**INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF USERS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

**Abstract**

Information needs and information seeking pattern of public library users are varied on account of their different requirements which might be due to the various demographic, social, cultural and economic factors. Identifying information needs is the first step towards satisfying the needs of library users. An information seeking process involves a number of further steps, including: identifying information sources, consulting the sources and accessing information. Information needs and information seeking behavior is a kind of communication behavior, which surely be influenced by many factors. The total population for the study is 200 staff of Imo State public Library Board Owerri. The researcher used questionnaires as the instrument for the data collection. Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for this study. A total of 133 respondents made up librarians, full stack wed developers, senior staff and junior staff was used for the study. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background of the study**

The researcher would want to begin this work with a survey of the importance of information in daily living. Since the down of history, man had generally requires information for his day to living information is required in decision and in other aspects of life. To function and be relevant, every society needs information. According to bent and melacklam, information is the life-blood of modern organization. Owing to the pervasiveness of information in the life of organization some writers have tried to analysis organizational function in term of receiving, recording, arranging and giving information. At the top management levels, it is vital in planning and strategies decision making.  Hence information is said to be data of value in decision making. It is critical resources that enable an organization to function and flourish. It is first among the other corporate resources because decisions relating to others depend on it. But the collection processing and dissemination of information are not trouble free. This is basically due to the nature of information. Information is indispensable to all processes and is essential to natural development. It is both a national and international resource for social political, religious, economic, cultural as well as technological development. Information is important as the three basic necessities of life which are water, food and shelter and so should be given enough priority in order to achieve what is meant for. It is significant to note that information is useless unless it is used however, before information can be made use of, it has to be provided and the user of it has to be aware of it. In other words, the use of information depends on its availability and accessibility to users.  INFORMATION DEFINED. Information is the act of informing or the condition of being informed or the communication of knowledge. The American library association glossary of library and information science (ALA) define information as all ideas, great and imaginative works of mind which have been communicated, recorded, published and distributed formally or in formally in any format. The new webster’s dictionary defines information as, the communication of news, knowledge obtained by search, study etc. it can also be considered as knowledge communicated concerning some particular facts, subjects or events. Information reduces uncertainty and adds to human knowledge. Information can be in two forms. Those that are pointers to other information and their sources which it provides substantive information which is information itself. Information is regarded as resources for use, and its generation and use for efficiency and effectiveness is a very demanding and stressful task because any information that lies not organized for future use may be wasted. Also, the relevance attached to information makes people to seek it in diverse ways and for diverse needs. (hanson 1978) writes: information is normally intended for use rather than interest. It is sought by their final users for particular purpose in particular circumstances. It is of maximum potential use to person who wants it when it meets his need not only in terms of general, subjects too. Needs can be seen as a requirement from subsistence or for carrying out some function or activities. Thus, information needs refer to information demands, requirements, wants or de sires for some general and specific purpose. Kadiri describes need in relation to information as: a state of lack of desirable requisition or commodity i.e. information necessary to deal with a situation as an individual deems fit.

INFORMATION AND CHILDREN  Information needs and information seeking behaviour of children is defined as the provision of desirable, up to data factual knowledge to the children at the appropriate time to enhance their welfare and ways or patterns pursued by them in an attempt to resolve an information need or needs. Access to information is one of the human rights and each user of it should be able to get the right information he desires at the right time and place in the way he needs it. Information as a valuable commodity can be got from the library among other places and it is necessary that librarians satisfy user’s needs. In public libraries, the notion of book acquisition or children literature is important. Of greater value is how the books and other materials are presented to children from effective use. As a result, there is need for public libraries to meet with the information needs nd information seeking behaviour of children. This would not only enhance performance of the children, use of libraries but would go an long way in improving the services rendered to children in public libraries. In addition, it would make for easy storage, processing, retrieval of information, dissemination and use. As information literacy becomes vital to functioning effectively in todays would, the public library has a responsibility in ensuring that the specific information and reference needs of children are adequately addressed. Children as reference client require skilled and considered assistance to locate information relevant to both their perceived and real needs. The public libraries meet those needs through the children section of the public library. A children section is an important resource to which children have easy access to information and utilization. It provides information in various formats. The children section provides pre-school programmes, storytelling, reading competitive, riddles and joke among others. The library facilities education of children. It also performs vital function such as informational, educational, cultural and recreational services. Public libraries can play a major role in fostering in children the desire for education and helping them develop the skills for obtaining the kind of ever changing knowledge necessary to survive and prosper. Children by all means need information knowledge sake, self development, skill acquisition and to carry out a given assignment.

