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Students and Lecturers' Use of Reference Sources in Teaching-Learning Process in a Higher Institution in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the use of reference sources in teaching and learning by the lecturers and students of Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate, Oyo State, Nigeria. About three (3) objectives of the study were put forward while three (3) research questions were also formulated to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed in carrying out the study. The research instrument used to gather data from the respondents was questionnaire. The target participants in the study were students and academic staff of the institution surveyed. Total enumeration was made use of in selecting the lecturers who were 125 while stratified sampling technique was used to select 291 student participants across 5 schools and various departments in the institution. Descriptive statistics comprising frequency counts and percentage were adopted in analyzing the data collected. The study reported that the library did not have most of the reference materials like almanacs, directories, gazetteers etc. It was also found out that lecturers used reference materials for teaching and research purposes. Students hardly used the materials and those of them that did use them for learning and class assignments. Some recommendations were made such as adequate funding of library be given priority and that efforts be made to educate and enlighten the students on the significance of reference sources in teaching-learning process, among others.

Keywords

Higher education, students, lecturers, reference materials, teaching

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Introduction

Libraries are widely recognized as intellectual repositories where information services and resources are rendered and provided respectively. They are also regarded as custodians of knowledge, knowledge acquisition centers and information resource centers. Libraries are so described because of the myriads of information documents therein contained. For this reason, Librarians who hold these materials in trust for people are sometimes called guardians of knowledge.

It is also well known that libraries of different categories serving different categories of people called users abound in the society. Amidst them are academic libraries which are libraries that are affiliated to higher education institutions. The primary users of these libraries are both the students in those institutions as well as their tutors (academic staff/lecturers). Academic libraries are saddled with the responsibilities of satisfying the information needs of these categories of users. In other words, libraries in higher education institutions help to facilitate teaching and learning processes. Students and lecturers are both engaged in knowledge acquisition and dissemination respectively. To be able to do this, information materials or resources of different types are made not only available but also accessible to the students and lecturers. Information resources may be explained as those information bearing materials that appear either in print or non-print including electronic formats. These information resources also called Library collections or holdings are the raw materials that libraries acquire and organize in a systematic manner in the interest of their intended users. These resources are also of varying types as observed in the aforementioned examples and they include basic textbooks, serials, and reference resources. Each of these materials has their unique characteristics.

Reference resources/sources often used interchangeably as reference collections refer to those categories of special library materials that are designed mainly for consultation for specific piece of information and are therefore, unlike textbooks, not expected to be read from cover to cover (Busari, 2017). Similarly, Ajani, Buraimoh, Adegbaye and Olusanya (2021) described reference books as those books that are not meant to be read through but have an array of unrelated entries which are generally arranged in alphabetical order. Ogbuiyi (2015) regarded reference sources to include any publications from which authoritative information can be obtained including but not limited to reference books, catalog records, printed indexes and abstracts and bibliographies. In their own views, Nwabueze and Ebele (2020) regarded reference materials as special data and fact carriers which are indispensable in any meaningful research. Reference materials are very useful in both teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning can be seen as two sides of the same coin meaning that they are two different but related and interwoven concepts. Ordinarily, teaching can be viewed as an act of imparting knowledge to the learners by the teachers, while learning, on the other hand, refers to the process or act of receiving knowledge by the students from the teachers. The knowledge so received leads to permanent change in the behavior of the recipients who are the students.

Statement of Problem

The impact that reference sources could make in enhancing effective teaching and learning has not been explored. Users of libraries hardly consult these important resources in their quest for knowledge. The statistical records of use of library resources often indicate that neither students nor lecturers made use of reference resources in their class and teaching assignments respectively, observations revealed. Rather, they heavily relied on textbooks and journals which are tertiary sources of information. It is for this reason that this survey aimed at determining the use of reference sources in teaching-learning process was carried out.

