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## Library information needs of Parents of Children who are Career Workers in Academic Libraries: Implication for Policy and Practice

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# Library information needs of Parents of Children who are Career Workers in Academic Libraries: Implication for Policy and Practice

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## **Abstract**

The importance of information in human development and growth brought about this descriptive research study which generally determined the library information needs of parents of children who are career workers. To achieve the above aforementioned aims, four research questions guided the study. A total of 212 staff were used as participants. A structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and titled: Information Needs of Academic Staff in Academic Library Questionnaire (INASALQ) was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three experts. It was trial tested using 20 staff of academic library and its internal consistency was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha co-efficient statistical method. The result gave overall Alpha-co-efficient value of 0.87. The data collected was analyzed using mean, and standard deviation. The major findings revealed that awareness creation, seeking for knowledge exposure, capacity building, teaching, research, technological and e-library skills among others are the information needs of college Library staff (parents of children). It was also found that conference participations and training are not their information needs. The finding revealed that the college staff agreed that staff meeting, media, internet, academic discussion and conference are their source of information needs. It was found that the problems affecting the satisfaction of information needs of college

Library staff are lack of awareness, infrastructural facilities, high cost of information materials, roads, financial incentives, fund, power supply and motivation. Finally, it was found that improvement of infrastructure, manpower development, procurement of advanced facilities, knowledge management, increased library funding, improvement of information related policy, improved credit facilities and accessible road are the strategies for meeting the information needs of the academic library staff (parents of children). Based on these findings, some practice implications were highlighted, and recommendations made.

Keywords: Library Information needs, Parents of Children, Career Workers, Academic Libraries, Policy and Practice

### **Introduction**

People are faced with challenges and issues on which they need to take decisions. The decisions need to be informed decision that assists the people to have good adjustment. The informed decisions are often dependent on information that is available to the individual. It therefore requires that such information must be valid and usable on its own. No wonder people are always in search of information for example, a staff of any establishment who lack valid information concerning the requirements, conditions and hazards involved in that job may likely have a problem.

Several definitions have been preferred to information. For Apata and Oguirowo (2010), information is described as power and an important working tool for the advancement of human and society. Contextually, information is a valuable data and resource required by organizational staff which will help them to be competitive globally and realize organizational and personal goals. Information has gained a rich background and popularity because of its global importance in this contemporary world (Akabogu, et al 2018; Ede et al 2021a). Ekoja (2010) opines that information is required for individual growth and development and by extension, societal growth and change.

In essence, information is an inevitable resource that brings about change, development, growth and advancement which every person in any establishment virtually needs.

Lack of information is believed to be a barrier to development because of the importance of information provision in capacity building and empowerment (Wakelin & Simelane, 1995). Capacity building according to Ugwu and Oboegblem (2011) is a process of improving the abilities of people in performing tasks. In this study, capacity building refers to equipping individuals with technological abilities, competencies, skills and experiences of discharging their organizational roles. When their capacities and abilities are solidified and rigidified, it empowers the individuals to be active in task performance. From the foregoing, people that work in any institution need to be well informed to enable them face global challenges terms of technology.

Since the world is growing scientifically and technologically developing in terms of skills and competencies to access information becomes imperative (Ede et al 2021b). This also become the driven force why everybody including civil servants and others are emphasizing the Needs for information. In essence, there is need for skills to surf technological resources and get the emerging exposure of information era.

Based on the aforementioned importance, it become necessary to understand what information needs is. Ekoja (2010) intones that information needs are the information, which information seekers require to conduct their business and their daily lives. Contextually, information needs are referred to a set of data which information users are missing that enable them to contribute valid informed decision and access worthwhile information at any particular time.

However, when an individual identifies information needs, it leads to accessibility and seeking for information. Therefore, people information needs differ and it is based on

individuality, orientation and occupation farmers, urban teachers and lecturers in tertiary institutions are not the same. Some need information because it has the capacity to enhance their teaching skills and experience (Okafor & Ejiofor, 2013). It implies that everybody has different purposes of seeking for information for the individual purpose of accessing information to be meant, a number of sources exist through which information can be disseminated.