**1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In strict pursuance of the objectives for which public libraries are established children with different information needs and various seeking have continued to flood the libraries looking for ways to achieve their pressing information needs. In doing this, children make a mess of the acquired materials and as a result material in the library are not properly organized. To properly store, organize and process knowledge that is children literature should be paramount in the minds of library staff in public libraries. This becomes fruitless if the children are not conversant with the information relating to the use of public libraries, how to satisfy their information needs. Children get disappointed for not getting what desired, their needs not met and their information seeking behaviour not identified. This study intends to investigate the children specific information needs, ways by which the children needs are met, the kind of materials consulted by children and reaction of the children when their needs are met and when their needs are not met. So, on the strength of the above, the following research questions are formulated; a. what are the children specific information needs b. How are the children needs met?  c. What are the types of materials used by children?  d. How do the children go about obtaining information they need? e. What are the children reactions when their needs are met and not met? f. What problems do children encounter in obtaining the information they need?

**1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study includes;

1. Identifying the information needs of children

2. Finding out the ways in which children needs are met.

3. Identify source of information available to children.

4. Knowing the ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs.

5. To determine problem encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children.

6. to attempt to provide recommendation and suggestion for procuring information for children

**1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

For the successful completion of the study, the following research hypotheses were formulated by the researcher;

**H0:**  there is no documented patterns in which children seeking information relating to their needs can be achieved

**H1:** there is a documented patterns in which children seeking information relating to their needs can be achieved

**H02:** there are no problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children

**H2:** there are problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children

**1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is meant to extend the frontiers of human knowledge and solve most of the problems encountered in public libraries when dealing with children information needs and information seeking behaviour. It would also be of great significance to staff of public and school/children libraries. Also to be director. Of public libraries as it would support plans for library development and input to improving services rendered to children. This study would serve as literature/reference material, for researchers in future and input to the literature available in this area of study

**1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study covers information needs and information seeking behavior of children in public libraries. Considering the time factor and financial constraints, the scope of this research is limited to information needs and information seeking behaviour of children in public libraries. There is no limitation as to the source of information used for this study, books, no-book material, journals, discussions public national, special libraries and information centers will fruitful utilized. The study has particular reference to Imo state public library board Owerri.

**1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**INFORMATION** The online dictionary of library and information science defined information as data presented in readily comprehensible form to which meaning has been attributed within the context of its use information knowledge.

**INFORMATION NEEDS** In 1967 information need was defined as an expression of the deficit of concrete information by an individual (collective or territorial) user solving a certain scientific or technical problem; it is said to be a necessity to acquire information about (or from) the serenity environment. Or any information a user ought to have whether the need is felt or not.

**INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR.  This** is defined as patterns or paths pursued by an individual seeker or group of information seeker to solve or resolve an information need. Also Wilson (1999) defines it as 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.

**CHILDREN** Children are taken to be young people within the age bracket of 0-12 0r 13 years. The term children are refers to the plural of the noun child.

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES** Elizebeth Thomson (1971) defined the public library as an institution that exists to serve all resident of a commodity district or region and receive its financial support in a whole or part from public fund. It is also a place where children enjoy themselves in storytelling.

**1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This research work is organized in five chapters, for easy understanding, as follows

Chapter one is concern with the introduction, which consist of the (overview, of the study), historical background, statement of problem, objectives of the study, research hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of terms and historical background of the study. Chapter two highlights the theoretical framework on which the study is based, thus the review of related literature. Chapter three deals on the research design and methodology adopted in the study. Chapter four concentrate on the data collection and analysis and presentation of finding. Chapter five gives summary, conclusion, and recommendations made of the study

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

A conceptual framework is described as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. When clearly articulated a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to scaffold research and to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings (Smyth 2004). Various information behaviour models have been developed to explain user’s information behaviour, information needs and information-seeking behaviour. Wilson (1999) describes information behaviour models as frameworks for thinking about a problem that may evolve into a statement of the relationship among theoretical propositions. A careful and thorough review of applicable models was undertaken before deciding on the most relevant model for this study. Dervin (1999) developed the sense-making approach, which is implemented in terms of four constituent elements:

* A situation in time and space which defines the context in which information problems arise
* A gap which identifies the difference between the contextual situation and the desired situation (for example, uncertainty)
* An outcome, that is the consequence of the sense-making process
* A bridge that is some means of closing the gap between situation and outcome.

Ellis’ behavioral model of information making strategies identified eight features of information-seeking behaviour which characterize the information-seeking behaviour of researchers in the physical and social sciences, engineers and research scientists (Ingwersen & Jarvelin 2005):

