

Full Length Research Paper

Information needs and seeking behavior of Muslim clerics in relation to preaching in Nigeria

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Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) studies is one area in Library and Information Science that has over the years attracted the attention of information professionals, resulting in several studies being carried out with a view to understanding the information needs of individuals, why they seek information, how they seek it and the problems encountered. While an enormous amount of literature has shown that several professional groups' information seeking behavior has been studied, an important and influential group of professionals, the Muslim clerics (Ulama) have been totally neglected. The study deployed the survey research method using questionnaire to collect data from 284 respondents which was subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The study found out that the Ulama like any other professional group needs information and take various steps to satisfy them. While preaching, the Ulama consult their personal collections and other libraries to use resources such as Qur'an, Hadith, and commentaries by other scholars, and consult informal channels of information such as council of Ulama, colleagues or friends and relatives. The study also found out that the Ulama deployed different search strategies to identify and locate information when using either the library, ICT, or informal channels. The study has also established significant relationships between demographic factors and search strategies adopted. Finally, it can be revealed that the information seeking pattern of the Ulama can best be described as linear along the features identified by the Leckie et al. (1996)'s Professional Information Search Strategy Model.

Key words: Information needs, information seeking, preaching, Ulama.

INTRODUCTION

The shift in emphasis from the study of information system to the individual as the finder and user of information has over the years received unprecedented attention among librarians and information professionals. This is indicated by the large number of researches carried out on various groups ranging from professionals such as doctors, engineers, scientists, to the unskilled such as janitors, fishermen, rural populace, etc. What is common among these studies was to identify their subjects' information needs and seeking behavior with a view to providing them access to the right information in

order to contribute their quota to the development of the society. One important professional group that is not given corresponding attention, which has been playing and will continue to play influential roles in the life of individuals and the society, is the clergy. Wicks (1997) lamented that the clergy as a professional group has not been adequately covered in terms of their information behavior. The situation is further compounded when viewed from the general perception the society has of the clergy as a conservative group which very little or nothing is known about their information requirement and how

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they access information towards performing their roles in the society. A search into the literature shows that between 1973 and 2008, a period of thirty-seven years, only seven major studies (Porcella, 1973; Erdel, 1978; Allen, 1987; Tanner, 1992; Phillips, 1992; Wicks, 1997; Daniel, 2008) were conducted on the information seeking behavior of the clergy in different contexts. Furthermore, all the studies were on Christian clergy and with the exception of Allen's which concentrated on developing countries of South America; all others were conducted in the United States and Canada.

Similarly, the paucity of literature in information behavior research in developing countries is further exposed by Dutta (2009) who reviewed studies on information behavior of people in developing countries. She lamented, "there are relatively small number of studies done on the information behavior of the citizens of developing countries, and the few studies concentrated on educated individuals and certain geographic areas of the urban population." It is in the light of the above that this study investigates the information needs and seeking behavior of Muslim clerics (Ulama) in relation to their preaching role with particular reference to Borno State in Nigeria.

Research objectives

Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the preaching information needs of the Ulama.
2. To find out how the Ulama identify and locate information for their preaching.
3. To highlight the search strategies deployed when seeking information for their preaching.
4. To determine the relationship between the demographic factors of the Ulama and their information seeking behavior in relation to their preaching role.

Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What constitutes the preaching information needs of the Ulama?
2. How do the Ulama seek information for their preaching?
3. What are the strategies employed by the Ulama to identify and locate information for preaching?
4. Are there relationships between the demographic factors of the Ulama and their preaching role?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Enormous amount of studies has been conducted in the

area of information needs and seeking behavior over the last decade. Many researchers in library and information science as well as in other disciplines have developed varying perspectives of information needs and seeking behavior. These studies have significantly contributed to developments in information services, literacy, skills training, electronic resources, virtual libraries, and traditional resources (Foster, 2004). As a result, a lot of literature in this field can be found in books, journal articles, thesis and dissertations, reports and magazines.

The concept of information need

Information need is one of the information concepts that emerged as a result of researches conducted in information studies. The concept just like information itself is difficult to define; consequently people talk about it without bothering to define it. David (2002) observed that "sometimes there are very good reasons for not doing so, for when definitions are provided they are often vague or highly complex in nature – clouding further some already muddy water, and really serve very little practical use." What compounds the situation is that those who tried to provide a definition ended up defining or explaining other related concepts such as 'wants or use'. Although both are manifestations of need, they are different and do not fully describe need. This variation in usage of the term makes it difficult to arrive at a generally acceptable definition as Forsythe et al. (1992) reported, "no explicit consensus exists in the literature regarding the meaning of the central concept of "information need.....in effect it has been defined according to the particular interest and expertise of various authors".

Despite this problem a number of writers have defined 'information need' and has been widely accepted in the literature. Line (1974) defined it as "information that would further this job or this research, and would be recognized as doing so by the recipient". Probably, the most referred definition of information need in the literature could be that of Belkin (1978) and Dervin (1983). Belkin is of the view that information need arises when a person recognizes a gap in his/her state of knowledge and wishes to resolve that anomaly. He therefore defined information need as an anomalous state of knowledge (ASK). Dervin, on the other hand, believes that we have needs in order to make sense of the world. According to her, "need implies a state that arises within a person suggesting some kind of gap that requires filling. When applied to the word information, as in information need, what is suggested is a gap that can be filled by something that the needing person calls "information". Deducing from the above definitions, one can imply that central to defining 'information need' is the recognition of limitation towards the execution of a task as a result of lack of information and realizing that executing such a task is necessary or important.

