International Journal of Information Processing and Communication (IJIPC) Vol. 7 No. 2 [December, 2019], pp. 248-255
Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

Information Behaviour and Quality of Life of Agronomists in the North Central, Nigeria

Janet OluseyiAdewara[1], Jacob Kehinde Opele[2], Fausat Ayobami Oyewumi[3] , Jamiu Wankasi Abdulraheem[4]
[1,3,4] Library Departments, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
[2]National Centre for Technology Management (NACETEM)
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Email: omoniyi.jo@unilorin.edu.ng; opelejk@gmail.com; ofayobami@unilorin.ng;
abdulraheemjamiuwankasi@gmail.com

Abstract

Crop farming is one of the leading agricultural practices all over the world. It is the major source of food and livelihood. However, farmers' information behaviour directly or indirectly affects their quality of life which has been described as a concept of economics, sociology and political science which encompasses an individual's spiritual (emotional), social and physical well-being. This study examined farmers' information behaviour in relation to their quality of life. This study adopted a survey research design. The population for this study consists of 13,383 agronomists in the three Local Government Areas with the highest participation in crop farming in Kwara State. Proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for the study. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings from the study showed that agronomists in the study areas engaged in information behaviour activities that affected their quality of life. The study showed that information behaviour accounted for 50.1% of the total variance in agronomist's quality of life in the study area. It revealed that frequency of information seeking (β = 0 .51, t = 7.72, p< 0.05) significantly contributed more to agronomist quality of life than information utilization (β= 0 .24, t = 4.26, p< 0.05).However, information sources accessed (β= -0.02, t = -.25, p > 0.05) and methods of information retrieval (β= 0 .05, t = .70, p > 0.05) did not significantly contribute to agronomist quality of life. The study thus concluded that agronomists in the study areas engaged in information behaviour to a great extent and this positively impacted on their quality of life.

Keywords: Information behavior, Agronomists, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Crop farming is one of the leading agricultural practices all over the world. Crop famers are the major sources of food to almost all human society. When they are able to access relevant information about their crops, they would likely be able to produce more crops for the consumption of human society. Thus, their ability to identify a need for information and ability to seek and use such information cannot be over emphasised. Their need to access their information seeking behaviour is of high merit. Information seeking behaviour has been defined as the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including active and passive information seeking and use (Wilson, 2000). It has been argued that information behaviour encompasses direct communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information without any intention to act on the information given (Robinson, & Bawden (2012). To Ford (2015) information behaviour include the act of perceiving some information-related needs; coming into contact with information potentially relevant to some needs; assessing the suitability of the information in relation to some information-related need and; using such information or knowledge for one's own use. It is thus expected that farmers' information behaviour may influence their crop production and quality of life if adopted in adequate quantity. In the

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

current study, three research questions were formulated, they are:(1) What are the information needs of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State? (2) What is the information seeking behaviour of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State? And (3) Information behaviour has no significant influence on the quality of life of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State. This study had the following specific objectives:

- Assess the information needs of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State
- Determine the information seeking behaviour of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State
- Find out the influence of information behaviour on the quality of life of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State.

2. Review of Related Works

Scholars and practitioners have examined agronomists' information behaviour from diverse perspectives. Odoi (2017) investigated information behaviour of Ugandan banana farmers in the context of participatory development communication, and found that most farmers obtained communally-expected information about crop farming. Also, Radad, Behzadi, and Zadehrahim (2017) examined the information-seeking behaviour of saffron farmers in Iran and found that saffron onion, pesticides, cultivators and farmland worker were the main components of saffron farmers' information-seeking behaviour of the famers. Also, Phiri, Chipeta and Chawinga (2019) investigated the information needs and barriers of rural smallholder farmers in in Malawi. They found that the majority of rural smallholder farmers (94.8%) were aware of information sources in personal experiences. They also found that a key challenge faced by rural smallholder farmers was lack of mobility to transport their farm produce to the cities where they are most appreciated. In the study of Rasak (2016) who examined the propensity to use toll-free platform for sourcing agricultural information among agronomist in Oyo State, Nigeria. They found that major constraints were poor network coverage, personnel challenges, and poor knowledge of its operation. Too, Naveed, Asif and Mumtaz (2015) in their study 'understanding Cotton Growers' Information Needs from Rural Bahawalpur'the authors found that cotton growers required information, in general, particularly in the areas of soil management and plot preparation, cotton seeds, crop care, and pre-and post-harvesting activities. However, they relied on informal networks while looking for the needed information. They reported that lack of timely access, illiteracy, infrequent visits of extension staff, and language barrier were the major barriers to crop farming among the respondents.

