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Research literature-seeking behaviours of female lecturers in faculties of education at a Nigerian Federal University

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Abstract

Although literature reviews are central to academic writing and teaching, little attention has been paid to how demographic factors such as age, academic rank, and marital status influence literature-seeking behaviours. This study addressed this gap by investigating the literature-seeking behaviours among female lecturers in the Faculties of Education at a Nigerian Federal University. The study involved 148 randomly selected female lecturers. A well-validated survey instrument was used to measure literature-seeking behaviours. The results indicated that the overall extent of literature-seeking habits was not significantly high. Significant age differences were observed in female lecturers' literature review habits, with younger lecturers exhibiting more favourable behaviours. Additionally, differences in academic rank revealed that assistant lecturers demonstrated the most literature-seeking habits. Furthermore, single female lecturers reported significantly better literature-seeking habits than their married counterparts did. The findings suggest a need for targeted support to enhance literature-seeking behaviours, particularly among older and married lecturers. Mentorship programmes and workshops are needed to promote academic engagement. Future research should explore the reasons for these differences and investigate interventions to improve literature-seeking behaviours across demographic groups.

Keywords

Age, female, lecturers, literature-seeking, marital status.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era, characterised by the prominence of information, efficiently searching for, accessing, and using information has become a vital competence applicable in diverse aspects of life. Be it within educational settings, professional environments, or personal spheres, the aptitude for navigating the extensive pool of accessible information can impact one's ability to make informed decisions, solve problems, and enhance overall knowledge acquisition. Information refers to conveying knowledge concerning an occurrence or a specific state and disseminating knowledge acquired through observations, research, or personal experience [1], [2]. Literature-seeking, a term widely used in the scholarly domain, encompasses academics'

deliberate and systematic efforts to acquire, retrieve, and utilise information to advance their research, teaching, and learning objectives [3]. There are general categories of information that academics seek based on common practices in academic research, which include scholarly literature, primary data, books and monographs, archival and historical records, conference proceedings, government publications, and online resources and databases [4], [5].

Seeking scholarly literature as an information source entails academics using various search strategies to locate research papers and other peer-reviewed journal articles to stay updated on the latest developments in their field [6]. These sources serve as a foundation for their research endeavours and provide insights into existing knowledge gaps. Nevertheless, some female lecturers in Nigeria face challenges in seeking and utilising information effectively. Many female lecturers do not use the right strategies for information from different sources. For example, while reviewing the literature, some female lecturers tend to copy the entire title of their research works and paste it into appropriate search engines. This approach could deny lecturers access to the most relevant documents since Google does not provide relevant information when the search string is very long. The search string should be concise for effective search results, with shorter search terms providing more results [6]. The same scholar complained that many users, including female lecturers, are unaware of Boolean operators as modern-day information search and mining strategies from electronic databases.

When seeking information, most do not seem to know how to use metadata when mining textual contexts. For example, when they access a published work, most rely on the works cited therein without appropriately attributing the works to the authors. This makes it difficult for them to prepare citations from primary sources [6], [7], attributing scholarly contributions to themselves or others, which is plagiarism. Additionally, some female lecturers do not seem to know the various outlets for obtaining information. They tend to rely solely on Google when searching for materials for academic writing. This is surprising given that there are highly customised websites, such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, Semantic Scholar, ResearchGate and others, that contain purely academic materials that can be useful for research engagements.

Based on our experiences and observations within academic settings, it appears that some lecturers struggle to access and utilise relevant literature for their research. We have encountered several cases where female lecturers, in particular, abandoned promising research projects due to challenges associated with sourcing quality information. From what we have seen, many of them risk unintentionally committing plagiarism, primarily because of an overreliance on secondary sources without properly tracing or acknowledging the original primary sources. Should such cases be officially scrutinised, these individuals could potentially face serious consequences [8]. Over time, various efforts have been by different academic institutions to promote best practices in information searching and citation. These have taken different forms, including online tutorials, workshops, book chapters, and public awareness campaigns aimed at guiding scholars on how to appropriately source and attribute materials. Professional bodies have released comprehensive manuals to aid in this process, and practical guides are widely available across different formats (such as books, journal articles), and even instructional videos on platforms such as YouTube. Yet, despite these initiatives, poor literature-seeking behaviours remain common particularly among female lecturers, as we have repeatedly observed in our professional engagements.

