

## The influence of denominational affiliations on the information seeking behavior of the Ulama in Borno State, Nigeria

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Information seeking behavior (ISB) studies is one area in library and information science that has over the years attracted the attention of information professionals, resulting in several studies being carried out with a view to understand why people seek information, how they seek it, and what influences their information seeking behavior. Thus, the main objective of the study was to investigate whether the information seeking behavior of the Ulama is influenced by their denominational and sectarian affiliations. The study deployed the survey research method. The target population was made up of 973 Ulama dispersed within 27 Local Government Areas of Borno State of Nigeria. Proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size of 284. The study used questionnaire to collect data which was subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The study identified the existence of various religious groups in Borno and highlighted the information sources preferred as well as the diverse search strategies adopted when seeking information. Most importantly however, the study revealed that the denominational and sectarian differences does not affect the ways the Ulama search for information to carry out their roles, what however influences their preaching, counseling, administration, and leadership roles, was their interpretations of Islam according to sectarian and doctrinal beliefs.

**Keywords:** Information seeking behaviour, Nigeria

### Introduction

The Arabic word Ulama is the plural of Alim which refers to 'learned or knowing man'. Ulama therefore literarily mean "those who possess knowledge" or "community of learned men". The Encyclopedia Britannica defined Ulama as the learned of Islam, those who possess the quality of ilm in its widest sense.....who are versed theoretically and practically in the Muslim Sciences.....the religious teachers of the Islamic community, theologians (muttakallimun), cannon lawyers (muftis), judges (qadis).<sup>1</sup> However, in the Islamic literature the term connotes a broader and more significant meaning. The term Ulama is used in Islam to mean not only group of men with religious education in the Quran, Sunna and Sharia but also a group of men expressing the true content of Islam towards both the people and the rulers. Historically, the Ulama first emerged within the companions of the Prophet (SAW) as interpreters of The Quran and transmitters of Sunnah, the sayings and deeds of the Prophet (SAW). These scholars also became the first to outline and elaborate the basic principles of Islamic law. They were also central to the spread of Islamic education, and instrumental in the process of training Islamic scholars.

The status of the Ulama in all Islamic societies is virtually the same. They are highly respected and distinguished due to the depth of their knowledge in Quran, Hadith and other Islamic sciences. They formed the core of religious establishments and served as guardians of the high Islamic culture of scholarship and learning. The sphere of influence of the Ulama was not limited to teaching and preaching alone but encompassed all facets of societal life. The Ulama were "heirs and successors of the prophets and depositors of truth in the world and the elite of mankind" as stated variously in The Qur'an and Hadith. Such glorified image of the Ulama is rooted in the Muslim ethics, and serves to explain the special position an Alim occupies in the community of Faithfull's. The Ulama are the purveyors of Islam, the guardians of its tradition and the moral agents of the populace. In a society where men are enjoined to "command good and set aside evil", it is the duty of the Ulama to see that this Qur'anic injunction is carried out through their teaching and preaching. In the process, different groups of Ulama emerged conditioned by the circumstances of their time, their depth of learning, affiliations and linkages with the authority.

The Ulama has considerable power in Muslim countries as well as great influence on most Muslims. This power and influence stems from two factors:-

1. The 'world' they live in. The 'world' of the Ulama is a spiritual one. The Alim lives within the confines of Islamic theology (kalam), within a denomination (mazhab) and sectarian congregation.
2. The roles they play in the society. Because of the spiritual life of the Alim, he plays the role of a preacher (wa'iz) constantly reminding Muslims of their faith; a counselor (mustashir) providing Islamic guidance because of his wisdom; as an administrator (mudirr) he oversees the day-to-day affairs of the madarassa; and as a leader (qa'id) he controls, guides, and directs his followership.

In order for the Ulama to maintain such power and influence, they must continue to play these societal roles effectively, and to achieve that they need and seek information using various sources. As information professionals, our role is to identify these needs and understand their information seeking behavior with a view to providing them relevant information and quality library services to improve their role performance for the betterment of the society.