Farinde and Atteh (2009) studied arable agronomist' willingness to pay for extension services in Niger State of Nigeria. Findings from their study revealed that about 60% of the farmers were willing to pay for extension services, provided their farm income would increase and extension services are relevant and meet their perceived needs. Oluwasusi and kanni (2014) surveyed the effectiveness of extension services among food agronomist in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Their findings indicated that more than half of the farmers have poor contact with extension services. They also established a significant relationship between age, sex, level of education, farming experience, farmer's attitude toward extension services, extension services received, and the effectiveness of extension services.

Concept of Quality of Life

Quality of life refers to individuals' perceptions of his or her position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which he lives, and in relation to his or her goals, expectations, standards and concerns in life. Abrams (1973) defines quality of life as the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction felt by people with various aspects of their lives. The provision of the 'necessary conditions for happiness and satisfaction' (McCall,

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

1975). It has been established that quality of life encompasses an individual's spiritual (emotional), social and physical well-being (Ruževičius, 2014). The WHO defines 'quality of life (QOL) as an individual purpose-aligned cultural and value system by which a person lives, relative to their aims, hopes, living standards and interests'. Quality of life of agronomists could affect an individual's satisfaction with his or her life dimensions comparing with his or her ideal life. Domains of quality of life include subjective satisfaction which refers to a global quality of life as assessed by individual; the physical environmental factors which include the standard of housing or institutional living arrangements, control over physical environment, access to facilities such as shops, public transport and leisure providers; the social environmental factors such as family and social networks and support, levels of recreational activity and contact with statutory and voluntary organizations; the socio-economic factors: such as income and wealth, nutrition and overall standard of living; cultural factors including age, gender, ethnic, religious and class background; health status factors such as physical well-being, functional ability and mental health; personality factors comprising the psychological well-being, morale, life satisfaction and happiness as well as personal autonomy factors which refers to the ability to make choices, exercise control and negotiate own environment

The characteristics of quality of life can come from an individual's information behaviour. According to Ruževičius (2014), an individual can be positive that the essential element of quality of life is helping other people positively. However, he pointed out that the essence of quality of life is in the fulfilment of the individual's priorities in life. Farmers' quality of lives is often affected by the quality of food they eat and not those they sell. It cannot be over emphasised that people organise their lives based on the resources available to them, as well as their personal needs. Nonetheless, peoples' quality of life can also be perceived through an individual's life experience. If a person perceives his life as good and desirable, it is possible to assume that it is indeed so in his case. Hence, the core criteria for the evaluation of quality of life of a farmer may include joy, pleasure and contentment with the outcome of his annual investment in farming activities.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a survey design. One of the advantages of survey research design is that it has a wide scope which allows primary data to be obtained from a large population that is geographically spread such as those meant for this research.According to the State Ministry of Agriculture, there were 13,383agronomists in the three Local Government Areas who are into crop farming in Kwara State. Proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for the study. A total of 309 famers were eventually selected for the study. The instrument for data collection is a structured questionnaire. Both validity and reliability of the instrument were established through face and content validity methods. Test of reliability of the instrument was done by means of Cronbach's' Alpha test and a Cronbach's' alpha of 0.7 and above was considered valid for this study. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation.

4. Results

Table 1 shows that the agronomist needed information for crop farming in Kwara State = 4.05. Specifically, 82.9% of agronomist needed information on agricultural credit/loan, 68.6% others needed information application on land and crops, still 78% needed information on modern storage methods, 71.8% agronomist needed information on land preparation and new seeds planting methods, 70.2% agronomist needed information on weather condition and irrigation during dry season, 71.8% agronomist needed information on processing methods and post-harvest management techniques. Lastly, 75.4% needed information on new agricultural equipment and harvesting methods.

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

Research Question 1: What are the information needs of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State?

