

Information seeking behaviour of media professionals in Karachi

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of various information channels, the awareness of the existence of information sources, ways used for disseminating information and use of libraries among media professionals in Karachi. A questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection for the survey. Data was gathered from 185 media professionals who belonged to three types of media houses (T.V, radio and newspaper). Findings indicate that library is the most used channel among newspaper professionals and television professionals. Reference service and newspaper clipping service are the most favorable information services in the library. Media professionals get to know of the information sources through common knowledge and review articles. Internet is the channel, which is being used increasingly by media practitioners; however use of Internet among newspaper practitioners is high as compared to radio and television practitioners. Quite surprisingly, the use of libraries among radio practitioners was found to be particularly low. All groups of the practitioners mentioned reading of book reviews published in newspapers to know the existence of an information source. This study would be helpful for librarians and information specialists, who are working in media house libraries for library planning and designing of library services in their parent organisation.

Keywords: Information behaviour; Media professionals; Newspaper journalists; Information services; Library use; Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Mass media breathes on the oxygen of information. It is the profession that communicates information to the masses to keep them aware of the world happenings and to broaden their horizon. Wainwright (1982) defined journalism as "It is a skill by which an event of the day is distilled into a few words, sounds or pictures processed by the mechanics of communication to satisfy the human curiosity of the world that is always eager to know what's new." Thus, journalism is positioned in an information rich environment. Media professionals, whether print or electronic, can never fulfill their responsibilities without information and their information needs are enormous, quite insatiable and much diversified owing to the fact that they do not only inform the masses, but also play an important role in interpretation of news and events to develop understanding, opinion formation and persuasion. We can say that the responsibilities of journalists are very substantial and in fulfilling these information needs, they have to consult different

channels of information. This act results in information seeking behavior, which Wilson (2000) defined as “the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking information, the individual may interact with manual information systems (such as the World Wide Web)”. Thus, information seeking behaviour means seeking information to fulfill a need or for some purpose or to accomplish a task. It is a mental process which occurs in the mind of an individual or he perceives in his mind to satisfy his needs. He searches information through information channels such as the library, information centre, online services or some other persons. We can say that it is the behaviour in response to satisfy the need of information.

Media professionals are the special seekers of information. They are information consumers as well as information communicators. Throughout the past century they have gathered information from primary sources and obtained information via word of mouth, usually through face to face or telephone interview. There is an immense need to investigate their information needs and behaviour pattern by which they fulfill their needs. Fulfillment of needs depend on the right and appropriate choice of information channels. However various channels are available to media professionals and the libraries can be the most effective, easily available and powerful information channel as role of libraries are remarkable. But information and communication technologies have changed tremendously; information can be easily accessed from the Internet, digital archives and a range of online databases. These changes allow media professionals access to information they may not previously have enjoyed before.

This study delves into the information seeking behaviour of media professionals in Karachi, Pakistan. Media professionals in this study refer to the staff members of the mass media i.e. radio, television and newspaper or news agencies. They produce news, current affairs and research oriented programmes on different topics such as health, economics, politics, foreign affairs, entertainment, education, children, religion, and social issues. Some times, they also make documentaries. There have been three studies done on the information seeking or gathering behaviour of media professionals In Pakistan. Two studies are a bit dated; the first is on the information needs of TV news producers (Butt 1975) and the second is on the information needs of newspaper editors in Lahore (Gureja 1975). Another study focused on newspaper journalists in Lahore (Anwar and Asghar 2009). This study is the first attempt to find patterns of information behaviour, use, and perceptions of needs of both print and electronic media professionals in Pakistan. Results of this study would be helpful for librarians and information specialists, who are working in media house libraries for the planning and designing of library services.

THE MEDIA SCENE IN PAKISTAN

At the time of partition of the Indian sub-continent, only four major newspapers existed in Pakistan. The newspapers published in the Indian subcontinent by Muslim owners migrated to Pakistan after partition. These were English dailies *Dawn* and *Morning News* and Urdu dailies *Jang* and *Anjam*. After 61 years of independence, a number of dailies, weeklies and monthlies are published in English as well as in the national language, Urdu and some other regional languages such as Sindhi, Pushto and Gujrati. Dailies are published in both morning and evening. As such, one can expect that the Pakistani press has language diversity. Urdu newspapers have a very high readership catering to the low and lower middle income citizens. English newspapers are restricted to those who are educated and elite class.

