

## Information Needs of Lecturers in the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The degree of knowledge acquired by lecturers is important in every progressive teaching and learning in a higher institution. The information needs of 30 lecturers in the faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus were investigated in this study. A structured questionnaire was used in collecting the data. Majority of the lecturers were found to be within lecturer 1 and Senior Lecturer. Areas of their information needs were found in the following order: research support for journal articles; research support for conference/workshop papers; information on current development in their field; help for teaching the students. Others were research support for book production; general knowledge; current affairs and health matters. The lecturers made use of the Internet; their colleagues; mass media and the library in meeting their information needs. They encountered insufficient updated textbooks in library, slow Internet service and insufficient current journal in the library as major problems in getting their information needs met. They suggested upgrading Internet services; provision of current and relevant journals, updated textbooks; provision of a separate section for them in the library, their needs studied and their active participation in selecting materials for the library.

**Keywords:** Information needs; Lecturers; Business Administration; University, Nigeria, libraries, internet, textbooks

## Introduction

According to Afolabi (2003), information is that external response which modifies an individual's knowledge state. At different times, new knowledge appears in almost every field of human endeavour. To Aina (2004), the term information is used interchangeably with news, or facts required for settling a state of uncertainty. Information is described as mankind's accumulated knowledge derived from all subjects in all forms and in all formats capable of helping the users acquire knowledge (Akambi cited by Ugah, 2010). To Agboola (2010), information is nothing but a class of events. It occurs to meet a particular purpose. Thus, in this case, information exists and the "purpose" is to meet the needs of the lecturers. In other words, an unfulfilled need which can be met by the provision of existing information is an information need. We use information to enhance our knowledge and then apply that knowledge to improve what we do (Ackland, 2010). Pursuit of higher education in Nigeria, especially in the areas of managerial and administrative endeavour is a necessity in the development efforts of the people. It leads to proper placement of human and material resources in their functional positions for effective monitoring and evaluation.

The University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established in 1960 to offer higher education to Nigerians and other nationals. Its faculties of Business Administration, Environmental Studies, Health Sciences and Technology, Medical Sciences, Law and Dentistry are located at its Enugu Campus which is about seventy kilometers from the main

Campus of the University. While the Faculties of Business Administration, Law and Environmental Studies are administered by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Faculties of Medical Sciences, Dentistry, Health Sciences and Technology are administered by the Provost of the College of Medicine.

The Faculty of Business Administration has four academic departments: Accountancy, Banking and Finance, Management and Marketing. The academic staff of these departments instructs the students and also guides them in the conduct of their researches. They are concerned with equipping the students with the required knowledge and skills for handling managerial and administrative positions in the society. A central library with an Internet unit serves information needs of not only the lecturers from this faculty but also lecturers from the Faculties of Law and Environmental studies.

The faculty has produced many successful business managers, who are found at different parts of the country and abroad. It has also produced many financial managers working in banks and related institutions. As people who are in charge of teaching and learning in the faculties, and who also conduct researches, these lecturers need information not only for themselves but also for their students.

## Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at identifying the following:

- i. The information needs of the lecturers in the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu.

- ii. Sources of information they consult to meet their information needs.
- iii. Problems they encounter in their efforts to get their information needs met; and
- iv. The desired changes in the library and information system for effective services.

### **Literature Review**

There is need for knowing and attending to the information needs of users of libraries, especially libraries attached to higher institutions, as means of ensuring effective services. Efforts are made to acquire specific information sources that the users need but are not available in the library (Ugah, 2010). It has also been found that some Nigerian academics do not find in their libraries adequate, relevant information that would help them achieve their academic objectives effectively. The library in a Nigerian University is one of the areas visited by the National Universities commission (NUC) during accreditation exercise (Okogwu and Akidi, 2011). Information can be made available to people orally or through the use of documents. It can also be stored and sent to others electronically. Information means knowledge communicated or received in relation to a particular subject (Olowonefa and Musa (2011).