Table 1: Information needs of agronomist

Items on information needs	Highly needed (%)	Needed (%)	Moderately needed (%)	Rarely needed (%)	Not needed (%)	$\overline{X}$ (SD)
Information on agricultural credit/loan	218 (70.6)	38 (12.3)	15 (4.9)	11 (3.6)	27 (8.7)	4.32 (1.26)
Information on fertilizer application on land and crops	143 (46.3)	69 (22.3)	56 (18.1)	23 (7.4)	18 (5.8)	3.96 (1.21)
Most agronomist needs Information on modern storage methods	124 (40.1)	117 (37.9)	33 (10.7)	18 (5.8)	17 (5.5)	4.01 (1.11)
Information on land preparation and new seeds planting method	119 (38.5)	103 (33.3)	60 (19.4)	16 (5.2)	11 (3.6)	3.98 (1.05)
Information on weather condition and irrigation during dry season	137 (44.3)	80 (25.9)	62 (20.1)	21 (6.8)	9 (2.9)	4.02 (1.09)
Information on processing methods and post-harvest management techniques	148 (47.9)	74 (23.9)	55 (17.8)	26 (8.4)	6 (1.9)	4.07 (1.08)
Information on new agriculture equipment and harvesting methods	138 (44.7)	95 (30.7)	38 (12.3)	21 (6.8)	17 (5.5)	4.02 (1.16)
			Overall mean score	4.05		

Research Question 2: What is the information seeking behaviour of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State?

Table 2 reveals that agronomist sometimes seek information on crop farming =3.25. It shows that 60.5% of agronomist browsed through the internet for information on new seeds, 64% of agronomist often discussed with family and friends to get information on new agricultural equipment. The highest percentage 49.5% agronomist often read newspapers and magazines so as to get the information on crop farming 50.4% agronomist often listen to program on radio and other media in order to get information on crop farming. Also, the highest percentage of 48.2% of agronomist visited libraries and information centers to read books that are related to crop farming, 43.3% others asked farmers' unions/cooperative and other experience farmers in the villages for information on agricultural credit/loan 38.2% of the agronomist attended village square meetings to know information on crop farming, 45.6% agronomist watched documented film / slide Projection on how to get information on crop farming, 46% agronomist sometimes used cell phones to get information from friends and loved ones on crop farming, 51.2% agronomist consulted non-governmental Organizations and financial institutions for agricultural credit/loan and 35.3% agronomist visited the library to locate textbooks on crop farming in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

Table 2: Frequency of agronomist information seeking behaviour

Items on information seeking behaviour	Very often (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)
I browse through the internet to locate Information on new seeds	156 (50.5)	31 (10.0)	39 (12.6)	33 (10.7)	50 (16.2)	3.68 (1.56)
I discuss with friends and family members to get information on new agriculture equipment	82 (26.5)	116 (37.5)	65 (21.0)	23 (7.4)	23 (7.4)	3.68 (1.16)
I read newspapers and magazines so as to get the information on crop farming	80 (25.9)	73 (23.6)	61 (19.7)	61 (19.7)	34 (11.0)	3.34 (1.34)
I listen to program on radio and other media in order to get information on crop farming	99 (32.0)	57 (18.4)	59 (19.1)	65 (21.0)	29 (9.4)	3.43 (1.37)
I visit libraries and information centers to read books that are related to crop farming.	52 (16.8)	97 (31.4)	59 (19.1)	29 (9.4)	72 (23.3)	3.09 (1.42)
I ask farmers' unions/cooperative and other experience farmers in the villages for information on agricultural credit/loan	39 (12.6)	95 (30.7)	124 (40.1)	34 (11.0)	17 (5.5)	3.34 (1.02)
I attend village square meetings to know information on crop farming	35 (11.3)	83 (26.9)	83 (26.9)	32 (10.4)	76 (24.6)	2.90 (1.34)
I watch documented film / slide Projection on how to get information on crop farming	52 (16.8)	57 (18.4)	98 (31.7)	43 (13.9)	59 (19.1)	3.00 (1.33)
I used my cell phones to get information from friends and loved ones on crop farming	55 (17.8)	73 (23.6)	80 (25.9)	62 (20.1)	39 (12.6)	3.14 (1.28)
I consult non-governmental Organizations and financial institutions for agricultural credit/loan	66 (21.4)	92 (29.8)	77 (24.9)	53 (17.2)	21 (6.8)	3.42 (1.19)
I visit the library to locate text books on crop farming	49 (15.9)	60 (19.4)	45 (14.6)	55 (17.8)	100 (32.4)	2.69 (1.49)
			Overall mean score	3.25		