In Pakistan, five chains of ownership exist in the print media; they are *Nawa-e-waqt Group*, *The Jang Group*, *The Herald Group*, *The Ummat group* and *The Millat group*. All leading newspapers including *Jang*, *Nawa-e-Waqt*, *Dawn*, *The Nation*, and *The News* have online editions which are easily accessible through the Internet. The constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides its citizens the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. Private newspapers and channels provide a forum to politicians and others to discuss and criticize government policies and issues. However, the Ministry of Education and Broadcasting monitors the Press.

The government of Pakistan owns a news agency, Associated Press of Pakistan which is an official carrier of international news and reports. This press agency is responsible to provide news to the local media. There are numerous television channels in Pakistan as the Government has issued license to twenty-two private channels. Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) is a government-owned TV channel. PTV Prime is an internationally available government TV channel. ARY and GEO are news and entertainment cable channels, operated by the private sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Man is a wanting being. Different types of needs are the pre-requisite for survival of man in this world. These include physiological, psychological and social needs. Among all the other needs, information need is unique and substantial and it is crucial in this ever changing era of technology. Man consults an information channel in order to satisfy his information need. This behaviour is called information seeking behaviour, and a number of studies in this area have been conducted for different groups of people to determine their active use of various sources and channels of information.

Research conducted by those in the library and information science field studying the information needs and seeking behaviour of media professionals has been sparse. A review of the literature reveals that a holistic approach considering all information methods and types has not been pursued by researchers studying media professionals. Anwar, Al-Ansari and Abdullah (2004) investigated the information seeking behaviour of Kuwaiti journalists. Results reveal that the sampled journalists regarded information as most important for fact checking and verification. They need information principally for writing a news item and feature article. They mostly used the Internet and press releases amongst formal sources of information and their satisfaction level with these sources is high. A sizable number of journalists use the Internet and their organizations provide this facility. The major reason cited for use of library/ information centre is to search a database and read materials there. Regarding the problems faced in information searching, lack of time available to finish assignments and lack of training are the major problems that journalists have to overcome.

Anwar and Asghar's (2009) research into the information seeking behaviour of Pakistani journalists found that the journalists use a variety of information sources, both formal and informal. Journalists sampled mostly require information for writing a news item and article, and they give high importance to their personal collection of information sources, daily news dairy and conversation. They are much satisfied with the Internet resources. They use in-house electronic library for getting the idea for a storyline and for background information. The majority of the journalists regarded their searching skills as good. Their

major problem in searching is lack of training and difficulties in accessing international information sources.

Attfeld and Dowell (2003) investigated the information seeking behaviour and information use by journalists at a national British newspaper agency. The data for this study was collected through unstructured interviews with twenty-five journalists at "The Times" in London. Information seeking of the study participants started with their work assignment. The journalists seek for information for the following reasons with the aim to provide their readers with an informed interpretation of events: personal understanding, establishing a perspective of story, finding facts and truth, and assessing the originality of a news angle. The researchers summarized their research findings in the form of a model which depicts a journalist's research and writing process, which consists of three stages: initiation, preparation and production.

Chinn (2001) studied the information seeking behaviour and information needs of journalists by using a case study approach. Three journalists were observed during a regular workday lasting 8 –13 hours. The first study participant was a sports director at a local television station in Washington D.C. The second participant was a general reporter of education for a medium sized daily newspaper located in the southeast region of United States, and the third participant was a crime reporter at the same daily newspaper where the second one worked. Their information needs and behaviour were analyzed within the framework of Nicholas and Martin (1998). All the three participants mostly need information for fact checking and current awareness. They use the Internet, e-mail and cell phone to obtain information. Results portrayed that the education reporter had lower needs as compared to the crime reporter. The sports reporter required deep background knowledge and statistical information while the education reporter needed only descriptive knowledge. All of them have to search information constantly owing to the fact that they need piles of subjective and up to date information. Education and crime reporter mainly relied on online databases, national news magazines and books for background information and research studies on different subjects. All three participants acknowledge the need for packaged information.

