



Availability, Accessibility and Use of Information Resources in the Library by Students

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Abstract

It is essential that library resources are easily accessible to users and effectively used to serve specific purposes. This study was conducted to determine the accessibility and use of information resources at the library of the College of Health Technology, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design and was conducted among 100 final year students of the College of Health Technology, Bayelsa State. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire which elicited responses on the level, accessibility and use of information sources at the library. Data was presented on tables and expressed as frequencies and percentages. Findings revealed that respondent indicated information resources available in the library included books (97%), dictionaries (88%), and handbooks (71%) among others. Books were accessible to a high extent. Dictionaries, handbooks, directories, journals, manuals, reports, were considered accessible to low extent by the students. Most respondents used these library resources for academic purposes such as getting assignments done, reading for examinations, consult project, preparing for practical sessions, among others. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that, the information resources in the library were inadequate, and most of those that were available, were not easily accessible to the students. It was recommended that considering the students' desire to utilize the library resources for academic activities, the identified inadequacies be resolved and the library revamped for better service provision to the students.

Keyword: Library Use, information resources, accessibility, utilization.

Introduction

Information resources availability, accessibility, and use in the academic library is a necessary service that cannot be overlooked. Libraries foster knowledge acquisition and provide resources to students, researchers and staff of their respective institutions of higher learning. Ajiboye, Bosede, Arowolo, and Olorunleke, (2021) define information resources as those information bearing materials that are in both printed and electronic forms. Such as textbooks, 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 materials that libraries acquire, catalogue, stock and make available to their patrons as well as use to provide various other services. Students in Nigerian tertiary institutions need various kinds of information for learning and research for the purpose of knowledge acquisition and self-development. To achieve this, the right information must be available for the right person at the right time in its appropriate format, which are the responsibilities of the College library. Oguntuase and Falaiye in Anande, Isaiah and Tondo (2015) agree with this view by observing that, the most effective way to mobilize people is through the provision of required information in the most usable form and that such information should be provided for the benefit of a large number of people. This entails use, availability and accessibility of information resources. Saharan (2013) opined that the reason behind the existence of any library is to acquire and organize records information in such a way that permits access by users. The concept of information resources is used to mean anything that can provide intellectual stimulation to the reader/learner and it includes books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and ephemeral materials audio materials, Films materials, graphic computers, etc. as well as individuals and objects in the Community.

Ikenwe and Adegbilero (2014) stated that the librarians should have a prior knowledge of the availability and usability of relevant information resources in their libraries. This is why librarians in academic libraries must undertake specific research on information needs in relation to usable collection of information resources to meet the needs of the users. Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami, and Salami (2014) posited that the effectiveness of any library is a measure of how available, accessible and usable its information resources are to users. According to Ugba, Katsina, Tondo, Tofi, et al. (2019) information resources may be available in the library yet inaccessible to users due to one reason or the other (poor organization, cataloging, classifying, indexing, abstracting). Information resources availability, accessibility and use are important factors in knowledge acquisition, learning and research. Indeed, every library regardless of size is expected to have adequate information resources available for its community for reading, learning and research, as it is inevitable for institutions of higher learning to succeed without libraries. The task at hand is for the academic librarian to always ensure availability and accessibility of needed information materials which will consequently lead to use. The effectiveness of any library is a function of the quality of services rendered, that is, how available and accessible information resources are to users. Therefore, proper

organization of available information resources will no doubt ensure its accessibility and utilization by users. The use, availability and accessibility of information resources are indispensable factors in acquiring knowledge, learning and research. The availability of information resources and services do not automatically translate or assure information accessibility (Agoulu & Agoulu, 2002; Nnadozie & Nnadozie, 2008). Librarians therefore should note that information resources availability in the library alone cannot fulfill the objectives of the library without resources accessibility. The more accessible information sources are, the more likely they are to be used. Users tend to use information resources that require the least effort to access. Frascotti, Levenseler, Weingarten, and Wiegand, (2007) established that students will use more of the library if they can do their homework, access information, listen to music, watch movies and use the Internet in the library environment.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of every academic library is to support the academic programmes of the institution by providing relevant information with a view to respond to the ever-increasing information demands of the users which comprised the student and the academic staff of the college or university. Most academic librarians acquire, organize, store and disseminate information with a view to improve use, availability and access. The ability of the academic library to provide the available learning resources is being continually undermined by various factors including adequate funding. It is observed by various researchers that institution management are not providing adequate library and information resources for their institution for the benefit of both staff and students. Even when the information resources are available, they may not be able to meet and satisfy the information needs of the users for which they are being acquired for (Nnadozie, 2013). Resources availability and accessibility are central to academic use of academic library. These three variables are interrelated, hence cannot be treated in isolation. Preliminary observations by the researchers indicate inadequate library use. This is the factor that prompt the researchers to investigate whether the information resources are available, accessible and are meeting the information needs of the undergraduate students for their academic studies.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the availability, accessibility and use of Information resources in the Academic Library among students of Bayelsa State College of Health Technology.

