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# Information Sources and Utilization of Library Resources and Services by the Students of Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

The study investigates information sources and utilization of library resources and services in Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated for the study. The study covered students of the Federal University Otuoke. Survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was 297 students out of which two hundred and ninety five (295) was completed for analysis. Accidental sampling technique was used for the study. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for all the three research questions. The finding of the study shows that there is a positive relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services. There is a positive relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services. There is a positive relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services. The study was recommended that the librarian should endeavor to stock the library with those information resources which are in high request as this would lead to increased utilization by the library patrons. Librarians should ensure that library resources with subject scope, fact and concepts are acquired as this would boost all information resources acquired by the library. There should be a database that provides information resources which enables library patrons to search for information electronically.

**Keywords:** information sources, utilization, library resources and services, federal university otuoke, Nigeria.

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## Introduction

University libraries have the herculean tasks of maintaining resources that meet the diverse needs of their users. As academic libraries in the foremost citadels of higher learning their information resources must have standards that are not below the national requirements and any objective utilization. University libraries are established to support education, and research. They are equally places where different social policies, theories and ideologies meet. Studies of different art and culture, school and analysis of the trends and development in various disciplines are accommodated in the libraries. (International Federation of Library Association IFLA, 2000). Rathinasabapathy (2005) posited that library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them to fulfill the curriculum requirements and to promote studies and research. The library, however, includes the totality of human and organized materials resources available in both book and non-book format for providing and obtaining needed information (Ahuauzu, 2002).

The Universities needs to ensure that its primary position and functions are discharged by all the academic and non-academic units of the institution, the library playing a central role in the research function. As an institution of higher learning set-up to educate students by teaching, learning and research, the University should equip its libraries and make its invaluable purpose achieved. The library occupies an important place in the academic system. It is not a mere store house of books but a dynamic instrument of education. Without the active support of a library, the whole academic functioning will come to grinding halt. The primary function of the library is not only to fulfill the 'mission' of the academic institution to which it belongs but also to advance its aims and objectives.

Library materials are one of the most important needs in setting any higher institution like Federal University Otuoke. Library resources are collections like books, Encyclopedia,

Dictionaries, Journals, etc. Library resources provide adequate library services to help in the delivery of actual needs of the library user according Daniel (2005) involve assisting readers in obtaining services from the libraries. It also includes all the services or assistance given to the library users to help him/her make adequate use of the services with minimal waste of time. The main tools for actualizing library services are called library resources materials. Library services are also that aspect of librarianship which deals with the interpersonal relationship between the libraries and library users. Library services are the formalized provision of library resources in diverse forms by a librarian who is interposed between the users and available library services sources. Katz (2002) wrote that library services involve spirit of human which aims at establishing the content between then right user and the right library resources at a right time.

Library patrons in Federal University Otuoke need library resources that is timely genuine and up-to-date in order to provide quality graduate. In other words, the need to be informed conscious of the education sector is to continue to make progress. Ezeala (2009) enumerated library services used in the library as follows, current awareness services, statistical data analysis, selective dissemination of information (SDI), document delivery, loaning photocopy, internet/e-mail services, ROM database searching indexing & abstractly microfilming and facsimile, etc. These library services are essential at this point in time building up the information required by the researchers. Emejorho and Nwalo (as cited in Okafor 2010) emphasized that library services is much more that collection building, it entails the use, storage and organization of library collection and making it accessible to the users. Adeogun (2009) was of the opinion that the value of library services in not possessing library resources but in providing access to it.

Availability of information sources has encouraged the utilization of library and information resources are also governed by its availability (Ajayi & Akinniyi, 2004). Availability here does not only mean that information resources provided but it also entails accessibility. Availability of information sources is meaningless if those who want to make use of it cannot have access to it. To effect proper and effective utilization, information resources must not only be available in the right quantity and time but also be accurate and its sources credible, reliable and receive within the closet proximity to the users.

In University library, relevance of information sources is always crucial to the development of library resources and services development. Lack of relevant information sources has been identified to be one of the problems facing library users leading to frustration. Oyediran (2004). This means if information sources were to be relevant, the library resources could have been made utilized of the more. The university libraries are therefore expected to provide relevant information sources to attract higher users of the library resources.

It is highly recognized that accessibility of information sources has been a recurring topic in the effective utilization of library resources and services. Many information sources according to Aguolu and Aguolu (2012) may be available in the library and even identified bibliographically as relevant to one's subject of interest, but the user may not still be able to lay his hands on it to utilize it. The more information resources are accessible the more likely that they would be utilized. Readers tend to use any information sources on the basis of the efforts they are likely to expend in accessing them.