The persistence of the unacceptable literature-seeking practices of female lecturers has spurred the need to understand the situation better from an empirical position. Thus, the present study considered the extent of literature-seeking practices among female lecturers and tested for age, rank, and marital status differences. This study considered age, rank, and marital status as moderators. These moderating variables can interact to create a complex web of influences on the information-seeking behaviours of female lecturers. Understanding these factors is essential for institutions to provide targeted support and resources to help lecturers effectively gather and utilise information in their professional roles. Against this background, this study assessed literature-seeking behaviours among female lecturers in faculties of education at the Nigerian Federal University (name masked for security reasons). Specifically, this study

assessed: (1) the level of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers, (2) age variation in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers, (3) academic rank differences in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers, and (4) differences in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers with respect to marital status.

Level of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

Wilson's Model of Information Behaviour [9] serves as a pertinent theoretical framework for understanding the literature-seeking habits among female lecturers. This model posits that individual characteristics, situational factors, and social environments influence information-seeking. It offers a comprehensive perspective on how people seek and utilise information. In the context of female lecturers, individual characteristics such as limited retrieval skills and reliance on electronic databases can critically shape their information-seeking behaviour. Furthermore, situational factors like time constraints and inadequate resources illuminate the challenges they face in accessing literature for teaching and research purposes. The social environment, which includes interactions with colleagues and other professionals, also plays a significant role.

Empirical studies have revealed that there are common challenges in professional information seeking. For example, Daei et al. [10] reported that time constraints, limited retrieval skills, and reliance on electronic databases such as MEDLINE/PubMed were common. Similarly, Mansour et al. [11] preferred traditional and electronic sources, often consulting colleagues and other healthcare professionals for research-related information. Moreover, several studies reveal that lecturers rely heavily on digital resources, particularly the internet, for their information needs. For example, Eromosele et al. [12] reported that lecturers mostly use online platforms for teaching and research, given the limited resources available in their institutional library. Similarly, Ogunbodede and Oniovosa [13] found that university academic staff preferred electronic resources and the internet for their research and teaching activities. In addition, the cited studies indicated that the challenges these lecturers faced included poor internet connectivity and insufficient library resources, which forced them to rely on external online sources [14]–[16].

Other studies have revealed that there are common challenges in professional information seeking. For example, Daei et al. [10] reported that time constraints, limited retrieval skills, and reliance on electronic databases such as MEDLINE/PubMed were common. Similarly, Mansour et al. [11] preferred traditional and electronic sources. They often consult colleagues and other healthcare professionals for research-related information. Moreover, several studies reveal that lecturers rely heavily on digital resources, particularly the internet, for their information needs. For example, Eromosele et al. [12] reported that lecturers mostly use online platforms for teaching and research, given the limited resources available in their institutional library. Similarly, Ogunbodede and Oniovosa [13] reported that university academic staff preferred electronic resources and the internet for their research and teaching activities. Nonetheless, the cited studies indicated that the challenges these lecturers faced included poor internet connectivity and insufficient library resources, which forced them to rely on external online sources [14]–[16].

Access to reliable information sources has been documented as a significant issue for lecturers and faculty members. For instance, Ngozi et al. [17] reported that faculty members primarily used print and online books but faced challenges such as inadequate internet facilities, time constraints, and limited search skills. These issues were compounded by dissatisfaction with library resources, leading faculty to rely heavily on online platforms such as Google. Similarly, Eromosele et al. [12] reported a lack of effective retrieval skills, further limiting lecturers' ability to access necessary information. The literature has also documented that keeping up with recent developments is a common challenge across academic environments. For example, Gordon et al. [18] revealed that time constraints and the overwhelming research volume hindered their progress. Similarly, Adjei [19] reported that reliance on ICT resources such as computers and mobile internet services influences information-seeking habits. Across studies, lecturers' information-seeking behaviour shows a preference for digital sources such as the internet, driven by teaching and research needs. Even so, challenges such as poor retrieval skills, inadequate resources, and infrastructural issues frequently impede the process. These findings in previous studies provide a basis for the first

hypothesis of this study: (H1) the extent of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers is not significantly high."

Age and literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

A relevant theoretical framework for examining age and literature-seeking habits among female lecturers is The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis [20]. This model posits that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly influence individuals' acceptance and use of technology. In the context of information-seeking behaviour, TAM provides explanations of how age-related differences may shape lecturers' preferences for digital versus traditional resources. For instance, younger educators often demonstrate a higher level of comfort with digital tools due to their tech-savviness, aligning with the model's premise that perceived ease of use is a critical factor in technology adoption [21].