The concept of information seeking

Information seeking is the most widely used concept in user studies, and yet the less defined. Probably it is assumed that the meaning of the term is obvious, that is the action taken in order to meet an information need. It is argued that the concept of information seeking is more closely associated with need than to information itself, for example scholars such as Wilson (1999) defined information seeking as “the purposive seeking of information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal”. Quite a number who defined the concept saw it from the perspective of a process of either discovering patterns or filling recognized gaps. Zerbinos (1990) commented that information seeking takes place when a person has knowledge stored in long term memory that precipitates an interest in related information as well as the motivation to acquire it. It can also take place when a person recognizes a gap in his knowledge that may motivate that person to acquire new information. Dervin (1999) and Marchionini (1995), on the other hand, perceived information seeking as problem oriented. Thus, Marchionini defined it as “a process in which humans purposefully engage in order to change their state of knowledge closely related to learning and problem solving”. This is synonymous with Dervin’s definition of sense making in terms of confronting problematic situations; indeed for some scholars, information seeking is synonymous with sense-making (Case, 2002).

Important as the definition of information seeking is the question: “Why do people seek information?” A cursory look at the literature shows various reasons advanced by scholars. These variations can, however, be grouped into four (4) categories propounded by Case (2002): Looking for Answers, Reducing Uncertainty, Making Sense and Motivations. It is clear from the above that information seeking is a conscious or deliberate action initiated by an individual to satisfy an information need. The ultimate consequence of the action is intended to solve problems, reduce uncertainty, make sense of one’s world, or as motivation towards self actualization.

Demographic factors in information seeking behavior

Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) has been defined variously as a concept in users’ studies. Dervin (1997) defined it as the bridge that information seekers use to overpass the gap and to make sense of situations. Available literature has shown that there are a lot of studies in ISB conducted within different contexts such as population, environment, occupations, etc. Case (2002) observed that in recent times researchers have turned their attention more to contextual, situational or role variables rather than demographic. Although demographic variables appear frequently in many ISB studies, their classification in the field of ISB is obviously missing

and does not seem to have been a primary focus of study by researchers. Variables such as age, gender, educational background, experience were also found to be of relative influence in information seeking behavior. Mehmet (2010) reported on the information seeking behavior of Crime Scene Investigators in Turkey that the older, more educated and experienced are positively disposed to accessing information relevant to solving crimes. Marcella and Baxter’s (2000) study on the information needs and information seeking behavior of a sample of United Kingdom’s population with special reference need related to citizenship revealed a lot of significance. The study found that young people were less confident in their abilities to access information. Furthermore, Tu and Hargraves (2003) revealed that “information seeking rises sharply as the level of education increases. 55% of people with a postgraduate education sought information relating to their jobs compared with 25% of those without a high school diploma”.

A lot of studies have also shown high correlation between role related factors such as years of experience, position, education, and information seeking behavior of professionals. Wicks (1999), Tanner (1992) and Porcella (1973) have all concluded that the level of education, years of experience and location of a pastor impact not only on his or her information seeking process, but also on his or her pastoral activities such as preaching, counseling and care-giving. Small et al. (1998) studied the relationship between demographic information of professionals and role related factors emphasizing on years of experience and revealed that the educated often rely on familiar routines to find information. This finding is consistent with earlier studies by Davies (1987), Holland (1995) and Porcella (1973). Wilkins and Leckie (1997) conducted a study on how academic and management staff of universities seeks information related to their work and found no correlation for years employed. However, the level of education of the respondents is highly significant: users with Masters Degree and PhD have used the library more frequently.

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that relatively few studies could be found that specifically addressed some demographic variables that are related to information seeking of the clergy particularly, the Ulama. Most of the related works tend to show the differences that exist in terms of educational level, experience, age and congregation. None of the studies available address relationship between information seeking of the Ulama and their demographic factors in relation to their roles.

Information seeking behavior of the clergy

While enormous amount of literature is bound in the area of user-oriented studies especially within professional context, not much has been written on the information

needs and seeking behavior of religious clerics (Wicks, 1997). A search into the literature between 1973 and 2008 revealed only few major studies in the area and all were directed towards ministers, pastors, evangelists, etc of the various denominations of the Christian faith.

Porcella (1973) studied the information needs as they relate to the preaching role of the Protestant ministers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He postulated that "Protestant minister's doctrinal belief has a causal relationship to their selection of information materials". Erdel's (1978) work was a survey of nineteen (19) Evangelical Mennonite Church pastors in America. Erdel found out that the pastors make little use of institutional and public library, have a personal library, and read mostly religious materials of conservative nature. Allen (1987) investigated information-seeking patterns and resource used by Baptist leaders with particular reference to South America. The study revealed that radio and television were the most widely used channels especially by the lower income and less desirable work situations, while libraries were used more by urban dwellers with greater leadership responsibility and higher educational level. How professional is the pastor in gathering and disseminating information is the centre of Tanner's (1992) study. Analyzing the pastor as information gatherer, he revealed that they sought information through both formal and informal channels. The study also identified two roles of the pastor as information disseminator. As a counselor, he deals with wide range of information needs and used various strategies, including referral to meet those needs; and as a preacher, the pastor relies heavily upon Scripture and personal experiences.

