Assessment of Library Information Resources Utilization by Students of College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State – Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed library information resources utilization by students of College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State – Nigeria. Three specific objectives with corresponding research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A sample of 352 final year-students of the College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State was used as the population of the study. The instrument for data collection for the study was a self-developed structured questionnaire Data collected was analyzed using Frequency Counts, Percentages, Means and Standard Deviation. Findings of the study revealed that students utilize a range of information resources such as textbooks, journals, magazines/newspapers, indexes, abstracts, reference materials, maps, encyclopedia, dictionary, projects, gazettes, and atlases. In addition, the research indicated a high extent of information resource utilization among students of College of Education Akwanga. However, challenges were identified, including poor indexing of information resources, insufficient relevant resources in the library, and the outdated nature of available information resources which pose obstacles to the effective utilization of information resources by students. The recommendations stemming from these findings include the need for College of Education Akwanga Library to organize user education or workshops at the start of each semester, targeting all categories of students among other recommendations.

Key Wards: Library, Information Resources, College of Education, Utilization, Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are considered repositories of human knowledge and experiences, and they come in various types, each with its own set of goals and objectives aligned with the organization they serve. The fundamental concept of librarianship revolves around delivering pertinent, precise, and timely information services to meet the needs of their patrons, thereby contributing to the

achievement of institutional objectives. Functioning as the core of educational institutions, libraries play a crucial role in offering information resources and services to support the academic endeavors of their community, encompassing students, educators, and other stake holders in the field of education. In higher education institutions, libraries take the lead in furnishing information services to cater to the diverse requirements of students, lecturers, and researchers, facilitating their teaching, learning, and research activities. These libraries are often referred to as the central hubs or nerve centers where academic activities converge (Nwali 2013).

Being a reservoir of human experiences that transcends spatial and temporal constraints, the primary aim of a library is to furnish information. Throughout history, humanity has harnessed information as a tool to address the challenges encountered. Information has proven to be a valuable instrument in the perpetual quest for knowledge, contributing to development goals (Emesealu & Popoola, 2016). Therefore, information emerges as an indispensable resource for individuals, governments, businesses, and institutions alike, playing a pivotal role in empowering individuals in their pursuit of developmental activities. It serves as a vital tool in realizing the objectives and goals set by libraries within educational institutions.

Information is widely recognized as a crucial asset for societal progress. Functioning as refined data carrying meaningful insights, information plays a pivotal role in planning, decision-making, and mitigating uncertainties. It essentially refers to processed data about societal events, transformed into messages for consumption and dissemination. This valuable resource is indispensable in various facets of human daily life and overall well-being. According to Ugbonna (2010), information stands as a significant resource essential in every sphere of human endeavor. In the current context, the information environment is dynamic and marked by the presence of diverse information sources accessible through both human and computer interfaces. There is a multitude of methods for obtaining information, and the content is often redundant due to contributions from numerous sources. As emphasized by Oluwaseye, Akanni, and Busuyi (2017), the utility of information knows no bounds, given its relevance in virtually every human activity and organizational development. Consequently, information becomes a vital element in any library setting, primarily because it is in high demand from users.

In the context of this study, library users comprise students from Colleges of Education who rely on the library for their information needs. These students engage with the library to gather pertinent information for various academic purposes such as assignments, seminars, term papers, dissertations, theses, and projects. The expectation is that these users, after receiving class instructions, will delve into the library resources to access information of diverse levels, frequencies, and volumes with ease. The importance of information, therefore, underscores its critical role in facilitating the academic pursuits of students in these educational institutions.

However, in spite of these huge purposes to which students use information resources, a number of factors or obstacles still serve as impediments to the utilization of these resources by the library users. This study aims to explore how College of Education students source and utilize information resources provided by their institution libraries to enhance academic growth. Specifically, this study explored the types of information resources they use, the extent of utilization, and the challenges hindering effective use of information resources.

Statement of the Problem

The diverse and comprehensive information accessible through libraries, both in traditional print formats and modern electronic resources, serves as a reservoir from which students draw the essential elements of their academic pursuits. Whether through textbooks, academic journals, or online databases, students in Colleges of Education rely on these resources to deepen their understanding of pedagogical theories, teaching methodologies, and the broader educational landscape.

However, in the course of observation, several issues have been identified, prompting the need for an in-depth exploration of library resource utilization among students in College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State. The researchers have noted a potential lack of clarity regarding the diverse channels available for accessing information, including traditional libraries, online databases, e-books, academic journals, and other platforms.