The specific objectives are to find out:

1. The available information resources found in the academic library in Bayelsa State College of Health Technology,
2. Determine the accessibility of the available information resources in the academic library,

3. Determine the level of use of information resources in the academic library
4. Determine the purposes students use information resources in the library
5. Find out the problems affecting the use, availability and accessibility of information resources in the academic library.

Research Questions

1. What are the available information resources found in the academic library of Bayelsa State College of Health Technology?
2. What is the extent of accessibility of the available information resources in the academic library?
3. What is the level of availability of information resources in the academic library?
4. What purpose do the students use information resources in the library?
5. What are the problems that affect the availability, accessibility and use of information resources in the academic library?

Literature Review

Information Resources Available in Academic libraries

Availability of information resources have to do with their presence and adequacy in the library for use by users. It is necessary that as long as any standard academic library is concerned to provide information resources to its users in large quantity. According to Ugba, Katsina, Tondo, Tofi, et al., (2019), the concept of information resources is used to mean anything that can provide intellectual stimulation to the reader/learner and it includes books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and ephemeral materials audio materials, Films materials, graphic computers, etc. as well as individuals and objects in the Community. Anande, Isaiah and Tondo (2015) include everything that is used in providing the required services to the clientele.

Abdulsalami (2013), remarked that availability requires workable performance measure to back it up even if the Ultimate benefit to the individual user and to the community is difficult to access. Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami, and Lucky (2014) opined that information resource availability in any library can explain the need for it and why such library is important. In other words, the absence of relevant and up to-date materials will undermine the existence of any Academic library. Furthermore, they described information resources availability as the existence of books, serials and journals publications, electronic source documents (non-print e.g. audio-visual) in the library. In an effort to ensure availability, the library should provide adequate, current and relevant information resources that cut across all users' discipline. This will support and help realize the goals of the parent institution.

Accessibility of Information Resources in Libraries

Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) stated that accessibility of information resources is an important recurring theme in the library and identified bibliographically as relevant to one's subject of interest, But the user may not be able to lay hands on them. The

more accessible Information sources are, the more likely they are to be used. The user may encounter five possible types of inaccessibility problems. These are conceptual, linguistics, critical, bibliographic and physical inaccessibility. Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) notes that availability of an information source does not necessarily imply its accessibility, because the source may be available but access to it prevented for one reason or the other. Olowu (2004) identifies natural and artificial barriers to free access to Information. The library's poor reputation was attributed to lack of accessibility of information resource.

Access to information resources is essential to any successful academic pursuits in universities. For the academic libraries to complete their functions, the available information Resources must be accessible. Abdulsalami (2013), in his opinion noted that the term access is used by different people in relation to quite bits and pieces of the whole, as in subject Access, open access and knowledge access system. However, each refers to one or more Aspects of providing means of access to information or in a fuller sense, to knowledge and understanding. All of the provision and use of library services is concerned with access to Knowledge. He further identified natural and artificial barriers to free access to information. The libraries poor reputation was attributed to lack of accessibility to information sources. Moon, Hossain, Kang and Shin (2012) in discussing the role of access to information in Research, opined that access to relevant information is necessary for academic staff to take efficient decision in his/her research. Aina (2012) in his discourse argued that access to Information is critical in research in Africa. McColl (2010) noted that new generation Students required Libraries to procure print and electronic resources, providing access to the resources through well designed library website and technical support, and by providing access to a physical space in the library for intellectual and interactive work. Abdulsalami (2013), in his opinion noted that the term access is used by different people in relation to quite bits and pieces of the whole, as in "subject access, open access and knowledge access system". However, each refers to one or more aspects of providing means of access to information or in a fuller sense, to knowledge and understanding. All of the provision and use of library services as concerned with access to knowledge. Abdulsalami (2013) further identified natural and artificial barriers to free access to information. The library poor reputation was attributed to lack of accessibility to information sources.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study was conducted at the College of Health Technology, Bayelsa state in South-South, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was used and the study comprises a total population of final year students. The total number of final year student in the various departments was one hundred and thirty-three (133). However, in order to draw out the sample size, the researcher used Taro Yamene formula which state $S=N/(1+Na^2)$, and clearly shows 99.81 as the sample size and it was approximated to 100. A stratified simple random sampling technique was used to draw samples from the population. A structured questionnaire having five sections (sections A – E) titled: "Use, Availability and

