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Comparative Analysis of Students' Information Seeking Behaviour in Adventist Universities: A Survey of Babcock and Solusi Universities

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Introduction

The 21st century can best be described as an era of information revolution, with the presence of information bearing materials in diverse formats. Libraries and information centres are not only equipped with materials in traditional formats but also in electronic formats offering users a vast selection. With the array of information sources available in the university library, little wonder then that the library is known as the academic heart of the university (Odiase, Unegbu, and Haliso, 2001).

Information seeking behaviour according to Wilson (2000) entails the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information including active and passive information seeking. In the quest for information, different kinds of behaviour are manifested as students have different reasons for wanting information, different levels of search skill and preference for some types of information bearing materials. Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain (1996) affirm that information seeking involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church owns a number of schools from kindergarten to tertiary level. At the tertiary level most especially, it is expected that libraries would be available to support the information needs of the user communities. While previous studies have been carried out on the information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in government and state owned institutions, little has been done to find out the information seeking patterns of students in church owned universities. This study therefore intends to breach that gap by finding out and

comparing the information seeking behaviour of undergraduates in two Seventh-day Adventist Universities.

Babcock University

Babcock University has its roots in the Adventist College of West Africa (ACWA) established on September 17, 1959 by the first Adventist missionary in Nigeria with an initial intake of seven ministerial students (Babcock University, 2009). The University is fully owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist church and registered under the laws of the federal republic of Nigeria to operate as a private University. While upholding the importance of the highest academic standards, the uniqueness of Babcock University is to be found in the pursuance of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education that emphasizes the harmonious development of the academic, physical, psycho-social and spiritual potential of students and faculty.

Solusi University

Solusi University is a Seventh-day Adventist institution situated west of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and near the original headquarters of Chief Soluswe from whom the University took its name. Established in 1894 (Seventh – Day Adventist Year Book, 2009). The school started as Solusi College after a small band of dedicated pioneers established a mission station on the site of the present campus. It opened on October 4, 1994, as the first private institution of higher education in the country, following the granting of the charter by the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe. It was renamed Solusi University to reflect the institution's expanded roles and academic offerings. Like every other Adventist University, Solusi University emphasizes the harmonious development of the academic, physical, psycho-social and spiritual potential of students and faculty.

Statement of the Problem

Information is a vital resources needed by students to perform well in their academic pursuit. However research and observation reveals that students sit long hours in the library in the quest for information, however, the type of information sought, the purpose of seeking information, accessibility to the required information and problems encountered during information seeking remains largely unknown. This unknown phenomenon affects the library and the user (students) in the sense that the library may not effectively meet the information needs of the students, and as such, students waste time in unfruitful search that would have been used for study. In the light of this, the present study investigates the pattern of students' information behaviour at Babcock University and Solusi University.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine information seeking behaviour of students' of Babcock and Solusi Universities; the specific objectives are to:

1 discover the purpose for information seeking by students;

2 determine the methods used for seeking information;

3 find out problems faced by students while seeking information;

Research Hypothesis

The following Null hypothesis are also tested.

H01.There is no significant difference in the pattern of information seeking behaviour of Babcock university students and students of Solusi University.

H02 There is no significant difference in the pattern of information seeking behaviour of students' based on their discipline.

Literature Review

Information behaviour is the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use (Wilson (2000). The need for information is often understood as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning (Kunhthau, 1993)). In the search for information, Marchionini (1989), notes, that the execution of an individual's information-seeking system for a particular information problem is considered an Information-Seeking Strategy (ISS). A well designed strategy will examine the problem and work out the best source of information that will match the information need.

Many researchers have shown interest in undergraduate students' information seeking behaviour. 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. In another study, Ajiboye and Adeyinka (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. This finding is further confirmed 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. 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.

Mann (1993) 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.

Ellis, Cox and Hall (1993), on the other hand, compared the information-seeking patterns of physical and social scientists and found out that there is no essential difference between the two disciplines. Covi (1999) analyzed information seeking behaviour of academic researchers in the field of molecular biology, literacy theory, and computer science and their use of digital libraries. The result of the study indicated differences in the search strategies employed and the types of material selected among the researchers in the various academic disciplines. Researchers like (Bates, 1996; Broadus, 1987) also investigated the information-seeking behaviours of people in the humanities. They generally reported that humanities

scholars did not use indexes and abstracts or consult librarians.