Furthermore, the utilization of library resources presents a multifaceted challenge. The researchers have observed potential obstacles such as poor indexing of information resources among others, which can impede students' ability to efficiently locate relevant materials. These if not urgently addressed may defeat the purpose for which libraries are established. It is against this backdrop that, the study is out to assess library information resources utilization by students of college of education Akwanga, Nasarawa State – Nigeria with a view to improving library services, thereby fostering an environment conducive to enhanced academic growth and success among the students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The essence and function of information is to adequately equip the information seekers to make right decisions among the alternative choices. Uhegbu (2007) asserts that "information utilization is the actual putting into appropriate use of acquired information". Utilization of information differs from person to person and from one corporate organization to the other according to their information needs and other socio-economic imperatives.

Library resources which students utilize include resources identified by Popoola and Haliso (2009) as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats such as textbooks, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-ROM databases, Internet/E-mail, videotapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, microforms, etc. Ellis and Oldman quoted in Gakibayo, Ikoja-Odongo and Okello-Obura (2013) noted that through the use of electronic resources, researchers and students now have access to global information resources, particularly the Internet for their scholarly intercourse. There is abundant opportunity in terms of resources available to all library patrons for appropriate research to enhance their academic activities. Students as members of academic community utilize library information resources to carry out independent studies pertaining to academic activities.

Several studies have shown that users use the library mostly as a place to study and make photocopies and use the resources to provide accurate and timely information (Whitmire as cited in Quadri, Adetimirin & Idowu, 2014). Lawal-Solarin (2014) in a study on "Understanding

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Students Information Needs and Role of academic Libraries: A Case Study of Covenant University Library, Ota, Nigeria" identified library resources most utilized by students to include textbooks, e-resources, project/thesis, newspapers, reference materials and magazines. Likewise, Okiki (2013) identified the available and utilized information resources in Nigerian Federal Universities to include books, Journals, E-books, E-journals, CD-ROM databases, Internet, References sources, Electronic databases, Search engines (e. g., google, yahoo, mamma etc), Websites, Online Public Access catalogue, Library catalogue, Photocopy and Newspaper/magazines. Hussain and Kumar (2013) found that books, newspapers and periodicals are the most used by users whereas the map/charts/ microfilms etc are of least use of them. In a similar vein, Quadri, Adetimirin & Idowu (2014) identified the information resources frequently used among undergraduate students in private universities in Ogun State to include CD-ROM, E- Journals, Online Databases, Internet and Online Public Access Catalogue. In a study on the use of the University of Maiduguri Library Ampa (2000) as quoted in Lawal-Solarin (2014) discovered that majority of students did not use the library catalogue which is the index to all holdings in the library for qualitative library service. In a similar study of the University of Agriculture, Umudike, Ugah (2007), found out that students constituted majority of the library users and that nearly three quarters of them browse the shelves to locate library materials. Obinyam, Obinyam and Aidenojie (2012) reported information resources frequently used by students to include reference materials e.g. dictionaries and encyclopedia, periodicals e.g. newspapers and journals, Magazines, trade literatures, bibliographic sources, fictions and non-fictions.

Academic libraries in Nigeria face various challenges most of which border on poor funding. A report on Nigerian academic libraries by Ifijeh (2011) observed that facilities and information resources are inadequate and students use the libraries mainly for study space. This was also corroborated by Gbaje (2007) who identified some of the challenges faced by 10 Nigerian universities such as; lack of web technology skills by staff, lack of funds, lack of infrastructure (Internet access, electricity, web server)and limited network, bandwidth/slow transmission. Several studies have been conducted on issues surrounding the utilization of library information resources but it appears from literature reviewed that none is on assessment of library information resources utilization by students of College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State – Nigeria, hence the gap which this study seeks to fill.

Purpose of the Study
The primary aim of this research was to assess the library information resources utilization by students of College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State – Nigeria. Specifically, the study was set out to accomplish the following specific objectives:
1. Find out the specific information resources that students of College of Education Akwanga utilize for their academic work.
2. Assess the extent to which students of College of Education Akwanga utilize library information resources to meet their educational needs.
3. Ascertain the challenges faced by students of College of Education Akwanga in effectively utilizing information resources.

Research Design

The design for this study was a descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in College of Education, Akwanga Nasarawa State. The sample size of 352 final year students in the College of Education was used for the study. This sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formula. To arrive at the sample size, purposive and convenience sampling techniques was adopted. The Instrument for Data Collection was a structured questionnaire. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of Frequency Count, Percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research question.

