

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF ACADEMICIANS AT MALAYSIA INSTITUTE OF INTEGRATIVE MEDIA

Mohd Rafiz Salji

Faculty of Information Management,
Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak, Jalan Meranek,
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.
e-mail: mohdrafiz@uitm.edu.my
tele: 082-677385

Abstract: *This paper investigated the information seeking behavior of academicians with regards to effort in fulfilling their needs in teaching and improving their learning methods. The survey was carried out at Malaysia Institute of Integrative Media (MIIM), Setiawangsa, Kuala Lumpur. In this case study, questionnaire is the methodology which supported relevant data to collect from those academicians that been chosen as sample at earlier stage. Among the findings of the study; majority of academicians agreed the training skills in information searching is important to the academicians for improving their skills. In searching information, majority preferred Internet as information resource where it easier and quicker accessed information. The majority of academicians felt librarians become preferred person in assisting search information in the library. System failure is common faced by the academicians in searching information and finally academicians tended to use library resources as it valuable to them. Several recommendations proposed; the need to provide information searching skills training, library assistance for academicians should be considered, academicians' should aware towards facilities and resources, advertise the information sources they have and the latest information resources, overcome the internet connection problem and improving the academicians frequency going to the library through various approaches.*

Keywords: *Information, Information seeking, Behavior, Information seeking behavior, MIIM.*

INTRODUCTION

Information seeking behavior is a process of how people seek and access information from any types of material. It helps them in finding answer or searching information at suitable sources to support their daily work. For the academicians, they normally use most of the resources obtained in the library. Basically, all information that they collect, select and use is for preparation for their teaching session. Therefore, the academicians have to make sure they have enough skills to obtain required, accurate and needed information on their discipline. However, they are not clear enough about their skills in information searching and sometimes the librarian perceives that end user of the library know how to use the library, and they do not give a high priority to knowing how users use the library. Action should be taken by librarian to examine and identify the level of information skills among the academicians.

Boyd (2004) has mentioned that, during the last decades the research interest in using the library and information behavior has increased mainly because of the increasing

number of users and libraries and thus needs to meet their clients' demands in the best possible way. Therefore, the librarians need to take responsibilities in guiding user obtain needed information especially for the academicians because the quality of the information those academicians obtained can produce higher quality students. The librarians need to make sure the academicians have adequate information skills to enable them examine users' information seeking behavior.

Wilson (1995) noted the study of information-seeking behaviour can stand on its own as an area of applied research where the motive for investing is pragmatically related to system design and development. A different motivation is involved if there is a need to understand why the information seeker behaves as he does. Information seeking behaviour involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought (Momodu, M. O. 2002). Pamela J., McKenzie (2003) identified overall it can be manipulating factor that will influences information seeking behaviors includes:

- Educational background, occupation, professional status
- Environment in which they find themselves (rural or urban) influence their needs
- Goals for which the information is sought
- The method available for meeting the needs
- Personality trait (intelligent, creativity, idealism etc) influence their information seeking behavior and use.

The academicians preferred method used for instance, in preparation of their lecture in class. Moreover, they are not only depending to such previous notes and textbook. Therefore, the academicians have to make sure they have the skills in information seeking to enable them to find relevant information for us in in teaching. However, academicians can be in trouble if they are not especially in the library.

Fayter (1998) noted that academicians are smart people, but find the university library to be a threatening place and the process of research intimidating. Unfortunately, they do not learn the basic information skills. They end up using trial and error methods of research that limits their capabilities to satisfy their needs. Wilson's 1996 model notes that in the process of seeking information, problems are encountered. Twidale, M.B., Nichols, D.M. (1998) noted that after interacting with the information sources (like in a library), what a user actually needs may not tally with what is practically available, due to constraints either within the stock or due to the users own inability. According to Wilson (1995), if an individual user could indicate what is needed under specified conditions, his problem might well be on its way towards a solution. Information seeking activities includes ways in which people articulate their need for, search for use information.

This paper outlines purpose of the study information seeking behavior of academicians at Malaysia Institute of Integrative Media (MIIM). The objectives are as follows:

- To investigate the academicians' attitudes towards the use of library resources.
- To find out the importance of training skills in information searching.
- To identify the most preferred sources used by the academician in finding information at the library (whether use book, online database and Internet etc).
- To identify the purpose of using the information sources.

- To know user information needs and sources use to meet the needs.
- To identify the problems and weakness in searching information.

This study will benefit in three groups. From this study, it will clarify weaknesses among those groups and give ideas how to improve it. The groups are as follows:

Library

The findings of the study would enable the library attempts to meet users' need and satisfaction. By looking at the attitude of the users towards the materials used, the library can identify the expectation of users, especially academicians in terms of collections and contents.

Librarian

The study would provide a guideline and explanation to librarians about the needs to provide accurate and relevant techniques and skills in seeking information to the academicians. Librarians need to play important role in helping academicians in searching information that are needed. So, it is really important that librarians prepare themselves with information seeking skills to serve the users, and not just assumes that users are well prepared with the skills and knowledge in information searching.