Starting

Chaining

Browsing

Differentiating

Monitoring

Extracting

Verifying

Ending

Kuhthau’s Information Search Process (ISP) compliments that of Ellis by attaching to the stages of the “information search process” the associated feelings, thoughts and actions, and the appropriate information tasks (Wilson 1999). The stages of Kuhthau’s models are Initiation, Selection, Exploration, Formulation, Collection and Presentation. As an example, the Initiation phase of the process is said to be characterized by feelings of uncertainty, vague and general thoughts about the problem area, and is associated with seeking background information: the “appropriate task” at this point is simply to “recognize” a need for information (Wilson 1999). Ingwersen’s (2004) cognitive mode concentrates on identifying processes of cognition which may occur in all the information processing elements involved. This has been criticized by Dick (2005) for marginalizing the core concerns of our society in South Africa for example, how ordinary people on the ground seek the information they need. Dick suggested that Ingwersen’s model should take a wider view of the social contexts in which information seeking and retrieval takes place, and hence enlarge its scope of application, given the historical, economic and societal contexts of people in South Africa. According to Aina in Bothma and Kaniki (2004), a critical review of all these models show that the important variable, illiteracy, is not taken into account in the above designs. It is assumed that all users are literate, although the model of Wilson (1999) makes provision for the educational background of users. However, none of these models specifically addresses illiteracy, which is a predominant factor in the information-seeking process of the majority of information users in Africa and South Africa. Wilson has put forth a series of series of information behaviour models (1981, 1996, 1997 and 1991). The first model of Wilson (1999) which he first developed in 1981 suggests that information-seeking behavior arises as a consequence of a need perceived by an information user. His second 1981 model proposes that an information need is not a primary need but rather a secondary need that arises out of a more basic kind of need. Wilson’s revised model of 1996, presents the cycle of information activities, from the rise of the information need to the phase when information is being used. It includes various intervening variables, which have a significant influence on information behaviour, and mechanisms which activate it (Niedzwiedzka 2003). Wilson’s second model of 1981 is based upon two propositions: first that an information need is not a primary need, but rather a secondary need that arises out of needs of a more basic kind of need, and that these can be defined as physiological, cognitive and affective; and second, the enquirer is likely to meet with barriers of different kinds (Wilson 1999). The barriers include, but are not limited to personal, interpersonal and environmental barriers. He goes on to note that the context of any one of these needs may be the person him- or herself, or the role demands of the person’s work or life, or the environments (such as political, economic, technological,) within which that life or work takes place. He then suggests that the barriers that impede the search for information will arise out of the same set of contexts. Wilson’s model is clearly what may be described as a macro-model or a model of the gross information-seeking behaviour and it suggests how information needs arise and what may prevent (and, by implication, aid) the actual search for information (Wilson 1999). It also embodies, implicitly, a set of hypotheses about information behaviour that are testable: for example, the proposition that information needs in different work roles will be different, or that personal traits may inhibit or assist information seeking. However, Wilson (1999) admits that the weakness of the model is that all of the hypotheses are only implicit and are not made explicit. Nor is there any indication of the processes whereby context has its effect upon the person, nor the factors that result in the perception of barriers. However, he asserts, that the very fact that the model is lacking in certain elements stimulates thinking about the kinds of elements that a more complete model ought to include. The communities in which this study was taken are plagued with numerous problems such as poverty, unemployment, crime and so forth, therefore, we would expect that their information needs are of a more basic kind. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs apply, which proposed that physiological needs are the most basic and fundamental needs, and these refer to the physiological requirement for human survival. These needs include shelter, food and water. The advantage of this model is that it produces a set of hypotheses that are testable. Various information models on information behaviour were discussed and it is the researcher’s opinion that Wilson’s second model of 1981 is suitable for this study.

**2.2 INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR**

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the information behaviour of library users based on their subject interest, occupation, information environment and geographical location (Thanuskodi 2012). The concept of “information behaviour” was coined in the late 1990’s, but it traces its roots to the concept of “information needs and uses” that arose in the 1960’s (Wilson 1999). Information behaviour is a broad term that covers information needs, information seeking behaviour, information searching and information use (Case 2000). The relationship between these concepts is that where there is a need, a user usually seeks information in order to meet the need. For this study, the concepts of information needs and information seeking behaviour will be explored, within the context of community library users. Key contributors in the study of information behaviour in South Africa include Stilwell (2010), Kalley (1995), Mostert (1998) and Fairer-Wessels (1987), Ikoga-Odongo and Mostert (2006) and Fourie (2002;2004) whilst international scholars include Wilson (1981;1996;1999;2000), Case (2002), Kuhlthau (1991;1993;2004), Dervin (1999),Taylor (1991) and Ingwersen and Jarvelin (2005). Stilwell (2010) has investigated the extent and nature of research into information behaviour in the South African context from 1980-2010. In Stilwell’s view, literature shows that the concept of information behaviour has grown over time and many approaches have been put forward for particular contexts and situations. Furthermore, Stilwell (2010) argues that whilst numerous papers have been presented at conferences and published as articles, little is available in terms of an overview of the entire body of such research to date. Her findings reveal an enormous growth in the number of articles and papers from 2000 onwards reflecting a wide array of subjects; however, there seems to be a significant gap in the literature reflecting the information needs and information seeking behaviour of a mixed population of library users in urban, disadvantaged areas. By mixed population, reference is made to communities that consist of Black, Indian and Coloured race groups. Tsebe (1986), Fairer-Wessels (1987), Mini (1990), Kaniki (1995) and various other researchers have all researched the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of black communities. Fairer-Wessels (1987) is of the opinion that current research has concentrated on occupational or business information needs and behaviour, rather than on needs in a nonoccupational context and feels that there is a gap in the latter field in South Africa. Whilst still in the South African context, Ikoga-Odongo and Mostert (2006) specifically sought to review significant studies that focused on the concepts of information needs, seeking, and use and they endorsed awareness of the context of information behaviour as the foundation for any research in this field (Stilwell 2010). Internationally, studies indicate that research in information behaviour has occupied information scientists, since before the term information science was coined (Wilson 1999). According to Wilson (1999) information behaviour is the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information use. Thus it includes face-to-face communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information, as in, for example, watching TV advertisements, without any intention to act on the information given. Wilson (1999) presents an outline of models of information seeking and other aspects of information behaviour, with the aim of reviewing the status of models of information behaviour to discover how they may relate one to another and to propose an integration of these models into a more general framework.

