

Influence of Time Pressure on Information Seeking Behaviour of Academic lawyers in Nigerian Law School

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Abstract

Purpose: This study was carried out to investigate the influence of time pressure on information seeking behavior of Academic Lawyers in Nigerian Law Schools.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The descriptive Survey design was adopted for this study. Quantitative research methodology was adopted for the study. The entire population of Academic lawyers of Nigerian law school formed the population of the study. A total of Eighty (80) copies of questionnaire were distributed across all the Academic Lawyers in the Six (6) Campuses of the Nigerian Law School during a period of conference marking with retrieval Success of Seventy (70) copies representing 90% return rate. Data were analyzed using the statistical package for social Science (SPSS).

Findings: The findings of this study reveals that the information needs of the Academic Lawyers includes information related to legal profession/education 61%, information related to legal research 70%, Information related to Judgments 72%, Information on Current Trends 67%. It was equally discovered that information sources of Academic Lawyers are the library 56%, legal database 87%, legal journal 91%, and Law Report 93%. Further discoveries showed that majority of the Academic lawyers agreed that time pressure affects their information seeking as they multi task and must finish their task at limited time. 63.8% agreed that time pressure hinders identification of information need. 80% of Academic Lawyers equally Agreed that time pressure affect their information usage as they might be limited time to go through all information materials before carrying out a given task. The challenges faced by academic lawyers in Nigerian law school includes Hesitation in approaching the reference desk and librarian 53%, inability of the librarians to meet the information needs of the Academic lawyers within the time frame 50%.

Originality/Value: The paper captured the various challenges faced by academic lawyers due to time pressure and it was recommended that the law librarian should package legal information needed by the Academic lawyers on time using selective dissemination of information, New arrival alert and increase the Acquisition of legal Database and distribution of IP address to the Academic lawyers for easy Accessibility to legal information online.

Keyword: Time pressure, Information Seeking, Academic Lawyers, Nigerian Law School.

Paper Type: Empirical research.

Introduction

Time pressure worsens the reasoning process and decision-making skills of academic lawyers. Academic lawyers often take decision under pressure. Academic lawyers who take part in negotiations, research and teaching could experience challenges deriving from time pressure. Legal decisions in legal institutions are also subject to severe time constraints. Similar pressure is faced in many occasions by academic lawyers in deciding about strategies to adopt in handling cases. The performance of academic lawyers is affected by the stress arising from the need to cope with limited time. St Buckert , 2014.

Scholars have long investigated the effects produced by time pressure on individual

decisions showing that time pressure is detrimental for decision quality (Diederich, 1997; Busemeyer, 2003). In spite of these studies, the problem of time pressure still persists. In order to reduce this problem to the barest minimum, scholars have stressed the importance of looking at it from a different perspective such the influence of time pressure on the information seeking behavior of academic lawyers (Exforsys, 2010). Not minding the importance of investigating the information seeking behavior of academic lawyers, from the literature reviewed, little studies have looked at it from this perspective.

The Nigerian Law School (NLS) is a vocational institution

responsible for the education and training of prospective legal practitioners in Nigeria. It was established to provide vocational and practical training for law graduates as the second and final stage of formal training of lawyers in Nigeria. As a vocational institution, its role is essentially to provide training in skills, procedures of courts, and the ethics guiding the legal profession. The activities of the NLS are coordinated by the Council of Legal Education. The nature of the courses at NLS is practice oriented and vocational training is undertaken in the form of a placement or apprenticeship program known as the “court and law office attachment”. This field placement or vocational training is structured in such a way that aspirant barristers go to the court of law chambers for practical.

The concept of life is vague without information. Information has enabled individuals to perform their routine activities in an efficient way. For decision-making, we need the support of information (Kumar, 2004). Modern society depends on information for all its activities. Every person has the need for information. Without valid and up-to-date information, it is impossible to make progress in any field of life. Understanding of information needs and information-seeking behavior of various professional groups is essential as it helps in the planning, implementation and operation of information system and services in the given work settings (Devadason & Lingam, 1997). Legal information is basic to academic lawyers. The law is supposed to be understood and used by each and every academic lawyer (Otiye, 1997). Academic Lawyers are individuals who have a wide range of responsibilities and duties when it comes to their profession. Their role is even more important as they are acting as teachers and researchers Exforsys, (2010). In today's world, legal issues spring up almost always on a regular basis. Most probably, one does not have the time to handle all of them. Having a lawyer to take care of one's legal affair is very much required and it is one sure way to be free from unnecessary headaches . Lawyers are the protectors of the people. They play a very important role in maintaining order in one place. In addition, a number of positions in the government are being held by lawyers.