Several studies have identified age in influencing information-seeking behaviour. For instance, Shipman et al. [22] demonstrated that younger educators favour digital tools, whereas older educators are more comfortable with traditional resources such as books and journals. Similarly, Crabb and Hanson [23] reported that younger individuals, owing to their tech-savviness, access web pages faster and perform better in online search tasks. These findings indicate a clear generational gap in information-seeking approaches, particularly in education and research. In addition to age, prior experience with information sources significantly impacts search habits. Owing to their frequent exposure to digital platforms, Sbaffi and Zhao [24] revealed that younger individuals are more adept at selecting appropriate online information channels, whereas older individuals rely more on familiar, traditional sources. Wong and Cheung [25] further showed that younger users were more likely to engage in online searches, indicating that digital literacy, which often correlates with age, is critical in shaping search efficiency. A large-scale African study also revealed that female lecturers are more prepared than male lecturers to utilise internet tools for information sharing [26].

Age also affects how individuals access and utilise information in health-related contexts. Liu et al. [27] reported that older individuals with higher health literacy scores were more inclined to access diverse sources of health information. Thompson et al. [28] reported that age predicted healthcare-seeking behaviour, with younger individuals showing a preference for online resources, whereas older individuals were more likely to rely on face-to-face consultations and traditional methods of gathering information. Confidence in navigating information sources also varies with age. Bronstein [29] reported that older students relied more on formal sources such as academic texts, whereas younger individuals were more confident in their exploration of digital resources. This disparity suggests that younger users are generally more comfortable navigating a rapidly evolving digital information landscape, whereas older users stick to more conventional methods. The literature reveals that while age influences information-seeking behaviour in various contexts, these variations are inconclusive when focusing solely on female lecturers. Thus, the second hypothesis is as follows: (H2) there is no significant age variation in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers.

Academic rank and literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

A relevant theoretical framework for understanding the influence of academic rank on literature-seeking habits among female lecturers is Role Theory, as proposed by Biddle [30]. This theory posits that individuals adopt specific behaviours based on the roles they occupy within an organisation, which, in this context, includes the varying responsibilities and expectations associated with different academic ranks. Junior lecturers tend to focus on establishing their research profiles and actively seeking information that enhances their academic output. Conversely, senior lecturers, who are likely to have broader responsibilities, may prioritise resources that support teaching innovations and administrative duties. This differentiation in role expectations may explain how academic rank can shape information-seeking behaviour and the types of resources lecturers engage with.

Academic rank has been shown to influence literature-seeking habits among lecturers, with junior and senior lecturers adopting different strategies based on their roles and responsibilities. A large-scale survey in Africa revealed significant variations in the willingness of academic staff at different ranks to embrace online platforms for research dissemination

during the COVID-19 pandemic, with higher-ranking lecturers showing greater readiness to utilise these channels [31]. In contrast, some studies suggest that academic rank may not significantly influence information-seeking habits. For example, Jarrah and Alkhazaleh [32] reported no statistically significant differences in academic rank. This finding indicates that, in some cases, other factors, such as institutional culture or individual preferences, may play a larger role than rank in shaping information-seeking behaviour.

Other studies have examined the relationship between academic rank and information-seeking habits in broader contexts. For example, Azadeh and Ghasemi [33] reported a correlation between academic rank, English language proficiency, and work experience, influencing how faculty members at Payame Noor University sought information. This suggests that while rank might have an impact, it often interacts with other factors, such as language skills and experience. Similarly, Latunji and Akinyemi [34] reported that lower-level workers were less likely to seek healthcare from formal sources. This finding indicates a possible link between job cadre and behaviour, which may extend to academic settings. The literature presents a mixed picture of the role of academic rank in shaping literature-seeking habits. While some studies highlight significant differences, others show little to no variation in rank. Hence, the third hypothesis is as follows: (H3) there are no significant differences in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers in terms of academic rank.