Kamanda (1999) in a study at the East African School of Library and Information Science Library, Makerere University, Uganda observed that more than half of the students experience problems locating library information materials. He noted 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. Ssendikadiwa (1996) made similar observation at Makerere University library. The author noted that although the catalogue was the most essential library tool in accessing library collections, it was the most avoided and least consulted by undergraduates. Taylor (1991), on the other hand identified problems associated with availability and access to resources. According to the author, what a user actually needs may not tally with what is practically available, due to constraints either within the stock or due to the users own inability. Hartmann (2001) in his study concluded that undergraduate students experienced difficulty in locating items from the library collection and did not understand the processes for retrieving journal articles.

Methodology

The descriptive design was used for the study. The population comprises of 4,741 students (1,292 and 3,449 for Solusi University Zimbabwe and Babcock University Nigeria, respectively) from three selected faculties (Science and Technology, Management and Social Science/Business and Education and Humanities/Arts) who registered during the first semester of 2009/2010 in the two universities. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 474 students (10% of the population) who took part in the study. A questionnaire adapted from Patitungkho and Deshpande (2005) was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square. The analysis was carried out using the statistical packages for social science (SPSS).

Table 1: Selection of respondents from both universities

University	*School/Faculty*	*Department*	*No of respondent*	*Total*
Babcock	Science and Technology	Computer science/Math	45	90
		Nursing science	45	
	Management and Social Science	Business Admin/Marketing	91	182
		Economics/Banking and Finance Accounting	91	
	Education and Humanities	Mass communication	37	73
		Information Resources Management	36	
Solusi	Science and Technology	Family consumer science	21	43
		Math and Environment science	22	
		Computer and Management	29	

	Business	Information System		59
		Accounting	30	
	Art	English Studies	27	27
Total				474

Data Presentation

The results of the analysis are discussed as follows:

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
University	345	72.8
Babcock	129	27.2
Solusi	474	100.0
TOTAL		
Faculty	117	24.7
Science and Technology	241	50.8
Social Sciences/Business	116	24.5
Education and Humanities/Arts	474	100.0
TOTAL		

It is evident from the table that majority of the respondents 345 (72.8%) are from Babcock university, 241 (50.8%) belong to the faculty of Social Sciences/Business.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Students According to Purpose of Seeking Information

Purpose of Information Seeking	NO		YES		TOTAL	
	F	Percent	F	Percent	N	Percent
Prepare class notes	343	72.4	131	27.6	474	100
Update knowledge	79	16.7	395	83.3	474	100
Do assignment	268	56.5	206	43.5	474	100
Write term papers	287	60.5	187	39.5	474	100
Examination preparation	205	43.2	269	56.8	474	100

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of students according to the purpose of

seeking information. From the table, students mainly seek information to update knowledge (83.3%), prepare for examination (56.8%) and to a lesser extent to do assignments (43.5%).

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Students According to Methods used for Seeking Information

Methods for Information Seeking	NO		YES		TOTAL	
	f	Percent	f	Percent	N	Percent
Discuss with Colleagues	208	43.9	266	56.1	474	100
Consult Knowledgeable Person(s)	251	53.0	223	47.0	474	100
Discuss with Librarian/Staff	420	88.6	54	11.4	474	100
Review Articles	303	63.9	171	36.1	474	100
Library Catalogue	342	72.2	132	28.8	474	100
Abstracting Journals	388	81.9	86	18.1	474	100
Other Methods	328	69.2	146	30.8	474	100

Table 4 shows the methods used by students in seeking information. From the table, the main methods of information seeking by students are discussions with colleagues (56.1%) followed by consulting knowledgeable person(s) (47.0%). This finding is in agreement with that of Patintungkho and Deshpande (2005) who found out that 53% of the faculty members of Rajabhat University in Bangkok consulted knowledgeable person in the field and 41% discussed with colleagues while seeking information.

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Students According to Problems faced while Seeking Information

Problems of Information Seeking	NO		YES		TOTAL	
	f	Percent	f	Percent	N	Percent
Materials not available	211	44.5	262	55.3	473	99.8
Library staff not willing/unfriendly	371	78.4	101	21.4	473	99.8
Incomplete Information Materials	320	67.7	152	32.1	473	99.8
Information Sources far located	421	88.8	53	11.2	474	100.0
Lack of time	374	78.9	100	21.1	474	100.0
Do not know use of catalogue	408	86.1	65	13.7	474	100.0
Information scattered in too many sources	366	77.2	108	22.8	474	100.0

Information materials old	265 55.9	209 44.1	474 100.0

Table 5 above shows the distribution of students according to problems faced while seeking information. The table reveals that the main problems are that materials are either not available (55.3%) or information materials are old (44.1%). This is in agreement with the assertion of Taylor (1991) that after interacting with information sources in the library, what a user actually needs may not tally with what is practically available.

Table 6: Cross- tabulation Chi-square test for difference in the pattern of information seeking behaviour of Babcock University students and students of Solusi University.