Accessibility of Information resources in the library among students of the Bayelsa State College of Health Technology” was used for collecting data from respondents. Section “A” elicited the personal information on the respondents. Section “B” elicited the level of information resources available at Bayelsa State College of Health Technology, Library. Section “C” elicited information on how accessible the available information resources were to the students, section “D” elicited the purpose of use of the information resources in the library, while section “E” elicited responses on the problems perceived by the respondents affecting the availability of information resources at the library. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered by face-to-face administration to respondents and completed instruments were retrieved immediately upon completion for statistical analysis. Analyzed data was presented on tables and expressed as frequencies and percentages. Also, regarding the accessibility of information resources in the library, the mean value of the responses provided was used to judge the accessibility as being of very high extent (\bar{X} 4), high extent (\bar{X} 3), low extent (\bar{X} 2), or very low extent (\bar{X} 1), All necessary ethical considerations in terms of approval, consent, privacy and confidentiality of information provided were adhered to.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Department	Frequency	Percentage
HIMT	27	27
MLS	12	12
PTS	20	20
DHS	3	3
EHS	6	6
CHS	28	28
MSW	4	4
TOTAL	100	100.0
Gender		
Male	46	46
Female	54	54
Total	100	100.0
Age		
15 – 20	25	25
21 – 25	54	54
26 –30	13	13
31 – 35	3	3
36–40	3	3
41 and above	2	2
Total	100	100.0

As shown in Table 1, 12 (12%) of the respondents were students of the Medical Laboratory Science department (MLS); 20 (20%) were of Pharmacy Technician

science (PTS); 4 (4%) were of Dental health science (DHS); 6 (6%) were of Environment health science (EHS); 28 (28%) were of Community health science (CHS); While 4 (4%) were of Medical social works (MSW). In year 1, 6 students represent 6% of the Respondents, 31 students represent 31% from year 2, year 3, 52 students represent 52% of the Respondents and year 4 representing 11 (11%). The distribution of the respondents by gender revealed that 46 (46%) were males while 54 (54%) were females. Out of the 100 respondents, 25 (25%) were aged 15 – 20 years; 54 (54%) were aged 21 – 25 years; 13 (13%) was aged 26 - 30 years; 3 (3%) were aged 31 – 35; 3 (3%) were aged 36 - 40; while 2 (2%) were aged 41 and above.

Percentage score on the level of Information Resources available

Table 2: Percentage score on the level of Information Resources available

S/N	Items	Available	Not Available
1	Books	97(97%)	3(3%)
2	Dictionaries	88(88%)	12(12%)
3	Handbook	71(71%)	29(29%)
4	Manuals	63(63%)	37(37%)
5	Journals	58 (58%)	42(42%)
6	Computers	56(56%)	44(44%)
7	Abstracts/ indexes	54(54%)	46(46%)
8	Atlases/ maps	51 (51%)	49(49%)
9	Reports	50(50%)	50(50%)
10	Directories	46 (46%)	54 (54%)
11	Biographies	42 (42%)	58 (58%)
12	Bibliographies	37 (37%)	63 (63%)
13	Encyclopedia	35 (35%)	65 (65%)
14	Newspaper/ magazines	31 (31%)	69 (69%)
15	CD-ROM technology	28 (28%)	72 (72%)
16	Internet facilities	26 (26%)	74 (74%)
17	Almanacs	23 (23%)	77 (77%)
18	Gazettes	23 (23%)	77 (77%)

