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Assessing information seeking behaviors of graduate students: in case of Assosa university

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Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to examine the information seeking behaviour of Assosa University students in North West of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. To attain this objective, descriptive survey method were involved. The subjects of the study were from seven colleges. Library observations, questionnaires and interviews were used to gather the necessary data. Data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The result also clearly showed that students from all colleges have major preference toward the resources Internet, journal articles and handout as their major sources of getting information in the university. As far as the purpose of seeking information concerned the students from all colleges mainly seek information for updating knowledge, doing assignment and write research or term papers. Among the factors that affect the information seeking behaviour were mode of teaching, lack of awareness the available resources, lack of computer, lack of skills was the most serious problem that affects their information seeking behaviour of all colleges. Moreover, the other impending factor that positively affects the information seeking behaviour were lack of computers, slow internet connection, lack of time, lack of reading materials and location of information materials. It is evident from the research findings that all college students have positive attitudes towards the resources library books services, electronic resources (digital library) and discussions with colleagues'. Considering this fact, librarians or concerned bodies should increase their communication and interpersonal skill to provide better services and create awareness among the students in the use of information sources like CD-ROM, journal articles; electronic resources (digital library). The University should give formal training on information seeking and skill gap trainings and improve internet connection too.*

Keywords: Information, Information seeking behaviour

Introduction

Information plays pivotal role in the day to day existence of human life.It is very important in decision making, problem solving and in every aspect of an economy. Without information economy could not survive in todays world. For that reason, information is both the engine and the result of economic growth. Information became a key strategic issue for effective and sustainable development of any type of organization in the modern society (Tadesse and Bayou, 2000). Human seek information to gather, store, interpret and use for various purposes (Waseem Afzal, 2009). Aina (2004) emphasizes that information seeking behaviour depends on a user's education, access to the library, and the length of time a user wishes to devote to the information seeking process.

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Statement of the problems

Information is essential resources required by the students to be successful in their education or in everyday activities. But there are various factors that affecting the information seeking behaviour of students among these, lack of awareness in selecting available materials and resources in the library, the varieties of information resource found in the library might not meet effectively the enormous information need of students. In this regard, Patitungkho, et al. (2005) conducted a study to identify the ISB of the faculty members in six Rajabhat Universities in Bangkok. Study revealed that majority of the problem were incomplete information, lack of resources and lack time are the problems faced by the respondents in seeking information. Mode of teaching is one the factors that negatively affected the information seeking behaviour of students.

Objective of the study

General objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to assess the information seeking behaviour of Assosa University graduate students.

Specific objectives of the study

- To identify the methods used by students during seeking information for the academic purpose.
- To assess the major factors affecting the information seeking behavior of the graduate students.
- To find out the reason for seeking information by the students.
- To discover the information satisfaction level of graduate students from their preferred resources.
- To identify factors affecting the information seeking behavior of Assosa University students.

Research questions

- What are the major methods used by students in finding academic information in the University?
- What are the major causes that affecting the information seeking behaviour of the students in the university?
- Why students seeking information in the university?
- Do students satisfied by the information from their preferred resource?

Scope and limitations of the study

Since the university environment is a diverse group comprising different teaching colleges / faculties and expensive and time consuming to study entire population or students in the University. The study focused on the graduate students of Assosa University only.

Significance of the study

To establish ways of improving the information seeking behavior of Assosa University students, motivate librarian and concerned bodies in the university library to provide complete sources tomeetthe enormous information needs of the students. Moreover the study provides the

concerned bodies particularly to the library administration and University administration office with empirical evidence and information about extent of the information seeking problem under consideration. Finally, it helps as a source of reference to those who aspire to make further investigation in the area of related dimensions.

Research Methodology

Descriptions of the Study Area

Assosa University is located 675 km north west of Addis Ababa at Assosa town which is the capital city of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. The University started its function with five faculties and seventeen departments by admitting the first batch of 1043, regular students which are assigned to these five Faculties. Namely: - Engineering and Technology, Natural and Computational Sciences, Agriculture and Natural Resource, Business and Economics, and Social Sciences and Humanity faculties. In 2017/18 Academic year, the University continued its teaching learning process with7colleges, 3 schools and 36 departments (ASU Website, 2016).

Research Design

The method used to study the problem was descriptive survey method involving both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Sharma (2000) described that a descriptive survey is appropriate for the study of attitudes, opinions, preferences and practices of the subjects under investigation.

Population of the study

The population of the study will be graduate students of Assosa University and the librarians. The target population was1850 (ASU Registrar Office, 2016).

