Information Questing Conduct of Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Medicine: A Case Study of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

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ABSTRACT

The research reveals that personal variables – gender, years of study and age of student significantly influence information questing conduct of students. Many problems have been highlighted as impediment to information seeking behavior of undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The study therefore proffered solution that regular power supply and adequate funding of the library are the key to motivating students' Information questing conduct. Understanding the actual needs of information users and taking steps to satisfy them is the first step towards effective service provision. This can best be achieved through formal in-depth studies. Librarians, especially those involved in bibliographic instruction should be interested in ways individuals approach the library and the methods they use to search for needed information. Librarians could redesign strategies intended to improve the provision of library services especially towards information skills development and information resource awareness.

KEYWORDS: Conduct, Information, questing, Student and library.

INTRODUCTION

Medical and allied education which can be accepted as higher education or professional education has an important role in the transformation of an individual and also in the growth and development of the health care society as well as the economic development of the nation as a whole. These factors have a tremendous impact not only on the academic institutions but the library and professionals working in the libraries in order to accomplish the aim and objectives of the institutions to provide effective services as per the need of the health science information seekers (David, 2014).The exponential growth of knowledge causes abundant of documents in various forms such as print and non-print materials and others that is, electronic information resources. The demand for specialized information by the users has necessitated the library to repackage the information from various sources to suit the user's needs (Clarke, 2014).

According to Ajiboye and Tella (2007), information is data that has been processed to be well understood to satisfy the user's query. KOC University Library Glossary (2014) see information as data presented in readily comprehensible form, to which meaning has been attributed within a context for it use. In a more dynamic sense, the message is conveyed by the use of a medium of communication or expression. 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.

Undergraduates have a lot of information needs which prompted their demand for information. When undergraduates are searching for information to meet their needs, they use different sources of information. Akinola, Afolabi and Chinedu (2009) defines information sources as the materials or means through which information can be found to meet a particular need. Case (2002) defines information seeking as a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge.

The use of the library, no doubt, enhances quality research, access to a variety of information resources and current information resources both locally and remotely. Qualitative education requires studies that uncover how to optimally use technologies for the benefit of students and researchers. The library has been identified as an important information resource for undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine because of the nature of their profession. Having acknowledged the importance of information resources, the management of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria has invested so much to ensure that students have access to resources by deploying Internet access points and hotspots in the Library and within the Campus at large. The researcher has observed, however, that many undergraduate students are faced with the challenges of seeking information. The research designed to examine the information questingthe conduct of undergraduate students of faculty of medicine in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

METHODOLOGY

The research target the population of this study comprises of the undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. There are over 3000 undergraduate students across the various Departments in the Faculty of Medicine of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Details are presented thus;

Table 1: Population of the Study

Departments	Population
Human Anatomy	529
Community Medicine	358
Dentistry	241
Gynecology	168
Medicine/Surgery	698
Human Physiology	312
Nursing Sciences	708
Total	**3,014**

Simple random sampling techniques were adopted for this study so that to be of representative to the entire population after which accurate and reliable data were collected from the respondents for analysis. And the sample size of 140 respondents will be chosen for this study since this is a descriptive research that is equal with the view of Frankel and Wallen (1990) who suggest a minimum of 100 participants for descriptive studies, 50 for correlational studies, 30 in each group for experimental and causal comparative studies.

A total number of 140 undergraduate students were enumerated. These formed the sample; the sample size of 140 were purposively selected because the total population is too large to be taken directly. On this research the instrument used in collecting the data were questionnaire which is closed ended type and this is the same as the view of Best and Kaln (1989), who describes questionnaire as data gathering instrument through which respondents answer questions or responds to statement which the respondent is expected to agree or disagree with.

The validated questionnaire titled "Information Questing Conduct of Undergraduate Students of faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria" were administered by the investigator to the purposefully selected 140 undergraduate students of the faculty under study.

RESULTS

Table 1: Response rate

Number of questionnaires distributed	140
Number of questionnaires filled &returned	120
Response rate	86%

Table2: Age distribution of respondents

Age Range	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
20-25	10	8%
26-30	24	20%
31-35	42	35%
36-40	26	22%
40 and above	18	15%
Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 3: Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	60	50%
Female	60	50%
Total	**120**	**100%**

Table 4: Level of study of respondents

Level of study	Frequency	Percentage
100	22	18%
200	30	25%
300	28	24%
400	18	15%
500	14	11%
600	8	7%
Total	**120**	**100%**

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of data presented, responses obtained from structured questionnaire and observations made by the researcher, the following major findings are made:

The most available source of information to undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria are computer, books and internet connectivity and the least is information from friends and colleagues.

Undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria require information for educational and research purposes and not on entertainment and jokes.

The respondents' perceived opinions on barriers militating against the effective information service delivery to undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria showed that low frequency library usage, difficulties in using the online catalogue due to never having used OPAC facilities before and over-reliance on Google and social networking sites constitutes the greatest barrier.

All the listed ways of improving information seeking strategies of undergraduate students of Faculty Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria presented in table 4.8 were all given high ranking. The respondents believed that regular power supply and adequate funding of the library remains the greatest way of improving the information seeking strategies of undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that students' basic reason for seeking information is to meet up with coursework and assignment. Respondents' most popular source of locating information for their programme include computer, books and internet connectivity. For respondents to effectively locate materials, they need to know how to use the catalogue and also know about other library services. This calls for teaching use of library on continuous or more detailed way. This study reveals that personal variables – gender, years of study and age of student significantly influence information questing conduct of students. Many problems have been highlighted as impediment to information seeking behavior of undergraduate students of Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The study therefore proffered solution that regular power supply and adequate funding of the library are the key to motivating students' Information questing conduct.Understanding the actual needs of information users and taking steps to satisfy them is the first step towards effective service provision. This can best be achieved through formal in-depth studies. Librarians, especially those involved in bibliographic instruction should be interested in ways individuals approach the library and the methods they use to search for needed information. Librarians could

redesign strategies intended to improve the provision of library services especially towards information skills development and information resource awareness. The role of the academic librarian is indeed changing and increasingly fraught with challenges. At the same, opportunities for meeting the evolving information needs of faculty and researchers in the technology-driven society, research-intensive and dynamic medical environment in Nigeria are abound.

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