LAFIA JOURNAL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
Volume 4, Number 2, 2023.
https://lalibjournals.org/index.php/LJLIS
ISSN: Print - 2814-0702, Online - 2814-0710
LJLIS

ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION NEEDS OF RURAL FARMERS IN HONG LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

Hilari EDWARD
Department of Library and Information Science University of Maiduguri, Borno Nigeria
edwardhila@gmail.com, 07030231830;

Madaki Mohammed ALI
Ramat Library University of Maiduguri
madakimohammedali@gmail.com, 08030540401, 07011977345

Regina Enajite BRISIBE
Ramat Library University of Maiduguri
brisibeenajite@gmail.com, 08065142964

Abstract
The study was an assessment of information needs of rural farmers in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study assessed rural farmers' information needs and how they seek information to carry out their farming activities. The objectives of the study were to assess information needs, and awareness of information by rural farmers in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two (2) research questions. A survey research design was used for the study with 130 Populations. The instrument was subjected to a reliability test. The result was r=0.84, this revealed that the instrument was reliable for data collection, since the r=value index is greater than 0.5. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages presented in tables and histogram. The findings of the study revealed that information needs of rural farmers was in a maximum level, but their awareness of information was less to their expectation. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government and NGOs should make available information to the rural farmers on how to plant seeds, apply manure/fertilizers, control weeds, store farm produce, and know the availability/application of pesticide and marketing. The government and NGOs should also encourage, advice and educate rural farmers to seek information from books, radio, television, community libraries, information centre, extension officers on agricultural activities, more so, government should extend community libraries to rural areas under study so that farmers should have access to information resources both print and non-print that content information of agricultural activities and new farming implements and also information providers should always be involved in creating awareness of available information resources on farming activities to promote spirit of learning which can enable rural farmers to seek for such information to meet their farming needs.

Keywords: Information needs, farmers, assessment, rural, Hong Local Government Area, Adamawa, State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Information has a variety of connotations in different fields. For instance, from the standpoint of physics and biology information is a basic property of the universe and in psychology information is used as a variable dealing with sensory perception, comprehension or other psychological processes (Prajapali, 2015). Then, the researcher sees information as an idea that effect change if used judiciously and it is an asset that can generate income when used effectively. According to Demet, Nilay and Marco (2016) information is a practical tool facilitating the life flow of individuals. This tool is used by individuals in order to resolve the problems, uncertainties and chaotic situations in life. More so, they added that information seeking behaviour and information needs are interwoven tools creating a circulation serving the target of various information user groups. Joseph (2020) defined information need as the process in which one goes about seeking information that will meet his/her need, adding that, information seeking behaviour varies considerably from one individual to another according to age, gender, level of education, occupation, location and culture. This implies that farmers are different in terms of age, gender, level of education, occupation, location and culture. The behaviour they put on while seeking for information also varies based on their information needs.

(Yusuf, 2012) opined that a businessman needs information to be able to improve in his existing business just like a specialist who also needs information to be up-to-date and well inform in his area of specialization, likewise farmers. If information is this valuable, it must be put to proper use, i.e. made available to people or group of people who need it, after ascertaining the groups' information needs and seeking behavior. Rabiu (2014) quoting online dictionary (Farlex), affirmed that, information is knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance. These types of information such as farm mechanization, storage facilities and market strategies might be what farmers lack in the study area. Chukwuji, Tsafe, Sule, Yusuf and Zakariya (2019) stressed that, it is only when the right information is available that people can be aware and also access, (is one thing to know about an information and yet another thing to access it). This means that they can utilize the information which can result in taking right decisions regarding what to plant at what time as well as decide on other businesses.

