

Information Seeking Behaviour of Faculties and Research Scholars in School of Physical Sciences, Mizoram University, Aizawl: A Study

By

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Abstract

Faculties and research scholars always need information to perform their duty and responsibility i.e. teaching and research. Information need is an aspect of information behaviour that represents the root of information search behaviour. Information behaviour is a totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information including both formal and informal. This study is an attempt to investigate the information seeking behaviour of faculties and research scholars in school of physical sciences in Mizoram University.

Keywords: *Information, Information Seeking Behaviour, Information Seeking Habit, User Study, Physical Scientists, Mizoram University etc.*

Introduction:

According to Wilson (1999, 2000), information-seeking behaviour includes "those activities a person may engage in when identifying their own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information." Kakai, et al., (2004) have defined information-seeking behaviour as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development. Information-seeking behaviour of students, researchers, and professionals has been the focus of enquiry for decades. Initially, however, user studies were conducted primarily to evaluate library collections. These were followed by studies of the research habits of individuals or groups that would lead to the design of appropriate information systems and services. In mid 1980s, the focus shifted to holistic approaches to information-seeking behaviour. According to Line (2000), new studies of information users and their needs are even more necessary in the age of the Internet. Researchers such as Callison (1997), Devadason and Pratap (1997), and Ellis (1993) have explored quantitative and qualitative methodologies for user studies.

Information Seeking Behaviour:

Information seeking behaviour involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Leckie Pettigrew and Sylvain, (1996) Information seeking behaviour is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation. Scholars, faculties and students actively seek information from the various media available in libraries e.g. encyclopedias, journals and more currently electronic media. Abels (2004)

mentioned that the frequency of use of the internet in 1998-2000 had greatly increased. At the same time expenditure on monographs publications showed steady increased.

Definition of Information Seeking Behaviour:

Case (2008) defines information seeking as “a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge”.

Wilson (1999) states that information-seeking behaviour is a “consequence of a need perceived by an information user, who, in order to satisfy that need, makes demands upon formal or informal information sources or services, which result in success or failure to find relevant information”.

Further Wilson (2000) explains that: "Information Seeking Behaviour is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems (such as a newspaper or a library), or with computer-based systems (such as the World Wide Web).

Central Library, Mizoram University:

Central Library, Mizoram University has been witnessing noteworthy development in various spheres during the last few years. Growth may be seen in its holdings, users and application of technology. The collection included 86,517 number of books, 74 Thesis, 248 Dissertations and 8,026 numbers of Bound Volumes of Journals. The Library at present subscribes to 238 Journals, 42 General periodicals and 21 dailies (English: 9, Mizo: 11, and Hindi: 1). The total Library membership is 1928 *i.e.* 174UG, 1015PG Students, 49 M.Phil, 342 Ph.D scholars, 212 Teachers, 4 Guest Lecturers, 2 Departmental Libraries and 130 Non-teaching staff (Source- Mizoram University annual report 2015). The entire library holdings have been made available in machine readable catalogue *since* 2008; and the computerized bibliographic information of the library holdings have also been available for users' searching throughout the campus through Local Area Network (intranet) using Web OPAC. Automated circulation system using barcode technology has been used since 1st December, 2008 which provides easy and prompt service to the users. Library has been providing lending *and* reprographic services, Orientation Programmes for newly admitted students of various Academic Departments.

Review of Literature:

Verma (2015) conducted a survey to study the information seeking behaviour of PG students of school of physical sciences, MZU. Jamali & Nicholas (2013) conducted a survey on Information-seeking behaviour of physicists and astronomers revealed differences in information-seeking behaviour among people with different academic status. Those with higher academic status, such as professors, relied more on word of mouth and interpersonal communications such as conferences for keeping up-to-date, while PhD students were more likely to use alerting services. Ahmad, Shehzad. (2012) focused “Information seeking behaviour of the forestry scientists of the Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar” identified that

the main modification for seeking information by the scientists group was their interest in personal development, conducting research, and keeping up to date. Laura & others (2010) conducted a study on inducted information-seeking behaviour of basic science researchers, in this study examines the information-seeking behaviours of basic science researchers to inform the development of customized library services although the basic science researchers expressed a positive attitude towards the library. Brown (1999) surveyed astronomers, chemists, mathematicians and physicists at the University of Oklahoma and found that physicists and astronomers mostly used current journals and had reliance on pre-print archives. Prasad and Tripathi (1998) comparing the information seeking behaviour of physical scientists and social scientist of BHU and resolved that there are significant differences in information seeking behaviour of physical scientists and social scientists in their approach, information seeking process, information needs and sources used to satisfy their information needs. Gautam, J.N. (1991) investigated that the information needs and information seeking behaviour of physical and chemistry teachers of universities and colleges of Gwalior as well as Chambal division and reported that to a large extend teachers were depended on information sources provided by libraries for the fulfillment of their own information needs