### **Borno State, Nigeria**

Borno State is the largest of all the 36 States of Nigeria covering an area of 116,589 Square kilometers and occupying the greater part of the Lake Chad Basin in the extreme North Eastern part of the Country. The State is highly pluralistic in its ethnic composition with Kanuri being the dominant ethnic group, and a rich and diverse cultural heritage. It has a population of 4.3 million, eighty percent (80%) of which are muslims<sup>2</sup>.

Historically, Kanem Borno was one of the great kingdoms of Central Sudan, described by historians as the area stretching from Dafur in Sudan to the Lake Chad Region in the east, and the great bend of River Niger and the Western Coast of the Atlantic Ocean on the west. Kanem Borno lies along the famous, stable, and ancient caravan routes which extended from West Africa and other parts of the Continent to Mecca<sup>3</sup>. This enhanced early contact with the Muslim world of Tunisia, in far northwest of Africa and Nubia on the

middle Nile and Egypt in the northeast of the continent. The early links and contacts with these states effectively influenced the culture of the people of Borno and eventually formed a sound basis for the development of an Islamic society. Consequently, it attracted leading scholars from other parts of the Islamic world, thus, becoming the single largest empire in the Central Sudan that can boast of a large number of people who commuted The Quran to memory. Borno remained the one area in the whole of Nigeria which can be accurately described as a Muslim State with an Islamic dynasty and tradition<sup>4</sup>.

As a centre of Islamic scholarship, Borno attracted many scholars with various fields of specialization, diverse backgrounds and interests together from all over West Africa to study. Of recent however, Borno has continued to witness consistent devastating religious crisis resulting in the death of thousands of people, destruction of properties worth millions, displacing thousands of people from their homes and means of livelihood and creating a state of insecurity.

### **Literature review**

A large number of studies have been conducted in the area of information needs and seeking behavior over the last decade. Many researchers in this area in library and information science as well as in other disciplines have developed varying perspectives of information needs and seeking behavior. These studies have significantly contributed to developments in information services, literacy, skills training, electronic resources, virtual libraries, and our understanding of individuals' behavior towards information<sup>5</sup>. As a result, a lot of literature in this field can be found in books, journal articles, theses and dissertations, reports, and magazines.

### **The concept of information seeking**

Information seeking is the most widely used concept in user studies, and yet the less defined. Probably because it is assumed that the meaning of the term is obvious, that is the action taken in order to solve an information need. It is argued that the concept of information seeking is more closely associated to need than to information itself, for example Wilson defined information seeking as "the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal<sup>6</sup>." Quite a number who defined the concept saw it from the perspective of a process of either discovering patterns or filling

recognized gaps. Others commented that information seeking takes place when a person has knowledge stored in long term memory that precipitates an interest in related information as well as the motivation to acquire it. It can also take place when a person recognizes a gap in their knowledge that may motivate that person to acquire new information. Some scholars on the other hand perceived information seeking as problem oriented. Marchionini defined it as “a process in which humans purposefully engage in order to change their state of knowledge closely related to learning and problem solving<sup>7</sup>, which is synonymous with Dervin’s<sup>8</sup> definition of sense making in terms of confronting problematic situations; indeed for some scholars information seeking is synonymous with sense-making.

Important as the definition of information seeking is the question - Why people seek information? A cursory look at the literature shows various reasons advanced by scholars. These variations can however be grouped into four categories propounded by Case<sup>9</sup>: Looking for answers, reducing uncertainty, Making sense and Motivations. It is clear from the above that information seeking is a conscious or deliberate action initiated by an individual to satisfy an information need. The ultimate consequence of the action is intended to solve problems, reduce uncertainty, make sense of ones world, or as motivation towards self actualization.

