

**INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING
BEHAVIOUR OF JOURNALISTS AT THE NATION MEDIA
GROUP**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE STUDENT:

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree or any other academic award in any university or other institution of learning.

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DEDICATION

My wife Jane Margaret and my children Valerie, Angela and Tony have borne the brunt of an “absentee” husband/father with a lot of endurance and understanding. To them I say thank you. The disciplined life of my father, the late Reuben Sasaka, has had a positive, indelible mark on my outlook to life, education and humility included.

ABSTRACT

Identification of information needs and the seeking behaviour has a considerable effect on the work of journalists. For the journalists to come up with full-proof stories, they need to identify clearly the information they need to cover the subject at hand and the expectations of their audience regarding the subject matter. They then require to have a clear roadmap of how they will go about seeking the information. Although journalists seek information on a daily basis, the extent to which they methodically go about identifying information needs and how they go about seeking it is unclear. This study therefore, investigated how journalists at Nation Media Group go about identifying their information needs and how they proceed to seek it. The specific objectives of the research were: to find out the information needs of the journalists at Nation Media Group; their sources of information; the level of information searching and retrieval skills of the journalists; establish the challenges journalists encounter in pursuit of information and suggestions to mitigate the challenges. The study was based on Niedzwiedzka's model of information behaviour. The research used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It used purposive sampling to get the sample size. Data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and document review. It was analysed using descriptive content analysis supported by use of tables and charts. The study found that stories done by some journalists, especially the younger ones, lacked in-depth content and did not provide a full proof fallback position in times of litigation. The study also found that quite a sizeable number of journalists at the Nation Media Group was not adequately skilled in electronic information searching and retrieval. The other finding was that journalists encounter many challenges in the course of their duties. Whilst they stand as the middle ground among protagonists, each warring faction views them as supportive of the other side of the divide. The study concluded that some of the journalists need to relook at their modus operandi in terms of how they assess their information needs and how they go about gathering information to back up their stories and satisfy those needs. The research recommends that journalists should undergo periodic refresher courses on information searching and retrieval as well as on house style, editorial policy, defamation, slander and the right of privacy for information sources. The study also recommends that journalists and librarians should create a rapport for ease of information dissemination. It further recommends that new journalists should go through an in-depth induction in the use of the in-house library to maximize on its potential.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ACM	Association for Computing Machineries
ASIS&T	Association for Information Science and Technology
CAS	Current Awareness Service
FM	Frequency Modulation
ISB	Information Seeking Behaviour
NMG	Nation Media Group
NTV	Nation Television
PDA	Personal Digital Assistants
SDI	Selective Dissemination Information
SIGIR	Special Interest Group on Information Retrieval

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 The Nation Media Group

The Nation Media Group was established in earnest in 1960 on the backdrop of Kenya's quest for independence. It became the market leader in 1970. It started with publishing the *Taifa*, followed by *The Nation* (once a week) in March 1960 and the *Daily Nation* in October 1960. In subsequent years, it has added *The East African*, the *Business Daily*, the *Daily Metro* (now defunct), and NTV, Easy FM, QFM and various digital platforms. On the regional front, it has so far established KFM radio, NTV Uganda and *The Monitor* newspaper all of Uganda and *The Citizen*, *Mwananchi* and *Mwanaspoti* newspapers in Tanzania. The latest addition (January 2012), is KFM radio in Rwanda and upcoming bureau in Juba, South Sudan and Bujumbura, Burundi.

This phenomenal growth has necessitated the employment of many journalists both on permanent and contract terms. Currently, the Group has engaged over 2000 of such journalists spanning the region. It is against this backdrop that the essence of establishing the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at the media group is anchored. Timely and accurate information is of utmost importance to the journalists here because of making the Group's stable reliable by beating publication deadlines and arriving to the market on time as well as having authentic information and for their own career development. It is necessary for the librarians in this organization to anticipate the needs of the journalists and prepare to meet them beforehand. Similarly, there is need for the journalists to be assisted to develop a

workable rhythm of seeking the information in a systematic manner. The help should target the kind of information sources they consult and the searching and retrieval skills required to attain optimum relevant hits from whatever sources they may be consulting. Credible information is also important to the journalists because it will shield them from litigation by avoiding legal suits as well as offering reliable defence in such suits. Over and above that, with honed skills in information needs assessment and seeking behaviour, they will reliably inform, educate and entertain their clientele without fear or favour.

1.1.2 Information Searching and Retrieval

The fields of information searching and retrieval both focus on the interaction between people and content in information systems. These two fields share common ground largely because both are concerned with the three perspectives of people, information and technology in locating information stored in computer systems. Information searching refers to people's interaction with information retrieval systems, ranging from adopting search strategy to judging the relevance of information retrieved (Jansen and Rieh 2010).

The term search denotes the specific behaviours of people engaged in locating information (Marchionini 1995). In contrast, information retrieval is finding material of an unstructured nature that satisfies an information need from within large collections stored in computer databases (Manning, Raghavan & Schutze, 2008). This definition does not differ much from van Rijsbergen's (1979) much earlier statement that information retrieval is automatic (vs. manual), deals with information or documents (vs. data), and informs the user concerning the existence or nonexistence

of information that is related to a query, versus changing the knowledge of the user. The term retrieval means the extraction of information from a content collection.

Fields are large areas of inquiry or research which may have a number of specialties (Wilson, 1983). As a field of study, information retrieval is well established, with its own conferences and journals focused exclusively on information retrieval research (ACM SIGIR Conferences, Transactions on Information Systems, Information Retrieval). Unlike the information retrieval field, the field of information searching has not gained a status as a distinct field. Its conferences (ASIS&T) and journals (Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, Journal of Documentation) tend to encompass other information science fields. However, from the viewpoint of “production of new knowledge” (Wilson, 1983), the number of researchers engaged with information searching research is quite large, and the research community has been well established. Therefore, one may argue that information searching is a de facto research field.

Jansen and Rieh (2010) identify, compare and contrast seventeen theoretical constructs for the fields of information searching and retrieval to emphasize the uniqueness of and synergy between the two fields. Theoretical constructs are the foundational elements that underpin a field's core theories, models, assumptions, methodologies and evaluation procedures. These constructs are concepts from which researchers build theories, develop models, and evaluate results and measure impact. According to Rosenberg (1974), they serve as the structure for organizing knowledge and perceptions. Understanding these constructs will help in understanding the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at the Nation Media Group and how to go about helping them achieve their information targets day in day out by

organizing the knowledge and information structures relevant to their research endeavours.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Unlike in many disciplines where conventional research suffices, journalists have to rely more and more on contemporary ideas as well as grey literature. For background information to beef up their stories, they have to rely mostly on generated literature over time through the archived newspaper articles, video clips and other sources like reports, conference proceedings, press statements, financial statements and other similarly current and unpublished sources. Journalists also consult online sources. For journalists, the events of the day's sources are invariably news generators of the moment like politicians, religious leaders, opinion shapers, economic giants, innovators in science and technology, environmental matters, agriculture and a myriad other data mines. However, they have to beef up this news fresh from the field with corroborative background information that gels with the issue at hand to ensure good grounding and continuity. For example, if a journalist went to cover elections of the Mbo-I-Kamiti Land-buying Company, s/he would need to do further inquiry on the company's history, its past record on elections etc and relate the same to the current elections which s/he has just been covering. This will lend credence to the event that s/he has just covered and put it in proper perspective for the readers to understand the context.

To be able to do this diligently, a mechanism that can enable them retrieve precise archival information in a timely manner to go with their current respective stories should be in place. This goes hand in hand with their ability to exhibit good information retrieval skills. The principal source of background information for the

journalists is their own in-house media library coupled with online services and seasoned journalists' institutional memory. However, over-reliance on one has often proved inadequate. Due to inadequate skills in information searching and retrieval, some journalists resort to over-reliance on experienced hands for institutional memory to corroborate their developing stories. This has sometimes run into danger because these senior staff are open to human error and therefore have at times inadvertently given misleading information. The aspect of subjectivity, e.g. ethnic bias in news coverage or personal whims that at times may lead to news slanting in favour of or against certain people etc inspite of the existence of editorial guidelines, is also an issue that needs to be probed. The employer policy, through the editorial guidelines and house style, may in itself need investigation as it seems to curtail the parameters within which the journalists operate and therefore affects their true potential in acting as the public watchdogs.

Searching and retrieval skills among journalists could very well be a factor influencing their information needs and seeking behaviour going by the number of incidences of goofs, factual errors, apologies and corrections. Their ability to carry out searches needs to be put under the microscope. Thus, it is important to investigate these information needs and information seeking behaviours among journalists in this media house so as to help them attain the expected high standards and minimize or eradicate substandard work while achieving speed to avoid setbacks like late arrival on the market, litigation, unreliability for non-authentic news and features, a run on customer base etc. This is important because both litigation and late market arrivals are an occurrence that bedevils Nation Media Group frequently and some of the

causes have been traced back to the quality and timeliness of the work of journalists, among others.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at the Nation Media Group with a view to developing appropriate strategies to improve information dissemination.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the information needs of journalists at The Nation Media Group;
2. Establish the sources of information consulted by the journalists;
3. Determine the information searching and retrieval skills of journalists;
4. Establish the challenges journalists encounter in pursuit of information;
5. Offer suggestions to improve the journalists' information seeking and use experience.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What kind of information do journalists require in order to execute their work roles?
2. Where do the NMG journalists access their information?
3. What is the level of information searching and retrieval competency of NMG journalists'?
4. What challenges do the journalists encounter in accessing and using information?
5. What should be done to improve NMG journalists' information search experience?

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumes that:

The sphere of journalism in Kenya has gone through many stages of review but it has not yet been established whether any researcher has empirically established the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at Nation Media Group.

Although the Nation Media Group has provided a digitized library, journalists do not make sufficient use of it.

Lack of or minimal use of information services is likely to affect the performance of journalists and negatively affect the Group's product quality, reliability and reputation.

Apathy by most journalists towards information seeking and use could be caused by both lack of interest in undertaking in-depth research and inadequate searching and retrieval skills.

These shortcomings could as well be a result of lack of proper information mapping by the information managers due to inadequate user needs survey.

In addition to the above, the journalists could also be feeling frustrated by the limited level of access rights to the digitized library which denies them the right to download PDF pages of the previous Nation Media Group publications hence affecting their research endeavours and motivation.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will be of great benefit to the Nation Media Group. The group will benefit from the study findings, recommendations and conclusion in addressing information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists and likely to improve, sustain and encourage the journalists to undertake their duties efficiently. It will assist NMG

management to understand, appreciate and address problems experienced by journalists besides forming a basis for further research in this area. The researcher aims to bring to the fore a framework that will entrench best practices in identifying information needs and seeking behaviour within the rank and file of journalists at the Nation Media Group.

The findings are expected to help librarians to become more refined in their identification of the journalists' information needs and their seeking behaviour so that the journalists can do their work to the best of their abilities as expected in terms of accuracy, reliability, objectivity, timeliness freely and fairly. This will help to reduce the risk of litigation for defamation or other legal transgressions that may be injurious to not only their professional reputation as journalists but also that of their parent organisation. It will also help to make NMG's publications to stand the test of time in terms of authenticity.

The study will add to the body of the existing literature on the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at the Nation Media Group. This will help the future scholars and researchers to understand what has been researched on the same topic, what gaps exist and what should be done to cover such gaps in modern journalism. The study will further add to readily available literature in the libraries and help to bring up an understanding of the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at the Nation Media Group which could be replicated in the other journalism houses.

1.8 Scope and Limitations

1.8.1 Scope of the Study

The sphere of operation of Nation Media Group spans the Eastern Africa region. However, the scope of this study specifically zeros in on the information needs and seeking behaviour of print journalists at the Nation Media Group's headquarters in Nairobi and the Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu bureaus. These are the main hubs of journalists working for NMG.

1.8.2 Limitations of the Study

The researcher lacked adequate capacity to traverse the wide geographical area due to financial constraints and time. This slowed down the research process since all the areas targeted had to be visited physically for face-to-face interviews. To counter this challenge the researcher resorted to infrequent visits when time and funds could allow until all the areas were covered.

The researcher also found it hard to collect adequate data because NMG operations have rigid policy guidelines that put hurdles in the way. This was largely due to apprehension about the company's operations being laid bare that could end up in the hands of other competing media outlets. To approach this limitation, the researcher got policy guidance from the NMG, informed the management that this was an academic study and not intended to disadvantage Nation Media Group. The researcher assured the company of the confidentiality of information gathered. With an authorization letter from Moi University requesting for permission by the researcher to carry out the study at NMG, the company furnished the researcher with NMG transmittal letter to carry out the research whilst abiding with confidentiality clauses.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Information: Information is anything that gives knowledge in the form of facts in a medium that is capable of communicating.

Information need: It is the identified gap, void or insufficient knowledge that seeks to be filled with information acquired from a source.

Information seeking: It is the process of looking or searching for information to satisfy an identified information need. Information seeking is a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge (Case, 2002).

