



INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS ON INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF RURAL DWELLERS IN EDU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined effects of information literacy skills on the information seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in Edu Local Government Area (LGA), Kwara State. The study aimed at finding the information sources available to the rural dwellers, levels of satisfaction with the information sources available, level of information literacy skills, and challenges that rural dwellers face in seeking information. The selected rural areas were Lafiagi, Shonga and Tsaragi, which has a total population of 51,330 rural dwellers. Random sampling technique using the Krejcie and Morgan table arrived at a total sample of 374 from the three selected rural areas. Data was collected through structured questionnaire. The collected data was analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Findings of the study revealed that books, periodicals (newspaper, journals, magazine etc.), radio, television, phones, friends, market-square and religious centres are the information sources available to the rural dwellers while majority of the respondents were satisfied with the information sources available to them. Furthermore, the level of information literacy skills of the respondent was high. The study also found that non-awareness of mass literacy programmes, inaccessibility and unavailability of some information materials, ignorance about the use of library, and cost of information materials are the major challenges that rural dwellers faced while seeking for

information. The study concluded that information literacy skills had effect on the information seeking behaviour of rural dwellers and recommended that the State Government, in conjunction with public library, should embark on mass literacy awareness programmes in the rural areas.

Key Words: Information, Literacy, Behaviour, Skills, Seeking, Rural, Dwellers,

Introduction

In this modern era, every society in the world needs information for day to day activities. As the need for information varies between different individuals, information has to be acquired, processed, stored, retrieved and distributed on day to day for communication whether it is for business, education, research and development. The effectiveness in running day to day activities efficiently depends largely on the availability and amount of information gathered at the right time. Information becomes central to the advancement of knowledge and the development of the knowledge society and it is one of the most important elements to thrive in the modern era. The needs for such information are supported by the development of information behaviour that is going on rapidly.

Human efforts towards attaining goals depend highly on effective communication of information, and the major ingredient that makes communication possible is information. Information is an important resource for individual growth and survival. The rural dwellers as a people also need information to help them to become capable and productive in their social and political obligations. For prosperity and progress of rural settlements, Udo and Jonathan (2016) stated that rural dwellers, as well as urban dwellers, need information as it is the primary raw material needed for development.

Ekoja (2010) explained that information needs are the information, which information seekers require to conduct their businesses and live their daily lives. Needs are a matter of priority, what we need is overriding reason. Information needs could be seen as demand (requirement) and want (desire). The identification of information needs of a person will lead to the means of seeking for

that information. Sultana and Ayesha as cited by Tubashi (2018) opined that information seeking behaviour involves a set actions like information needs, information seeking, evaluation and selection and finally information use. He further stated that information seeking is the process engaged in by humans to change their state of knowledge.

Information needs and information seeking behaviour of people are distinctive due to varied demographic, social, cultural and economic factors. Identifying information needs is the first step towards satisfying the user's needs. An information seeking process involves three major steps such as identifying information sources, consulting the sources and accessing information. Information needs and information seeking behaviour is a kind of communication behaviour, which is definitely influenced by many factors. The continued information divide between urban and rural areas is largely responsible for the slow development in rural areas. This study therefore seeks to explore the influence of information literacy skills on the information seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in Edu Local Government Area in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The rural areas in Nigeria are often bedevilled with lack of basic infrastructures that could have enhanced the welfare of its inhabitants. Rural areas in Nigeria are characterised with poor roads, lack of pipe borne water, lack of standard schools and health facilities, inadequate or total lack of electricity among others. The kind of information available to rural dwellers is inadequate compared to that of their urban counterparts. Majority of people living in the rural areas lack up-to-date and accurate

information that may affect their day-to-day activities. They also have very low participation in political and government matters. Hence, important government decisions and policies are not usually felt or seen in most rural areas. For effective participation in political and government matters, rural people must understand the importance of information. It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to investigate the influence of information literacy skills on information seeking behavior of rural dwellers in Edu Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of information literacy skills on information seeking behavior of rural dwellers in Edu LGA in Kwara State. Therefore, the study specifically:

- (i) Identify information sources available to the rural dwellers in Edu LGA, Kwara State.
- (ii) Determine the levels of satisfaction with the information sources available to the rural dwellers in Edu LGA, Kwara State.
- (iii) Examine the levels of information literacy skills of rural dwellers in Edu LGA, Kwara State.
- (iv) Investigate information seeking behavior of rural dwellers in Edu LGA, Kwara State.
- (v) Identify challenges that rural dwellers in Edu Local Government, Kwara State faced while seeking for information.

