Information Seeking Behavour and Uatilization of Information Resources by National Legislators in Nigeria

BAPPA ISA MAGAJI cln, fbse
Library Department, Federal Polytechnic Bali, P.O. Box 05 Bali, Taraba State, Nigeria
bappamagaji@gmail.com

Abstract
The study was to identify the information seeking behavior and utilization of resources by national legislators in Nigeria. Thirty six (36) copies of questionnaires and ninety (90) copies were distributed to the Senate and the Members respectively. Seventy five (75) out of the total of 126 (60%) were returned and found usable. The findings revealed that legislators have a high demand of information in preparing for parliamentary speeches debates and preparing bills, planning, and decision making. Suggestions were offered on how the national assembly library could render adequate information services to legislators.
Keywords: Information, Information resources, Information Needs, Legislators

Introduction
Information is that which is transmitted by the act or process of communication it may be a message, a signal, or a stimuli. It assumed a response in the receiving organism and therefore poses response potential Shera (1972). Despite the daily growth of information and the problems associated with it the need for it keeps on increasing. This is because information is regarded as a basic tool for researchers, politicians, teachers, students and those in business. Utor(1998) observe that: the need for information as a resource becomes more apparent when information is understood to mean facts, data, opinion, and the like including but revealed in the results of the study research and scholarship in all fields of knowledge. Information has become a critical element in life and society. It is an important part of development. In a developing legislative like Nigeria, information in all aspects of life need to be collected to assist legislators in their day to day management process. The legislators need as much information as it can get to aid its legislative process.

Making information sources readily available and accessible to legislators in national assembly could significantly increase the effectiveness in making laws for peace and order which are vital to development efforts. Brain (1996) noted that … key to an effective legislature is the knowledge and information that permit it to make informed decisions on specific issues and to play active role in the policy making process of the nation.

Library services are the principal sources for meeting the information needs of the parliamentarians of today and future. To make informed decisions on a myriad of complex policy issues, legislators need authoritative information on a timely basis.

The rapid development of information technologies today has a great influence on access to information and on information seeking. Librarians must understand the criteria of information seeking and information used by legislators for providing effective and efficient information services.

Statement of the Problem
The importance of information as a resource for decision making cannot be over-emphasized. National legislators need up to date and effective information in order to perform their duties of debating and passing of laws for the good governance of the country. National legislators are expected to maximally utilize the library as one of their major sources of information. However, noting from other observations and studies on the on the use of library resources national legislators in Nigeria do not use most of the library resources. It was assumed that members could be experiencing some technical problems accessing information resources; coupled with lack of knowledge and awareness of the resources. The member's poor information seeking behavior and utilization constitute the main problem that needed investigation.

Purposes of the Study
The purpose of this study is to investigate the following questions:
1. What are the sources of information for National Legislators?
2. What are the types of information materials needed by the legislators?
3. What are the tools used in accessing information needs?
4. Do legislators use Internet in accessing information?
5. **What are the problems encountered while seeking for information?**

Literature Review
Making information sources readily available and accessible to legislators could significantly increase the

effectiveness of laws and policies which are vital element in any nations' development. Many scholars have severally attempted to examine the information seeking behavior of particular professional groups in an effort to map their locating and use of information and to enhance information provision to these groups. Leckie et al. (1996) produced a model of professional group's information seeking of examining the common characteristics of the behavior of these groups. When seeking information for their projects, engineers turned to a variety of library guides and leaflets, library catalogue, library staff, journals, online databases; previous students projects. However, similar to other studies of information behavior of engineering professionals (Anderson et al. 2001), the library was not the first place students looked for information like professional engineers, engineering students tended to use the library midway through their information on seeking process for their projects and to regard librarian as lead to information sources.

Some researchers relate information with job satisfaction of individual users. Ajidahun (1990) established that information needs were job related. Akusu(1987) found information needs differed according to areas of specialization and most researchers make private arrangement such as subscription to journals and purchase of books to keep themselves and up to date with information relevant to their field of specialization.