Timely access to the right kind of legal information determines the performance of any legal officer in any judicial process (Naveed, 2012). The need to become informed and

knowledgeable leads individuals to the process of identifying information. However Callister [2000] illustrates that lawyers have, at least since the beginning of the twentieth century, been regarded as having poor research skills; Justice Deemer of the Iowa Supreme Court in 1902 stated that he has “been amazed at the helplessness of law students and even of Academic lawyers when they go into a library to search for authorities. Therefore knowing the actual information needs of an academic lawyer by a law librarian will to a large extent reduce the information research burden of the academic lawyer. The research tradition within LIS (Library and Information Science) has over the last years increasingly focused on users' search behavior. Within this tradition a particular emphasis has been on the context of information seeking (Solomon, 2002). It has been acknowledged that the information-seeking process is dependent on task (e.g., Byström, 2000), discipline (e.g., or stage of the research process (Kuhlthau, 1993). This research tradition, where the individual is studied as part of the context has provided a valuable understanding of groups of users in a sociological sense. In order to gain a full understanding of information need and seeking behavior, it would be vital to further extend the focus to the user's psychological processes. Allen & Kim (2001) have highlighted the importance of accounting for both the context and the individual characteristics, as search behaviour is likely to evolve through interaction between the two. Understanding of psychological characteristics can shed light on both variability and patterns in information seeking (Wilson, 2000).

“Information-seeking” is a term describing the ways individuals seek, evaluate, select, and use information. In the course of seeking new information, the individual may interact with different people, analog tools, and computer-based information systems (Wilson, 2000). Information seeking is a process in which humans engage in order to advance and potentially alter their state of knowledge. It is also an important cognitive function related to learning and problem solving .The behavior is one of the most important research areas in library user studies and is affected by different factors. “Information-seeking behavior” is different from the actual “information need.” The “information need” is a subjective, relative concept in the mind of the experiencing

individual and is defined as the “recognition of the existence of uncertainty” . Information-seeking behavior which results from the recognition of some need is defined as “any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the resources invested in the library, the level of patronage is still very low making the investment unjustifiable (source). General observation by the researcher based on work experience in that library revealed that there is low patronage by Academic Lawyers. Academic Lawyers prefer to stay in their offices to browse the Internet. Retrieval of quality information from the internet is difficult especially if they retain too many hits that will take their time to browse and analyse one by one;

Could this observation be attributed to time pressure since most of the faculty members have private practices like defending court cases, community service, legal advising? They are expected to take decisions in a dual context (i.e. as faculty members and as practicing lawyers). This pressure, it would appear, makes it easy for Academic Lawyers to choose sources that are readily available to them. This source is the internet since the school management has provided every faculty member with free internet connectivity.

There is therefore the need to investigate the influence of time pressure on the information seeking behavior of Academic Lawyers in Nigeria Law School

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions

1. What are the legal information needs of Academic lawyers in Nigeria Law school library?
2. What legal information sources are available for Academic lawyers in Nigeria Law school library?
3. What are the causes of time pressure of Academic lawyers in the Nigeria law school?
4. What are the tools used by Academic Lawyers in seeking information in Nigeria Law school library?
5. What is the extent of use of various legal information resources in the law library?

6. What are the challenges faced by Academic Lawyers in the process of seeking legal information in Nigeria Law school library?

Objectives of the Study

Academic lawyers in law school contribute to the attainment of the broad objective of the law school which is teaching, research and community service. The academic lawyers provide academic guidance to student and extend the frontiers of knowledge through research and publication. This makes academic lawyers need for information inevitable. Information need and information seeking pattern of academic lawyers is paramount to the law library because the law library has a role to play in helping Academic lawyers meet their information needs.

This study therefore seeks:

1. To investigate the relationship between time pressure and academic lawyers’ information behavior in Nigeria law school.
2. To ascertain the relationship between time pressure and academic lawyers’ source preference in the Nigeria Law School

Scope of the Study

The study was limited to the influence of time pressure on the information seeking behavior of academic lawyers of the Nigerian law school. All the six campuses of the Nigerian Law School in Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Enugu, Yola and Bayelsa will be covered in this study

Literature Review

The Concept of Time Pressure

Time pressure is becoming an increasingly prominent feature of work in the legal profession. Both the business press and the organizational literature have identified a “time famine,” in which people feel that there are never enough hours in the work day. Indeed, it is likely that anyone reading this paper has a daunting “To Do” list on the current mental agenda. At the same time, with the growth of knowledge work, there is an increasingly urgent need for creative thinking in organizations. Are these two trends at odds? Might increasing time pressure be sabotaging organizational efforts to produce useful new ideas? Researchers have paid scanty attention to this question, and lay wisdom includes contradictory views about the effects of time pressure. Some people hold that it spurs them on to their best work; others say that it makes high levels of performance almost impossible. In this paper, we report a study

examining the relationship between time pressure and creative thinking. In addition, we introduce a new methodology for observing creative thinking as it occurs in organizations. We suggest that time pressure, although it may spur people on to do more work, may undermine precisely the kind of thinking needed to do creative work.