Academicians

Academicians' information seeking behavior is studied in order to know the purpose of the interaction with information environment. The study will describe the creativity of information seeking to support information need and indicate the extent of the knowledge and skill available among the users in information searching.

The academicians need to respond in terms of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction towards information sources so that librarian can provide appropriate sources that meet the education need in future. The comments given by users and the problems faced during searching and obtaining information through printed and non printed material, would hopefully assist librarians to improve the quality of library services.

Besides, the significance of the research findings could provide data and information for reference by individuals or researchers in producing a project paper or research regarding the topic and as a body of knowledge for any academic purposes.

METHODOLOGY

This survey targeted specifically to the academicians at Media MIIM, Taman Setiawangsa, Kuala Lumpur that has been chosen as sample randomly. The questionnaires were distributed to 40 respondents by hand. All respondents responded to the questionnaire. The respondents are 16 male and 24 female which comes from different background. These respondents have to answer 23 questions stipulated in the questionnaire. The data obtained were analyzed and creating frequency tables for each of the variables. The questionnaire was used specifically to gather data on:

- Information seeking behavior among the academicians.
- The purpose and factor that lead academicians toward the use of library resources.

- Method preferred and explores the way or techniques of academicians in obtaining such information.
- How academicians use information they obtained, information usage and publishing or distribute it.
- Perception of academicians the importance of training and skill among academicians for information seeking.

RESULTS

The Importance of Information Searching Skill Training

The question was asked about the importance of information searching skill training among academicians at MIIM. The table 1 shows 55.0% of the respondents strongly agreed the training on information searching have to provide to all academicians in MIIM because they know this skill can help them in their daily work, 35.0% of respondents also agreed with the training skills and only 10.0% disagreed.

Table 1: The Importance of Information Searching Skill Training

Training	Number of Respondents	Percent
Disagree	4	10.0
Agree	14	35.0
Strongly agree	22	55.0

The frequency in using variety sources to obtain information

The question asked about the frequency in variety sources used to obtain information. Among those sources, the majority of users preferred internet as medium to obtain information. In table 7, 57.5% of respondents use internet, 20.0% often, 15.0% seldom and 7.5% sometimes.

Table 2: Respondents by preferred Book

Book	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	6	15.0
Sometimes	3	7.5
Often	10	25.0
Always	21	52.5

Table 3: Respondents by preferred Magazine

Magazines	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	9	22.5
Sometimes	6	15.0
Often	7	17.5
Always	18	45.0

Table 4: Respondents by preferred Online Database

Online Database	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	6	15.0
Sometimes	6	15.0
Often	14	35.0
Always	14	35.0

Table 5: Respondents by preferred CD-ROM

CD- ROM	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	18	45,0
Sometimes	9	22,5
Often	7	17,5
Always	6	15,0

Table 6: Respondent by preferred Audio/ Video

Audio / Video	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	3	7.5
Sometimes	10	25.0
Often	13	32.5
Always	14	35.0

Table 7: Respondents by preferred Internet

Internet	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	6	15.0
Sometimes	3	7.5
Often	8	20.0
Always	23	57.5

Table 8: Respondents by preferred Journal

Journals	Number of Respondents	Percent
Seldom	10	25,0
Sometimes	14	35,0
Often	5	12,5
Always	11	27,5

Reason for choosing the sources

With reference to table 9, 45.0% of respondents preferred easier and quicker to access, 22.5% information provided was accurate, 17.5% save time to get information and 15.0% better knowledge of available services.

Table 9: Reason for choosing the sources

Reason of Choice	Number of Respondents	Percent
Easier and quicker to access	18	45.0
Save time to get information	7	17.5
Information provided was accurate / up to date	9	22.5
Better knowledge of available services	6	15.0

Preferred person to ask if having problems in searching information

In table 10 indicated 42.5% of respondent asked for help from librarians if having problems in seeking information. It is good choice preferred librarians as they known more in a library in term of guide to search books or any materials using electronic database system, ask the location of the materials and etc. 20.0% preferred helped from enquiry desk and nobody help and finally 17.5% preferred friend's help.

Table 10: Preferred person to ask if having problems in searching information

Preferred Person	Number of Respondents	Percent
help from enquiry desk	8	20.0
help from librarian	17	42.5
friend's help	7	17.5
no one	8	20.0

Problems faced in searching online information

In table 10 shown 50.0% of problem faced by respondents is system failure, 22.5% unable to download certain information and password problem and finally 5.0% not well trained in used certain material.

Table 10: Problems faced in searching online information

Problems in Searching	Number of Respondents	Percent
System failure	20	50.0
Unable to download certain information	9	22.5
Password	9	22.5
Not well trained in used certain material	2	5.0

Respondents rating of library materials that suitable to their need and requirement

In table 11 shown 65.0% of respondents agreed the library provided suitable materials, 20.0% strongly agree and 15.0% disagreed the requirement of library materials in library.

Table 11: Respondents ratings of library materials that suitability to their need and requirement

Library Rating	Number of Respondents	Percent
Disagree	6	15.0
Agree	26	65.0
Strongly agree	8	20.0

Respondents' opinion on information retrieval at MIIM library

In table 12 shown 57.5% respondents agreed information retrieved in MIIM library is good and 42.5% said no.