Marital status and differences in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

The role conflict theory, devised by Kahn et al. [35], is a suitable theoretical framework to explain the relationship between marital status and female lecturers' literature-seeking habits. The theory states that an individual plays many roles that result in competing demands; hence, there is a chance of conflict between their roles. For married female lecturers, therefore, the dual responsibilities of attending to family commitments and academic obligations might well create a substantial problem in managing time and prioritisation. Thus, such lecturers will perhaps practice more selectiveness and efficiency in literature-seeking behaviour, opting for only immediate and relevant literature to answer professional and personal needs. Role conflict theory provides a useful prism through which to view the dynamics at play and how demands exerted by having to fulfil a multitude of roles can impact information-seeking behaviour.

Marital status has been studied in terms of various behaviours, including information-seeking habits, particularly concerning how it affects time management and prioritisation. Married female lecturers with family responsibilities may have less time for extensive information searching and may adopt more selective and efficient approaches focused on immediate needs. Several studies have explored this relationship with mixed results. For example, Liu et al. [27] reported substantial disparities in the ability to access health information based on marital status in China, with marital status influencing individuals' health information-seeking habits. Similarly, Magaard et al. [36] reported that marital status significantly affects health-seeking behaviour among adults with major depression, indicating a possible parallel in other contexts, including academic information seeking.

In constrast, some studies suggest that marital status may not play a significant role. Tennant et al. [37] reported that marital status was not a significant predictor of eHealth literacy or the use of Web 2.0 platforms for health-related information among baby boomers and older adults. Similarly, Stellefson et al. [38] identified a statistically significant relationship between marital status and eHealth literacy in seeking health information online but did not suggest that it was a dominant factor. Other studies, such as Paek et al. [39], reported a notable correlation between marital status and health-seeking behaviours under the Universal Coverage Scheme in Thailand. Blais and Renshaw [40] also reported that being married was positively associated with seeking help from medical professionals among returning service members, although the effect sizes were small. While there is some evidence of a relationship between marital status and information-seeking, the literature does not consistently suggest a significant difference in academic information-seeking habits based on marital status. This leads to the fourth hypothesis: (H4) there is no significant difference in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers concerning their marital status.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. According to Lavrakas [41], "A cross-sectional survey collects data to make inferences about a population of interest (universe) at one point in time". This design is used when the researcher tests several variables simultaneously [42]. The cross-sectional survey design was considered appropriate for this study because the researchers were interested in examining the literature-seeking habits of female lecturers at the University via data obtained from a single questionnaire. The design is also suited to the present study because it allowed the researchers to examine the differences in the literature-seeking habits of female lecturers across multiple demographic variables, such as age, marital status and rank. In addition, cross-sectional studies are usually inexpensive and easy to conduct, making them suitable for this type of research.

Research participants

The population of this study included all female lecturers, from assistant lecturers to professors, in the Faculties of Education, at the Nigerian Federal University. According to the information gathered, there are three Faculties of Education—the Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education (61), the Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies (118) and the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education (57)—with a combined total of 236 female lecturers from the rank of assistant lecturers to Professors (Faculty Officers 2023). Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the minimum sample size required for effective generalisation since the population size was already known.

Thus, a sample of 148 female lecturers selected from the three Faculties of Education is needed for this study, representing 62.712% of the population. Thirty-eight (38), seventy-four (74) and thirty-six (36) lecturers were sampled from the Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education, the Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies and the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, respectively. However, the researcher adopted stratified random and accidental sampling techniques when selecting the actual participants for the study. In doing so, the researcher stratified the population of female lecturers on the basis of faculty. After that, the researcher determined the number of expected participants for each faculty member by computing 62.712% of the available female lecturers who met the eligibility criteria across the three faculties. However, after determining how many participants were required to participate in each of the three faculties, the researcher adopted an accidental approach in which copies of the questionnaire were administered to only female lecturers at their offices during data collection. Thus, a questionnaire was not administered to eligible lecturers who were unavailable in their offices during data collection.

The demographic characteristics of the participants are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents (n=148).

