

# Assessment of Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Undergraduates in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Abdullahi, Abdulazeez Olalekan<sup>1</sup> Magnus Osahon Igbinovia<sup>2\*</sup> Solanke Oluwayinka Esther<sup>3</sup>

1.Teaching Service Commission, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

2.Department of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

3.University Library, Redeemer's University, Nigeria

\*E-mail of the corresponding author: [infor.migbinovia@yahoo.com](mailto:infor.migbinovia@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

To thrive in this era, one needs varieties of information, no matter how versed one is in a field or profession. Information is new knowledge, which leads to a change in actions of people exposed to it. The concept of information needs and seeking behaviour of undergraduate has been of great concern to stakeholders especially in developing countries where access to information is seen as a mirage. Researchers have made it known that, the way students organize their learning and search for academic information could be considered very crucial to their overall performance at the end of the day. Thus, information needs and seeking behaviour is pertinent for undergraduate academic performance. Notwithstanding, no study has been conducted on undergraduate information needs and seeking behaviour at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. In this light, the study examined information needs and seeking behaviour of undergraduates in the University of Ilorin. Survey design was adopted using a questionnaire as instrument for data collection. A simple random sampling technique was employed to sample twenty (20) respondents each from the twelve (12) faculties in the university. To achieve the objectives of the study, five (5) research questions were developed to guide the study. The results indicate 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. The study recommends that adequate and relevant information materials should be acquired so as to meet undergraduate's information needs.

**Keywords:** Information, Information Needs, Information Seeking behaviour, Undergraduates, University of Ilorin.

## 1. Introduction

Information has become an essential tool for competitive advantage both at the individual, organisation, societal and national level. There are as many definitions of information as there are many disciplines and scholars. However, List (1998) defines information as "all ideas, facts, and imaginative works of the mind which have been communicated, recorded, published and/or distributed formally or informally in any format". Reitz (2004) quoted by Ojedokun (2007) describes the concept of information concretely as "all facts, conclusion, ideas, and creative works of the human intellect and imagination that have been communicated formally and informally, in any form."

Uttor (1999) also defines information as data valuable in the planning, decision making, and evaluation of any program. He goes on to say that it is data that have been subjected to some processing functions capable of answering a user's query, whether recorded, summarized, or simply collected, that assists decision making. The researcher concluded that information is required in man's daily activities in school, play, or work. More concretely, all the facts, conclusions, ideas, and creative works of the human intellect and imagination which have been communicated, formally or informally, in any form - print and electronic - is what information comprises.

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 (Kuhlthau 1993). Belkin (1982) describes information need as an anomalous state of knowledge (ASK) or gap in the individual's knowledge in sense making situations (Dervin and Nilan 1986). Wilson, (1997) points 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.

Information seeking is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need (Wright and Guy, 1997). This activity may be actively or passively done when taking steps to satisfy a felt need (Ikoja-Odongo, 2002). The concept of information needs and information seeking has been a major issue of study in academic environment especially in the developing countries. The information needs of individual are enormous and the way they accomplish this is diverse. Thus, the desires to identify the information needs of undergraduates are important, so are the diverse methods used in meeting such needs. Information seeking

behaviour can be described as an individual way and manner of gathering information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development (Tella, 2009). Fairer-Wessels (1990) refers to it as the way people search for and utilize information.

Wilson (1981) cited by Khan and Hedge (2010) opined that “Information seeking behaviour are those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information searching for such information in any way and using or transferring that information”. Kuhlthau’s model is imperative to note as it suggests that the user is an active participant in the information search process. The student’s or user’s knowledge grows as he/ she interacts with the information. More importantly, cognitive strategies such as brain storming, contemplating, predicting, consulting, reading, choosing, identifying, defining and confirming. However, Kuhlthau’s model does not seem to incorporate manipulation of information, which consists of analyzing, digesting, organizing, synthesizing, and evaluation of the found information. The model, however, does highlight those affective feelings such as apprehension, uncertainty, confusion, anxiety, anticipation, doubt, optimism, and confidence interplay as the search for information proceeds (Kuhlthau, 1992). Information seeking behaviour is thus the behavioural pattern exhibited in a bid to acquire certain information necessary to bridge a gap in one’s knowledge.

The outcome of this study was expected to give an insight into the information needs and information seeking behaviour of undergraduate vis a vis the purpose of such information, the utilisation and problems encountered in the seeking process

The findings from this study would contribute to the understanding of the differences in information needs and information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students based on their faculties and course of study in the university. Thus, this will help in developing a strategy which will be geared toward meeting the information needs and information seeking behaviour of respective undergraduate students

## **2. Research Problem**

Information is new knowledge, which leads to a change in actions of people expose to it. The concept of information needs and information seeking behaviour of undergraduate has been of great concern to stakeholders especially in the developing countries where access to information is seen as a mirage. The current ambit of information atmosphere is rich, characterized by an explosion of information sources and providers, a multiplicity of methods for accessing information, and a redundancy of content from multiple sources.

The information explosion brought about by the development and deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought about various ways of codifying information and information retrieval which has later constitute a great challenge to these undergraduates in their pursuit to achieve academic excellence. Ajiboye and Tella (2007) made it known that, the way students organize their learning and search for academic information could be considered very crucial to their overall performance at the end of the day. Despite the important roles play by information needs and information seeking, no single study has been conducted in the context of the University of Ilorin Nigeria on the undergraduate information needs and seeking behaviour since it was established in 1975. It is expected that this study will showcase the sources mostly consulted and the most sought information by the undergraduates in the process of seeking information. This will enable the researcher to suggest recommendations on how the university library can facilitates such information sources. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the information needs and information seeking behaviour of undergraduates with a keen passion in streamlining necessary strategy to better their lot.