Table 12: Respondents opinion on information retrieval at MIIM library

Opinion on Information Retrieval	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	19	47.5
No	13	32.5
Not sure	8	20.0

DISCUSSION

The survey from the questionnaire found that the majority of the academicians in MIIM agreed strongly on the training skill in searching information among them as very important. It is considered as very significant in providing the efficiency and effectiveness in information seeking behavior. Since the academicians have a good skill in information seeking behavior, they will facilitate themselves in information searching by using particular sources. They would motivate themselves in information seeking even encourage their students to make practice or training them in information searching skill.

Besides, it was found that most of the academicians prefer to seek for new idea or information that could support in their class preparation. This has been revealed earlier which identifies the purpose of accessing information towards the use of library resources. Results also indicated that the majority of the academicians often use information sources during class session. Most of the academicians, however were very satisfied on the information they retrieve from the library, since the materials provided itself is consider beneficial, meet the need and their requirement in learning and teaching.

It also found that the library provides all kind of information resources which can be used in searching information. This was indicated by the response of the academicians on the use of books, magazines, journals, Internet, audio/ video, CD-ROM and online databases. In comparison to all the materials provided, it was found that most of them preferred to mostly use Internet rather than books, magazines, and online databases. This might be due to the fact that the Internet services is available, not only in libraries but also at the academicians office. This can be concluded that new information transmitted via online, and internet is regarded as apt of the academician preferred mode of information searching.

There have several problems that are normally faced by the academicians during information seeking, such as major system failure during the online information searching. However, librarians assistance was being sought in solving the problems. Although the academicians are categorized as an more expert than the students in information seeking, they prefer to work on information problem independently. However, results of the study revealed that the academicians are still dependent on the librarians for help.

From overall research, there are some common information seeking behavioral characteristics and preferences among academicians that are found during information seeking behavior. It shows that the majority of the academicians accept the electronic form of publishing as an alternative printed output. The data shows that the majority of academicians are willing to spend much time in using the system and services provided at library especially to save effort in providing valuable information that can be used in support of their teaching process. In seeking suitable information source, the majority of the respondents spend more time, around one to two hours to obtain relevant information. The responses indicated from the results of the survey confirmed the trustworthiness of respondents towards electronic information sources. This can be the

factors that influenced the acceptance of the electronic sources as a faster mode of information seeking rather than through the printed materials. Despite that, the study shows the willingness of respondents to combine multiple access points and use various information sources, including printed and electronic information resources.

The effectiveness of information searching skills, efficiency of library services and effective retrieval systems could enhance the academicians to be more frequent library users and change their perceptions towards the library services. Effective skill in information seeking among academicians would lead to the best performance of library services and achieve the objective in generating high quality academicians.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The need to provide information searching skills training
From the findings, the librarian needs to provide training in information searching skills to the academicians because the skills is very important to them in obtaining accurate information and to find new knowledge to improve their teaching resources. However, the academicians should also motivate themselves to conduct research even which involves information seeking activities. The academicians should be information literate, well prepared, and know how to use such information sources in the library.
- ii. Library assistance/ support for academicians should be considered
The MIIM library should consider the academicians' purpose of information seeking so that the librarians can be in a better position to understand their needs and help them in information searching. Other than that, the librarians should have skills in approaching the academicians to make them comfortable when interacting with each other.
- iii. Academicians' should be made aware towards facilities and resources
Academicians should be acknowledged about the full range of facilities and information resources available in the library. This would enable the academicians to obtain new ideas from variety of information resources. This is to make sure that the academicians are not dependent only on one resource.
- iv. Library should publicise the information resources they have
According to the survey, Internet is a well known of service in the library and most commonly used among academicians. Therefore, library should find ways to promote other information resources other than the electronic information resources.
- v. Library should overcome the Internet connection problem
Internet is the most popular services and the library should ensure that the Internet connections in order to achieve better performance and user satisfaction.

- vi. To encourage academicians frequency to the library through various approaches
The librarian should initiate programs, such as exhibition that would highlight new information resources to their academicians. This will not only promote the academicians to use the resources provided by the library, but also to increase the number of the academicians to visit the library and make use all formats of information resources provided by the library. Besides that, the exhibitions displayed by the library can also encourage the academicians in finding relevant information resources that can be used to meet the needs of academicians. Furthermore, it provided the opportunity for the librarians to act as advisors to the academicians and users in recommending and utilization of wide variety of information resources.
- vii. Library should advertise the latest information resources
The librar should actively inform the academicians about the latest information resources in the library so that the user will be alerted of the new arrival of information resources available at the library. This is besed on the response from most of the academicians who claimed that the library did not not inform their user of the latest resources that are available. Librarian should provide notices, memos or distribute flyers, and use knowledge portals to the academicians about the latest information resources to publicise these new arrivals.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the information seeking behavior of academicians is related to their interaction with thw librarians and the information skills activities provided by the libraries. Academicians trust that the library prvides efficiet services to them. However, the library should plan and design effective library and information systems and services and also provides effective information searching skills training to the academians and general users.

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