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Examining the Information Need of Researchers for Improved Research Output in Research Institutes Libraries in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North-central Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives and two research questions. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population of 1400 researchers from the research institutes in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for this study was 311 researchers from the research institutes in North Central Nigeria determined using Taro Yamane sampling method. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire structured and designed by the researcher and titled "Questionnaire on Information Need of Researchers for Improved Research Output" (QINRFIRO). Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages, Mean and

Standard Deviation. The findings of the study revealed that researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria need information for improved research output. The outcomes further revealed that researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria agreed that items listed are the sources of information need for improved research output. Based on these findings, it was recommended that for continuous patronage of research institute libraries by researchers in the research institutes for their information need, the Federal Government should allocate sufficient funds to libraries to acquire up to date, current and relevant library materials and that research institutes should structure training programs in the libraries that focus on research skills for researchers for improved research output.

Keywords: Information Need, Information-Seeking Behaviour, Scholarly Communication Output, Research Institute Library, Researchers

Introduction

One of the greatest advantages of research institutes is that they are important sources of information and knowledge for the communities they are established thereby enhancing research productivity of individuals. With the advent of new technologies and the growth in the digital age, the role of research institutes in providing information has become even more critical. Research institutes are integral parts of learning and advanced research in every country. These institutes are expected to provide unique inquiry-based learning opportunities for researchers and be involved in relevant research forums and community outreach. A research institute can be defined as an establishment or institution funded for carrying out research in a specific or special field. They are often specialized in pure research, applied or natural science research and also, institutes provide an important function as part of the innovation landscape.

Research institutes are usually established for several reasons and one of these reasons is to meet the information need of researchers in that field. Information need is the desire to locate and obtain relevant information to satisfy conscious and unconscious need. It is referred to as the gap in knowledge that researchers experience and their desire to fill that gap through information seeking. Information seeking behaviour on the other hand can be described as the way an individual who needs information conducts his/herself or acts when searching, receiving, or acquiring information. This includes the individual's utterances, gesture, zeal, or any other attribute displayed by that individual in his efforts to purchase, acquire or receive the needed information. Thilavathi and Thirunavukarasu (2015) in their study ascertained that understanding the information need of institute researchers is necessary for their effective and improved research output. The term information seeking behaviour have been commonly used in the field of information science to explain information need and the manner in which researchers go about satisfying the need (Katrodia, 2019).

Information need is a complex process that brings out the social, communicative and interactive behaviour of an individual. In their study, Manjunathan and Babu (2018) established that the role of library is not just only limited to preserve reading materials but also to ensure that information need of the researchers are met in a satisfactory manner such that the research output of researchers can be improved.

Different researchers have conducted researches to show the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries. Okonoko, Odiachi and Isebe (2015) in their investigation discovered that the preferred sources of information need by the academics are books, journals, internet sources, electronic resources, colleagues and friends, reference materials. Their study also revealed respondents indicated that they use information to get materials for research purposes, materials for teaching purposes, to advance their academic career. Fidzani (2018) revealed that guidance in the use of library resources and services is necessary to help students meet some of their information requirements. The study further revealed that journals and textbooks are the most popular needed sources of information for course work and research. Enweani and Nwankwo (2018) in their study revealed that the major information need of lecturers are for education, research and personal development. Agada, Abu and Ojobo (2022) in their investigation of the information need and research activities of postgraduates in universities in Benue State revealed that the research activities of students in universities include academic information, information for personal development and political information among others. Kuburat, Oshinaike and Ayodele (2022) in their study found out that the information resources need of researchers include journals, literature review, reviewed articles, theories and conceptual framework.