Information seeking behaviour: Information seeking behaviour encompasses information behaviour as well as the totality of unintended or passive behaviour...as well as purposive behaviour that do not involve seeking, such as avoiding information. (Case, 2002). Basically therefore, it is either the positive or negative attitude of the person to information seeking.

Information sources: The various origins and media of information which include both published and unpublished works in print and non-print formats.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks upon which the study is anchored. These include Wilson's and Niedzwiedzka's Information Models. It also reviews literature related to the topic of study such as Information Seeking and Uncertainty, Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Media Practitioners, Measuring Online Information Seeking Context, The Seventeen Theoretical Constructs of Information Searching and Retrieval, Journalists and their Sources, Information Seeking Behaviour of Journalists, Information Seeking and Use by Newspaper Journalists and The Information Seeking Behaviour and Needs of Journalists in Context.

Journalism has evolved from medieval times when scribes used to scratch and record information on rocks, papyrus, scrolls and skins. Those pre-historic scribes are the modern-day journalists. Journalists are word-smiths who thrive in collecting, collating and disseminating, mostly but not restricted to, contemporary information. They are information gatherers. Theirs is not merely a profession but a calling to enlighten the public on a variety of issues as well as assist in various spheres of national development by informing, educating and entertaining (Berryman, 2008). Their main sources of information are primary e.g. press releases, conference/workshop/seminar papers and interviews with news sources either face-to-face, video conferencing or telephone. However, all of the above must be corroborated by background information to the subject at hand which beefs up the 'dry' news to give it context and authenticity.

The other branch of journalism, namely feature writing, may have a slight departure from this course. They exhibit a lot more leeway in their treatment of stories, running from the contemporary to the tales of yore. They rely more on researched work than news bits gathered from the field. They, too, have their own information needs and information seeking behaviour, much in the league of entertainment journalists writing about arts, culture and music (Nicholas, 2000).. All the above-mentioned categories of journalists at the Nation Media Group are exposed to new technological tools to boost their story gathering process like laptops, still and video cameras, outside broadcast equipment, tape recorders, on-line searches and an internal library database wired to their workstations over and above the books available in the physical library. These are meant to assist in beating deadlines by gathering and collating information within a short period while maintaining a high level of accuracy to earn reliability as well as avoid litigation (Poteet, 2000).

Information need, seeking and use are areas of fundamental concern to journalism professionals. During the past decades, a considerable body of literature has been produced dealing with information needs and seeking behaviour of both individuals and groups in a variety of contexts. It is understood that information needs arise when an individual finds himself in a problem situation, when he or she no longer can manage with the knowledge that he or she possesses (Talja 2006). It is the information need that triggers information seeking which is caused by “uncertainty due to a lack of understanding, gap in meaning, or a limited construct” (Kuhlthau 2003).

A study by Poteet (2000) found that information seekers use a variety of formal and informal sources with varying emphasis from one discipline to another. Journalists seem to be different from other professional and discipline-oriented groups. First, they are not a homogenous group and their approach to information is different from others. Second, while using the services of information professionals, journalists do not communicate their need in clear and precise terms. According to Nicholas and Martin (1997), journalists do this because of the confidentiality of their interest, their own uncertainty as to what they want and a certain professional arrogance as to why information professionals should want to know more about their work. Full understanding of this approach is critical in order to design information systems and services that will enable journalists to meet their information needs.

Journalists, important as they are as information consumers as well as producers at the same time, were not investigated to understand their information needs and seeking behaviour up to the mid-1980s (Herron, 1986). Over two dozen studies have been conducted during the past 18 years to understand journalists' information seeking behaviour and its various aspects. Nicholas and Martin (1997), studying British journalists using semi-structured interviews, concluded that the journalists needed information for five broad functions: fact checking; current awareness; researching; to obtain a context; and stimulus. In addition to function, the chief characteristics of journalists' information needs were identified as: "the sheer size of their information appetites; their requirement for authoritative and current information and the speed with which they need information" (1997, 51).

Attfield and Dowell (2003) investigated the information seeking and use by journalist of a national British newspaper. The data for the study was collected through unstructured interviews with twenty-five journalists at “The Times” in London. According to the findings of the study, information seeking is started with the assignment of work. Journalists seek information for their assignment, such as to establish a perspective of a story, to find truth or facts, and to assess the originality of an angle. Their purpose is to provide their readers with an informed interpretation of events. The authors summarized findings in the form of a model, which depicts the journalists’ research and writing process like initiation, preparation and production.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a type of intermediate theory that attempts to connect to all aspects of inquiry. Conceptual frameworks can act like maps that give coherence to empirical inquiry. It is used in research to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to an idea or thought. In information needs and information seeking behaviour of journalists, there are the dependent and independent variables that form the basis for the process. In the independent variables, there are the information need, seeking and use. This means that an information need prompts the journalist to seek for information from any or all possible sources to satisfy that need and make use of the information. In the dependent variables, the sources consulted must give accurate, reliable, fair and time-bound information.

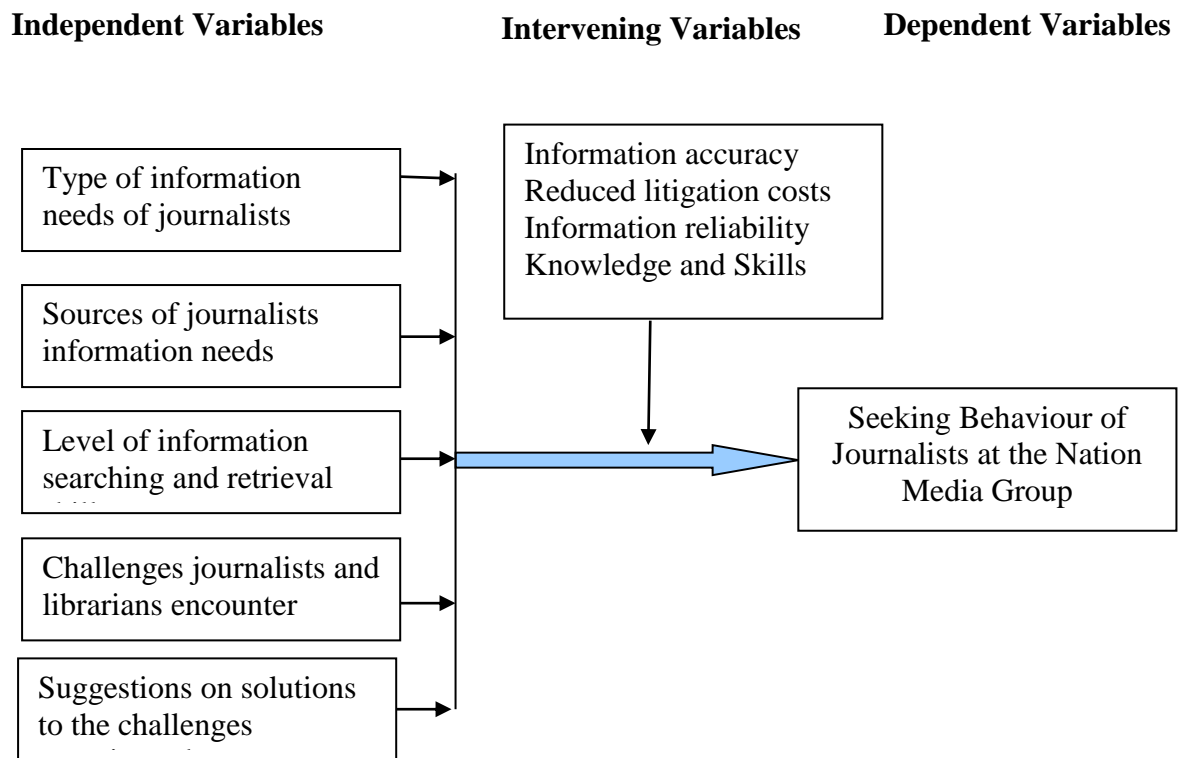


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source, Author (2016)

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories which account for or explain phenomena (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). It guides a researcher and clearly outlines the variables that will be explored in pursuit of breaking down the research topic and getting credible findings through modelling. According to Stockburger (2008), a model is a representation containing the essential structure of some object or event in the real world. Information needs and seeking behaviour has been the subject of many studies resulting in several models explaining human behaviour on how information needs arise and how we seek and search for information. There are many models of information-seeking behaviour. They include Wilson's (1981) model of information-seeking behaviour; Dervin's (1983) sense-

making theory; Ellis's (1989 and 1993) behavioural model of information seeking strategies; Kuhlthau's (1991) model of the stages of information-seeking behaviour; Wilson's 1996 model which expands his 1981 model through an analysis of the literature in fields other than information science and Niedzwiedzka's (2003) general model of information behaviour.

This study was anchored on Niedzwiedzka's model, being the latest in the series of information needs and seeking behaviour models. However, it will be difficult to delve into this model without talking about Wilson's model of information seeking behaviour. Indeed Niedzwiedzka's model is an improvement of Wilson's model. Her need for enhancement of this model was necessitated by a research she was conducting in Poland about information needs of health-care managers. She used Wilson's model in the study and it brought the model's weaknesses to the fore regarding its conceptual content and graphical presentation.

Practical requirements of the research revealed some conceptual difficulties which the model imposes on the researchers. It was also not general enough to include the predominant information behaviour of the users. Consequently, without it being the express aim of the study, a revision of the model was done arising from these research findings, culminating into the general model of information behaviour by Niedzwiedzka's.

2.3.1 Wilson's General Model of Information Seeking Behaviour

Wilson's revised model of 1996 is presented in Figure 2 below. It shows the cycle of information activities, from the rise of information need to the phase when information is being used. It includes various intervening variables, which have a

significant influence on information behaviour and the mechanisms which activate it. Wilson points out that there are various determinants of information behaviour, which he calls intervening variables. They include the environment within which the user is in, his/her psychological state, the demographic set-up (age brackets) etc. The author concludes that it is the value of an intervening variable that determines whether it supports or hinders information behaviour (Guba, and Lincoln, 1994).

Wilson says that not every need leads to information seeking. He says that only those situations where there is pressure on the person to fulfil a certain need will push him or her to seek information. He calls this stress/coping theory. In this scenario, the person will be forced to look for information to avoid stress that may be associated with lack of knowledge about the matter at hand or failure to meet a given objective. He terms this drive that compels one to seek for information as an activating mechanism. Other theories he considers activating mechanisms are the risk/reward theory which is associated with the benefits of seeking information vis-à-vis the pitfalls of not doing so, the self-efficacy theory that makes the information seeker gratified internally and gets a feeling of contentment (Wilson, et al, 2002).

The foregoing phases of intervening variables and activating mechanisms, in Wilson's order of things, give rise to acquisition of information through seeking and researching and eventually onto the phase of information processing and use. The most glaring discrepancy in Wilson's model is that it is limited to a situation where a user seeks information personally. Niedzwiedzka's found this wanting since managers and other senior staff e.g. editors and sub-editors, rely on a host of intermediaries not catered for in Wilson's model (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