Literature Review

Mtenga (2012) opined that information alongside capital, land and skills is an important commodity that people need for their day-to-day activities and for their personal development. This means that information is a basic resource, which any persons, groups or communities can use to improve significantly their living conditions

and it is very vital to development processes. According to Aina (2006), information sources are consulted on a subject, theme, an event, a date, a number, a place or even a word. Information source is an institution or individual that creates or brings about a message (Vidanaphirana, 2019). As revealed by the study conducted by Odefadehan, Akinola and Odefadehan (2016), the information sources or channels used in disseminating information to the rural dwellers include town criers, oral information from friends, neighbors, age group, elders, farmers group, village leaders and family members, radio, TV, Internet, books, brochures, films, leaflet, newspapers and magazine, mobile phones among others.

Information literacy, on the other hand, is the ability to recognize information required, finding that information from a source and assessing the genuineness of that information (Dorulo and Dadzie, 2016). Once an individual has the ability to identify what he needs, seeking for it becomes easier. The need for information drives the urge to acquire the needed information (Eftekhar and Hayati, 2016). This need can be different amongst various users thereby leading to different actions taken according to the context of what is required by the information user. This action exhibited and geared towards satisfying /getting the required information is referred to as the information seeking behavior of an information user (Olayinka, Glenrose and Tinashe, 2019).

Information seeking behaviour action can be described in terms of the information sources consulted during the quest to satisfy a particular information need. Therefore, the information seeking behavior of an information user can be synonymous to the information sources to be consulted during information search.

Research Methodology

The research method adopted for this study was survey research method using structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The population of study was 51,330 of rural dwellers from Lafiagi (34,890), Shonga (9,685) and Tsaragi (6,755). The sample size according to the

Krejcie and Morgan table (1970) was 374. Out of the 374 copies of questionnaire distributed, only 320 was returned and found usable for analysis. Data analysis was done using frequency counts and simple percentages.

Results and Interpretation

Table 1: Frequency distribution of Sex of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	187	58.4
Female	133	41.6
Total	320	100.0

Table 1 above showed that 187(58.4%) of respondents are male while 133(41.6%) are female.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Unemployed	14	4.4
Civil Servant	42	13.1
Farmer	106	33.1
Artisan	64	20.0
Trader	94	29.4
Total	320	100.0

Table 1 above revealed that 106(33.1%) of respondents are farmers, 94(29.4%) are traders, 64(20%) of respondents are artisans, 42(13.1%) of respondents are civil servants

while 14(4.4%) are confirmed to be unemployed.

Table 2: Level of Education of respondents

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
None	5	1.6
Primary School	164	51.2
Secondary School	53	16.6
NCE	40	12.5
Polytechnic	32	10.0
University	26	8.1
Total	320	100.0

Table 2 revealed that majority of respondents 164(51.2%) only obtained primary education, 53(16.6%) secondary education, 40(12.5%) NCE, 32(10%)

polytechnic, 26(8.1%) university education while 5(1.6%) had no form of education.

Table 3: Information sources available to the rural dwellers in Edu Local Government

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Books	80 (25.0%)	160 (50.0%)	53 (16.6%)	27 (8.4%)
2.	Periodicals (newspapers, journals, magazines etc)	133 (41.6%)	133 (41.6%)	54 (16.8%)	-
3.	Internet	133 (41.6%)	80 (25.0%)	27 (8.4%)	80 (25.0%)
4.	Radio	134 (41.9%)	106 (33.1%)	53 (16.6%)	27 (8.4%)
5.	Television	108 (33.8)	186 (58.1%)	26 (8.1%)	-

6.	Phones	80 (25.0%)	187 (58.4%)	-	53 (16.6%)
7.	Friends	26 (8.1%)	133 (41.6%)	134 (41.9%)	27 (8.4%)
8.	Palace	107 (33.4%)	108 (33.8%)	53 (16.6%)	52 (16.2%)
9.	Market Square	79 (24.7%)	107 (33.4%)	80 (25.0%)	54 (16.9%)
10.	Religious Centres	134 (41.9%)	106 (33.1%)	53 (16.6%)	27 (8.4%)

SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 3 showed that majority of the respondents agree that radio, television, phones, friends, market square, religious centres, books, periodicals (newspaper,

journals, magazine etc), and Internet are the information sources available to them.