## **3. Research Questions**

Specifically the following research questions were investigated:

- I. What are the information needs of the undergraduate students?
- II. What are the sources through which undergraduates seeks information?
- III. What is the information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students?
- IV. What are the purposes for seeking information by the UG students?
- V. What are the problems encountered by the undergraduates when seeking for information?

## **4. Literature Review**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents review of related literatures on the study. It focuses on the concept of information, information needs and information seeking behaviour, empirical review of studies and models or theories to support the study before summarizing the literature review. Reitz (2004) quoted by Ojedokun (2007) describes the concept of information concretely as “all facts, conclusion, ideas, and creative works of the human intellect and imagination that have been communicated formally and informally, in any form”. Whereas, Information need 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 (Kuhlthau 1993). Belkin

(1982) describes information need as an anomalous state of knowledge (ASK) or gap in the individual's knowledge in sense making situations (Dervin and Nilan 1986). Wilson, (1997) points out that there must be an attendant motive when a person experiences information needs. This attendant's motive is what prompts the individual to take necessary steps to locate and identify resources needed to meet his/her need when it arises.

Information seeking is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need (Wright and Guy, 1997). This activity may be actively or passively done when taking steps to satisfy a felt need (Ikoja-Odongo, 2002). From this backdrop, Wilson (1981) cited by Khan and Hedge (2010) opined that "Information seeking behaviour are those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information searching for such information in any way and using or transferring that information".

#### **4.2 Information needs of the undergraduate students.**

Oladokun and Aina (2009) looked into the library and information needs and barriers to the use of information sources by continuing education students at the University of Botswana. Their study aimed at identifying the library and information needs of the part-time evening students; identifying and establishing the computing and information skills by the part-time evening students. 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. The study however recommends that the University of Botswana library should ask for space in the local public libraries, and school libraries to keep some materials for the distance learning students use. Qureshi, Zafar and Khan (2008) investigated the information needs & seeking behaviour of students in Universities of Pakistan. The study concluded that there are several factors that have significant effect on students' information seeking. Factors such as educational and cultural background, surrounding environment and student participation have high positive impact on information needs and information seeking behaviour of students. The researcher further concludes that, if surrounding environment is helpful and student participation is active, it will create a culture that enhances the students' information gathering system.

#### **4.3 Sources through which undergraduate students seek information.**

Fidzani (1998) conducted a study at University of Botswana, Gaborone on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of graduate students. Findings revealed that the students relied on library books, textbooks, and journals. In another study, Ajiboye and Tella (2007) examined the information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in the University of Botswana. The result of the study revealed that the internet is the most consulted source, followed by students' class notes and handouts which is different from the outcome of a study carried out by Valentine (1993) who conducted a similar study and found out that undergraduates looked for the fastest way that would lead to satisfactory results when doing research by going for electronic information sources first. Siddiqui (2011) carried out a study on the Information Seeking Behaviour of B.Tech. and M.B.B.S. Students in Lucknow. The outcome of the study shows that students give the first priority to seek information through discussion with colleagues, second priority is discussion with seniors, and consultation with teachers is a third priority. Consultation with a knowledgeable person is fourth priority, and the fifth priority is to seek the information through review of articles.

In a study carried out by Mahajan (2009) on students' information seeking behaviour in Panjab University in India, the study reveals that most respondents are satisfied with the assistance provided by the library staff with searching information in the manual catalogue, OPAC, and reference books. Most also indicated the helpful behavior of staff in locating and checking out materials. The study also made it known that undergraduate students use e-mail and discussion with teachers (lecturers) as the most preferred informal sources of seeking information. Thus, they feel that friends and teachers direct them to various sources of information that may be useful. Teachers even provide them with journal articles and books.

On the user preference for information sources format, the study shows that users prefer information in both print and electronic form; but however, students desire more exposure to electronic sources, and they also expressed a need for training in the use of these resources. Thus, according to the study of Tahir et al (2008) on the preferred formats of students between Arts and Humanities teachers at the University of Punjab, it reveals that (77%) of the students studied preferred print resources, followed by electronic resources (39%) while audiovisual materials were the least preferred (13%).

#### **4.4 Information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students.**

Chikonzo and Aina (2006) researched into the information needs and sources of information used by veterinary students at the University of Zimbabwe. Findings from the study revealed that writing assignments and studying for tests or examination were the primary tasks for which they required information and the major sources used to obtain information were books, videos, lecture notes, handouts, the internet, projects, CD-ROM database and

journals. The students confirmed making little use of indexes, abstracts and dissertations.

Also, in a study carried out by Miriam Kakai, Ikoja–Odongo, and I.M.N Kigongo–Bukunya,(2004), They investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of undergraduate students of Makerere University using cross–sectional survey, with samples of respondents from the Department of Biochemistry in the Faculty of Science and the Department of History in the Faculty of Arts. The sample consisted of 104 undergraduate students selected from their first, second, and third year of study. Ellis’ six generic information–seeking activities were tested to establish how undergraduate students seek information. The chi–square statistic was used to test the stated hypotheses. The results provide an insight into the factors that influence students information–seeking behaviour and the information sources used.

The findings revealed that the main information demands that led undergraduate students into seeking for information include: course works and assignments (86), preparation for examinations and tests (68), general reading to enhance lecture notes (55), and class–group discussions (44). Seminars or preparation for workshops (10), tutorial presentations (15) and dissertation research (15) all had a lower rating.

The study also finds out the sources of information they prefer using a ranking method. The findings show that lecture notes and handouts were the most preferred and used, followed by using departmental Book–Banks and then the University Library. Consulting and photocopying from colleagues took the fourth position, followed by using Internet sources, while the University Bookshop took the last position.