Variable	F	%	Variable	F	%
Age			Rank		
< 40 years	49	33.1	Assist. Lecturer	21	14.2
40—49 years	35	23.6	Lecturer II	43	29.1
50—59 years	35	23.6	Lecturer I	38	25.7
≥ 60 years	29	19.6	Senior Lecturer	25	16.9
Marital Status			Assoc. Professor	12	8.1
Single	64	43.2	Professor	9	6.1
Married	84	56.8			

The age demographic analysis in Table 1 reveals that 33.1% of the participants are under 40 years of age, with 49 individuals in this age bracket. The 40—49 and 50—59 age categories constitute 23.6% each, with 35 respondents each. The 60 years or above category comprises 19.6% of the sample, with 29 respondents. In terms of academic rank, assistant lecturers constitute 14.2% (n=21) of the participants; those with the second-ranking in the categories (Lecturer II) constitute 29.1% (n=43) of the participants; those in Lecturer I constitute 25.7%, with 38 individuals holding this rank; Senior Lecturer accounts for 16.9% of the distribution, with 25 individuals in this position; 8.1% (n=12) of the participants are Associate professors; and

Professor constitutes 6.1% of the distribution, with 9 individuals holding the highest academic rank. For marital status, 43.2% of the respondents (*n*=64) were single, whereas 56.8% (*n*=84) were married.

Instrument and measures

A questionnaire titled the "Literature Seeking Habits Questionnaire" (LSHQ) was used for data collection. The need for a new instrument was conceived for contextual reasons and to provide a localised tool that meets the needs of female academics at the Nigerian Federal University. The LSHQ has two sections—A and B. Section A was designed to obtain information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age, education level, rank, marital status, and years of work experience. Section B contained 16 items measuring literature-seeking habits among female lecturers. The response options for all the items in section B of the LSHQ were on a four-point Likert scale, such as "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree."

Validity of the instrument

A printed version of the LSHQ was submitted to three experts: two specialising in research, measurement, and evaluation and one in library and information science. These experts individually examined the questionnaire and assessed how well the items measured the variables in the study regarding relevance, clarity, simplicity, and lack of ambiguity. The expert assessors kept the items deemed relevant, reworded poorly formulated items, and eliminated irrelevant items. Additionally, when items were removed, the assessors provided suggestions for replacement. The researchers made the necessary adjustments as recommended by the experts before presenting the revised instrument to the supervisor for additional review and approval.

To gather evidence of the validity of the LSHQ, a pilot test was carried out on 50 female lecturers randomly selected from the Faculty of Social Sciences. The ranks of these lecturers ranged from assistant lecturers to professors. The data collected from the pilot sample were subjected to exploratory factor analysis (EFA). This procedure aimed to identify the underlying factor structure of the items measuring literature-seeking habits among female lecturers. EFA was conducted via maximum likelihood (ML) with varimax rotation to enhance interpretability. Before performing the EFA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was calculated, yielding a value of 0.82 above the recommended threshold of 0.60, indicating that the sample was adequate for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2_{(120)}$=743.65, *p*-value<0.001), confirming that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for the analysis.

The initial results revealed that four factors had eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for 67.3% of the variance. After the scree plot and eigenvalues were reviewed, a decision was made to retain three factors, which together explained 58.9% of the variance, reflecting distinct dimensions of literature-seeking habits. Factor 1, labelled "Strategic Literature Sourcing," included items related to purposeful and efficient strategies for seeking information, such as the use of digital libraries and online databases. Factor 2, "time-constrained literature seeking," included items that reflected lecturers' need to find information quickly because of limited time. Factor 3, "collaborative information sharing," included items related to seeking and sharing literature with colleagues, indicating a more cooperative approach to information gathering. Items that did not load significantly onto any factors were reviewed and removed to refine the instrument. The factor loadings for the retained items were all above 0.60, demonstrating strong associations with their respective factors. This resulted in a refined questionnaire with three clear dimensions of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers.

Ethical considerations and data collection

Because the study included human participants, ethical approval was sought from the University of Calabar's Research Ethics Committee. While the questionnaires were being administered, the respondents were assured of confidentiality in the data analysis. All the respondents consented that their responses would be used for publication if confidentiality was maintained.

The data for this study were collected through the physical administration of the questionnaire. The participants were briefed about the process and the importance of providing impartial answers. They were encouraged to stay attentive and provide truthful responses. Additionally,

they were guaranteed that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The copies of the instrument were personally delivered to eligible lecturers in their respective offices by the researcher. Only lecturers available in their offices during data collection were given copies of the questionnaire to complete. The researchers gave each lecturer one week to respond to the questionnaire before revisiting it for retrieval. However, lecturers who preferred to fill out the survey on the spot were given that option.

RESEARCH RESULT

This study assessed literature-seeking behaviours among female lecturers in the Faculties of Education at the Nigerian Federal University. The results of the study are provided in the subsequent subheadings.

