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INFORMATION NEEDS AND USE BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (SPECIAL) OYO, NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study examined information needs and use by students with disabilities in FCE Oyo, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study while total enumeration method was used to select two hundred and twenty students with disabilities including both males and females. Two research questions and one hypothesis were employed to guide the study. A self-structured questionnaire tagged was developed and used to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the two research questions while the inferential statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Finding revealed that information on employment and job-related issues was the students' major need. It was also revealed that *information needs have positive significant relationships with information use among students with disabilities. The study recommended that the institution should ensure sufficient provision of information materials in alternative formats for the use of students with disabilities. Also, library staff should be trained on more efficient ways of handling students with disabilities who want to use library facilities.*

Keywords: Information**,** information needs, information use, disability, students with disabilities, FCE Oyo.

Introduction

Information is recognized as a powerful tool in shaping the twenty-first century and in breaking the barriers to knowledge. It is the gateway to knowledge because it provides basic condition for life-long learning. It is a well-known fact that an informed mind is an educated mind; if one is not well informed, one will be deformed for day-to-day living. Some people perceive information as facts while others see it as data or news. For instance, information means data to

telecommunication engineers, recorded knowledge to librarians and genes in deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) to microbiologists. Muhammed (2011) described information as anything which adds to knowledge, ideas, skills and experience positively or negatively, and which assists a receiver to make a decision immediately or later. Popoola (2011) described information as that which reduces the users' level of uncertainty in decision-making.

However, as important as information is to everyone, it is often difficult to be accessed by some individuals because of their adverse sensory, mental and physical conditions. These individuals include those with visual disability, those with hearing or auditory defect and those with mobility impairment amongst others. Despite the much-talked about technological advance, access to information still remains an elusive goal for individuals with disabilities, severely limiting their opportunities for employment, education, entertainment or leisure and independence. The World Health Organization (WHO) cited by Nabil (2017) pointed out that about 17% of the world population is disabled and that this number is likely to increase in the near future due to various factors. Similarly, the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) was quoted by Nabil (2017) that, about 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries and that disability rates are significantly higher among groups with lower educational attainment. Neil further asserted that the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the number of people with disabilities in Nigeria to be 19 million or 20% of the country's population. Nonetheless, the above statistics underscores the necessity for the creation of information society based on the principles of social engagement, that is, the involvement of all citizens, regardless of their abilities, background, social status and ethnicity amongst others (Nabil, 2017).

The concept of information use has different connotations. For instance, Cole (2008) conceptualized information use as the interpretation and codify of environmental stimuli whereby the human organism creates new and adapted knowledge structures. Uhegbu (2007) simply described information use as the actual putting into appropriate use of acquired information. Also, Savolainen (2009) viewed information use as how people approach sources of information and adapt information available to them. Students with disabilities, just like their regular or non-disabled counterparts, use information for life-long learning, for work and for leisure. They also use it to solve their daily problems, to forge social relationship, to play a full part in society and to do many other things. Students with disabilities need information to be well-informed about the goings-on in their society.

Information need can be viewed it as a state or process started when one perceives that there is a gap between the information and knowledge available to solve a problem and the actual solution of the problem. It should be pointed out that information search and use define information needs. They are built cognitively, emotionally and dynamically. Information use depends on the individual's evaluation of the cognitive and emotional relevance of the information received. It also depends on the appropriated information to solve a certain problematic situation. In today world, everyone has a need for information for day-to-day living. The need for information is linked to the social and organizational world in which the user exists. Larbert and Loislle (2007) averred that information need is the lack of appropriate information on which to base choice that can lead to benefits or services that may improve one's well-being. Similarly, Baby and Kumaravel (2011) asserted that the need for information is often understood as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and as culminating in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning. Factors that give rise to information need include seeking

answers, reducing uncertainty, bridging gaps, solving problems, understanding (making sense) and coping with life.

The information needs of different groups of people and organizations are determined in the same way as those of the individuals when a knowledge and meaning gap is perceived and when facing emotional and situational factors. Information needs of individuals with disabilities relate to education, job opportunities, careers, politics, and economy, socio-cultural events as well as those that can help them to better understand and cope with disabilities. Wilson (2000) opined that information needs are influenced by a variety of factors such as the range of information sources available: the uses to which the information will be put; the background, motivation, professional orientation and individual characteristics of users. Other factors are socio-political, economic, legal and regulatory systems surrounding the users as well as the consequences of information use. The quality of sources of information available to the users is also important because relevant sources are most likely to get useful information. Similarly, Igwe (2012) categorized the information needs into the followings: educational and academics information needs, political information needs, job opportunities and business information needs, economic information needs, social and entertainment (Arts) information needs and agricultural, geographical and environmental information needs. Others are medical and health information needs, scientific and technological information needs, religion and cultural information needs legal and human rights information needs international and global information needs.