Information behaviour has no significant influence on the quality of life of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Table.3 reveals that agronomist' information behaviour significantly influenced quality of life (R^2 = .507, $F_{4,304}$ = 78.196). The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, information behaviour significantly influence agronomist quality of life (R = .71, $F_{4,304}$= 78.20, P<0.05). Table shows that information behaviour accounts for 50.1% of the total variance in agronomist' quality of life. Furthermore, the standardized beta coefficients shows that frequency of information seeking (β = .51, t = 7.72, p< 0.05) significantly contributes more to agronomist quality of life than information utilization (β= .24, t = 4.26, p< 0.05).However, information sources accessed (β= -.02, t = -.25, p > 0.05) and methods of information retrieval (β= .05, t = .70, p > 0.05) do not significantly contribute to agronomist quality of life.

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

Table 3: Regression analysis of information behaviour on quality of life

ANOVA						
Model		**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
	Regression	29.967	4	7.492	78.196	.000
	Residual	29.126	304	.096		
	Total	59.093	308			
R = .712	**R Square = .507**	**Adjusted R Square = .501**				
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**T**	**Sig.**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	2.433	.070		34.661	.000
	Information Seeking	.228	.030	.512	7.717	.000
	Information Sources	-.008	.032	-.019	-.253	.800
	Information Retrieval	.023	.032	.053	.696	.487
	Information Utilisation	.111	.026	.236	4.258	.000

5. Discussion of Findings

As regards agronomist' information seeking, the findings show that agronomist in Kwara State were information literate, majority often surf the internet for information on new seeds and discuss with family and friends to get information on new agricultural equipment. They sometimes attend village square meeting and visit the library. Findings from this study is in sharp contrast with the study of Mohd Shuib, Abdullah and Ismail (2010) who studied the use of information retrieval tools in Uganda, and found that respondents had difficulties in finding information that was suitable to their needs using available information retrieval tools. In our study, information sources used to obtain information by agronomist included information from family and friends. They sometimes source information from agricultural research institute/University, NGOs, on the internet and online databases. When farmers are able to access related information, access to and use of information will empower the rural agronomist on a path toward financial stability which would improve their quality of life. Besides, it has been reported that information sources use plays a significant role in enlightening people, improving their standard of living, participating in decision making processes and making informed decision (Adekanye, 2014). Buttressing this, Abdullahi, Osahon and Esther (2015) stated that information has become an essential tool for competitive advantage both at the individual, organization, societal and national level and therefore; information is needed to be able to take a right decision and also reduce uncertainty.

This study shows that sources of information to farmers include radio, television and other electronic sources. This is inconsonant with Ronald, Silayo & Abdalah (2015) who studied the preference sources of information used by Seaweeds farmers in Unguja, Zanzibar. They found that neighbours and or friends, radio, family/parents and personal experience are types of information sources used in the study area, but television and radio was mostly preferred consulted by respondents. As regards information retrieval methods of agronomist in Ilorin, Kwara State, the study showed thatoverall, farmers could retrieve agricultural information from a large document collection that deals with storage, organization, management and retrieval of information with a view to find better methods of crop farming to a great extent. When it comes to theextent of information use by agronomist, the study shows the mostly used information include information on

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

agricultural credit/loan, they averagely used information on the recruitment of farm labors. Also, information on marketing of crop, on inorganic fertilizer application and on crops planting was averagely used. The findings show that information behaviour significantly influence agronomist quality of life($R = .71$, $F_{4,304} = 78.20$, $P<0.05$). This implies that there is power in information seeking behaviour, it will keep the farmers abreast of the happenings in the agricultural sector of the economy. Information seeking behaviour also helps to improve farmers overall quality of life.

6. Conclusion

This study revealed that the information behaviour of agronomist in Kwara State, Nigeria is moderately high. Majority are aware of the need for information, making concerted efforts to seek the information and effectively utilizing the information to improve agricultural practices in the state and this enhanced their income and livelihood. The study concluded that information behaviour and quality of life of agronomists in the north central, Nigeria is high and should be sustained for enhance productivity.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommended that: Government agencies and information providers should provide more information in the area of agricultural processing methods and post-harvest management techniques This can be provided by relevant agencies of government and association of farmers in the state and beyond; Agronomist' associations should organize regular farmer's meetings where agricultural information can be discussed and demonstrated to farmers.