**2.3 INFORMATION NEEDS**

People need accessible information in order to solve problems in their everyday lives. This information provides them with a sense of security, achievement and control. Feather and Sturges (1997:217) define information needs as “the expression used in a wide range of ways to refer to any context where information is sought and it represents all forms of information seeking”. Case (2007) suggests that an information need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have. Wilson (1981:9) suggests that the phrase ‘information seeking towards the satisfaction of needs’ be used instead of the term ‘information needs’. He feels that personal needs are the basis of the motivation to seek information and these also affect the information-seeking behavior of the user. Wilson describes personal needs as:

* Physiological needs such as the need for food, water and shelter
* Affective needs, such as the need for attainment and for domination
* Cognitive needs, that is, the need to learn a skill and take decisions.

These categories are obviously inter-related. The view is that in order to find ways and means to satisfy these needs the individual would seek information about them. A study conducted by Tsebe (1985) highlights the inadequacy of research conducted on the information needs of Africans. The study identifies the information needs of Africans as pertaining to health, legal, and socio-economic issues and makes recommendations for the improvement of the information infrastructure. Actual research into the information needs of disadvantaged communities in South Africa has been done by Fairer-Wessels (1987 and 1990), who attempted to isolate the particular information needs of urban black women, based on a survey conducted in Mamelodi. Her research indicated that health, money and education were the three main problem areas for this group (Fairer-Wessels 1987). Writing in the late 1980’s Bekker and Lategan (1988) maintain that little was then known of the general information needs of residents living in the black urban areas. This remains true today, as there have been little or no studies identifying the information needs and information seeking behaviour of residents living in non-white urban areas, signifying a significant gap in the literature. They identified “articulated” problems associated with the labour market, the housing delivery process and transport as the three areas in which they experienced the most difficulty. Other issues included access to health services, water, fuel, sanitation and schooling. They also emphasised that priorities in one specific community may not be priorities in another, and the information needs of each community should be assessed individually. Bekker and Lategan’s (1988) point seems to be that whilst it is useful to know the areas in which problems might be experienced by a community, it is essential that each community decides for itself what its priority areas are. This point of view is reason why the present study is so vital, and although there have been various studies regarding disadvantaged communities, each community is unique and has their own information needs. Mini’s (1990) study focused on the information needs of people living in Edendale on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg. Data was gathered by means of a house-to-house survey. The findings of the study concluded that the majority of the participants could not articulate their information needs. On an international level, Dervin (1984) examined the information needs of urban residents in California. It involved 1040 interviewees of 12 years and older. Her findings indicate that there were many information needs and that a number of them are not being met. It also found that well well-off societies are differentiated from poor ones in terms of the situations they have to deal with and the way in which they give meaning to these situations. The conclusion of the study was that libraries must focus more on human dimensions of information use and less on demographics as a means of organising their services and getting to know their customers. Another conclusion is that information needs depend on a specific situation and time. Therefore, needs must be evaluated on a continuous basis.