People access information using town cries, community meeting, personal contact, radio, television and libraries which are not sufficient (Otolu, 2009). Aria (2010) posits that information is disseminated through radio, television, magazine, posters and motion slides. In the same vein Abraham (2009) identifies several channels and sources used to bring information to the audience such as the media, internet, institutions, social functions, town criers, but in the traditional African setting. With the aforementioned views, it implies that in academic setting, the sources of information include seminars conferences, billboard, teleconferencing radio, television, lecture, academic discussion, symposium and workshops. These information agents play significant role to reach out to the recipient or users.

Information agents mean those channels like Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), radio broadcasting among others. Information agents are channels developed to ensure that information is effectively reached out to the information seekers (Annune, 2011). It is worrisome that some sources are inadequate and costly to aide the services of the users. It has been observed that the ratio of the number of internet centres available to school staff is usually very low and this makes its usage very difficult (Obagah, 2000; Sufi, 1991). Likewise, the high cost of internet services and lack of internet bandwidth prevent many schools from being connected to information (Chisenga, 1999). It is also disturbing that at this 21st century, many teachers have not enrolled themselves to acquire skills, competencies and training required for accessibility of information (Ofoegbu,

2007). In essence, it seems that the challenges of information users evolve the inability to access internet, technological know-how and poor attitude towards global information infrastructure.

Owing to this global information lukewarmness, facing information accessibility, it would be important to draw on new information and communication technologies which teachers should both teach and use in the classroom (Ofoegbu, 2011). Ofoegbu further emphasizes that teachers need to acquire information technology skills and how it will be used for preparation and delivery of their lessons and also for feedback on their students.

In pursuance of its primary role of training, teaching and extension, research and consciously strengthening the human resource base, the college has been improving the facilities like e-library, cyber education and other information technologies. This is to enhance teaching and learning as well as making information accessible to the various information seekers.

Currently, it is the researchers' general observations that despite the importance of information and its awareness mechanism towards actualization of academic library programme a large number of staff seem to have not understand the information needs in an educational environment. They seem to not have acquired technological skills and commentaries to access information. It is observed that most of administrative and academic activities are being operated using traditional method. The adverse effects and negative impacts of such growing incidence are capable of culminating or affecting national development and teaching and learning process. It is in view of this concern, that this study is being carried out to investigate the information needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to determine the library information needs of academic library staff. Specifically, the objectives of this study included:

- (1) identify the information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries
- (2) ascertain sources of information used by the parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries
- (3) identify the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries.
- (4) Identify the strategies for meeting the information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

- (1) What are the library information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?
- (2) What are sources of library information used by the parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?
- (3) What are the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?
- (4) What are the strategies for meeting the library information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?

## **Methods**

### **Design of the Study**

The design of the study was descriptive survey. Descriptive survey design according to According to Nworgu (2015) a descriptive survey refers to those studies which aim at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics features or facts about a given population. This design is considered suitable for the study because the researcher collected data from the representatives of the population and described systematically the library information Needs of academic library staff.

### **Participants**

The sample size for this study will be 212 parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries in Colleges of Education in Enugu State Nigeria.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection was a self-made questionnaire by the researchers titled: Information Needs of Academic Staff in Academic Library Questionnaire (INASALQ).

The instrument is designed in two sections; A and B. Section A focused on demographic information of the respondent such as gender, and qualification. Section B was put into four (4) clusters put into 24 items. Cluster one addresses the information Needs of the college academic staff, cluster two seeks information on sources of information used by the college academic staff, while cluster three elicits information on the problem affecting the satisfaction of library information Needs of college academic staff and cluster four focused on the strategies for enhancing information accessibility among college academic staff respectively. The instrument is a four point rating scale in which the respondents' have to state whether they: strongly agree (SA=4points), Agree (A=3points), Disagree (D=2points), or Strongly Disagree (SD=points). The

positive items were weighted at 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The negative worded items were scored in the reverse form.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

After the development of the instrument, it was subjected to face validation. Three copies of instrument were given to three experts; two in Library and Information Science Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation both in Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. These experts were requested to validate the instrument with respect to appropriateness, clarity and structure of the items. The observations, comments and suggestions of the experts were effected which led to the final draft of the instrument.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it trial tested using 20 academic library staff in college of education, Ikwo, Ebonyi State. The institution was considered appropriate because it is outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The rationale for using Cronbach Alpha statistical method was because the data collected was not a discrete data. The Cronbach Alpha statistical analysis gave 0.57, 0.56, 0.60 and 0.70 for cluster 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The overall value was 0.87.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researchers only to ensure appropriateness high return of questionnaire.