Extent of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

In this section, the extent of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers was explore, based on the results of a one-sample *t*-test. This null hypothesis was tested at the .05 alpha level via one-sample *t*-test. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that the mean number of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers is 40.17, which is slightly greater than the test mean value of 40.00, with a standard deviation of 14.43. The results also revealed that the mean difference of .17 is not significantly high, $t_{(147)}$=0.142, *p*-value>0.05. On the basis of this evidence, the null hypothesis was upheld. This implies that the extent of literature-seeking habits among female lecturers is not significantly high in the Faculties of Education at the Nigerian Federal University.

Table 2. One-sample *t*-test on literature-seeking habits of female lecturers (*n*=148)

Variable	Mean	SD	SE	MD	*df*	*t*	*p*-value
Level of literature-seeking habits	40.17	14.43	1.19	0.17	147	0.142	0.89

SD=Standard Deviation; SE=Standard Error; MD=Mean Difference; Test value=40.00

Age differences in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

This section examines whether literature-seeking habits differ significantly across age groups of female lecturers. A one-way analysis of variance was performed to test the null hypothesis at the 0.05 alpha level. The analysis presented in Table 3 shows that out of the 148 female lecturers, 49 were younger than 40 years, 35 were between 40 and 49 years, 35 were between 50 and 59 years, and 29 were 60 years or older. The comparison in Table 3 revealed that literature-seeking habits among female lecturers were more favourable in the below 40 years category ($\bar{x}$=56 ± 4.64), 40—49 years category ($\bar{x}$=43.17 ± 3.06), 50—59 years category ($\bar{x}$=30.51 ± 4.02) and 60 years or above category ($\bar{x}$=20.17 ± 2.26).

Table 3. One-way ANOVA of age influence on female lecturers' literature-seeking habits.

Age	*n*	Mean	SD	SE
Below 40 years	49	56.73	4.64	0.66
40—49 years	35	43.17	3.06	0.52
50—59 years	35	30.51	4.02	0.68
60 years and above	29	20.21	2.26	0.42
Total	148	40.17	14.43	0.57

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*-value
Between Groups	28580.75	3	9526.918	670.508	0.000
Within Groups	2046.02	144	14.209		
Total	30626.77	147			

The results in Table 3 reveal that there is a significant age difference in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers in the Faculty of Education at the university ($F_{(3,144)}$=670.508, *p*-value<0.05). For those not receiving adequate statistical support, the null hypothesis was disregarded. The Tukey honest significant difference (HSD) test of multiple bivariate comparisons (Table 4) revealed significant differences across all the pairwise comparisons.

This clearly suggests that the differences in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers in different age brackets (earlier established) were not due to chance.

Table 4. Tukey HSD Post hoc test for age differences in literature-seeking habits of female lecturers

(I) Age	(J) Age	MD (I – J)	SE	*p*-value
Below 40 years	40—49 years	13.563*	0.834	0.000
	50—59 years	26.220*	0.834	0.000
	60 years & above	36.528*	0.883	0.000
40—49 years	50—59 years	12.657*	0.901	0.000
	60 years & above	22.965*	0.947	0.000
50—59 years	60 years & above	10.307*	0.947	0.000

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Academic rank and literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

This section explored the influence of academic rank on the literature-seeking habits among female lecturers. A one-way analysis of variance was performed to test the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5. The results in Table 5 reveal that in that order, female lecturers' information habits were greater in the assistant lecturer category than in the Lecturer II, Lecturer I, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professorial categories.

The result of the one-way analysis of variance presented in Table 5 shows an *F*-ratio of 428.205, with its associated *p*-value of .000 being less than the alpha level of .05. On the basis of this result, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis, which was eventually upheld. There is, therefore, a significant difference in literature-seeking habits among female lecturers in the faculties of education at Nigerian Federal University. To determine the pairwise differences across the various academic ranks on the basis of their literature-seeking habits, the Tukey HSD test was performed, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 5. ANOVA results for academic rank and literature-seeking habits

Academic level	*n*	Mean	SD	SE
Assistant Lecturer	21	60.95	2.397	0.523
Lecturer II	43	50.86	4.617	0.704
Lecturer I	38	37.71	4.343	0.704
Senior Lecturer	25	25.60	2.630	0.526
Associate Professor	12	20.50	1.168	0.337
Professor	9	17.67	1.414	0.471
Total	148	40.17	14.434	1.186

Source	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*-value
Between Groups	28721.85	5	5744.369	428.205	0.000
Within Groups	1904.93	142	13.415		
Total	30626.78	147			

Tukey's honest significant difference (HSD) test of multiple bivariate comparisons revealed significant differences across all the pairwise comparisons except for the comparison of Associate Professors and Professors. This suggests that the differences in the literature-seeking habits among female lecturers of different academic ranks, except for Associate professors and Professors (earlier established), were not due to chance.