**2.4 INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR**

A Royal Society Conference in 1948 was the real beginning of an interest in information seeking behaviour, especially in science and technology (Rafiq 2009). It was followed ten years later by the International Conference on Scientific Information in Washington, DC. The conference covered several aspects, including how people made use of libraries and the needs they endeavoured to satisfy through library use. Wilson (2000) however argues that the subject goes rather further back in time. For example, The Library Survey (McDiarmid, 1940) referred to various kinds of surveys dating back to 1916 (Ayres & Mckinnie, 1916) and with a spate of studies in the 1920s and 1930s. Wilson elaborates by stating that these studies were about library use in general, they were concerned less with the needs that led people to the library as a source of information and more with issues such as the social class make-up of the clientele. Information- seeking behaviour is purposive in nature and is an outcome of a need to satisfy some objectives (Wilson 1999). He further defines information seeking behaviour “as those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information, searching for such information in any way, and using or transferring that information”. IkojaOdonga and Mostert (2006) suggest that information seeking behaviour arises from the perceived need of a user, whereby the individual identifies his or her needs for information, searches for information and finally transfers the information obtained. The literature search revealed that a limited number of studies have been conducted in South Africa and internationally concerning information seeking behaviour of community library users in disadvantaged urban areas. Whilst there are various studies on information seeking behaviour on specific occupations, social roles and demographic groupings, research indicates a gap in the information seeking behaviour of community library users in disadvantaged urban areas. A study that deserves mention is that conducted by Kaniki (1995) which investigated the information needs and information seeking behaviour of communities in Kwa-Ngwanase (Natal) and Qumbu (Transkei) in South Africa. In the study an attempt was made to answer the following questions: What are the information needs in the two communities; which information providers do people use; and what is the demographic distribution of each community and its implication for information provision in these areas? Adams (2010) has researched the information behaviour of Generation Y students at the University of Stellenbosch, whilst Du Preez (2007) has investigated the information needs and information seeking behaviour of engineers. Further studies on information-seeking behaviour include the study by Mitha (2009) on “New information seeking behaviours of academics in the Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine at the University of KwaZulu Natal” Abroad, Chen & Hernon (1992) analyzed the information needs and information- seeking patterns of people living in selected cities in the USA. A significant contribution of the study was the use of the telephone for the first time as a tool for gathering data on information needs.

**2.5 PUBLIC LIBRARY**

The public library can be defined as an institution, financed by public money, housing a variety of documents and information sources that can be used for the purpose of informal education, recreation, cultural enrichment and/or information. The public library must be accessible to all members of the community (Harrod's librarian's glossary of terms used in librarianship, documentation and the book crafts and reference 1987). According to Jain and Nfila (2005) a public library is an organization established, supported and funded by the community either by local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and imaginary works through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, disability, economic and employment status. The Public Libraries Research Group (in Muddiman 1990: 91) defines the aims of the public library as contributing to “sustaining' the quality of life in all its aspects educational, economic, industrial, scientific and cultural. It should make freely available the records of man's experience to all who may ask and thus promote and foster the free flow of ideas”. Public libraries are a critical information resource for communities in a country, particularly in rural areas, as sometimes they may be the only accessible place of information for some sectors of the community (Cannon, 1999). However, public libraries in the developing world particularly Africa have been found to be unable to satisfy the needs of the people they serve, and various reasons have been advanced for this failure. The reasons include the inability to respond to the economic and social needs of the people (Sturges and Neil, 1990). According to Mostert (1998:71) the typical western public library is suitable for those community members who are “well educated, literate and middle class, whereas the newly literate and illiterate members of the community are not taken into account”. For libraries to remain relevant, they need to change and adapt themselves and develop information services aimed at making a positive and meaningful impact to the communities they serve

**2.6 COMMUNITY INFORMATION**

Bunch (1987:4) defines community information as having two aspects. One which is “concerned with the nature of the information provided, that is, information in the community to help people with daily problem solving or in raising the quality of their lives; the other is concerned with the nature of the clientele served, namely those who belong to the socioeconomic groups or those who are disadvantaged through an inability to obtain, understand, or act on information that affects their lives”. Bunch (1993) continues that there are different ways in which communication information can be offered and these include; self help, support for other information services, information giving, referral, advice, practical help with letters, advocacy, community education, community action, outreach and counselling. Community information is the information for the survival and growth of the community or possibly the information required by a member of the community to make effective use of the available resources around them. Community information, within the context of this research, must be understood in conjunction with the concepts of ‘self-reliance’ and ‘self-determination’ (Kempson 1986:182). Thus community information is the information which helps to solve their day to day problems related to survival such as health, education, housing, legal protection, political rights and so forth. Kempson (1986:182) commented further by saying that “Communities, and individuals within them should have a far greater say in the decisions which affect their lives and a greater control over the ways in which their lives develop. To do this requires that they are both well-informed and have the means to act on that information.” Kempson (1986) suggests that information must be regarded as a public good with external benefits each individual in the community may benefit when his/her associates, are better informed. The hierarchy of human needs formulated by Maslow (1970) is well known (September 1993). They are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self actualization needs. Maslow believes that human behaviour is continuously influenced by the striving to satisfy these needs, and that in order of priority the most basic of needs is the need for physical survival. He further states that physiological needs include the need for food, water, shelter, sleep, and those other things which sustain life at the most minimal level.

September (1993) describes Maslows most basic human needs in ascending order as follows:

* Safety needs involve assurance that future physiological needs will be met and concern with personal safety
* Social needs are concerned with the need to belong; to be accepted and to participate in social activities
* Esteem needs include the need for self-respect, confidence, achievement, independence and freedom, recognition and appreciation
* Self-actualization needs arise, only when other needs are sufficiently satisfied and lead to the desire to achieve through exploration of one’ talents, capacities and potentialities, in other words, the desire for self-improvement.