### **Method of data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Any response with mean value of 2.50 and above was accepted while any mean value below 2.50

was rejected. These statistical methods are chosen because it helped the researcher to measure the variability of the responses of the respondents.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** What are the Library information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation of the Library information Needs of college academic library staff.

S/N	Items on information Needs of college academic staff	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	New method of making informed decisions	3.36	0.48	Agree
2	For awareness creation	3.42	0.50	Agree
3	Seeking for knowledge exposure	3.31	0.46	Agree
4	For capacity building	3.24	3.23	Agree
5	For teaching skills	3.17	0.95	Agree
6	Need for research skills	3.48	0.67	Agree
7	For competence in human relations	2.82	1.00	Agree
8	For making information decisions concerning school administrative planning	3.19	0.83	Agree
9	For strengthening e-library skills	3.24	0.87	Agree
10	For improving technological skills	3.17	0.95	Agree
11	For improving classroom management	3.30	0.77	Agree
12	Conference participation	2.08	0.66	Disagree
13	For retraining	2.10	0.68	Disagree

n = 212;  $\bar{x}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

Data analysis in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the information Needs of college academic library staff (Parents). The analysis reveals that the mean scores of items I to 11 are more than 2.50 the mean benchmark. While the college staff disagreed that items 12 and 13 are information needs. This implies that awareness creation, seeking for knowledge exposure, capacity building, teaching, research, technological and e-library skills among others are the library information Needs of college academic library staff. However, the non closeness of the standard deviation scores indicates that there is variability between the respondents' responses which could be attributed to factors.

**Research Question Two:** What are sources of library information used by the parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation of the sources of library information used by academic library staff

S/N	Items on sources of information used by college academic library staff	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Staff meeting	3.24	0.87	A
2	Personal contact	3.17	0.95	A
3	Radio	3.38	0.71	A
4	Television	3.31	0.61	A
5	Library	3.34	0.57	A
6	Poster	3.26	0.78	A
7	Magazine	3.29	0.85	A
8	Motion slides	2.19	0.79	D
9	Internet	3.37	0.76	A
10	Academic discussion	3.39	0.74	A
11	Conference	3.22	0.74	A
12	Workshop	2.21	0.84	D

n = 212;  $\bar{x}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; A = Agree; D = Disagree

Data analysis in Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the sources of information used by college academic library staff (parents). The analysis reveals that the mean scores of items 1 to 7, 9, 10 and 11 are more than 2.50 the mean benchmark. While items 8 and 12 are below 2.50 the criterion mean. By implication, motion slides and workshops are not source information Needs. Hence, the college staff agreed Staff meeting, radio, television, library, poster, magazine, internet, academic discussion and conference are their source of information needs. Furthermore, the closeness of the standard deviation scores indicates that there is no significant difference between the respondents' responses which could be attributed to experience variable.

**Research Question Three:** What are the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?

**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviation of the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries.

S/N	Items on the problems affecting the satisfaction of information needs of college academic library staff	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Lack of awareness on how to obtain information	2.31	0.86	A
2	Poor infrastructural facilities	3.17	0.68	A
3	High cost of information materials	3.12	0.78	A
4	Lack of good roads	3.07	0.79	A
5	Poor financial incentives by the government	3.28	0.80	A
6	Poor communication skills among the academic staff	2.12	0.75	D
7	Inadequate funding of information materials	3.56	0.60	A
8	Poor power supply	3.10	0.57	A
9	Lack of motivation in college academic staff	3.50	0.60	A
10	Negative attitude towards time management among staff	1.93	0.53	D
11	Poor resource control among staff	1.46	0.62	D
12	Staff lack technological skills to access information online	1.60	0.61	D
13	Inability to make informed decisions	1.82	0.80	D

n = 212;  $\bar{x}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; A = Agree; D = Disagree

Data analysis in Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries. The analysis reveals that the mean scores of items 1 to 5, 7, 8 and 9 are more than 2.50 the set criterion mean. While items 6, 10, 11 and 12 are below 2.50 the criterion mean. Implicitly, those items that are below the benchmark are not the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries. On the other hands, the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of college academic staff are awareness, infrastructural facilities, high cost of information materials, roads, financial incentives, fund, power supply and motivation.

