

Information Seeking Behaviour of Administrators in Tertiary Institutions: Evidence from University of Port Harcourt

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Abstract This research paper has looked through the information-seeking behaviour in tertiary institutions through the lens of the administrators of the University of Port Sultan in a bid to understand how they find, receive, and use information in achieving academic and administrative goals. The research design used was descriptive survey design, which included all the 116 administrators in units of the University, thus using census technique. The data of six key areas was gathered using a systematic questionnaire, which included: selecting resources, using the search method, evaluating the sources of information, narrowing the sources of information, referring to the information and competitive activities. The descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to examine the data and the findings were presented in tables and charts. The findings indicated that the administrators put the foremost emphasis on the perfecting of information sources and selection of resources. This indicates that they were approaching it in a very pragmatic way by ensuring that the content they collected was practical and applicable. The researcher concludes that the administrators of the University of Port Harcourt placed the practical and functional aspects of information searching in front of the regulatory ones. The research recommends that access to pertinent electronic and print resources must be enhanced, informational search and assessment skills should be better trained and regulating frameworks incorporated more deeply into the information seeking process, that administrators and librarians should collaborate more, and ICT infrastructure must be more robust to facilitate efficient information utilization.

Index Terms- Information Seeking Behaviour; Administrators; Tertiary Institution

I. INTRODUCTION

The pursuit and use of knowledge is the basic nature of academic institutions. During this so-called information era, the ability to discover, evaluate and

utilize information effectively is not only an academic activity; it also makes the difference in the professional success and institutional development. This process is based on Information Seeking Behaviour (ISB), desiring itself as the complex set of behaviours that individuals decide to, and seek to, in order to acquire, find, and use information to satisfy a perceived need (David-West & Bassey, 2023).

The conceptualisation of information seeking behaviour (ISB) is theoretical models, which begin with a perceived need and modulate under the impacts of an individual and contextual situation (Gordon, 2020). This is done by searching, evaluating and reusing information repeatedly. Such barriers as inaccessibility or the inability to do so may complicate this process (David-West & Bassey, 2023). The benefits to institutions that can drink this behaviour are that, information seeking behaviour generates better informed decision-making, continuous learning, high effectiveness of problem-solving and effective academic and administrative performance. Conversely, the drawbacks of information seeking behaviour are information overload, time wastage, the inability to judge the credibility of the source, inability to access credible resources, and the possibility of misinformation or misinterpretation. Nowadays, this issue is even more serious as the information is so abundant and it is more difficult to judge the sources (Okonoko et al., 2021).

Empirical evidence reveals that, though basic needs of academics are always stable in research, teaching, and publishing, their strategies towards accessing information change rapidly. The hybrid paradigm is in place: the efficiency of digital sources is

considered, but the print materials and face-to-face consultations are essential in terms of depth and quality insight (Olajumoke et al., 2023; David-West & Owate, 2018). As a result, information seeking goes beyond simple transactions, and it is a complex social and cognitive process, which is influenced by discipline, experience, as well as context (Zondi, 2020). The information-seeking behaviour (ISB) of different academic groups such as undergraduate students (Wiche and Ray-Ogbonna, 2021; David-West & Bassey, 2023), faculty members (Okonoko et al., 2015; Okonoko et al., 2021), and lecturers of certain faculties (David-West & Owate, 2018) have been studied in the considerable amount of research. Nevertheless, there is still a significant gap in terms of information seeking behavior of academic administrators, especially on the dean, provost, and HODs level at Uniport. Moreover, the information-seeking habits of administrators who operate in the interface between academics, administration, and high-level strategy have been largely under-studied especially in the Nigerian context.