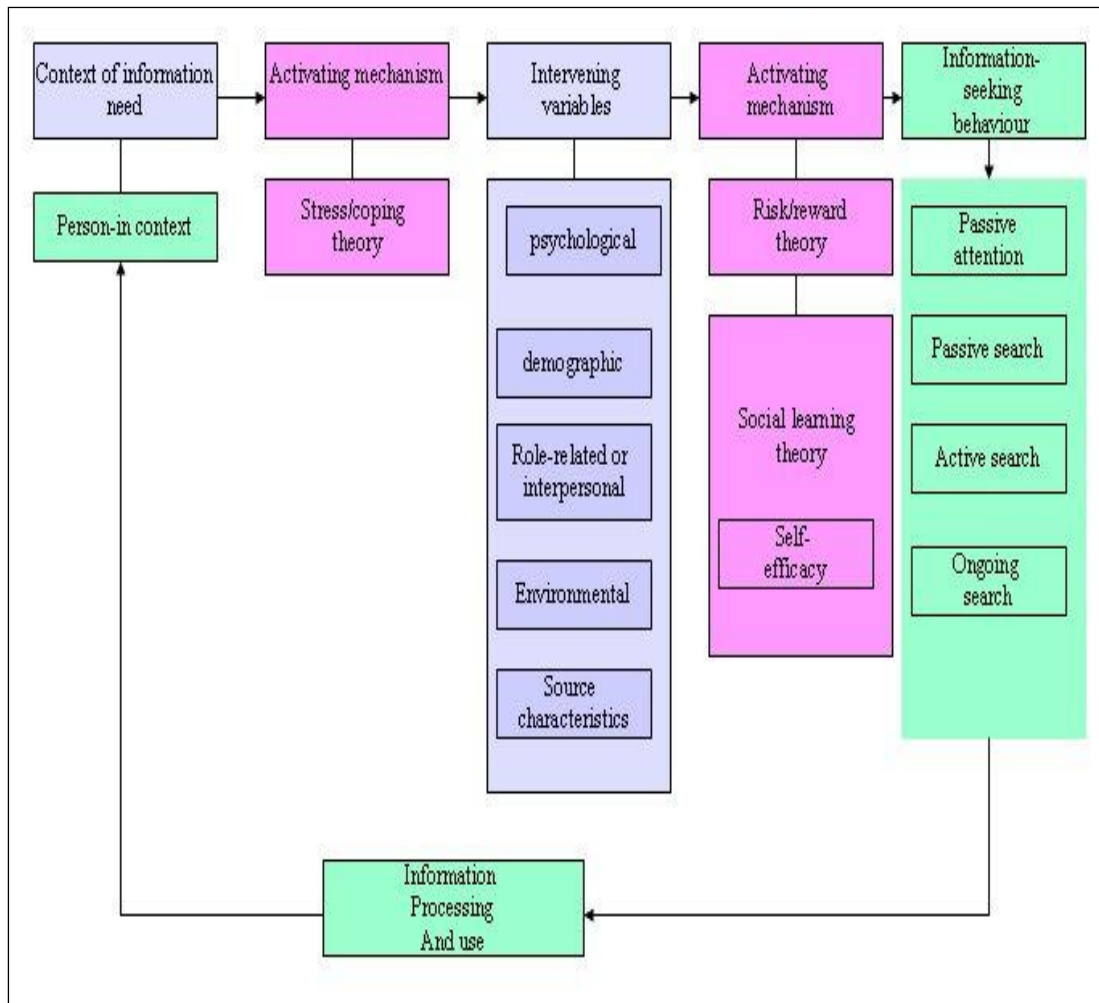


Figure 2: Wilson's General Model of 1996

2.3.2 Niedzwiedzka's Model of Information Behaviour

Barbata Niedzwiedzka Model of Information Behaviour presents a critical description of Wilson's 1996 global model of information behaviour and proposes major modification on the basis of research into information behavior of managers, conducted in Poland. The theoretical analysis and research results suggest that Wilson's model has certain imperfections, both in its conceptual content and in graphical presentation. The model, for example, cannot be used to describe managers' information behavior, since managers basically are not the end users of external (from organization) or computerized information services and they acquire information

mainly through various intermediaries (Carlson, 2009). Therefore, the model cannot be considered as a general model, applicable to every category of information users.

Niedzwiedzka's model (Figure 3) encompasses the main concepts of Wilson's model, such as: person-in-context, three categories of intervening variables (individual, social and environmental), activating mechanisms, cyclic character of information behaviours and the adoption of a multi-disciplinary approach to explain the model. However, the model introduces several changes. They include: identification of 'context' with the intervening variables; immersion of the chain of information behaviour in the 'context' to indicate that the context variables influence behaviour at all stages of the process (identification of needs, looking for information, processing and using it); emphasis on the fact that the activating mechanisms can also occur at all stages of the information acquisition process; introduction of two basic strategies of looking for information: personally and/or using various intermediaries (Carlson, 2009).

In Niedzwiedzka's model, the totality of information behaviour is submerged in a context which consists of Wilson's intervening variables (personal, role-related and environmental). Such presentation of the relationship stresses the fact that these factors are always present and they influence the process at all stages. The new model also indicates that the activating mechanisms can occur at each link of the chain of behaviour leading to acquiring and using information (Angen, 2000).

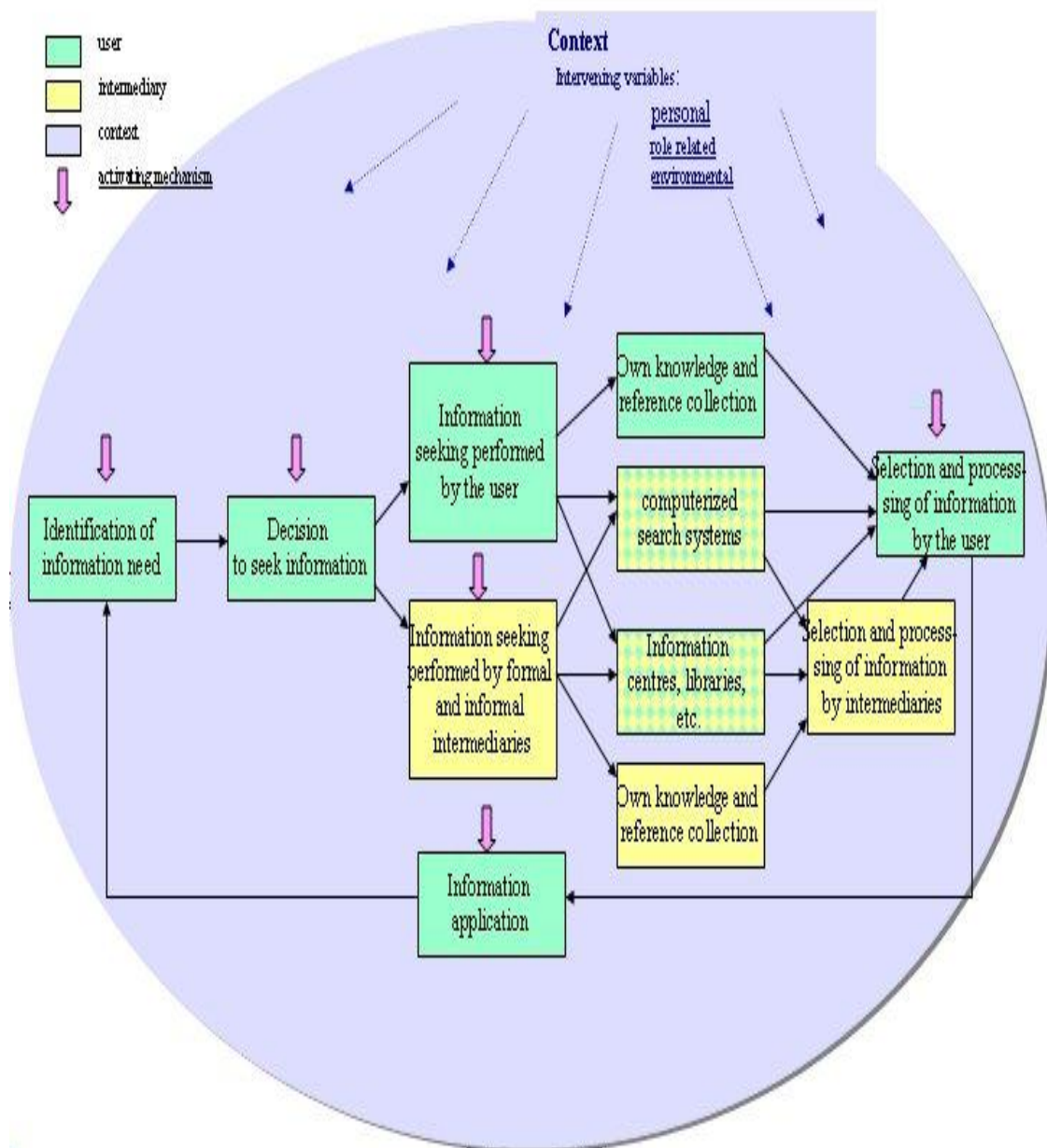


Figure 3: Niedzwiedzka's Model of Information Behaviour

A phase of the need occurrence is separated from a phase of making a decision to seek information, which follows Wilson's comments and suggests that at this stage the activating mechanisms can play a significant role. The model shows two basic strategies of information seeking: a user seeks information personally or a user uses the help or services of other people. The figure indicates that a user can choose one, the other or both of the strategies. An independent user applies his/her own

knowledge, available sources and interacts with search systems and information services (databases, catalogues, archives, search-engines etc.) (Anwar, Al-Ansari, and Abdullah, 2004).

In the chain of journalism work, the "foot soldiers" on the beat, the reviewers, the feature writers, the sports journalists, the business writers, the managing editors, the associate editors, the sub-editors and the editorial department managers are all journalists with diverse information seeking behaviours that surpass the capacity of Wilson's model and their information needs and seeking behaviours are accommodated well in Niedzwiedzka's model (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). Wilson's model targets a particular group of users at a given time as opposed to a hybrid model that allows information seeking both in person and by proxy.

Niedzwiedzka's model illustrates stages of information behaviour and relationships that can be observed in a process in such a way that it can be applied to a broader range of users. This General Model of Information Behaviour by Niedzwiedzka, therefore, suits the situation at Nation Media Group because the process from news gathering to publication of the same involves a chain of various cadres of journalists as outlined above and each cadre has its own information needs and seeking behaviours in order to fulfil its mandate of checks and balances so as to come up with an overall balanced, objective and reliable product (Blumer, 1969).

The model acknowledges that top managers (editors in the case of Nation Media Group), are generally not the independent users of information services. The results of a conducted survey, focus groups and interviews demonstrated that, in accordance with earlier studies, work overload, lack of time, diversity of tasks and fragmentation

of the working day, are the characteristic features of the editors' jobs (Katzer and Fletcher, 1992). These features mean that the editors, especially top-level editors, do not have time to seek information personally, methodically and on a continuous basis. They basically do not search information databases, do not use information centres, libraries and the internet to look for professional information. So Niedzwiedzka's model best serves their interest in terms of delegating this role of information seeking.

2.4 Previous Studies

This section looks at existing literature in the area of information needs assessment and information searching formulation and parameters. Most of the researchers have vouched for a systematic approach to the two aspects in order to be precise on the relevance of the information retrieved.

2.4.1: Information Seeking and Uncertainty

Perhaps the earliest formal association of information and uncertainty was set out by Shannon and Weaver (1949), for whom information itself refers to the reduction in uncertainty about the state of an event after a message has been sent relative to the uncertainty about the state of the event before the message was sent. Since then, uncertainty has become a concept that is studied in a variety of fields, most notably in classical probability theory, but also in theories of decision making and in artificial intelligence research.

Complex search situations are generally associated with uncertainty. However, it is the perception of complexity, rather than the actual objective complexity of a task, that causes feelings of uncertainty (Kuhlthau, 1999). Perceived complexity is often the cause of the secondary peak of uncertainty, doubt and confusion in information

seeking. Unfortunately, many web-based search devices compound the perception of complexity by overwhelming the user with “everything,” when a few well-chosen guiding elements might be more appropriate for orientation. Advances in information technology and the advent of ubiquitous web-based search and navigation systems have only compounded the user’s dilemma rather than eased it (Blumer, 1969).

Wilson et al. (2002) explored the relationship between uncertainty and information seeking. Based on longitudinal data collected in the U.S. and U.K., the researchers show that uncertainty can be operationalised and reliably measured in a quantitative investigation. They found that the principle of uncertainty as outlined by Kuhlthau indeed serves as a useful variable in understanding and predicting information-seeking behaviour. The research points towards uncertainty as a universal aspect of information seeking. Furthermore, although uncertainty is often associated with risk and danger, Anderson (2006) reminds us that uncertainty can also have positive effects. She found uncertainty to be necessary and even desirable in many situations: it can motivate new lines of inquiry, contribute to creative thinking and spur innovation. Anderson shows us that uncertainty is indeed a very complex aspect of human nature and it is the interplay between desired and undesired forms of uncertainty that should draw interest in information research.

2.4.2 Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Media Practitioners

Media is an information-hungry industry. It stands on the pillars of information. Practitioners working in media organizations need current, authoritative and factual information to construct the news (Sonnenwald, 1997). For fulfilment of these needs, media practitioners consult many sources and channels of information, such as libraries, information centres, record centres and the internet. Internet and online

services provide huge amount of information but an in-house media library is unique in that it is close-by and easily accessible with on-point information. A media library can provide accumulated and precise information through current awareness service (CAS), selective dissemination of information (SDI) and reference services (*Stockburger, 2008*).

The role of media librarians is, therefore, crucial. They work as information gate keepers. They visit the newsroom on a daily basis and help to assess the media practitioners' needs (Thomson, 2007). They are also looped in on the news breakouts via intranets and other social media alerts and this prepares them to provide CAS and SDI well in advance and in anticipation of information needs. Based on the information needs of media practitioners, they select credible and authentic sources, print or digital. Media librarians have information seeking skills in digital environment. They are experts in intelligent searching and use of databases. They also facilitate in information use. In a word, media librarians play an active role in the construction of news. Media libraries provide comprehensive services to the editorial department. There is an overwhelming necessity to identify the needs of media practitioners because they are information users as well as information producers and information communicators (Trochim, 2006).

Information Seeking Behaviour (ISB) is a favourite subject of research by library and information scientists. It is an important part of user studies which looks at the casual relationship between the user of information and the information system. The concept of `Information System` is of recent origin (Tuchman, 1980). More generally, a system is defined as an assembly of inter-related components which are organized either naturally or by design in such a way as to achieve a specific common objective

or purpose. System concept applied to information is called information system. An information system encompasses the various components like people, procedures and information resources organized in such a way that they interact to perform a series of functionally related tasks such as storing and retrieving information to satisfy the information needs of a variety of users. Auster (1982) defines Information Seeking Behaviour as “The field, composed of studies that are concerned with who needs what kind of information and for what reason; how information is found, evaluated and used and how these needs can be identified and satisfied.” ISB is thus concerned with establishing a relationship with people, information and system of an order so as to obtain the best results. That information system is the best, which provides maximum satisfaction to the users with minimum cost within a very short time. The process of ISB includes defining information needs, use of sources of information, satisfaction and dissatisfaction derived in the process of seeking information etc. Newspaper journalists need various types of information for various purposes. The information seeking behaviour and information needs vary from one category of journalists to another.

