The Impact of Technology Platform Change on the Information Seeking Behavior of Academicians in Amhara

Chalachew Muluken Liyew, Bahir Dar University Institute of Technology, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Sertse Abebe Ayalew, Bahir Dar University Institute of Technology, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Yibeltal Tafere Bayih, Bahir Dar University Institute of Technology, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

This study empirically measures the information seeking behavior of academician on the rapid technology platform change environment in the technology institutes found in Amhara Region, Ethiopia. The questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the academicians of technology institutes to collect information about the medium which was used for seeking information. The questions were how devices helped to seek information, the purpose of the information, and challenges faced while seeking information and measure of satisfaction level for the digital library in the institutes. Hence, the study reveals that users used portable devices to seek information from the internet and the digital library rather than using printed copies of information for their academic, research and community service activities. The results show that the information dissemination medium should be changed to electronic information due to the rapid growth of information and communication technology that impacts the information seeking behavior of users, and provide continuous support and training to use the electronic resources.

KEYWORDS

Academicians, Information Seeking, Information Seeking Behavior, Technology

INTRODUCTION

When an individual needs information, the information does not come to him/ her on its own. Rather, the individual must search for and seek the information. According to Kumar (1990) "information seeking behavior is mainly concerned with who needs what kind of information for what reasons; how information is found, evaluated and used." Wilson (1999) also defines information behavior as activities of an individual engaged in identifying his or her need, searching and using or transferring the information.

Information is a key element for academicians (i.e. academic faculty and researchers) for their teaching and learning, research, community problem solving and innovative activities. Academicians need to search information to acquire the required knowledge and skill to contribute in the development

of the respective nation. Nowadays, more and more information are available for information seekers in different format of electronic resources (e-journals, online databases and digital libraries) in the web and print-based resources in the library (Kadli & Kumbar, 2011).

Information and communication technology affect the academic library service exchange system. According to Sujatha (2016) the information available on the web has affected the seekers behavior to search electronic information in the library. Hence, libraries should respond to the change of the information and communication technology that has effects on the seeking behavior of academicians. Wang, et al. (2007) showed that the growth of information and communication technology shifted the search and access operation of academicians from the traditional service to the modern internet-based information access role.

The information needs and access methods of the academicians in the technology institute found in the Amhara region, Ethiopia have been changed due to the rapid growth of information and communication technology. Understanding the information seeking behavior of academicians in the technology institute of the Amhara Region in Ethiopia on the rapid change of technology environment is an important research topic to propose effective and efficient information system, library collection, services and facilities. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to measure empirically the information seeking behavior of academicians on the rapid growth of ICT platform environment in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nui and Hemminger (2011) conducted research on the factors that affect the information seeking behavior of academicians and identified that demographic, psychological, role-related, and environmental factors (department types and library distance) affected the information seeking behavior of the academicians. In addition, Kumari et al., (2013) reported that a maximum number of teachers used the library to access books, use periodicals, journals and reference material for different purposes. The researcher added that maximum number of teachers never used audio-visual material as the source of information. However, these studies could not explore the effect of information and communication technology on the information seeking behavior of the academics' environment.

Mohamed (2007) carried out a research on the use of ICT-based resources and services in special libraries in Kerala. The study concluded that ICT-based resources and services were highly significant for academic and research work. However, the orientation and training on the use of ICT to seek resources was inadequate.

Niu et al. (2010) conducted a survey on academic researchers in natural science, engineering, and medical science from five research universities in the United States to understand different aspects of researcher's information-seeking behavior. The findings showed that electronic resources were used the most to search and access academic content so that the academic libraries should support the needs of scientists.

The use of electronic devices, networks and different information formats are changing information access operations worldwide. Kadli and Kumbar (2011), and Ellis and Haugan (1997) discuss that books, journals and articles are available on the internet in digitized form for quicker and better information access for academicians in the ICT era. According to Bhattacharjee and Sinha (2016), before the advent of the ICT era, information searching and access took huge amounts of time because a large volume of information had been stored in non-electronic or analog form. The change to ICT has helped to increase the productivity of researchers, authors and academicians. Nowadays, academicians are in a position to provide updated information in their publications, facilitating teaching-learning activities with this information and doing community services by identifying community problems easily.

In an empirical study on the impact of information technology on the information-seeking behavior of users Manikandan et al. (2013) revealed that a majority of the participants confirmed that the

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