This research will fill this important gap as it will investigate information-seeking behaviour among administrators of the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT). This paper aims at explaining how pivotal academic leadership decision-making is informed by examining the evidence provided by these key informants. It is expected that the findings of the research can be of great importance to the university administration, practitioners of library and information science and policymakers. It will assist in the development of specific information systems, executive information dashboards, and tailored training programs which can assist the faculty and university administrators make more evidence-based decisions. This will eventually make the University of Port Harcourt and other colleges/universities like it, stronger.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework/Models

Wilson's model of Behaviour

Information-seeking behaviour (Wilson, 1981) is a model that describes the process through which individuals realize an information requirement,

search and retrieve information that is relevant, and use it to resolve a problem. This process starts once the information user becomes aware of a knowledge gap and starts information-seeking behaviour, in which he or she can engage information systems like libraries and databases, or informal sources like colleagues and experts. The search may end in a success where the need is achieved or failure which ends up in a new search. The information retrieved is then applied to carry out certain things resulting in satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on the satisfaction with the way the need was met. The social aspect of information seeking is also considered in the model because users share and pass information with others to perfect understanding and enhanced sharing of knowledge.

In terms of tertiary institutions like the University of Port Harcourt, this model is very pertinent since the administrators are required to constantly identify the information requirements, deal with various formal and informal sources, and use the information to make academic and administrative decisions. It also points out that to utilise information effectively requires access to systems, interpersonal networks and the skill of the user to evaluate and apply information effectively.

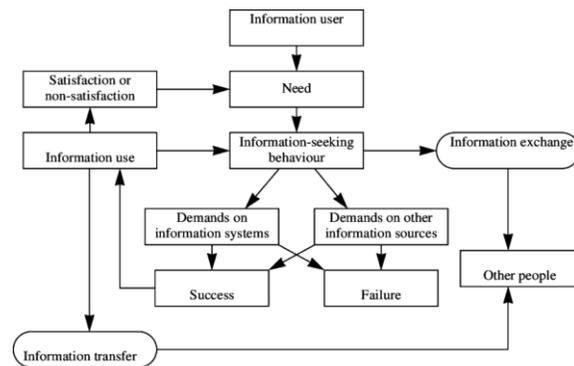


Figure 1: Wilson's information behaviour model (1981)

Ellis's Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour

The model of information-seeking behaviour suggested by Ellis (1989, 1993) is one that describes the repetitive behavior that people adhere to when seeking information. The model is based on empirical research of scholars and practitioners that define a variety of behavioural characteristics, being

interrelated: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, extracting, verifying and ending. These behaviours are never in a determined sequence but are overlapping as a result of the flexible and iterative characteristics of real-world information seeking. As an example, tertiary institution administrators can start with determining relevance of key sources of information (starting) or refer to known material (chaining) or scan databases and reports to find the relevant information (browsing). Their credibility of sources (differentiating), maintaining pace with policy and academic updates (monitoring), retrieving selective data to make a decision (extracting), determining its validity (verifying), and terminating the process when they have ample information (ending).

The strength of the model is that it demonstrates that the process of information seeking is not linear as it is adaptive and cyclical. Nonetheless, it takes minimal consideration to the aspects of cognitive or emotional factors or provides a comprehensive picture of the effects of digital search environments. Nevertheless, the model developed by Ellis is very relevant in explaining how administrators in the University of Port Harcourt maintain dynamic and multi stage information-seeking behaviors as a way of supporting academic and administrative decision-making.

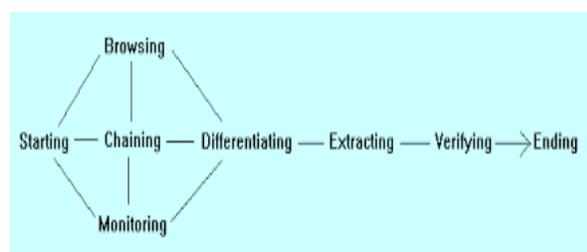


Figure 2: Ellis's Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour (1989)

2.2 Information seeking behaviour

Information seeking behaviour (ISB) has been an academically interesting concept over time, particularly in higher education where access to information is central to research, learning, management, and administration, as well as to leadership. ISB can usually be regarded as the process through which individuals determine the need of information, request the resources, evaluate

their applicability, and apply the obtained knowledge (Wilson, 1999). Scholarship indicates that scholars in Nigerian institutions adopt a combination of both print and electronic materials including the high-ranking administration. Nevertheless, online sources and institutional repositories are gaining popularity since they are timelier and more accessible (Adeyalo & Ogunniyi, 2020; Ahiauzu & Ani, 2015). The key leaders who are required to seek knowledge beyond the scope of their academic performance are administrators who are supposed to be imbued with information such as administration, resource allocation, and policy implementation. Their move is a complex process that assists in academic progress as well as strategic management of faculties.

