

AVAILABILITY, AWARENESS AND USE OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the availability, awareness, and use of library information resources and services among undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 4,289 undergraduate students from selected universities in Nasarawa State, while a sample size of 366 respondents was selected using proportionate sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire titled Availability, Awareness and Use of Library Information Resources and Services Questionnaire (AAULIRSQ) was used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, while Chi-square and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that library information resources such as textbooks, journals, reference materials, and internet facilities were largely available in the university libraries. The study further showed that undergraduate students possessed a high level of awareness of available library information resources and services. Despite this awareness, utilization varied across resources, with textbooks, internet facilities, and journals being the most frequently used. The study also identified challenges affecting the effective use of library resources, including poor internet connectivity, unstable power supply, inadequate ICT skills, and limited access to digital resources. The study concluded that although library information resources and services are available and students are aware of them, several infrastructural and institutional challenges hinder optimal utilization. The study

recommended improved user education programmes, enhanced ICT infrastructure, increased funding for libraries, and promotion of underutilized resources.

Keywords: *Availability, Awareness, Use, Library Information Resources, Undergraduate Students, University Libraries*

Introduction

The university library is widely recognized as an essential component of higher education, serving as a central platform for supporting teaching, learning, and research activities within academic institutions. It provides access to a wide range of information resources that facilitate intellectual development and academic inquiry among students and faculty members. Traditionally, university libraries have functioned as repositories of knowledge where books, journals, manuscripts, and other scholarly materials are organized and made accessible for academic use. However, the rapid development of information and communication technologies has transformed the nature of libraries from purely physical spaces into dynamic information environments that integrate both print and digital resources including e-books, electronic journals, online databases, and multimedia collections (Gorman, 2016). Beyond providing information resources, libraries also play an important role in fostering intellectual development and supporting academic research by guiding users in locating, evaluating, and utilizing information effectively.

The effective utilization of library information resources largely depends on how well these resources are organized, accessible and made available to users whether public or university library. University libraries are expected to provide adequate information resources that meet the curriculum, research, and information needs of students and academic staff. Reitz (as cited in Nwamnebe, 2014) explained that one of the primary functions of a university library is to support the teaching, research, and

information needs of its academic community. However, for students to benefit fully from library collections, these resources must not only be available but also accessible and properly communicated to users. The availability of library information resources ensures that students have the necessary materials required for their academic studies and research activities.

In addition to availability, awareness of library resources and services is a critical factor influencing the extent to which students utilize the library. Without adequate awareness, valuable information resources and services may remain underutilized by students. Awareness refers to the knowledge or understanding of the existence and usefulness of particular resources or services. According to Suleiman, Vashistha, and Jimah (2018) awareness involves the recognition and understanding of information resources and services that are available for use. Awareness therefore plays an important role in influencing users' attitudes toward the use of library resources and services. Sejane (2017) advance that, when library users are aware of available information resources and services, they are more likely to utilize them effectively for academic purposes.

Awareness within the context of library and information science extends beyond simply knowing that resources exist. It also includes being informed about the relevance, accessibility, and usefulness of available resources. According to Nwankwo, Chukwu, Igbokwe, and Agbanu (2019) awareness in libraries also involves understanding developments in library services, changes in resource availability, and the ability to identify materials that can support academic tasks. In essence, awareness acts as a catalyst that motivates users to explore and utilize library collections. Without adequate awareness, students may fail to take advantage of available information

resources, thereby limiting their academic potential. Closely related to awareness is the concept of utilization.

Utilization which refers to the extent to which library resources and services are actually used by library patrons. Utilization involves the effective application of information resources to achieve academic objectives such as research, assignments, and knowledge acquisition. According to Dictionary.com (2016) utilization refers to the act of making use of available resources to achieve a particular purpose. The utilization of library resources allows students to expand their knowledge base, enhance their research skills, and develop critical thinking abilities. As centers of knowledge, libraries are expected to provide resources that improve teaching, learning, and research outcomes within academic institutions.

Utilization and awareness therefore function as complementary factors that influence students' engagement with library resources. The likelihood of students using library information resources increases when they are aware of the existence and relevance of such resources. Obuh and Bozimo (2016) observed that awareness is an essential prerequisite for the effective utilization of library information resources and services. Similarly, Dinev, Hu and Geo (2018) identified awareness as a key factor influencing students' attitudes and behavior toward the use of information resources. When students are well informed about available resources and services, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward library usage and integrate these resources into their academic activities in universities.

Statement of the Problem

University libraries are established to support academic excellence through the provision of relevant information resources and services. Despite this objective,

evidence suggests that many undergraduate students do not fully utilize the available library resources and services within their institutions. In some cases, students are unaware of the existence of certain information resources and services provided by the library. In other situations, inadequate technological infrastructure, limited access to digital resources, and poor internet services hinder effective utilization.

This situation creates a gap between the availability of library information resources and their actual use by undergraduate students. Without adequate awareness and accessibility, valuable academic resources may remain underutilized, thereby limiting students' academic performance and research development. Therefore, this study investigates the availability, awareness, and use of library information resources and services among undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State, Nigeria

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What types of library information resources are available for undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State?
2. What are the library information resources that undergraduate students are aware of in universities in Nasarawa State?
3. To what extent do undergraduate students use library information resources in universities in Nasarawa State?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis will be tested in this study:

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the level of use of library information resources among undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State.