An important construct that is often linked to information needs and information use is information seeking behaviour. Literature is replete with information seeking behaviour of the general population but not much is known about information seeking behaviour of individuals with disabilities. When one perceives a need for information, the next thing is for one to seek it through many available and accessible sources to be able to use it. Information seeking behaviour is, thus, the consequence of a felt information need by a user who may then make demands upon formal and informal information sources or services to satisfy the need (Oketunji and oketunji, 2016). It is concerned, among other aspects, with understanding how people seek and use information, and the channels they use to get information. In short, information seeking behaviour can be viewed as activities directed towards obtaining information in response to an information need (Oketunji and oketunji, 2016). Naturally, people differ in the ways they seek and use information as a result of different contexts, demographic characteristics, motivations, and source preference. In seeking and using accessible information, students with disabilities tend to put more value on the information quality and reliability than on the level of effort and time needed to find the information and adapt it for use (Sehic and Tanackovic, 2009, 2013).

It is a well-known fact that students with disabilities tend to encounter a lot of barriers in their bid to get useful information to meet their needs. They are weighed down by time constraints, frustrated by non-existent reading materials in suitable format, hindered by lack of independence and discouraged by uncaring attitudes of others. Quite admiringly, the students' determination and resilience often prove to be a very important factor enhancing their information behaviour (Sehic and Tanackovic, 2009, 2013). Available data shows that of all students with diverse types of disability, students with visual impairment face more barriers when seeking information while those with hearing impairment and mobility impairment can get and use information at least to a certain extent. However, assistive technologies have come to play a major

role in the information seeking experiences of these hapless students. They use the technologies in a number of ways to locate information and adapt it for their use; they can scan print materials, enlarge texts, translate documents and obtain information on the Internet.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study include the following:

1. To find out the information needs of students with disabilities at FCE Oyo
2. To examine the purpose of information use by students with disabilities at FCE Oyo

Research Questions

The study employed two research questions and one hypothesis as follows:

1. What are the information needs of students with disabilities at FCE Oyo?
2. What is the purpose of information use by students with disabilities at FCE Oyo?

Hypothesis

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between information needs and use among students with disabilities at FCE, Oyo.

Methodology

The study used descriptive survey design which aims at collecting data on something and describing it in a systematic manner, (Nworgu, 2009). The study described and explained information needs and information use among students with disabilities in Federal Colleges of Education (Special), Oyo state as well-found relationship between information needs and use among students with disabilities in the study area.

Population of the study was made up of 220 students with disabilities in FCE, Oyo comprising 140 students with hearing impairment, 70 students with visual impairment and 10 students with mobility impairment. All the 220 students were used for the study because the number was manageable in size.

A self-developed structured questionnaire tagged "Information Needs and Use Questionnaire" (INUQ) was used to collect data for the study. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used to determine the aggregate responses of the respondents in the study. A criterion mean of 2.5 was used to take decision such that, any item whose mean score was less than 2.5 is rejected while mean scores of 2.5 and above were considered accepted.

Two research assistants were used to assist the researchers in the administration of the questionnaire. Participants with hearing impairment and those with mobility impairment were able to fill their own copies of the questionnaire by themselves while some participants with profound visual impairment were given braille version of the questionnaire to be able to fill in necessary data. Other participants with moderate/ less severe visual impairment were able to fill the questionnaire by themselves with the help of assistive devices. The participants were told in plain language and in sign language through interpreters, the purpose of the study and all of them agreed to participate in the study. The researcher respected the dignity, equality, independence and diversity of the participants. Later, the entire two hundred and twenty copies of the questionnaire were retrieved for analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentages, mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Classification	Sub-groups	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	143	65.0
	Female	77	35.0
	Total	**220**	**100**
Age group	16-20 years	154	70.0
	21-25 years	55	25.0
	26-above	11	5.0
	Total	**220**	**100.0**
Education level	1st year	112	50.9
	2nd year	69	31.4
	3rd year	39	17.7
	Total	**220**	**100.0**
Type of disability	Hearing loss	140	63.6
	Visual imp.	70	31.8
	Mobility imp	10	4.5
Total		**Total**	**100.0**
Degree of Disability	Profound	80	36.4
	Severe	103	46.8
	Moderate	37	16.8
	Total	**220**	**100.0**

Table 2: Response rates of information needs of students with disabilities in FCE Oyo (N = 220)

S/N	Information Needs	SA	A	D	Mean
1	I want information on employment and job-related issues after graduation.	181	37	2	3.80
2	I need information about finance matters.	177	42	1	3.77
3	Information about college-related activities is very important to me.	171	49	0	3.76
4	I need information on my specialized programme in my institution.	169	50	1	3.76
5	I am interested in information about persons with disabilities and their activities.	154	66	0	3.70
6	I value health information.	125	94	1	3.56
7	My information need is mostly about career issues.	134	74	12	3.55
8	I need information on current affairs.	72	106	42	3.14
9	I cannot do without information on social services.	92	70	50	3.12
10	Information on politics and governmental activities is not important to me.	65	56	90	2.79

