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Availability and Utilization of Information Resources for Students in University of Calabar Library, Cross River State.

Comfort Linus Inyang

and

Martina Ekpenyong Ekeng

Department of Library and
Information Science, University
of Calabar, Calabar, Cross
River State, Nigeria.

Cinyang72@gmail.com/
martinaekeng001@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was to investigate the Availability and Utilization of Information Resources for Students in University of Calabar Library Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, three research questions were formulated to guide the study. Literature review was done according to the variables under study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Four thousand and eighty (4080) was the total population of the study. A Sample of two hundred and four (204) registered library students or users were selected for the study using simple random and accidental sampling techniques. Questionnaire was the main instrument for collection of data. The instrument for data collection was titled: Availability and Utilization of Information Resources Questionnaire (AUIRQ). The instrument was subjected to content validation by the project supervisor and the reliability was established through the test re-test survey. Frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation were the statistical analysis techniques adopted to test the research questions under study. The result of the analysis revealed that different types of information resources are available in the library, the extent that availability of information influences the utilization of resources by student is high, also that information resources were accessible by students. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that University libraries should market their resources and services to attract users.

Keywords: *Availability, Utilization, Information Resources, Students, Library*

1.1 Introduction

A collection of information resource likes books in a room without orderly organization (arrangement) to comfort retrieval does not make a library. A library therefore is a repository of various forms of recorded information which may be in a print

formats such as books, periodicals, references materials, manuscript, magazines, these gazette etc. some prints formats such as micro forms, films, magnetic tapes, slide, video tapes and data stored in electronic media like disc. Library as an institution that manages the intellectual products that individual can gain

access to readily. Library is a stored house of information which is saved and kept for essentials use in the global world it involves the collection of prints and non-print information resources that provide vital information that help users for their knowledge development. According to Ottong (2014), the library is a nerve center of educational development of a man at any level and particularly in any academic pursuit.

Information resources are the stock in trade of librarians. These are the resources in the library which make services possible. They are materials which the users come to consult, read and borrow. Information resources are many and varied, but they can be divided in to two broad categories namely; printed and non-printed resources. The printed resources are books, pamphlets, periodicals, encyclopedias, newspapers and many others. Non-printed resources are however, often referred to as audio-visual resources. They are divided into audio, visual and audio-visual. These are the products of advanced technology, some of which require special equipment to operate. There are also electronic resources as part of information resources in the libraries.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

For a library to be functional, it has to meet its user's needs and ensuring that users make functional use of the information resources and services available at their disposal. The more accessible information resources are the more they are likely to be used. Users tend to use information resources that require the least effort to access. The task at hand is for the academic librarians to always ensure availability, accessibility and utilization of needed information resources which will eventually lead to academic use. Utilization of library and information resource has been a concern from the time the library change from been cultural monuments to knowledge acquisition and information communication center, in view of this development librarians

conceive the idea of educating the library user in finding and locating the information they need on their day to day activities.

It is observed that accessibility of the information resources seems difficult. This might be as a result of poor processing of the information resources. For instances, uncatalogued, mis catalogue, mis-shelved information resources. The more accessible information resources are, the more likely they are to be used. Therefore, good information resources should be received and retrieved to meet the desired need of educating the students. It is observed that, in the library where these information resources are available, they are not put into maximum used by the students. In the light of this, this study would examine the availability and accessibility of information resources for students in university of Calabar library, Cross River State, Nigeria.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the availability of information resources in University of Calabar library. Specifically, the study intend to:

1. Find out the types of information resources that are available in the library
2. Determine if the availability of information influence utilization of resources by students
3. Ascertain if accessibility of information influence utilization of resources by students

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the types of information resources that are available in the library?
2. To what extent does availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student?
3. How does accessibility of information

influences utilization of resources by students?

2.1 Literature Review

Provision and accessibility of information resources are the main focus of libraries and librarians in all the host establishments. Popoola and Haliso (2009) define information resources as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic formats. Such as textbook, journals, indexes, abstracts, newspapers and magazines, reports, CD-Rom, databases, internet, E-mail, video, tapes/cassettes, diskettes, magnetic disk, computers, microforms and many others. These information resources are the raw materials that libraries acquire, catalogue, stock and make available to their patrons as well as use to provide various other services.