#### **Demographic factors in information seeking**

Available literature has shown that there are a lot of studies on information seeking behavior conducted within different contexts such as population, environment, occupations, etc. In recent times researchers have turned their attention more to contextual, situational or role variables rather than demographic. Although demographic variables appear frequently in many information seeking behavior studies, denominational and sectarian affiliations as variables and their classification in the field of information seeking behavior are obviously missing and does not seem to have been a primary focus of study by researchers. However, variables such as age, gender, educational background, experience, were found to be of relative influence in information seeking behavior. Mehmet<sup>10</sup> reported on the information seeking behavior of crime Scene Investigators in Turkey that the older, more educated and experienced are positively disposed to accessing

information relevant to solving crimes. Marcella and Baxter<sup>11</sup> also study the information needs and information seeking behavior of a sample of United Kingdom’s population with special reference need related to citizenship, revealed a lot of significance. The study found that young people were less confident in their abilities to access information. Furthermore, Al Suqri<sup>12</sup> revealed that information seeking rises sharply as the level of education increases. 55% of people with a postgraduate education sought information relating to their jobs compared with 25% of those without a high school diploma.

Many studies have also shown high correlation between role related factors such as years of experience, position, education, and information seeking behavior of professionals. Wicks<sup>13</sup>, Tanner<sup>14</sup>, and Porcella<sup>15</sup> have all concluded that the level of education, years of experience, and location of a Pastor impacts not only on his or her information seeking process but also on his or her pastoral activities such as preaching, counseling and care-giving. Small et al<sup>16</sup> studied the relationship between demographic information of professionals and role related factors emphasizing on years of experience and reveal that the educated often rely on familiar routines to find information. This finding is consistent with earlier studies by Davies<sup>17</sup>, Holland<sup>18</sup>, and Porcella<sup>15</sup>. Wilkins and Leckie<sup>19</sup> conducted a study on how academic and management staffs of universities seek information related to their work and found no correlation for years employed. However, the level of education of the respondents is highly significant; users with master’s degrees and PhD have used the library more frequently.

From the literature reviewed, it is clear that no study could be found that specifically addressed the denominational affiliation of the clergy, particularly the Ulama to their information seeking. Most of the related works tend to show the differences that exist in terms of educational level, experience, age and congregation.

#### **Information seeking behavior of the clergy**

While enormous amount of literature is bound in the area of user-oriented studies especially within professional context, not much has been written on the information needs and seeking behavior of religious clerics<sup>13</sup>. A search into the literature between 1973 and 2008 revealed only few major studies in the

area and all were directed towards ministers, pastors, evangelists, etc of the various denominations of the Christian faith.

Porcella studied the information needs as they relate to the preaching role of the Protestant ministers in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He postulated that protestant minister's doctrinal belief has a causal relationship to their selection of information materials<sup>15</sup>. Erdel's<sup>20</sup> work was a survey of nineteen Evangelical Mennonite Church pastors in America. He found out that the pastors make little use of institutional and public library, have a personal library, and read mostly religious materials of conservative nature. Allen<sup>21</sup> investigated information-seeking patterns and resource use by Baptist Leaders with particular reference to South America. The study revealed that radio and television were the most widely used channels especially by the lower income and less desirable work situations, while libraries were used more by urban dwellers with greater leadership responsibility and higher educational level. How professional is the Pastor in gathering and disseminating information is the centre of Tanner's<sup>14</sup> study. Analyzing the Pastor as information gatherer, he revealed that they sought information through both formal and informal channels. The study also identified two roles of the Pastor as information disseminator- as a counselor he dealt with wide range of information needs and used various strategies, including referral to meet those needs and as a preacher, the Pastor relied heavily upon scripture and personal experiences.

Understanding the relationship between work roles and information seeking behavior of Protestant ministers formed the centre of Phillip's<sup>22</sup> research. The survey study showed relationships between information seeking behaviors and both choice of information channel and choice of method of retrieving information. The study also found out that the minister as preacher preferred a relatively few formal information channels, especially a personal book collection, pamphlet files, the Bible etc and preferred individualistic or impersonal means .or accessing information such as reading a book.