Despite such order, researchers continue discussing the issues that complicate access to information in Nigerian institutions. It has been shown that there are infrastructural problems, such as poor internet connectivity, unreliable electricity, old-fashioned collection of libraries, and limited access to academic databases (Makinde et al., 2019; Ojohwoh, 2019). The limitation of skill in terms of efficient search and critical evaluation is common even in the situation where the required resources are available. The truth is that numerous scholars, not to mention administrators, use informal groups, their co-workers, and easily accessible search engines like Google as coping strategies (Olajumoke et al., 2023; Siamian et al., 2013). In the case of people with high positions, these boundaries can have more serious repercussions, since any failure involving information use can affect critical administrative and academic decisions.

Studies have been initiated in order to generate local knowledge on the context of the University of Port Harcourt. In their analysis of lecturers in the Faculty of Agriculture, David-West & Owate (2018) found a remarkable link between the information needs and the information-seeking activity and proved that the process of selection, refining and evaluating information has a severe influence on the final usage of information. David-West (2020) observed that the ability of users to access current electronic resources and be educated is necessary in improving the engagement between the information seekers. These results indicate general processes in the field of the

Nigerian universities, and at the same time, they draw attention to the specific situation in UNIPORT. Literature on other universities is very insightful into how the information-seeking activity by administrators is conceptualized. As the studies show, the informational needs in higher education establishments often go beyond the scope of research and pedagogy, including the administrative tasks, the promotion criteria, and the career advancement (Barfi et al., 2018; Omah & Urhiewhu, 2019). Administrators are involved in both academic and managerial responsibilities; therefore, it is only natural that their information behaviour resembles that of lecturers in addition to certain demands of the policy documents, strategic reports and materials pertaining to governance.

2.2 Dimensions of information seeking behaviour

2.2.1 Selecting sources

The source selection is a significant aspect of information-seeking behavior of people because it influences the quality and relevance of information they receive. The administrators and other academics in colleges and universities have a wide variety of options to select, i.e. books, journals, electronic databases, websites and other professionals. Selection of a source is usually determined by the ease of access as well as the degree to which the source appears credible and the type of information required. According to the research, Nigerian scholars are highly oriented towards a hybrid combination of print and electronic sources, and electronic sources are increasingly becoming predominant due to their timeliness and all-encompassing nature (David-West and Owate, 2018). Nevertheless, printed books and journals remain necessary to conduct thorough research of the issues and to have their accepted scholarly power (Nafiz, 2020). As an illustration, faculties often combine library materials with online materials, although they are usually faced with issues when they do not have access to sufficient current electronic databases (Wilson, 2020). Administrators need to assist in academic and administrative affairs, that is why it is particularly important that administrators should know how to select the right sources. The reason behind this is that it directs the

implementation of policies, the management of the faculty and the decision making process. Conversely, poor selection of sources can make individuals use information that is either missing or of low quality thus being detrimental to the performance of an institution.

2.2.2 Using search strategies

The other significant component of ISB is search strategies, which refers to the methods and means by which information of some sources can be located. These involve making queries, using the appropriate search engines or databases, key words, and Boolean logic or elaborate filtering. Relevant and accurate information is found not only through good search tactics, but also through time saving tactics. The experience of Nigerian institutions indicates that a good share of academics in this field have large skill deficits in this direction, and thus they overuse simple web searches and the associated tools such as Google rather than relying on specific databases (Tella et al., 2018). David-West et al. (2020) at UNIPORT discovered that the lack of training in advanced search methods remains an issue. Not all users are aware of how to make their queries better or how to maximize on their institutional subscriptions. There are usually specific and immediate information such as policy briefs, accreditation guidelines, or strategy research that administrators require in order to make decisions. Unless they possess good search techniques, then they might not be in a position to respond in a successful way. This reveals the importance of continuing to educate users and the need to have information literacy programs that are not student- and professor-focused but also senior administrator-focused.