Many academic libraries have their information resources in the print form as contrasted with more advanced countries where a greater percentage of libraries have their information resources in electronic and digital form. Electronic books, electronic periodicals as well

as electronic reference materials should take the centre stage; despite the benefit of electronic resources the print resources still maintain a variety of reasons. Ajayi and Akinniyi (2004), in their own opinion of evaluation of information resources considered the nature of library resources. Utilization of library resources and services hence lays more on the information sources variables of availability, relevance and accessibility.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There is no doubt that information sources of availability, relevance and accessibility on utilization of library resources services have become a major channel for seeking and sourcing for information by library users, most especially in university like Federal University Otuoke library. This is because availability of library resources and services in library provides users easy access to information needed, which enhance research, teaching, learning, and studies. The accomplishments of these duties depend largely on the available library resources and services. However, the economic fortunes in Nigeria reduced institutional funding for library resources and services. This perhaps is making it difficult for university librarians to make library resources and services available to its users.

Without the availability, relevance, accessibility and utilization of library resources and services, the Federal University Otuoke Library may not be able to deliver effective and efficient library services that will enhance teaching, learning and research processes that Federal University Otuoke Library are purposely established for. Where library resources and services are inadequate the speed on library services delivery and volume of available current library resources are likely to be critically jeopardized. Previous studies by other scholars covered areas such as availability and utilization of library resources in University Libraries. This is also worrisome and calls for investigation of this factor to fill the gap between availability, utilization, usefulness and satisfaction derived

in the use of library resources and services by students of the University. The rationale for the study thus become clear that there is need to investigate the information sources and utilization of library resources and services in Federal University Otuoke library, Bayelsa state of Nigeria.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- 1.) To find out of the relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services.
- 2.) To find out of the relationship between relevance and utilization of library resources and services.
- 3.) To find out of the relationship between accessibility and utilization of library resources and services.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1.) What is the relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services?
- 2.) What is the relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services?
- 3.) What is the relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services?

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

Availability of information resources on the effective utilization of library resources and services, has received the attention of library researchers and scholars in the recent times. Availability of information resources means ensuring their presence in the Nigeria University libraries for immediate use (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002).

Information resources availability must be distinguished from accessibility. Library materials might be available, but inaccessible to those who need them for whatever reason (Aguolu & Aguolu, 2002) argued that the problem of availability of information sources should be viewed at both national and

instructional levels. Aguolu & Aguolu attributed unavailability of information sources to the steady proliferation of Universities. Federal, state and private, along with increases in students and faculty and the diversification of courses, academic and research programmes, without adequate information sources to meet the actual and potential information needs of the University system. They went further to identify obstacle to the development of adequate information sources.

Abanobi (2000), analysis appears to be correct but it could be stressed that use of library resources depends on the availability and accessibility of the resources in question. Users cannot utilize what is not available. American Library Association (ALA) (2000), research analysis showed that majority of students did not utilize library resources for various reasons. Most of the students mentioned that there was no need to use library materials. Some students found personal textbook and class notes to be sufficient. Other reported having difficulty in locating, selecting and identifying the materials needed by them in the library. Most of the students argued that few or none of their lecturers gave them reading list or referred them to the library. This leads to underutilization of the library resources.

#### **RELEVANCE AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

The second law of library science "Every reader his book". Here the emphasis is on the reader according to Ranganathan (1998). A user of the library is the prime factor. His requirements must agitate the mind of the library and information scientists and practicing librarians in the relevance of information sources to the information needs of the library users. Oyediran (2004), argues that the information resources have lost their relevance, thereby making the utilization of information resources frustrating and problematic. This argument was reinforced by Dipeolu (2000) because in the last six to seven years the libraries had been hard put to adding currency periodicals and book to their

collections. This situation rendered the information resources in the university libraries irrelevant to the need of the patrons. This argument was put forward as far back as 1992.

Xishi, Patricia and Peter (2004) in their study of satisfaction formation process in library users confirmed that quality factors in form of relevance, currency, precision and reliability of information resources and consequently yields satisfaction to the library users of such information resources. The subject, language and style of exposition in books to be selected and acquired should be closely correlated to the requirement of the users. This means that books should be user oriented. It must suit the user's need if a message is entitled by a source from collection and is assimilated by recipient causing some changes to occur in the latter's knowledge structure, then the message can be said to be relevant to the recipient and that there has been an effective communication of information. In this situation, the recipient can utilize a relevant assessment of the message. Note, it is the user of information that can make a judgment that information is relevant to him. He also carried out study of concept of relevant and confirmed that there is a formal relationship between quality of retrieved materials and their relevance. The concept of relevance is of concern to him information science because it underlines the effectiveness of any communication process. In the context of the library, information resources serve as a medium of communication between the library user and the library. The effectiveness of any communication depends on the relevance of the information content.