The information seeking behavior of pastoral clergy: a study of the interaction of their work worlds and work roles by Wicks asks whether the information-seeking behavior of pastoral clergy is governed by the interaction of their work worlds and work roles. Findings of the study indicated that

“pastoral clergy tend to use different types of sources in different roles and that certain combinations of pastoral worlds and pastoral roles influence whether the information-seeking behavior will be open or closed<sup>13</sup>. Roland<sup>23</sup> researched a single case study of a clergy member's behavior in the interpretation of scripture for the weekly Sunday sermon. Like Wick's, Roland's research is grounded in Dervin's Sense-Making Model which provided the interpretative framework for the qualitative study. Findings of the study were also similar to Wick's and Allen's. Other studies within the religious context that were reported in the literature include Huseman's<sup>24</sup> study on the selection and use of literature by pastors, Brockway's<sup>25</sup> survey of the reading habits of pastors in Connecticut, and Gorman<sup>26</sup> on the utilization of theological libraries by academic theologians.

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

#### **Information and role execution**

Within the complex nature of our world, the primary importance of information is widely recognized. People continuously encounter and have access to far more information than they can possibly process. Fox<sup>27</sup> lamented that there is a lot of information available and by many measures the amount continues to grow at an exponential rate. Information plays an important role in our daily professional and personal lives and we are constantly challenged to take charge of the information that we need for work, fun and everyday decisions and tasks. Drawing from the above, information is viewed as a basic resource which all human needs in a society in order to execute their roles effectively. Several studies have been carried out to determine the importance of information on the efficiency and effectiveness of role execution by different professionals.

Studying the relationship between the information seeking pattern of the clergy and their work roles, Wicks<sup>13</sup>, Blizzard<sup>28</sup>, and Phillips<sup>22</sup> not only identified the roles (preaching, care-giving, and administration) for which the clergy require information, but also linked the clergy's work roles and information seeking. The studies also indicated that although the

clergy's choice and use for a particular source of information is determined by the role of the moment, generally however, the clergy rely more on informal sources especially when performing care-giving and administrative roles. For the preaching role, the Bible and other religious publications are required. Similarly, several researchers have investigated the effects of roles upon information seeking. For example Mick, Lindsay, and Callahan<sup>29</sup>; and Summers, Matheson, and Conry<sup>30</sup> have all concluded that work roles not only influence the choice of information sources, but it also relates to effective role performance.

What is available on Muslim clerics (Ulama) relates only to the roles they play in the society and their contribution to Islamic education. The few relevant ones to this study, written on the Ulama in Borno include Laminu<sup>31</sup>, Ashigar<sup>32</sup>, Abdurrahman and Canham<sup>4</sup>, Mustapha<sup>3</sup>, and Gazali<sup>33</sup>. Specifically however, emphasis is placed on the roles they play and their contribution to the development of the Muslim Ummah in Borno and Nigeria in general.

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

### **Objectives of the study**

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To identify the various religious denominations in Borno;
- To identify the information sources used for their activities;
- To determine how they seek information to perform their activities; and
- To examine whether denominational affiliations influence their information seeking activities.

### **Methodology**

The survey method is found to be appropriate. Creswell<sup>34</sup> observed that survey research is the type of design that the researcher collects data at one point

in time. The design has the advantage of measuring current attitudes, beliefs, opinions or practices. It also provides information within a short period. Data was collected using survey questionnaire made up of both open and close ended items containing numerical, categorical, and multiple response questions.

The population for the study was made up of nine hundred and seventy three (973) Ulama, recognized and registered by the Borno State Ministry for Religious Affairs and Special Education. This number is widely and variously distributed among the twenty-seven (27) Local Government Areas of the State within a sparsely populated area of 116,589 square kilometers. According to Robert and Morgan<sup>35</sup> a sample size of two hundred and seventy eight (278) within a frame  $\pm 5$  margins of error for a population of between nine hundred and fifty (950) and one thousand (1000) are recommended. To arrive at the sample size, thirty percent of the target population was selected through Stratified Random Sampling technique. The list of registered Ulama containing nine hundred and seventy three (973) names arranged according to their respective Local Government Areas provided by the Borno State Ministry for Religious Affairs and Special Education served as the sampling frame. However, since the numbers of the Ulama vary from one Local Government to another, the thirty percent derivation was proportionally done according to their number in each of the twenty seven (27) local government areas of Borno State. This technique provided the respondents equal opportunity of being selected to participate in the study no matter how large or small the number of Ulama in each local government area. This resulted in a total of Two hundred and eighty-four (284) Ulama as the sample size.