N=100

Table 2 shows the percentage scores of the response of the types of information resources available for research by students in Bayelsa State College of Health Technology, Otuogidi-Ogbia Town. From the table, books, dictionaries, handbooks, manuals, journals, reports, atlases/maps, computers and abstracts/indexes are available. Items such as encyclopedia, newspapers/magazines, biographies, bibliographies, almanacs, gazettes, Internet facilities, CD- Rom technology, and Directories are not available. This implies that the information resources in the

library are very inadequate. In this information age the library does not have internet facilities

Respondents Perceptions of Accessibility of Information Resources in Library

Table 3: Accessibility of Information Resources

S/N	Items	Response				Mean score
		VHE(%)	HE(%)	LE(%)	VLE(%)	
1	Books	40(40%)	35(35%)	19(19%)	6(6%)	3.09
2	Dictionaries	29(29%)	30(30%)	25(25%)	16(16%)	2.75
3	Handbook	20(29%)	27(27%)	24(24%)	29(29%)	2.38
4	Directories	21(21%)	14(14%)	26(26%)	39(39%)	2.17
5	Journals	13(13%)	25(25%)	27(27%)	35(35%)	2.16
6	Manuals	16(16%)	16(16%)	28(28%)	40(40%)	2.08
7	Reports	13(13%)	17(17%)	28(28%)	42(42%)	2.01
8	Abstract/ indexes	10(10%)	13(13%)	30(30%)	47(47%)	1.86
9	Computers	12(12%)	12(12%)	19(19%)	57(57%)	1.79
10	Atlases/ maps	11(11%)	8(8%)	23(23%)	58(58%)	1.72
11	Biographies	4(4%)	20(20%)	20(20%)	56(56%)	1.72
12	Encyclopedia	10(10%)	10(10%)	21(21%)	59(59%)	1.71
13	Newspaper/magazines	7(7%)	12(12%)	24(24%)	57(57%)	1.69
14	Bibliographies	8(8%)	10(10%)	20(20%)	62(62%)	1.58
15	Internet facilities	7(7%)	6(6%)	17(17%)	70(70%)	1.5
16	CD-ROM technology	9(9%)	5(5%)	11(11%)	75(75%)	1.48
17	Almanacs	6(6%)	5(5%)	19(19%)	70(70%)	1.47
18	Gazettes	7(7%)	2(2%)	16(16%)	75 (75%)	1.41

Very high extent = 4, High extent= 3, Low extent = 2, Very low extent= 1

Table 3 shows the respondents perceptions of the accessibility of library resources. Mean score shows that the respondents indicated that only books were accessible to a high extent. Dictionaries, handbooks, directories, journals, manuals, reports, were considered accessible to low extent by students for research. While, items such as abstract/ indexes, computers, atlases/ maps, biographies, encyclopedia, newspaper/magazines, bibliographies, internet facilities, CD-ROM technology, almanacs, and gazettes were not accessible to very low extent. Therefore, their extent of accessibility were low and poor.

Purpose of use of the information resources in the library

Table 4: Purpose of information resources use in the library

S/N	Items	Réponse				Mean score	Remark
		SA (%)	A(%)	D(%)	SD(%)		
1	To do assignments	54(54%)	38(38%)	6(6%)	2(2%)	3.44	Agree
2	To read for examination	52(52%)	41(41%)	5(5%)	2(2%)	3.43	Agree
3	To consult reference materials	44(44%)	46(46%)	7(7%)	3(3%)	3.25	Agree
4	To consult projects	31(31%)	50(50%)	14(14%)	5(5%)	3.07	Agree
5	To prepare for practical classes	26(26%)	58(58%)	10(10%)	6(6%)	3.04	Agree
6	To use books/ e-books	26(26%)	55(55%)	11(11%)	8(8%)	2.99	Disagree
7	To consult journals/ e-journals	16(16%)	49(49%)	20(20%)	15(15%)	2.86	Disagree
8	To use encyclopedia	18(18%)	40(40%)	25(25%)	17(17%)	2.59	Disagree
9	To read newspaper/ magazines	13(13%)	33(33%)	28(28%)	26(26%)	2.33	Disagree
10	To use social media	9(9%)	11(11%)	30(30%)	50(50%)	1.79	Strongly Disagree
11	To check my emails	9(9%)	23(23%)	24(24%)	44(44%)	1.74	Strongly Disagree
12	To watch movies/ listen to music	9(9%)	12(12%)	16(16%)	63(63%)	1.67	Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1