Literature Review

Muokebe, Bibana, and Enweani (2019) observe that availability is a fundamental factor influencing awareness and use of library resources among students. In another study, Ajayi and Oyebode (2019), observed that the awareness and availability of library resources among students remain insufficiently addressed in many Nigerian universities. This situation creates a gap in understanding the factors influencing the utilization of library information resources and services among undergraduate students. The limited use of library resources is particularly concerning because these resources play an essential role in supporting academic development, critical thinking, and scholarly research (Akinsolu & Ijaola, 2017). In addition, Shorunke, Akinola, Alade and Odefadehan (2020) explored awareness and use of Electronic Library Resources among Undergraduates in two Universities in Ondo State, Nigeria and the study found out that, majority of the respondents were aware of electronic library resources (ELR). However, less than half of the respondents used the electronic library resources, also the respondents also reported that they were not satisfied with the ELR. A study by Popoola and Haliso (2019) reveals that effective utilization of library resources significantly enhances teaching, learning, and research outcomes in universities. Owusu-Ansah (2017) observes that informed students are more likely to benefit from library services. Mubofu (2021) notes that improved access to resources supports students' academic success.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 4,289 undergraduate students from three selected universities in Nasarawa State. Using a proportionate sampling technique, a sample size of 366 respondents was drawn. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Availability,

Awareness and Use of Library Information Resources Questionnaire (AAULIRQ)". The instrument was validated by experts in Library and Information Science and Measurement and Evaluation. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the instrument, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients indicated acceptable internal consistency. The researcher, with the help of research assistants, administered the questionnaire directly to respondents, resulting in a high return rate of 322 copies, representing 88.0%. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, while inferential statistics such as Chi-square and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented according to research questions answered below:

Research Question 1: What types of library information resources are available for undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State?

Table 2: Percentages on available of library information resources

S/N	Statements	A	%	NA	%	Dec.
1	Textbooks are available in the library	301	93.5	21	6.5	A
2	Reference materials are available	297	92.2	25	7.8	A
3	Print journals are available	279	86.6	43	13.4	A
4	Electronic journals (e-journals) are available	271	84.2	51	15.8	A
5	E-books are available	267	82.9	55	17.1	A
6	Newspapers and magazines are available	291	90.4	31	9.6	A
7	Theses and dissertations are available	259	80.4	63	19.6	A
8	Government publications are available	211	65.5	111	34.5	A
9	Online databases are available	251	77.9	71	22.1	A
10	Institutional repositories are available	231	71.7	91	28.3	A
11	Audio-visual materials are available	207	64.3	115	35.7	A
12	Conference proceedings are available	199	61.8	123	38.2	A
13	Indexing and abstracting services are available	217	67.4	105	32.6	A
14	Internet facilities are available	303	94.1	19	5.9	A
15	Archival materials are available	149	46.3	173	53.7	NA

A= Available NA= Not Available

The findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State have access to a broad range of library information resources, including textbooks, reference materials, print and electronic journals, internet facilities, and online databases. This suggests that the libraries are relatively well-equipped to support teaching, learning, and research activities. The strong presence of both print and electronic resources indicates a hybrid collection development approach, which is essential in contemporary academic environments. This finding supports Obande et al. (2020) who reported that students had access to e-resources such as e-journals, e-books, and online databases. However, while their study emphasized the availability of electronic resources, the present study goes further to show that traditional resources like textbooks and print journals are still highly dominant and widely accessible. This highlights the continued relevance of print materials in Nigerian universities, contrary to assumptions that digital resources have completely overtaken them. On the other hand, the finding that archival materials are largely unavailable contradicts Mubofu (2021) who identified a broader range of resources, including past records and special collections, as being available to users. The disparity may be attributed to differences in institutional priorities, funding levels, or collection development policies. This gap suggests that while general academic needs are met, there is limited attention given to preserving and providing access to historical and rare materials, which are equally important for advanced research.

Research Question 2: What are the library information resources that undergraduate students are aware of in universities in Nasarawa State?

Table 5: Percentages on the Awareness of Library Information Resources

S/N	Statements	A	%	NA	%	Dec.
16	Aware of textbooks in the library	305	94.7	17	5.3	A
17	Aware of reference materials	299	92.9	23	7.1	A
18	Aware of print journals	283	87.9	39	12.1	A
19	Aware of electronic journals	271	84.2	51	15.8	A
20	Aware of e-books	269	83.5	53	16.5	A
21	Aware of theses and dissertations	257	79.8	65	20.2	A
22	Aware of online databases	249	77.3	73	22.7	A
23	Aware of institutional repositories	229	71.1	93	28.9	A
24	Aware of audio-visual materials	211	65.5	111	34.5	A
25	Aware of government publications	207	64.3	115	35.7	A
26	Aware of conference proceedings	199	61.8	123	38.2	A
27	Aware of indexing services	213	66.1	109	33.9	A
28	Aware of archival materials	151	46.9	171	53.1	NA
29	Aware of internet facilities	309	95.9	13	4.1	A
30	Aware of newspapers and magazines	293	91.0	29	9.0	A