Marital status and literature-seeking habits among female lecturers

This section examines how marital status influences the literature-seeking habits of female lecturers. The independent variable of this hypothesis is the lecturers' marital status, which is operationalised into two levels: single or married. The dependent variable of the hypothesis is their literature-seeking habits. An independent test was used to compare the means of single and married female lecturers with

respect to the literature-seeking habits. The analysis in Table 7 shows that the total number of single respondents was 64, whereas the number of married respondents was 84.

Table 6. Tukey HSD test of academic rank differences in female lecturers' literature-seeking habits

(I) Academic rank	(J) Academic rank	MD (I – J)	SE	*p*-value
Assistance Lecturer	Lecturer II	10.092*	0.975	0.000
	Lecturer I	23.242*	0.996	0.000
	Senior Lecturer	35.352*	1.084	0.000
	Assoc. Professor	40.452*	1.325	0.000
	Professor	43.286*	1.459	0.000
Lecturer II	Lecturer I	13.150*	0.815	0.000
	Senior Lecturer	25.260*	0.921	0.000
	Associate Professor	30.360*	1.196	0.000
	Professor	33.194*	1.343	0.000
Lecturer I	Senior Lecturer	12.111*	0.943	0.000
	Associate Professor	17.211*	1.213	0.000
	Professor	20.044*	1.358	0.000
Senior Lecturer	Associate Professor	5.100*	1.286	0.000
	Professor	7.933*	1.424	0.000
Associate Professor	Professor	2.833	1.615	0.082

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 7 further reveals that single female lecturers displayed more positive literature-seeking habits ($\bar{x}$=54.17±6.232) than their married counterparts did ($\bar{x}$=29.50±8.551) in the Faculties of Education at the university. A significant mean difference was further revealed (24.672) in the literature-seeking habits of single and married female lecturers favouring the former. This implies a significant influence of marital status on literature-seeking habits among female lecturers in the Faculty of Education at the universit, $t_{(146)}$=19.470, *p*-value<0.05).

Table 7. Independent *t*-test of marital status influence on literature-seeking habits of female lecturers

Variable	Marital Status	*n*	Mean	SD	MD	*df*	*t*	*p*-value
Literature-seeking habits	Single	64	54.17	6.232	24.672	146	19.470	0.000
	Married	84	29.50	8.551				

DISCUSSION

This study revealed that literature-seeking habits are not significantly high among female lecturers in the Faculties of Education at the Nigerian Federal University. The low level of information-seeking habits of female lecturers could be attributed to various factors. Limited resource access, heavy workloads, and time constraints discourage active literature seeking. Additionally, disparities in professional development opportunities, technology access, and institutional support could play a role. Societal and institutional gender stereotypes may affect perceptions and expectations for women in academia, impacting their engagement in rigorous information-seeking behaviour. Networking opportunities and family responsibilities also contributed to these findings. To better understand these challenges, further research and qualitative methods are essential. Addressing these factors through interventions and support structures could help improve information-seeking habits among female lecturers. These elements collectively contribute to the observed high level of information-seeking habits among female lecturers, explaining their commitment to academic excellence. This study correlated with that of Eromosele et al. [12], who reported limited utilisation of the library due to insufficient resources within the libraries and a lack of effective skills, including the use of the Library Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and search engines.