Wien (2000) investigated the online information retrieval support and resources available to the journalists of Denmark. All newspaper agencies in this study subscribe to national and international resources and these are available at the desktop of the journalists. Large newspaper companies subscribe to more online databases as compared to their smaller counterparts. Wien found that all newspaper agencies in Denmark, except for one, have a library with at least one librarian who assists in information searching. However, the journalists sampled also have to search for information on their own. In the light of the research findings, Wien (2000) suggested that journalism students should be trained to express their information needs and be given hands-on training of information searching skills for using online information retrieval tools.

In a study to find out how and by whom was the Internet being used in media and the impact of the Internet on the use of traditionally existing information services and channels, Nicholas et al (2000) studied the impact of Internet on British newspaper journalists. The data were collected from over 300 journalists and media librarians through open-ended interview questionnaires and observations. The result made obvious that the three groups i.e. student journalists, media librarians and media journalists use Internet extensively. The two factors that have a strong influence on the use of Internet are lack of access and age. Experienced senior journalists who are above 50 years old seldom use the

Internet due to lack of training. Journalists use the Internet for chatting, accessing the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) statistics, checking the latest information about computer viruses, downloading free software and keeping themselves abreast of current events. Respondents indicated that they could easily find different websites of book reviews which help them in the selection of new books. Information overload is a factor which prohibits using the Internet. Quality and the reliability of data obtained from the Internet are questionable for many of the journalists. It was observed that the use of Internet cannot diminish the use of other information sources but instead it increases the usage of the latter.

The studies on information seeking behaviour reviewed in this section indicate that journalist's information seeking behaviour is motivated by originality checking, confirming the news and developing personal understanding. Journalists need information for fact checking and they also use online databases, magazines and books for background information. Internet and e-mail are important sources of information.

OBJECTIVES AND METHOD

The present research is informed by previous studies in this area, particularly the work of Anwar, Al-Ansari and Abdullah (2004) and Anwar and Asghar (2009). The purpose of this study is to investigate the information seeking behaviour of media professionals in Karachi, Pakistan, focusing on finding patterns of habit, use, and perceptions of needs and identifying issues within their respective contexts. Specific objectives are to:

- a) identify the various information sources and channels used by the media professionals;
- b) examine how media professionals learn to know about the existence of various information sources;
- c) find out how media professionals use and disseminate information;
- d) ascertain the use of library among media professionals;
- e) explore the type of information services media professionals require in the libraries and information centres; and
- f) reveal how media professionals come to know about the current literature in the field of their subject / interest.

The study is limited to Karachi, which is the biggest and a metropolitan city of Pakistan. It is unique in the sense that all citizens originally belonging to any Pakistani province or city, whether urban or rural, live in Karachi. As such, it is also called mini-Pakistan. Its social, cultural, economical and educational background is quite different from other cities in the country. Literacy rate is comparatively high in Karachi. Being the hub of business and industry, job opportunities are far better here compared to other places in Pakistan.

Questionnaire based survey method was used in investigating the information seeking behaviour of the media professionals. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researchers as it was the most suitable method to probe the information seeking behaviour. Postal questionnaires or hand delivered questionnaires were rejected because there was a possibility of low response rate, misunderstanding and that the questionnaire might not have been completely answered. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 185 media professionals comprising representatives from three media organizations: the major and established newspaper (120, 64.9%), radio (22, 11.9%) and

television (43, 23.24%) channels. Out of the 120 respondents from newspaper agencies, 63 were from the Urdu dailies, 49 from English dailies, and eight (8) from news agencies.

The questionnaire developed for this study consists of two parts. The first part solicits the demographic characteristics of the participants for determination of some important factors such as work position and nature of job. The second part explores the seeking behaviour of media professionals for e.g. sources they consult to find information; information channels i.e. library, Internet, documentation and information centers, etc. The questionnaire was pre-tested by six media professionals to ensure validity and reliability; for from the newspaper and one each from the radio and television. It was found, question did not need any major change. Question were easily understandable and options were given in the question are appropriate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of Respondents