Table 4: Level of satisfaction of rural dwellers in Edu local government with the information sources consulted

S/N	Information Sources	VS	S	D	VDS
1.	Books	161 (50.3%)	53 (16.6%)	106 (33.1%)	-
2.	Periodicals (newspapers, journals, magazines etc)	26 (8.1%)	54 (16.9%)	105 (32.8%)	135 (42.2%)
3.	Internet	79 (24.7%)	-	134 (41.9%)	107 (33.4%)
4.	Radio	188 (58.8%)	53 (16.6%)	53 (16.6%)	26 (8.1%)
5.	Television	186 (58.1%)	81 (25.3%)	53 (16.6%)	-
6.	Friends	54 (16.9%)	186 (58.1%)	26 (8.1%)	54 (16.9%)
7.	Palace	160 (50.0%)	81 (25.3%)	52 (16.2%)	27 (8.4%)
8.	Market Square	159 (49.7%)	107 (33.4%)	27 (8.4%)	27 (8.4%)
9.	Religious Centres	79 (24.7%)	187 (58.4%)	-	54 (16.9%)

NOTE: VS=Very Satisfied S= Satisfied D=Dissatisfied VDS=Very Dissatisfied

Table 4 showed the levels of satisfaction of rural dwellers in Edu Local Government with the information sources consulted. The result reveals that majority of the respondents were satisfied with books

periodicals (newspapers, journals, magazines etc), radio, television, friends, palace, market square and religious centres.

Table 5: Levels of Information Literacy Skills of Rural Dwellers in Edu Local Government

S/N	Items	VH	H	L	VL
1.	Define the information I need	188 (58.8%)	26 (8.1%)	106 (33.1%)	-
2.	Decide where and how to find the information I need	26 (8.1%)	161 (50.3%)	52 (16.2%)	81 (25.3%)
3.	Use different types of libraries	188 (58.8%)	52 (16.2%)	80 (25.0%)	-
4.	Use internet search tools (e.g. search engines, directories etc)	26 (8.1%)	160 (50.0%)	53 (16.6%)	81 (25.3%)
5.	Use many resources at the same time to make a research	80 (25.0%)	133 (41.6%)	107 (33.4%)	-
6.	Evaluate information critically	106 (33.1%)	81 (25.3%)	-	133 (41.6%)
7.	Select information most appropriate to the information need	106 (33.1%)	106 (33.1%)	54 (16.9)	54 (16.9)
8.	Synthesize newly gathered information with the previous one	107 (33.4%)	106 (33.1%)	54 (16.9)	53 (16.6%)

VH=Very High H= High L=Low VL= Very Low

The result in Table 5 shows that, 214 (41.2%) stated that their ability of defining the information they need is high while 106

(33.1%) stated that their ability of defining the information needed is low. Furthermore, the table shows that 187 (58.4%) claimed

ability of deciding where and how to find the information they need is high while 133 (37.5%) claimed that their ability of deciding where and how to find the information they need is low. In the same vein, the table shows that 240 (75.0%) affirmed that their ability to use different types of libraries resources is high while 80 (25.0%) affirmed that their ability to use different types of libraries resources is low. The result in the table also shows that 186 (58.1%) agree that their ability to use internet search tools such as search engines, directories among others is high while 134 (41.9%) agree that their ability to use internet search tools such as search engines, directories among others is low.

Similarly, the result shows that 213 (66.6%) stated that their ability to use many resources at the same time to make a research is high while 107 (33.4%) stated that their ability to use many resources at the

same time to make a research is low. Also, the result shows that 187 (58.4%) claimed that their ability to evaluate information critically is high while 133 (41.6%) claimed that their ability to evaluate information critically is low. Furthermore, the result shows that 212 (66.2%) affirmed that their ability to select information most appropriate to the information needs is high while 108 (33.8%) affirmed that their ability to select information most appropriate to the information needs is low. Finally, the result shows that 213 (66.5%) stated that their ability to synthesize newly gathered information with the previous one is high while 107 (33.5%) stated that their ability to synthesize newly gathered information with the previous one is high. In summary, it can be noted that the level of information literacy skills of respondents is high.