The study's second main result revealed a significant age gap in lecturers' literature-seeking habits among female lecturers in the Faculties of

Education at the university. This finding, which is in favour of younger female lecturers, is not surprising, as many factors could account for it. For example, literature seeking has advanced so that ICT-inclined individuals are ahead of their counterparts when seeking information. Younger lecturers may be more accustomed to digital technologies and online resources, having grown up with them (digital natives). In contrast, older lecturers (digital immigrants) might not be as comfortable or adept at using newer information technologies. Additionally, younger lecturers may have received more recent and technology-focused education, including training on effective information retrieval from online sources. Older lecturers might have been trained in a different era with less emphasis on digital tools. Additionally, younger individuals generally tend to be more comfortable and adaptable when using technology. They may be more willing to explore and adopt new literature-seeking tools than their older counterparts are. Furthermore, younger lecturers may be early in their careers and more motivated to stay updated with the latest research and teaching methods. Older lecturers, who have been in the profession for longer periods, may have established routines and rely on their existing knowledge base. In addition, younger individuals may be more open to change and innovation, whereas older individuals might be more resistant to adopting new practices. This can impact their willingness to explore and adopt new information-seeking methods. Younger lecturers might be more engaged in online academic communities and social media, facilitating quicker access to information through networking. Older lecturers may rely more on traditional academic networks. This result is in line with those of several previous studies, including that of Shipman et al. [22], who reported the significant influence of age on the literature-seeking patterns of people. Sbaffi and Zhao [24] also reported that several factors, including age and health condition, significantly influence the selection of online health information challenges. Wong and Cheung [25] reported that being younger significantly predicted engaging in online health information-seeking activities.

The third finding of this study was the significant influence of female lecturers' academic rank on their literature-seeking habits in the Faculties of Education at the university. The observed influence of academic rank on the information-seeking habits of female lecturers, favouring those with lower ranks, could stem from various interconnected factors. Younger lecturers, often in the early stages of their careers, may be more motivated to actively seek out information as part of their professional development and career-building efforts. Their comfort with an inclination towards adopting technology might influence their preference for digital resources in information retrieval. The pressure to meet research productivity expectations, a focus on networking, a drive for innovation, and generational differences in information-seeking behaviours collectively contribute to this trend. Moreover, time constraints and differing mentorship structures may impact how younger and senior faculty members engage with and actively seek information within the academic context. This finding corroborates Owan et al. [14], [26], [31], who reported a significant difference in ranks, signifying variations in the willingness of academic staff to embrace internet-based channels for sharing their research. Latunji and Akinyemi [34] reported that lower-level workers were less likely to seek information. This could result from the differences between the present study and the cited studies. While the cited study focused on seeking healthcare information, the present study investigated the literature-seeking habits of female lecturers.

The study's fourth major finding was that marital status significantly influences female lecturers' literature-seeking habits in favour of single lecturers. Possible justifications for this influence revolve around the time and responsibilities associated with marriage, with single lecturers potentially having more flexibility for professional development. Additionally, career focus differs, as single lecturers prioritise their professional lives, engage in networking activities, and stay current. Married lecturers, on the other hand, may balance their time across work and family commitments. The support systems available to each group, the role of networking opportunities, and differing priorities in personal well-being may collectively contribute to the observed variations in information-seeking habits. This study aligns with previous studies reporting that marital status significantly influences how individuals seek information [27], [36], [38], [39]. For instance, Paek et al. [39] explained a notable correlation

between marital status and the behaviour of seeking healthcare services.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the literature-seeking habits of female lecturers in the Faculties of Education at a Nigerian Federal University and to explore how factors such as age, academic rank, and marital status influence these habits. The study revealed that the overall level of literature seeking was low, with younger lecturers, those in lower academic ranks, and single lecturers showing more active engagement in seeking academic information. These findings have important implications for higher education institutions, particularly those that support female lecturers' professional development. By addressing challenges such as limited access to resources, time constraints, and gender-based disparities, institutions can foster a more conducive environment for active literature-seeking. The beneficiaries of these findings include university administrators, who can use evidence to design interventions that target female lecturers' specific needs, and the lecturers themselves, who may benefit from enhanced resource access and professional support. Beyond the immediate context of this study, the findings are relevant to other academic settings, both in Nigeria and globally. Issues such as technological advancements, professional rank, and work-life balance affect female academics in various educational contexts. Institutions worldwide can benefit from these findings when strategies are implemented to enhance literature-seeking habits, especially for female faculty members in education and other disciplines.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following is recommended: (1) Regardless of their age, marital status, or other demographic affiliation, all lecturers should prioritise literature-seeking to develop the habit of keeping abreast of the advances in their fields of study; (2) Literature-seeking awareness and training should be organised for older female lecturers and those with higher ranks to achieve a blend of technological advancements; (3) Awareness campaigns for married female lecturers should be conducted to improve their habits toward literature-seeking; (4) Institutions should readily provide lecturers with easy access to navigate internet sources for literature-seeking purposes.

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