Understanding the relationship between work roles and information seeking behavior of Protestant ministers formed the centre of Phillip's (1992) research. The survey study showed relationships between information seeking behaviors and both choice of information channel and method of retrieving information. The study also found out that the minister as preacher preferred a relatively few formal information channels, especially a personal book collection, pamphlet files, the Bible etc and preferred individualistic or impersonal means such as reading a book (Phillips).

"The information seeking behavior of pastoral clergy: a study of the interaction of their work worlds and work roles" by Wicks (1997) asks whether the information-seeking behavior of pastoral clergy is governed by the interaction of their work worlds and work roles? Findings of the study indicated that pastoral clergy tend to use different types of sources in different roles and that certain combinations of pastoral worlds and pastoral roles influence whether the information seeking behavior will be open or closed (Wicks, 1997).

Ronald's (2008) research is a single case study of a clergy member's behavior in the interpretation of Scripture for the weekly Sunday sermon. Like Wick's, Roland's research is grounded in Dervin's Sense-Making Model which provided the interpretative framework for the

qualitative study. Findings of the study which are similar to Wick's and Allen's revealed that the clergy like most other professionals relied more on their personal collections for information. Other studies within the religious context that were reported in the literature with similar conclusions include Huseman's (1970) study on the selection and use of literature by pastors, Brockway's (1974) survey of the reading habits of pastors in Connecticut, and Gorman (1990) on the utilization of theological libraries by academic theologians.

From the foregoing, it is right to observe that researches conducted on the information needs and seeking behavior of the clergy concentrated more on the Christian clerics. Very few also were conducted in developing countries, and none was carried out on Muslim clerics (Ulama) in Africa, particularly, in Nigeria.

Information and role execution

Within the complex nature of our world, the primary importance of information is widely recognized. People continuously encounter and have access to far more information than they can possibly process. Fox (1983) lamented that there is a lot of information available and by many measures the amount continues to grow at an exponential rate. Information plays an important role in our daily professional and personal lives and we are constantly challenged to take charge of the information that we need for work, fun and everyday decisions and tasks. Drawing from the above, information is viewed as a basic resource which all humans need in a society in order to execute their roles effectively. Several studies have been carried out to determine the importance of information on the efficiency and effectiveness of role execution by different professionals (Leckie et al., 1996).

Studying the relationship between the information seeking pattern of the clergy and their work roles, Wicks (1997), Blizzard (1985) and Phillips (1992) not only identified the roles (preaching, care-giving and administration) for which the clergy require information, but also linked the clergy's work roles and information seeking. The studies also indicated that although the clergy's choice and use of a particular source of information is determined by the role of the moment, generally however, the clergy rely more on informal sources especially when performing care-giving and administrative roles. For the preaching role, the Bible and other religious publications are required. Similarly, several researchers have investigated the effects of roles upon information seeking. For example Mick et al. (1980) and Summers et al. (1983) have all concluded that work roles do not only influence the choice of information sources, but also relate to effective role performance.

What is available on Muslim clerics (Ulama) relates only to the roles they play in the society and their contribution to Islamic education. The few relevant ones to this study, written on the Ulama in Borno include

Laminu (1993), Ashigar (1977), Abdurraman and Canham (1978), Mustapha (1987) and Gazali (2005). Specifically, however, emphasis is placed on the roles they play and their contribution to the development of the Muslim Ummah in Borno and Nigeria in general.

The importance of information in our daily lives and activities cannot be over emphasized. For individuals to perform their roles in the society effectively, they must be knowledgeable. To be knowledgeable means to be informed in order to carry out one's responsibilities. It is clear from the foregoing that the Ulama have very important roles to play in the society and they require information to play these roles successfully.

METHODOLOGY

Research setting

Borno State is the largest of all the 36 States of Nigeria covering an area of 116,589 Square Kilometers and occupying the greater part of the Lake Chad Basin in the extreme North-eastern part of the country. The state is highly pluralistic in its ethnic composition with Kanuri being the dominant ethnic group; it has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. It has a population of 4.3 million, eighty percent (80%) of which are Muslims (Census 2006).

Research design

As stated earlier, the main purpose of the study is to investigate the information needs and seeking behavior of the Ulama in Borno State, Nigeria; thus, the survey method is found to be appropriate. The population for the study was made up of 973 Ulama, recognized and registered by the Borno State Ministry for Religious Affairs and Special Education. This number is widely and variously distributed among the twenty-seven (27) Local Government Areas of the State. Based on Robert and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size for research purposes, a sample size of two hundred and seventy eight (278) within a frame ± 5 margins of error for a population of between nine hundred and fifty (950) and one thousand (1000) was recommended. To arrive at the sample size, 30% of the target population was selected through proportional stratified random sampling. This technique provided the respondents with equal opportunity of being selected to participate in the study. This resulted in a total of 284 Ulama as the sample size.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Based on the sampling procedure adopted, a total of 400 questionnaires were administered directly on the respondents, out of which 281 were properly filled and returned representing 70% response rate.