Mann (1993) in his study notes that most students use a subject–disciplinary method in seeking for information which leads them to specific lists of resources on particular subjects. The author points out that while this method allows students and researchers to find more specific sources, it limits their knowledge of the fact that work of interest to their subject appears within the literature of many other disciplines which impinges on how much they get out of the library system. Kerins, Madden and Fulton (2004), examined the information-seeking patterns of final year undergraduate engineering students split evenly between two engineering institutes in Irish universities. It was reported that engineering students seem to have a preference for channels that require the least effort, such as the Internet. They explained that the result was due to the fact that student engineers viewed the Internet as a speedy, current information source which fed initial information needs quickly. Kerins, Madden, and Fulton explored information-seeking behaviour among Irish university law students. They also found that most of these students claimed to use the resources of the library heavily over the course of their academic programs.

Onouha and Awoniyi (2011) carried out a comparative analysis of students’ information seeking behaviour of undergraduate’s students of Babcock University (Nigeria) and Solusi University (Zimbabwe). From the research it was generally observed 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. This however, maybe attributed to the fact that discussing with colleagues or persons’ considered as knowledgeable may give them better understanding of the topics they are working on before they embark on a literature search or that students do not see the librarians/library staff as knowledgeable enough to assist them. Whatever the case, it is however worrisome that, students from both universities hardly consult the library catalogue, which is an indication that either the catalogue is not functioning well or that students lack the necessary skills to enable them make proper use of the library catalogue. The major problem noted by the respondents in seeking information is however in the area of material unavailability. Respondents also noted obsolete materials as another major problem. An indication that the universities libraries (Babcock and Solusi University) may not be providing resources to suit the information needs of students.

#### **4.5 Purpose for seeking information by Undergraduates**

Many researchers in information seeking behaviour have shown interest in undergraduate students’ purpose of seeking information. Whitmire (2001) in such study found out that undergraduates use the library mostly as a place to study and make photocopies, but do not make great use of some of the available library services, such as interlibrary loan and the reference desk.

Ajiboye and Tella (2007) conducted a research on university undergraduates’ information-seeking behaviour: 12 percent of the students required information for their personal development, while 11.25 percent claimed that they sought information on health matter, and 64.1 percent sought for information for their academic development, 9.3 percent to secure employment.

In a study carried out by Siddiqui (2011) on the Information Seeking Behaviour of B.Tech. and M.B.B.S. Students in Lucknow respondents indicated the purpose of seeking information. It is clearly stated that the maximum number of respondent gives the first priority to seek information for examination purposes, seeking information for updating knowledge level is a second priority, and the third seek information for preparing class notes and very few gives no response. This also corroborates the findings of Onouha and



Awoniyi (2011) in a study carried out on the comparative analysis of students' information seeking behaviour of undergraduates students of Babcock University (Nigeria) and Solusi University (Zimbabwe). From the research it was generally observed that students in the two universities surveyed, sought information mainly for the purpose of updating their knowledge, preparing for examinations and doing assignments.

#### **4.6 Problems encountered when seeking for information by Undergraduates**

Also, in a study conducted by Ejiwoye and Ayandare (2011) their findings posited that the inhibitors to the use of information resources by students was as a result of lack of time to consult information resources, lack of current information materials and erratic power supply to use electronic information resources and relying on internet for information need. However, this assumption may seem too simplistic because it is also plausible to argue that even when there are good facilities and quality teachers, students' achievement may still be hampered due to some students' factors, principal among which is the way they seek and organize academic information.

Similarly, Kamanda (1999) did a similar study at the East African School of Library and Information Science Library, Makerere University, Uganda. Questionnaire was used to gathered data from the respondents. It was observed that more than half of the students experience problems in locating library information materials. Kamanda notes that the majority of them either located materials through browsing the shelves or sought assistance from library staff, but they did not make full use of the card catalogue. Unlike Kamanda study which focused on regular students the present study focused on resident and distance learners study to compare their information seeking behaviour. Hence, the way students organize their learning and search for academic information could be considered very crucial to their overall performance at the end of the day. This situation gets more chaotic, especially when students are given assignments and presentations to make. They need to search for information on their own, consequently it is expected that they consult appropriate sources for academic information.

Zondi (1992) conducted a research on information seeking behaviour among undergraduate students using questionnaire as method of data collection. The study observed that most of the students are incompetent in using libraries. The first year undergraduate students at the University of Zululand, South Africa showed a very low level of competence in the use of a library and displayed poor information seeking patterns. This study differs from the present study in the use of method used for data collection. While only questionnaire was used by Zondi the present study employed the combination of questionnaire and interview.

Qureshi (2008) investigated the information needs & seeking behaviour of students in Universities of Pakistan. The study concluded that there are several factors that have significant effect on students' behaviour such as educational and cultural background, surrounding environment and student participation, which have high positive impact on information needs and information seeking behavior of students. If surrounding environment is helpful and student participation is active and then it will create culture that enhances the students' information gathering system. Also, In a study carried out by Siddiqui (2011) on the Information Seeking Behaviour of B.Tech. and M.B.B.S. Students in Lucknow, the study shows that the majority of respondents give the first priority lack of time i.e. 41 %, second priority was not availability of materials. 28 % says that information is too vast and 8 % gives no response.

### **5. Models and Theories on Information Seeking Behaviour**

Several models have been used to understand how library users seek for information and this includes both not limited to the following;

#### **5.1 Anomalous State of knowledge**

According to Belkin (1980), the proponent of the Anomalous State of knowledge (ASK) an information need arises when a human individual encounters an ASK. ASK is a situation where the user realizes that there is an anomaly in their state of knowledge with respect to the problem faced. The person may address the anomaly by seeking for information. After obtaining information the person will evaluate again whether the anomaly still exists. If it does, and the person is still motivated to resolve it and more information may be sought.