Presentation of results

The presentation follows the sequence of the research questions answered as can be seen bellow:

Research Question 1: Which information resources do students of Colleges of Education Akwanga make use of?
To answer this research question, data on the information resources utilized by students of students of Colleges of Education Akwanga were collected and analyzed as presented on

Table 1: Frequency Counts and Percentages of the information resources utilized by students of College of Education Akwanga

SN	Resources	FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE (%)		
		U	NU	U	U	ECISION
1	**Textbooks**	333	0	100	0.0	Utilized
2	**Journals**	333	0	100	0.0	Utilized
3	**Magazines/Newspaper**	298	35	89.5	10.5	Utilized
4	**Compact Disc-Read-Only Memory (CD- ROM)**	35	298	10.5	89.5	Not utilized
5	**Indexes**	245	88	73.6	26.4	Utilized
6	**Abstracts**	270	63	81.1	18.9	Utilized
7	**Reference Materials**	273	60	81.9	18.1	Utilized
8	**Online Databases**	55	278	16.5	83.5	Not utilized
9	**Maps**	288	45	86.5	13.5	Utilized
10	**Data Archives**	58	275	17.4	82.6	Not utilized
11	**Encyclopedia**	256	77	76.9	23.1	Utilized
12	**Dictionary**	253	80	75.9	24.1	Utilized
13	**Projects**	298	35	89.5	10.5	Utilized
14	**Handouts**	291	42	87.4	12.6	Utilized
15	**Internet Facility**	62	271	18.6	81.4	Not utilized
16	**Gazettes**	240	93	72.1	27.9	Utilized
17	**Atlases**	244	89	73.3	26.7	Utilized

Table 1 shows the information resources utilized by students of College of Education Akwanga in Nasarawa State in Frequencies and Percentages. From the table as indicated by the respondents, items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, and 17 with 'yes' percentage values above 50% are considered 'Utilized'. Items 4, 8, 10, and 15 with percentage values below 50% are considered 'Not utilized' by students of College of Education Akwanga in Nasarawa State.

Research Question 2: To what extent do students of College of Education Akwanga utilize information resources?

To answer this research question, data on the extent of utilization of information resources among students of College of Education Akwanga in Nasarawa State, Nigeria were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 2

Table 2: Mean Scores of the extent of utilization of information resources among students of College of Education Akwanga in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Resources Utilization	N	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
18	**Textbooks**	333	3.12	0.97	High Extent
19	**Journals**	333	3.24	0.99	High Extent
20	**Magazines/Newspaper**	333	2.99	0.95	High Extent
21	**Compact Disc-Read-Only Memory (CD-ROM)**	333	2.22	0.56	Low extent
22	**Indexes**	333	2.81	0.81	High Extent
23	**Abstracts**	333	2.78	0.90	High Extent
24	**Reference Materials**	333	2.89	0.89	High Extent
25	**Online Databases**	333	2.01	0.45	Low extent
26	**Maps**	333	2.95	0.83	High Extent
27	**Data Archives**	333	2.42	0.61	Low extent
28	**Encyclopedia**	333	2.97	0.86	High Extent
29	**Dictionary**	333	2.94	0.92	High Extent
30	**Projects**	333	2.87	0.80	High Extent
31	**Handouts**	333	2.67	0.75	High Extent
32	**Internet Facility**	333	2.32	0.57	Low extent
33	**Gazettes**	333	2.90	0.88	High Extent
34	**Atlases**	333	2.79	0.79	High Extent
	Grand Means		**2.75**	**0.79**	**High Extent**

Table 2 shows Means scores and Standard Deviation on the extent of utilization of information resources among students of College of Education Akwanga in Nasarawa State. From the table as indicated by the respondents, items (18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, and 34) with Mean values ranging from 2.67 – 3.24 which are above the benchmark of 2.50, with corresponding Standard Deviations ranging from 0.75 - 0.99 values show high extent of information resources by the college students. Also, from the table as presented items (21, 25, 27, and 32) with mean values of 2.01 – 2.42 which are below the benchmark of 2.50 shows the low extent of information resources The table further revealed a cluster Mean of 2.75 and SD = 0.79. With this cluster mean (2.75) which is above the benchmark of 2.50, it means that, there is a high extent of utilization of information resources among students of College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Research Question 3: What challenges do students face in the utilization of information resources in College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State?
To answer this research question, data on the challenges confronting students' utilization of information resources in College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State, Nigeria were collected and analyzed as presented on Table 3