2.2.3 Evaluating sources and information

It is highly essential to have the ability to analyze sources and information in the era of a digital world where it is overloaded with information. You must question the reliability, authority, accuracy and timeliness of the information before utilizing it at school or in employment. Empirical studies show that many academics in Nigeria struggle with this area and often use the already known or easily available resources without evaluating them appropriately (Okonoko et al., 2021). This is in part due to the fact

that they have not been exposed to evaluation frameworks sufficiently and their training on how to utilize the information has not been sufficiently done. This is more difficult on the part of the administrators who must ensure that the data utilized to inform the faculty administration and strategic planning are accurate. Provided that the information is incorrect or not thoroughly analyzed, it may result in poor choices in such spheres as curriculum design, accreditation standards, and faculty management. According to Wiche (2021) the delivery of training to users on how to utilize electronic resources and ensuring that they are curated and trustworthy will significantly improve the evaluation processes in the university libraries. The institution gains improved evidenced based policies and better academic governance when administrators gain better evaluative skills.

2.2.4 Refining sources and information

Refinement is that of modifying searches or re-assessing sources depending on the discoveries that you make initially. This dimension indicates that ISB is a non-linear dimension and cycles of ISB meaning that users will keep changing their strategies to suit their information needs as they change. Refining can be inclusive of modifying the keyword, browsing the bibliographies of the found literature, or switching down to the special databases. It has been shown that researchers who are involved in systematic refinement achieve better outcomes, as they are able to pay their attention to more relevant and authoritative sources (Ahiauzu & Ani, 2015). In Nigerian colleges, however, due to the issues with infrastructure, such as poor internet connectivity and absence of subscription to academic databases, it is frequently difficult to optimize the procedures (Folorunsho, 2014; Mohammed, 2020). The ability to refine information is highly effective to administrators at UNIPORT since their work is rather complex and requires them to integrate academic, managerial and policy related information. The weak refining processes may make superficial findings whereas the being powerful may make decisions that are evidence-based.

2.2.5 Referring to information

The next thing is to apply or utilize the concerned information once located, evaluated, and refined.

This involves the utilisation of the information in research paper, teaching books, administrative decisions, or even policy books. Information citation is becoming more vital to the administrators, as they are dealing with the integration of information into strategy reports, submissions to accreditations, faculty development plans, and documents related to governance. Studies at UNIPORT show that effective information referral enhances the utilization of library materials and leads to the improvement of academic outcomes (David-West and Owate, 2018). Conversely, poor referral processes such as failure to cite sources correctly, use of anecdotal information, etc. may render reports ineffective and less convincing to the institutions to take action. According to Asabe (2018), frequent access to user education programs and reliable databases makes the use of information in their work by academics, and then administrators, much easier. This dimension links the discovery process to real world outcomes to institutions.

2.2.6 Regulatory activities

Regulatory actions are the final element and involves the rules and institutions which guide the manner in which information is searched, used, and managed. Copyright and ethical standards, accreditation requirements, promotion processes as well as how they operate their own business are all rules in colleges and universities that affect them. Such frameworks not only create a demand of certain form of information, they also restrict the use of such information. An example is that accreditation exercises compel administrators to seek policy papers, benchmarks and statistical data. The criteria of promotion, in its turn, cause the faculty to seek the details about research outputs and academic publications. It has been found that information searching is targeted by the regulatory requirements awareness; however, the lack of institutional support can be barriers to complying in time (Ismaila, 2019). At UNIPORT, these types of demands are facing the administrators, and it is difficult to comply with the regulatory requirements, as well as address the issues with infrastructure and access. This aspect demonstrates the relationship between information behaviour and institutional responsibility. It demonstrates that regulatory settings not only support

the type of information seeking behavior that individuals are capable of performing, but also limit it.

2.3 Various types of information seeking behaviour in the university

The information seeking behaviour incorporates a continuum of strategic methods to discover information, both passive discovery and active goal-oriented discovering searches. These strategies include passive attention, passive search, active search and continuing search. They all come in handy under various circumstances and to serve various purposes in the academic environment.