It has been reported that the expectation of faculty staff is often high when seeking information and they feel frustrated when such expectation is not met (Akinade cited by Mbashir and Adeoti, 2008). Lack of current, relevant information materials and sometimes lack of knowledge of how to obtain the information in the library often constitutes part of the frustration. It is

interesting to note that the Internet has come to help all readers in Nigerian higher institutions. However, Internet services cannot replace academic libraries in the country ( Ukpebor, 2011). At a higher level of education such as in a university, libraries provide relevant information resources necessary for sustaining teaching, learning and research functions (Ugboma and Edewor, 2012). It is noteworthy that not every important information for the academics can be found on the Internet. Agboola (2010) has found that many Nigerian academics look for information on the Internet and also make use of updated textbooks in their various disciplines for the purpose of teaching. On the other hand, Abubakar and Choji (2007), pointed out that in a library system, there are electronic and print sources of information, but some lecturers by-pass the library for the electronic sources. This is in line with the view of Ukpebor (2011), who has stated that updating the lecturers' knowledge in their various fields would require the services of the Internet. Provision of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in an academic library enhances access to the relevant information by members of the academic community (Opaleke, 2013). For this reason, libraries in developing countries are encouraged to subscribe to the Internet which is a tremendous storehouse of knowledge (Chigbu, 2003). The academic staff of Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Lagos State, Nigeria, attest to the fact that the Internet makes research work easier for them (Jegede, Towolawi and Monu, 2011). To Ochogwu (2010), the aim of establishing libraries and other information organizations in modern

societies is to meet information needs of the different user communities. Libraries and the Internet services in an academic environment help in meeting the needs of the academics.

Aguolu (1983) stated the following six functions of Nigerian Universities which are supported by their libraries and information centres:

- i. Conservation of Knowledge
  - ii. Pursuit, promotion and dissemination of knowledge through teaching;
  - iii. Advancement of knowledge through research – pure, applied and development oriented;
  - iv. Provision of intellectual leadership;
  - v. Development of human resources for meeting manpower needs;
  - vi. Promotion of social and economic modernization.
- Lecturers in the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus participate in the dissemination and advancement of knowledge through teaching and researches. They also participate in the development of human resources and intellectual leadership to meet manpower needs of the nation.

Thus, they need to be assisted by the services of their libraries and information centres.

### Methodology

The survey design method has been used for this study. The population consisted of the thirty (30) lecturers in the faculty of Business Administration. They ranged from graduate assistants to professors.

Since the population was not up to one thousand, there was no need for sampling (Nworgu, 2006). A questionnaire entitled *Information Needs of Lecturers in the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Nigeria, Enugu-Campus* was used for data collection. The questionnaire sought information on the status of the respondents, their areas of information needs, sources they consulted, problems encountered and the desired changes. The authors participated in administering copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. They were helped by four research assistants: one in each of the departments. Out of the fifty three copies of the questionnaire, thirty copies were properly completed and returned. This study was carried out in 2013/2014 academic session.

Data were analyzed using tables, relevant headings, simple frequencies, percentages and means. An item whose mean score was up to 2.50 represented a positive response, while an item whose mean score was below 2.50 meant a negative response.

### Findings

**Table 1: Summary of the Demographic Data of the Respondents**

<b>Male</b>	-	<b>18</b>
<b>Female</b>	-	<b>12</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>frequency</b>
<b>18 – 30</b>	<b>3.33%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>31-40</b>	<b>6.66%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>41 – 50</b>	<b>86.66%</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>51 – above</b>	<b>3.33%</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>

Of the 30 respondents used for this study, 18 were males while 12 were females. Age ranged from 41-50 years ranked highest while those from 50 years and above ranked the least.