The distribution of respondents by gender shows that almost three-quarter are males (138, 74.6%), while the remaining (47, 25.4%) constitutes female respondents. Work position or designation varies with respondents from newspaper/ news agencies (120, 64.9%) include editor, executive editor, deputy editor, associate editor, news editor, assistant editor, editorial director, reporter, sub-editor, and feature writer. Respondents from radio channels (22, 11.9%) include producers, news editors, deputy controller, programme/duty officers and anchor persons/hosts. They are involved in production of news, current affairs and research-based programmes on different topics such as health, children, religion, social issues and documentaries on various topics. Respondents from television house (43, 23.24%) include producers, reporters, researchers, news editors in charge of news section or current affair programmes, programme managers, assistant directors, research coordinators, directors, assistant directors, sub-editors, news managers, anchors, director of programmes, director of current affair programmes, staff reporters, chief reporters and sports editors. Education of respondents varies. Very few respondents (55, 29.72%) reported having professional degree in mass communication. The majority (130, 70.27%) of them hold masters degree in different disciplines such as languages (Urdu or English), international relations and history. All reported having received on-job training and seemed to be successful in their profession.

Information Seeking Behaviour of Media Professionals

(a) Sources of Information

The sources from which media professionals obtain the information required are shown in Table 1. The most preferred source of information for television and radio professionals is research reports (24, 55.81% and 10, 45.45% respectively). Newspaper professionals considered annual reports to be their most important source of information (65, 54.17 %). Moreover, dictionaries (62, 51.67%), research report (62, 51.6%), encyclopedia and journals (61, 50.83% respectively) are predominantly used by newspaper professionals. This might draw us to an important conclusion that newspaper professionals rely on information sources for fact- checking. Sources such as theses and dissertations, almanac and bibliographic literature are not considered to be that important among the three groups of media professionals.

Table 1: Sources of Information (n = 185)

Sources of Information	TV n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Journal	19	44.19	7	31.82	61	50.83
Conf. proceeding	15	34.88	5	22.73	41	34.17
Dissertation	7	16.28	nil	0.00	7	5.83
Theses	7	16.28	1	4.55	13	10.83
Bib literature	11	25.58	1	4.55	11	9.17
Dictionaries	13	30.23	8	36.36	62	51.67
Directories	12	27.91	7	31.82	35	29.17
Year book	14	32.56	4	18.18	36	30.00
Hand book	6	13.95	2	9.09	20	16.67
Reviews	17	39.53	5	22.73	21	17.50
Encyclopedia	20	46.51	8	36.36	61	50.83
Almanac	4	9.30	1	4.55	17	14.17
Research report	24	55.81	10	45.45	62	51.67
Annual report	13	30.23	8	36.36	65	54.17
On line databases	17	39.53	5	22.73	51	42.50
Manual	5	11.63	3	13.64	7	5.83

(b) Types of Information Channel

Media professionals were asked about the types of information channels they use. By far, the most common type of information channel used among the television and radio professionals is the Internet (38, 88.37% and 14, 63.64% respectively). However, the newspaper professionals chose the library (94, 78.33%) as their primary information channel over the Internet (90, 75.0%). The library was opted second by the television professionals (31, 72.9%), however the library as an information channel was ranked comparatively low by the radio professionals (2, 9.09%). Findings also indicated that both electronic media professionals rely on the mass media for information. Other channels such as the information or documentation centre and the record centre were not considered important information channels by the respondents with the percentage figures lower than 35% for each type of media professionals. Table 2 details the findings. In addition to these channels of information, media practitioners also indicated getting information through e-mails and from music libraries, NGOs, senior counterparts as well as other news organizations.

Table 2: Kinds of information Channel (n = 185)

Kind of information	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Library	31	72.09	2	9.09	94	78.33
Internet	38	88.37	14	63.64	90	75.00
Inf/documentation center	15	34.88	2	9.09	38	31.67
Mass Media	28	65.12	14	63.64	69	57.50
Record center	13	30.23	1	4.55	31	25.83
Direct purchasing	12	27.91	9	40.91	40	33.33