For any nation to achieve meaningful and maximum development all the available resources would have to be carefully mobilized and utilized. Fjallbrant (1981) stressed that not only the use of the information resources increases quantitatively in terms of number of users, but that even the use library becomes more sophisticated in relation to methods of information retrieval, while Abass(1986) considers library resources utilization as the corner stone of any kind or type of library service – his presence and ability to make meaningful use of information can be a yard stick to measure library service in a given situation.

Haruna et al. (2000) investigated the relationships between information resource utilization, and professional effectiveness attributes of legal practitioners of Lagos, Nigeria. The study highlights the heavy dependence of legal practice on utilization of relevant and timely information. By inference, legal practitioners who patronize libraries and utilize current information are more effective in their profession than those who do not. The presently we are at the era of information and knowledge revolution. Many electronic resources are available in the library. The increase in information available on the web has affected information seeking behavior. Innumerable types of information, in a large variety of containers and in many different locations, are all available in one place (Fidel, et al 1999)

There is a universal assumption that man was born innocent or ignorant and should actively seek knowledge. Information seeking is thus a natural and necessary mechanism of human existence. Marchionini, (1995), Information seeking behavior is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goals. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems such as a newspaper or a library or with computer based systems such as the web Wilson (2000).

Leckie, Pettigrew, and Sylian,(1996) maintain that information seeking behavior involves personal reasons for seeking information, and the kind of information which are being sought. Information seeking behavior is expected in various forms, from reading printed materials to research and experimentation, scholars, students and faculties actively seek information from various media available in libraries, e.g. encyclopedia, journals, and currently electronic media. Abels (2004) reported that the frequency of use of the internet in 1998-2000 had greatly increased. At the same time, expenditures on monographs showed steady increase.

Research Methodology

A simple survey research design was used to collect data from the National Legislators in Nigeria. The Population of the study consists of all the National legislators in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are one hundred and nine (109) Senators and three hundred and sixty (360) members in the House of Representatives. That is four hundred and sixty nine (469) National Legislators in the National Assembly.

The stratified sample technique was used in selecting respondents from the six geo-political regions, where there are six (6) Senators and fifteen (15) members from each region. In other words there was thirty six, (36) Senators and Ninety, (90) members as respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the legislators by the through the sergeant at Arms of the two houses as directed by the Clerk of the National Assembly. This process of administering the questionnaires proved to be effective, and afforded the author to have face to face discussion with some of the members while in the gallery which revealed important information to the researcher. Descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire with view to generating frequencies and percentages where appropriate.

Results

Response rate

Total of one hundred and twenty six (126) questionnaires were distributed in the two houses (Senate and House of Representatives). Seventy-five (75) or 60% collected and found usable. Below is the table showing the

response rate according to the houses.

Table 1: Response Rate

HOUSE	TOTAL QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED	RETURNED	PERCENTAGE
Senate	36	23	18.4
House of Representative	90	52	41.6
Total	126	75	60

From the above table, thirty-six questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in the Senate, and twenty- three (18.4%) of the questionnaires were returned, while ninety questionnaires distributed in the House of Representatives, and fifty- two (41.6%) of the questionnaires were returned.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents sex

HOUSE	MALE	PERCENTAGE	FEMALE	PERCENTAGE
Senate	22	29%	1	1.3%
House of representatives	50	67%	2	2.7%
Total	72	96%	3	4%

Table 3: Information sources of respondents

Information sources	Frequency	Percentage
Discussion with colleagues	23	30.7
Consult a knowledgeable person in the field	25	33.3
Discussion with librarian	10	13.3
Consult abstract and journals	5	6.7
Consult indexing and Journals	4	5.3
Consult library catalogue	6	8
Other sources	2	2.7
Total	75	100

Table 3 reveals that 23 (30.7%) respondents relied on discussion with colleagues as source of information, 25 (33.3%) respondents perfumed consulting knowledgeable person in the field, 10 (13.3%) respondent discussed with librarian, 5 (6.7%) respondents consulted abstract and journals, 4 (5.3%) respondents consulted indexing and journals while 6 (8%) respondents consult library catalogue and two (2.7%) respondents consulted other sources. It is apparent from the foregoing that discussion with colleagues and knowledgeable persons in the field formed the bulk of sources of information consulted by the respondents.