Purpose	Frequency	University		Chi-Square Value	Df	Sig. Level	Comment
		Babcock	Solusi				
		NO YES	NO YES				
Prepare class notes	Observed Expected	244 101 249.7 95.3	99 30 93.3 35.7	1.701	1	.117	NS
Update knowledge	Observed Expected	51 294 57.5 287.5	28 101 21.5 107.5	3.240	1	.050	S
Do assignment	Observed Expected	211 134 195.1 149.9	57 72 72.9 56.1	11.008	1	.001	S
Write term papers	Observed Expected	216 129 208.9 136.1	71 58 78.1 50.9	2.252	1	.082	NS
Examination preparation	Observed Expected	178 167 148.2 195.8	27 102 55.8 73.2	35.970	1	.000	S

df = Degree of freedom

NS = Not Significant

S = Significant

From Table 6, the observed frequency of 294 for yes for Babcock University students was higher than the expected frequency of 287.5 in the seeking of information to update knowledge an indication that students of Babcock University uses information to update knowledge more than their counterparts from Solusi University. The difference was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance when the Chi-square test was applied. In the same vein, there are significant

differences in the seeking of information for doing assignment and for examination preparations with Solusi University using it more for these two purposes than their counterparts from Babcock University. No significant difference was found in their pattern of information seeking for preparing class notes and writing term papers.

Table 7: Cross - tabulation Chi-square test for difference in the pattern of information seeking behaviour of students based on their discipline.

Purpose	Frequency	Faculty			Chi-Square Value	df	Sig.	Comment
		Science & Tech	Social Science/Bus.	EAH/Arts				
		NO YES	NO YES	NO YES				
Prepare class notes	Observed	82 35	175 66	86 30	0.449	2	.781	NS
	Expected	84.7 32.3	174.4 66.6	83.9 32.1				
Update knowledge	Observed	13 104	46 195	20 96	3.644	2	.162	NS
	Expected	19.5 97.5	40.2 200.8	19.2 96.7				
Do assignment	Observed	69 48	142 99	57 59	3.425	2	.180	NS
	Expected	66.2 50.8	136.3 104.7	65.6 50.4				
Write term papers	Observed	80 37	151 90	56 60	10.763	2	.005	S
	Expected	70.8 46.2	145.9 95.1	70.2 45.8				
Examination preparation	Observed	44 73	126 115	35 81	17.611	2	.000	S
	Expected	50.6 66.4	104.2 136.8	50.2 65.8				

Table 7 shows the Cross-tabulation Chi-square test for the difference in pattern of information seeking behaviour of students based on their discipline. It is evident from the table that the observed frequencies for *yes* were higher than the expected frequencies for students in the Faculty of Education and Humanities/Arts than for those of their counterparts from the Faculty of Science and Technology as well as Faculty of Social Sciences/Business with respect to seeking information for writing term papers and examination preparation. This is an indication that students from the Faculty of Education and Humanities/ Arts use it more for these two purposes. The difference was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Students from the different Faculties do not differ in their pattern of information seeking for note preparation, updating knowledge and for doing assignments.

Discussion of Findings

From the research it was generally observed that students in the two Adventist

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.

From the hypothesis tested, it was confirmed that students of Babcock University use information materials to update their knowledge more than their counterparts from Solusi University. The difference was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance when the Chi-square test was applied. Also the observed frequencies for *yes* were higher than the expected frequencies for students in the Faculty of Education and Humanities/Arts than for those of their counterparts from the Faculty of Science and Technology as well as Faculty of Social Sciences/Business with respect to seeking information for writing term papers and preparing for examination. This is an indication that students from the Faculty of Education and Humanities/ Arts use it more for these two purposes. The difference was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Students from the different Faculties do not differ in their pattern of information seeking for note preparation, updating knowledge and for doing assignments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the above, it is evident that students seek information mainly to update knowledge, prepare for examinations and to do assignments from textbooks and electronic sources, however the relevant materials are often not available or obsolete (too old). Students of the two universities however differ in their information seeking behaviour with respect to updating knowledge, doing assignments as well as for examination preparation.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Babcock and Solusi universities should make more effort to stock the library with current and relevant information materials in all academic programmes offered in the university in order to meet students need.

2. Both universities libraries should embark on use of library training skill for students to ensure that they have the required knowledge that would enable them make maximum use of library resources

3. The libraries surveyed can also carry out an assessment of the library's catalogue, to ensure it's effectiveness

4. Librarians / library staff should make more effort to reach out to students, this would not only draw the students closer to them, but also encourage students to ask for their help while seeking for information.

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