September (1993) explains that in attempting to identify the information needs of disadvantaged communities it is important to realise that the social system of apartheid has almost completely denied these communities the satisfaction of even the most basic of human needs. Although transformation and improvements has been made in recent years, the fact remains that the communities in this study remain in a disadvantaged situation. Therefore, as September (1993) indicates, it is understandable that community information needs, to a great measure, will be connected to physiological, safety, social and esteem needs. This, however, he adds, does not mean that self-actualization needs do not exist. Self-actualization needs are relevant to a relatively small percentage of the people of these communities. Community information needs will obviously vary from community to community and need to be articulated by the community itself (Kalley 1995). Bekker and Lategan (1988) however, have compiled a generalised listing of primary needs which include labour, housing, transport, community and education services set within the parameters of the social, economic and political milieu.

**2.7 COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

The role of the library, and its responsibility to the community which it purports to serve, is a recurring theme in library and information science literature (Aitchison 1991). Community libraries are the focal point of this study, however the term public library needs to be defined as well, as the two terms are often used interchangeably. Public libraries and community libraries have certain characteristics in common, but they differ considerably in most. Common ground is found in the respect that both provide a service to a community It can be argued, that all forms of librarianship are in fact “community librarianship” in that every library serves some community: the public library its regular users, the hospital its staff and patients, and so on (Vincent 1986). Community libraries have the fundamental responsibility for providing for the diverse and ever-changing informational, educational, socio-economic and cultural needs of a specific community. In order to fulfil these objectives, libraries need to be informed about users’ information behaviour, so as to understand the user’s information needs and how to fulfill these needs. Community libraries differ from public libraries in South Africa, in that they are usually established in economically disadvantaged communities and are more likely to provide information rather than recreational reading (Kalley 1995; Mostert 1998; Stilwell 1989, 1991, 1997). Within the South African context the community library has been described as one controlled, owned and sustained by residents of a disadvantaged community, usually black or Coloured, in order to motivate, empower and enable the local people to participate in programmes aimed at meeting their socio-economic, political, educational and cultural needs (Fairer-Wessels and Machet 1993). The aims of the libraries are to empower community members by proactively providing survival information often repackaged by the community librarians and if necessary, of a temporary nature such as displays and pamphlets, brochures, newspapers as well as oral information (Aitchison 2006). Stilwell (1991a) maintains that the social purpose of these libraries differs markedly from those of the public library. While the public library is passive about its sense of social purpose, community libraries are pro-active. Within community libraries neutrality of service is seen as neither possible nor desirable. Fairer- Wessels and Machet (1993) add that the aim of a community library is to render a more varied and more pro-active service than is commonly offered by public libraries. In assessing the role of the traditional public libraries in the provision of information needs, Bekker and Lategan (1988) in Kalley (1995) argue, despite well-stocked holdings, they do not make provision for the needs of the urban black community given the stock’s irrelevance to the specific community circumstances. This argument would also apply to the needs of a mixed population in an urban community. They make the significant point that people need to be advised, need to be given the opportunity to ask questions, to ask for further explanations, to see for themselves (Bekker and Lategan 1988).

**2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**The Bruner’s Theory of Learning and Development**

Bruner (1986) and Adolph (2015) in the theory of learning and development, state that thinking and reasoning are intertwined into a single process. Bruner also indicates that a child develops through several stages of development, which he refers to as inactive, iconic and symbolic modes. The inactive mode is that stage, which is characterized by hand to mouth coordination. The iconic mode is the stage during which the child starts to attach meaning to previous experiences as he thinks about these experiences. The symbolic mode is a stage in which the child exercises the highest thinking by giving names to objects around him, which is important for learners to develop the skills and abilities to do their work independently.

Bruner’s theory encourages learning through discovery, active learning and problem solving skills by learners. Bruner’s theory relates to this study because the CAPS approach requires the learners to look for information on their own in order to do their schoolwork, as they are continuously assessed. In this way, CAPS is a resourcebased approach. There has been an increase in the projects, portfolios and assignments that learners are expected to do. All this needs information from the library to supplement the textbook. CAPS have made learning to become a resource-orientated education system (ArkoCobbah 2004; De Vries 2004; Hart 2000a; Le Roux 2002; Lombo 2002).

Todd (2006) and the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia (2011), stress that school libraries are hubs for discovery, inquiry, thinking and creativity in learners. Inquiry in the school library encourages the 21st century learner to develop curiosity, and to have innovative and creative spirit in the academic context. Moreover, in the school library, the school librarian works hand in hand with the instructional team of teachers as well as other learning specialists such as leaders in reading, literacy, special needs and ICT. The use of various and sometimes conflicting sources of information assists learners to learn how to think in critical ways, to solve problems, to make decisions, and to be reflective.

Furthermore, AASL (2007) and Al-Kaabi (2015) affirm that inquiry through school libraries open a platform for discovery, knowledge building, innovation and creativity in learners. AASL also encourages standards for 21st century learners. These standards stress reading, inquiry, information literacy, critical thinking as well as knowledge construction. Krashen (2001) and Simisaye and Quadri (2010) holds that free voluntary reading, which is encouraged by the availability and access to reading materials, plays an important role in reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar usage and writing style.