Farming system discussed in this study are dry season (irrigation farming) and rainy season (wet farming). Though, farming system comprised; subsistence and commercial farming, this study was based on farming season with their information needs. Pastoral farming, dairy farming, arable farming and mixed farming were the types of farming being practiced. ***Pastoral*** farming is a rearing of livestock such as sheep, goats, rabbits, cows and horses as well as poultry and others. ***Arable*** farming is a growing of crops such as maize, rice, atcha, beans, groundnuts, wheat, millets, potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes, cassava, okra, tomatoes and sugarcane. Many farmers grow both crops and livestock and which is called ***mixed*** farming. Sharm (2018) stated that farm is an area of land and its buildings which is used for growing crops and rearing animals. It is devoted primarily to agricultural processes with the primary objective of producing food

and other crops. ***Commercial*** farmers grow crops or livestock to sell at markets. This makes a profit for the farmer and provides food for the population. A ***subsistence*** farmer produces crops or livestock just to feed the families (for consumption).

Very little, or none of the produce is send to market, and mostly local farming tools are used. Chukwuji et al (2019) opined that agriculture is the main stay of the state's economy, hence, it is their livewire as the inhabitant run their daily affairs using agriculture and animal production as means of income, providing employment and ensuring food security. Agricultural information disseminates through various channels like mass media such as (radio broadcast, print media) and traditional media and interpersonal channels such as face-to-face contacts, group contacts and demonstrations (Kughur, Daudu and Akua, 2014). Furthermore, they observed that the major information sources of farmers in Uttar Pradesh of India were friends, relatives, leader farmers, radio and television, and extension officers. According to the study of Kabir, Roy and Kuri (2014), farmers in Bangladesh have greatly relied on pesticide dealers, seed dealers, neighbors and friends and the mass media in accessing the farming information.

Hong is a Local Government Area in Adamawa State with headquarters in Hong. Kilba (Hoba) is the majority of people in the inhabitants. It has an area of 912 Kilometre Square (414 sq). The languages spoken in the Local Government Area in a hierarchical order are Kilba (Hoba), Minchika, English and other minorities. Thus far, rural farmers in the area need information like other professions to carry out farming activities in order to meet their set goals. Most of the farmers live in the remote areas and to get information on farming implements and new method of farm cultivation were very difficult, due to poor road, lack of electricity, network connectivity. Furthermore, their inability to use modern tools effectively compared to other professionals found in the cities, since, not everybody can read and write well in English.

The researcher's interaction and observations indicated that, rural farmers have been left behind. They were in desperate need of information to boost their farming activities. It was found out that, the gap exists between information providers and rural farmers, whether of their inability to write or read well in English! They lack access to agricultural information as well as tracing agriculture extension workers. It seems like they lack (knowledge) awareness on the existence of information sources, often times they complained about how to get right chemicals to clear off weeds and get right fertilizers to apply in their farms which has been the great concerned of most of the farmers. For that matter, it seems they lack knowledge on how to access agricultural information for betterment of their farming activities.

Based on the above statement by the researcher, National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service (NAERLS) (2018), put it clear that decision by any government to distribute improved seeds and other farm materials to farmers to boost productivity may never yield the expected results, mainly because, even with the best of technologies, farmers need quality information and knowledge to handle agricultural activities, if not so, all efforts may amount to nothing. NAERLS (2017) also added that, they set up National Farmers Helpline Centres (NFHCs) with the primary objective of

providing timely and relevant information and advisory services to facilitate decisions along the agricultural value chain. Thus, these were made possible by providing farmers with sound scientific knowledge, technology and improved inputs to enhance farming productivity. NAERLS (2015) appealed to the Federal Government and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to speed up the process of equipping the newly constructed National Farmers Helpline Centres (NFHCs), so that Nigerian farmers can begin to access the centre for vital information to improve and grow their farming products.

The researcher therefore, attempts to assess information needs with the mindset of bringing out to their notice some measures as well as ways in which they can access new modern farm tools to improve their farming production.

Statement of the Problem

Information needs of rural farmers seemed to be unmet when farmers feel that they need information pertaining agricultural production to boost their productivity but the availability of information was a big problem. The issue is that, they need to know about new farming implements, on how to apply fertilizers, knowledge on improved seed and modern farming equipment, but information seems to be inadequate which might satisfy their needs. Information such as farm mechanization, storage facilities and market strategies might be what farmers lack in the area under study. Therefore, this information needs owed to satisfy them; lack of meeting these needs will certainly result into a corresponding decrease in food supply. Hence fairly accurate assessment of information needs of users has to be made promptly (Ode, 2017).