Sampling methods

This study was used proportional stratified random sampling technique and followed by simple random sampling technique for this assessment. On the other hand, Kothari (2004) mentioned that the size of the sample should neither excessively be large nor too small. It should be optimum.

Data collection tools

In order to collect the required data for the study, the following three types of data collection tools were used: observations, questionnaires and interviews**.**

Methods of data analysis

The collected quantitative data was processed using SPSS software version 21.0; in that, descriptive statistics was used to put the result in the form of tables. Qualitative data was collected and the result of the finding of qualitative data was displayed in the form of narrations, explanations, concepts, and opinions.

Results and Discussion

Background of the respondents

Table 2: Students' Background Information

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Age	Frequency	Percent
Male	192	60.2	18-20	125	39.2
Female	127	39.8	22-28	161	50.5
	319	100	29 -35	33	10.3
Total				**319**	**100**

The table 2 shows personal and demographic characteristics of student respondents 192(60.2%) weremales and the remaining 127(39.8%) were females. Regarding the age of the student respondents, 125(39.2%) was between 18 and 20 years, 161(50.5 %) were between 22 and 28 years, 33(10.3%) were between the age 29 and above. As far as the educational level of the student respondents was concerned, 96(30.0%) of them were from Engineering, and 24(7.5%) from Computing & Informatics, 9(2.8%) from Health Science, 47(14.7%) were from Agriculture, 52(16.3%) were from Business & Economics and 52(16.3%) were from Law, 39(12.2%) were from Natural &Computational Science. The analysis clearly shows (M>=3.5) all college students have major preference towards the resources internet, journal articles and handout/lecture. Likewise, for different items of preference questions also (M>=2.5) shows that all college students have positive attitudes towards library books services and Social Networking Sites. Majority of the students often prefer it as their important source in accessing information for academic tasks. Moreover, mean value of the student's (M<=2.5) questions clearly show that all college students have no positive attitude towards the methods such as Television, CD-ROM databases, Discuss with colleagues, electronic resources (Digital library).

The Majority of students from all colleges were always satisfied with Internet; nearly a small number of students were never satisfied. On other hand, the analysis clearly shows that a significant portion of students from all colleges did not believe that they have great satisfaction levels from the CD-ROM, social networking sites and Televisions. However, the majority of respondents rated from all colleges were frequently satisfied with internet, discussion with colleagues.

Table 3: Resources used by the students in Seeking Information

Resources	College	Respondent(N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Resources	College	Respondent t(N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation
Internet	Engineering	96	3.53	1.158	**CD-ROM database**	Engineering	96	0.67	1.92
	Computing & Informatics	24	4.04	.624		Computing & Informatics	24	0.504	1.11
	Health Science	9	4.44	.527		Agriculture	9	1.007	1.17
	Agriculture	47	4.60	.496		Business & Economics	47	1.75	1.630
	Business & Economics	52	3.21	1.103		Law	52	0.29	1.426
	Law	52	3.67	1.630		Natural &Computational Science	52	1.56	.527
	Natural &Computational Science	39	1.69	.800	**Journal Articles**	Engineering	39	4.13	1.018
Library book service	Engineering	96	3.19	.987		Computing & Informatics	96	4.04	.624
	Computing & Informatics	24	2.92	1.100		Health Science	24	4.44	.527
	Health Science	9	2.67	1.129		Agriculture	9	4.60	.496
	Agriculture	47	3.74	.871		Business & Economics	47	3.88	1.114
	Business & Economics	52	3.12	2.44		Law	52	4.33	.857
	Law	52	.502	1.05		Natural &Computational Science	52	4.31	.521
	Natural &Computational Science	39	`1.92	1.152	**Social Networking Sites**	Engineering	96	4.77	.423
Discuss with colleagues	Engineering	96	.929	2.21		Computing & Informatics	24	2.50	1.445
	Computing & Informatics	24	1.021	1.56		Health Science	9	3.33	1.871
	Health Science	9	.527	3.53		Agriculture	47	3.53	1.158
	Agriculture	47	1.158	2.06		Business & Economics	52	2.06	1.227
	Business & Economics	52	1.22	2.81		Law	52	4.33	.857
	Law	52	1.38	2.28		Natural &Computational Science	39	2.28	1.395
	Natural &Computational Science	39	1.39	2.16	**Televisions**	Engineering	96	2.67	1.129
Lecture or Handout	Engineering	96	4.77	.423		Computing & Informatics	24	.504	1.11
	Computing & Informatics	24	4.04	.624		Health Science	9	3.67	1.630
	Health Science	9	4.44	.527		Agriculture	47	1.79	.848
	Agriculture	47	4.60	.496		Business & Economics	52	2.75	1.203
	Business & Economics	52	3.88	1.114		Law	52	3.67	1.630
	Law	52	4.33	.857		Natural &Computational Science	39	2.31	1.104
	Natural &Computational Science	39	2.31	1.104	**Electronic resources**	Agriculture	47	0.67	1.92
Electronic Resource'(Digital Library)	Engineering	96	0.67	1.92		Business & Economics	52	1.22	2.81
	Computing & Informatics	24	0.504	1.11		Law	52	1.38	2.28
	Health Science	9	1.007	1.17		Nat.& comp Science	39	1.39	2.16