Belkin's model can be summarized in three basic steps:

1. A person recognizes a need for information (ASK)
2. That person presents a query (request) to an IR system, which returns information in the form of text(s)
3. The person then evaluates the information obtained from the system and determines if his/her need is completely satisfied, only partially satisfied or not satisfied at all.

#### **5.2 Big Six Skills Model**

Eissenberg (1992) quoted by Kakai (2004) also proposed the big six skills model of information seeking behaviour. The first skill of the model is Task Definition where a user defines a problem from an information point of view. However, users may plunge into information seeking before defining their topic or problem. The

second skill is Information Seeking Strategy, which involves making decisions. The third skill is Location and Access which involves use of access tools, arrangement of materials within a library or parts of an information source. The fourth skill is Use of Information; which involves interacting, dialoguing, reading, viewing, questioning and reflecting on the information. The fifth skill is Synthesis, which is the application of all the information to the defined task. The sixth skill is Evaluation which involves the examination and assessment of the information problem solving process. Evaluation determines whether the information found met the defined task.

### 5.3 Cognitive Dimension of Behaviour

Dervin (1992) is prominent among proponents of models that focus on the cognitive dimensions of information behaviour. Dervin (1992)'s sense making metaphor describes humans as moving along through time and space until they reach a cognitive gap, where an information need is perceived. Such gaps must be bridged through the acquisition of new information before they can move forward again. For him the aim of the person's information seeking endeavours is to make use of the current situation. It is also known as sense making model. He opined that the theory can be implemented by

- I. a *situation* in time and space, which defines the context in which information problems arise;
- II. a *gap*, which identifies the difference between the contextual situation and the desired situation (e.g. uncertainty);
- III. an *outcome*, that is, the consequences of the sense-making process, and
- IV. a *bridge*, that is, some means of closing the gap between situation and outcome.

### 5.4 Monitoring and Blunting Theory

Monitoring and Blunting theory posits that "when faced with an aversive event, people differ in their preference for information" (Fisher et al., 2006, p.239). The "monitors" are those who seek information in order to keep abreast of a situation; they are proactive in their searching, and they want to know current information. For these individuals, being informed about possible "threat-related" situations helps to alleviate their stress level and uncertainty about the situation (Fisher et al., 2006). The other reaction, blunting, is when people chose to avoid information about the situation which is causing them stress. Avoidance is their cure for anxiety.

The Monitoring and Blunting theory is closely related to the Sense Making model of information seeking behaviour developed by Brenda Dervin (Fisher et al., 2006, p.240). Sense Making can be divided into two components correlating to Monitoring and Blunting: Immediate Information Seeking, seen as Monitoring, and Deferred Information Needs, which can be viewed as Blunting. There is also a connection between these two theories in their acknowledgement that all individuals "seek information, albeit in different time frames" (Fisher et al., 2006, p.240). We all make sense of information. The important distinction being, we "sense make" at different speeds.

### 5.5 Information Intents Theory

The theory of Information Intents posits an "active-creative" (Fisher et al 2006) role for the information seeker. Todd's goal in developing this theory was to "provide a richer understanding of what happens in people's minds when they consume information" (Fisher et al., 2006). A building block example for this theory was Brooke's Fundamental Equation. This equation views information seeking as a three-fold process: what do people know, how does knowledge change as a result of information seeking and what effect do these changes have on the information seeker (Fisher et al., 2006). The theory identifies five information intents as the following:

- I. *Getting a complete picture*– the seeker initiates a search with the desire to add new information to an already constructed idea; to link together thoughts or ideas; to remember; to build a more expansive vocabulary in a specific knowledge area.
- II. *Getting a changed picture*– the information seeker makes changes to their ideas based upon the information found.
- III. *Getting a clearer picture*– the seeker identifies correlations between ideas and views these ideas with greater definition and understanding.
- IV. *Getting a verified picture*– the individual seeks to relieve existing doubt about an idea.
- V. *Getting a position in a picture*– the seeker is able to formulate a viewpoint or opinion.

Todd notes that these intents all have manifest in them some kind of "changes to knowledge structures" (Fisher et al., 2006, p.200). This model supports the theory that "people engage with information in purposeful, deliberate, and selective ways to get expanded, and/or changed, and/or clearer and/or verified pictures and by being able to state positions" also, "This is not random acquisition, but one shaped by a desired cognitive intent in the context of individual frames of reference such as personal experience, existing knowledge, and current state of life cycle" (Fisher et al., 2006, p.200).

## 6. Methodology

This study adopted social survey design, the population of this study consisted of undergraduate students of University of Ilorin who are on for a four, five, or six years programme within the twelve (12) faculties in the university. According to the 2010/2011 annual report of the university, the total number of undergraduates students stands at 21,827 in all the twelve (12) faculties that made up the University of Ilorin. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique to select the sample for the study. Israel (2003) model for determining sample size was used to arrive at this actual sample for this study. The model states: taken sample size for  $\pm 3\%$ ,  $\pm 5\%$ ,  $\pm 7\%$  and  $\pm 10\%$  for Precision Levels where Confidence Level is 95% and  $P=.5$ . Going by the model, if  $\pm 7$  was taken for precision when the population is 21,827, the sample should be 204. This justifies the sample used in this study which is 240.