Objective of Study:

1. Identify the purpose of seeking information, nature and type of information required;
2. Assess the frequency of visit the library'
3. Examine the use of various type of information sources respondents
4. Determine the preferred type of information source used respondents
5. Identify the computer knowledge compatibility of respondents

Methodology:

For collection of data, for the study, survey method has been used. A structure questionnaire are circulated to all faculty members and Ph.D. scholars of school Physical Sciences, Mizoram University in order to obtain required information with regards measure the information seeking behaviour of faculties and research scholars.

Data Analysis:

Analysis of responses:

The analysis of data given in Table-1 shows the sample size and response of respondents. Total 66 questionnaires was distributed among 26 faculties and 40 research scholars in school of physical sciences, Mizoram University and total 53 (80%) questionnaire including 20 (77%) faculties & 33 (83%) research scholars were received to draw the result of study.

Table-1: Analysis by Responses

Analysis by Frequency of visit to Library:

Answer regarding visit of library are shows in Table-2 and it resolved that majority of respondents are not regular visitor of library. Only 2(10%) faculties and 2(5%) research scholars (total 8%) are visited library daily, 10 (50%) faculties and 18 (55%) research scholars (total 53%) weekly and 39% of total respondents including 40% faculties and research scholars occasionally visited library

Table 2- Analysis by Frequency of visit to Library

Frequency	Category		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Daily	02 (10%)	02 (05%)	04 (8%)
Weekly	10 (50%)	18 (55%)	28 (53%)
Occasionally	08 (40%)	13 (40%)	21(39%)
Total	20 (100%)	33 (100%)	53 (100%)

Without Library how accessing the information?

Table-3 show the information about without visiting the library how the find out the information and it resolved that 75% respondents including 70% faculties and 79% research scholars search information from internet, 10% respondents from departmental library while 15% respondents search information from their personal collection.

Table -3: Without Library for accessing the resources?

Way to access resources	Category		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Internet	14 (70%)	26(79%)	40 (75%)
Department Library	03 (15%)	02 (6%)	05(10%)
Personal Collections	03 (15%)	05 (15%)	08 (15%)
Total	20 (100%)	33 (100%)	53 (100%)

Purpose of visiting the library:

Users are visited library for different purposes. Table-4 show the users purpose to visit library and it resolved that 75% respondents including 65% faculties and 82% research scholars visited

to
the
21%

Designation	Questionnaire Distributed	No. of response	% of response
Faculties	26	20	77
Research scholars	40	33	83
Total	66	53	80

library
borrow
book,

respondents consisting 25% faculties and 18% research scholars visited for study purpose while 2% visited library to read periodicals and preparing for lecture/ research works.

Table-4: Purpose of visiting the library

Sl. No.	Source of Information	Category		Total
		Faculty	Research Scholar	
1	borrow books	13(65%)	27(82%)	40(75%)
2	study	05(25%)	06(18%)	11(21%)
3	read Periodicals	01(5%)	00(0%)	01(2%)
4	Preparing lectures/ research work	01(5%)	00(0%)	01(2%)

Library services satisfy for information needs:

Answers regarding library services satisfy the information needs is shown in Table-5 and it resolved that 79% respondents including 75% faculties and 82% research scholars are saying that library services satisfy their information needs while 21 % respondents including 25% faculties and 21% research scholars are reported that library did not satisfy their information need.