The analysis consists of both descriptive statistics which provided a general overview of the characteristic features of the respondents as well as the distribution of the respondent's various responses to the questions raised; and inferential statistics used to answer research questions was raised to determine relationships between demographic variables and role performance.

Demographic background of respondents

The demographic background of the respondents varies as presented in Table 1. Result of the analysis shows that majority of the respondents, 101 (35.9%), fall within the age group of 45-54 years closely followed by those within the age bracket of 35-44 years, with 93 (33.1%). Respondents with least representation, 33 (11.7%), belong to the oldest group of the survey with 55 years and above.

Respondents were also asked to state the level of education they attained, as well as indicate how it was acquired. 110 of them representing 39.3% were Masters Degree holders, followed by Bachelors Degree holders, constituting 102 or 36.3%. 16 respondents representing 5.7% were High School leavers and they formed the minority group in the study in terms of educational qualification. When asked to indicate whether they acquired their education formally, informally, or both, majority of the respondents, 141 (50.2%) indicated that they acquired their education by attending both formally established schools and traditional *Islamiyya* schools (*Madrassa*). However, only 33 (11.7%) observed that they acquired their education by attending traditional *Islamiyya* schools (*Madrassa*). As regard experience acquired over the years as practicing Ulama, 77 (27.4%) have been practicing for between 16-19 years. This is closely followed by 66 (23.5%) of the respondents who indicated that they earned between 6-10 years experience of practice. The minority group with between 11-15 years of experience is represented by 36 of the respondents, making-up 12.8%.

Continuing the exploration on the demographic background of the respondents, the questionnaire further enquired about their denominational affiliations. The result of the analysis presented in Table 2 shows that while there is no representative from the *Hanafi Mazhab* that participated in the survey, overwhelming majority of the respondents, 269 (95.7%), belong to the *Maliki Mazhab*. Affiliates of *Hambali* and *Shafi'i Mazhabs* are a tie with 1.1% each, while 2.1% of the respondents come from the "Other" *Mazhab*. Sectarian affiliation of the respondents is also another item on the questionnaire which the study sought to know. The data gathered revealed that majority, 176 (62.2%), affiliate with the *Sufi* sect of the *Ahl Sunnah* followed by the *Salafiyya* sect with 20.3%. Other sects such as the *Tijaniyya*, *Qadriyya*, and *Shi'a* were not represented in the survey study.

Information needs of respondents

Questions were raised on issues such as information lacking at the moment, currently needed information, and steps taken to satisfy the need. When asked to state if they lack any information at the moment in their effort to improve on their role performance, most of the respondents, 275 (97.9%), responded positively. Probed

Table 1. Demographic background of respondents (N=281).

Demographic information		F	%
Age (in years)	25-34	54	19.2
	35-44	93	33.1
	45-54	101	35.9
	55 above	33	11.7
	Total:	Mean: 2.40	STD: .929
Level of education	High school	16	5.7
	Diploma	29	10.3
	Bachelor's degree	102	36.3
	Master's degree	110	39.3
	Doctorate degree	24	8.5
	Total:	Mean: 3.35	STD: .974
How acquired	Formally	107	38.1
	Informally	33	11.7
	Both	141	50.2
	Total:	Mean: 2.12	STD: .933
Years of Experience	1- 5	45	16.0
	6-10	66	23.5
	11-15	36	12.8
	16-19	77	27.4
	20 above	57	20.3
	Total:	Mean: 3.12	STD: 1.397

Table 2. Religious affiliations of respondents (N=281).

Denominations		F	%
Mazhab	Shafi'i	3	1.1
	Maliki	269	95.7
	Hambali	3	1.1
	Hanafi	0	0
	Others	6	2.1
	Total:	Mean: 2.07	STD: .491
Sect	Shi'a	0	0
	Sufiyya	176	62.6
	Salafiyya	57	20.3
	Others	48	17.1
	Total:	Mean: 2.54	STD: .769

further to indicate the information they needed most, the result varies as presented in Table 3.

The analysis of the data gathered on the information needs of the respondents shows that majority, 180 (64.1%), lacked information relating to commentaries on the *Sunnah* of the prophet (SAW) while only about 89 representing 31.7 % stated that information on Arabic

language and literature is what they are lacking most at the moment. Closely related to the above is the question that concerns the information they need at the moment when preaching.

Overwhelming number of the respondents, 212 (75.4%), revealed that obtaining commentary on relevant verses of the Quran dealing with the current issue at hand is what they need most, followed by commentaries on the *Sunnah* of the prophet (SAW); and trailing is Arabic language and literature constituting 56.6% and 54.4% respectively. When asked to further state how often they needed such information? Only 52 or 18.5% reported not often, while one 158 (56.2%) observed that they needed the information very often to perform their roles effectively.

Having realized that they needed information to perform their roles effectively, the researcher sought to know the action taken by the respondents to meet their needs. Consulting their personal collections to satisfy the need was the highest with 36%. Going to libraries and asking a colleague was second with 27%, while the least action taken by respondents to satisfy their information need is using the internet which is represented by less than 1% as depicted in Table 4

Furthermore, majority of the respondents, 132 (47.0%), declared that they often take action towards satisfying

Table 3. Respondents preaching information need.