**Table 6.1: Israel Sample Size Determination Table**

Sample size for $\pm 3\%$ , $\pm 5\%$ , $\pm 7\%$ and $\pm 10\%$ Precision Levels Where Confidence Level is 95% and $P=.5$ .				
Size of Population	Sample Size (n) for Precision (e) of:			
	$\pm 3\%$	$\pm 5\%$	$\pm 7\%$	$\pm 10\%$
10,000	1,000	385	200	100
15,000	1,034	390	201	100
20,000	1,053	392	204	100
25,000	1,064	394	204	100
50,000	1,087	394	204	100
100,000	1,099	398	204	100

Source: Israel 2003

The above table further justifies a sample of 229 respondents used in this study. The instrument was validated to ensure both the content and construct validity. To achieve these, the instrument was given to two experts whose research areas of interest include information seeking. They were to, scrutinize the instrument and offer expertise judgment. This is with the view of checking the appropriateness of the instrument before administration. The feedback from the experts on the instrument adjudged it has having both the face and content validity.

To achieve the reliability of the instrument used for data collection in this study, a split-half reliability method was used. The instrument was administered to twenty (20) students from seven (7) faculties in the university. Responses collected were subjected to cronbach-alpha. The overall reliability of the questionnaire returned gave a reliability coefficient of  $r= 0.82$ .

## 7.Data Collection And Analysis

The questionnaire was administered when students were on session because that is the time they could easily be reached. Out of 240 copies of the questionnaire administered, 229 copies were returned and completely filled representing 95.4% return rate. These were used for data analysis on the study. The data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive statistics including simple percentage and frequency count. The descriptive statistical tool was adopted because of its simple and easy understanding pattern to different cadet of researcher that may be interested in reading this report.

**Table 7.1: Distribution of Demographic Data of respondents based on faculty**

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	17	7.4
Arts	18	7.9
Basic Medical Sciences	18	7.9
Business and Social Sciences	19	8.3
Clinical Sciences	16	7.0
Communication and Information Sciences	26	11.4
Education	17	7.4
Engineering and Technology	27	11.8
Law	22	9.6
Pharmaceutical Sciences	13	5.7
Sciences	28	12.2
Veterinary Medicine	8	3.5
Total	229	100.0

The result indicate that 7.4% of the students were from faculty of agriculture, 7.9% were from faculty of arts, 7.9% were from faculty of basic medical sciences, 8.3% were from faculty of business and social sciences, 7.0% where from faculty of clinical sciences, 11.4% were from faculty of communication and

information sciences, 7.4% were from faculty of education, 11.8% were from faculty of engineering and technology, 9.6% were from faculty of law, 5.7% were from faculty of pharmaceutical sciences, 12.2% were from faculty of sciences while 3.5% of were from faculty of veterinary medicine. This shows that students from faculty of communication and information sciences, engineering and technology and sciences has the highest percentage while students from faculty of pharmaceutical sciences and veterinary medicine has lower percentage because the faculty is a newly created one and the students are few and not readily available during the collection of the data.

**Table 7.2: Demographic variables of respondents.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
100 level	102	44.5
200 level	44	19.2
300 level	35	15.3
400 level	39	17.0
500 level	9	3.9
600 level	0	0
Total	229	100
<b>Residents</b>		
Hostel	76	33.2
Off-Campus	153	66.8
Total	229	100
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	122	53.3
Female	107	46.7
Total	229	100
<b>Age</b>		
16-20	110	48
21-25	101	44.4
26-30	16	7
31-35	2	0.9
Total	229	100

The above table shows the distribution of students base on their level/year of study. 44.5% of the students were in their first year of study, 19.2% were in their second year of study, 15.3% were in their third year of study, 17.0% were in their fourth year of study while 3.9% were in their fifth year of study and none were in their sixth year of study. This indicates that the larger percentage of the students were in their first year of study. The table also above indicates that the 66.8% of the students resides outside the school campus while those that reside in the hostel accommodation provided by the school management is 33.2%.

This means that the larger percentage of the students reside off-campus. The results also indicate that, 53.3% of the respondents were male while 46.7% were female. This shows that there are more male than female that took part in this study. In addition, 48% of the students were between the ages of 16-20 years, 44.1% are between 21-25 years of age, 7% were aged 26-30 years while 0.9% were aged between 31-35 years.

**Table 7.3: Information Needs of the respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Use of ICT in research (OPAC)	113	49.3 %	116%	50.7%
Search Strategies skills	48	21%	181%	79%
Finding Appropriate Materials	105	45.9	124	54.1
Need for Specific Information	72	31.4	157	68.6

The table above shows that 79% of the respondents do not consider search strategy skills to be their information need. On the other hand, 45.9% consider finding appropriate material to be their information needs, 50.7% of the student do not consider the use of (OPAC) in research to be their information need. This could be attributed to the fact that majority of them still don't have search strategy skills which is prerequisite for the



use of ICT in research.

**Table 7.4: Purpose of Seeking Information**

Variable	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%)	Frequency No	Percentage (%)
To write a research project	78	34.1	151	65.9
To prepare for an examination and test	118	51.5	111	48.5
For course work and assignment	133	58.1	96	41.9
To review literature	32	14	197	86
General awareness or reading to enhance lecture notes	100	43.7	129	56.3
Leisure	54	23.6	175	76.4
Health information	46	20.1	183	79.9
Sports	32	14	197	86
Political	29	12.7	200	87.3
Self development	136	59.4	93	40.6

The above table indicates that the majority of the student needs information to prepare for examination and test 51.5%, 58.1% for course work and assignment, 59.4% need information for self-development, while 43.7% need information for general awareness or reading to enhance lecture notes. The study also indicates that respondents have less emphasis for information on sports 14%, politics 12.7% and health information 20.1%.

**Table 7.5: Use of Information Sought**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%)	Frequency No	Percentage (%)
General awareness	148	64.6	81	35.4
For entertainment	36	15.7	193	84.3
For doing Research	100	43.7	129	56.3
Preparing Reading	115	50.2	114	49.8
For writing a seminar paper or presentation	47	20.5	182	79.5

The students were asked their purpose of seeking information. The result indicates that 64.6% of the students purpose of seeking information for general awareness, 50.2% for preparing reading, 43.7% for doing research, 20.5% for writing a seminar paper or presentation while the least where for entertainment purpose.