Table 4. Student's information satisfaction levels from their preferred resources

Resources Used	College	Respondent (N)	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Internet	Engineering	96	41	42.7083	20	20.8333	20	20.83	10	10.4167	5	5.208
	Computing & Informatics	24	4	16.6667	5	20.8333	4	16.67	7	29.1667	4	16.67
	Health Science	9	3	33.3333	0	0	1	11.11	1	11.1111	4	44.44
	Agriculture	47	18	38.2979	15	31.9149	5	10.64	4	8.51064	5	10.64
	Business & Economics	52	24	46.1538	13	25	2	3.846	6	11.5385	7	13.46
	Law	52	25	48.0769	13	25	14	26.92	0	0	0	0
	Natural & Computational Science	39	20	51.2821	11	28.2051	8	20.51	0	0	0	0
Library book service	Engineering	96	10	10.4167	0	0	57	59.38	20	20.8333	9	9.375
	Computing & Informatics	24	0	0	4	16.6667	20	83.33	0	0	0	0
	Health Science	9	0	0	3	33.3333	0	0	3	33.3333	3	33.33
	Agriculture	47	0	0	0	0	25	53.19	9	19.1489	13	27.66
	Business & Economics	52	7	13.4615	7	13.4615	21	40.38	7	13.4615	10	19.23
	Law	52	0	0	29	55.7692	23	44.23	0	0	0	0
	Natural & Computational Science	39	0	0	2	5.12821	37	94.8718	0	0	0	0
Discuss with colleagues	Engineering	96	11	11.4583	7	7.29167	47	48.96	31	32.2917	0	0
	Computing & Informatics	24	6	25	11	45.8333	3	12.5	4	16.6667	0	0
	Health Science	9	4	44.4444	5	55.5556	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Agriculture	47	2	4.25532	9	19.1489	8	17.02	18	38.2979	10	21.28
	Business & Economics	52	27	51.9231	5	9.61538	10	19.23	10	19.2308	0	0
	Law	52	8	15.3846	21	40.3846	6	11.54	7	13.4615	10	19.23
	Natural & Computational Science	39	19	48.7179	4	10.2564	2	5.128	14	35.8974	0	0
	Engineering	96	15	15.625	51	53.125	30	31.25	0	0	0	0
	Computing & Informatics	24	4	16.6667	18	75	2	8.333	0	0	0	0
Lecture or Handout	Health Science	9	1	11.111	0	0	8	88.89	0	0	0	0
	Agriculture	47	10	21.2766	27	57.4468	4	8.511	4	8.51064	2	4.255
	Business & Economics	52	5	9.61538	23	44.2308	11	21.15	6	11.5385	7	13.46
	Law	52	20	38.4615	11	21.1538	7	13.46	14	26.9231	0	0
	Natural & Computational Science	39	12	30.7692	10	25.641	10	25.64	7	17.9487	0	0
	Engineering	96	13	13.5417	14	14.5833	9	9.375	36	37.5	24	25
	Computing & Informatics	24	3	12.5	6	25	5	20.83	10	41.6667	0	0
Electronic Resources (digital library)	Health Science	9	0	0	1	11.1111	1	11.11	1	11.1111	6	66.67
	Agriculture	47	0	0	0	0	10	21.28	19	40.4255	18	38.3
	Business & Economics	52	20	38.4615	5	9.61538	1	1.923	11	21.1538	15	28.85
	Law	52	4	7.69231	3	5.76923	3	5.769	24	46.1538	18	34.62
	Natural & Computational Science	39	2	5.12821	15	38.4615	10	25.64	12	30.7692	0	0
	Engineering	96	2	2.08333	10	10.4167	5	5.208	19	19.7917	60	62.5
	Computing & Informatics	24	8	33.3333	4	16.6667	0	0	8	33.3333	4	16.67
CD-ROM database	Health Science	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	100
	Agriculture	47	0	0	10	21.2766	5	10.64	9	19.1489	23	48.94
	Business & Economics	52	10	19.2308	5	9.61538	4	7.692	6	11.5385	27	51.92
	Law	52	11	21.1538	7	13.4615	11	21.15	13	25	10	19.23