Akamde (2008) described library as a collection of information materials and the place where materials are kept for consultation by users. For a place to be called library information resources such as prints books, non-print books and audio visual materials should be organized systematically for easy retrieval, organization and retrieval of information are some of the general motives of the library to locate the needed materials. A user approaches a library with a defined need and once this need is identified, such user will be patronizing the library to retrieve relevant information to satisfy his information needs. Libraries acquire, process and stored a large unit of information resource. Hence, it is a repository of various forms of recorded information which may be a printed and none printed formats, printed materials include books, magazine, periodicals, maps etc.

Information in this 21st century is power, life blood and it has a life form (Ntui & Edam-Agbor, 2015). Information plays a vital role in shaping human thinking and character development, communication, the teaching

and learning process, tremendous growth in knowledge, technology advancement and rapid change in the modern world have laid to increase awareness of importance of information in all aspect of life. Academic institutions as organizations play a key role in the society by preparing future generations to use the acquired knowledge to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively. The libraries of this institution serve various set of users such as student, faculty staffs and administrators with diverse information need. These libraries acquired variety of information sources and offer various services for supporting research and learning activities hence the important of libraries in academic institutions is considerable and they are seen as a nuclear of academic activity.

Availability and accessibility are very important, the availability of information resource and the ability to access the information makes a standard library. Information could be available, but yet not accessible. A library with a large volume of collection without users' access to it content is useless readily. Available information to students determines the satisfaction. Availability of library resource means ensuring their presences in the library for immediate use (Ugah, 2007). It is also means making available resources in the library available for use by student with visual impairment. Abubakar (2008) defined availability of library resources as ensuring their presence in the Nigerian college library for immediate use. Availability is the condition of bring available, especially of been accessible or obtainable. Availability of library resource means something that can easily be obtained or seen and use.

To succeed in any aspect of human endeavor availability and accessibility to the quick and up to date resources is very essential. Mariam and OgunRowbi (2006) confirm that high unavailability of library resource in most university libraries have a

negative effect on the use of library facilities in the university. It is essential that the libraries resources should be made available and be utilized by users so that learning can take place for the overall development of the country. The task of the library is that of collecting, sorting, an organizing books and making them available to the users. This implies that availability of books is clearly central to information provision in the universities libraries, and it can be used as a measure of library performance.

Utilization of information resources is the extent to which the resource and service of the library are actually used for teaching, learning and research. To this end, professional librarians continue to strive to collect, store, organize and disseminate all forms of recorded knowledge in order to satisfy both present and future information needs of users. Utilization of information resources is making use of the available resources by the students through adequate access where the library ensure that the resources are acquired and process as well as making them readily available and utilized at the right time through the right medium, through which students would be able to make use of such resources. Accessibility in the present context depicts the speed at which an information nation output in any format is obtained by university students. University

libraries support universities in discharging their responsibility by acquiring all the relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning, research, and the academic activities of their universities.

3.1 Methodology

A survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of four thousand and eighty (4080) of all the registered undergraduate students. Accidental sampling technique was adopted as the researcher gave the instrument only to the undergraduate students met at the University of Calabar library at the time the researcher administered the instrument. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 5% of the entire population. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A and B. Section "A" was designed to collect the respondent's bio-data and section B contains 15 items. 5 items each measuring types of information resources, availability of information resources and utilization of information resources on a Likert scale with four point alternative responses ranging from strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), strongly disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). This instrument was validated by experts and the reliability was measured using trial testing. The Simple percentage was used to test the research questions.

4.1 Results

Research Question 1: What are the types of information resources that are available in the library?

Table 1: Response of the respondents on the types of information resources that are available in the library (N=204)

	Types of information resources that are available in the library	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Are computers in the library	3.2714	.57309	Significant
2	Are academic Journals in the library	3.9317	.25238	Significant
3	Are textbooks in the library	3.2000	.65372	Significant
4	Are internet facilities in the library	3.6683	.47121	Significant
5	Are Newspapers /Magazines in the library	3.6000	.49029	Significant

To answer this research question, responses to items 1-5 of section B on the questionnaire were analyzed. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 presents the mean ratings of the types of information resources that are available in the library. All the isolated items recorded mean rating ranging from 3.46 to 3.87 which were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus, indicating that different types of information resources were available in the library. The standard deviation ranged from 0.22 to 0.62 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses.