Table 4: purpose for seeking information by respondents

Purpose for seeking information	Frequency
When preparing for parliamentary speeches and Debates	63
To prepare Bills	48
For Planning	55
For Making Decision	65
When Preparing answers for enquiries from the constituents	42
When preparing position papers	32
To gain general knowledge	16
Others	-

Table 4 indicates that respondents primarily sought information for different purposes. Sixty-five respondents indicated that they seek information for making decision while, 63 when preparing for parliamentary speeches and debates. Fifty- five respondents seek information to prepare bills. Forty- two respondents seek information when preparing answers for enquiries from their constituents and 32 respondents seek information when preparing position papers. Sixteen respondents seek information to gain general knowledge.
This had indicated form the above table that the overwhelming majority of the legislators are aware that information is indispensable in legislative debates.

Table 5: Type of materials respondents sought information in their library

Library materials	Frequency	Percentage
Text book	139	74.7
Periodicals	14	7.5
Newspapers	7	3.8
Journals	16	8.6
Thesis and projects	6	3.2
Total	**186**	**100**

Table 5 depicts that 139 (74.7%) sought information from text book, 14 (7.5%) from periodicals, 7 (3.8%) from newspapers, 16 (8.6%) from Journals, 6 (3.2%) from theses and project and 4 (2.2% from other library materials. One can deduce from the above analysis that large percentage of respondents still preferred seeking information from textbooks an old traditional source of seeking information.

Table 6: Library Tools Respondents use to Access their Information needs

Library tools	Frequency	Percentage
Library catalogue	99	53.2
Index	13	7.0
Abstract	9	4.8
Bibliographies	23	12.4
Ask a librarian	36	19.4
Others	6	3.2
Total	**186**	**100**

Table 6 indicates that 99 (53.2%) respondents used library catalogue to meet their information needs, 13 (7.0%) used index, 9 (4.8%) used abstract, 32 (12.4%) used bibliographies, 36 (19.4%) asked librarians and 6 (3.2%) accessed information through other sources. Library catalogue accounted for largest tool through which respondents access their information needs.

Table 7: Problems encountered while seeking information

Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Catalogue not detailed	39	21.0
Library staff are unwilling to assist	28	15.1
Materials not available	82	44.1
Time constraint	19	10.2
Do not know how to use catalogue	16	8.6
Others problems	2	1.1
Total	**186**	**100**

Table 7 shows that 39 (21.0%) respondents encountered problems of catalogue not detailed, 28 (15.1%) library staff were unwilling to assist, 82 (44.1%) materials not available, 19 (10.2%) time constraint, 16 (8.6%) did not know how to use catalogue and two (1.1%) encountered other problems associated with library use. It is therefore apparent that non availability of relevant library materials was the major problem encountered by respondents while seeking information

Table 8: Internet use by respondents

Do you use the internet	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	139	74.7
No	47	25.3
Total	**186**	**100**

Table 8 indicates that 139 (74.7%) respondents use the internet while 74 (25.3%) respondents did not use the internet. It is noteworthy that a large percentage of respondents used the internet to seek information

being complementary to literature search and use in the library.

Table 9: Frequency of use the internet by the respondents

Frequency of use the internet	Frequency	Percentage
Frequently	72	38.7
Rarely	9	4.8
Occasionally	60	32.3
Not at all	45	24.2
Total	186	100

Table 9 shows that 72 (38.7%) respondents frequently used the internet, 9 (4.8%) respondents used the internet rarely, 60 (32.3%) used the internet occasionally while 45 (24.2%) respondents did not use the internet at all. The above responses show that a good percentage of respondents use the internet frequently and occasionally while seeking information.