Researcher's observation there is a continuous decline interest from the farmers on this new information when information providers make it available for them to access and most often, they avoid it. These farmers are the nation's feeders which human beings depend on for their survival. It is against this backdrop that this study was prompted to assess information needs of rural farmers in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine information needs of farmers in Hon g Local Government Area,
2. Find out the awareness of information by rural farmers on farming activities in Hong Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the information needs of farmers in Hong Local Government Area?
2. Are the Hong Local Government farmers aware of information on farming activities?

Research Methodology

Survey research design was used for this study. Population of the study was made

up of 130 members of Farmers' Association Groups (FAGs) in Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State; Census sampling technique was used, because the population was manageable. A self-designed questionnaire was used as the instrument for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic of frequency counts, percentages and histogram.

Data Analysis

The data collected for this study are presented in tables and analyzed using frequency counts and percentage. The presentation and analysis were based on the research question and respondents information out of one hundred and thirty and (130) questionnaire were administered Hong Local Government Area of Adamawa State. One hundred and seventeen (117) copies were returned. The decision Column refers to the decision made for each with respect to frequency counts and percentages obtained.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: Level of information needs of respondents

Table one: Information Needs of Rural Farmers-(N=117)

	Statement	**M**		**A**		**BA**	
S/N		Frq	%	Frq	%	Frq	%
1.	On planting methods	73	62.4	39	33.3	5	4.3
2.	On new seeds and storage methods	63	53.8	47	40.2	7	6
3.	On agricultural credit/loans	50	42.7	40	34.2	27	23.1
4.	On how to use manure, fertilizers and weed controls	70	59.8	40	34.2	7	6
5.	On pesticides availability, application and marketing	60	51.3	42	35.9	15	12.8
	Total	**316**	**270**	**208**	**177.8**	**61**	**52.2**
	Average	**63.2**	**54**	**41.6**	**35.6**	**12.2**	**10.4**