Variables		F	%
Information lacked	Commentaries on Hadith	180 (N=281)	64.1
	Relevant verses of the Quran	164(N=281)	58.4
	Arabic language and literature	89 (N=281)	31.7
Information needed	Relevant verses of the Quran	212 (N=281)	75.4
	Arabic language and literature	153 (N=281)	54.4
	Commentaries on Hadith	159 (N=281)	56.6
How often	Very often	158 (N=281)	56.2
	Often	71 (N=281)	25.3
	Not often	52 (N=281)	18.5

Table 4. Action taken to satisfy information need (N=281).

Variable		F	%
Action taken	Going to libraries	76	27.0
	Personal collection	101	36.0
	Use my experience	17	6.0
	Ask another Alim	76	27.0
	Ask friends/relatives	10	3.6
	Internet	1	.4
		Mean: 1.72	STD: 1.001
How often	Very often	63	22.4
	Often	132	47.0
	Not often	86	30.6

their information needs, while 86 respondents representing 30.6% reported that they did not often take action to satisfy their needs. Generally, however, respondents rely more on their personal collections than other means for satisfying their information needs.

Information sources and resources for preaching

Respondents were asked to choose from the list provided, five sources and resources each, which they usually consult to perform their preaching role and rank them in order of priority. Under the sources category, libraries recorded the highest value with 167 respondents representing 59.4% with a total mean of 1.04 and a standard deviation of .914. However, respondents emphasize the use of personal libraries and that of colleagues rather than other types of libraries.

Committee of Ulama pulled the highest number of responses – 147 (52.3 %)- in the informal channel category, and is followed by meeting a colleague with 26 respondents representing 19.9%. Contacting friends and relatives came last under the informal channel with 9.6%

of the respondents, while Internet with 9.3% equally came last under the electronic media as the not sought after information source for the purposes of preaching. Further analysis of the respondents' data is presented in Table 5

In the resources category, the print media specifically books dealing with commentaries on the Quran were regarded as the most valuable resources in performing the preaching role as indicated by 96.8 % of the respondents with a total mean of 1.59 and a standard deviation of .250. Journals, another group of resources in the print category, was second with 86 (30.6%) of the respondents, while indexes and bibliographies occupied the third position with 26 respondents making up 9.3%. Audio visuals recorded seventeen respondents or 6% and mean of 3.54 and standard deviation of 1.222. Trailing behind in the non print media category is database (3.9%) which recorded the highest mean (-4.02) and standard deviation of 1.293.

Generally, the analysis indicated that respondents preferred print media especially books and journals mostly from their personal collections or that of their friends and colleagues, and informal channels such as

Table 5. Information sources/resources consulted for preaching.

Preaching		F	%	M	Std
Sources	Libraries	167 (N=281)	59.4	1.04	.914
	Committee of Ulama	147 (N=281)	52.3	1.91	1.142
	Colleagues	56 (N=281)	19.9	2.58	1.245
	Friends and Relatives	27 (N=281)	9.6	2.99	1.252
	Internet	26 (N=281)	9.3	3.40	1.255
Resource	Books	272 (N=281)	96.8	1.59	.250
	Journals	86 (N=281)	30.6	2.07	1.022
	Indexes/Bibliographies	26 (N=281)	9.3	3.19	1.175
	Audio Visuals	17 (N=281)	6.0	3.54	1.222
	Databases	11 (N=281)	3.9	4.02	1.293

consulting the Ulama to source for information for preaching. The electronic media such as internet, databases, and audio visuals are however less emphasized as regular and preferred sources of information for preaching by the respondents.

Information searching strategies for preaching

Preaching is one the most important roles played by the Ulama as part of their responsibilities to the Muslim community (Ummah). In order to discharge this burden effectively, they seek relevant information through various media. The three major media accessible to the respondents which are also identified in the study were libraries, Internet and informal channels. The researchers came up with different seeking strategies and requested respondents to indicate those applicable to them when preaching as presented in Table 6

It shows that majority, 98 respondents representing 34.9%, indicated that they ask for assistance from the librarians and other library staff to be guided when using the library as a medium to seek information for preaching. 75 or 26.7% go directly to the shelves, while 54 (19.2%) use the catalogues to search for relevant materials; 46 (16.4%) browse through books and other library materials, while only 8 (2.8%) observed that they stumble upon most of the information they need by chance or accident.

Seeking information using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is now not only common but also inevitable for a successful search. The large amount of information contained in electronic format can only be accessed using such search strategies as basic keyword searches, prelisted menus, and advance searches etc, brought about by modern ICT. When asked to state how they search for information in the internet using the available technology, most respondents (32.7%) remark that they use the basic keyword search. This is followed

by pre-listed menu search with 26.7%; 20.3% use the Boolean operators, 17.4% preferred the pre-coordinate subject searching, while only 2.8% use advance search strategy.

Apart from using the conventional avenues for seeking information, respondents have agreed on informal channels as equally important sources of information. When asked to indicate the informal channels they deploy when seeking information for preaching, overwhelming majority of respondents, 125 representing 44.5% revealed that they consult the committee of Ulama-, 31% consult their colleagues, while 12.5% rely on their friends and relatives. Community leaders were not considered much of a source as indicated by 7.5% of respondents, while the least is conferences, seminars, and workshops which attracted 13 respondents, representing 4.6% only.