**Table 2: Categories of the Lecturers**

Category	Frequency	Percentage %
1. Professors	1	3.33
2. Reader	-	0
3. Senior Lecturer	13	43.33
4. Lecturer 1	13	43.33
5. Lecturer 11	-	0
6. Assistant lecturer	1	3.33
7. Graduate Assistant	2	6.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The data presented in table 2 further show that 1 (3.33%) professor; 13 (43.33%), senior lecturers; 13 (43.33), lecturers; 1 (3.33) assistant lecturer and 2 (6.66%) graduate assistants responded to the questionnaire. Data in this table show that most of the lecturers were in

the categories of lecturer 1 and senior lecturer. Therefore, most of the information sought was to meet information needs of these lecturers, who were often involved in teaching and research.

**Table 3: Areas of Information Needs of the Respondents**

S/NO	Information need	X	Decision
1	Help for teaching the students	2.97	Accepted
2	Research support for journal articles	3.43	Accepted
3	Current development in your field	3.23	Accepted
4	General knowledge	2.67	Accepted
5	Current affairs	2.63	Accepted
6	Research support for book production	2.93	Accepted
7	Research support for conference/ workshop papers	3.27	Accepted
8	Administrative matters	2.40	Rejected
9	Information on business and economic matters	2.40	Rejected
10	Sources of employment	2.13	Rejected
11	Health matters	2.57	Accepted

The data in table 3 show that research in support of journal articles (3.43)

constituted the major area of the needs of the lecturers; this was closely

followed by research support for production of conference/workshop papers (3.27). Lecturers in the faculty were concerned about their professional development and academic needs of the students.

Moreover, information on current development in the lecturers' fields was also emphasized, (3.23). The rest of the areas of information needs were in the

following order: Help for teaching students (2.97); information on general knowledge (2.67); research support for book production (2.93); information on current affairs (2.63); and the needs for materials on health matters (2.57). The lecturers were also interested in current affairs and maintenance of their health as they handled their teaching/learning functions.

**Table 4: Sources of Information Consulted by the Lecturers.**

S/No	Item	Frequency	Percentage %
A	Library	18	60
B	Consultation with colleagues	22	73.3
C	Internet services	28	93.3
D	Mass media	19	63.3

From the data in table 4, we can see that most of the lecturers 28(93.3%) sought information from the Internet, and some of them 22(73.3%) also interacted with their colleagues for useful information. Twenty nine 29 (63.3%) of them made use of helpful information from the mass media even as 18 (60%) visited the library for relevant information.

The need for current information in support of teaching/research made most of the lecturers to resort to the Internet services. Information from their colleagues and the mass media equally met their needs. They did not depend on the library as they did to the other sources.

**Table 5: Information Materials the Lecturers Consulted**

S/No	Item	X	Decision
1.	Journals and periodicals	3.53	Accepted
2.	Updated textbooks	3.53	Accepted
3.	Reference works	3.00	Accepted
4	Newspapers	2.67	Accepted
5	Online databases	3.50	Accepted
6	Internet websites	3.27	Accepted
7	CD-ROMs	2.07	Rejected
8	Conference proceedings	2.87	Accepted
9	Magazines	2.70	Accepted
10	Government publications	3.00	Accepted

The data in table 5 show that the lecturers consulted information materials in the following order: Journals and periodicals (3.53), Updated textbooks (3.53). Online databases (3.50), Internet

websites (3.27), Reference works (3,00) and Government publications (3.00). Others were Conference proceedings (2.87), Magazines (2.70), Newspapers (2.67) and CD-ROMs (2.07). It is clear

from table 4 that the lecturers consulted mostly materials they hoped would provide them with current information: print and electronic sources.