Table 3: Mean Scores of the challenges confronting students' utilization of information resources in Colleges of Education Akwanga in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	MEAN	S.D	DECISION
35	**Poor indexing of information resources**	333	2.72	0.78	Agree
36	**Inadequate relevant information resources in the library**	333	3.24	0.83	Agree
37	**Out datedness of information resources in the library**	333	2.71	0.69	Agree
38	**Insufficient library opening hours**	333	2.62	0.60	Agree
39	**Poor abstracting**	333	2.61	0.61	Agree
40	**Lack of awareness of available resources**	333	3.07	0.76	Agree
41	**Un-conducive environment for reading in the library**	333	2.98	0.80	Agree
42	**Overcrowding in the library**	333	2.88	0.62	Agree
43	**Excessive control/ library rules**	333	2.35	0.34	Disagree
44	**Irregular power supply**	333	2.80	0.88	Agree
45	**Poor network connectivity**	333	2.98	0.66	Agree
46	**No/ little assistance from the library staff**	333	2.78	0.59	Agree
47	**Lack of technical know-how**	333	2.89	0.64	Agree

Table 3 shows the responses of respondents on the challenges confronting students' utilization of information resources in College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State. From the table as presented, except for item 43 with a mean 2.35 which is less than the benchmark of 2.50, the respondents agreed to all other items with Mean values ranging from 2.62 – 3.24 which are above the benchmark of 2.50 as the challenges confronting their utilization of information resources.

Discussion

Based on the findings derived from the study, the following were discussed.
The finding of the study unveiled the information resources actively utilized by students in College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. These included textbooks, journals, magazines/newspaper, indexes, abstracts, reference materials, maps, encyclopedia, dictionary, projects, gazettes, and atlases. This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Suleiman, Vashistha, and Jimah (2018), where a majority of students reported utilizing library resources such as Newspapers/Magazines, Books, reference documents, Journals, and Thesis/Dissertation/Projects.

The study's finding, as depicted in Table 2, illuminated a high extent of utilization of information resources among students in College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The extensively utilized information resources encompassed textbooks, journals, magazines/newspaper, indexes, abstracts, reference materials, maps, encyclopedia, dictionary, projects, gazettes, and atlases. This aligns with the research by Hussain and Kumar (2013), indicating that books, newspapers, and periodicals are among the most commonly utilized information resources by users. However, a noteworthy discrepancy emerged in comparison with the findings of Salubi, Ondari-Okenwa, and Nekhwevha (2018), who identified Wi-Fi as the most utilized library resource. This contrasted with the present study, where internet facilities were reported to be utilized to a low extent by students in College of Education Akwanga. In essence, the observations from the present study suggest a preference among College of Education Akwanga's students for the usage of print information resources over non-print resources.

The final finding of the study, as presented in Table 3, highlighted the array of challenges confronting students in the utilization of information resources in College of Education Akwanga. These challenges encompassed poor indexing of information resources, inadequate relevant information resources in the library, out datedness of information resources in the library, insufficient library opening hours, poor abstracting, lack of awareness of available resources, overcrowding in the library, irregular power supply, poor network connectivity, little or no assistance from library staff, and a lack of technical know-how. This finding aligns with the research by Olajide and Adio (2017), who identified erratic power supply, functional resources, adequate reading space, and lack of physical facilities as major obstacles hindering students from effectively utilizing library resources for their information needs.

The observations from the present study suggest that, despite high utilization of information resources in College of Education Akwanga Library, students face numerous challenges that impede their effective utilization of these resources.

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Conclusion

Drawing from the study's findings, it can be concluded that students of College of Education Akwanga, Nasarawa State exhibit a high degree of utilization of information resources as an integral part of their academic pursuits. These students actively access information from diverse sources, including but not limited to Books, School Library, Magazine/Newspaper, Radio, Television, and Social Media Sites. Despite their keen engagement with information resources, the students encounter a multitude of challenges that significantly impact their effective utilization of these valuable resources. These call for deliberate attempt by the relevant authorities at mitigating the challenges for enhanced academic output.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

i.   The College of Education Akwanga library should organize user education/workshop at the beginning of every semester or sessions for all categories of students to enable them make effective use of information resources. The workshop should focus more on the use of academic database and other electronic information resources with major emphasis on online databases, CD-ROM and Internet facility to enable the students broaden their search and narrow their search results

ii.   The library staff should also modify their public relations and ensure good rapport between them and the students so as to encourage the students in seeking necessary assistance

iii.   Training programmes should be organized for the library staff so they can be more effective in meeting students' information needs

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