Objectives of the study

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the use of reference materials in teaching-learning process by students and lecturers in Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate, Oyo State, Nigeria. Other specific objectives are as follows:

- a. To identify the reference resources that are available and made accessible in the institution library to students and lecturers of the institution.
- b. To evaluate the extent of use of reference sources by the students and lecturers of the institution.
- c. To determine the effect of the use of reference sources on teaching and learning by the students and lecturers of the institution.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

1. What are the reference sources available in the library of Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate?
2. What is the extent of use of the reference sources by both the students and lecturers of Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate?
3. What effect does the use of reference sources have on both teaching and learning among the students and lecturers of Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate?

Literature Review

Reference sources, also called reference materials or resources, are the group of special library materials that are merely consulted for a specific piece of information. As described by Nwabueze and Ebele (2020), they are information materials in the library that are not meant to be read page by page but rather consulted from time to time as the need for them arises. According to them, reference resources point or direct the users to the main source of information while some others are the main sources/carriers of information. In making these materials available to the users in the library, the services involved are called reference services. The importance of reference materials in libraries, and academic libraries in particular, cannot be over-emphasized as they help the researchers to get well informed about a particular subject. In their own description of reference sources, Otonekwu and Oyedokun (2019) admitted that reference resources refer to non-circulating library collections that present current information in a bound format. They are said to provide factual information (hardly will a reference material

represent opinion) in words and figures (Otonekwu, Salihu & Oyedokun, 2019). It is also believed that reference sources are infallible and authoritative sources that provide concise, clear and organized information in either systematic or chronological order, and they help in locating accurate information about people, place, time and events. Users consult them for topic summaries, geographical and biographical and bibliographical information (McEnery, 2018).

Quadri and Abiodun (2017) as well as IFLA (2019) regarded reference resources as information resources that are designed to help users find key facts or background information on a subject matter which also aid in finding meaning to concepts and terminologies. Reference resources can be primary, secondary or tertiary materials which are enlarged, condensed, or evaluated by a second party (Akanbi, Oludipe & Ambali, 2019). In most cases, they are in groups which are usually located and arranged in a definite order at the reference section of a library, and are separated or differentiated from other materials by putting **REFERENCE ONLY** or abbreviated as **REF.** below the class mark.

Reference materials can be in print, non-print and electronic forms and are of two categories which include those that provide information directly and those that serve as gateway to the real source(s) of information. Examples of those reference books that provide direct information include Encyclopedia (general or subject), Dictionaries (general or subject), Thesaurus, Biographies, Almanacs, Handbooks, Manuals, Atlas, Gazette, Year Books, Maps, Atlases, Gazetters, Guide books, Directories, while examples of those that serve as gateway to others include Indexes, Abstracts and Bibliographies. Otonekwu and Oyedokun (2019) added that handbooks and manuals provide practical information and comprehensive overview of a subject matter as information about individuals is found in biographical books such as biographies, autobiographies, “who is who” etc. Geographical information about places could be found in maps, atlases, travellers’ guides and gazetters. Suggestions for further studies are found in bibliographical sources and statistical data while dates of events are reported in almanacs and yearbooks.

While distinguishing reference resources from textbooks, Busari (2017) and (Akanbi, Oludipe & Ambali, 2019) identified the following as distinctive features of reference materials:

- a. They are not to be read from cover to cover, that is they are not for consecutive reading but for finding out bits and pieces of information.
- b. They are arranged in alphabetical order, word by word or letter by letter, and their entries are arranged in chronological order.
- c. They are not loanable materials (cannot be borrowed out of the library) but only consulted within the library premises.
- d. Some of them are usually voluminous and comprehensive in scope and condensed in treatment.
- e. They are usually in high demand but held in limited copies and are relatively expensive.

- f. They usually have a whole volume as index to other volumes.
- g. The symbols and abbreviations used in them are always vividly explained.

Desire to acquire knowledge is the reason students are sent to schools. While in the classrooms, students acquire knowledge through interaction with the teachers. This interaction that takes place between the teacher and students in the classrooms can be termed as an activity which can be called teaching. In this regard, it can be asserted that when a person imparts information or skills to another, it is common to describe the action as teaching (Rajagopalan, 2019). To impart may mean to share experiences or to communicate information, for instance, lecture. Amidon, as quoted by Rajagopalan (2019), defined teaching as an interactive process, primarily involving classroom talk which takes place between teacher and students which occurs during certain definable activities. It involves an intimate contact between a more mature personality and a less mature one which is designed to further the education of the latter. Different ideas of the concept of teaching are held by different educationists. It is also regarded as a form of interpersonal influence, which is aimed at changing the potential behavior of another person (Levenson, 2018).

