**NEWS SOURCE CREDIBILITY AND INFORMATION SEEKING ACTIVITY OF UYO RESIDENTS**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTINGS**

* 1. **INTRODUCTION**

Information seeking is important part of people’s everyday lives. To obtain information, people use web search engines, consult authorities, ask questions from friends, go to libraries, read newspapers, and watch television among other methods.

Through such activities, people continually make judgments about how useful information is to their particular needs, actively construct meaning and form judgments about the relevance of the information to their goal based on various attributes or criteria.

When people assess information, however, they may notice that the characteristics and values of some information are not always consistent. that is people may find texts that seem to be clearly written but are inaccurate, that are easy to obtain but out of date, that are current but not sufficiently comprehensive, and so on. In such cases, how do they make judgments about information?

According to Wilson (1983) people tend to ask whether they can believe what the text says, or if not, whether they can at least take it seriously. Wilson thus notes that credibility is a chief aspect of information quality and states that what and who people believe to be credible constitutes the potential pool of “cognitive authorities” or those that influence people’s thoughts because they are perceived as “Worthy of belief”.

Selecting credible information from among the various available resources is a challenge for anyone. The kinds of challenges may however, differ for achiest and for young people. For instance, adult information seekers are likely to select information when they think it is accurate, current; adjective, reliable, authoritative, trust-worthy, understandable, well-written, comprehensive, easy to obtain and on topic. Young people, on the other hand, often mainly consider whether it is new, interesting, and convenient, while showing less interest in authority, the read ability of the language and regency.

Moreover, most adults possess knowledge of how to evaluate information in traditional print media before newer digital media, especially the internet were introduced. Consequently, they had to learn how to apply the old rules and criteria for evaluating information to the relatively newer digital media. Their experiences differ from those of today’s youth, who have used digital media since a very young age.

Every day life information seeking studies have identified a number of criteria by which people select information sources in non-work contexts. For example, Chen and Hernon (1982: PG 56) showed that in the selection of information sources people frequently draw on criteria such as past experiences gained from the use of a source, easy accessibility and usability chat man (1991) drawing largely on Patrick Wilson’s (1983) ideas of cognitive authority found that low- skilled workers placed greatest faith in human sources available in their immediate social milieu. Information originating outside of this small world was not of great interest to then and was not perceived to be sufficiently authoritative or credible. Hence, they favoured first- level information originating from some-one living in the same small world. By contrast, the value of second-level information received form outsiders was mistrusted and often ignored because this type of information was not compatible with the common sense reality of the small world.

Empirical studies such as these have not, however, reviewed media credibility and cognitive authority as factors that determine the selection and use of information sources. Media credibility and cognitive authority denote closely related concepts that are difficult to define unambiguously this is partly because they over lap with a number of closely related concepts like quality of information, believability of media and reliability and trust-worthiness of information (Fogg and Tseng : 1999 :PG 80-81).

The conceptual setting is further complicated by the fact that information scientists and communication researchers use different terminology to refer to the above issues. Information scientists that tend to favour the concepts of cognitive authority, while communication researchers prefer concepts such as source –message – medium – and media credibility (Metzger et al. 2003).

Therefore, to empirically determine news source credibility and information seeking activity of Uyo residents, this study presents itself as a guide that until elevate. Information seeking on the basis of credibility and other variables on the part of the source.

* 1. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Perceptions of the reliability and trust-worthiness of information may significantly affect the selection and use of information sources in particular, the significance of these and other criteria is emphasized when information seekers encounter conflicting information. In the situations, they have to assess the credibility and cognitive authority of alternative sources. Unfortunately, these questions have so far remained largely unresearched in the context of every –day life information seeking. However, the topic is significantly given the fact that an increasing number of alternative sources is competing for people’s attention in the daily information environment.

However, this research intends to investigate the news source credibility and information seeking activity of Uyo residents.

* 1. **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this research work are as follows:

1. To identify the source of the news at the disposal of Uyo residents.
2. To identify the information usually sought for by Uyo residents.
3. To ascertain the perception of Uyo residents towards credibility of the available information resources.
4. To find out the pattern of information seeking activity of the Uyo residents.
5. To investigate other factors influencing information seeking of Uyo residents.
   1. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
6. What are the sources of the News at the disposal of Uyo residents?
7. What is the information usually sought for by Uyo residents?
8. How credible is the information source?
9. How do Uyo residents seek for information.
10. What other factors influence information seeking by Uyo residents.
    1. **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is significant because it will help the academia unearthen more reasons for information seeking among Uyo residents.

Also, it would create adequate information by taking a critical look at the rationale for information seeking on .the basis of news source credibility and other source – receiver variables.

* 1. **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study concentrates on the information News source credibility and information seeking activity of Uyo residents.

**1.7** **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

1. News: it is the record of events and not the events itself in order to keep the public updated at all times.
2. Source: refers to who and where the information is derived from or given.
3. Credibility: the tendency of the News being accurate and believable.
4. Information – seeking: it refers to .the purposive seeking for information /as the consequences of the needs to satisfy some goals.
5. Uyo residents: it means the inhabitants of Uyo, Akwa – Ibom State.