A= **Aware** NA= **Not Aware**

The study established that students have a generally high level of awareness of library information resources, particularly textbooks, journals, and internet-based resources. This suggests that libraries are effective in creating visibility for commonly used resources. This finding aligns with Shorunke et al. (2020) and Ebele (2015) both of whom reported high awareness levels among students. However, the present study introduces a critical dimension by revealing uneven awareness across resource types. While core academic materials are widely known, awareness of resources such as archival materials and conference proceedings is relatively low. This partially contradicts Komolafe et al. (2020) who suggested that postgraduate students broadly acknowledge the existence of information resources. The difference indicates that awareness may vary depending on the level of study, exposure, and academic needs. Undergraduate students may focus more on immediate academic materials, thereby neglecting less frequently used resources. The implication is that awareness campaigns

in libraries may be skewed toward popular resources, leaving other valuable materials under-promoted and underutilized.

Research Question 3: To what extent do undergraduate students use library information resources?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent of Use of Library Information Resources

S/N	Statements	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{x}$	SD	Dec.
31	Use textbooks for academic work	131	101	53	37	3.02	0.88	HE
32	Use reference materials	121	103	61	37	2.95	0.90	HE
33	Use print journals	101	97	79	45	2.79	0.93	HE
34	Use electronic journals	109	99	71	43	2.86	0.91	HE
35	Use e-books	111	97	73	41	2.87	0.90	HE
36	Use theses and dissertations	93	99	81	49	2.73	0.94	HE
37	Use online databases	101	101	73	47	2.80	0.95	HE
38	Use institutional repositories	79	91	97	55	2.60	0.96	HE
39	Use audio-visual materials	71	89	103	59	2.53	0.97	HE
40	Use government publications	67	87	105	63	2.49	0.98	LE
41	Use conference proceedings	63	85	109	65	2.45	0.99	LE
42	Use indexing services	73	91	101	57	2.56	0.96	HE
43	Use archival materials	59	79	111	73	2.38	1.01	LE
44	Use internet facilities for research	133	101	49	39	3.03	0.87	HE
45	Use newspapers and magazines	121	103	61	37	2.95	0.90	HE
Cluster Mean						2.74	0.94	HE

Key: $\bar{x}$ = mean, SD = Standard Deviation, VHE= Very High Extent, HE= High Extent, LE = Low Extent, VLE = Very Low Extent, Dec. = Decision

The study found that undergraduate students utilize library information resources to a high extent, particularly textbooks, internet facilities, and journals. This suggests that students rely heavily on core academic resources for their studies. This finding supports Ebele (2015) who reported frequent use of textbooks and other academic materials among students. However, the present study diverges from Owusu-Ansah (2017) who found that despite awareness, print serials were used infrequently. In contrast, the current study shows that several key resources are actively used, indicating a stronger link between awareness and utilization. Nevertheless, the study also revealed that some resources, such as government publications, conference

proceedings, and archival materials, are used to a low extent. This supports Shorunke et al. (2020) who found that awareness does not always translate into usage, especially for electronic resources.

The implication is that factors such as relevance, accessibility, ease of use, and academic requirements play a significant role in determining whether students actually use available resources.

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference to the extent of use of library information resources among undergraduate students in universities in Nasarawa State.

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA on the Extent of Use of Library Information Resources among Undergraduate Students in Universities in Nasarawa State

University	N	Mean	SD
Federal University Lafia	212	2.88	0.29
Nasarawa State University Keffi	79	2.67	0.33
Bingham University Karu	31	2.71	0.28
Total	322	2.79	0.31

Table 5 ANOVA Summary

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Universities	2.12	2	1.06	11.78	0.00	S
Within Universities	28.61	319	0.09			
Total	30.73	321				

The ANOVA results show that there are variations in the extent of resource use among the three universities. Federal University Lafia recorded the highest mean usage (2.88), followed by Bingham University (2.71), while Nasarawa State University Keffi had the lowest (2.67). The calculated F-value of 11.78 with a significance level of 0.00

indicates that the differences are statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that students' use of library resources differs significantly across institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Enhanced User Orientation Programmes:** University libraries should organize regular and comprehensive orientation programmes to educate students on the availability and effective use of all library resources, especially less utilized ones.
2. **Improvement of ICT Infrastructure:** University management should invest in reliable internet services, stable power supply, and adequate computer systems to facilitate easy access to digital resources.
3. **Promotion of Underutilized Resources and Services:** Libraries should intensify awareness campaigns using workshops, seminars, and digital platforms to promote resources such as archival materials, institutional repositories, and interlibrary loan services.
4. **Adequate Funding of Libraries:** Government and university authorities should increase funding to enable libraries to acquire up-to-date resources and maintain modern facilities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the study concludes that improving library use among undergraduate students requires a comprehensive approach that combines resource provision, effective awareness strategies, user education, and infrastructural development. Simply making resources available is not sufficient; deliberate efforts must be made to ensure that students can easily access and effectively utilize them.

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