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COURSE TITLE:
LIS 8303: INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

ASSIGNMENT:
IDENTIFY AND DISCUSS DIFFERENT TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION NEEDS

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Introduction

In order to discuss different types and categories of information needs, there is a need to understand the concept of “information needs”. The term is made-up of two concepts that is, ‘information’ and ‘needs’ which is coined together to form the concept in which different scholars gave different interpretations to it. As Faibisoff and Ely (n.d) observed that, “this term has become an umbrella under which a variety of interpretations falls. Because it is a generic term, it often hides more than it reveals”. It is in line with this development that some scholars attempted at placing information in the hierarchy of needs which becomes fallacious (Idiegbeyan-Ose & Idahosa, 2012). For instance, Idiegbeyan-Ose & Idahosa (as cited Okafor, 2003) has contended with the globally acclaimed Maslow’s theory of need, and argued that people are too complex to be caged by theories predicting their needs at all the time to be constant without changing.

However, Idiegbeyan-Ose & Idahosa (as cited in Laloo, 2002) it is envisaged that information need is a difficult concept to define, isolated and or measure. This is true as shown in (Wikipedia, 2014) that, the ‘information’ and ‘need’ in ‘information need’ are an inseparable inter connection. Needs and interest call forth information. Devadson and Lingam (1996) had stated that, information needs represent gaps in the current knowledge of the user. In day to day work; lack of self-sufficiency constitutes an information need.

Also Preeze, (as cited Case 2007:333) that, an information need arises when an individual senses a problematic situation or information gap, in which his or her internal knowledge and beliefs, and model of the environment fail to suggest a path towards the satisfaction of his or her goals. The term “information need” therefore does not necessarily imply that people are “in need of” information as such but that the use of information can lead to the satisfaction of a more basic need (Wilson 1981:5-6).
Wilson (2006) attention has been paid to the definitional problem of “information need” and the difficulty of separating the concept from “wants”, “expressed demand”, “satisfied demand” and so on. An information want is a desire for information to satisfy an uncertainty; an information need is the condition, whether recognized by the individual or not in which information is required to resolve a problem.

Faibisoff and Ely (n.d) there are individuals who can articulate demands and there are those who have a desire for information but are not able to specify what it is that they “need”. For example, one person may say that he needs a ride to the office while another person with the same objective may say that he needs a car. The first person has stated a specific requirement and the second have expressed a desire for transportation.

Based on the above definitions, Tibbo (cited Case, 2002) that, information need is a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have.

**Types of Information Needs**

There are different types of information needs presented by different scholars and researchers, thus; Aina (2004) give four types of information need as follows:

1. General Information Needs
2. Special Information Needs
3. Recreation and Entertainment Information Needs
4. Current Awareness Information Needs

**Categories of Information Needs**

Moreover, Aina (cited Whittaker, 1993) has categorized information needs into the following:
Professional Need: - they need information for their learning, teaching and research purpose. These are highly mobile educated men and women who have expertise in various areas. They are highly skilled and many of them have one beyond secondary education. They are the engines of growth in a society. They are found both in the private and public sectors of the economy.

Career Advancement Needs: - this is information for self-enrichment, employment.

Subject Needs: - these needs for those who are usually interested I subject fields in which they are working or studying. They include pupils and students, researchers and lecturers who are usually involved in the advancement of knowledge.

Policy makers and planners Needs: - it is information for formulating policies which is meant for politicians and top government and private sector officials. They occupy various positions such as ministers, permanent secretaries, heads of parastatals and government departments, chief executive officers of private companies, etc. they formulate polices. They are served mainly by special libraries and occasionally by public libraries.

Vocational education Needs:- these are information for enhancement needs and is for those people that are involved in all kinds of occupation, especially those in construction and motor industry; hence we have carpenters, plumbers, bricklayers, welders, painters, panel beaters, electricians, mechanics, etc. other activities in which they are involved among, others, include hairdressing and tailoring. They have limited education because most of them would have undergone primary education, and a few have attained secondary education.

Physically Handicapped Needs: - this is information for disabled persons which are either physically or intellectually disable. The physically handicapped are those users who have one disability or the other, like those who use wheel
chairs, those who are visually-impaired or hearing-impaired and those that cannot physically get to the library for one reason or the other, like hospital patients and prisoners. The intellectually handicapped are those that are mentally retarded. Deaf and blind, crippled, hospital patients, prisoners, etc.

Conclusively, information need is information that will enable the individual to resolve uncertainties and problem, or that will help in decision-making Aina (2004). Thus, libraries and professional are expected to articulate and provide resources that will meet most of the needs of users.
References:


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