Key: M=Maximum, A=Average and BA=Below Average

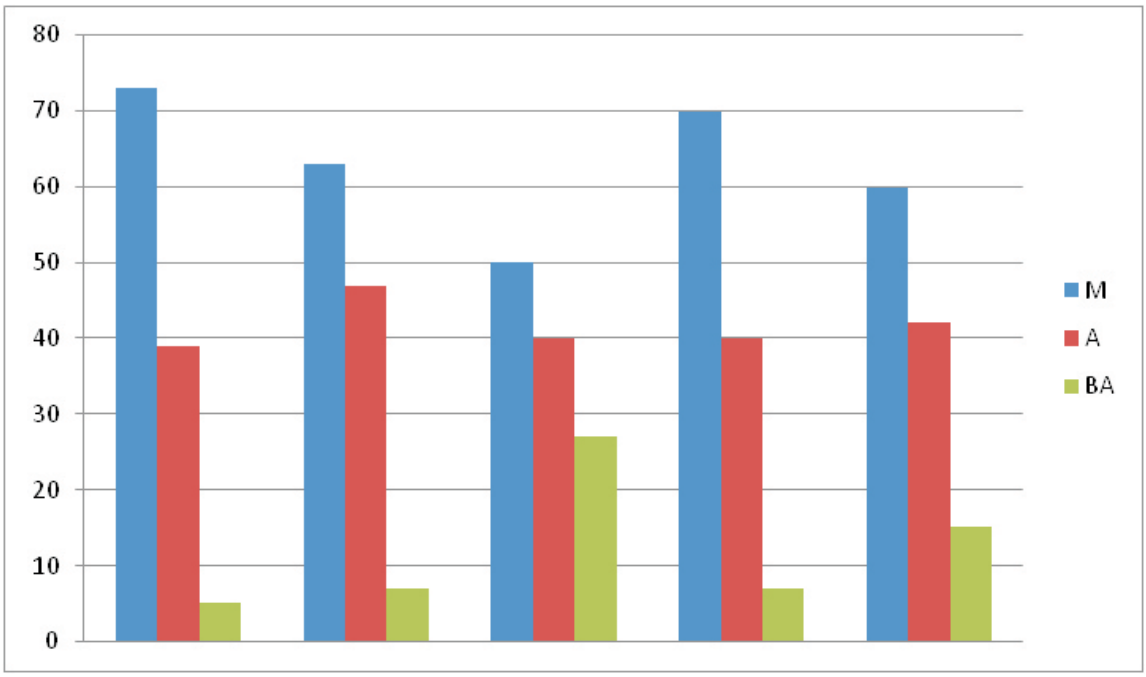


Table one: indicates that the level of information needs of rural farmers, where 73(62.4%) of information needs is on planting methods followed by use of manure, fertilizers and weed controls with 70(59.8%), new seeds and storage methods with 60(51.3%), pesticides availability, application and marketing with 63(51.6%) and agricultural credit/loans with 50(42.7%). The highest response score is 63(53.8%) who indicated that their information needs was to a maximum level, 42(35.9%) respondents indicated that their information needs was to an average level and then, 15(12.8%) respondents indicated that their information needs was below average.

Research Question two: **Are you aware of information on farming activities?**
Table 2: Awareness of Information by Farmers on Farming Activities-(N=117)

	Statement	**WA**		**A**		**NA**	
S/N		**Frq**	**%**	**Frq**	**%**	**Frq**	**%**
1.	Agriculture extension service	50	42.7	42	35.9	25	21.4
2.	Use of manure and fertilizers	59	50.4	50	42.7	7	5.9
3.	Agricultural credit/loans	30	25.6	55	47	32	27.4
4.	Pesticides availability, application and weeds control	40	34.2	60	51.3	17	14.5
5.	Disease control of farm produces	50	42.7	45	38.5	22	18.8
6.	Method of storing farm produces	40	34.2	60	51.3	17	14.5

7.	**Radio and television programmes on farming**	**49**	**41.9**	**54**	**46.2**	**15**	**12.8**
8.	Library and information centre	23	19.7	35	29.9	59	50.4
9.	New seeds and farming implements	40	34.2	46	39.3	31	26.5
	Total	**381**	**325.6**	**447**	**382.1**	**225**	**192.2**
	Average	**42.3**	**36.2**	**49.6**	**42.5**	**25**	**21.4**