**Theory of Human Attitude**

The theoretical framework for this study was the Theory of Human Attitude. The theory was developed by Alreck and Settle (1985). The theory stipulates that attitudes are psychological “predispositions”, because they predispose people to act in a certain way towards the object of the

attitude. The attitude comes before behaviour and affects the way the person will act. The theory was deemed appropriate for the study because the use of libraries by students is greatly affected by their perception of them.

The knowledge component indicates that, the feelings and actions of students are based on their knowledge of a particular object or subject. What people know or perceive about a particular subject is very important because it affects how they behave or act towards it. The feelings and actions of students towards the utilization of library resources would be evaluated based on their

interests and availability of resources. Students’ knowledge on the importance of the library resources, purpose of library resources in their research and teaching processes would be evaluated to get an insight into what factors information play in their use or otherwise of these resources.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

* 1. **Research design**

The researcher used descriptive research survey design in building up this project work the choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought to information needs and information seeking behavior of children in public libraries

* 1. **Sources of data collection**

Data were collected from two main sources namely:

(i)Primary source and

(ii)Secondary source

**Primary source:**

These are materials of statistical investigation which were collected by the research for a particular purpose. They can be obtained through a survey, observation questionnaire or as experiment; the researcher has adopted the questionnaire method for this study.

**Secondary source:**

These are data from textbook Journal handset etc. they arise as byproducts of the same other purposes. Example administration, various other unpublished works and write ups were also used.

* 1. **Population of the study**

Population of a study is a group of persons or aggregate items, things the researcher is interested in getting information on the study information needs and information seeking behavior of children in public libraries. 200 staff of Imo State public library board Owerri was selected randomly by the researcher as the population of the study.

* 1. **Sample and sampling procedure**

Sample is the set people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling. Due to large size of the target population, the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study.

n= N

1+N (e) 2

n= 200

1+200(0.05)2

= 200

1+200(0.0025)

= 200 200

1+0.5 = 1.5 = 133.

**3.5 Instrument for data collection**

The major research instrument used is the questionnaires. This was appropriately moderated. The secretaries were administered with the questionnaires to complete, with or without disclosing their identities. The questionnaire was designed to obtain sufficient and relevant information from the respondents. The primary data contained information extracted from the questionnaires in which the respondents were required to give specific answer to a question by ticking in front of an appropriate answer and administered the same on staff of the two organizations: The questionnaires contained structured questions which were divided into sections A and B.

* 1. **Validation of the research instrument**

The questionnaire used as the research instrument was subjected to face its validation. This research instrument (questionnaire) adopted was adequately checked and validated by the supervisor his contributions and corrections were included into the final draft of the research instrument used.

* 1. **Method of data analysis**

The data collected was not an end in itself but it served as a means to an end. The end being the use of the required data to understand the various situations it is with a view to making valuable recommendations and contributions. To this end, the data collected has to be analysis for any meaningful interpretation to come out with some results. It is for this reason that the following methods were adopted in the research project for the analysis of the data collected. For a comprehensive analysis of data collected, emphasis was laid on the use of absolute numbers frequencies of responses and percentages. Answers to the research questions were provided through the comparison of the percentage of workers response to each statement in the questionnaire related to any specified question being considered.

Frequency in this study refers to the arrangement of responses in order of magnitude or occurrence while percentage refers to the arrangements of the responses in order of their proportion. The simple percentage method is believed to be straight forward easy to interpret and understand method.

The researcher therefore chooses the simple percentage as the method to use.

The formula for percentage is shown as.

% = f/N x 100/1

Where f = frequency of respondents response

N = Total Number of response of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item

Contained in questions

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**PRESENTATION ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

**4.1 Introduction**

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It will also show answers to questions relating to the research questions for this research study. The researcher employed simple percentage in the analysis.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

A total of 133(one hundred and thirty three) questionnaires were distributed and 133 questionnaires were returned.

Question 1

Gender distribution of the respondents.

TABLE I

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender distribution of the respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 77 | 57.9 | 57.9 | 57.9 |
| Female | 56 | 42.1 | 42.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

From the above table it shows that 57.9% of the respondents were male while 42.1% of the respondents were female.

Question 2

The positions held by respondents

TABLE II

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The positions held by respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| **Valid** | Librarians | 37 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 27.8 |
| Full stack web developers | 50 | 37.6 | 37.6 | 65.4 |
| Senior staff | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 82.7 |
| Junior staff | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

The above tables shown that 37 respondents which represents27.8% of the respondents are librarians 50 respondents which represents 37.6 % are full stack web developers 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents are senior staff, while 23 respondents which represent 17.3% of the respondents are junior staff

**TEST OF HYPOTHESES**

There are no ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs.

