Ordinary National Diploma (OND), Senior School Examination Certificate (SSCE) to First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC)} need information for their activities and in the advancement of their knowledge. It is obvious that the need for information arises in every human endeavours, in business, education, health, etc. and as a result, the information needs of people varies. Thus, the information needs of the junior employees vary. Their needs could be the kind of information that will be necessary for self-development of personal transformation, the kind of information they will need for their promotion, the kind of information materials they will need to read and pass their conversion examinations especially for those who has acquired additional qualification, the kind of information they will need to pass their degree or diploma examinations for those doing part time degree or diploma programmes, the kind of information materials that will be useful for their era of administrative cadres, and other job opportunities.

The question now is what are the information needs of junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, how they are seeking information and what ways are they pursuing information, in order to resolve their information needs.

Many scholars have examined the information needs and seeking behavior of different groups of people in Nigeria and elsewhere. Oladokun and Aina (2009) carried out a study on the library and information needs and barriers to the use of information sources by continuing education students at the University of Botswana. The study found out that major areas of information needs of the respondents are related to course of study; job opportunities; career development and further education. The study also found out that the university library does not adequately

cater for the library and information needs of the students. Also, Olalekan, Osahon & Solanke, (2015) carried out a study to examine information needs and seeking behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Ilorin. The results indicated that undergraduate use information sought to prepare for examination, test and assignment while information sources available from which the respondents seek information are books, journals, Internet, etc. Similarly, Onouha and Awoniyi (2011) carried out a comparative analysis of students' information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students of Babcock University (Nigeria) and Solusi University (Zimbabwe). The results show that students in the two universities surveyed, sought information mainly for the purpose of updating their knowledge, preparing for examinations and doing assignments. Although one would have expected that students consult librarians / library staff, when seeking for information, it was however observed that students prefer discussing with colleagues or person(s) they consider more knowledgeable. Majid, Hayat, Patel and Vijayaraghavan (2012) carried out a study on information needs and seeking behaviour of business students. The main objective of their study was to investigate information needs, information seeking behavior and usage of different information sources by MBA students in Singapore. It was found that the basic purposes of seeking information by the students were for writing assignments, conducting case study analyses, and preparing for student presentations and class discussions. Mostly students were looking for information about market research, financial information, economic news, and industry trends. Electronic information sources were considered more important than printed sources. Ajiboye and Tella (2007) conducted a study on university undergraduate's information-seeking behavior and results show that 12% of the respondents (students) required information for their personal development, while 11.25% claimed that they sought for information on health matter, and 64.1% sought for information for their academic development, 9.3% seek information to secure employment.

The aforementioned review of empirical studies revealed that many studies have been carried out on information needs and seeking behavior of mostly students, faculty members and others but none has been carried out on junior employees. The review has revealed a knowledge gap in the area of information needs and seeking behavior of junior employees especially in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. Hence, this research was designed to fill the gap.

Nnamdi Azikiwe University is an off-shoot of the Anambra State University of Technology (ASUTECH) founded in 1980 by the then government of Old Anambra State. ASUTECH had a multi-campus structure with campuses spread across Enugu, Awka, Abakaliki, and Nnewi. Enugu served as the main campus for its central administration. Then came the creation of Enugu State out of the Old Anambra State in 1991, which gave the ASUTECH campuses at Nnewi and Awka a new status quo as the University of the New Anambra State. The two campuses were merged as one and the University has its main campus at Awka, still answering ASUTECH.

In 1991, still, Nnamdi Azikiwe University was established by the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Edict No 5 of 1991, named after one of the prominent, famous Nigerians, the first indigenous Nigerian president, the Rt. Hon. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Ovwelle of Onitsha. This University took off at a temporary site Awka in rented apartments at Achalla Road off Enugu-Onitsha Expressway. One of the rented apartments was used as the library.

In 1992, the university changed its status from a State University to a Federal University and a portion of land for a permanent site acquired at Agu-Awka. All the remaining faculties that were still at the temporary site were finally moved to the permanent site in 2006 (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The information age has shown that no organization can manage its activities very well without adequate information. The junior employees of every organization have their peculiar information needs and their seeking behaviour. The availability of the sources and other media in which they can obtain meaningful information that are most useful to them should contribute greatly to satisfy their information needs.

However, it is assumed that the junior employees due to the nature of their work could be experiencing difficulty in accessing information resources and also dictating the right information to apply when taking decisions. Despite the important roles play by researches who have carried out different studies on information needs and information seeking, to the researcher's best of knowledge, no single study has been conducted in the context of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria on the junior employees' information needs and seeking behaviour since its establishment as federal university in 1992. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the junior employees' information needs and their seeking behaviour in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify the information needs of junior employees and their seeking behaviour. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the junior employees' information needs in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
2. Ascertain the junior employees' information seeking behaviour in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research

1. What are the junior employees' information needs in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?
2. What are the junior employees' information seeking behaviour in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consists of Six Hundred and Ninety (690) Junior Staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka which were on pay-roll at the time of this study. From the four campuses that make up Nnamdi Azikiwe University, five hundred (500) Junior Staff were in Awka Campus, One hundred and thirty-five (135) in Nnewi campus, Fifty-five (55) in Agulu campus and in Ifite-ogwari – Nil. One hundred (100) junior employees were selected from main campus in Awka through purposive sampling

technique. Two research questions guided the study. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Mean rating was used to answer research questions. Midpoint for responses in four (4) point scale was 2.50 which was the mean of the four scales derived as follows, $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50$. Items to the values of 2.5 and above were agreed or accepted while below 2.5 were rejected.