Information need, seeking and use always gets the attention of library science researchers. Many of the studies conducted on the subject are focused on groups other than media practitioners. Edem (1993) studied how Nigerian journalists in four major towns in Nigeria used library and archival resources and revealed that those journalists’ major needs for information are related to political activities (27.1%), government affairs (21.4%), social activities (16.4%), economic activities (14.2%), etc. Most of the information they sought was for fulfilling their official duties (95%), such as writing articles, preparing for news talks or news reporting while only 5% was

pertaining to unofficial duties. The majority of the journalists (76%) relied on informal sources such as persons whereas 24% used formal sources such as libraries or archival centres. All the surveyed media houses had a library except news magazine houses. Among 10 news magazines surveyed, only 6 had a library.

Joseph (1993) studied the use of libraries by Indian journalists in the State of Kerala. She looked into how Indian journalists used the library and what they used the obtained information for. Her findings show that the use of library is significant. 27% of the journalists used the library twice or more times a week while 21% used more than once a day. Mostly, they used the library for getting background material and for specific information. They used the information obtained mostly for writing feature or news items. Occasionally, they used it for column or editorial items. News magazines and reference books were most preferred by journalists in the study. However, they also used current and back issues of newspapers. Senior editorial staff are ranked first in using back issues of newspapers. They needed information within a timeframe of 5 to 15 minutes. 63% sought information themselves. They wished to have information on their desk due to time pressure and busy schedules. However, such service was not available to them (Tuchman, 1980).

Uncertainty, in general, is a broad concept that has been investigated in many fields, such as decision-making (Harris, 2008), ethics (Tannert et al, 2007), risk and business (Hubbard, 2009), and even physics (e.g., Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle), among numerous other areas. Indeed, the notion of uncertainty underlies most aspects of our lives: it has been shown to drive everything from trading on stock markets to deciding which piece of fruit to buy at the market. Formal associations between information, in particular, and uncertainty date back to Shannon and Weaver (1949), fathers of

modern information and communication theory. For one, they proposed and popularized the concept of “information entropy,” or the measure of uncertainty in a transmitted message. Overall, they believed that the presentation of information reduced uncertainty: the more information a person received, the lower their uncertainty. Other researchers picked up on uncertainty in information science. For instance, Nicholas Belkin (1980) focused on the notion that seekers, sometimes even experts in a given information system, are not able to properly formulate queries to access the information they need.

Anomalous states of knowledge,” or ASK for short. Here, uncertainty underlies the basic information seeking. Kuhlthau’s (1993) work on uncertainty and information seeking is perhaps the most extensive. She proposes uncertainty as a fundamental principle in her Information Search Process (ISP), a six-stage model of seeking information. She describes the role of uncertainty as follows: Uncertainty is a cognitive state that commonly causes affective symptoms of anxiety and lack of confidence. Uncertainty and anxiety can be expected in the early stages of the ISP. The affective symptoms of uncertainty, confusion, and frustration are associated with vague, unclear thoughts about a topic or problem. As knowledge states shift to more clearly focused thoughts, a parallel shift occurs in feelings of increased confidence. Uncertainty due to a lack of understanding, a gap in meaning, or a limited construct initiates the process of information seeking (Kuhlthau, 1993, p. 111). Two interesting aspects emerge from this perspective. First, Kuhlthau found that uncertainty is often the primary driver for the affective states people while seeking information. Any endeavor to understand uncertainty in information seeking must therefore also account for the seeker’s affective states. Kuhlthau’s model does just this, along with

considerations of cognitive states and physical actions taken. Second, Kuhlthau shows that contrary to previous models of uncertainty in communication, the introduction of new information can increase uncertainty. This is not always the case, but it holds true in complex information seeking situations.

In a very comprehensive study, Wilson et al. (2002) also explored the relationship between uncertainty and information seeking. Based on longitudinal data collected in the U.S. and U.K., the researchers show that uncertainty can be operationalised and reliably measured in a quantitative investigation. They found that the principle of uncertainty as outlined by Kuhlthau indeed serves as a useful variable in understanding and predicting information-seeking behaviour. The research points towards uncertainty as a universal aspect of information seeking. Furthermore, although uncertainty is often associated with risk and danger, Anderson (2006) reminds us that uncertainty can also have positive effects. She found uncertainty to be necessary and even desirable in many situations: it can motivate new lines of inquiry, contribute to creative thinking, and spur innovation. Anderson shows us that uncertainty is indeed a very complex aspect of human nature, and it is the interplay between desired and undesired forms of uncertainty that should draw interest in information research.

2.4.3 Measuring Online Information Seeking Context

Kelly (2006) opines that context is one of the most important concepts in information seeking and retrieval. Kelly purposed to develop a method for collecting data about information seeking context in natural online environments and identify which aspects of context should be considered when studying online information seeking. She focuses on evaluating the study method and exploring the relationships among context

and judgments of relevance. The aim is to make recommendations for measuring information seeking context and behaviour in natural settings and to determine how it can be used to provide contextual and personalised information retrieval to individuals.

This approach narrows down the parameters within which a coherent information need analysis, searching and retrieval mechanism can be arrived at in a precise manner on online platform.

2.4.4 Journalists and Their Sources

Franklin and Carlson (2010) explain at length the relationship between the journalists and their sources of information. He says journalists turn to outside sources to provide evidence for their accounts. The journalists are supposed to be influenced by objectivity as they go about gathering information. It forms a basis in their information seeking endeavours. As a philosophy of news and a strategy guiding its production, objectivity precludes reporters from injecting their personal opinion in the stories they churn out (Tuchman 1978). Instead, journalists construct stories through attribution, linking information directly to sources, often through quotations. For objective journalism, sources do more than provide information; they serve as an essential form of evidence. This reliance on sources frees the journalist from the extra labour of adjudicating claims from aggrieved parties (Tuchman 1978). This carefully crafted acquisition of information process creates a foundation for assessment of information sources and forms an integral part of information seeking behaviour of journalists.

2.4.5 Information Seeking Behaviour of Journalists

Anwar, al-Ansari and Abdullah (2004) of Kuwait University carried out a research entitled “Information Seeking Behaviour of Kuwaiti Journalists”. The purpose of this research was to identify the information seeking patterns of working journalists in Kuwait. It was realized that journalists place more emphasis on fact-checking, general and background information as compared to getting ideas for future articles. They use a wide variety of sources, both informal and formal, to obtain the needed information as do their colleagues in other countries. However, in addition to giving preference to ‘human’ sources, as was found by Campbell (1997), they placed more emphasis on the Internet and ‘press releases’. They seem to be more satisfied with information that they receive from sources that they prefer than those that they do not. It is interesting to note that these respondents were least satisfied with the in-house ‘electronic library of stories/reports produced by their colleagues’ simply because this is something new to the Kuwaiti news establishments and is still evolving. Some of the respondents may not even have the appropriate skills to use this electronic library. A majority of these respondents indicated a willingness to go through training on how to use this electronic library. A similar situation pertains at the Nation Media Group where some journalists shun the use of the in-house electronic library because of its “complex” nature as opposed to googling for information. This calls for the need to train journalists periodically on the importance and use of the in-house electronic library (Attfield, and Dowell, 2002).

Often unknowingly, confidential information, such as trade secrets, may be disclosed by an employee or other party with knowledge on popular social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn. Confidential information may also be disclosed via

blogs, chat rooms, and anonymous blog comments. Widespread disclosure of trade secrets, in particular, can result in the loss of intellectual property rights in the confidential materials. In addition, some websites purport to claim ownership of user posted information, such as comments to a story. The best protection is to update policies and procedures so that employees are aware of their ongoing obligations not to disclose confidential or proprietary information (Babbie, & Mouton, 2008).

Unauthorized use of third party trademarks on a social media site may lead to legal liability for trademark infringement, dilution or unfair competition. While, in certain circumstances, it may be a permissible “fair use” to refer to a company and its product or service in a product review, blog, or status posting, it is not permissible to use the trademarks of others to create a false impression of endorsement, affiliation or sponsorship. Also, websites such as Facebook now have sophisticated infringement reporting policies whereby a trademark owner can prevent another party from adopting its mark as a username or the like (Brown, 2008).

2.4.6 Information Seeking and Use by Newspaper Journalists

Information seeking is a basic activity indulged in by all people and manifested through a particular behaviour. It is also an aspect of scholarly work of most interest to academic librarians who strive to develop collections, services and organizational structures that facilitate information seeking (Wiberley and Jones 1989).

Mann (1993) notes that most researchers, even with computers, find only a fraction of the sources available to them. He explains that researchers tend to work within one or another mental framework that limits their basic perception of the universe of knowledge available to them. Students, according to him, use a subject–disciplinary

method that leads them to a specific list of sources on a particular subject. He points out that while this method allows students and researchers to find more specific sources, it is limiting in that they may not realize that work of interest to their own subject appears within the literature of many other disciplines. This impinges on how much they get out of the library system.

Studies conducted among undergraduate students have shown that most of them are inadequate in using libraries. Zondi (1992) for instance, conducted a study among first year undergraduate students at the University of Zululand, South Africa. She established that the majority of students showed a very low level of competence in the use of a library and displayed poor information seeking patterns. Kamanda (1999) did a similar study at the East African School of Library and Information Science, Makerere University, Uganda. He observed that more than half of the students experience problems in locating library information materials. He noted that the majority of them either located materials through browsing the shelves or sought assistance from library staff, but they did not make full use of the card catalogue.

Ssendikadiwa (1996) also observed about Makerere University that although the catalogue was the most essential library tool in accessing library collections, it was the most avoided and least consulted by undergraduates. Considering the rapid changes in information provision in the 21st Century with computerized access, digitized information formats and the plethora of resources on the internet, the access and retrieval capabilities of users who are traditionally accustomed to manual information library systems, is questionable. Atkinson (1997) enumerates these as the circumstances under which it was worthwhile to re-examine issues of user behaviour in academic settings. Artfield and Dowell (2002) give a rundown of the development

of the various resources of journalistic information. According to them, the late 1980s saw the beginnings of a revolution in information seeking in news media companies with the introduction of online news cuttings archives.

Copyright-protected works, such as text, videos, music, photographs, and source code, are often copied from another location and used on a social media website without the authorization of the content owner (Campbell, 1997). Use of copyright-protected works without authorization creates the potential for infringement liability. Also, site owners may be protected under a “safe harbour” provision in copyright law, whereby if they take down infringing content after receiving notice, they are protected from liability. This safe harbour does not automatically apply to trademarks, but similar procedures should be implemented by site owners for the unauthorized use of marks. The best practice is to seek permission before using material that appears to be a copyright-protected work. In some cases, the content owner may charge a license fee, but that fee will certainly be less costly than an infringement lawsuit. Some content, though, is available for public use without express permission, such as open source code. However, even that material often requires attribution to the original author, so pay close attention to the terms and conditions of use (Carlson, 2009).

Some of the features that make social media attractive, such as real-time interaction and the ability to post on the fly are the same ones that could result in unintended legal liability. Statements published to a limited group of “connections” or “friends” that arguably defame a third party may result in legal action against the poster. Given the infancy of social media, it is unclear whether courts will view this type of posting as sufficient for libel purposes, but best practices are to avoid statements that could be construed as defamatory. Also, posts made anonymously may be traceable via IP

address or similar technique. So anonymity alone will not necessarily prevent liability (Chinn, 2001).

In the US newspaper industry, 1985 was described as something of a “watershed” for the installation of electronic cuttings databases (Herron, 1986) followed by considerable growth (Ward et al., 1988). At this time, systems tended to be confined to library departments with searching normally performed by librarians. During the early 1990s uptake increased considerably and searching by journalists became more commonplace (Nicholas and Martin, 1993).

By this time, it was recognized that electronic cuttings archives had become “necessities” in many medium-sized and large newspaper libraries (Hansen and Ward, 1991). By the late 1990s, access to online news cuttings archives had reached the journalist’s workstation in many news companies.

In contrast, use of the internet by journalists has been slower than that of the cuttings archive. In a joint interview, questionnaire and observational study, Nicholas et al. (2000) assessed the impact that the internet was having on information seeking within the British media. Data was gathered from journalists and media librarians from a large number of news media organizations and the results showed that internet use consisted predominantly of searching the World Wide Web, but at that time internet use in general was limited. The study showed that the primary reasons for this were the perceived potential for information overload and concerns over information authority. For the journalist end-user, the development of greater proximity between online information retrieval tools and text editing tools undoubtedly brought with it

the potential for greater integration between the tasks of information seeking and news writing.

