
EVALUATION OF INFORMATION RESOURCES IN LIBRARIES OF THE STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN YOBE STATE-NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study evaluated the information resources in the academic libraries of the Yobe State Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The aim of the research was to find out the causes for low patronage by the users. Thus, the study identified the information resources available in the libraries, and also discovered reasons for low patronage of the resources. Two research questions were generated and tested to guide the conduct of the study. Frequency count and percentages were used to analyze the data collected and thus answered the research questions. Survey research method was employed and questionnaire was used as instrument in collecting the data. The findings of the study revealed that although, the quantity and quality of the majority of the information resources and were satisfactory, the major challenge nearly everyone faced in the libraries was poor accommodation that is; inadequate seating capacity, unfitted study areas, uncomfortable seating arrangement. Other challenges revealed by the findings of this study included; Inadequate staff to attend to users; most of the libraries were not marketing their services. It was therefore hoped that, the respective managements of Yobe State Tertiary Institutions must ensure convenient, favourable and conducive library environments for meaningful and effective utilization of resources.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Information Resources.

Introduction

The main objective of any library should be that, the user who enters library for a specific purpose should not leave empty handed. Nwalo (2003) observed that the first law of S. R. Rangana than says “**Books are for use**” that is; libraries are not just about storing books for decoration, they are about people having access to books. It is imperative to ensure library patrons use the materials libraries select and purchase for

Evaluation of Information Resources in Libraries of the State Tertiary Institutions in Yobe State-Nigeria - Dr. Amina Ibrahim Makintami and Dr. Muhammad Bello Danladi

them. Information is an essential prerequisite in the development of any society. It is a key to any successful activity. According to Alemna (2011), information may be defined as knowledge (given or received) of some facts or circumstances. Ayokunle and Temitope (2020) viewed library as a collection of graphic acoustic and holistic materials such as books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, maps, charts, filmstrips, microfilms, photographs, records, or any recorded piece of information systematically arranged and designed for use.

There are variations in the extent and intensity of the services offered by libraries. These variations provide the ground for placing libraries in different categories. The concern of this research is on information resources in libraries that benefit tertiary education people. **Academic libraries** are those located in higher institutions like the universities and colleges to support the teaching and learning activities of staff and students. Umoh (2017) observed that the role is to help and promote the objective of its parent institution. **Information resources** according to Adeyoyin (2011) can be described as the totality of acquired materials gathered together by a library for its users. They can be broadly categorized into two; books or printed materials, and non-print or audio-visual materials. Therefore, the term information resources in a very general sense, cover all materials acquired by purchase new or second-hand, or by gift or exchange, and in fact anything which might be of use in providing information to the users.

The resources make information available to the researchers, which would have been otherwise inaccessible to them, and at the same help to conserve space. Discussing on the importance of medium of document (information resource), Akussah (2011) states that the medium of documentation is very crucial for the survival of the information it holds. When the medium gets destroyed, the information is lost. It is with regards to the importance of information that, academic libraries exist, make provision for information and ensure they are easily accessible to users for optimum utilization. Thus, the research focused on the quantity and quality of resources in Yobe State tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The issues that require consideration are the availability of information resources and the problems encountered by the patrons. It is expected that at the end of the research, the following will be established: resources available in academic libraries in Yobe State, and the reasons why users are not well patronizing the library resources.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

There was low patronage of information resources in the libraries under study.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What information resources are available in the libraries?
2. Why are users not well patronizing the resources?

2. Literature Review

Relevant writings were reviewed under the following:

2.1 Information Resources Available in Academic Libraries

According to Aina (2004) for an academic library to perform its myriad of functions, its collection must not only include books and journals but also other materials such as generalized and specialized collections, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, museum objects, photographs, theses and dissertations, audio-visual materials, microforms, Compact Disk-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), and necessary equipment such as microfiche and microfilm readers, computer and CD-ROM drives, which are needed in order to use some of the items in the collection. The library must also have full access to the Internet. Edoke (2000) opined that the functions of academic libraries are to provide information materials required for the academic programs of the parent institution, to provide research information resources in consonance with the needs of faculty and research students, and to provide information resources for recreation and for personal self-development of users. Thus, books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, patents, maps, engineering drawings, bibliographies, indexes, slides and all other information bearing materials that can be found in a modern library are provided in response to the information needs of users. Adeyoyin (2011) concluded that, the academic library stocks various types of library materials ranging from books and non-books, to other materials that can aid teaching and learning. Discussing ICT resources as indispensable tools in academic libraries, Idi (2007) stated that they reduce the problem of space in the library, electronic or virtual library is now seen physically empty compared to traditional libraries but filled up with invisible resources. What makes library so congested are shelves and books but technology changes our libraries from traditional libraries to virtual libraries. In other words, absence of shelves and physical books give much space in our modern libraries.

2.2 Problems of information utilization in Academic libraries

A study conducted by Ogombo and Adomi (2003) on “Student’s Utilization of Library Resources at Baptist School of Nursing, Eku, Delta State-Nigeria, proved that students were not given orientation, majority of them went directly to the shelves to locate needed material. Short duration of loan period, less number of books issued at a time and inadequate opening hours of library were the problems found during the study. Munyoki, (2011) carried out a research on “Factors that affect the accessibility and utilization of resources in selected Kenya Armed Forces College Libraries”. The findings indicated that, the problems that faced the libraries were low speed of Internet and/or computers, lack of seating space and low state of library interior furnishing like furniture. The library staff were found to be lacking professional qualifications for these libraries and this led to their passive nature. Most of the patrons located materials through the librarians as opposed to a small percentage that used the catalogue. User education was also severely lacking. Similarly, Velmurugan, (2013) investigated on the

Evaluation of Information Resources in Libraries of the State Tertiary Institutions in Yobe State-Nigeria - Dr. Amina Ibrahim Makintami and Dr. Muhammad Bello Danladi

awareness and utilization of library electronic resources and related issues among faculty members of SKR Engineering College (SKREC) at Chennai, India. It was revealed that 56.19 percentage of respondents faced problem of slow Internet access speed which takes a lot of their slot time to retrieve the relevant information.