**Research Question Four:** What are the strategies for meeting the library information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries?

**Table 4:** Mean and Standard Deviation of the strategies for meeting the library information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries.

S/N	Items on the strategies for meeting the information needs	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Improvement of infrastructure	3.24	0.87	A
2	Manpower development	3.17	0.95	A
3	Procurement of advanced facilities for the staff	3.48	0.67	A
4	Empowerment training on information technology	3.34	0.77	A
5	Shifting from information management to knowledge management	3.19	0.83	A
6	Increased library funding	3.24	0.87	A
7	Improvement of information related policy	3.17	0.95	A
8	Improved credit facilities	3.30	0.77	A
9	Accessible road	3.42	0.50	A

n = 212;  $\bar{x}$  = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; A = Agree; D = Disagree

Data analysis in Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the strategies for meeting the library information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries. The analysis reveals that the mean scores of items I to 9 are greater than 2.50 the set criterion mean. Implicitly, improvement of infrastructure, manpower development, procurement of advanced facilities, empowerment, knowledge management, increased library funding, improvement of information related policy, improved credit facilities and accessible road are the strategies for meeting the information Needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries.

### Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate information needs of parents of children who are career workers in academic libraries. The result found that awareness creation, seeking for knowledge exposure, capacity building, teaching, research, technological and e-library skills among others are the information Needs of college academic staff. It was also found that

conference participations and training are not their information Needs. This finding agrees with Njoku (2003) who revealed that information Needs of people are mostly occupational directed. This finding is surprising as the academic staff disclosed that parts of their information Needs include awareness creation, seeking for knowledge exposure, capacity building, teaching, research, technological and e-library skills. This could be attributed to the fact that the staff appear to still be operating most their system manually. This is evidently established thus it could be based on non-availability of electronic facilities in the college.

The finding revealed that the college staff agreed that staff meeting, radio, television, library, poster, magazine, internet, academic discussion and conference are their source of information Needs. The finding also indicated that motion slides and workshops are not source information Needs. This finding agrees with Njoku (2003) who found that the chief sources of information include colleagues, friends, neighbors and relatives. In a similar finding, Sawyerr (2008) found that the sources of information available to them were focus group discussion, traditional media like town criers, village meetings, neighbors, friends, relations. The author further revealed that modern sources were GSM phones, television and radio are also sources of information. This result is in consonance with Utor and Utor (2007) who discovered that the sources of information were opinion leaders, Radio broadcast, News papers, TV broad cast. This result is also in consonance with Opeke and Madukoma (2013) who established among others that information sources used by senior non-academic staff in Nigerian universities were mostly online; print materials; policy papers and subordinates in the office. This finding has extensively informed managements of Colleges of Education to procure facilities that will enhance library, poster, magazine, internet services in their colleges. Since it will help academic staff to access their information Needs.

The found showed that the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of college academic staff are awareness, infrastructural facilities, high cost of information materials, roads, financial incentives, fund, power supply and motivation. This result is in consonance with Utor and Utor (2007) who discovered that the high cost of information materials, high rate of illiteracy, and lack of awareness on the part of the people, radio/ TV programs, absence of information centers and lack of good roads are factors that inhibit access to information. The finding of this study therefore is not surprising because infrastructural facilities seem to have being lacking technical knowhow. Probably because of poor supply and infrastructural problem they feel unsatisfied accessing information.