Research Question 2: To what extent does availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student?

Table 2 : Results of responses of the respondents on the extent that availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student (N=204)

Availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student		Mean	SD	Remark
6	I utilize computers that are available in the library	3.8635	.34360	Significant
7	I utilize academic Journals that are available in the library	3.6000	.49029	Significant
8	I utilize textbooks that are available in the library	3.8635	.34360	Significant
9	I utilize internet facilities that are available in the library	3.6000	.49029	Significant
10	I utilize Newspapers /Magazines that are available in the library	3.8635	.34360	Significant

To answer this research question, responses to the items 6-10 on section B on the questionnaire were analyzed. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of the extent that availability of information influences the utilization of resources by students. All the isolated items recorded mean rating ranging from 3.46 to 3.87 were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus, indicating that the extent availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student is high. The standard deviation ranged from 0.22 to 0.62 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses.

Research Question 3: How does accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students

Table 3: Results of responses of the respondents on how accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students (N=204)

Accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students		Mean	SD	Remark
11	Accessibility of computers influences their utilization in the library	3.8667	.34020	Significant
12	Accessibility of academic Journals influences their utilization in the library	3.0619	1.12677	Significant
13	Accessibility of textbooks influences their utilization in the library	3.6000	.61150	Significant
14	Accessibility of internet facilities influences their utilization in the library	3.8651	.34191	Significant
15	Accessibility of Newspapers /Magazines influences their utilization in the library	3.3317	.47121	Significant

To answer this research question, the items 11-15 of the questionnaire were analyzed. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 presents the mean ratings of how accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students. All the isolated items recorded mean rating ranging from 3.46 to 3.87 which were above the cut-off mark of 2.50, thus, indicating that information resources are accessible by students. The standard deviation ranged from 0.22 to 0.62 which revealed that respondents were not too far from the mean and each other in their responses.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This section deals with the discussion of findings from the trends of the three research questions tested. The discussion is presented according to the research questions.

5.2 This first research question is to find out the types of information resources available in the library

The result of the first research questions revealed that the extent of type of information resources that are available in the library is high. The findings supported the study of Olowu (2004) who observed that, information resources include materials such as print, non-print, periodicals and audio-visual materials that are provided for use by people. These materials are usually housed in a building systematically arranged for easy retrieval and use. The resources are many and varied, they are divided into two (2) categories; print and non-print information resources. Information resources are the stock in trade of librarians.

Watson, (2004) also mentioned that the printed information resources are information resources in physical and tangible formats, examples of print information resources are books, journals, pamphlets, newsletters and reference sources. They also

include projected aids, visuals aids, three dimensional aids and non-projected aids. Non-print information resources are materials that appeal to the senses of hearing and touch, such as records and records players, tapes, tape recorders, radio, filmstrip projector, television, videotape recorder, VCD and DVD etc. Technology has added a digital touch to library services such that reference services of the library can be executed digitally using electronic means.

Okiki (2013) also sees information resources as print and electronic materials that could be sourced and accessed manually or electronically by users. Information resources include everything that is providing the required services of users. Library resources are identified by as materials which enable libraries perform their function effectively. Popoola and Haliso (2009) also see information resources as those information bearing materials that are in printed and electronic formats such as slides, computers, videotapes, textbooks, newspaper, journals etc. these information materials are raw materials which the libraries acquire, catalogue, shelve and make them available to their patrons as well as use to provide other services.

Information resources is any information in electronic, audio-visual or physical form or any information in hardware or software that makes possible the storage and use of information. Today, it is hardly possible that development of knowledge in the field of human endeavor without library, books and various type of information materials which exist in the library as information resources would not have been in existence. Information resources is seen as materials needed for learning all the courses offered in the University as well as potential courses that may be offered. The functions of information delivery must be executed efficiently and timely for the library to be relevant to university objectives. The

University library has been regarded as the academic heart of the academic community with the essential functions to provide students and the entire school community an enabling environment that supports higher education objectives. Without the information resources provided by the library, teaching-learning, research, other reasons for using library resources will lack requisite support.