Relationships between demographic factors and preaching role

Here, the intention was to establish relationships between demographic factors and choice of information sources for preaching. Respondents' background information such as age, education, years of experience, denominational and sectarian affiliations was tested against the information sources consulted for preaching role. The result is seen in Table 7. The Chi-square test was used for the analysis except where otherwise stated. All computations were done at 0.05 level of significance.

Relationship between age and preaching

Both Chi-square and Monte Carlos tests were used to determine whether there exist a relationship between age and the choice of information sources for the purpose of performing the preaching role. The result of the test

Table 6. Respondent's searching strategies for preaching.

Seeking strategy		F	%
Using the library	Ask librarians	98	34.9
	Go to shelves	75	26.7
	Browse books	54	19.2
	Catalogue	46	16.4
	Serendipity	8	2.8
	Total:	N=281	100%
Using ICT	Basic keyword search	92	32.7
	Prelisted menu	75	26.7
	Boolean operators	57	20.3
	Subject heading	49	17.4
	Advance search	11	3.9
	Total:	N=281	100%
Other channels	Committee of Ulama	125	44.5
	Colleagues	87	31.0
	Friends/Relatives	35	12.5
	Community Leaders/Elders	21	7.5
	Conf./Sem./Workshops	13	4.6
	Total:	N=281	100%

indicated that three sources had statistically significant relationship with age; that is age and colleagues ($X^2=71.402$, $DF=12$, $MC P=.000$); age and disciples ($X^2=60.364$, $DF=12$, $P=.000$); and age and committee of Ulama ($X^2=66.480$, $DF=3$, $P=.000$). These results implied that the older the Alim the more inclined he is to informal channels of information for preaching.

Contrary to the above, the test result of the three remaining sources shows no significant relationship; that is age and library ($X^2=14.019$, $DF=4$, $MC P=.107$); age and internet ($X^2=3.977$, $DF=1$, $P=.086$); and age and friends/relatives ($X^2=3.686$, $DF=4$, $MC P=.434$); all by implication suggests that the younger Ulama between the ages of 20-35 years actively explore sources of information more than their contemporaries for performing their preaching role.

Relationship between Level of Education and Preaching

In order to determine whether or not a relationship exists between the level of education and the choice of sources of information for preaching, the Chi-square test was performed and the result as can be seen in Table 7 indicated that out of the six main sources identified four were not significantly related to level of education. They are contacting a disciple ($X^2=2.536$, $DF=4$, $P.638$), consulting with colleagues as a source of information for preaching ($X^2=24.133$, $DF=16$, $FE P=.057$), conferring

with friends/relatives ($X^2=11.537$, $DF=4$, $MC=.118$) and consulting committee of Ulama ($X^2=5.844$, $DF=1$, $P=.076$).

The results which indicated significant relationships are level of education and the choice of library as a source of information for preaching ($X^2=57.119$, $DF=16$, $FE P=.000$); and level of education and internet ($X^2=8.051$, $DF=1$, $FE P=.002$). This result is a vindication of the general assumption that indeed the educated elites patronize the internet and the library more compared to the lowly educated. These results implied that those with higher educational qualifications do not make much use of information from informal sources such as colleagues, friends and relatives, their disciples and committee of Ulama for preaching purposes. This may be because they relied more on formal sources such as the library, the internet and their personal collections to perform their preaching roles.

Relationship between years of experience and preaching

The Chi-square and Monte Carlos tests were also carried-out to determine the relationship between the years spent as an Alim and the choice of information sources for preaching. The tabulated result (Table 7) shows that four sources were significantly related to years of experience of the Ulama. They are contacting colleagues ($X^2=58.849$, $DF=16$, $MC=.000$), meeting

Table 7. Relationship between demographic factors and preaching role.

Demographic factors versus preaching					
Preaching sources	Age	Education	Years of exp.	Denomination	Sect
Libraries	X ² =15.019, DF=4, *MC=.107 Not significant	X ² =57.119, DF=16, **P=.000 Significant	X ² =6.333, DF=4, *MC=.149 Not significant	X ² =1.497, DF=1, P=.221 Not significant	X ² =8.842, DF=1, P=.003 Significant
Internet	X ² =3.977 DF=1 P=.086 Not significant	X ² =8.051 DF=1 **P=.002 Significant	X ² =.357 DF=1, P=.550 Not Significant	X ² =2.425 DF=1 P=.119 Not significant	X ² =.560 DF=1 P=.454 Not significant
Colleagues	X ² =71.402 DF=12 *MC=.000 Significant	X ² =24.133 DF=16 **P=.027 Not significant	X ² =58.849 DF=16 *MC=.000 Significant	X ² =28.585 DF=12 *MC=.004 Significant	X ² =34.136 DF=8 *MC=.000 Significant
Friends/Relatives	X ² =3.686 DF=4 *MCP=.434 Not significant	X ² =11.537 DF=4 *MC=.018 Significant	X ² =15.441 DF=4 P=.004 Significant	X ² =4.444 DF=4 *MC=.377 Not significant	X ² =36.749 DF=8 P=.000 Significant
Disciples	X ² =60.364 DF=12 P=.000 Significant	X ² =2.536 DF=4 P=.638 Not significant	X ² =29.964 DF=16 P=.018 Significant	X ² =2.648 DF=3 *MC=.284 Not significant	X ² =23.249 DF=8 P=.003 Significant
Committee of Ulama	X ² =66.480 DF=3 P=.000 Significant	X ² =5.844 DF=1 P=.016 Significant	X ² =7.130 DF=1 P=.008 Significant	X ² =3.340 DF=3 **P=.352 Not significant	X ² =8.441 DF=2 P=.015 Significant