### **Analysis**

Based on the sampling procedure adopted, a total of 400 questionnaires were administered directly on the respondents out of which 281 (70 %) properly filled and returned, were used for the study.

The analysis consists of both descriptive statistics which provided a general over view of the characteristic features of the respondents as well as the distribution of the respondent's various responses to the questions raised; and inferential statistics used to answer research questions raised to determine the influence of denominational and sectarian affiliations on information seeking behavior.

### Demographic background of respondents

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

Respondents were also asked to state the level of education they attained, as well as indicate how it was acquired. One-hundred and ten of them representing 39.1% were Masters Degree holders, followed by Bachelors Degree holders constituting one-hundred and two or 36.3%. Sixteen respondents representing 5.7% were high school leavers and they formed the minority group in the study in terms of educational qualification. Asked to indicate whether they acquired their education formally, informally, or both; Majority of the respondents, one-hundred and forty-one (50.2%) indicated that they acquired their education by attending both formally established schools and traditional *Islamiyya* schools (*Madrassa*). However, only thirty-three (11.7%) observed that they acquired their education by attending traditional *Islamiyya* schools (*Madrassa*). As regards experience acquired over the years as a practicing Alim, seventy-seven (27.4%) have been practicing for between 16-19 years. This is closely followed by Sixty-six (23.5%) of the respondents who indicated that they earned between 6-10 years experience of practice. The minority group with between 11-15 years of experience is represented by thirty-six of the respondents making-up 12.8%

### Denominational affiliation of respondents

One of the main objectives of the study was to identify the various religious denominations in existence in Borno State. Consequently, the researcher identified the four renowned Islamic denominations (*Maliki, Shafi'i, Hambali, and Hanafi*), and requested respondents to state their affiliation Table 2 shows that while there is no representative from the *Hanafi Mazhab* that participated in the survey, Majority of the respondents, two hundred and sixty-nine (95.7%) belong to the *Maliki Mazhab*.

### Sectarian affiliation of respondents

Basically, the literature categorized Islamic sects into two main groups, Sunni and Shia. However, while the Shia is seen as one unit with little or no

fundamental differences, the Sunni group being the largest constitute of many splinter groups with fundamental differences. For the purpose of this study, respondents were asked to determine their sect and if they belong to the Sunni group, state their sub-group.

The data gathered revealed that majority of respondents two hundred and fifty-one (89%) belong to the Sunni sect while the remaining thirty-one (11%) belong to the Shia sect. The analysis of the data as presented in Figure 1, further revealed that out of the 250 making up the Sunni sect, eighty-six (34%) were *Sufi*, seventy (28%) were of the *Sallafiyya* group, forty-one (16%) affiliate with the *Ahl Sunnah*, thirty-one (12%) follow the *Tijaniyya* sub-group, while the *Qadriyya* adherents make up the remaining twenty-two or 9%.

It is clear from the above that majority of the Ulama in Borno are Sunnis and belong to different religious sub-groups with diverse fundamental principles and understanding of the Islamic religion.