2.4.7 The Information Seeking Behaviour and Needs of Journalists in Context

Information seeking behaviour refers to the way people search for and utilize information (Fairer–Wessels, 1990). Most times students' information seeking behaviour involves active or purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete course assignments, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences or write final year research papers. Fister (1992) noted that undergraduate students are smart people, but find the university library to be a threatening place and find the process of research intimidating. Unfortunately they do not learn the basic information skills. They end up using trial and error methods of research that limits their capabilities to satisfy their needs. Wilson's 1996 model notes that in the process of seeking information, problems are encountered. Taylor (1968) noted that after interacting with the information sources (like in a library), what a user actually needs may not tally with what is practically available, due to constraints either within the stock or due to the users own inability. Mellon (1986) noted that undergraduates encounter barriers like library anxiety. User's perceptions of the library and its programs also act as an intervening variable to information utilisation in the library.

Lisa Chinn (2001) studied the information needs and seeking behaviour of three journalists specializing in the reportage of sports, education and crime. She found out that their behaviour had been largely affected by the emerging technologies such as wireless phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and the internet news services. She concludes that information seeking behaviour and needs of journalists all depends on the perception of the journalists and the environment within which they work.

Sonnenwald's (1997) proposition that information horizons are made up of the context, situations and social networks that surround a person such as information policy, marketing of information and information literacy seems to reinforce this view.

2.5 Conclusion

Media is an information-oriented industry. Media professionals are a group of people who both produce and consume information. Or put it in another way, they produce information for the society based on the information they have acquired through various sources. For this reason, they need large amounts of information every day. They will not perform their duties well without accurate information or information sources. In general, media practitioners need all kinds of information in every form or format. However, factual information is what they seek most and therefore reliable sources such as research reports, encyclopaedias, journals and annual reports are what they use most. Time is crucial in the media industry. It operates on deadlines. They are time-bound. Due to time constraint, they usually seek selective information. However, exhaustive and recent information is also needed. This calls for the need to learn the art of information need assessment, seeking and retrieval skills.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with research design, population and sampling techniques, data collection, validity and reliability tests and data analysis. The research used both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

3.2 Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in the study. A study by Bickman and Rog (2008) indicated that descriptive studies are usually the best methods for collecting information that demonstrated relationships and describe the world as it exists as it answers questions such as “what is” or “what was.”

Previous related studies have successfully used this design. For example, Karuri (2010) used descriptive research design in determining the media capacity and its contribution to the society. Wangeci (2012) applied it in a study that compared media personality influence and behaviour in the journalistic profession. Ongowo (2011) used it in a study of strategies used to acquire information by media houses and its impact on future journalistic articulation of issues. This design also acted as a basis for formulation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to problems as emphasised by Bickman and Rog (2008). All these were achievable because of the model’s nature of classification, measurement, analysis and interpretation.

3.3 Population

Population refers to all cases of people and organizations or institutions which possess certain characteristics that reflect the purpose of the study (Mugenda and Mugenda,

2009). Kombo and Tromp (2006) refer to a population as one group of persons or elements having one thing in common. A research population is the entire set of individuals about which inferences are made (Pickard, 2007). The study population comprised of 300 journalists and 8 librarians at Nation Media Group (NMG) in Nairobi, Kisumu, Nakuru and Mombasa. The target population for this study was selected as 308 staff members from the NMG centres.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

According to Singh (1990), a sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. Similarly, Kothari (2004) avers that sampling is the process of getting information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. The study used purposive sampling to get the sample size. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. Some types of research design necessitate researchers to take a decision about the individual participants who would most likely contribute appropriate data, both in terms of relevance and depth (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Therefore, out of the approximately 300 journalists in question, the researcher sampled 36 of them which is representative enough to capture the issues concerning them all. Of the 36, just a few were sampled from each category, namely Sports Desk, Features Desk, Business Desk, News Desk, Taifa Desk (writers of the Kiswahili newspaper), Business Daily, The East African Desk, Political Desk and the Investigation/Crime Desk.

So, the researcher used a small sample size based on the deep knowledge of the subject by the sampled individuals as well as their willingness to participate in the study.

3.5 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes. The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business etc. While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same. The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of convincing and credible answers to questions that have been posed.

3.5.1 Interview Method

The face-to-face interview was the key method of collecting data in this research. The researcher preferred this method because it is an effective tool for determining issues and concerns about a given phenomenon (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). The duo observed that it is through the face- to-face interviews that the evaluator can fully explore an audience's perspective and reasons for it. This method was also preferred because it is an effective way of collecting detailed information from a smaller group of people. The semi-structured interview was adopted for this study by the researcher because of the need to clearly address issues and answer specific questions. Denscombe (1998) states that with semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, during the interviews, the researcher was flexible in terms of the order in which the topics were considered and

particularly in letting the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. In view of this, the semi-structured interview schedule was preferred. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) note that an interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing and aid in obtaining data required to meet specific objectives of the study. With the semi-structured interview schedule, the researcher asked questions that simply required him to check the participant's response and those that were intended to lead the respondent in giving in-depth data to meet the study objectives.

3.5.1.1 Establishing Rapport during the Interview

Odini (1993) notes that the use of face-to-face interview method in an information needs analysis gives a chance to the researcher to establish a rapport with the interviewees. In employing this method, the researcher took the initiative at the beginning of each session, to exchange greetings with the participant, do introductions, talk about the aim and objectives of the study and share his interest in the topic. The researcher reassured the participant about the confidentiality of all comments during the interview. These logical steps created a relaxed atmosphere in which the interviewee felt free to open up on the topic under investigation. It also helped to build trust and establish a rapport with the researcher.

3.5.1.2 Recording the Interview

The researcher used note-taking method to record data during the study. Again Denscombe (1998) recommends that researchers sometimes need to rely on field notes written during or soon after the interview. The researcher preferred note-taking as opposed to tape-recording because the later would be financially prohibitive and also participants would feel uneasy revealing issues on tape. Mugenda and Mugenda

(1999) recommend that the interviewer should record the respondents' answers exactly as expressed and that no attempt should be made to summarise, paraphrase or correct bad grammar. In pursuance of this recommendation, the researcher recorded the responses as the participant talked in his or her own words. In addition the researcher made some interpretative comments on the margin regarding observed gestures.

3.5.2 Procedure

The researcher first got an authorization letter from Moi University and a research permit from the relevant authorities. With these documents, the researcher booked appointments with staff respondents at Nation Media Group in the relevant departments/sections which was followed by a pre-visit to the selected departments on the respective appointment dates. The researcher then proceeded to interview the respondents. During the interviews, the researcher asked questions and then gave adequate time for the respondent to answer exhaustively without undue interjections. Everything was taken into account, including the work environment, the gestures and insinuations etc and notes taken accordingly. Corroborative questions were put to other respondents to ascertain the veracity of answers given by others.

The notes thus taken were pieced together by the researcher in a coherent manner at the end of the exercise and formed the crucial data for analysis of the situation.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study, otherwise known as a feasibility study, is a small study conducted in advance of a planned project specifically to test aspects of the research design and to allow necessary adjustment before final commitment to the design. It is more

common in quantitative research but is nevertheless used in qualitative research as well.

The researcher tried out the efficacy of the data collection tools on three respondents in a pilot study (1 news reporter/writer, 1 editor and 1 feature writer). The researcher interviewed the respondents face-to-face and took in their answers, their gestures and the general working environment and thus gathered data that formed the basis for analysis. The pilot study showed the strength and the weakness of the data collection method and was overall found to be suitable to be implemented in carrying out the study.

3.5.4 Reliability

Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) stated that reliability is a measure of degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after an accepted number of repeat trials. The test-retest technique of measuring the reliability of the research instruments was used to eliminate biasness in order to fit within the required goals. From NMG, random pilot interviews were done on non-respondents to test the validity and consistence of the research instrument against the results that were obtained from the respondents. Similarly, results amongst respondents were also checked for their consistence.

3.5.5 Validity

A research instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). In order to pre-test validity of the instruments and to improve the interview items' concept and wording, content validity of the instruments was used to measure the degree to which the items represented specific areas covered

by the study. According to Orodho (2003), the validity of an instrument is measured by its repeated reviews by experts and field tests. To validate the instruments, the researcher checked whether there were ambiguous, confusing and poorly prepared interview questions. The instruments were tested to ascertain their validity and suitability in collecting the required data. The draft interview schedule was given to the supervising lecturer at Moi University who is an expert to appraise the items' sustainability in obtaining information according to the research objectives. Being an expert, he examined all the items one by one and provided feedback on the questions that required to be corrected by guiding the researcher on how to rewrite the correct format of the questions. In the process the researcher was able to internalise the expert's recommendations which he to make amendments on the items in the interview schedule.

3.6 Data Analysis

This section explains the methods of data analysis used in the study. Data was collected and analysed using quantitative and qualitative method. The data was then presented using various statistical tools such as tables and pie charts. Data collected through the interviews was edited and coded for analysis. Data was therefore analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was analysed through the use of descriptive statistics. Tables, charts and percentages were used for data presentation. Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. It was then formulated according to the objectives of the study.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are norms of conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They are generally professional codes of conduct. Some of the ethical principles that various codes of conduct address include honesty, objectivity, integrity, carefulness, openness, respect for intellectual and private property, confidentiality and many others. This researcher maintained the integrity of the research by observing originality in his work and acknowledged all relevant sources used. The researcher assured and acknowledged the respondents' right to privacy and confidentiality by concealing their true identity. The researcher sought informed consent of the respondents to participate in the research process by explaining to them in detail the reason and benefits of the study. Only information consented to was used. The respondents had the right to vary the terms of their engagement in the process including the right to withdraw.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers data analysis, presentation and interpretation. The data is summarized in form of tables and pie charts. The collected data has been analysed and interpreted in line with the aims of the study which is to investigate the information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at Nation Media Group.

4.2 Response Rate

The study realized a good response rate. Of the target sample of 36, those who participated in the interviews were 34(94%). Only 2(6%) respondents did not participate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% is good and above 70% is rated very good. Based on this assertion, the response rate in this case of over 70% was large enough to offer credible and dependable information about information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at Nation Media Group.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Responses	Frequency	Percentage <i>N=36</i>
Responded	34	94
Non Response	2	6
Total	36	100

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

To understand the respondents, a number of demographic details commonly associated with information behavior of users was sort. These include age, gender.

4.3.1 Age

The age distribution of the respondents as listed in Table 4.2 shows that the majority of journalists at the Nation Media Group are aged between 21-50 years, indicating a high level of young professionals who are venturing and have settled in the journalism career.

Table 4.2: Age of Respondents

Age of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage N = 34
Below 21 Years	2	6
21-30 Years	12	35
31-40 Years	8	24
41-50 Years	10	29
51 and above Years	2	6
Total	34	100

The study agrees with findings by Wilson (1996) that the average age for most journalists in the world is 25-40 years. This is a vibrant age group that have the potential, all things being equal, to enhance the media houses through innovative ideas, experience, and skills.

4.3.2 Gender

As seen in Figure 4.1, majority of respondents were male journalists (68%). The female counter parts were female (32%). The male dominance in the industry is not

surprising: A study by Jose (2012) found that despite rising numbers of women in the workforce and in journalism schools, the news of the day still largely comes from a male perspective. A study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (2012) which examined 16,800 news stories across 45 different news outlets during 20 randomly selected days over nine months found that more than three quarters of all stories contain male sources, with only a third of stories containing just a single female source.

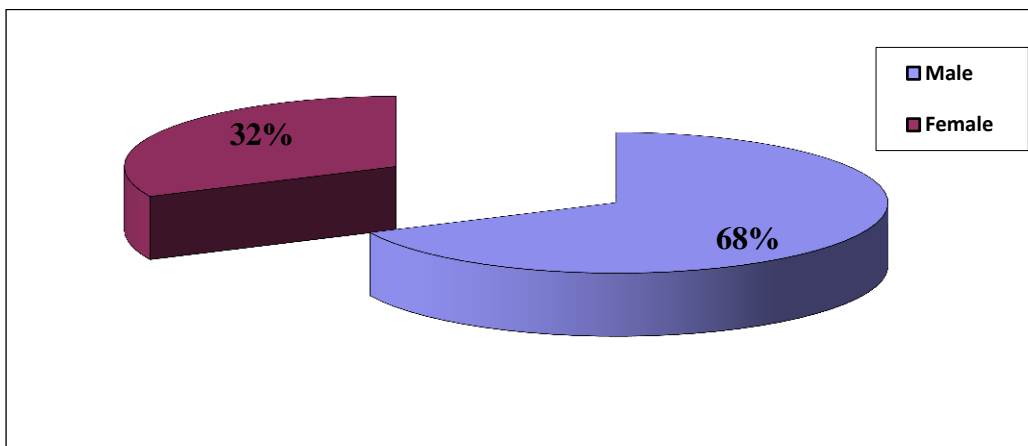


Figure 4.1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

4.3.3 Education Qualifications

Concerning the level of education of the respondents (Table 4.3), majority (53%) were Bachelors degree holders. Only one (3%) was PhD holder. 53%, while were Masters and diploma holders were 26% and 12% respectfully. The 8% with other qualifications included those with certificates. Overall, it can be deduced that majority of the respondents were fairly well educated. These findings on education levels of the media personalities agrees Davidson (2012) study findings on journalism level of education in United States of America. Davidson's study findings established that the percentage of U.S. journalists with at least a college Bachelors degree continues to

increase. Four-year Bachelors degree was considered the basic qualification necessary for being hired as a journalist in most U.S. news media outlets.