Table 6: Information Seeking Behaviour of Rural Dwellers in Edu Local Government

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Listen to radio and watch television	106 (33.1%)	134 (41.9%)	26 (8.1%)	54 (16.9%)
2.	Visit libraries, information centres, cyber cafes.	53 (16.6%)	-	134 (41.9%)	133 (41.6%)
3.	Go to local government office, palace or other relevant associations	160 (50.0%)	53 (16.6%)	80 (25.0%)	27 (8.4%)
4.	Ask my friends and relatives for it	160 (50.0%)	80 (25.0%)	53 (16.6%)	27 (8.4%)
5.	Visit mosques or churches to ask for it	79 (24.7%)	161 (50.3%)	27 (8.4%)	53 (16.6%)
6.	Go to newspaper and magazine vendor to read	26 (8.1%)	-	187 (58.4%)	107 (33.4%)
7.	Send somebody to go and get the information for me.	79 (24.7%)	52 (16.2%)	108 (33.8%)	81 (25.3%)

SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree D= Disagree SD= Strongly Disagree

Result in table 6 showed the information seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in Edu Local Government. The result shows that majority of the respondents (75%) agree that they listen to radio and watch television. Similarly, the result shows that majority of the respondents go to local government office, palace or other relevant associations while seeking for information. In the same vein, the result shows that majority of the

respondents ask their friends and relatives while seeking for information. Furthermore, the result shows that majority of the respondent agree that they do not go to newspaper and magazine vendor to read. The result also shows that majority of the respondents agree that they do not visit libraries, information centres, cyber cafes while seeking for information.

Table 7: Challenges that Rural Dwellers face while seeking for Information

S/N	Challenges	Yes	No
1.	Lack of time	106 (33.1%)	214 (66.9%)
2.	Non-awareness of mass literacy programme	188 (58.8%)	132 (41.2%)
3.	Inaccessibility and unavailability of some information materials	187 (58.4%)	133 (41.6%)
4.	Ignorance about the use of library	213 (66.6%)	107 (33.4%)
5.	Cost of information materials	186 (58.1%)	134 (41.9%)

Table 7 revealed the challenges that rural dwellers faced while seeking for information. The result in the table shows that non-awareness of mass literacy programme, inaccessibility and unavailability of some information materials, ignorance about the use of library, and cost of information materials are the major challenges that rural dwellers faced while seeking for information.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed the information sources available to the rural dwellers in Edu Local Government to include books, periodicals (newspaper, journals, magazine etc), radio, television, phones, and friends, market square and religious centres. This finding on the one hand, partially support the finding of Olarongbe and Ademolake (2013) that information sources available to rural dwellers are radio/television broadcast and mobile phones.

Another finding of the study further revealed the level of satisfaction with the information sources available to rural dwellers in Edu Local Government. The study found that majority of the respondents were satisfied with the books, periodicals (newspapers, journals, magazines etc), internet, radio, television, friends, palace, market square and religious centres. The study found that respondents do listen to

radio and watch television; go to local government office, palace or other relevant associations; ask their friends and relatives for information; and go to newspaper and magazine vendor to read. This finding corroborates the work of Sinha and Das (2015) on information needs and information seeking behaviour of rural population in North East, India. The study shows that the rural dwellers in North East, India do make use of mass media such as television, radio and newspapers, books, journals, pamphlets, and web sites while seeking for information.

The study found that non-awareness of mass literacy programme, inaccessibility and unavailability of some information materials, ignorance about the use of library, and cost of information materials are the major challenges that rural dwellers faced while seeking for information. This finding is in agreement with the study carried out by Iqbal, Yousaf and Soroya (2013) on the information need and seeking behaviour of rural women in Soon Valley, Pakistan. The study found that factors that poses barrier to the accessibility of information by rural women includes less resources and lack of time among others.

Conclusion

Books, periodicals (newspaper, journals, magazine etc), radio, television, phones, friends, market square and religious centres are the information sources available to the rural dwellers in Edu LGA. Rural dwellers in Edu local government were satisfied with the information sources available to them. Similarly, the level of information literacy skills of the rural dwellers in Edu local government is high while rural dwellers listens to radio and watch television, go to local government office, palace or other relevant associations and ask their friends and relatives for information. Non-awareness of mass literacy programme, inaccessibility and unavailability of some information materials, ignorance about the use of library, and cost of information materials are the

major challenges that rural dwellers in Edu local government faced while seeking for information. Finally, the study concluded that information literacy skills had effect on the information seeking behaviour of rural dwellers in Edu Local Government Area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are suggested recommendations:

- (i) Government in conjunction with public library should embark on mass literacy awareness programme. This will further increase the level of information literacy skills of the rural dwellers.
- (ii) Information providers such as newspaper vendors, publishers should try as much as possible to reduce the price of the information materials.
- (iii) Adult and non-formal education should be introduced so as to improve the level of information literacy skills of rural dwellers.

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