c) The Information Services Used and Awareness on the Existence of Resources

The media professionals were asked about the type of information services that they require from a library or information centre. 'Reference service' is mostly required by both television and newspaper professionals (28, 65.12% and 76, 63.33 % respectively) perhaps for the reason that they need precise and timely information from this service. According to television professionals news bulletins have to be aired as soon as an event occurs, as such they do not have much time get the background information on their own. Conversely radio professionals had very low requirement for this service (8, 36.36%). In most of the media houses in Karachi, library's reference services are not provided despite the keen interest shown by media professionals in this service. 'Newspaper clipping service' tops the list of the services required by newspaper professionals (77, 64.17%) as the news, features and reports from this service provide background information. As a case in point, the newspaper clipping service helps in compiling statistics and a journalist can compile statistics of suicide for the news of suicide cases being reported. Almost half of the television professionals indicated requirement for this service (22, 51.16%). The radio professionals do not require this service that much (5, 22.73 %). Services such as Current Content, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and Translation are not frequently used, perhaps for the reasons that the media professionals are not aware of these services or these bibliographies and abstracting services are not provided in the library that they patronize. This study shows that information seeking behaviour is dependent on awareness and availability. Table 3 presents the data on information services required.

Table 3: Information Services Required by Media Professionals (n=185)

Required information service	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Reference service	28	65.12	8	36.36	76	63.33
Addition list of latest books	10	23.26	4	18.18	19	15.83
Inter lib borrowing service	6	13.95	6	27.27	31	25.83
Newspaper clipping service	22	51.16	5	22.73	77	64.17
Current content service	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	1	2.33	2	9.09	13	10.83
Translation service	3	6.98	2	9.09	16	13.33

The study further explored how the media professionals come to know of the existence of the information sources in their field. Common knowledge, review articles and conversation are used most often by all the groups of practitioners however with a slight difference. As denoted in Table 4, a remarkably large number of television professionals become acquainted with the existence of information sources by 'common knowledge' (18, 41.86%), 'review articles' (18, 41.86%) and 'from conversation' (17, 39.53%). 'Common knowledge' is also ranked highest among radio professionals (7, 31.82%). None of the radio professionals exhibited use of 'index and abstract'. A good number of newspaper professionals know about the existence of information sources through conversation (48, 40.0%) and common knowledge (44, 36.67%). According to Harris and Dewdney (1994) people get information or help from interpersonal sources such as professional colleagues. Insignificant use of 'review articles' (35, 29.17%) and 'list of books' (36, 30.0%) were also

indicated by newspaper professionals. Bibliographies are the least used among all the practitioners as they are not commonly compiled and are not easily available in Pakistan. In general, it can be observed that the awareness on the existence of information obtained from various library resources had low frequencies (the most being about 30.0%) among all groups of media professionals. This shows that their information seeking behaviour is quite poor and they do not have a particular information needs from library resources.

Table 4: Awareness on the Existence of Information Sources (n=185)

Existence of information	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
From bibliography	9	20.93	1	4.55	17	14.17
Through index and abstract	8	18.6	0	0	8	6.67
From book list	13	30.23	0	0	14	11.67
From journals	13	30.23	2	9.09	20	16.67
From list of books	9	20.93	2	9.09	36	30
From conversation	17	39.53	5	22.73	48	40
From review articles	18	41.86	5	22.73	35	29.17
From catalogue	6	13.95	1	4.55	14	11.67
Common knowledge	18	41.86	7	31.82	44	36.67
By chance	7	16.28	1	4.545	17	14.17

d) Dissemination of Information and Knowledge of Current Literature

Analysis of data regarding how media professionals disseminate information indicated that they do so for an obvious reason that is based on the basic function of their organization. Table 5 presents this finding. A sizeable number of newspaper professionals do this through publishing (117, 97.50%). Broadcasting is a major way of disseminating information among radio professional (21, 95.45%) and television professionals (31, 72.09%). The ways least favourable among media professionals in disseminating information include ‘lecture/teaching’ and ‘through research reports. As such, this study found that respondents working in newspapers disseminate information through publishing, and television and radio practitioners disseminate information through broadcasting. Results of this study show that dissemination of information depends on the nature of organizations and duties that have to be performed. It means that professionals disseminate information strictly according to requirement of their field of action.