### Information sources preferred

For the purposes of identifying the sources of information most preferred by the respondents when seeking information to perform a role, the data as

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

		F	%
Age (in years)	25-3	54	19.2
	35-44	93	33.1
	45-54	101	35.9
	55 above	33	11.7
Level of education	High School	16	5.7
	Diploma	29	10.3
	Bachelor's Degree	102	36.3
	Master's Degree	110	39.3
	Doctorate Degree	24	8.5
How acquired	Formally	107	38.1
	Informally	33	11.7
	Both	141	50.2
Years of experience	1-5	45	16.0
	6-10	66	23.5
	11-15	36	12.8
	16-19	77	27.4
	20 above	57	20.3

Table 2—Denominational affiliations of respondents

Denominations	F	%
Shafi'i	3	1.1
Maliki	269	95.7
Hambali	3	1.1
Hanafi	0	0
Others	6	2.1

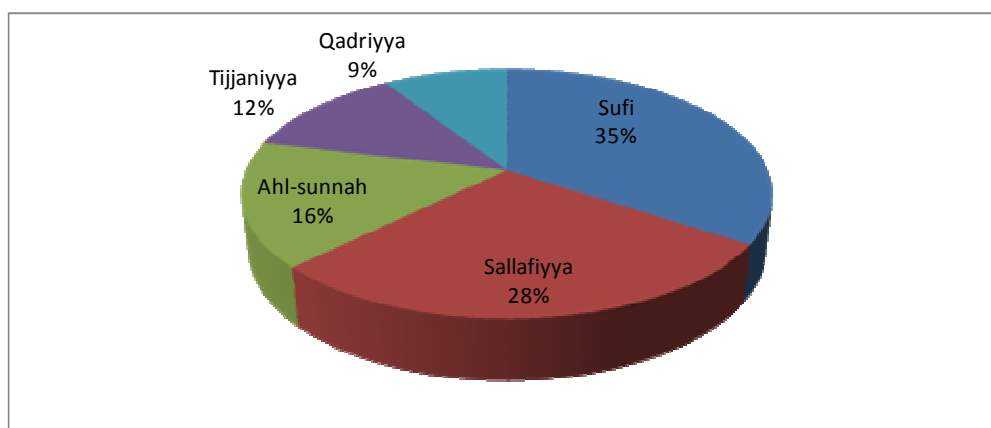


Figure 1 Sectarian affiliation of respondents

presented in Table 3 revealed that majority – two hundred and eight (87.2%) of the respondents declared their choice of Committee of Ulama as the most preferred source of information when performing any of the roles identified in the study. Following closely in second position with two hundred and three or 72.2 %, is The Library; the Internet came third as a preferred source of information followed by Friends/Relatives; and the least, Colleague with 29.9 %, 21.7 %, and 18.9 % respectively.

On most preferred resources, the print media especially books and journals maintained the first and second positions having been chosen by 87.2% and 42.0% of the respondents respectively. The last group of resources in the print category represented by Indexes and Bibliographies was preferred by seventy-two or 25.6 % of the respondents. It is however by no means the least preferred information resource compared to the non-print category where Database was chosen by only 10 % of the respondents.

#### Characteristics of information sources preferred

In order to know why respondents made their various choices of information sources and resources that they preferred and felt important to them towards performing their roles effectively, five attributes were provided to choose from as the most compelling reason why such decisions was made. Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents- ninety-three (32.1%) attributed their choice to availability. Ease of use (24.1%) and proximity (18.9%) came second and third respectively, while cost effectiveness (12.1%) was considered the least attribute considered during the decision to choose an information source/resource as vital towards effective role performance.

Table 3—Preferences of information sources and resources

Sources	Preference	F	%
	A library	203 (N=281)	72.2
	Internet	84 (N=281)	29.9
	A colleague	53 (N=281)	18.9
	Disciple	41 (N=281)	14.5
	Friends and relatives	61 (N=281)	21.7
	Committee of Ulama	208 (N=281)	74.0
Resources	Books	245 (N=281)	87.2
	Journals	118 (N=281)	42.0
	Indexes/Bibliographies	72 (N=281)	25.6
	Databases	28 (N=281)	10.0
	Audio Visuals	41 (N=281)	14.6

Table 4—Reason for choosing information sources and resources

Attributes	F	%
Availability	93	33.1
Ease of use	65	23.1
Proximity	53	18.9
Quickest	36	12.8
Cost effectiveness	34	12.1
Total	281	100

#### Relationship between affiliations and preference of information sources

To see whether there is any relationship between the denominational affiliations of the respondents and their choice of information, both Chi-square and Monte Carlos tests were deployed variously. The result of the tests as presented in Table 5 revealed that none of the six main information sources had any significant relationship with denominational affiliation. This indicates that the denomination affiliation of the Ulama does not have a significant influence on the choice of information sources.