*Monte Carlos test was conducted instead of Chi-square because it violated the assumption. **Fisher's Exact test was conducted instead of Chi-square because it violated the assumption.

friends and relatives (X²=15.441, DF=4, P=.004), meeting one's disciples (X²=29.964, DF=16, P=.018) and consulting the committee of Ulama (X²=7.130, DF=1, P=.008). This suggests that the more years one spends as an Alim, the more he relies on close associates and relatives for information to carry out his preaching role.

The choice of the library (X²=6.333, DF=4, MC=.149) and internet (X²=.357, DF=1, P=.550) as sources of information for preaching were not statistically significant in relation to years of experience as an Alim. One can say by implication, that the 'new' Ulama with little or no preaching experience naturally possess the potentials to explore the library and the internet as main sources of information for preaching. Again, this result indicates that the less experienced exploit the advantages of these information sources more than the experienced because of their desire to acquire knowledge and grow in the profession.

Relationship between denominational affiliation and preaching role

To see whether there is any relationship between the denominational affiliations of the respondents and their choice of information for preaching, both Chi-square and Monte Carlos tests were deployed variously. The result of the tests as presented in Table 7 above revealed that out of the six main preaching sources, only one had any significant relationship with denominational affiliation. The results are as follows:- denominational affiliation and consulting colleagues (X²=28.585, DF=12, MC=.004 - significant); choice of library as a source of information for preaching (X²=1.497, DF=1, P=.221); choice of internet (X²=2.425, DF=1, P=.119); contacting friends and relatives (X²=4.444, DF=4, MC=.377); conferring with a disciple (X²=2.648, DF=3, MC=.284); and consulting the committee of Ulama (X²=3.340, DF=3, FE P=.352).

From the above analysis, it could be said that while there are apparently different denominations which the respondents are affiliated with, that does not relate to the way they chose information sources for the purposes of conducting their preaching roles. In other words, respondents are aware of the information potentials of the various sources identified and the need to harness them for the purposes of performing their preaching roles effectively.

Relationship between sectarian affiliation and preaching role

The last set of test under preaching sources was conducted to determine if any relationship exists between belonging to a sect and choice of information sources for preaching. Again the six sources were pitched against sectarian affiliations of respondents. The result of the analysis which is presented in Table 7 above established that five preaching information sources were statistically significant. They are: Libraries ($X^2=8.842$, $DF=1$, $P=.003$); conferring with colleagues ($X^2=34.136$, $DF=8$, $MC=.000$); meeting friends and relatives ($X^2=36.749$, $DF=8$, $P=.000$); conferring with one's disciple ($X^2=23.249$, $DF=8$, $P=.003$) and consulting the Committee of Ulama ($X^2=8.441$, $DF=2$, $P=.015$). This implied that apart from relying on libraries, there is a lot of consultation between an Alim and his disciples and colleagues within the same sect. This is made possible because of the imminence between them. The only results which established no relationship were: sectarian affiliation and internet as an information source for preaching ($X^2=.560$, $DF=1$, $P=.454$).

The last set of reported analysis showed by implication that there were different sects which the respondents are affiliated with, and that does not in any way relate to the way they showed preference or chose information sources for preaching. In other words, respondents did realize the information potentials of the various sources identified and the need to exploit them for their preaching regardless of their sectarian affiliations.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study showed that most of the respondents need information to carry out their preaching role successfully. The Ulama in Borno just like any other professional group, need information to perform their preaching role. This is consistent with findings of all information seeking behavior in the literature. Findings from some of these studies confirmed that people need information for various reasons such as solving personal problems and in decision-making (Derwin 1999); a goal seeking and a need satisfaction (Brown 1999); and as a role and task accomplishment (Leckie et al., 1996).

The study found out that majority of respondents lacked information relevant to the task at hand. Generally,

however, the study revealed that they lacked information on commentaries of the Hadith. While one could say that there are many resources in this area notable among them being the Sahih Bukhari which runs into hundreds of volumes, it could be said that they lacked such information because they could not afford to acquire the whole set nor access them at will. This finding agrees with Nathan and Saxton (2006) whose study also found out that lacking information is always associated with lack of information resources and or the means to retrieve them. It must also be added that lack of a steady and adequate income greatly contributed to the above finding. With regard to the action taken to bridge the gap, the findings of the study indicated that the Ulama very often take steps to address the situation. This shows the importance of the realization that to be among the Ulama and be able to carry-out one's role expectations successfully, one needs to constantly be up to date which often results into seeking relevant information sources and resources with a view to acquiring more knowledge and therefore narrow the information gap. Similarly, Westbrook (1999) also found out that when people take action by engaging in information behavior they are not only attempting to satisfy existing needs, but they are also engaged in trying to lay the groundwork for future events that they anticipate.