**Table 6: Problems Encountered by the Lecturers in Their Efforts to Satisfy Their Information Needs.**

1	Time constraint-family problems	2.33	Reject
2.	Insufficient current journals in the library	2.90	Accepted
3.	Insufficient updated textbooks in the library	3.27	Accepted
4	Unreliable colleagues	1.97	Rejected
5	Many materials in the library are not relevant	2.23	Rejected
6	Large population of students to attend to their needs	2.27	Rejected
7	Too many administrative works	2.53	Accepted
8	Lack of studying spaces in the library	1.23	Rejected
9	Slow internet services	3.00	Accepted
10	Lack of studying spaces in the ICT unit.	2.03	Rejected

From the data in table 6, it can be seen that the lecturers had textbooks (3.27), slow internet services (3.00), many administrative works (2.53) and insufficient current journals (2.90) as problems. Thus, insufficient, current print materials and slow Internet services constituted the major problems.

**Table 7: Suggestions for Improvement in the Services of Both the Library and the Internet Unit.**

A	More current and relevant journals in the library	3.37	Accepted
B	Post-graduates and academic staff should have a section in the library.	3.17	Accepted
c.	More current and updated textbooks	3.30	Accepted
D	Lecturers needs should be studied	2.80	Accepted
E	Lecturers should participate actively in selecting materials for the library.	3.10	Accepted
F	Upgrading on Internet services	3.43	Accepted
g.	Library to close at 10:00pm	2.17	Rejected

The data in table 6 show that the lecturers were in support of the suggestion for improved services as follows: upgrading of the Internet services, (3.43), provision of more current and relevant journals in the library (3.37); more current and updated text books (3.30); postgraduate and academic staff should have a section in the library (3.17). They also suggested that lecturers should participate actively in selecting materials for the library

(3.10), and lecturers' needs should be studied (2.80). Most of the suggestions were on provision of more current, relevant information and maintenance of effective Internet services.

### **Discussion of Findings**

It is found in this study that most of the lecturers were in the categories of Lecturer 1, and Senior lecturers. Lecturers in these categories usually have more course works than others in a

university set up. Thus, they need to be equipped with current, relevant information for teaching/learning function. The lecturers were desirous of publishing journal articles and books as required for their promotion.

While they desired to publish their own works, they needed to consult articles written by their professional colleagues as available in the library. It means that the library should principally provide adequate, relevant current books and journals in the fields of the lecturers. This observation is supported by Bassey and Biao (2005), who point out that current books and journals are good sources for research, teaching and career development.

Emphasis on sources consulted by the respondents was on the Internet. The reason for this development could also be as maintained by Bassey and Biao (2005), who are of the view that the essence of having electronic sources is to ensure faster and better access to current knowledge. Every reasonable researcher looks for current and relevant information.

It has also been found that interactions with professional colleagues helped the lecturers in updating their level of information stock. They also recognized the value of relevant information from the mass media. All these sources of information are good, but not as comprehensive and reliable as print and electronic information often found in the library. Moreover, a breakdown of the types of materials consulted by the lecturers showed high level of patronage for updated textbooks, journals and online databases. These sources of information are essential for serious academic works.

Inadequate current textbooks and journals in the library was among the

problems pointed out by the lecturers. This is a common feature in many Nigerian libraries, but effective information delivery requires a reverse of the trend.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Lecturers who are very active in their duties are happy when they are able to access new knowledge. The new knowledge keeps them abreast of new developments in their fields of study and subsequently brings about quality teaching and research. Lecturers in this study need current and quality information resources to meet their information needs, which are mainly teaching and research. It is therefore recommended as follows:

1. The recommended ten percent budgetary allocation by the National Universities Commission for the development of libraries in the federal universities should be implemented. If the money is made available to the libraries, they will be able to buy as many current books and journals as expected. The Internet services as an area in the library will be adequately equipped for active utilization by the lecturers in meeting their information needs.
2. The library should give more attention to the provision of more current journals, updated textbooks and electronic sources of information.
3. There should be provided a separate department/section for the lecturers and post-graduate students. This will show a good sign of academic support on the part of the library. Provision of relevant resources requires that the lecturers be allowed

to participate actively in their selection.

4. Lecturers should be allowed to participate in selection of library materials for acquisition.

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