However, the same cannot be said of sectarian affiliation of the Ulama. When the six sources were

Table 5—Relationships between affiliations and preference of information sources

Preferred sources	Denomination	Sect
Library	$X^2=4.565$ , DF=2, P=.102 Not significant	$X^2=.875$ , DF=2, P=.646 Not significant
Internet	$X^2=13.988$ , DF=2, *P=.111 Not significant	$X^2=9.090$ , DF=4, P=.059 Not significant
Colleagues	$X^2=4.235$ , DF=2, P=.120 Not significant	$X^2=4.039$ , DF=2, P=.133 Not significant
Friends/Relatives	$X^2=1.428$ , DF=1, P=.232 Not significant	$X^2=6.614$ , DF=1, P=.010 Significant
Disciple	$X^2=4.481$ , DF=2, P=.106, Not significant	$X^2=25.337$ , DF=4, P=.000 Significant
Committee of Ulama	$X^2=5.364$ , DF=2, P=.068 Not significant	$X^2=23.910$ , DF=2, *P=.388 Not significant

\*Monte Carlos test was conducted instead of Chi-square because it violated the assumption.

Table 6—Relationships between affiliations and preference of information resources

Preferred resources	Denomination	Sect
Books	$X^2=.559$ , DF=1, P=.455 Not significant	$X^2=7.478$ , DF=1, P=.106 Not significant
Journals	$X^2=5.119$ , DF=6, *P=.552 Not significant	$X^2=4.981$ , DF=4, P=.289 Not significant
Indexes/Bibliographies	$X^2=1.221$ , DF=2, * P=.569 Not significant	$X^2=9.566$ , DF=2, P=.114 Not significant
Audio visuals	$X^2=2.575$ , DF=2, *P=.267 Not significant	$X^2=6.484$ , DF=2, P=.089 Not significant
Television	$X^2=3.501$ , DF=2, P=.199, Not significant	$X^2=5.540$ , DF=2 P=.066 Not significant

\*Monte Carlos test was conducted instead of Chi-square because it violated the assumption.

pitched against sectarian affiliations of respondents, result of the analysis which is presented in Table 5 above, established a statistically significant relationship between sectarian affiliation and Friends/Relatives ( $X^2=6.614$ , DF=1, P=.010) and conferring with one's disciple ( $X^2=25.337$ , DF=4, P=.000). This implied that there is a lot of consultation between an Alim and his close associates and this is made possible because of easy access.

#### Relationship between affiliations and preference of information resources

To see whether there is any relationship between the denominational affiliations of the respondents and their choice of information resources, both Chi-square and Monte Carlos tests were deployed variously. The result of the tests as presented in Table 6 revealed that none of the seven main information resources had any significant relationship with denominational affiliation. The analysis revealed the same result when the researcher tried to determine whether the sect to

which one belongs influences his choice of information resources.

From the forgone analysis it could be deduced that while there are apparently different denominations and sects to which the respondents affiliated with, that does not in any way relate to the way they showed preference or chose information sources and resources. In other words respondents did realized the information potentials of the various sources and resources identified and the need to exploit them for the purposes of performing their roles effectively, regardless of the denomination or sect to which one belonged or is affiliated.

#### Discussions

Findings from the study revealed that most respondents have knowledge of information sources and resources accessible to them. A good number of the Ulama have shown quite a remarkable understanding of the various sources of information which includes library, internet, and informal



channels. They have also indicated sound knowledge of information resources such as books, journals, Audio visuals, internet, and databases. The study further revealed that books especially the Qur'an and Hadith were the most popular and preferred among the Ulama.