References

Abdullahi, A. O., Osahon, I. M., & Esther, S. O. (2015). Assessment of information needs and seeking behaviour of undergraduates in university of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.*Information and Knowledge Management,5*(4):1-16

Adekanye, A. E. (2014). Information needs, utilization and socio-economic empowerment of textile market women in Southern Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal),* Paper 1903. Available at https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1093/

Adesoji, S. A. & Ayinde, J. O. (2013).Ethno-Practices and Adaptation Strategies for the Mitigation of Climate Change by Arable Agronomist in Osun State: Implications for Extension Policy Formulation in Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural & Food* ***Information***, 14 (1), 66-76, DOI: 10.1080/10496505.2013.747070

Adomi, Esharenana E.; Ogbomo, Monday O & Inoni, O. E. (2003). Gender factor in agronomist' access to agricultural information in rural areas of Delta State, Nigeria. *Library Review*,.52 (8), 388-393. DOI: 10.1108/00242530310493798

Robinson, L. & Bawden, D. (2012). *Introduction to Information Science*. London, UK: Facet Publishing.

Farinde, A. J., & Atteh, A. P. *(2009).* Tending Toward Extension Privatization in Nigeria: An Assessment of Arable **Agronomist**' Willingness to Pay for Extension Services in Niger State of Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural & Food* ***Information***, 2009, Vol. 10 Issue 1, p63-75, 13p, 6 Charts; DOI: 10.1080/10496500802705508

Ford, N. (2015). *Introduction to information behaviour*. London Facet Publishing, 50-53.

Online: ISSN 2645-2960; Print ISSN: 2141-3959

MohdShuib, N., Abdullah, N., & Ismail M. (2010). The use of information retrieval tools: A study of computer science postgraduate students. *2010 International Conference on Science and Social Research (CSSR), Kuala Lumpur,* Malaysia.

Naveed, M. A., & Anwar, M. A *(*2015). Understanding Cotton Growers' **Information** Needs from Rural Bahawalpur. *Pakistan Journal of **Information** Management & Libraries* , (16) 21-28.

Odoi, N. *(2017).* The information behaviour of Ugandan banana farmers in the context of participatory development communication. ***Information** Research*, 22(3), 1-22

Oluwasusi, J. O. & Akanni, Y. O.. *(2014).* Effectiveness of Extension Services Among Food Agronomist in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural & Food **Information***, 15 (4), 324-341. DOI: 10.1080/10496505.2014.952175

Phiri, A; Chipeta, G. T. & Chawinga, W. D. *(2019).* Information needs and barriers of rural smallholder farmers in developing countries: A case study of rural smallholder farmers in Malawi. ***Information** Development*, 35 (3),421-434; DOI: 10.1177/0266666918755222

Phiri, Austine; Chipeta, George T. & Chawinga, W. D. *(2019).* **Information** needs and barriers of rural smallholder **farmers** in developing countries: A case study of rural smallholder **farmers** in Malawi. ***Information** Development* , 35 (3),421-434. DOI: 10.1177/0266666918755222

Radad, I., Behzadi, H & Zadehrahim, S. *(*2017). Information seeking behaviour of ordinary and elite saffron farmers in Iran. *Electronic Library* , 35 (2), 233-245. DOI: 10.1108/EL-02-2016-0048

Rasak, O. B. (2016). Propensity to Use Toll-Free Platform for Sourcing Agricultural Information Among Agronomist in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agricultural & Food **Information***, 17 (1) 37-48. DOI: 10.1080/10496505.2015.1110029

Ronald, B., Dulle, F., & Honesta, N. (2014). Assessment of the information needs of rice farmers in Tanzania: A case study of Kilombero District, Morogoro. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, Paper 1071. Retrieved 15th March 2017 from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1071

Ronald, B., Silayo, G. F., & Abdalah, K. J. (2015). Preference sources of information used by seaweeds farmers in Unguja, Zanzibar. *International Journal of Academic Library and Information Science*. Vol. 3(4), pp. 106-116.

Ruževičius, J. (2014). Quality of Life and of Working Life: Conceptions and Research. 17th Toulon-Verona International Conference. Liverpool John Moores UniversityLiverpool (England).

Wilson, T. D. (2000). Recent trends in user studies: action research and qualitative methods. *Information Research, 5*, 5-3.

Yaseen, Ahmad & Soni (2018). Farm Households' Simultaneous Use of Sources to Access Information on Cotton Crop Production. *Journal of Agricultural & Food **Information***, 19 (2), 149-161, DOI: 10.1080/10496505.2017.1325743