It has been observed from personal experience while carrying out this research that the much needed facilities provided to support and improve research output in research institutes in North Central, Nigeria is inadequate. That is why Gabriel and Shonaike (2016) suggested that if only Nigeria will improve in research funding of the research institutes, it will equip the research institutes libraries and empower researchers with needed information resources and thereby improve their research output. In the same vein, Ogunode (2023) noticed that Nigeria is not doing well in terms of publication due to lack of facilities. Without proper provision of information need of researchers in research institute in North central, Nigeria, there will be no improvement in the research output in the area. It is against this background that this study intends to examine the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The thrust of every research institute is to provide information resources that will meet the specific information need of researchers for improved research output. It is the core mandate of all research institutes libraries to provide timely, specialized, accurate, specific, current, reliable information resources for researchers. If all information need of researchers in research institutes are provided by the libraries in these institutes, this will go a long way to assist researchers improve in their research output.

Unfortunately, research activities in Nigeria is not encouraging, probably due to inadequacy of information resources and also, most of information resources available especially in the research institute libraries are obsolete and even the electronic information resources are inaccessible due to irregular internet services and other challenges in the libraries. There is a growing concern about the shortage of information resources which has led to decline in research activities in research institutes libraries in North Central, Nigeria as was observed by the researchers during this research. Again, this inadequacy of current

information resources in these institutes' libraries have produced negative effect on the research output of researchers in these institutes. Literature relating to this study were scanty and no study has covered the scope that this study intends to cover to the best of knowledge of these researchers and this has created a gap in knowledge that prompted this study. The problem of this study therefor is to investigate the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Identify the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North central, Nigeria.
- ii. Determine the sources of information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions research questions were raised and answered by the study.

- i. What are the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North central, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the sources of information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North Central?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design with a population of 1400 researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria who are registered with their respective libraries. The sample size for this study was 311 researchers that are registered with the libraries in the research institutes and was determined using Taro Yamane sampling method. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire structured and designed by the researcher and titled "Questionnaire on Information Need of Researchers for Improved Research Output" (QINRFIRO). The questionnaire was distributed by the researcher and eight other research assistants within the different research institutes for easy retrieval. Data collected was analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages to answer research question one while mean and standard deviation was then used to answer research question two.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One

What are the information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North central, Nigeria?

Table 1: Frequency Count and Percentages on Information Need of Researchers for Improved Research Output in Research Institutes Libraries in North Central Nigeria (N=311)

S/N	Items	Needed (%)	Not Needed (%)	Rank	Remark
1	How to conduct research activities	300 (96.50)	11 (3.50)	1 st	Needed
2	Professional knowledge	248 (79.70)	63 (20.30)	10 th	Needed
3	Experiment to improve productivity and sustainability on the field	241 (77.50)	70 (22.50)	14 th	Needed
4	Preparation for career promotion	245 (78.80)	66 (21.20)	11 th	Needed
5	How to write seminar and conference papers	257 (82.60)	54 (17.40)	8 th	Needed
6	How to write books and articles	266 (85.50)	45 (14.50)	5 th	Needed
7	How to gather data	256 (82.30)	55 (17.70)	9 th	Needed
8	Career development`	297 (95.50)	14 (4.50)	3 rd	Needed
9	Self-development	261 (83.90)	50 (16.10)	6 th	Needed
10	Guidance in the library	299 (96.10)	12 (3.90)	2 nd	Needed
11	New invention	244 (78.50)	67 (21.50)	12 th	Needed
12	Expert Addresses	241 (77.50)	70 (22.50)	13 th	Needed
13	International Research institutions	268 (86.20)	43 (13.80)	4 th	Needed
14	Research breakthrough by experts	259 (83.30)	52 (16.70)	7 th	Needed

N= number of observations.