	Natural & Computational Science	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	23.0769	30	76.92
	Engineering	96	46	47.92	7	7.29167	17	17.71	25	26.0417	1	1.04
	Computing & Informatics	24	0	0	1	4.16667	1	4.167	18	75	4	16.67
Journal Articles	Health Science	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	55.5556	4	44.44
	Agriculture	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	40.4255	28	59.57
	Business & Economics	52	0	0	6	11.5385	17	32.69	6	11.5385	23	44.23
	Law	52	25	48.08	2	3.84615	1	1.923	23	44.2308	1	1.9
	Natural & Computational Science	39	0	0	0	0	1	2.564	25	64.1026	13	33.33
	Engineering	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	22.9167	74	77.08
	Computing & Informatics	24	6	25	11	45.8333	0	0	3	12.5	4	16.67
Social Networking Sites	Health Science	9	4	44.4444	5	55.5556	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Agriculture	47	2	4.25532	9	19.1489	8	17.02	18	38.2979	10	21.28
	Business & Economics	52	27	51.9231	5	9.61538	10	19.23	10	19.2308	0	0
	Law	52	8	15.3846	21	40.3846	6	11.54	7	13.4615	10	19.23
	Natural & Computational Science	39	0	0	4	10.2564	2	5.128	14	35.8974	19	48.71
Televisions	Engineering	96	1	1.04167	7	7.29167	17	17.71	25	26.0417	46	47.92
	Computing & Informatics	24	0	0	1	4.16667	1	4.167	18	75	4	16.67
	Health Science	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	55.5556	4	44.44
	Agriculture	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	40.4255	28	59.57
	Business & Economics	52	0	0	6	11.5385	17	32.69	6	11.5385	23	44.23
	Law	52	1	1.92308	2	3.84615	1	1.923	23	44.2308	25	48.08
	Natural & Computational	39	0	0	0	0	1	2.564	25	64.1026	13	33.33

Table 5: Problem faced by the in seeking Information's

Problem faced College		Respondents (N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Problem faced	Colleges	Respondents (N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation.
Lack of reading materials	Engineering	96	3.46	1.368	Lack of computers	Engineering	96	3.19	.987
	Computing & Informatics	24	4.13	1.296		Computing & Informatics	24	2.83	.381
	Health Science	9	2.11	1.054		Health Science	9	3.67	1.323
	Agriculture	47	4.64	.486		Agriculture	47	3.74	.871
	Business & Economics	52	1.71	.957		Business & Economics	52	3.12	1.263
	Law	52	3.67	1.630		Law	52	3.19	.987
	Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	.521		Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	.521
Lack of awareness of available information	Engineering	96	4.13	1.018	Lack of skill or knowledge to access available resources	Engineering	96	4.13	1.018
	Computing & Informatics	24	4.04	.624		Computing & Informatics	24	4.04	.624
	Health Science	9	4.44	.527		Health Science	9	4.44	.527
	Agriculture	47	4.60	.496		Agriculture	47	4.60	.496
	Business & Economics	52	3.88	1.114		Business & Economics	52	3.88	1.114
	Law	52	4.33	.857		Law	52	4.33	.857
	Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	.521		Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	.521
Slow internet connection	Engineering	96	2.67	1.129	Willingness of library staff to provide help	Engineering	96	4.13	1.018
	Computing & Informatics	24	3.08	1.381		Computing & Informatics	24	4.04	.624
	Health Science	9	3.33	1.871		Health Science	9	4.44	.527
	Agriculture	47	2.21	1.334		Agriculture	47	4.60	.496
	Business & Economics	52	2.75	1.203		Business & Economics	52	3.88	1.114
	Law	52	3.67	1.630		Law	52	4.33	.857
	Natural &Computational Science	39	3.03	1.328		Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	.521
Information sources far located	Engineering	96	3.19	.987	Mode of teaching	Engineering	96	3.89	1.264
	Computing & Informatics	24	2.67	1.129		Computing & Informatics	24	2.67	1.129
	Health Science	9	3.00	1.000		Health Science	9	3.00	1.000
	Agriculture	47	4.64	.486		Agriculture	47	4.64	.486
	Business & Economics	52	3.40	1.485		Business & Economics	52	3.40	1.485
	Law	52	4.52	.542		Law	52	4.52	.542
	Natural &Computational Science	39	3.03	1.328		Natural &Computational Science	39	3.03	1.328
Lack of time	Engineering	96	3.46	1.368	Lack of time	Natural &Computational Science	39	2.74	.966
	Computing & Informatics	24	2.92	1.100		Law	52	3.94	1.162
	Health Science	9	4.33	1.118					
	Agriculture	47	4.17	.761					
	Business & Economics	52	2.92	1.747					