Table 4.3: Education Qualifications

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage N = 34
Diploma	4	12
Bachelors degree	18	53
Masters degree	9	26
PhD	1	3
Others	2	6
Total	34	100

4.3.4 Years of Experience as Journalists

The study sought to establish the respondents' years of experience. As Table 4.4 shows, the majority of the journalists had 11-30 years of experience. Of these, 47% had 11-20 years of experience. Those with over 30 years of experience were the least (12%). This indicates that most of respondents were well conversant with the trade. Norbert's (2010) study provides a plausible explanation: it established that there is no better experience of journalism than going out there and sampling a living, breathing Newsroom. It is what one can do better that matters than the years of experience

Table 4.4: Years of Experience as a Journalist

Years of Experience as a Journalist	Frequency	Percentage N= 34
0-10 Years	6	18
11-20 Years	16	47
21-30 Years	8	24
Over 30 Years	4	12
Total	34	100

4.3.5 Area of Specialization

Journalists in the study were pooled from different specializations. ; 3% of the journalists in the study were pooled from sports section, 6% were from features section, 15% were from science and technology while 17% were from business. Further, 15% were from editing desk, 6% from the entertainment section and 29% were from news gathering and reporting. 9% were from other sections such as crime and magazine desks (Table 4.5). This analysis shows that the respondents were drawn from an expansive pool of the editorial department making it more balanced to get the better views about the topic under study.

Table 4.5: Area of Specialization

Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percentage (N = 34)
Sports	1	3
Features	2	6
Science and Technology	5	15
Business	6	17
Entertainment	2	6
Editing	5	15
News gathering and reporting	10	29
Others	3	9
Total	34	100

4.3.6 Number of Employers Worked for

Findings on the number of employers that each journalist had worked for shows that (Table 4.6) majority of them had for at least 2-3 employers. Only one journalist had worked for more than three employers. Five of the journalists had however worked for one employer. From the interviews, most of them indicated that they had accumulated vast experience, having worked for a number of employers over long periods of time.

Table 4.6: Number of Employers Worked for

Number of employers	Frequency	Percentage N = 34
1	5	14
2	12	35
3	16	47
3+	1	3
Total	34	100

4.4 Information Needs of Journalists

To gain an in-depth understanding of information needs of journalists (objective one), number of aspects relating to information needs of the journalists was considered. These include role of journalists, information needed to support journalists work roles, and ranking of the information.

4.4.1 Roles of the Journalists

The study found that Newspaper journalists research and write stories for national, regional and local press. As well as news and politics, they report on sports, arts and culture, science and business. They also cover national and local events, entertainment and human interest stories. Traditionally, the reporters write stories allocated to them by the news desk. These stories could be of investigative nature, court reporting, press conferences, events coverage and many other aspects. They pass these to the news editor who in turn hands them over to sub-editors. Other roles include correspondents, who are specialists in one field or location, and feature writers, who cover topics in greater depth, often using a more personal style. On smaller newspapers many journalists have to multitask; they may work on layout, photography and sub-editing as well as stories. Newspaper journalism is becoming increasingly multi-platform, making IT, web and broadcast skills highly valued. The new byword at the Nation Media Group newsrooms is media convergence. This simply means that every journalist is expected to write and cover for all Nation Media Group platforms; the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and digital media alerts, among others.

4.4.2 Information to assist them carry out their work

The study sought to know if the journalists needed information to carry out their work. The study established that almost all journalists need more information to make

their findings and work easier and successful. The journalists reported that the success of their work depended on the accuracy, speed and reliability of the information that they relay to their audience. A few (3%) of respondents however, indicated that they do not need ready-made information but they need to look for their own primary information to deliver their stories. 97% of the respondents indicated that they needed a lot of information both from second person, primary and secondary sources to make their stories a success.

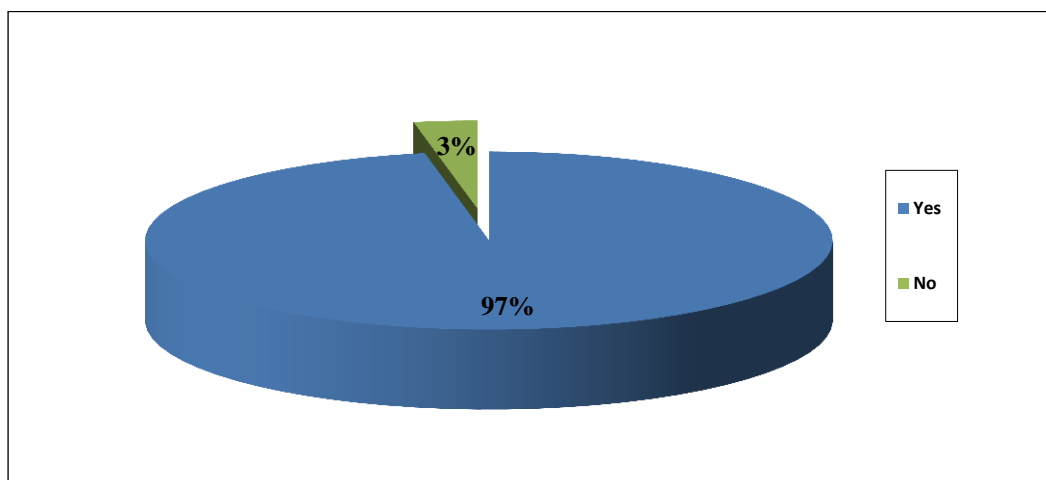


Figure 4.2: Whether Journalists need Information to assist them carry out their work

4.4.3 Ranking of Information Needed

Analyzing and assessing information needs of clients is key to the provision of effective service and appropriate collections in both face-to-face and virtual library services. The importance of information needs analysis is widely recognized by information professionals, but currently there is little substantive, detailed work in the professional literature devoted to this important topic.

The study found that the most important information need for the journalists at Nation Media Group is to get the story right the first time and scoop the opposition (rival media houses) by being first, fast and accurate with the news. So the biggest need was to get the story factually correct and back it up with adequate corroborating historical facts on the subject.

4.4.4 How the Journalists get their story Ideas

The study found that more than half of journalists now use social media as a source of story ideas, and nearly half use blogs to find angles and ideas. 62% indicated that they draw their news from trusted sources on Twitter or Facebook, while 64% rely on well-known blogs as a source of story ideas. However, the journalists were quick to point out that they were much less inclined to use information from an unfamiliar social media user or blog.

In addition the journalists at the Nation Media Group also indicated that they get their stories through press conferences, assignment by the news desk, from the courts, by invitation to business and social meetings, conferences and workshops as well as impromptu occurrences. Investigative pieces as well as science and technology matters also form an integral part of the storyline.

4.5 Information Sources Consulted the Journalists

This section explores the various sources that journalists consult in their endeavour to seek for relevant information to satisfy their needs.

4.5.1 Journalists' Interpretation of what Constitutes Information

The study found that different information is sought by journalists depending on the objectives one wants to achieve. Published sources can be divided into scholarly, mass-market and statistical, each of which can provide different information and a different perspective on the issue and attempts to address it. Depending on what a journalist decides they are looking for, they might use all or any combination of these information.

4.5.2 Sources of Information Used

The study established that the Nation Media Group journalists consulted varied sources of information. These include official records, past publications, past broadcasts, officials in government and business, organizations or corporations, press conferences, witnesses of crime, accidents or other events and people involved with or affected by a news event or issue.

There are a multitude of factors that tend to condition the acceptance of sources as bona fide by these journalists. For example, reporters are expected to develop and cultivate sources, especially if they regularly cover a specific topic, known as a "beat". Beat reporters must, however, be cautious of becoming too close to their sources. It was also noted that reporters often, but not always, give greater leeway to sources with little experience. This is because information from inexperienced sources is considered to be "truly raw, honest and reliable, untainted by shrewd, calculating experienced sources" as one journalist explained. Journalists are also encouraged to be sceptical without being cynical. As a rule of thumb, but especially when reporting on controversy, reporters are expected to use multiple sources.

Apart from the primary sources aforementioned, the study also found out that such information is subjected to a verification process, which includes researching background information on the subject in question to ascertain authenticity.

4.5.3 Frequency of Use of the Nation Media Group Library

Majority (82%) of the journalists (Table 4.7) indicated that they use the media house's library frequently, 12% less frequently, while 6% rarely use the library. The library was used to retrieve current and archival information. In particular, it is used by the journalists to dig out background information to beef up news stories that are just coming up. The journalists considered the library as giving credence to stories of the day by giving them an authentic context. They also considered the library as an important source for verification of facts and figures obtained from the field. Thus it can be said that journalists at Nation Media Group are information seekers and use the NMG library for the right purpose of guiding their information towards objectivity. The library is their first source of authentic information research since it gives direct correlation of background information to the developing stories. Other sources are considered secondary.

Table 4.7: Frequency of Use of NMG Library by the Journalists

Use of NMG library	Frequency	Percentage N=34
Frequently	28	82
Infrequently	4	12
Rarely	2	6
Total	34	100

In defense of the low and none use of the library, the journalists indicated that orientation in library use is not properly conducted for new employees and so they find it cumbersome to use. Instead of learning from the librarians or the frequent users, they have opted to use other sources, notably Google sites, for their research. This has adverse effect on the veracity of their information richness in terms of the Nation Media Group's institutional memory

4.5.4 Journalists use Electronic Information

The respondents were asked if they used electronic sources and if they trusted the authenticity of the sources. Their response is summarized in Figure 4.4.

Concerning use of electronic information, the study found that 82% of the journalists use electronic information while 18% did not. The heavy reliance on electronic information as opposed to print sources of information is partially explained by the fact that NMG library is mostly electronically equipped to enhance easier and accurate information sourcing from diverse electronic sources. Whereas their workstations can provide access to electronic sources on the internet, specialized electronic sources that are subscribed to can only be logged on from the NMG library.

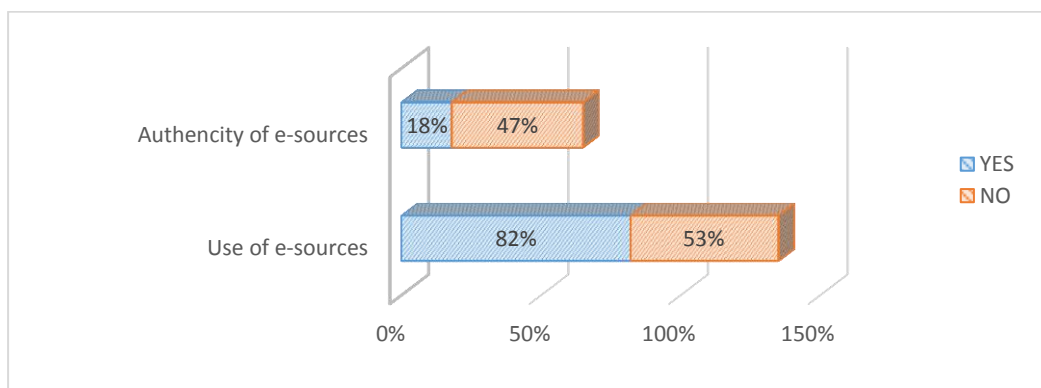


Figure 4.3: Journalists Use of Electronic Sources

When asked if they trusted the authenticity of electronic media, 53% of the journalists indicated that they did while 47% indicated that they did not trust their electronic sources. A study by Attfield and Dowell (2003) found that with the ambiguity of digital representations and the proliferation of sources of information on the internet, these issues are further complicated. It is not unusual to find sources purporting to represent the same thing at many different sites. But journalists do not have standardized methods of assessing and establishing authenticity of digital sources.

4.5.4.1 Journalists Perception of the Old System of Newspaper Clippings to the Current Automated Environment

The study used the case of newspaper clippings to gain deeper understanding of the respondents experience with e-resources. The digital library was introduced at Nation Media Group in 2007. All the journalists who had experienced the clipping files and the modern electronic library database responded overwhelmingly for the digital library; they all preferred the digital library to what they describe as the medieval, archaic library of clippings of yesteryear.

4.6 Information Searching and Retrieval Competency Levels of the Journalists

The study found out that there are a number of steps to gathering and putting together the information used by the journalists. From the responses received, the first step journalists at Nation Media Group use in gathering information is determining what information to gather. There are a number of areas they explored. These include:

Details about the issue. These might include its immediate and root causes; its general effects on individuals and communities; its consequences; its development through different stages; its history; and the history of attempts to address it.