Keys: WA=Well Aware, A= Aware and NA=Not Aware

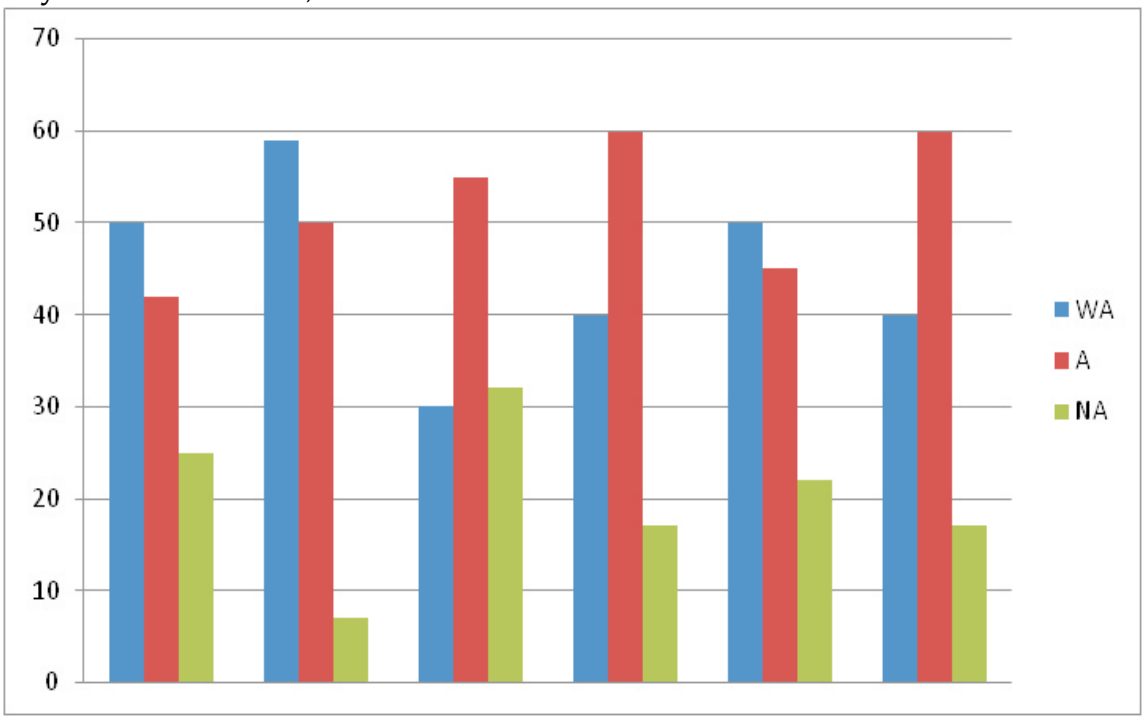


Table 2 indicates the awareness of information by rural farmers which, 60(51.3%) were aware of use of manure and fertilizers, 50(42.7%) of the respondents were aware of the agricultural extension service, disease control of farm produces, and radio and television, 40(34.2%) were also aware of pesticides availability, application and weeds control, and method of storing farm produces, 40(34.2%) shows their awareness of new seeds and farming implements, 30(25.6%) are aware of agricultural credit/loans and 22(18.8%) are also aware of library and information centre. Where 42(35.9%) respondents showed that they were well aware of information provided for farming activities, 49(41.9%) of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the information given to farmers, while 23(19.7%) respondents revealed that they were not aware of information provided for farming activities.

Therefore, this implies that majority of the respondents revealed that they were aware

of farming information provided for farming activities.

Discussion

Based on the findings the information needs of rural farmers was on planting methods; use of manure, fertilizers and weeds control; new seeds and storage methods; pesticides availability, application and marketing and agricultural credit/loans revealed that farmers need maximum information as what bothered them most in their area. These findings were similar with those of other studies such as Joseph (2020); Adetimehin, Okunlola and Owolabi (2018); Roja (2018); Ode (2017); Acheampong, Frimpong, Owusu and Asante (2017); and Benard, Dulle, Honesta (2014) which showed that majority of the farmers have variety of information needs which include; information on marketing, how to secure agricultural credit/loans, new seeds, storage method, planting methods, disease/pest management practices, sales of farm produce, pesticides availability and application, improved farm implements. Acheampong, Frimpong, Owusu and Asante (2017) opined that, to enhance the use of information among farmers' relevant production activities such as fertilizer application, pesticide application, disease and weed control will be required investment in extension services. Akande and Adewojo (2016) also added that the area in which farmers need most information was on agriculture. This is probable because information is very important element in any economic development.

Following this, it was found out that research institutes have put more efforts in developing different seeds varieties with more productivity patterns/drought and disease tolerance. This was in consonance with Benard, Dulle and Honesta (2014) responses which stated that, very few farmers use new improved seeds. This is evident because lack of awareness on the existence of such seeds or lack of enough capital to acquire the seeds and farm equipment.

Finally, some farmers disclosed that they were not totally aware of information provided by library and information centre regarding farming activities. Thus, these findings agreed with the study carried out by Amaechi and Ossai-onah (2015) which stated that farmers' challenges were from irregular power supply that prevents them from listening to news, non-existence of community library services which greatly hindered most of them from getting current and essentials information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations were highlighted as follows:

1. Government and NGOs should make use of information providers to make available information to the rural farmers on how to plant seeds, apply manure/fertilizers, control weeds, store farm produce, and know the availability/application of pesticide and marketing.
2. Information providers should always be involved in creating awareness of available information resources on farming activities to promote spirit of learning which can enable rural farmers to seek for such information to meet their farming needs.