2.3.1 Passive Attention

Passive attention assists us in knowing a lot of significant things. Administrators usually get access to vital information randomly in the dynamic environment of university life (Mandu et al., 2020). This may be in the shape of a new policy circular on a staff noticeboard, or a conversation between department heads that hints there is a problem on the way, or reading a newspaper headline that there is a change in national education funding. This is a casual method of obtaining information which is significant as it ensures that you remain in the know of what is happening both within and without the organisation without incurring much effort. This will assist you in identifying new opportunities or issues in the future (Makinde et al., 2019).

2.3.2 Passive Search

Administrators search passively in cases when they should search more attentively, but at the same time more generally. This involves the involvement in information dense scenarios without an exact immediate query (Saha and Jena, 2020). As an example, one could visit the latest version of a higher education management journal over the internet, browse the LinkedIn feeds of other administrators in other institutions, or simply walk the new acquisitions section of the library. The goal is not to determine some specific answer but to maintain a rough awareness of trends, new developments and overall issues across the academic community in general. This is a discovery work that is crucial to strategic thinking and long-term planning (Ogunode et al., 2020).

2.3.3 Active Search

Active search on the other hand is a specific and purposeful effort to solve a particular problem (Wilson, 1999). Such behaviour is the most frequently associated with a particular information demand. As an example, preparing an accreditation visit by the National Universities Commission (NUC), one of the administrators will systematically seek out the specific criteria, scavenge information on the student-lecturer ratios, and locate historical institutional reports. This is a method that incorporates the use of official government websites, application of precise key words within the digital archives, and acquisition of precise figures within the institutions records. This purposeful searching is not always as effective as it can be due to the familiar issues, including the irritating number of irrelevant online content and the need to verify the credibility of the sources regularly (Okonoko et al., 2021; Wiche & Ray-Ogbonna, 2021).

2.3.4 Ongoing Search

Lastly, good leadership must involve unremitting search. Administrators must maintain a long-term concern in key issues influencing the well-being and development of their faculty (Adeyalo & Ogunniyi, 2020). This is that one should constantly monitor the changes in curriculum innovation, national education policy, and the main focus of study. They can install notifications of words such as decentralized management of faculty or subscribe to professional groups newsletters to make this easier. They also keep an eye on the academic world changes that can assist them in steering their faculty towards greatness and relevance (Obi, 2018).

III. METHODOLOGY

The method of research applied was descriptive survey research. The design was considered appropriate because it helps the researcher to acquire information first hand, and describes the current trends in information-seeking behaviour without distorting variables. It also provides a systematic way of focusing on the behavior, preferences and problems associated with the information-seeking and use mechanisms of the Deans of faculties, Provost and Head of Departments of the University of Port Harcourt. The population of the study

included 19 Deans of faculties, 1 Provost and 96 Head of Departments in the University of Port Harcourt (as given in the 35 th convocation magazine) (see appendix II), and hence comprised 116 individuals. The method employed in the research was a census method, which implied that all the members were used as respondents and no sampling was necessary. The researcher designed an orderly questionnaire to gather information based on the information available in previous researches on information search behavior of people. The instrument identified six aspects of information-seeking behaviour, including selection of resources, use of search strategies, evaluation of sources, refinement of sources, referencing of information and regulation efforts. The goods were arranged based on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Experts in management research methods were used to make sure that the questionnaire was valid. Their ideas and adjustments were taken into account before the administration. Cronbachs alpha test was adopted to test the reliability of the instrument on a pilot sample of the similar respondents not within the study area. The test produced a satisfactory value of 0.70 and above and this indicated that the way the instrument was constructed was internally consistent. The surveys were administered to the participants personally. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and informed that the information would not be used in any other way, but academically. To analyze the data collected we have made use of descriptive statistics, in particular, the means value. The criterion mean is 3.0 with anything less than 3.0 being low perception and anything equal and above is moderate to high perception. The lowest response value (135) is the minimum (Min) and the highest response value (135) is the maximum (Max) as this is the least and the most people agreed. We have also used other descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, and standard deviations as a summary of the replies and prioritize the various sections of the information-seeking behaviour. The findings were presented in tables and charts to ensure that they were easier to read. We analyzed it using Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.