**Table 7.6: Places of getting Needed Information**

Variable	Frequency Yes	Percentage Yes (%)	Frequency No	Percentage No (%)
Public Library	32	14	197	86
Special Library	8	3.5	221	96.5
Online databases	83	36.2	146	63.8
Personal clections collection	66	28.8	163	71.2
Mobile surfing	110	48	119	52
Unilorin library(Main, Law or Medical)	122	53.3	107	46.7
Unilorin e-library Library	35	15.3	194	84.7
Cyber cafes	98	42.8	191	57.2
Departmental Library	16	7	213	93
BBM (BlackBerry Messenger)	17	7.4	212	92.6

The above table shows that 53.3% of the student usually go to the university library to get information, 48% prefer mobile surfing in order to get information followed by 42.8% who opined that they visit cyber cafes whenever they need information.

**Table 7.7: Library Visit**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	201	87.8
No	28	12.2
Total	229	100

The above table shows that 87.8% of the student usually go to the university library to get information, 12.2% prefer mobile surfing in order to get information followed by 42.8% who opined that they visit cyber cafes whenever they need information.

The respondents were asked to indicate if they ever visit the university library. The result shows that 87.8% of the respondents do visit the library while 12.2% said they don't visit the library.

**Table 7.8: Types of Information Preference**

Variable	Frequency Yes	Percentage Yes (%)	Frequency No	Percentage No (%)
Books with appropriate title	167	72.9	62	27.1
Repackaged information	41	17.9	188	82.1
Academic journal	74	32.3	155	67.7
Books on reserve put aside by course tutor	54	23.6	175	76.4

The table above indicates that 72.9% prefer books with appropriate title while they barely go for repackaged information; 17.9%; academic journals 32.3% and research books reserved by course tutor 23.6%.

**Table 7.9: Library Section and User Satisfaction**

Variable	Frequency Yes	Percentage Yes (%)	Frequency No	Percentage No (%)
Circulation section	98	42.8	131	57.2
Serials section	58	25.3	171	74.7
Reference Section	83	36.2	146	63.8
E—library	81	35.4	148	64.6

The respondents were asked on the library section they visit when looking for information while considering their satisfaction on the sections visited. The result further indicates that the respondents usually visit the circulation section of the library 42.8%, 36.2% use to visit the reference section while they rarely visit the e-library 35.4% and 25.3% serials section.

**Table 7.10: Satisfaction with the Library Working Hour**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	114	49.8
No	75	32.8
I don't know	40	17.5

The above shows that 49.8% of the respondents are satisfied with the library working hours, 32.8% are not satisfy with the library working hour while 17.5% are indifferent.

**Table 7.11: Sources of Consulted Information**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%) Yes	Frequency No	Percentage (%) No
Books	187	81.7	42	18.3
Periodicals (eg. Journals and magazines)	56	24.5	173	75.5
Internet	187	81.7	42	18.3
Telephone	30	13.1	199	86.9
Friends and classmates classmates	86	37.6	143	62.4
Videos	23	10	206	90
Pamphlets	18	7.9	211	92.1
Course lecturer	55	24	174	76
Librarian	14	6.1	215	93.9

The respondents were asked on the source of information they consulted. The table above shows that they 81.7% consulted books, 81.7% internet while they barely consulted periodicals (journals and magazines) 24.5% and course lecturer for 24% information

**Table 7.12: Information Sources and Satisfaction**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%) Yes	Frequency No	Percentage (%) No
Books	158	69	71	31
Periodicals (eg. Journals and magazines)	28	12.2	201	87.8
Internet	167	72.9	62	27.1
Telephone	20	8.7	209	91.3
Friends and classmates	86	37.6	143	62.4
Videos	14	6.1	215	93.9
Pamphlets	7	3.1	222	96.9
Course lecturer	27	11.8	202	88.2
Librarian	8	3.5	221	96.5

The respondents were asked on the information sources among those consulted that often satisfy their needs. The result shows that internet 72% and books 69% were the major sources that satisfy their information needs.

**Table 7.13: Information Sources Preference**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Formal	176	76.9
Informal	53	23.1
Total	229	100

The respondents were asked to identify if they prefer formal sources of information to informal sources of information. The result shows 76.9% prefer formal sources of information such as (Books, journal, reference sources, online databases etc) to informal sources of information indicated by 23.1% including (e-mail, discussion with teachers, seminars, discussion with librarians etc) sources of information.

**Table 7.14: Information Sources and Satisfaction**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	101	44.1
Partially Satisfied	125	54.6
Not Satisfied	3	1.3
Total	229	100

The respondents were asked to indicate if all information sources consulted satisfy their information needs. The result shows that 44.1% were satisfied, 54.6% were partially satisfied and 1.3% were not satisfied. Thus, this further buttress the point that various sources of information used by the respondents were in one way or the other met and satisfied their information needs. Majority were satisfied and partially satisfied with a minute percentage of the respondents who felt they are not.

**Table 7.15: Format of Information Materials Sought**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Print	148	64.6
Electronic	56	24.5
Multimedia	11	4.8
Audio Visual	14	6.1
Total	229	100

The respondents were asked to indicate their most preferred information format. The result shows that 64.6% preferred print format, 24.5% preferred electronic format, 6.1% preferred the use of audio-visual while 4.8% preferred to use multimedia. This is an indication to the fact that the prints sources of information constitute a larger volume of information materials provided by the university library while electronic information sources are only be provided at the e-library section of the university library. Thus, multimedia and audio visual sources are rarely used and preferred due to their unavailability at the university library.