Prior research on performance effects has demonstrated clearly that time pressure – defined as either subjectively perceived time pressure or the imposition of a deadline – increases the rate of individual and group performance (Kelly & Karau, 1993, 1999). However, results have been much less consistent on the quality of performance, with evidence of a positive relationship (Kelly & Karau, 1999), a negative relationship (Kelly & McGrath, 1985), a curvilinear relationship indicating an optimal level of moderate time pressure (Isenberg, 1981), and (Bassett, 1979) no relationship at all. Importantly, most of these researches have focused on the performance of relatively straightforward tasks rather than tasks requiring creativity.

Information Sources Available to the Academic Lawyer

The academic lawyer is usually involved in legal research according to Ayua (2001) and has been concerned with the development of elaboration of legal doctrine and the normative purpose of law, using such materials as Law, Regulations, Rules and Cases. These legal information resources could be referred to as legal literature, such as law books, law report and status, legal periodicals, government publications, reference materials and other inter-related non-legal books-resources, unpublished works of the law. Otike (1997) stated that legal academic have task of participating in teaching program, conducting legal research, carrying out consultation and mentoring of students. They require wide range but specific information and therefore consult a variety of sources to satisfy their needs. Willes (1992) in a survey of (1000) academic lawyers in the UK, noted that more than a quarter of academic lawyer had either visited the law library personally or had sent an aide to make enquiries to carry out a research. Colleagues were also considered as important information channel. Otike(1999) claimed that Academic lawyers had a high regard for colleagues and they contacted colloquies in first instance before utilizing the library.

Time Pressure and Creative Cognitive Processing

We propose that time pressure, in the moderate to high levels generally experienced in contemporary organizations, has a direct negative effect on creative cognitive processing. According to the componential theory, creativity is determined by the effects of one extra-individual (outside the person) component and three intra-individual (inside the person) components on creative cognitive processing or insolving a problem.

Information Needs of Academic Lawyers

Otike (2000) explored the legal information needs of lawyers in kenya. It was determined that a lawyers work is determined by the legal needs of the clients, which in turn influences the information needs of the lawyers. The Academic Lawyers seek assistance from the Law Library. Haruna and Mabanwonku (2000) examined the information needs and seeking behavior of lawyers in Lagos, Nigeria. The study revealed that many lawyers perceived the needs to know the latest decisions of superior courts as their greatest professional information need.

Information Seeking Behavior

Scholars face a lot of problem trying to define information seeking behavior which was well articulated by Case (2002) who explained that information seeking behavior is a phenomenon that often defies generalization and escapes observation because it varies depending on people situation and objects of interest, Meho and Haas (2001) claim that information seeking behavior is a broad term that encompasses the way in which individuals articulate their information needs and seek, evaluate and use information from knowledge sources. (kakai, Ikoja –Odongo and Kigongo-Bukenga, 2004) declares that information seeking behavior refers to the way people search for and utilize information.

Information Sources and Services in the Legal Discipline

There are distinct information sources available in the legal discipline. The primary source of information materials in law is divided into two categories differs from those available in other discipline. It includes both primary and secondary legal which include; Legislation (i.e. status and regulations) and Case law (court decisions) and administrative tribunals)

Related Work

While time pressure has not been studied extensively in information science, other fields such as decision science and psychology have examined it in a variety of contexts. Prior work has distinguished the concepts of time Constraints and time pressure (Ordoñez & Benson, 1997). Time and time constraints are subjectively experienced (McKenzie & Davies, 2002; Savolainen, 2006, p. 123); given the same time constraint, there is variability in the amount of time pressure reported by different individuals (Francis-Smythe & Robertson, 1999). Time constraints are one method to induce time pressure, but other methods such as displaying a constantly visible timer have also been used to manipulate feelings of time pressure Kelly and Karau 2004; Olson & Olson, 2013). Some studies imposing time constraints have assumed time pressure is felt (Padovani & Lansdale, 2003), and others have asked questions about perceived time pressure as a manipulation check , Hockey, & Bdzola, (2000).