Table-5: Library services satisfy for information needs

Library services satisfy for information needs	Category		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Yes	15 (75%)	27 (82%)	42 (79%)
No	05 (25%)	06 (18%)	11 (21%)
Total	20 (100%)	33 (100%)	53 (100%)

Preferred form of information sources:

Table-6 shows the preferred format of information sources which used by faculties and research scholars in school of Physical Sciences, Mizoram University and resolved printed source of information are proffered format of respondents and 65% faculties and 58% research scholars are prefer while 35% faculties and 42% research scholars (total 40%) preferred to use electronic resources. No one is using multimedia resources.

Table 6- Preferred information sources

Source of Information	Category		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Print sources	13 (65%)	19 (58%)	32(60%)
E-resources	07 (35%)	14 (42%)	21 (40%)

Multimedia resources (CD, DVD etc)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total	20 (100%)	33 (100%)	53(100%)

Computer knowledge competency:

Table-7 shows the computer knowledge compatibility of respondents and it resolved that 82% respondents consisting 75% faculties and 84% research scholars are good in computer knowledge and skills, while 9% respondents consisting 15% faculties and 6% research scholars are excellent while 9% have satisfactory knowledge of computer.

Table 7- Computer knowledge competency

Computer knowledge and skill	Category		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Excellent	03(15%)	02(6%)	05(9%)
Good	15(75%)	28(84%)	43(82%)
Satisfactory	02(10%)	03(10%)	05(9%)
Total	20(100%)	33(100%)	53(100%)

Use of information sources:

There are two types of information sources generally used by academicians to fulfill their information needs i.e. formal and informal. Table-8 shows the trend of use of information sources and it resolved that 30% faculties & research scholars used only formal source of information while 70% respondents used both formal and informal type of information sources to fulfill their information need.

Table-8: Use of information sources

Respondents	Only Formal Sources	Only Informal sources	Both formal and informal Sources	Total
Faculties	6 (30%)	0	14(70%)	20(100%)
Research Scholars	10(30%)	0	23(70%)	33(100%)
Total	16(30%)	0	37(70%)	53(100%)

Use of formal sources of information:

Tale-9 presents the trend of use formal sources of information by respondents and it resolved that book and journals is most common source of information and total 91% respondents used it. 72% respondents constituting 85% facilities & 64% research scholars used library catalogue; 49% respondents constituting 50% faculties & 48% research scholars used abstract and indexes; 60% respondents consisting 55% faculties & 64% research scholars used thesis/dissertation; 41% of among total respondents used monographs/text book and research report while 40% faculties & 55% research scholars (total-49% respondents) used publisher's catalogue for locate their required information. The news paper and government publication were used by total 57% and 64% respondents respectively.

Table-9: Use of formal sources of information

Formal Source	Faculties	Research Scholars	Total
Book	18 (90%)	30 (91%)	48 (91%)
Journal	20(100%)	28 (85%)	48(91%)
Monographs/Text book	10(50%)	12 (36%)	22 (41%)
Abstract and Indexes	10(50%)	16 (48%)	26 (49%)
Publisher's Catalogue	08(40%)	18 (55%)	26 (49%)
Library Catalogue	17(85%)	21(64%)	38 (72%)
Thesis/Dissertation	11(55%)	21 (64%)	32(60%)
Research Report	08(50%)	20 (61%)	28(53%)
News Paper	12(60%)	18(55%)	30(57%)
Gov. Publication	14 (70%)	20(61%)	34(64%)

Use of informal sources of information:

In an academic field there are many way to seek information in informal way like conferences/ seminars, discussion etc. Table-10 shows the use of informal sources by respondents and it resolved that Seminar/ conferences most popular way to seek information because total 91% respondents constituting all faculties &85% research scholars used this channel; 72% respondents consisting 80% faculties &66% research scholars get information by personal contact with professionals; 50% faculties & 79% research scholars (total- 68% respondents) consulted librarian to get information while 49% respondents constituting 55% faculties and 45% research scholars get information through Exhibition, Concert Performance etc. Now in present digital environment online forum and social networking sites become a very important source of information because 90% faculties and 79% research scholars (total-83% respondents) used Online forum/ Discussion group and 90% faculties and 88% research scholars (total-89% respondents) used SNSs to get their needful information.