**Table 7.16: Information Need**

**Table 7.16a: Remembrance on needed information**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	197	86.0
No	25	10.9
I do not know	7	3.1
Total	229	100

The respondents were asked if they could remember when they recently needed information. The

result shows that 86% of the respondents said they can remember when they recently needed information, 10.9% said No while 3.1% said they do not know.

**Table 7.16b: Steps Taken on Information Need**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%) Yes	Frequency No	Percentage (%) No
Consulted my program module programme module	62	27.1	167	72.9
Asked people who are expert on my subject of interest	110	48	119	52
Discussion with my colleagues colleagues	119	52	110	48
Meet the course lecturer Lecturer	42	18.3	187	81.7

The respondents were asked to indicate what they do when they realize they needed information. The results shows that 52% discusses with their colleagues, 48% asked people who are expert in their field of interest, 27.1% use to consult their programme module while 18.3% always meet their course lecturer when they realized they needed information.

**Table 7.17: Frequency of Library Visitation**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Once	22	9.6
Frequently	129	56.3
Seldom	78	34.1
Total	229	100

The respondents were asked how often they visit the university library in a semester. The result shows that 56.3% visits the library frequently, 34.1% said they seldom visits the library while 9.6% visits the library once.

**Table 7.18: Methods Apply to Locate Information**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage Yes (%)	Frequency No	Percentage No (%)
Assistance of library staff	34	14.8	195	85.2
Guidance of lecturers/librarians	37	16.2	192	83.8
Self help	129	56.3	100	43.7
Trial by error	26	11.4	203	88.6
Using the Web OPAC	35	15.3	194	84.7
Help of a friend	48	21	181	79
Using the catalogue	73	31.9	156	68.1

The respondents were asked to indicate the method they applied in locating information in the library. The result shows that 56.3% of the respondents locate their information through self- help, 31.9% use the catalogue in locating information, 21% use the help of a friend, 15.3% said they use the Web OPAC while 11.4% adopt a trial by error method.

**Table 7.19: Purpose of Seeking Information**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%) Yes	Frequency No	Percentage (%) No
General awareness awareness	148	64.6	81	35.4
For entertainment entertainment	36	15.7	193	84.3
For doing research	100	43.7	129	56.3
Preparing reading	115	50.2	114	49.8
For writing a seminar paper or presentation	47	20.5	182	79.5

The students were asked their purpose of seeking information. The result indicates that 64.6% of the students purpose of seeking information for general awareness, 50.2% for preparing reading, 43.7% for doing research, 20.5% for writing a seminar paper or presentation while the least where for entertainment purpose.

**Table 7.20: Problems Encountered/ Factors affecting Use of Information**

Variables	Frequency Yes	Percentage (%) Yes	Frequency No	Percentage (%) No
Lack of time	80	34.9	149	65.1
Inadequacy of relevant materials	120	52.4	109	47.6
Inadequacy of relevant library equipment	197	86	32	14
Technophobia	3	1.3	226	98.7
Proximity to information services	19	8.3	210	91.7
Procrastination	76	33.2	153	66.8
Complicated Materials	45	19.7	184	80.3
Lack of technological skills	21	9.2	208	90.8
Cost	60	26.2	169	73.8

The respondents were asked on what affects their use of information. The results shows that 86% attributed it to inadequacy of relevant equipment, 52.4% inadequacy of relevant materials, 34.9% lack of time, 33.2% procrastination, 26.2% cost, 19.7% complicate materials, 9.2% lack of technological skills, 8.3% proximity to information services while 1.3% is technophobia.

### 8. Summary Of Findings

The results of study showed that the information resources available to the respondents include books, periodicals (eg journals, magazine and newspaper etc) and internet services provided at the e-library. The information sources available to them are formal and informal which includes print, electronic, multimedia and audiovisual. Respondents prefer information materials with appropriate titles during their visit to the library and they adopt self-help to locate information they need as they rarely use the catalogue to retrieving information materials.

Furthermore, other places where information is sought include the cyber cafes, mobile surfing, online databases and personal collection. Steps taken when information is needed is usually done by asking experts in their field of study and discussion with their colleagues while the usage of information is channelled towards general awareness, preparing reading and for writing paper presentation. However, factors affecting respondents' usage of information ranges from inadequacy of relevant library equipment, inadequate relevant library materials, lack of time, procrastination and a host of others.

## 9. Discussion of Findings, Conclusion And Recommendation

### 9.1 Introduction

This study presents the discussion of results obtained in this study. The presentation also includes discussion on conclusion, recommendation and suggestions for future research. The objective of this study was to assess the information needs and information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The objectives were to: Investigate the information needs of the undergraduate students.; Identify the sources through which undergraduate seeks information.; Identify undergraduate information seeking behaviour.; Find out the purpose for seeking information.; Identify the problems encountered when seeking for information.

### 9.2 Information needs of the undergraduate students.

The study sought to find the information needs of the undergraduates. The results suggested that information needs of the respondents solely lies on the use of ICT in research followed by search strategy skills which is a prerequisite for the use of ICT in seeking for information. This was in accordance with the findings of Toto (2009) who studies the information seeking behaviour of distance learners in which the findings reveals that the most important information need of the learners is use of ICT for research. Finding appropriate information materials for use in their study was also indicated by the respondents as they tend to find actual information in them. The information needs are mostly directed towards preparation for exam, carrying out course work and assignment, which is the centre point of their learning process as an undergraduate. Furthermore, information sought is also channelled towards general awareness to enhance lecture notes which helps to enhance notes and lectures given. However, the purpose which they use information for are at times used for research and to prepare for a seminar which form part of the academic activities required by them as an undergraduate as this add to the overall performance.