Calderhead (1995) cited in Rajagopalan (2019) opined that teaching can be conceptualized as a form of problem-solving and decision-making which has many properties in common with the work of physicians. Rajagopalan (2019) summarized the characteristics of teaching as follows:

- It is an effective interaction between teachers and students.
- It is both arts as well as science.
- It can be both formal training and informal training.
- Teaching is a tripartite process which includes educational objectives, learning experiences and change in behavior.
- For teaching to be more effective, it should be well planned and the teacher should decide the objectives, the methods of teaching and evaluation techniques.
- Good teaching is democratic and the teacher should respect the students, encourage them to ask questions, answer the questions and discuss other things with them.
- It is a cooperative activity and the teacher should involve students in different classroom activities such as organization, management, discussion and evaluation of results.
- It is a kind and sympathetic action and a good teacher should develop emotional stability among the students.
- It helps the students to make adjustments in life, and it also helps to stimulate the students' power of thinking and direct them towards self-learning.

Teaching has a positive effect on student learning as it is a system of actions intended to induce learning. Learning, on the other hand is about a change which is brought about by developing a new skill, understanding a scientific law and changing an attitude. It is a relatively permanent change brought about intentionally. When we attend a course, search through a book, or read a

discussion paper, we set out to learn, Levenson (2018) concluded. Learning is internal to learners, and it is both a mature and behavior, but only behavior is seen.

According to Ghafar and Lestari (2023), learning is viewed as a form of permanent change because it is engendered in students by the teachers using methods such as helping them master particular abilities, altering some of their attitudes, or comprehending a particular scientific rule that governs a learning environment. In the process of learning in higher education, the students anticipate being treated as an adult learner and given some control over the learning environment. This control, as they continue, includes the capacity to pose questions and address any issues they may have. In higher education, students as adult learners want their teachers (lecturers) to be approachable and entertaining, clearly explain ideas, and regularly use relevant examples to make the materials simple to learn, which is becoming increasingly essential in classrooms today. They also want their lecturers/instructors to be knowledgeable about the materials they are teaching them.

It is often said that one of the pre-requisite of a good teacher or lecturer is to understand the teaching-learning process more deeply. Teaching and learning process in higher education can be defined as a transformation process of knowledge from lecturers to students in tertiary institutions. It is referred to as the combination of various elements within the process where lecturers identify and establish the learning objectives and develop teaching resources and implement the teaching and learning strategy (Munna & Abdulkalam, 2021). The process involves an interaction between the instructor, and the learners and it aims at ensuring effectiveness in both teaching and learning. In the process, the lecturers assist the students to prepare for life expectations by their developing their capacity and abilities to be independent.

Use of Reference Sources in Teaching-Learning Process in Higher Education

Library as a place for both academic and social affiliations is recognized in various studies. Generally, library resources including reference sources are purposely acquired with the intention to cater for the needs of both the students and lecturers.

Libraries assume an important responsibility to facilitate students' education by providing services, programs and resources to assist students in being more effective and efficient in their academic career- to succeed academically. These resources help to enhance and stimulate the cognitive development of the students. Provision of reference materials also help to reinforce teaching and learning for both educators and learners respectively. Otonekwu, Oyedokun, Komolafe, and Adewale (2019) submitted that students and other library users including lecturers should study and familiarize themselves adequately well with the different types of reference materials earlier mentioned so as to be able to use them effectively. Reference materials form a major source of information which lecturers and students cannot afford to ignore in their teaching-learning activities, and they must be able to use these materials independently and effectively.