Response on information needs of students with disabilities is discussed in table 2: I want information on employment and job-related issues after graduation (mean =3.80) ranked highest by the mean rating and was followed by I need information about finance matters (mean =3.77), Information about college-related activities is very important to me (mean =3.76), I need information on my specialized programme in my institution (mean =3.76), I am interested in information about persons with disabilities and their activities (mean =3.70). Also, I value health information has mean score of 3.56, My information need is mostly about career issues (mean =3.55), I need information on current affairs (mean =3.14), I cannot do without information on social services (mean =3.12), Information on politics and governmental activities is not important to me (mean =2.79). The above shows that the students need information on employment related issues after graduation, financial matters, college related activities, specialised programmes, persons with disabilities and their activities, value for health, career issues, current affairs, social services as well as politics and government.

Table 3: Purpose of information use by students with disabilities at FCE Oyo (N=220)

S/N	Purpose	SA	A	D	Mean
1	I use information to solve my daily problems.	181	39	0	3.82
2	I use information to satisfy my educational and academic needs only.	167	51	2	3.75
3	I use information to maximize my usefulness.	164	52	4	3.75
4	I use information to build my personal knowledge for different purposes.	160	51	9	3.69
5	I use information to develop my future career goals.	141	75	4	3.62
6	I use information for recreation and to satisfy all my needs.	135	82	3	3.60
7	I use information to regulate my intimate and inter-personal relationships issues.	130	68	22	3.50
8	I use information to participate in social activities.	121	80	19	3.46
9	I use information to know about the goings-on in the community	114	77	29	4.02
10	I use information to interact with other people.	101	97	22	3.36

The mean rating in respect of purpose of information use by students with disabilities at FCE (Special), Oyo indicate that, the students use information for the purposes of knowing the goings in their communities (4.02), to solve daily problems (3.82), to satisfy educational and academic needs (3.75), to maximise their usefulness and to develop future careers (3.62). Other purposes are: for recreation (3.60), to regulate intimate and interpersonal needs (3.50), to participate in social activities (3.46) and to interact with others (3.36). This shows that students with disabilities in FCE, Oyo use information to solve their daily problem, satisfy educational and academic needs, maximise their usefulness and to develop future careers for recreation, to regulate intimate and interpersonal needs, participate in social activities and to interact with others.

Table 4: Significant relationship between information needs and information use

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Information needs	18.68	3.183				
			220	.156*	.021	Sig.
Information use	14.09	3.137				

*Sig. at 0.05 level

Table 4.3.1 showed that there was a positive significant relationship between information needs and information use (r = .156*, N= 220, p<.05).

Discussion

The study examined the relationship between information needs and information use among students with disabilities at FCE Oyo. Two research questions and one hypothesis were employed to guide the study. Research question one sought to identify the information needs of students with disabilities at FCE, Oyo. Finding revealed that the students need information on employment related issues after graduation, financial matters, college related activities, specialised programmes, persons with disabilities and their activities, value for health, career issues, current affairs, social services as well as politics and government. This finding is in consonance with the result of Moore (2000) who noted that students with disabilities need information to be sufficiently well-informed and to be able to participate fully as citizens and that they also need information about employment and health services**.**

Research question two examined the purpose of information use by students with disabilities in FCE, Oyo and found that the students use the information to solve their daily problem, satisfy educational and academic needs, maximise their usefulness and to develop future careers for recreation, to regulate intimate and interpersonal needs, participate in social activities and to interact with others. This view lends credence to the findings of Chima and Nwokocha (2013) who established that every use of information is goal-oriented: it must aim at solving a problem or enhancing a better understanding of an already known situation.

The only hypothesis in the study examined the relationship between information needs and information use among students with disabilities at FCE, Oyo. Findings showed that, a positive significant relationship between information needs and information use did exist. This result supports the views of Wilson (2000) and Choo (2006) who stressed that information need is linked to the social and organizational world in which the user exists. This supports the submission of Wilson (2000) that information needs are influenced by a variety of factors such as the range of information sources available, the uses to which the information will be put, the background, motivation, professional orientation and individual characteristics of users. Other factors are socio-political, economic, legal and regulatory systems surrounding the users as well as the consequences of information use.

Conclusion

The study on information needs and information use among students with disabilities in Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria investigated information needs and the purpose of use of information by the students as well as the relationship between information needs and information use. The survey that targeted 220 students of the school found varied needs for information by the students as well as different purposes for which the students use information. A positive relationship was also found to have existed between information needs and use.

Recommendations

The study recommended that government should ensure sufficient provision of information materials in alternative formats for the use of students with disabilities so that they can satisfy their information needs. However, information resources on politics and government activities should be de-emphacised since many of the students agreed that, such information is not important to them. Also, more members of staff of the library should be trained on the effective ways to handle students with disabilities who want to use library facilities so that the purposes of using the library will be fully achieved.

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