Table 6: Purpose of information seeking by students

Purpose	Colleges	Respondents (N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation	Purpose	Colleges	Respondents (N)	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation
Do home work	Engineering	96	3.53	1.158	Write term papers or research	Engineering	96	3.46	1.368
	Computing & Informatics	24	4.04	.624		Computing & Informatics	24	2.92	1.100
	Health Science	9	4.67	.500		Health Science	9	4.33	1.118
	Agriculture	47	3.51	1.365		Agriculture	47	4.17	.761
	Business & Economics	52	3.06	1.487		Business & Economics	52	3.5	1.365
	Law	52	4.33	.857		Law	52	3.94	1.162
	Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	4.14		Natural &Computational Science	39	3.67	1.630
Update knowledge	Engineering	96	4.10	1.000	To prepare for examination	Engineering	96	4.77	.423
	Computing & Informatics	24	3.21	1.103		Computing & Informatics	24	2.50	1.445
	Health Science	9	4.89	.333		Health Science	9	1.56	.527
	Agriculture	47	4.17	.761		Agriculture	47	3.53	1.158
	Business & Economics	52	3.5	1.365		Business & Economics	52	1.56	.527
	Law	52	3.19	1.442		Law	52	2.81	1.387
	Natural &Computational Science	39	3.13	1.174		Natural &Computational Science	39	2.28	1.395
Do assignments	Engineering	96	4.1	1.000					
	Computing & Informatics	24	3.08	1.381					
	Health Science	9	3.33	1.871					
	Agriculture	47	3.5	1.365					
	Business & Economics	52	4.9	0.33					
	Law	52	3.67	1.630					
	Natural &Computational Science	39	4.31	4.14					

The analysis of this section clearly showed that (M>=3.5) all college students mainly sought information for updating knowledge, to write term paper and, to do assignments and homework. Since, the mean value (M<2.5) shows they do not believe that it is an effective tool for prepare for examination.

The analysis confirm that (M>=3.5) Mode of teaching, Lack of awareness of available information resources, lack of time , lack of reading materials , Lack of skill or knowledge to access available resources were the most serious problem that affects the information seeking behaviour of all college students. The other impeding factors (M<=2.5) which are commonly considered by all colleges were lack of computer, slow internet connection and location of information resources which far located from their dormitory sometimes affects their seeking behaviour.

Conclusions

The study shows that students from all colleges often seek information mainly from Internet, handouts, Articles Journal. But they differ in their information seeking behaviour with respect to library Electronic resources; Discussion with colleagues. Majority of the respondents from all Colleges did not preferred CD-ROM, Social Networking Sites and Television directly useful for their information needs. The main purposes of information sought by the students of all colleges were to do Assignment, writing term/ Research papers and Update knowledge but they differ with respects to doing homework. Moreover, they do not believe that it is an effective tool for examination. The serious problem that affects the information seeking behaviour of all college students were Modes of teaching, Lack of computers, Lack of computers, Lack of skill or knowledge to access available resources, Lack of awareness of available information resources.

The other impending factor that positively affects the information seeking behaviour were lack of computers, slow internet connection, lack of time, lack of reading materials and location of information materials.

Recommendations

The major resources, to seek information, frequently preferred by all colleges were internet, journal articles and handout/lecture notes. Therefore, there is a need to create awareness or formal trainings among the students in the uses of information resources like Journal Articles, CD-ROM database, Social Networking Sites and Electronic resources for all college students to ensure that they have the required knowledge and skills that would enable them to make maximum use of the available university resources. The university library or concerned bodies should provide formal trainings to the students and they should provide latest and updated educational materials containing different educational contents using their sources that have least preferences by the students. The data confirm that Modes of teaching, slow Internet connection, lack of time and skill in seeking information were the main factors affected the information seeking behavior. Therefore, the university administration or concerned bodies should made a supervision team that follows up and assess the skill gap &offer trainings to the university instructors. Library should provide printing/copying services at reasonable cost. This would serve as alternative to printing, Web searching resources which gain more time in seeking information. Besides giving immediate solutions to slow Internet connection in the University

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