Findings from the study indicated that the Ulama principally consulted the main scripture texts (Qur'an and Hadith) while preaching. They also preferred print sources mostly from their personal libraries and tend to rely more on informal channels such as committee of Ulama or colleagues. The findings were the same with that Wicks (1997) who found that the clergy rely on the scriptures and other religious publications mostly in print form found within their personal collections and libraries. He also found out that they extensively used inter-personal sources for their preaching roles. This is expected because preaching is a sacred role which is strictly confined to the interpretation of the scriptures without any prejudice of opinion. Consequently, the traditional sources such as Qur'an and Hadith constitute the primary resources used by the Ulama.

Findings from the study established that the Ulama deployed various search strategies to obtain information for their preaching role. Although they rely primarily on Qur'an and Hadith, they gather information on the task by browsing through the Qur'an in search of the relevant chapters and verses and the Sunnah to aid in the interpretation. This requires going through their collection, the library, or an informal channel. When using the library they go directly to shelves if they are conversant with the system, otherwise they asked for assistance. However, where they were using their personal collections they already knew where the materials were so they accessed them directly and browse through searching for relevant information. Consultations among colleagues and the Committee of Ulama were also a great way of searching

information for preaching. Previous studies in relation to searching strategies adopted by professionals to perform work tasks conducted by Pinelli (1991), Leckie et al. (1996) and Johnson (1996); all concurred that professionals used searching strategies they are familiar with and those that were found to be reliable towards solving the task at hand. Thus like other professionals, the Ulama search for information in the library or personal collections by going directly to the shelves and when using informal channel they consult with the council of Ulama and colleagues.

Preaching, as one of the fundamental responsibilities of the Ulama, is discharged by constantly reminding people of their obligation to Allah (SWT) through *Fatwa*, *Hudba*, and *Tafsir*; and to carry out these tasks effectively, the Ulama require relevant information which they seek through different sources, under different and difficult circumstances. The study has clearly shown that the Ulama in Borno need information to perform this role and to update their knowledge. This confirms the findings of Porcella (1973) and Wicks (1997) whose works on clergy revealed that they seek for information in order to perform their work roles and the need to keep abreast and knowledgeable about the scriptures.

On the sources consulted for preaching purposes, the study found out that the Ulama relied more on their libraries or personal collections and informal channels such as consulting colleagues and the committee of Ulama. The study observed that they preferred these sources because they are easily accessible, reliable and cheap. Findings by Allen (1987), Leckie et al. (1996) and Haruna and Mabawonku (2001) have all variously concluded that professionals generally rely on their personal libraries and professional colleagues for information to solve a particular task at hand. Thus, the Ulama in Borno are not an exception when in terms of their information seeking pattern for their preaching role. The study has also established the fact that the Ulama in Borno were found to depend more on printed information resources especially books. For preaching purposes they specifically relied on no other book than The Holy Qur'an, Hadith and commentaries by renowned scholars. Similarities could be seen between this finding and that of Al-suqri (2007) and Mehmet (2010) who also concurred that professionals tend to depend more on printed resources even where they could access the electronic sources or the internet. One can say that the Ulama in reality find it easier to locate and use printed information resources than other resources for various reasons among which is non availability because 'the libraries in Nigeria have not progressed positively from the traditional library' (Kamba, 2010).

The study has revealed that the Ulama in Borno need and seek information to carry out their preaching role. They mostly used printed information resources specifically the Qur'an, Hadith, and commentaries of renowned scholars, usually from their personal collections and

interpersonal sources such as colleagues and council of Ulama.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the information needs of the Muslim clerics (Ulama) and how they seek information to perform the preaching role. Four research questions and objectives were developed to guide the study. The survey method was used employing mainly the quantitative approach to collect data from two hundred and eighty-one (281) respondents, selected through proportionate stratified random sampling, from a population of nine hundred and seventy-three (973) spread across twenty seven Local Government Areas, covering an area of about 116,589 Square Kilometers. The results from the analysis which was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were quite revealing.

It can be concluded from the foregoing that there exists a lot of similarities between the information seeking behavior of the Ulama and other professionals such as engineers, lawyers, and pastors etc. having exhibited strict reliance and dependence on information sourced formally to perform their roles. Again the Ulama just like other professionals showed their preferences to print media mostly from their personal collections or that of their friends and colleagues, and informal channels such as consulting with colleagues to source for information to perform their roles. However the Ulama in Nigeria differed greatly from such professionals in their use of electronic media such as internet, databases, and audio visuals. Furthermore, while most of the researches conducted on information seeking behavior were carried-out in the Western world where access and opportunities to these technologies are available; such is, however, not the case with the Ulama in Nigeria, who live in a third world country characterized by poor infrastructure, scarce resources and competing demands, as well as lack of support for the information industry. These coupled with the Islamic tradition of reading rooted in print, the perception of technology as 'western' and lack of training and skills to use these technologies were perhaps the factors that attributed to the differences in the information needs and seeking behaviors of the Ulama and other professionals.

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