### 9.3 Sources through which undergraduate seeks information.

The study sought to find out the sources through which undergraduates seek information. The result suggested



that undergraduates mostly consult books and internet while they barely consulted periodicals (journals and magazines) and course lecturer for information. This is related to the study carried out by Fidzani (1998) who study the information needs and information seeking behaviour of students at University of Botswana, Gaborone. Findings revealed that the students relied on library books, textbooks, and journals. This might be in line with the fact that undergraduate take books as their first source of call when seeking information sources which is also accordance with This is also in accordance with Patitungkho and Deshpande's (2005) finding that most respondents in their study consulted books.

Thus, the results also finds out that internet sources and books were the major sources that satisfy their information needs as they prefer formal sources of information (Books, journal, reference sources, online databases etc) to informal sources of information (e-mail, discussion with teachers, seminars, discussion with librarians etc) sources of information. However, majority of the students were partially satisfied with the information sources consulted. Some of them were satisfied while few were not satisfied with the sources of information they consult this was revealed in the findings of Boadi and Letsolo (2004) as their study indicates that, most respondents covered in their study were satisfied with their sources of information.

#### **9.4 Undergraduate information seeking behaviour.**

The research question sought the extent of undergraduate information seeking behaviour. The respondents were asked on their most preferred information format. The result shows undergraduates preferred print format, followed by electronic format while they barely prefer the use of audio-visual and multimedia information format this also corroborated the study Tahir et al (2008) whereby the study shows that most respondents (77%) prefer print, followed by electronic materials (39%), while audiovisual materials were the least preferred (13%). The study also made it known that most of the respondent could remember the last time they needed information and there were indications that they discuss with their colleagues when they need information and also ask expert in their field of study when the need for this arises but hardly meets the course lecturer or consult their programme module for this purpose. The aspect of undergraduates meeting with experts in their field is also in relation with the findings of Tahir et al (2008), who studied the information needs and information seeking behaviour of humanities teachers, as the respondents consult knowledgeable persons or experts in the field was the most important source of information for the research. As to whether they do visit the library, majority of the respondents do visit the library frequently as they usually adopt self-help method and catalogue in locating information in the library. It was also revealed that the respondents hardly sought the help of the librarian in seeking information base on the reasons that they are not cooperative when approached.

#### **9.5 Purpose for seeking information.**

The students were asked their purpose of seeking information. Majorly, the respondent's purpose of seeking information is for general awareness and for reading and carrying out research. Some also indicates their purpose of seeking information for writing seminar or paper presentation which differs from the findings of Siddiqui (2011) as the respondents' studies gives the first priority to seek information for examination purposes and seeking information for updating knowledge.

#### **9.6 Identify the problems encountered when seeking for information.**

In identifying problems encountered by the respondents, generally, the study indicates that information materials are not available in their field of study, majority of the respondents do not know how to use the library catalogue in locating information they needed in the library. Respondents also made it known that they lack time in seeking information and at times information materials are old and incomplete while in rare cases they are too vast. This view was also buttressed by Siddiqui (2011) who studied the information seeking behaviour of undergraduates in which the respondents encountered problems and majority gave the first priority as lack of time i.e. 41 %, second priority was non-availability of materials while 28 % said that information is too vast.

#### **9.7 Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to assess the information needs and information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in University of Ilorin. The results generally showed that undergraduate students make use of information to prepare for examination test and to do their assignments. The information resources used by the respondents are books, journals, internet access, magazines and newspapers. Many of the respondents purpose for seeking for information is for general awareness, preparing reading and for carrying out research. It is to be noted that information they sought are through self-help and little do they use the library catalogue. They seldom use Web OPAC which is an indication that it is not provided by the library for retrieving information as some might have come across it through the internet.

The problems encountered in seeking and use of information is based on the premise that information

materials are not available and when available, are incomplete. Many can hardly use the library catalogue which is a problem faced when seeking for information. Thus, as for use of information, respondents opined that there are inadequate information materials and relevant library equipment. There is issue of lack of time which may arise due to procrastination in the use of information sought by the respondent and majority said they lack adequate information materials in their field of study.

### 9.8 Recommendations

The following are recommended based on the above findings:

The University management should provide more current and relevant information materials across all faculties to meet the information needs of students.

The Library should embark on practical user education to train prospective users on information retrieval skills.

The library should regularly access its retrieval tools especially the catalogue to ensure its effectiveness while staffs should be on ground to assist users at all times.

The University management through the library should make available internet facilities with easy access to users at little or no cost

### 9.9 Future Directions

Subsequent research on this could be on undergraduate information needs and information seeking behaviour in a digital environment by finding the relationship among them base on discipline. In addition, longitudinal study relating to private and state owned universities can be conducted to find out behaviour of students towards information needs and seeking behaviour

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**First A. Author:** Is an Education Officer with the Teaching Service Commission, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. BSc in Library and Information Science, University of Ilorin Nigeria, 2012  
MLIS (In View), Department of Library, Archival and information Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
Major field of interest include information literacy, information seeking behaviour and ICT in Library  
E-mail: zeezcounit@gmail.com

**Second A. Author:** This author became a member (M) of Nigeria Library Association; Edo State chapter in 2013 and holds a proficiency certificate in management from the Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM) in 2012.

BSc (Hons) in Library and Information Science, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria  
MLIS (In View), Department of Library, Archival and information Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
Major Field of study are Information seeking behaviour, knowledge management and reference services.  
E-mail: infor.migbinovia@yahoo.com

**Third A. Author:** This author is a staff member in the reference unit of Redeemer's University Library, Nigeria  
B.Ed in Educational Management/Economics, Tai Solarin University of Education, 2010.  
MLIS (In View) Department of Library, Archival and information Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria  
E-mail: solankeyinka@gmail.com