Result

The results were presented to actualize the purpose of the research.

Research Question 1: What are the junior employees' information needs in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

Table 1

Mean scores of the Response of junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka on their Information Needs

S/N.	Information Needs	Mean \bar{x}	Decision
1	Social Information	3.29	Agree
2	Health Information	3.18	Agree
3	Cultural Information	2.31	Agree
4	Civil Service Information	3.58	Agree
5	Religious Information	2.28	Disagree
6	Political Information	2.41	Agree
7	Business Information	2.3	Disagree
8	Information for career development	3.23	Agree
9	Employment Information	3.15	Agree
10	Academic Information	3.13	Agree
11	Entertainment/Leisure Information	2.49	Disagree
12	Information on promotion requirements	3.50	Agree

Table 1 shows that out of 12 items listed as information needs of junior staff, the respondents agreed on 8 items as their information needs with high indication on 5 items which includes civil service information with (3.58) as their most information need, followed by information on promotion requirements (3.50), social information (3.29), information for career development (3.23), health information (3.18), employment information (3.15), academic information (3.13). Business information has least mean score of 2.3

Research Question 2: What are the junior employees' Information Seeking Behaviour in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

In answering this research question, mean scores of response of junior employees on their information seeking behavior is measured based on their method of seeking information and how they locate information.

Table 2

Mean Score of the Response of Junior Employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka on their Information Seeking Behaviour

S/N	Information Seeking Behaviour	Mean \bar{x}	Decision
1	I discuss with colleagues within the school whenever I need information	3.15	Agree
2	I visit university library whenever I need information	2.51	Agree
3	I browse the internet whenever I need information	2.50	Agree
4	I send somebody to search and get the information I need	2.15	Disagree
5	I ask my senior colleague for the information I need	1.75	Disagree
6	I ask library staff for an assistance in order to locate information	2.94	Agree
7	I prefer searching for information I need on my own	2.67	Agree
8	I ask people who are expert on my subject interest for information	2.12	Disagree
9	I go to newspaper and magazines vendors to the read so as to get the information	1.68	Disagree
10	I listen to radio and watch television in order to get the information I need	2.31	Disagree

The results in table 2 show that the respondents agree with items 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 as their information seeking behaviour. Item 1 which deals with discussing with fellow colleague whenever they need information and item 6 which also deals with asking library staff for assistance in order to locate the information they need have the highest mean rating of 3.15 and 2.94 respectively. However, the respondents disagree with items 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 as their information seeking behaviour. Item 5 which deals with asking a senior colleague for their information need and item 9 which also deals with going to newspapers and magazines vendors to read so as to get the information they need have the least mean rating of 1.75 and 1.68 respectively.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the study revealed the information needs of junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka to include; civil service information, information on promotion requirement, social information, information for career development, health information, employment information and academic information. The finding is in line with that of Oladokun and Aina (2009) who found out that major area of information needs of continuing education students at the University of Botswana are related to course of study; job opportunities; career development and further education. The similarity of the both findings is not misleading because majority of junior employees are pursuing their studies in continuing education programme. In other words, majority of continuing education programme students are junior staff from different institutions or organization where they work. The finding is also in line with that of Ajiboye and Tella (2007) who conducted a study on university undergraduates' information seeking behavior and found out that the respondents required information for their personal development, information on health matter, information for their academic development, and information to secure employment. The finding of this study is not in line with that of Olalekan, Osahon &

Solanke, (2015), Majid, Hayat, Patel and Vijayaraghavan (2012) and Onouha and Awoniyi (2011) who found out that students need information for writing assignments, conducting case study analyses, and preparing for student presentations and class discussions.

The finding on information seeking behavior revealed that junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka method of seeking information include discussion with colleagues within school, visiting library/information centre and browsing the Internet for information they need. They also locate information especially in library independently and with help of a Librarian.

Conclusion

From the interpretation and discussions of results of this study as they affect the research questions, the following conclusions were made.

The study has revealed the information needs of junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University to include; civil service information, information on promotion requirement, social information, information for career development, health information, employment information and academic information.

Also, on the information seeking behavior of junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, the study has shown that method of seeking information include discussion with colleagues within school, visiting library/information centre and browsing the Internet. It also revealed that junior employees in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, locate information especially in library independently and with help of a Librarian.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings and conclusions made in the study.

- ✓ Adequate and relevant information materials should be acquired so as to meet junior employees' information needs.
- ✓ Seminars and conferences should be held for the junior employees at regular intervals to keep them abreast of latest happenings in the University and orient them on the right attitude to seek and use information.

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