Table 5: Dissemination of information (n=185)

Dissemination of information	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Publishing	14	32.56	5	22.73	117	97.50
Broadcasting	31	72.09	21	95.45	6	5.00
Lecture/ teaching	9	20.93	1	4.55	12	10.00
Through research report	5	11.63	0	0.00	20	16.67

Findings on knowledge about current literature are amazing. Almost half of the newspaper and television professionals acquire knowledge about current literature through book reviews in newspapers and periodicals (61, 50.83% and 24, 55.81% respectively). This might be due to the fact that they read newspapers and periodicals regularly. However, radio professionals had a comparatively low frequency for this means of knowing about current literature (5, 22.73%). Among the groups, very few radio professionals (1, 4.55%) and newspaper professionals (12, 10.0%) use 'bibliography, index and abstract'. Comparatively there was a higher rating for this service by television professionals (8, 18.60%). Bibliography indexes, abstracts, addition list issued by librarians are rarely used, perhaps because these are not easily and hassle freely available. 'Addition list issued by the library' had the lowest rating by all three groups. Table 6 indicates the means by which the media professionals come to know about the current literature in their field.

Table 6: Knowledge about Current Literature (n=185)

Knowledge about current literature	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Book trade catalogue	13	30.23	3	13.64	23	19.17
Bibliography, index & abstract	8	18.60	1	4.55	12	10.00
Book reviews in newspaper and periodical	24	55.81	5	22.73	61	50.83
Addition list issued by the library	5	11.63	0	0	12	10.00

e) Library as an Information Source among Media Professionals

In an effort to ascertain the use of library among media professionals, the study asked whether the respondents do make an effort to find out if the library has relevant materials on the topic of their interest. The percentage of those who indicated "Yes" to this question was quite low for each type of media professionals, with the percentage figures ranged from (7, 31.81%) for the radio professionals to (23, 53.49%) for the television professionals. The majority of the radio professionals make such an attempt casually (10, 23.25%). The percentage of all the practitioners who try to find what material any library has is very low. This also shows the lack of formal information seeking behaviour among the participants. Possible reason given for this may be lack of time and poor library services. Edem's (1993) study which found that "formal sources are obsolete and cause delay" supports this finding.

Table 7: Media Professionals' Effort to Find if Library has Relevant Materials (n=185)

Does the library have relevant materials?	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Yes	23	53.49	7	31.81	50	41.7
No	13	30.23	5	22.72	36	30.00
Casually	7	16.27	10	23.25	34	28.33

Replies to the questions related to collection of information show that information is collected significantly by asking the librarian as it is the easiest method. All of the newspaper professionals gather information by this method followed by television professionals (18, 78.26%) and radio professionals (5, 71.42%). Searching the shelves is also an important way of collecting information. A sizable number of Newspaper professionals (30, 60%) and radio professionals (4, 57.14%) search the shelves but television professionals had a comparatively lower frequency (10, 43.47%) (Table 8). 'Subject bibliographies' and 'subject catalogues' were less popular among all the sampled participants. Television and newspapers practitioners mostly collect information from library by asking the librarian, as it is the easiest method. Edem's (1993) study on information needs and information seeking behaviour patterns of Nigerian journalists revealed that journalists mostly depend on the assistance of librarian or other library staff. They also depend on use of subject catalogue and other bibliographical tool for searching the information.

Table 8: Ways of Collecting Information Regarding Topic of Interest (n=80)

Collect information	T.V n=23	Percentage	Radio n=7	Percentage	Newspaper n=50	Percentage
Searching the shelves	10	43.47	4	57.14	30	60
Asking the librarian	18	78.26	5	71.42	50	100
Discussion with colleagues	9	39.13	2	28.57	27	54
Subject bibliography	6	26.08	1	14.28	9	18
Subject catalogue	9	39.13	2	28.57	21	42

Periodicals are the best source of detailed current and latest information. As indicated in Table 9 a remarkably large number of the media professionals read periodicals (165, 89.18%). Obviously, newspaper practitioners read periodicals more (109, 90.83%) as compared to television practitioners (37, 86.05%) and radio practitioners (19, 86.36%) since newspapers and periodicals are both print sources. With the exclusion of newspaper practitioners, the majority of the respondents are casual readers of periodicals. As expected, newspaper practitioners read periodicals regularly (Table 10). Practitioners relevant to any media house or belonging to any group of practitioners used periodicals frequently because newspapers and periodicals both are print sources but radio and television read them less comparatively. Findings of Nicholas and Martin (1997) support this finding. Almost all of the practitioners read periodicals regularly, because they have to keep themselves abreast of the latest and up to date information. However, Edem (1993) reported only 2.9% Nigerian media practitioners read journals/ periodicals.