Table 1: Distribution of the study population

Population	Frequency	Percentage
Abuja campus	20	25%
Lagos campus	15	18.75%
Kano campus	12	15%
Enugu campus	13	16.25%
Bayelsa campus	10	12.5%
Yola campus	10	12.5%
TOTAL	80	100%

Sample and Sampling Technique

The entire population of the study was used and therefore there was no need for sampling.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for the data collection was structured questionnaire.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher engaged the service of experienced research assistants to administer the questionnaire.

Research Methodology

Quantitative research methodology was adopted for this study. According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000) quantitative research is the systematic empirical investigation of observable phenomena via statistical Mathematical or computational techniques. Quantitative methodology will enable the researcher to achieve the research objectives and to address the research problem (source). A quantitative research generates quantifiable data. It is primarily concerned with observable and measurable phenomena involving people, events or things, and establishing the strength of the relationship between variables, usually by statistical tests.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises of eighty (80) academic lawyers in Nigeria law school. They are distributed as follows:

Procedure for Data Analysis

In terms of data collected from the hypotheses, software package for social sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis.

Findings

Information needs of academic lawyers.

Data in Table 2 indicates that academic librarians most important information need was related to legal research (75%) followed by legal profession (66%), judgments (65%) and current trends in the library (62.5%)

Table 2: Findings on Information needs of Academic Lawyers.

Types of Information Needs	Agreed	Undecided	Not Agreed
Information related to Legal Research	60(75%)	10(12.5%)	10(12.5%)
Information related to legal profession/Education	53(66.25%)	15(18.7%)	12(15%)
Information related to Judgments	52(65%)	18(22.5%)	10(12.5%)
Information on Current Trends In the Library.	50(62.5%)	10(12.5%)	20(25%)

Table 3 below shows the major source of legal information for academic lawyers was law reports followed by law journals, legal

databases and the library which has the lowest score among other source of information of academic lawyers.

Table 3: Sources of legal information of academic lawyers

Sources of Legal Information	Agreed	Undecided	Not Agreed
Law Reports	75(94%)	2(25%)	1(1.25)
Legal Journal	73(92%)	Nil	3(3.75)
Legal Databases	70(88%)	31(30.75)	4(5%)
Library	45(56%)	7.(8.75)	3(8.75)

Effect of time pressure on academic lawyers information seeking behaviour in Nigerian law school. From the table below majority of the Academic lawyers Agreed that time pressure

affects the information seeking as they have time frame for information they needed for lecturing, court cases and other legal related issues

Table 4: Effect of time pressure on academic lawyers information seeking behaviour in Nigerian Law School

Effect of time pressure on information seeking behaviour in Nigeria Law School	Highly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided
Time pressure hinders identification of information need among academic lawyers in Nigerian Law School	51(63.8%)	23(28.7)	6(7.5%)
Under time pressure,it is difficult for Academic lawyers in the Nigeria Law School to seek information that will satisfy their information	54(65%)	11(13.8)	25(31.2%)
Time Pressure affects information use among academic lawyers in Nigerian Law School	80(100%)	Nil	Nil

Table 5: Challenges faced By Academic Lawyers in the Process of Seeking Legal Information. From the table below it was shown that the Academic Lawyers face challenges

while seeking information in the Law library and the figures on the table show the various problems faced by academic lawyers while seeking for information in the law school library.

Table 5: Challenges faced by academic lawyers in the process of seeking legal information

Challenges	Agreed	Undecided	Not Agreed	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hesitation in approaching reference station and librarians	43(53.8%)	27(33.7%)	10(12.5%)	26.6	13.44
Inability to find the the right legal information in the Library	66(43.8%)	23(28.7%)	17(21.3%)	35.3	21.82
Inability of the librarians to Meet the information needs of the Academic Lawyers within time frame	40(50%)	23(38.7%)	17(12.3%)	26.6	9.74

Conclusion

Time pressure has actually affects the Academic lawyers of the Nigerian Law School and this has shown by their response and From this findings,for the Academic Lawyer to be able to meet up with the responsibility of lecturing and attending to other legal duties the Law librarians must provide means of Packaging legal information needed by the Academic lawyers in short time using the legal database software’s Available and making available the IP address to the Academic Lawyers so that they can get legal information even the comfort of their homes to save time.

relieving the stress of the Academic Lawyers using the:

1. Selective Dissemination of information
2. 2 .New arrival Alert
3. 3.Current Awareness Services
4. Increase the Acquisition of Legal Database and Distribution of IP address to the Academic Staff for easy Accessibility to legal information online.
5. Regular Training for Academic Lawyers on the use legal database.

Recommendation

The Law Librarian as the Information Officer of the Nigerian Law School as regard legal information needs should seek for ways of

Reference

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