3.1 Demographic Statistics

Table 1 Demographic Variable	Category	Dean (n = 19)	Provost (n = 1)	HODs (n = 96)	Total (N = 116)
Age (years)	30–39	–	–	12	–
	40–49	7	–	35	–
	50–59	10	1	40	–
	60+	2	–	9	–

Gender	Male	17 (89.5 %)	0 (0%)	68 (70.8 %)	85 (73.3 %)
	Female	2 (10.5 %)	1 (100 %)	28 (29.2 %)	31 (26.7 %)

Marital Status	Single	1	–	5	–
	Married	18	1	91	–

Years in Office	Less than 1 year	6	–	30	–
	1–2 years	8	1	40	–
	Above 3 years	5	–	26	–

The table has a summary of the demographics of UNIPORT administrators (Deans, Provost, and HODs, N = 116). Majority of them are middle-aged (40-59 years) with few young (30-39) and old (60+) administrators. The males are the dominant group

(73.3%), with females less in number, including the single Provost. Most of them are married and there are hardly any single administrators. The majority of them have not served more than two years in office; however, there are those who have more than three years of experience. In general, the statistics indicate

that the administrators are mostly middle-aged, married men with different terms in the office.

3.2 Degree of manifestation of information seeking behaviour

TABLE 2: Descriptive Statistics of ISB

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Selecting_resources	116	1	5	3.6509	.99563
Using_Search_Strategies	116	1	5	3.8302	.93066
Evaluating_Sources_Information	116	1	5	3.8868	.84313
Refining_sources_information	116	1	5	4.1038	.93533
Referring_to_Information	116	1	5	4.2642	.89764
Regulatory_Activities	116	1	5	4.0283	.79830
Valid N (listwise)	116				

Source: Survey data (2025)

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the six dimensions comprising Information Seeking Behavior (ISB), based on a sample of 116 participants. The scale for all dimensions ranged from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5.

Selecting Resources: The dimension Selecting resources had a mean score of 3.65 (SD = 0.996). This mean is slightly above the midpoint of the 5-point scale, suggesting that, on average, participants demonstrated a moderate to high degree of engaging in the selection of resources during their information seeking process. The relatively large standard deviation (0.996) indicates that there was a wider variability in the reported frequency or agreement among the participants regarding their resource selection behaviors.

Using Search Strategies: For the dimension Using Search Strategies, the mean score was 3.83 (SD = 0.931). This mean is closer to the "high" end of the scale, indicating that participants generally reported a high degree of utilizing different search strategies

(e.g., using keywords, Boolean operators) when seeking information. The standard deviation of 0.931 suggests a moderate spread of responses around this mean.

Evaluating Sources Information: The mean score for Evaluating Sources Information was 3.89 (SD = 0.843). This value reflects a high degree of manifestation of this behavior, implying that participants frequently engage in critically evaluating the quality and relevance of the information sources they find. The lower standard deviation (0.843) compared to the previous two items suggests that the scores for this dimension were more consistent among the participants.

Refining Sources Information: The dimension Refining sources information yielded a mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.935). This is the second-highest mean reported, demonstrating a very high degree of behavior related to modifying or adjusting search queries and information sources throughout the process. The relatively high mean suggests this is a well-established practice among the participants.

Referring to Information: The highest mean score was observed for Referring to Information ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.898$). This indicates that the participants reported the greatest degree of manifestation for this behavior, which typically involves citing, referencing, or explicitly using the acquired information in their work. The high mean confirms that participants strongly agree with or frequently engage in the proper attribution and utilization of information.

Regulatory Activities: The mean score for Regulatory Activities was 4.03 ($SD = 0.798$). This dimension, which refers to monitoring and controlling one's own information seeking process, also showed a high degree of manifestation. The standard deviation of 0.798 is the smallest of all dimensions, indicating that participants were the most homogenous in their reported frequency of engaging in regulatory activities.