In a study by Munna and AbdulKalam (2021) on teaching and learning process, lecturers need to use reference resources in the teaching process. Empirical studies establishing the use of reference sources by students and lecturers abound. However, the rate of use of these resources varies. In an empirical study on accessibility and utilization of reference materials among undergraduate fisheries students in the Universities in the North-central part of Nigeria, Makinde, Aba and Ugah (2017) reported that the use of reference materials by students was very low. However, in a similar study on the use of reference materials and services by the students of Kwara State College of Education, Otonekwu, Oyedokun, Komolafe, and Adeware (2019) admitted a high level of usage.

In all these studies, it showed that the percentage of use of reference sources by students was at variance. It should also be noted that encyclopedia and dictionaries were the mostly used among the various types of reference resources in the library and that those resources were used to aid learning by the students. Other reference sources such as directories, almanacs, and bibliographies were hardly used.

As far as the lecturers' use of reference sources in teaching in higher education is concerned, few studies appear to have been conducted. Those few studies admitted that lecturers did not make use of reference sources in most cases in their teaching but majorly used them to support their research works and textbook publications (Ogbuniyi, 2015).

Methodology

The research design employed in carrying out the study was descriptive survey and the students and the lecturers of Oyo state college of education constituted the population of the study. The population of students of the college as at 2022/2023 academic session when the study was conducted was 1056. The lecturers then were 125 while only 110 of them responded. Total enumeration was the sampling technique used to sample the lecturers while stratified sampling technique was used to select about 291 students across their various levels, schools and departments. A well-structured questionnaire was used as the research instrument for the study. The data gathered from the administered questionnaire were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics comprising simple percentage and frequency counts.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Bio-data of the respondents

GENDER	FREQUENCY			
	STUDENTS	%	LECTURERS	%
MALE	126	43.30	95	86.36
FEMALE	165	56.70	15	13.64
TOTAL	291	100	110	100

LEVEL OF STUDY	STUDENT S			
100	84	28.87	NA	NA
200	105	36.08	NA	NA
300	102	35.05	NA	NA
TOTAL	291	100	NA	NA
STATUS/DESIGNATION	NA	NA	LECTURERS	
CHIEF LECTURERS	NA	NA	38	34.55
PRINCIPAL LECTURERS	NA	NA	21	19.09
SENIOR LECTURERS	NA	NA	29	26.36
LECTURER 1-3	NA	NA	15	13.63
ASSISTANT LECTURERS	NA	NA	03	2.73
INSTRUCTORS	NA	NA	04	3.64
TOTAL	NA	NA	110	100

KEY: NA=Not Applicable.

Table I above indicates few of the biographical information of the respondents (both students and lecturers). It appears that there were more female students (165, 56.70%) than male students who were 126(43.30%), unlike the academic staff with 86.36% of them being male while only 15 (13.64%) of them were female lecturers. In addition, the respondents among the students were majorly the stale students in both 200 and 300 levels (207, 71.13%). As for the lecturers, 88 (80%) of them ranged from chief lecturers to senior lecturers who were seasoned and experienced lecturers, while the remaining 22 (20%) belonged to the junior lecturer cadre such as lecturer 1-3, assistant lecturers and instructors.

Research question 1: What are the Reference Sources available to both students and lecturers in the College Library of Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate.

Table 2: Reference sources available

S/N	REFERENCE SOURCES	AVAILABLE (A)	NOT AVAILABLE (NA)
1	Encyclopedia	A	-
2	Dictionaries	A	-
3	Biographies	A	-
4	Bibliographies	A	-
5	Directories	-	NA
6	Handbooks	-	NA
7	Abstract	-	NA
8	Index	-	NA

9	Manuals	-	NA
10	Year books	-	NA
11	Guides	-	NA
12	Government publications	-	NA
13	Annuals	-	NA
14	Almanacs	-	NA
15	Online reference sources	-	NA
16	Gazette	-	NA
17	Gazetters	-	NA
18	Concordance	-	NA
19	Thesaurus	A	-
20	African today	-	NA
21	Atlases	A	-
22	Globes	A	-
23	Maps	A	-

KEY: A= Available, NA= Not Available.