How the issue has been dealt with elsewhere. For this, they considered best practices or approaches for which there is an evidence base; other approaches that have been at least partially effective; and what has not worked, which may give you at least as much important information as what has.

People who can help. This category encompasses experts in the field and people or organizations that have run or been involved in successful attempts to address the issue.

Most of these can be group activities, part of the participatory process. The actual information gathering can be parceled out to specific individuals or sub-groups. The single largest storehouse of information available is the Internet. The Nation Media Group digital library is their greatest data mine.

The study found that the journalists evaluate the gathered information based on their editorial policy, its newsworthiness and implications to the society and their employer.

The study further sought to establish if it is possible to carry out any successful journalistic assignment without information. All the journalists indicated that they would not successfully carry out their duties without information support. Information was found to be the back born of journalism.

4.6.1 Determination of Information Adequacy

In response to the question on when/how they determine that they have enough information, the study found that information can never be measured as enough because there could be always some more to add. The respondents indicated that information can only be said as enough if it is authentic without doubt and

exhaustively accurate. They provided a number of core detriments to having insufficient information including misjudgements, poor comparisons, and incorrect conclusions that can be arrived upon

4.6.2 Methods Used in Authenticating Sources of Information

All the journalists indicated that they authentic information before quoting it although as established earlier, they did not have a standardized method of assessing and establishing authenticity of digital sources. General authentication is done by re-evaluation of the information, looking at the flipside of the information and observing the information through the third side of the story. This was done to moderate on any biasness and to increase the ability to enhance accuracy and accountability of the information obtained. To further ensure authenticity, majority of the journalists also used multiple sources to determine the correlation of the information. This was also done for news sources whose credibility was in doubt.

4.6.3 Criteria Used in Determining Newsworthiness of Information

There are multiple formats and types of sources that journalists discover as they begin their research. Knowing the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each of these can help journalists make informed decisions in their selections. It is also important to understand when different types of sources will be published about a specific event. The progression of media coverage about a newsworthy event is called the Information Cycle. Knowing when a type of source appears in the Information Cycle helps journalists in select the best source for their assignment. Speed and comprehensiveness of the information are two major characteristics considered in determining the information newsworthiness.

Response to the question of what was valued more in terms of information speed and comprehensiveness established that verified facts must form the basis of all news, not rumour, speculation and innuendo. Comprehensiveness is essential if journalism is to inform the public debate. Comprehensiveness comes ahead of speed. “If you are not sure, hold fire. Being first and wrong is not a model to aim for. Being right, comprehensiveness and always reliable and measured is,” explained one journalist. The study found this to be the bedrock upon which Nation Media Group journalists based their work. The respondents noted that media organisations are judged by the accuracy, comprehensiveness and reliability of its journalism, which must be well-sourced, supported by strong evidence, examined and tested, clear and unambiguous.

All the journalists averred that whereas speed of getting information may be a virtue due to the deadline and perishable nature of the business, getting it right the first time and being comprehensive is non-negotiable

About comprehensiveness, the respondents noted the need for total transparency in declaring what is known and what is not known: “Those who trust the journalist will be prepared to wait for his version” they explained. Coverage is one method used to check whether a hastily prepared item by a competitor has any truth in it. Consequently, particular caution was observed especially where the topic is considered controversial “too much haste can cause lasting damage to news brand” noted one respondent. “For most major news you require first-hand sources, double-checking of facts, validation of material submitted, confirmation via two reliable sources and corroboration of any claims or allegations made” added another.

The journalists reiterated that they strive by all means, to set the pace of journalistic excellence in pursuance of the NMG house image of being ‘the pacesetter in reliability.

It can therefore be concluded that the Nation Media Group journalists, in their various areas of specialisation, have perfected the art of nosing the news angle to take regardless of the original purpose of any event or happening.

4.6.4 Dependency on Intermediaries when Interacting with the Library

Earlier findings established that the library is key for information sourcing. The library at NMG is available on all workstations and journalists do not have to walk to the library unless they must. However, because the journalists are not exclusively adept at maneuvering the library database, it is important that they either walk to the library, make telephone inquiries or email queries to the library staff for specific assistance.

The study found that 76% of the journalists usually seek assistance for information from the library staff while 24% did not. The journalists explained that the cordial reception by the librarians and their patience in listening to and analysing their client's inquiries was the key reason why they sort assistance of the librarians. They further indicated that librarians were important in getting them right information faster to beat deadlines. 95% said they find the librarians homely and inviting while 5% thought the library staff can do with a bit of more public relations adherence

4.6.5 Digital Literacy

To ascertain the computer levels of the NMG personalities, the study sort computer /IT and e-searching and retrieval fluency levels. The findings are captured in Figure 4.4. below.

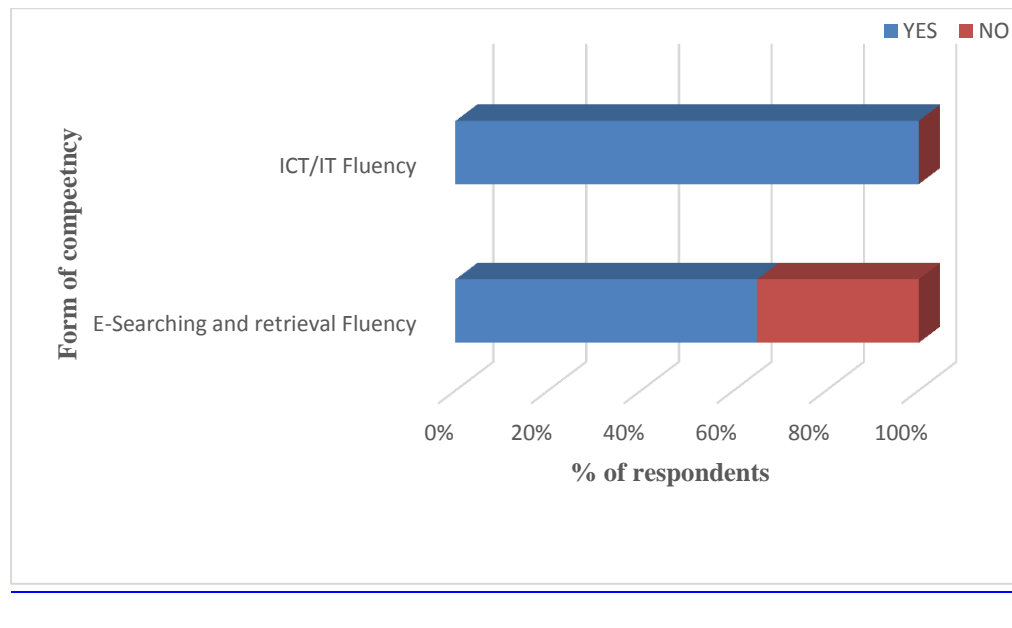


Figure 4.4: Digital Information Literacy

4.6.5.1 Computer/ IT Literacy Fluency

All journalists at Nation Media Group were computer literate. Further probing to understand why this high computer literacy levels amongst the respondents established that over and above their own background in computer literacy, Nation Media Group work processes are fully computerized and only those with such skills can work in this environment. Thus computer literacy is a prerequisite for getting employed at Nation Media Group, especially in the editorial department.

4.6.5.2 E-Searching and Retrieval Fluency

The study further sought to know if the respondents were adept at electronic searching and retrieval of information. The research found that 65% ($N= 22$) were good at electronic searching and retrieval of information while 35% ($N=12$) did not have the requisite skill, more out of apathy than lack of an enabling environment

In addition, the study established that 94% of the journalists had attended training in searching and retrieval of information while 6% had no such training. The 6% with no training in searching and retrieval of information were employees who joined the media house after the initial training was done at the installation of the library system in 2007. Only a fraction of them were not able to manipulate the system due to apathy.

4.7 Challenges Experienced in Information Pursuit

The ascendance of militant extremists and criminal gangs who abduct and even kill reporters, combined with rising government repression in the course of counterterrorism, were identified as the biggest threat to journalism in recent times. In particular, the respondents identified the following forms and circumstances of challenges under which the role of journalists as democracy's watchdogs is proving increasingly hazardous:

- i. Terror dynamic environment in which journalists are targeted and threatened by non-state actors
- ii. Governments' restriction on civil liberties including press freedom in the name of fighting terror. This has not only resulted in journalists losing their jobs but also journalists have themselves at risk of being arrested, kidnapped or even killed in the line of duty;

- iii. Warring factions in business, investment groups, political parties and other groupings holding diverse and divergent opinions who always invariably see the journalists as taking sides with their protagonists;
- iv. Encountered roadblocks in the name of government secret documents that cannot be divulged even though they may be of public interest.

4.8 Strategies Used to Counter Challenges Encountered

The respondents provided examples of strategies they adopted to minimize risks, legal litigations, and mis-representation.

4.8.1 Avoidance of Misquoting

Elaborating on action taken to avoid misquoting of sources, one respondent explained:

The only way of ensuring authenticity and accuracy to avoid misquoting is to avoid or presume the information given and go further to dig into facts. Check the internet (Google, LinkedIn, Facebook, a source's organization's website) and other resources (your clips, database etc if you work at a newspaper) about a person, but don't presume that they are always correct. When covering an event (rather than an interview), you get a program or agenda beforehand in addition, you make efforts to locate the main people to verify if their names are spelled correctly in the program. In circumstances where someone unknown speaks or does something during the event, details of the individual is quickly obtained. Then try to run the person down by phone [call] to verify. Your notebook should have each name spelled right, verified by the character. If possible you should have at least one printed or digital source with the name also on it

4.8.2 Audio-Recording of Conversations/Interview

Apart from the foregoing, the study also found out that journalists at Nation Media Group are required to carry with them audio-visual recording gadgets. However, whereas the journalists routinely made use of notebooks, not many observed the requirement of using digital recordings as stipulated. This has at times impacted negatively on the media house's defence in cases of complaints and/or litigations.

4.8.3 Use of Multiple Resources were used to Verify the Information

The study established that Social media and the Web have escalated the importance of getting it right (a story) the first time and avoiding errors as one journalist. Use of multiple sources of information is considered a cautionary measure:

Avoiding incorrect sources can be done by reading multiple sources before rendering judgment, reading an entire story before linking to it and making sure that the source is current and has not been corrected itself.

4.8.4 Avoidance of Manipulation

Journalists always need to ensure that they are getting the full and accurate version of every story. With news sources and public relations people having their own agenda, a journalist runs the risk of being used or manipulated unknowingly into writing an inaccurate story even if they reported all the facts they received correctly.

4.8.5 Tape-Recording Conversations/Interviews for Future Reference

...Use of audio-visual gadgets is strongly advised... Journalists at Nation Media Group face litigation frequently and audio-visual recordings come in handy. Their background research in verifying facts and figures has always been a great fall-back position in instances of litigation.

4.8.6 Maintaining Objectivity in Reporting

The study found out that the political patronage and biasness is ethnically aligned. Nevertheless, such blatant biasness is not explicitly discernible in copy.

It is commonly acknowledged that mainstream media the world over has traditionally taken sides with opposing political parties. They normally push forward the agenda of their politically preferred leanings. However, unlike their Kenyan counterparts, they often take to the platform of party policies and ideologies.

Majority (85%) of the respondents considered themselves to be impartial in their reporting (i.e. had no slanted reporting nor political biasness). 15% however could not confirm their objectivity. It was further observed that media house did not have any explicit policy of supporting any political party and the individual leanings of some journalists were relegated to newsroom arguments without being reflected in the newspaper's output.

4.8.7 Compliance to Editorial Policy

All the respondents acknowledged that their employer has an editorial policy. The study found that due to the transitional, amorphous and volatile nature of news, especially due to the emergency of multiple media platforms, including social media, journalists at the Nation Media Group have constantly found their editorial policy falling back in relevance at a fast rate. There is constant questioning and consensus on the intranet on how to treat certain aspects of information. As a result different respondents had differing opinions concerning political leanings of the media house. For example, the journalists use different methods to win the confidentiality of their sources in order to get stories. Some journalists sign agreements of confidentiality

while others make gentleman's agreements to seal their confidentiality. Breach of confidentiality could however be broken especially under duress from powerful forces such as government.

4.8.8 Upholding Confidentiality Agreement

The study found that the ability to report the news often depends on the ability to protect the confidentiality of news sources. As one editor indicated:

A breach of confidentiality occurs when data or information provided in confidence to you by a client is disclosed to a third party without your client's consent.

The cost of breaching confidentiality agreement can be dire

... While most confidentiality breaches are unintentional, clients can still suffer financial losses as a result. Such loss can also be one of credibility, litigation, trust etc. In order to recoup their money, they may take legal action against your firm. Professional indemnity insurance is designed to cover against such instances.

The study found out that confidentiality is a tenet that is strictly observed at Nation Media Group. The company has empowered journalists to strictly shield their sources even at the expense of the company paying the price via court awards or government persecution. However, when a journalist faces a defamation suit based on information provided by a confidential source, the promise of anonymity to that person may prevent the reporter from relying on certain defences.