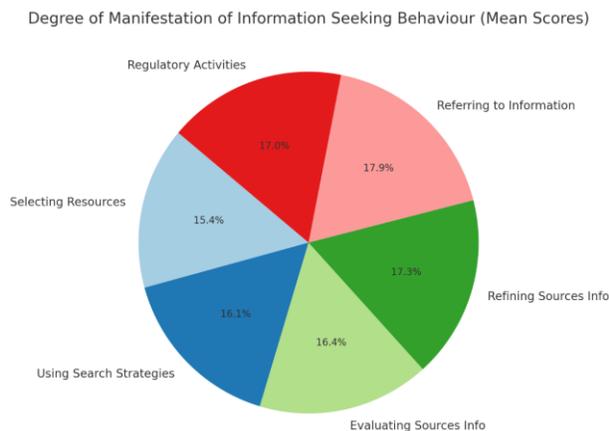


Figure 1: Distribution of Mean scores of ISB

The pie chart indicates that there is a very balanced expression of information-seeking behaviors (mean scores). The highest score is of Referring to Information (17.9%) and Refining Sources Information (17.3%) and the next one is Regulatory Activities (17.0%). The assessment of Sources Information (16.4%), Using Search Strategies (16.1%), and Selecting Resources (15.4%) are a little lower. The range of all six components is 2.5, which means that the development of the information-seeking skills is evenly spread among the sample.

IV. FINDINGS

The study findings offer a clear picture of information-seeking behaviour of the administrators in the University of Port Harcourt in six dimensions. On balance, the results of the mean values showed that the level of manifestation of ISB among the respondents is predominantly high and demonstrates the active involvement of administrative personnel in the working process with information resources aimed at making decisions and managing institutions.

- The behaviour with the highest rating (Referring to Information) shows that administrators appreciate the use of information to a great extent in decision-making process, documentation, and policy-making. This implies a high culture of evidence-based management, in which the information is not merely accessed, but also incorporated into the memos, reports, and strategic measures. This is in line with the administrative nature of work where documentation of the same should be defended and transparent.
- Another area that was rated highly is Refining Sources of Information. The large mean proves that administrators do not simply take information at face value but refine search querying, revisiting, and using iterative methods to make the information relevant and accurate. One of the cognitively challenging processes of ISB like refinement means that the administrators are actively construing meaning in addition to passively receiving information.
- The average scores of Evaluating Sources, Using Search Strategies, and Selecting Resources are in the moderate-to-high range. These habits indicate that administrators are aware of the necessity to check quality, apply systematized techniques in search (keywords, Boolean operators), and select the right one. They are however a little lower in the ranking compared to refining and referring and so it can be inferred that as much as administrators adopt these behaviours, they do so as a necessity rather than a methodological rigour.
- It is worth noting that Regulatory Activities had the highest mean and the lowest standard deviation, which means that the administrators were consistent in the approach they take to search behaviour that they monitor and control.

Regulatory behaviour: The sources tracking, the revision of strategies, and accuracy demonstrate that the administrators are aware of the significance of the information quality, though they are more pragmatically than procedurally orientated.

Overall, the trend of results demonstrates that the administrators are more concerned with practical, outcome-oriented procedures (refinement, referring, selecting) than with methodological or compliance-oriented procedures (evaluation and regulatory practices). This implies that the administrative culture at uniport is oriented towards relevance, promptness of decision-making and actionable information instead of strict compliance to formal information standards. The results thus portray an institution where information application is largely functional, dynamic, and influenced by the practical administrative activities.

Conversely, the conceptualization of the information-seeking behaviour of Wilson is problem-solving behaviour that starts with notification of the information need, active searching, information processing, and information use. The role of intervening variables (psychological, environmental, social) and cyclical nature of the process are also stressed in the model.

- The findings of this research are consistent with the model provided by Wilson. The high mean scores in Refining Sources and Referring to Information indicate that uniport administrators do not just identify the needs in information, but also proceed to the last point of the Wilson process application and use. Their high propensity to filter information implies that they are faced with intervening barriers (e.g. relevance issues, outdated sources) and react by adjusting their strategies, which is in line with Wilson perspective that information-seeking is not a linear process.
- Wilson also focuses on the importance of cognitive and interpersonal factors. The moderate scores on Evaluating Sources reflect the application of cognitive judgement in decisions to do with credibility by the administrators. Another indicator of the high manifestation of Regulatory Activities also constitutes the aspects of the control and feedback loop of Wilson wherein individuals follow their search process and modify it according to the results.