Table 2 above clearly explains the various categories of reference sources that were available in the College Library of the institution being examined. It is evident from the table that only a few of the reference sources were available in this Library. These include Encyclopedias, Dictionaries of various types, Biographies, Thesaurus, Atlases, Globes and Maps. It also points out that the Library did not have majority of the reference sources such as Directories, Bibliographies, Handbooks, Abstracts, Indexes, Manuals, Yearbooks, Guides, Government publications, Annuals, Gazette, Gazetters, Concordances, African Today, Almanacs and Online reference sources.

Research question 2: What is the extent use of Reference Sources by the students and lecturers of the Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate?

Table 3: Extent of use of reference sources

S/N	Reference sources	STUDENTS			LECTURERS		
		Always used	Rarely used	Never used	Always used	Rarely used	Never used
1	Encyclopedia	240 (82.82%)	51 (17.18%)	-	110 (100%)	-	-
2	Dictionaries	289 (99.31%)	02 (0.69%)	-	110 (100%)	-	-
3	Biographies	101	190	-	06	52	52

		(34.71%)	(65.29 %)		(5.46%)	(47.27%)	(47.27%)
4	Bibliographies	-	-	291 (100%)	18 (16.36%)	32 (29.09%)	60 (54.55%)
5	Directories	-	02 (0.69%)	289 (99.31 %)	16 (14.54%)	45 (40.91%)	49 (44.55%)
6	Handbooks	02 (0.69%)	10 (3.43%)	279 (95.88 %)	15 (13.64%)	40 (36.36%)	55 (50%)
7	Abstract	02 (0.69%)	07 (2.40%)	282 (96.91 %)	92 (83.64%)	10 (9.09%)	08 (7.27%)
8	Index	-	05 (1.72%)	286 (98.28 %)	83 (75.45%)	15 (13.64%)	12 (10.91%)
9	Manuals	03 (1.03%)	15 (5.16%)	273 (93.81 %)	08 (7.27%)	42 (38.18%)	60 (54.55%)
10	Year books	02 (0.69%)	05 (1.72%)	284 (97.59 %)	02 (1.82%)	69 (62.73%)	39 (35.45%)
11	Guides	-	-	291 (100%)	04 (3.64%)	36 (32.73%)	70 (63.63%)
12	Government publications	05 (1.72%)	16 (5.50%)	270 (92.78 %)	32 (29.09%)	30 (27.27%)	48 (43.64%)
13	Annuals	-	05 (1.72%)	286 (98.28 %)	06 (5.46%)	10 (9.09%)	94 (85.45%)
14	Almanacs	02 (0.69%)	07 (2.40%)	282 (96.91 %)	08 (7.27)	12 (10.91%)	90 (81.82%)
15	Online reference sources	-	-	291 (100%)	-	-	291 (100%)
16	Gazette	01 (0.34%)	12 (41.23 %)	278 (95.53 %)	07 (6.36%)	15 (13.64%)	88 (80%)
17	Gazetters	-	15 (5.15%)	276 (94.5%)	08 (7.27%)	16 (14.55%)	86 (78.18%)
18	Concordance	-	-	291	-	-	110

				(100%)			(100%)
19	Thesaurus	79 (27.15%)	152 (52.23%)	60 (20.62%)	91 (82.73%)	19 (17.27%)	-
20	African today	-	-	291 (100%)	-	-	110 (100%)
21	Atlases	07 (2.40%)	07 (2.40%)	277 (95.20%)	05 (4.55%)	16 (14.54%)	89 (80.91%)
22	Globes	07 (2.40%)	07 (2.40%)	277 (95.20%)	05 (4.55%)	48 (43.64%)	57 (51.81%)
23	Maps	07 (2.40%)	06 (2.06%)	278 (95.54%)	06 (5.45%)	15 (13.64%)	89 (80.91%)

Table 3 above shows the rate of use of reference sources by both the students and lecturers of Oyo State College of Education, Lanlate. It reveals that among the reference sources, it was only encyclopedia, dictionaries, biographies and thesaurus that were always consulted for use by both the students and lecturers. Those that were never used by them included bibliographies, directories, manuals, handbooks, abstracts, and index. However, it was also found out that some of the resources that were used by the lecturers but which were not available in the institution library were sourced from other libraries. These were resources like abstracts, index, handbooks etc. There were some of these materials that were rarely used by the students despite their availability in the library. Examples of such included thesaurus and biographies, perhaps they did not know their usefulness in their studies.