Table 4. shows that the main purposes for undergraduate students’ visit to the library were to do assignments, read for examination, consult projects, to consult reference materials, and prepare for practical classes. Other purposes to low extent are to use books/ e-books. consult journals/e-journals resources, use of encyclopedia and to read newspapers and magazines. It also shows that use of social media, check emails, watch movies/ listen to music are not the purpose for using the library.

Problems that affect the availability, accessibility and use of information in the library by students.

Table 5: The problems students think affects the availability, accessibility and use of information in the library.

S/N	Items	Response	
		Yes(%)	No(%)
1	Lack of internet facilities	90(90%)	10 (10%)
2	Inadequate information materials in the library	81 (81%)	19(19%)
3	I don't know how to make use of some library materials like encyclopedia	65(65%)	35(35%)
4	I am not aware of the information resources available in the library	62(62%)	38(38%)
5	No library catalogue in the library	50(50%)	50(50%)

Table 5 shows the students response to problems to availability, accessibility and use of information resources in the academic library of Bayelsa State College of Health Technology, Otuogidi-Ogbia Town. The table indicates that the students attest to lack of internet facilities (90%), inadequate information materials in the library (81%), lack of money to acquire library resources (75%), lack of knowledge on how to use some information materials (65%), unawareness of information resources available in the library (62%), and no library catalogue in the library (50%).

Discussion

The study affirms that the library has resources such as books, journals, dictionaries, handbook, manuals, reports, atlases, maps, computers, only. The finding is in agreement with Okogwu and Mole, (2019) who reported that, libraries lack information resources such as internet facilities and it's not in agreement with Lefuma (2017) who revealed that e-resources such as OPAC, e-journals, full text databases, CD-ROM databases were not available to a very large extent for students to access in conducting research and other scholarly works, this implies that, indeed, the quality and quantity of a library's collection would definitely have an effect on the quality of education the students receive and what the teachers deliver in the classrooms and lecture halls would be very low. The study also revealed that the majority of the available information resources in the library understudy were not

accessible. Only books were indicated by majority of the respondents as being accessible to a high extent. This finding is consistent with that of Aguolu (2002) who revealed that, resources may be available in the library and identified bibliographically as relevant to one's subject of interest, but the user may not be able to lay hands on them. The findings also are in disagreement with the findings of Lefuna (2017) who also established that e-resources are mostly accessible by students in University Libraries, this implies that there is no e-resources in the library and do not expose student to internet facility for better learning habit. Findings showed that the main purpose for undergraduate students' visit to the library were to do assignment, read for examination, consult projects, consult reference materials and to prepare for practical classes etc. The findings do not collaborate with Ebaye, and Osim, (2022) who revealed that the users of academic libraries are increasingly utilizing electronic information resources as more Access points are made available. Finally, the study revealed the problems to availability, accessibility and use of information resources to include lack of internet facilities, inadequate information resources in the library, lack of money to acquire library resources, lack of knowledge on how to use some information materials, lack of awareness of the information materials, lack of qualified library Staff and no library catalogue in the library. This finding affirms that of Abubakar (2020), Ugah (2007), Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) who identified problems to availability and accessibility of information resources, thereby accepting to that fact that, if library resources like adequate books, journals, computers and internet facilities were available in the library, students in the institution would have gain access to different information resources to improve their academic excellence in the institution.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings, it was concluded that, the information resources available in the library are books, journals, dictionaries, handbook, manuals, reports, atlases/maps and computers. only Books and dictionaries were considered highly accessible. The extent of accessibility of other library resource is low and poor. The problems encountered while accessing and using the available information resources in the library were lack of internet facilities, inadequate information resources in the library, Students require quality information resources in order to learn effectively and undertake research. The global growth of information resources in print and electronic formats means that students also need quality information resources that could help them identify, access and use the required information resources. The library management should put in place mechanisms to ensure that information resources are available, fully accessed and utilized by.

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