Table 10: Purpose for use of internet

Purpose for use of internet	Frequency	Percentage
Education	144	77.4
Entertainment	4	2.2
News	14	7.5
Sports	24	12.9
Total	186	100

The purpose for the use of the internet in the table 10 indicates that 144 (77.4%) respondents was for education purpose, 4 (2.2%) respondents for entertainment, 14 (7.5%) respondents for the purpose of listening to the news and 24 (12.9%) respondents used the internet for the purpose of seeking sports information. Seeking education information is the hallmark of respondents' purpose of internet usage from the above analysis.

Discussion of Findings

It is established from that National legislators have information needs that relate to their legislation. These findings to some extent tally with earlier studies of other researchers. However, the disadvantage is that National legislators are still reliant on the information acquired from their constituents and other knowledgeable persons on the field other than the information generated from the library. The findings revealed that the main information demands that led National legislators into seeking information include preparing for parliamentary speeches and debates, preparing bills, planning, and Making Decision. National Legislators were also found to rely mainly on consultations with colleagues and print media with very little use of other information resources like electronic media. This could be as a result of not knowing their value and how to use them or not knowing of their existence. This therefore set a challenge to the information resources providers (the librarians) to play their role in educating and sensitizing the users about the useful information resources rather than textbooks

Furthermore, the information access tool used by the National Legislators to access their information need was library catalogue as other literature access tools were not exhaustively used. It was revealed that, they encountered problem insufficient / non-availability of textbooks while seeking information. Problem encountered is enormous, the professional librarians and library staff should provide quality services and display eagerness to assist the users and adequate user education should be provided. Internet usage is new trend but it required searching skills for successful relevance of it. Therefore, adequate training is highly necessary to arouse the interest of the respondents to frequently and result-oriented usage.

Conclusion

Most members appear to value information greatly, as they cannot make decision without information. This is not surprising because information is vital resource for legislative work.

Members as revealed by the study prefer to have personal contacts with prospective information providers. They usually make contacts with their fellow legislators, committee staff, research officers, government officers and their constituents.

Recommendation

1. The National Assembly library should provide information resources that are relevant to the legislators information needs. This will facilitate effective utilization of the available resources.
2. Legislators should be encouraged by the Librarian to use the library. The Librarian should play vital

roles in educating the Legislators on the importance of the library through workshops, seminars, production of handbills, and leaflets on the services being provided by the library.

3. More funds should be made available in order for the library to achieve its set objectives.
4. Emphasis should be made on the provision of specialized services like production of lists of latest arrivals, subject bibliographies, maintaining user profile, journal and newspaper abstracting indexing of articles and reports among others.

References:

Abels, E. (2004). Information seeker's perspectives of libraries and librarian. *Advances in librarianship.* 28.151-170.

Agha, S.S (1997). Performance required of future information professionals,*Malaysian journal of library an information science*, 2 (2), 45-56.

Ajidahun, O.C. (1990). Information needs of secondary school, teachers in Oyo two. Unpublished **M.L.I.S** project. *University of Ibadan.*

Fidel, R. Darles R.K. Douglass, M.H, holder, J.K. Hopkins, C.J. Kushner, E.J. miyagishima, B.K and Toney, C.D.(1999) a visit students. Journal of the American society for information mall: web searching behavior of high students. *Journal of the American society for information science, 50 (1), 24-37.*

Haruna et al. (2000). Personal effectiveness attributes of legal practitioners as correlates of information utilization in Lagos, Nigeria. *Nigerian libraries.* (34) 2.

Leckie, G.J. Pettigrew, K.E. and sylian, C. (1996). Modeling the information seeking of professionals: a general model derived from research on engineers, health care professionals and lawyers. *Library quarterly.* 66(2). 161-194.

Marchionini, G. (1995) information seeking in electronic environments. U.K: *Cambridge university press.*

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
http://www.iiste.org

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: http://www.iiste.org/journals/ All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: http://www.iiste.org/book/

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digtial Library , NewJour, Google Scholar