It was found that improvement of infrastructure, manpower development, procurement of advanced facilities, empowerment, knowledge management, increased library funding, improvement of information related policy, improved credit facilities and accessible road are the strategies for meeting the information Needs of Parents of Children who are Career Workers in Academic Libraries. The finding is also confirmed by Sawyerr (2008) found that the strategies for arresting this situation was that government should provide more amenities for rural dwellers, organize adult literacy classes and broadcast information radio and television in local language.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The result found that awareness creation, seeking for knowledge exposure, capacity building, teaching, research, technological and e-library skills among others are the information Needs of college academic staff. It was also found that conference participations and training are not their information Needs. The implication of this finding is that if college academic staff receive awareness and knowledge it will help them to build on their capacities in research that will not only sustain the college but also the country at large. The finding revealed that the college staff

agreed that staff meeting, radio, television, library, poster, magazine, internet, academic discussion and conference are their source of information Needs. The finding also indicated that motion slides and workshops are not source information Needs. By implication, if radio, television, library, poster, magazine, internet, academic discussion and conference are made available to college academic staff, it would facilitate and enhance their knowledge exposure. The found showed that the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of college academic staff are awareness, infrastructural facilities, high cost of information materials, roads, financial incentives, fund, power supply and motivation. This implies that if efforts are not made to solve the problem of infrastructural facilities, high cost of information materials, roads, power supply and motivation among others it may cause harm to the college. It was found that improvement of infrastructure, manpower development, procurement of advanced facilities, empowerment, knowledge management, increased library funding, improvement of information related policy, improved credit facilities and accessible road are the strategies for meeting the information Needs of academic staff. It implies that once infrastructure is improved and procured the information Needs of the college academic staff would be satisfied. This may bring about advancement in among them.

For the practice implication, effective practices are actions that librarians and staff should do in each priority area to influence student learning and success while also aligning with institutional goals and objectives. Researchers, librarians, and provosts should identify a meaningful step for proving the library's worth to higher education stakeholders. To ensure active engagement of these stakeholders (e.g., community, colleges and universities) spreading the activities into wider practices that libraries in a variety of settings might use to address each priority area. These could be effectively done via Communicate with those outside the library and at the

top of the institution's administration because they can provide a bird's-eye view of what the library should be doing and can act as advocates and supporters for the library if they feel invested in and a part of it. Determine the terminology used by provosts to explain the importance of the library and employ it in subsequent conversations. Look for opportunities for casual interactions with leadership to cultivate relationships. Identify people who can advocate for the library. Consider how diverse sets of stakeholders perceive effective communication from various forms of media, and position the library accordingly (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

Based the findings of this study, there is the indication that awareness creation, seeking for knowledge exposure, capacity building, teaching, research, technological and e-library skills among others are the information Needs of college academic staff. It was also found that conference participations and training are not their information Needs. The finding revealed that the college staff agreed that staff meeting, radio, television, library, poster, magazine, internet, academic discussion and conference are their source of information Needs. The finding also indicated that motion slides and workshops are not source information Needs. The found showed that the problems affecting the satisfaction of information Needs of college academic staff are awareness, infrastructural facilities, high cost of information materials, roads, financial incentives, fund, power supply and motivation. Finally, it was found that improvement of infrastructure, manpower development, procurement of advanced facilities, empowerment, knowledge management, increased library funding, improvement of information related policy, improved credit facilities and accessible road are the strategies for meeting the information Needs of Federal academic library staff.

### **Recommendation**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study and consequent educational implications.

Government should ensure extension of current awareness as well as selective dissemination of information to senior non-academic staff by information professionals specifically, librarians. Hence this will avail them the opportunity of having access to regular, current and job related information for their day to day activities. This will also motivate senior non-academic staff to seek and make regular use of different information sources.

### **Limitations of the Study**

At the course of carrying out this study, the researcher faced some difficulties which include:

- (a) The use of questionnaire alone in data collection also tends to affect the results of the study. This is because some of the respondents' attitudes tended to reveal they were not very willing to complete the questionnaire. As they may have submitted biased information.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The researcher made the following suggestion for further study to compliment this present study:

1. A replication of this study using larger representative in another location
2. Exploring sustainable information Needs of academic staff of colleges of Education
3. Differential analysis of influence of location on satisfaction of information Needs among academic staff.

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