Thus, a dependence on the Qur'an and Hadith is to be expected in Islamic religion, as Bible was the case in Christianity as found by Wicks<sup>13</sup>. This reliance on a standard source he further stated was necessary in order to simplify the confusing world of information. Thus, it could be confirmed that knowledge and awareness about information sources and resources is a determinant of information seeking pattern as revealed by Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvain<sup>36</sup>.

Similarly, the study also revealed that the Ulama rely more on their personal library collections over other libraries. This was in agreement with findings of Brockway<sup>25</sup>, Erdel<sup>20</sup>, Tanner<sup>14</sup>, and Wicks<sup>13</sup>. Again and again, researches conducted in information seeking behavior of professionals have indicated that they favor sources of information that are easily available. The personal library offers ease of access and this accessibility is another way for (Ulama), like other professionals has of managing the information seeking process.

Apart from accessibility other factors found to be influencing preference for information sources and resources include cost, proximity, reliability, and trust. Again this findings is in tandem with Leckie et al<sup>36</sup> and Kamba<sup>37</sup> who found out that familiarity, prior success, trustworthiness, packaging, cost, availability, and easy to get were the most important variables of sources related to selection of information.

Generally, it could be inferred that the Ulama accessed various sources using different search strategies to gather information towards performing their roles. The role to be performed determines the type of sources and resources to be used as well as the search strategy to be deployed. The non-parametric test carried-out to determine the relationship between associating with a religious group and the type of information sources preferred when performing their work roles, shows no significant relationship between the variables. In other words the study found out that the denomination and sect of the Alim does not determine the type of information sources (library, internet, and informal channel) preferred. It means that regardless of the denominational and sectarian differences of the Ulama, they all access the sources

to gather information for their work roles, showing a little preference to their personal collections. It should be quickly added however, that the study also found out that in terms of information resources (prints and non prints), the Ulama preferred the printed information especially denominational publications relating to translations of the Qur'an and Hadith, commentaries on the Qur'an, and other publications relating to sectarian doctrines.

Previous studies conducted on the clergy resulting in similar outcomes include Porcella<sup>15</sup> who first associated the clergy with the use of his denominational and sectarian publications; while Tanner<sup>14</sup> and Wicks<sup>13</sup> reported that the clergy's denominational world does affect his choice of information and consequently his work roles especially the preaching role. Thus, one can say that the Ulama in Borno preferred and used information resources that share their doctrinal beliefs.

The outcome of the study revealed no direct relationship between the denominational affiliation of the respondents and their search strategies. This implied that an Alim's association with a particular religious denomination is not related to the type of search strategy deployed when seeking information to perform his work roles. The researcher has observed that this is essentially the case involving search strategies applicable to all the three information sources identified in the study (libraries, internet, and informal channels).

Contrary to the above finding however, the study established a relationship between sectarian membership and search strategies used by the Ulama to gather information towards performing their preaching, counseling, administrative, and leadership roles. The Ulama were found to develop their personal collections along their sectarian doctrines and because they rely more on their personal collections, the search is therefore limited to these sectarian based resources. When looked at from the informal channel perspective, you find that the Ulama tend to seek or share information with colleagues and friends belonging to the same sect.

This finding is not uncommon nor is it unique. Previous studies carried out to determine the seeking behavior of professionals has shown that practitioners sharing the same or similar professional ethics and interest were more open and consulted each other more often than with those they do not share similar interest<sup>38</sup>. Similar findings were also arrived at by

Porcella<sup>15</sup>; Phillips<sup>22</sup>; and Wicks<sup>13</sup> in their studies on the information seeking behaviors' of the clergy, and revealed that the clergy's doctrinal belief does limit his search for information to those who share the same with him.

### Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to find out whether the denominational and sectarian affiliations of the Ulama in Borno have any influence on their information seeking activities. While the study has identified the existence of various religious groups, their preferred sources of information as well as how they sought information, it can be said that the denominational and sectarian differences does not affect the ways they search for information to carry out their roles, what however influences their preaching, counseling, administration, and leadership roles, was their interpretations of Islam according to sectarian and doctrinal beliefs.

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