5.3 Availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student

The result of this research question revealed that the availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student is high. The finding supported the study of Alokun (2003) who affirmed that availability of information is central to human development but insufficient knowledge may create problems resulting in abject poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. For any library to flourish in any society, the economy must be sufficiently vibrant and government must commit funds to its development. He further asserts that to succeed in any aspect of human endeavor, availability and accessibility to the quick and up-to-date is very essential. In the same line of thought, unavailability of library resources in most universities libraries and information centers have negative effect on the use of library and information resources in the University.

Abdulsalami (2013) also stated that “Book availability is an indicator of stock effectiveness”. Libraries consider their task to be collecting, storing and measuring books, most libraries also consider their task as making these books available to their users. The intellectual access to available information resources has since been a major pre-occupation of libraries. Importance has been reflected in efforts devoted to the design and creation of bibliographies, catalogue and classification scheme and other devices that help establish the existence of individual

document and their relevance to specific inquiries. However, this intellectual access needs to be accompanied by physical access if e-resources is to be used. Abdulsalami further stated that the provision and use of information resources have grown to be a political and social responsibility. It appears that this responsibility will continue to grow with increase in the production of information and the number of its users. The daily growth of information brings about the problems of making easily available to potential users the right type of information at the right time.

5.4 Accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students.

Results obtained from the analysis indicate that the accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students. The findings were contrary to the study of Popoola (2008) who affirmed that the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among the students and faculty staff members. Availability of information resources does not automatically translate to resources, accessibility and utilization. Availability is concerned with physical location of resources in the library, while accessibility has to do with the problem of storage, display and transmission of information.

Ugah (2008) also noted that, accessibility of information resources is a paramount concern and relevant to library users. Without access to information resources, utilization is not realizable and the value of the resources is meaningless to users. The issue poses numerous challenges to both library management and users, because making resource accessible demands certain requisite skills, which when lacking renders materials available but not accessible. What contribute to the failure in accessibility of information resources are weak and inadequate cataloguing, shelving and

technical services. Accessibility of information resources is very important a recurring theme in literature.

Aguolu (2002) also posited that resources maybe available in the library and identified bibliographically as relevant to ones' subject of interest, but the users may not be able to lay hands on the resources. One may identify citations in indexes but may not have access to sources containing the relevant article. The more accessible information resources are, the more likely they are to be used. Readers tend to use information sources that require the least effort to access.

Adeyinka (2008) also stated that number of factors influence the use of academic library collections. These include availability of library materials, location, age of collection, and user education. Availability of materials certainly influences the use of a library. The frequent use of a library will be influenced by the availability of the information sources in the library to the user. Availability is the simple most important determinant of the overall extent to which an information channel is used. Both availability and technical quality influence the selection of first choice. When books and other information sources are available for use, the library user is satisfied as his information needs are likely to be met. The user develops a positive attitude towards the library, on the other hand, unavailability of information sources leads to user frustration.

Agbonlahor (2006) also stated that the factor that might motivate an individual to use a library is how easy it can be used. Thus, ease of use becomes an important factor to consider when a user is contemplating using a library. It is better to device an information retrieval system that will not make it troublesome for a user to have information. Ease of use is sometimes ranked ahead of quality of information expected from a particular source. Provision of library catalogues that are easy to use, adequate guides to library collections and

adequately shelved books enhance and facilitate library use. Library is a service organization responsible for organizing information resources in such a way that permits access to users and also turning passive users to committed users.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Different types of information resources are available in the library. The extent of availability of information influences the utilization of resource by student is high. Accessibility of information influences utilization of resources by students. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. More information resources should be made available and accessible to students. This will make learning more exciting with opportunities for developmental research for functional society.
2. University libraries should market their resources and services to attract users.
3. The improvement of power supply and internet connectivity will help in sustaining information resources utilization for maximum satisfaction.

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