- Moreover, the moderate level of participation of the administrators in Selecting Resources and Using Search Strategies allows considering that Wilson considers both formal and informal channels of information. These imply that administrators rely on various systems to solve information requirements; digital databases, institutional documents, peer networks, etc.

In this way the results corroborate the idea of the model introduced by Wilson since they prove that administrators are involved in a constant loop of need identification, search, refinement, evaluation and information use. The fact that they focus on refinement and practical application is in line with the model claim that information searching is driven by the need to reduce uncertainty to make informed decisions.

In the model of behaviour, Ellis recognises eight non-linear and overlapping activities of information seeking which he identifies as starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, extracting, verifying and ending. Some of these qualities are closely aligned with the behaviours of the administrators as disclosed in this study map.

- The relatively high value of Selecting Resources and Using Search Strategies will be associated with the starting, browsing and chaining steps of the model of Ellis. Administrators start working out where to search, search information space, and bridge gaps between what is known and what is new (e.g. policy documents, reports, databases).
- The deep focus on Refining Sources can be addressed to the stage of differentiating and extracting, at which the user has to refine the information regarding the relevance and selectively use what is required. The findings suggest that administrators repeat and revise search terms at an extraordinarily high frequency, something that Ellis argues information seeking is a cyclical process that reacts to new knowledge.
- Likewise, the average of Evaluating Sources is high, which is a sign of verifying behaviour as the administrators would ensure credibility and cross-reference information and then use it in official decisions. The practice conforms well to

the views of Ellis on the emphasis of verification as a fundamental aspect of information-seeking between professionals.

- Lastly, the mean that is the greatest and is equal to Information refers to the last and the fourth stage of the model created by Ellis, which is the extracting stage. This implies that the administrators often put the information into use and consult it, which indicates the end of a complete cycle of seeking behaviour.
- However, the model proposed by Ellis is less clear regarding regulatory or metacognitive behaviours, but the high uniformity of the administrators in Regulatory Activities appears to indicate that the process of monitoring is systematic, and could be influenced by the expectations of the administration and institutional accountability. This shows that even though there is an effective explanation of the stages of behaviour in the model developed by Ellis, the framework presented by Wilson is more effective in describing the regulatory and feedback factors that are witnessed.

On the whole, Ellis model is effective in explaining practical, repetitive and overlapping behaviours exhibited by the administrators, particularly the refining, evaluating, selecting and referring activities.

V. CONCLUSION

The researchers conclude that administrators are more concerned with the practicality of information in the real life than respect to adherence to rules. This demonstrates the fact that more assistance is required in systematic evaluation and compliance-oriented information practices. The findings indicated that the most significant tasks are to refine and select the sources of information. This demonstrates that the administrators are concerned with acquiring the right and useful information in order to make the academic and administrative decisions. The moderate attention was put on search strategies, reference material, and source evaluation. In contrast, the least attention was paid to regulatory activities.

5.2 Recommendations

- 1) The management of the University of Port Harcourt needs to facilitate the process of access to both electronic and print sources by subscribing to new databases, e-journals, and digital repositories. This will assist the administrators in making decisions and enhancing the usage of the credible sources of information that will be pertinent to their academic and administration responsibilities.
- 2) Information literacy and advanced search skills should be provided to administrators regularly in the University Library. This will assist them to become more skilled in the use of search strategies, evaluation of material critically, and staying up to date with new digital information finding tools.
- 3) The University must engage administration in easier acquisition and use of information through development of simple rules and processes that would suit their work. In seeking information, administrators will ensure their decisions align with the institutional policies and the accreditation standards through the use of regulatory techniques.
- 4) Proactive approaches such as personalized information alerts and current awareness services to administrators should be adopted by the academic librarians. Such a collaboration will ensure administrators receive prompt, precise, and suitable information to make decisions.
- 5) The University must continue its effort to enhance internet connectivity, provide reliable power sources, and ensure that digital devices are not out of stock. The presence of reliable ICT infrastructure will also enable the administrators to easily access information and assist them in locating information fast.

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