**Table III**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **there are no ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs.** | | | |
| Response | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
| Agreed | 40 | 33.3 | 6.8 |
| strongly agreed | 50 | 33.3 | 16.8 |
| Disagreed | 26 | 33.3 | -7.3 |
| strongly disagreed | 17 | 33.3 | -16.3 |
| Total | 133 |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Test Statistics** | |
|  | there are no ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs. |
| Chi-Square | 19.331a |
| Df | 3 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 33.3. | |

Decision rule:

There researcher therefore reject the null hypothesis there are no ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs as a second language as the calculated value of 19.331 is greater than the critical value of 7.82

Therefore the alternate hypothesis is accepted there are ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS TWO**

There are no problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children

Table V

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **there are no problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children** | | | |
| Response | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
| Yes | 73 | 44.3 | 28.7 |
| No | 33 | 44.3 | -11.3 |
| Undecided | 27 | 44.3 | -17.3 |
| Total | 133 |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Test Statistics** | |
|  | there are no problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children |
| Chi-Square | 28.211a |
| Df | 2 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 44.3. | |

Decision rule:

There researcher therefore reject the null hypothesis that there are no problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children as the calculated value of 28.211 is greater than the critical value of 5.99

Therefore the alternate hypothesis is accepted that there are problems encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 Introduction**

It is important to ascertain that the objective of this study was to ascertain information needs and information seeking behavior of children in public libraries

In the preceding chapter, the relevant data collected for this study were presented, critically analyzed and appropriate interpretation given. In this chapter, certain recommendations made which in the opinion of the researcher will be of benefits in addressing the challenges of information needs and information seeking behavior of children in public libraries

**5.2 Summary**

This study was on information needs and information seeking behavior of children in public libraries. Four objectives were raised which included: Identifying the information needs of children, finding out the ways in which children needs are met, identify source of information available to children, Knowing the ways or patterns in which children seek information relating to their needs, to determine problem encountered by children and also that of the libraries in disseminating information to children, to attempt to provide recommendation and suggestion for procuring information for children. In line with these objectives, two research hypotheses were formulated and two null hypotheses were posited. The total population for the study is 200 staff of Imo State public Library Board Owerri. The researcher used questionnaires as the instrument for the data collection. Descriptive Survey research design was adopted for this study. A total of 133 respondents made up librarians, full stack wed developers, senior staff and junior staff was used for the study. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies.

**5.3 Conclusion**

The study reveals that the improvement of information services in rural environment it is necessary to make rural public libraries in every village and make the rural people aware about the need and importance of the public libraries. The library gives more information to rural community and its help to development of rural area. So the government should take steps to growth of library in undeveloped area. The rapid developments in Public library have helped different sectors by providing right information to the right reader at the right time. For example, it will help children to create reading habit, unemployed youths to get better jobs and farmers to improve agricultural production. Libraries of all countries are functioning for social development by extending these activities and services, sharing books, extension lectures on various topics such as child labor, epidemic diseases, reading habits and environmental protection.

**5.4 Recommendation**

* Library extension services such as Lecture Programs, Seminar/ Workshop programs should be organized regularly by the rural public libraries with proper emphasis to promote library services and its importance to the people.
* Public Libraries should arrange classes for illiterate people under National Literacy Mission.
* Rural Public Libraries should conduct social events like, New Year’s party, general knowledge quiz contest etc. Public Library should organized periodic Orientation Programme for library users to make them aware about the collection and services available in the public libraries.

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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please tick the option that best describes your opinion. You are please requested to make few comments where necessary.

**Gender**

Male { } Female { }

**Position**

Librarian { } Assistant Librarian { }

Information Scientist { } Professional Assistant { }

Library Assistant { } Library Attendant { }

Section Officer { } Personal Assistant { }

Upper Divisional Clerk { } Lower Divisional Clerk { }

**Age**

20-30 { } 31-40 { }

40-50 { } Above 50 { }

**Marital status**

Married { } Single { }

Separated { }

**Section B**

Young people have information needs.

Strongly Agreed { }

Agreed { }

Strongly disagreed { }

Disagreed { }

Uncertain { }

The library is equipped to provide information needs of young people.

Strongly Agreed { }

Agreed { }

Strongly disagreed { }

Disagreed { }

Uncertain { }

The various information needs of young people are not fully captured within the library.

Strongly Agreed { }

Agreed { }

Strongly disagreed { }

Disagreed { }

Uncertain { }

In what ways do the library management meet the information needs of young people.

Please write:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are library services affordable for young people?

Yes { } No { }

Which of these are the surest method young people adopt to source for information?

The internet { }

The books { }

Do you agree that young people encounter some challenges sourcing for information.

Strongly Agreed { }

Agreed { }

Strongly disagreed { }

Disagreed { }

Uncertain { }

If agreed, what are the various challenges young people encounter while searching for information.

Please comment:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What are your recommendations in achieving an effective library that will accommodate the information needs of the students?

Please write: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_