References

Acheampong, D. A., Frimpong, N. F., Owusu A., Bright O. A. & Dulle, M. (2017). Assssing the information seeking behaviour and utilization of rice farmers in the Ejisu-Juaben municipality of Ashanti Region of Ghana. *Agric & Food Secure (2017) 6-38.*

Adetimehin, O. D., Okunlalo, J. O. & Owolabi, K. E. (2018). Utilization of agricultural information and knowledge for improved production by rice farmers in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences, 33(1),* 76-100

Akande, F. T. & Adewojo, A. A. (2016). *Information Need and Seeking Behavior of Farmers in Laduba Community of Kwara State, Nigeria.89-105*

Adetimehin, O. D., Okunlalo, J. O. & Owolabi, K. E. (2018). Utilization of agricultural information and knowledge for improved production by rice farmers in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences, 33(1),* 76-100

Akande, F. T. & Adewojo, A. A. (2016). *Information Need and Seeking Behavior of Farmers in Laduba Community of Kwara State, Nigeria.89-105*

Adetimehin, O. D., Okunlalo, J. O. & Owolabi, K. E. (2018). Utilization of agricultural information and knowledge for improved production by rice farmers in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences, 33(1),* 76-100

Akande, F. T. & Adewojo, A. A. (2016). *Information Need and Seeking Behavior of Farmers in Laduba Community of Kwara State, Nigeria.89-105*

Amaechi, M. N. & Ossai-onah, O. (2015). Utilization of agricultural information among literate women in Ihiagwa autonomous community Owerri, Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management, 6(1),* 41-50.

Benard, R., Dulle, F. &Honesta, N. (2014). Assessment of information needs of rice farmers in Tanzania: A case study of Kilombero District, Morogoro. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal), 1071.*

Chukwuji, C. N.; Tsafe, A. G.; Sule, S. Yusuf, Z.; & Zakariya, J. (2019), "Awareness, Access and Utilization of Information on Climate Change by Farmers in Zamfara State, Nigeria". *Library Philosophy and Practice (ejournal)*. 2106.

Demet, S., Nilay, C. & Marco, S. (2016). A comparative study of information seeking behaviour and digital information needs of farmers in Turkey and Sweden. *International Journal of e-Business and e-Government, 8(2),* 2146-0744.

Joseph, L. (2020). Information and information seeking behaviour of farmers for sustainable agricultural development in Benue State, Nigeria. *International of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 4(4), 2454-6186.

Kabir, K.H., Roy, D., Sarker, A. & Kuri, S.K. (2014). Information seeking behaviour of the farmers to ensure sustainable agriculture. *European Academic Research, II* (3), 3723–3734.

Kughur, P.G., Daudu, S. & Akua, E.M. (2014). Different sources of information on adoption behaviour offarmers in Logo local area Government of Benue State, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Biological and Life Sciences,* 3(2), 133–136.

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service (2015*). A quarterly*

newsletter of the NAERLS, FMARD ABU, Zaria, 4(1), 7.

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service (2018). *Agricultural Performance Survey Report, from monthly Digest 7(2), 3.*

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Service (2017). *NAERLS has the capacity to turn around Nigeria's Agriculture: Monthly Digest, (3), 2.*

Ode, O. E. (2017). Information needs of rural farmers in Ameka-Owo in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State, *9(1&2), 61-69.*

Prajapali, B. H. (2015). *Library and information science*. Discovery publication house, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj; New Delhi, 7-8.

Rabiu, A. M. (2014). Librarian's perception of evidence based library and information practice (EBLIB) and information society as vital tool for national development. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology, 9(1),* 63-72.

Roja, M. M. (2018). Information needs of rural women farmers: A study. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Review*, 3(8), 87-90.

Sharm, B. (2018). *Concept, definitions and types of farming system*. Kathmandu, Nepal, 1-43.
Yusuf, T. I. (2012). "Information Needs, Sources and Information Seeking Behaviour of

Women Artisans in Offa Metropolis". *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 1201. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1201.