4.8.9 Building Trust with the Sources of Information

Trust was considered as one of the most important factor in successful journalism. Building trust requires making a commitment to trustworthy behaviour. The

respondents agreed that journalists can build trust and relationships if they are prepared to make the effort.

The journalists win trust of their news sources first by specialising and projecting themselves as professionals in that particular aspect of reporting e.g. business reporting. Their news sources therefore grow to trust their ability of understanding the supposed gravity of the matters they handle. They eventually look at those particular journalists as their confidants with whom they can share issues of interest without the risk of being revealed even under duress.

4.9 Summary

This chapter shows that experience is integral in journalism when it comes to information reliability. So it is imperative that NMG blends experienced staff with the young in order to get the news perspectives right the first time. It has also found out that some of the journalists (35%) have issues with manoeuvring the library database and often skip using the same in favour of other sources. This malady is manifested in the proportion of journalists who run into this kind of challenge but opt not to ask the librarians for help (24%). A periodic training on use of the same should be mounted

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists at the Nation Media Group. The inquiry looked into the information needs of journalists at the Nation Media Group; sources of information consulted by the journalists; information searching and retrieval skills of journalists; challenges journalists encounter in pursuit of information; suggestions to improve the journalists' information seeking and use experience.

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusion and proposed areas for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study found that journalists investigate and report on events, issues and trends for the mass audiences of print, broadcast and online media such as newspapers, magazines and books, radio and television stations and networks, blogs and social and mobile media platforms. They write hard news stories, which are short, timely and focused reports on what has just happened and feature stories, which are soft, not as timely yet with a topical news pitch

The analysis found that many journalists report on only one or two special subjects. Nicholas and Martin (2010) indicated that journalists express their information needs to others on these subjects in vague or generalized descriptions for three different reasons: confidentiality (they do not want to expose their information need to others so as not to lose its possible uniqueness), uncertainty (they are often unclear as to their

exact information need), and professional arrogance (they see no reason to expose information needs for help from others, and feel they can satisfy them on their own).

The study found that journalists have five purposes for information: fact-checking, current awareness, research, context and stimulus. The data collected from this study shows there is evidence to support all of these information needs. All three of the strategies engaged in fact-checking and current awareness are used to gain information throughout the day using a variety of methods.

The study found that the nature or type of information need expressed by journalists can be classified into five distinct categories: conceptual/theoretical, historical, descriptive, statistical and methodological to offer suggestions to the challenges experienced by journalists in information needs and seeking behaviour.

The study also found that journalists rely more on the internet as a source of their information. It was found that a good number also consulted the Nation Media Group library. However, the 18% that do not use the library risk getting the facts wrong thereby exposing the media house to libel.

The journalists retrieve information from a complex range of sources. Besides the library, they also rely heavily on human sources for first-hand information. In doing this, they have to adhere to tacit rules to help them locate, select and retrieve information for news story. This finding is line with a similar study carried out in 1997 (Campbell, 1997).

The research found that a third of the sampled journalists were not adept to electronic searching and retrieval of information. It was found out that this was more out of apathy since the media house has provided an enabling environment for electronic

searching to thrive. It was found that beating deadlines for stories had made some journalists to cut corners.

Knowledge of research tools is critical for exploratory search success. This may involve the creation of new interfaces that move the search process beyond predictable fact retrieval (Marchionini 2006)

The study found that the journalists indeed encounter a lot of challenges in their quest to dig out information. Some of these challenges include going beyond the obvious and behind the scenes to bring out authentic and reliable reports that can stand the test of time and litigation. They have to circumvent the secrecy of information in organisations and government and get the physical evidence of their writings. They also undertake their assignments against the backdrop of cultural diversity that has opposite sensitivities to certain issues. The balancing act in such cases is critical to be able to appeal to all while remaining objective and factual. All this has to be achieved with deadlines and legal bottlenecks in check. All this and more is given credence in News Manual Volume 3 on Ethics and the Law: Pressures on journalists Chapter 58.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that any journalist, whether covering hard or soft news, needs to gather information in preparation for writing. All writers have to conduct research and gather information before they can start writing. The study concluded that information seeking skills of senior journalists should be able to guide the junior journalists on the best method of information seeking.

Awareness about the existence of information sources should yield significant findings. The study established that a librarian is integral in the management of the information resources and assisting journalists and other users with the direction on how and where to get the right information. When scholars, journalists and other users come to a library, they have confidence enough, in regard to the cordiality of their reception, to make their wishes known with clarity, without timidity or reservation.

The study found that the truth can be placed in the open; exposed naked to the entire world. The truth does not need any laws to protect it and it does not need secrecy to protect it. The truth does not need evidence destroyed nor does it need videotapes to be confiscated. Only lies need secrecy. Only lies need protection from laws. Only lies benefit from fear, secrecy, blackmail, gossip and confiscation of evidence. Today, given that the traditional media is being controlled by either big media corporations or government, it can no longer serve as a reliable source. Furthermore, unless journalists have somebody they can trust in the centre of ongoing affairs, they cannot trust social media, as it is so easy to flood twitter with propaganda using spam bots and it is so easy for coordinated effort to propagate lies as the truth.

Journalists at the Nation Media Group sift through copy by counter-checking stories with other sources they trust and doing background research in their library to verify facts and figures.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Introduction

It is crucial for the ongoing development of knowledge in many fields that it be possible to determine the relative authenticity of a number of different representations, through an analysis of the methods that have been chosen to transform the original into a digital format or through an assessment of the methods used to capture original digital data.

5.4.2 Over-Reliance on Electronic Information Sources

It was found that almost half of journalists at Nation Media Group (47%) have doubts about the authenticity of electronic information sources yet some of them use the sources exclusively to cut down on time wastage so as to beat deadlines. The research recommends that the editorial management in conjunction with the legal department, should frequently sensitise the journalists on the pitfalls of relying exclusively on electronic sources of information, especially the younger journalists.

At the hiring stage, the journalists' ability to carry out research should be a formidable part of the positive attributes desired of the prospective employee. Therefore the study recommends that on employment, journalists should first be engaged practically on precise information needs identification and seeking exercises as a prerequisite to job entry and deployment. This will help shape their information seeking behaviours, enhancing their accuracy, authenticity and timely delivery of the information. Practical engagement is the only method that journalists can use to transform their class theories on information needs and seeking behaviour to practical implementation of the same in their jobs

5.4.3 Maximization of the Use the Nation Media Group Library

Since Nation Media Group has invested heavily in creating a modern library, it is only fair that all the journalists exploit the facility for the good of the company. Googling for information should be of supplementary value rather than making it the core source. The library is a core reservoir of internal information source built over time and reliable to withstand the test of time.

Just like it is done in universities for new students, the study recommends that library orientation should be given a lot of weight for all new employees of the company, especially journalists. As it is now, new employees just come on board and learn the skills of using the library as they go along. The Human Resource Director or his representative should deliberately categorize library orientation as a prerequisite to new employees' assimilation into the Nation family. The Editorial Administration Manager should work closely with the HR to make this a reality.

5.4.4 Improve the Library Staff Communication and Client Support

The study found that whereas the majority of respondents sought assistance from library staff, 24% grapple with finding information in the library without seeking assistance from librarians. In the same vein, the research found that at least 5% of the journalists think that librarians are not cordial in their public relations. A sampling of librarians' reaction to this perception yielded the fact that the said journalists are just difficult clients who go against the grain on library rules and regulations. Some have apathy towards librarians.

The study recommends that the Chief Librarian should sensitise library staff to treat the journalists as clients who need utmost care and attention. That the difficult ones

should be reined in with an olive branch rather than a snub. Any extreme cases should be handled by the Chief Librarian and the Editorial Administration Manager.

The research also recommends that the Chief Librarian should engage journalists through the available internal communication mechanism, the intranet, and encourage them to seek assistance from librarians in all situations where they meet difficulties in their research endeavours.

It is also recommended that librarians should create a rapport with the journalists for ease of information dissemination. Librarians are more like public relations personnel and the more they interact with their client base, the more the clientele will feel at ease to approach them for help. Such a rapport will create an enabling environment to fully exploit the rich resource in the library.

5.4.5 Refresher Courses in Electronic Information Searching and Retrieval

The research found that 35% of the journalists have challenges in electronic searching and retrieval of information. It was found that this was more out of apathy rather than lack of an enabling environment.

Subsequently, the study recommends that journalists should be given refresher courses on information seeking and retrieval. This will enhance their professionalism, assist in proper identification of their information needs and shaping of their information seeking skills. Librarians should also undergo these refresher courses to help them catch up with the fast-changing technological advancement in information management so as to continue giving relevant guidance to the journalists

This onerous task of ensuring that the journalists and the librarians enhance their searching and retrieval skills and also create rapport among themselves falls under the docket of the Human Resources Director or his/her representative and the Editorial Administration Manager.

5.4.6 Keeping Abreast

Media professionals should read periodicals regularly to keep abreast with current information and news. They should collect information in the library by asking librarians or learn to carry out searching and retrieval from the internal library database at NMG. They should also consult and discuss with colleagues about the existence of information source catalogues. Generally they should get used to using the library which is available on their workstations. The information seeking behaviour of media professionals, who prepare research based programmes in particular, is very distinct and pronounced as compared to other professionals. For the library and information science professionals, results of this study can assist in improving interactions with media professionals and better-understanding of their information needs and shaping of their information seeking behaviours. Librarians should become pro-active in their efforts to assist journalists with their information needs. They should be available to provide basic technical assistance or information, if needed.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

5.5.1 Technological Growth

It is recommended that more research should be done to investigate the growth of technology and its effect in information needs and seeking behaviour of journalists.

This is because the proliferation of diverse information sources is having an impact, both positive and negative, on information use and seeking habits of journalists.

5.5.2 Journalists' Perception towards the Library

The study suggests that more investigations should be carried out to establish the perception of journalists at NMG towards the library. This is due to current negative perception about libraries.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF JOURNALISTS
AT THE NATION MEDIA GROUP****SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Tick as appropriate:

1. What is your age?

(a) Below 21 (b) 21-30 (c) 31-40 (d) 41-50 (e) 51 and above 2. What is your gender: M F

3. What qualifications do you hold?

(a) Diploma (b) Bachelors degree (c) Masters degree (d) PhD (e) Others Please state _____

4. For how long have you been a journalist?

(a) 0-10 years (b) 11-20 years (c) 21-30 years (d) over 30 years

5. What is your area of specialization?

(a) Sports

(b) Features

(c) Science and Technology

(d) Business

(e) Entertainment

(f) Editing

(g) Others Please indicate _____

6. How many employers have you worked for?

(a) 1

(b) 2

(c) 3

(d) Others Please state _____

SECTION B: ACTIVITIES

7. What do you do as a journalist? (Please list the activities you do)

8. Do you require information to assist you to carry out your work? Yes No

If no, why?

If yes, what kind of information do you require?

9. How do you get story ideas?

10. Describe how you gather, retrieve and evaluate information for a story.

11. Are there instances when you have carried out your assignment successfully without information support? Yes No

Please, state why.

12. What, in your view, is information?

13. When do you know that you have enough information?

14. What do you consider your most important information need?

15. Do you use electronic information? Yes No

If yes, how

If no, why?

16. Do you trust the authenticity of your electronic sources? Yes No

If no, why?

17. What do you do to avoid quoting what could be unauthentic sources?

18. What do you value more in terms of information - speed or comprehensiveness?

Why?

19. How important is comprehensive information?

20. Which sources of information do you consult whenever you need information?

21. What are the best sources of information, going by your view and experience?

22. How often do you use the Nation Media Group library?

23. Do you find it useful? Yes No

If no, why?

24. Do you seek assistance from library staff whenever you are not able to locate the information you need? Yes No

If no, why?

25. What would you like the librarians to do for you?

26. What is your view of the NMG library as an information resource for the journalists? Does it have a role to play in the success of a journalist? Why?

27. Are you computer or IT literate? Yes No

If yes, where and how did you acquire the skills? If no, why have you not acquired the skills?

28. Are you adept at electronic information searching and retrieval? Yes No

If no, why?

29. Have you ever undergone any type of training in searching and retrieving information from information resources such as libraries, print or electronic works? Yes No

If yes, where was the training carried out?

If no, why?

30. What challenges do you face, both physical and legal, as you go about seeking information?

31. How do you compare the old system of newspaper clippings to the current automated environment?

32. What do you do to avoid misquoting your sources, especially politicians?

33. How do you defend yourself in case you are accused of misquoting them?

34. How do you differentiate truth from lies to avoid propagating untruth in your copy?

35. In a politically charged environment, are you slanted in your reporting, towards any political ideology propagated by a particular political party?

Please, explain.

36. Does your employer have an editorial policy? Yes No

If no, why?

If yes, does it favour certain political leanings?

If not, what are the factors mitigating against having the policy?

37. How do you win the trust of your sources in order to get stories from them?

38. Are there chances that breach of confidentiality could be broken especially under duress from, say, the Government or the courts? Please, explain.