Table-10: Use of informal sources of information

Informal Source	Faculties	Research Scholars	Total
Seminar, workshop, Conference	20 (100%)	28 (85%)	48 (91%)
Personal contact with professionals	16(80%)	22 (66%)	38(72%)
Consulting librarian	10(50%)	26(79%)	36(68%)
Exhibition, Concert Performance etc.	11(55%)	15(45%)	26(49%)
Online forum/ Discussion group	18(90%)	26 (79%)	44(83%)
Social Networking Sites	18(90%)	29 (88%)	47 (89%)

Purpose of information seeking:

Every information seekers seek information for specific purpose. Table-11 shows purpose of seek information by respondents and it resolved that they seek information mainly for teaching and research purpose because all faculties seek information for teaching while all faculties & all research scholars seek information for research purpose. For other academic purpose like write research paper/complete research project about 80% faculties & 91% research scholars; 75% respondents seek information for solve course queries and for update themselves in subject; 70% faculties &64% research scholars (total-66% respondents); for general awareness;

while 50% faculties seek information to write a book and 70% faculties & 45% research scholars (total-54% respondents) seek information for discussion with professionals.

Table-11: Purpose of seek information

Purpose	Faculties	Research Scholars	Total
General awareness	14 (70%)	21 (64%)	35(66%)
Teaching	20 (100%)	10 (30%)	30 (57%)
Research	20 (100%)	33 (100%)	53(100%)
Course queries	16 (80%)	24 (73%)	40(75%)
Update themselves in subject	12 (60%)	28 (85%)	40 (75%)
Write research paper/complete research project	16 (80%)	30 (91%)	46 (87%)
Writing books	10 (50%)	0	10 (19%)
Discussion with professionals	14 (70%)	15 (45%)	29 (54%)

Major Findings:

1. The total response rate of respondents is 80%. The faculties and research scholars of school of physical sciences, Mizoram University are not visited library regularly and visited weekly or occasionally. Majority of them (75%) find out information from Internet when they are not visiting library. They visited library mainly for barrowing the book, study, read Periodicals preparing the lectures etc.
2. 79% respondents feel that library satisfy their information needs and 60% respondents preferred printed resources and 40% preferred e-resources. No respondents preferred to use multimedia resources.
3. Every respondent have computer knowledge and they are using computer to search the information and 82% respondents having good knowledge of computer.
4. Faculties and research scholars referred to use both formal and informal sources of information. Journal, books library catalogue and thesis and dissertation is most usable formal information sources while seminar/conferences/workshops, Social networking sites (SNSs), online forum discussion and personnel contact with professional are most useable informal source to satisfy the information needs.
5. Faculties and research scholars seek information mainly for teaching, research, write a research paper and update themselves with latest information.

Conclusion:

Universities are regarded as the highest places of learning in education system. Therefore university teachers are placed at a higher podium than the teachers of other educational institutions. Role of faculty members and research scholars is very crucial in the universities. University teachers are expected to teach post-graduate students and guide and research scholars to contribute for enhancing the horizon of their own subject disciplines. Thus, their reading interests, current awareness, subject knowledge have direct impact on their teaching, learning and research activities and they are expected to be well reader and constantly up-to-date in their fields of specialization, even then their reading interests, sources of information, information and communication channels, types of information they need etc. vary even among the same community and group and time.

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Information seeking behaviour of graduate students in Nigerian Universities. US Edem, BA Bassey. African Journal of Educational and Information Management 2 (2), 116-125, 1999. 7. 1999. Nexus Between Students' Teachers' and School System Effectiveness: Construction and Factorial Validity of a Measuring Instrument. BA Bassey, VJ Owan, EA Eze. Comparative Study of Manual and Computerized Software Techniques of Data Management and Analysis in Educational Research. VJ Owan, BA Bassey. International Journal of Innovation in Educational Management (IJIEM) 2 (1), 2018. 4. 2018. Assessment of Selected Science Process Skills Acquisition among Senior Secondary Schools Students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Experienced faculty and staff provide in-depth knowledge applicable to the lab environment. Learn More. The Electronic Materials Research Institute (eMRI). Bob would much rather spend his time talking about the student scholars in Northeastern's Biotechnology Co-op Research Fellowship Program. Along with his wife Eileen, Bob has generously and proudly supported nearly 70 undergraduate students from the College of Science working for 6 months in world-class labs on campus and around Boston. Bob is a graduate of Northeastern University's College of Liberal Arts. At the time of his attendance, Northeastern was a long-celebrated engineering school, and he recalls that he and his fellow science students "were a much smaller group."