Research question 3: What is the effect of use of reference sources on teaching and learning in the institution?

Table 4: Effect of use of reference sources on teaching and learning

S/N	ITEMS	STUDENTS		LECTURERS	
		A	D	A	D
1	Reference sources help to facilitate teaching by the lecturers	-	-	110 100%	-
2	Reference sources assist the students in enhancing their learning	276 (94.85%)	15 (5.15%)	-	-
3	Reference sources are used to complement lectures in the classroom by the students	270 (92.78%)	21 (7.22%)	-	-
4	Reference sources are used to carry out class assignments	268 (92.10%)	13 (7.90%)	-	-

)			
5	Reference sources are also used for research purposes	-	-	97 (88.18 %)	13 (11.82%)
6	Reference sources are used			98 (89.09 %)	12 (10.91%)

KEY: A=Agreed, D=Disagreed

Table 4 proves that reference sources helped the teaching staff in facilitating their lectures in the classrooms as indicated by all of them (100%) in their response to the survey. On the other hand, 94.85% of the students also claimed that these resources assisted them in their learning. In the same vein, 270 of the students representing 92.78% agreed that reference sources complemented the lectures they received in the classroom. They also admitted that they made use of these materials in carrying out their class assignments, only a few of them (13, 7.90%) submitted that they did not. As far as the need to use reference materials for research purpose by lecturers is concerned, it could be observed that a greater number of lecturers (97, 88.18%) found reference resources useful for their research work.

Discussion of Findings

The study established that there were more female students than male students while male lecturers were more than the female teaching staff in the college. It was also found out by the study that few students were admitted into the college during the period of the study which indicated that there was problem of attrition of students in colleges of education in Nigeria. It was also reported that majority of lecturers in the institution were gradually reaching the peak of their teaching careers while the junior lecturers were few which points to the fact that recruitment of staff in the college had been carried out for a long time. There is an admitted fact that no library in the world could have all its resources. This fact is reflected in this study which shows that the college library of the institution did not have most of the reference materials such as directories, almanacs, government publications, gazettes, gazetteers etc. Though, the library had some of the basic reference sources like dictionaries, encyclopedia, biographies and thesaurus. This could be due to poor funding of the library which is a common phenomenon and which was in conformity with the earlier studies of Ogbuniyi (2015). As regards the use of these materials by both the teaching staff and students, it was found out that those that were available and were always used included dictionaries, encyclopedia, thesaurus, globes and atlases. The percentage of use by both the students and lecturers varied. Lecturers used them more than the students.

In addition, it became obvious from the findings of the study that academic staff attested to the fact that reference materials assisted them in their teaching assignments as they facilitated delivery of their lectures. It was added that the materials also helped them greatly in their research work. On their own part too, those of the students who

consulted reference materials admitted that they helped them not only in their learning but also in carrying out the class assignments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is established by the study that reference materials just like basic subject textbooks are good teaching and learning resources for both students and lecturers. They are, however, not as adequate as textbooks in the library. Teaching and learning could be enhanced with the aid of reference materials. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

adequate funding of the library should be given priority by the parent body. This would enable the library acquire necessary materials in meeting the needs of the users. more efforts should be made to educate and enlighten the students on the significance of reference materials. This should be given attention in the use of library as a general course.

lecturers should be requested to refer the students to specific reference materials in the library either for an assignment or as a further study to the classroom lectures. This would not expose the students to the materials but also encourage them to use the resources.

policy makers should design a mean to encourage students to seek for admission into colleges of education as a measure to address the attrition rate. This could be through the introduction of special bursary awards to students in colleges of education.

there is urgent need to employ more teaching staff in the college as majority of the senior lecturers are reaching their retirement gradually.

similar study on the use of reference materials could be carried out in other arms of higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics).

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