2.3 Summary of the reviewed literature

From the assertions on **information resources available in academic libraries**, it can be said that, academic libraries constitute an effective combination of advanced collection of print, non-print and electronic resources in support of teaching, learning and research activities of the institution. The direction and extent of these resources in any given academic library are largely determined by the nature of the academic programs of the parent institution. The findings also revealed that librarians possess unique skills in administering and processing information. Their primary objective is to maximize the social utility of these records of human culture for the benefit of the society.

It can be said that some of the **problems of information utilization in academic libraries** include; students are not given orientation, majority of them went directly to the shelves to locate needed material. Short duration of loan period, less number of books issued at a time, inadequate opening hours of library, power failure, machine breakdowns, and lack of spare parts and technicians, which intermittently stall the performance of the modern gadgets of information storage and transfer in developing countries.

3. Methodology

Survey research method was employed and questionnaire was used as instrument in collecting the data. The target population for the study comprised the registered students in all the State Tertiary Institutions in Yobe State as well as the librarians in each of the libraries. However, Yobe State University library was not included based on the fact that the problem of low patronage was not observed in the library. The sample size of the study was 394 based on values from Yamane (1967) formula. Thus, a total number of 394 questionnaires were distributed among students in the six State Tertiary Institutions. But, all the library staff were considered because their number is small (73). The software used for analysis of data from the questionnaires was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.1. Results

3.1.1. ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES FROM THE STUDENTS

Research Questions One

What information resources are available in the libraries?

The researchers sought to find out from the respondents what information resources were available in their respective libraries. The aim of the researchers was to identify the types of materials found in the libraries. The data on the questionnaires therefore, showed that majority 292(80.9%) of the respondents indicated the availability of text books, reference books, audio-visual materials and e-resources in their libraries.

Research Questions Two

Why are users not well patronizing the resources?

The respondents were required to indicate some of the problems they encountered in the use of resources in their libraries. Multiple responses were given to this question where majority 264(73.1%) of the respondents indicated accommodation as problem they encountered in using the library. This is followed by 239(66.2%) of the respondents who indicated Inadequate staff to attend to users as problem, and 223(61.8%) of the respondents indicated that the catalogues were not well organised. More than half 195(54.0%) of the respondents indicated difficulty in locating needed materials, while less than half 149(41.3%) of the respondents indicated slow internet connectivity as problem they encountered. Less than half 148(41.0%) viewed that the library staff were not friendly and 137(38.0%) considered inadequate furniture for reading as a problem they encountered in using the library, then 132(36.6%) considered inadequate library collection as a problem. Almost one quarter 85(23.5%) of the respondents indicated that their libraries were not marketing their services, while least 82(22.7%) of the respondents lamented unsuitable opening and closing hours as the problem.

3.1.2. ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES FROM THE LIBRARY STAFF

Research Questions One

What information resources are available in your library?

In response, 52(80.0%) of the respondents indicated text books, reference books, audio-visual materials and e-resources.

Research Questions Two

Please give your comment about the resources and services of the library.

Respondents were given open-ended question to comment about the resources and services of their respective libraries. Their responses were grouped and presented into the following themes; there should be presence of conducive learning environment with the aid of constant power supply, staff motivation, adequate training opportunities, provision of effective management/administrative commitment, addition of skilled manpower, sufficient funding for all tertiary institutions libraries, adequate preparation for an imminent shift from the use of paper-based to electronic records, high quality devices to be used in the storage of electronic resources. There is also the need for more

computers for e-library services in addition to the provision of more space to accommodate more library users.

4. Conclusions

Interestingly, with regard to the information resources available in the libraries, there appeared to be uniformity in the majority of the responses from the users and library staff who confirmed that text books (standard work used for a specific course of study), reference books (periodicals, bibliographies, encyclopaedias, abstracts, students' projects etc.), audio-visual materials (computers, televisions, CD-ROMs, smart boards, etc.) and e-resources (network, databases, etc.) were adequate in terms of quantity and quality.

Although, it was concluded that information resources were adequate, the findings of the study revealed challenges nearly everyone faced in the use of resources and services of the libraries. These included poor accommodation (inadequate seating capacity, unfitted study areas, uncomfortable seating arrangement), inadequate staff to attend to users, difficulty in locating the needed item, lack of conducive learning environment, inadequate training opportunities among others.

Therefore, it is interesting to note that, the entire human and material resources in an academic library are put in place at considerable expense for the overall purpose of providing effective services to the users. Therefore, the libraries have responsibilities to ensure that their resources and services are used. Effective access to information is an essential requirement for the success of any research system. Thus, it is essential for users of the libraries to access and utilize the resources and services available for enhanced teaching and learning.

It therefore hoped that, the findings of this study will be useful to professional librarians, staff, and administrators in libraries and the institutions who wish to develop user-centered library services and resources and to identify problem areas where improvements are needed.

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Evaluation of Information Resources in Libraries of the State Tertiary Institutions in Yobe State-Nigeria - Dr. Amina Ibrahim Makintami and Dr. Muhammad Bello Danladi

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