Result presented on Table 1 shows the frequency counts and percentage of respondents on information need of researchers in research institutes for improved research output in North Central Nigeria. The result shows How to conduct research activities 300 (96.50), Discussion 299 (96.10), Career development 297 (95.50), International Research institutions 268 (86.20), How to write books and articles 266 (85.50), Self-development 261 (83.90), Research breakthrough by experts 259 (83.30), How to write seminar and conference papers 257 (82.60), How to gather data 256 (82.30), Professional knowledge 248

(79.70), Preparation for career promotion 245 (78.80), New invention 244 (78.50), Expert Addresses 241 (77.50) and Experiment to improve productivity and sustainability on the field 241 (77.50). This indicate that researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria need information for improved research output. The finding of this study agrees with the finding of Fidzani (2018) whose study revealed that guidance in the use of library resources and services is necessary to help researchers meet some of their information requirements. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Agada, Abu and Ojobo (2022) whose study revealed that the information need and research activities of researchers in universities include academic information, information for personal development, for career development, for professional knowledge, self-development and political information among others.

Research Question Two

What are the sources of information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North central, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Sources of Information Need of Researchers for Improved Research Output in Research Institutes Libraries in North central, Nigeria (N=311)

S\N	Items statement	\bar{X}	SD	Rank	Remark
1	Journals	3.76	0.47	1 st	Agreed
2	Literature review	3.68	0.53	3 rd	Agreed
3	Review articles	3.68	0.53	3 rd	Agreed
4	Theories and conceptual framework	3.68	0.56	2 nd	Agreed
5	Knowledgeable persons	3.60	0.61	5 th	Agreed
6	Internet	3.05	0.87	11 th	Agreed
7	Books	3.43	0.69	8 th	Agreed
8	Publication and Dissemination	3.40	0.85	9 th	Agreed
9	Academics Networking	3.51	0.67	7 th	Agreed
10	Theories written by people	3.55	0.64	6 th	Agreed
11	Internet and database	3.40	0.69	10 th	Agreed
Grand Mean and Decision		3.52	-		Agreed

Result presented in Table 2 shows the Mean and Standard Deviation of sources of information need of researchers for improved research output in research institutes libraries in North central, Nigeria. The result reveals Journals ($\bar{X} = 3.76$, SD = 0.47), Theories and conceptual framework ($\bar{X} = 3.68$, SD = 0.56), Literature review ($\bar{X} = 3.68$, SD = 0.53), Review articles ($\bar{X} = 3.68$, SD = 0.53), Knowledgeable persons ($\bar{X} = 3.60$, SD = 0.61), Theories written by people ($\bar{X} = 3.55$, SD = 0.64), Academics Networking ($\bar{X} = 3.51$, SD = 0.67), Books ($\bar{X} = 3.43$, SD = 0.69), Publications and Dissemination ($\bar{X} = 3.40$, SD = 0.85), Internet and Databases ($\bar{X} = 3.40$, SD = 0.69) and Internet ($\bar{X} = 3.05$, SD = 0.87). The Grand Mean and Standard Deviation of ($\bar{X} = 3.52$, SD = 0.64) indicate that researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria agreed that items listed are the sources of

information need for improved research output. The finding of this study agrees with the finding of Okonoko, Odiachi and Isebe (2015) whose work affirmed that the preferred sources of information by the academics are books, journals, internet sources, electronic resources, colleagues and friends, reference materials, among others. Their study also revealed respondents indicated that they use information to get materials for research purposes, materials for teaching purposes, to advance their academic career, to understand the condition of service/promotion criteria, among others. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Fidzani (2018) who observed that journals and textbooks are the most popular sources of information need for researchers and students. This study corroborates Kuburat, Oshinaike and Ayodele (2022) who found out that the information resources need of researchers to include journals, literature review, reviewed articles, theories and conceptual framework among others.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria need information for improved research output. Also, that researchers in research institutes in North Central Nigeria utilizes these needed information resources in the libraries in the research institutes for improved research output.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- i. For continuous patronage of research institute libraries by researchers in the research institutes for their information need, the Federal Government should allocate sufficient funds to libraries to acquire up to date, current and relevant library materials.
- ii. Research institutes should structure training programs in the libraries that focus on research skills for researchers for improved research output. These programs should be designed to enhance researchers' capabilities in conducting research activities, improving research output and sustainability in their respective fields.

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