### **ACCESSIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

The low rating of library was attributed to non-accessibility to information resources. Iyoro (2004) examined the impact of serial publication in the promotion of educational excellence among information professionals undergoing higher level of training at university of Ibadan. The study particularly takes a look at

the respondents' perception of how serial accessibility has contributed to their learning process. It was discovered that serials played a significant role in pursuance and acquisition of knowledge. This was made possible because the serial collection was easily and conveniently accessible to them. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) of the respondent and sixty-two (62) of them found the serial collection of the library accessible.

The library patrons must know how to exploit these sources and they also lamented on the attendant features of underdevelopment such as power failure, machine breakdown, lack of spare parts and technicians, which intermittently stall the performance of the modern gadgets of information storage and transfer, set-ups in developing countries. Neelamghan (1981) has identified accessibility as one of the prerequisites of information utilization, since there is growing concern in the need for equal access to information. He argues that information generation, collection, recording and distribution, accessing and utilization operate imperfectly. Thus, the purpose user's characteristics, environment or situation involved, medium of communication, quality, infrastructural facility, cost and time availability all condition the use of information.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Survey research design was adopted for the study and structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into four sections, A – D. section A was used to collect information from the respondents on availability, section B was used to elicit information from the respondents on relevance, and section C was used to collect information on accessibility, while section D was used to collect information on utilization of library resources and services. The study involved only registered users from the Federal University Otuoke. The responses for the sections in the questionnaire are a four point rating scale with response choice for each items ranging from strongly agreed, agreed,

disagreed and strongly disagreed. A total of two hundred and ninety seven (297) users of Federal University Otuoke library users were sampled, out of which two hundred and ninety five (295) was completed for analysis using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Accidental sampling technique was used to administer the questionnaire.

The decision for research questions is that for accepting any of the variables, availability,

relevance and accessibility as positive relationship is when the mean of 3.00 was regarded as negative relationship.

**FINDINGS**

**Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between the availability and utilization of library resources and services in Federal University Otuoke?

**Table 1: Relationship between availability and utilization of library resources and services**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	Mean	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Availability	295	2016	6.83	.817
Utilization of library Resources and services		6375	21.61	

The data analysis in Table 1 above shows the mean score for availability is 6.83, while that of utilization of library resources and services is 21.61. The correlation coefficient value is .817, this shows a positive relationship between availability and utilization of library resources

and services in the federal university Otuoke library.

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between the relevance and utilization of library resources and services in Federal University Otuoke?

**Table 2: Relationship between relevance and utilization of library resources and services**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	Mean	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Relevance	295	2591	8.78	.547
Utilization of library Resources and services		6375	21.61	

The data analysis in Table 2 above shows the mean score for relevance is 8.78, while that of utilization of library resources and services is 21.61. The correlation coefficient value is .547, this shows a positive relationship between relevance and utilization of library resources

and services in the federal university Otuoke library.

**Research Question 3**

What is the relationship between the accessibility and utilization of library resources and services in Federal University Otuoke?

**Table 3: Relationship between accessibility and utilization of library resources and services**

Variables	N	$\Sigma x$ $\Sigma y$	Mean	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Accessibility	295	1148	63.89	.670
Utilization of library Resources and services		6375	21.61	

The data analysis in Table 3 above shows the mean score for accessibility is 6.83, while that of utilization of library resources and services is 21.61. The correlation coefficient value is .817, this shows a positive relationship between accessibility and utilization of library resources and services in the federal university Otuoke library.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, the findings are being concluded that Information Sources Variables (availability, relevance and accessibility) are significant determinants of utilization of information resources and services in the federal university Otuoke library. That is, students derive maximum satisfaction from available information resources that are current and relevant due to constant acquiring of information resources by the university library with breadth and depth of subject scope which are easily accessible. However, the librarian should endeavor to stock the library with those information resources which are in high request as this would lead to increased utilization by the library patrons. Librarians should ensure that library resources with subject scope, fact and concepts are acquired as this would boost all information resources acquired by the library. There should be a database that provides information resources which enables library patrons to search for information electronically.

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