Table 9: Periodicals as a Source of Information on Topic of Interest (n=185)

Reading periodicals	T.V n=43	Percentage	Radio n=22	Percentage	Newspaper n=120	Percentage
Yes	37	86.05	19	86.36	109	90.83
No	6	13.95	3	13.64	11	9.17

Table 10: Frequency of Reading Periodicals on Topic of Interest (n=165)

Frequency of reading periodicals	T.V. n=37	Percentage	Radio n=19	Percentage	Newspaper n=109	Percentage
Regularly	17	46.51	9	47.37	72	66.05
Casually	20	53.48	10	52.63	37	33.94

CONCLUSION

This study focused on media professionals, who are constantly seeking, processing, evaluating and packaging information, in order to shed light on their information behaviors, and contribute to the development of efficient information behaviors/ The purpose of this research was to ascertain the information seeking behaviour of media professionals in Karachi, comprising radio, television and newspaper practitioners. Results evidently indicate that media professionals require complete, factual and dependable information channels such as the library, Internet and online databases. They usually consult the source and channel which is easily available and accessible. Most of their work assignments need information seeking from specialized sources of information. Media professionals need good library facilities and services as well as online data facilities. Results show that library and the Internet are the main channels of information in use. The use of Internet is the highest among television and radio practitioners, perhaps for a simple reason that it is a great source of information on which information on worldwide basis is available easily. It also provides current news and happenings of the world. Nicholas (2000) indicated that easily accessible information channel is used the most. If information sources or systems are available, people engaged in information seeking behaviour and meet their needs. Harris and Dewdney (1994) support this by saying that “people tend to seek information that is most accessible.” The Internet is accessible to lay-man easily in Karachi. This is the reason of excessive use of Internet among media professionals although television and radio houses in Karachi do not provide Internet facility. However, the use of Internet among practitioners of these media houses is high as they use this facility in their homes. However, when Nicholas et al (1998) explored the impact of the Internet on information seeking behaviour of journalists, they revealed that journalists are conservative in the choice of information sources. Their use of Internet is limited, and only less than 20% of metropolitan press journalists use the Internet

Media professionals in this study also commonly use the libraries, as they are easily accessible and are an important channel of information. In Karachi the use of library in newspaper houses is ranked high, while its use among radio professionals is quite low. Observation made during the visit of media house libraries by the researchers revealed that the library in radio house is either not available or in poor condition. While this findings support Nicholas’s (2000) statement that “easily available channels and sources are used greatly”, Campbell (1997) also highlighted the same when he indicated that journalists “seem to pursue the easiest information option.” Surprisingly, the use of libraries among radio professionals is very low. The reason for this finding is believed to be a result of poor library services and poor collection in their libraries. However, libraries and information centres provide books and other print sources in large numbers. These sources

are authentic and genuine. The least used among all these channels are record centres. Radio practitioners were found to use mass media, information / documentation and record centres the least.

Reference service dominates the required services by all groups of media professionals. Interestingly, although, media house libraries rarely provide this service but media professionals show great interest in it. Professional experience of the researchers for more than 25 years in this area of research shows that in Pakistan, records are not easily made available by government agencies or any other organizations. As such, the media professionals require such information from reference services. Newspaper clipping service is also required by them. When asked about current content and SDI services (by the researchers) during data collection, the professionals were unaware of the fact that such services even exist. Libraries of media houses are not the state of the art information centres, and some of them do not even have a proper library. The media houses in which libraries do exist are not providing satisfactory services.

Awareness about the existence of information source also yielded significant findings. Each group of the respondents showed a kind of disability in this regard, however, most of them mentioned reading book reviews published in newspapers. All media professionals read periodicals regularly to keep abreast of current information and news. They collect information in the library by asking the librarian or searching the shelves by themselves. They also consult and discuss with colleagues about the existence of information source catalogues. Generally they go to the library which is nearest to their office or home. 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 their information behaviors. Librarians should become pro-active in the efforts to assist television, radio and newspaper journalists, with their information needs be available to provide basic technical assistance, or information, if needed.

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