

UTILISATION OF LIBRARY INFORMATION RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the utilization of library information resources for improving students' academic achievements in universities in Northwest Nigeria. A random sampling technique was adopted, and a survey questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. A total of 100 participants constituted the study population. The data collected were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The findings of the study indicated that print library resources, including books, journals, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, theses, and dissertations, are available in university libraries and are highly utilized for improving students' academic achievement. Strategies that improve the use of library resources among students in the study areas include the acquisition of more relevant books, the provision of adequate funding for libraries, an increase in the number of departmental libraries, the involvement of lecturers in the book selection (acquisition) policy of libraries and ensuring that resource provision is matched with accessibility. The study concluded that print resources constitute the major materials in university libraries and that their acquisition enhances knowledge acquisition in tertiary institutions. It further advocates the allocation of additional funds to university libraries for the acquisition of non-print resources such as projectors, microfiches, CD-ROMs, online databases, internet services, audiovisual materials, records, microfilms, and computers to improve students' academic achievement. The study also emphasizes the need for consistent efforts by university management to sustain strategies that improve the effective use of library resources among students in the study areas.

Keywords: academic, achievement, improve, information, library, resources, students, university, utilisation.

Introduction

Libraries are primarily established to acquire, organize, and make accessible various kinds of information resources required by users. Today's library is a powerhouse that stores, generates, and transfers information to fulfill users' needs, regardless of age or race (Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021). Libraries collect a variety of information resources and offer

services that support instructional, research, and learning activities. They are essentially aimed at improving the quality of learning and have the potential to meet users' information needs. Libraries form one of the most important organs of institutions of higher learning, where academic excellence, intellectual vitality, and effectiveness largely depend (Mole & Mesagan, 2017).

In another vein, Ajayi (2013) affirmed that any student without access to supplementary reading materials from a library will be seriously handicapped, as academic success will largely depend on the ability to memorize lecture notes. Ogbuiyi and Okpe (2013) opined that a library is a place where academic information sources are acquired, organized, processed, stored, and made available to meet users' information needs. The library is responsible for acquiring information resources to support teaching and learning, providing materials necessary for research, meeting faculty requirements, and opening access to a wide range of resources beyond one's field of specialization.

In this study, resources refer to anything, a person, or an action to which one turns for aid in times of need. Library resources apply to personnel, materials, functions, or activities available in a library to satisfy the human need for information (Shrestha, 2012). Library resources are information materials used by library users and students to satisfy their information needs. A library remains merely a building without relevant information materials acquired to meet users' needs. Hence, best practice requires libraries to acquire materials with users in mind. Ihedioha (2019) averred that library staff are the most important resource of the library, as they provide managerial, technical, and professional services.

Studies have shown that the quality of library services depends largely on the quantity and quality of collections and the competence of staff who provide the services

(Ajibero, 2015). Thus, university libraries must provide adequate resources to satisfy the individual information needs of their patrons. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009), cited in Mesagan and Ibrahim (2021), opined that the university library acts as a medium for accessing the latest scientific and technological information resources in both print and electronic formats. Similarly, Omobola and Oyeboade (2009), cited in Mesagan and Ibrahim (2021), noted that university libraries collect a wide variety of materials for preservation and use by library patrons. Adeoye and Popoola (2011) highlighted the effectiveness, availability, accessibility, and use of library and information resources, explaining that effective learning requires access to necessary information materials. Regarding accessibility, they added that information sources requiring the least effort to access are more likely to be used.

University libraries demonstrate their commitment to improving students' academic performance through participation in first-year orientation programs and by involving students in library policy and programming decisions. This reinforces the library's role as a welcoming and safe space for all users, regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, or socio-economic status. However, many students complete their education without visiting the library or using its resources. Although the library is regarded as an integral part of academic life, it has not fully become an essential component of the educational system and learning process. Undergraduate students often begin their searches with encyclopedias rather than using the card catalogue (Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021).

Undergraduates constitute the major users of university library resources. According to Aina (2004), cited in Mesagan and Ibrahim (2021), the library serves as the learning center for undergraduate students, providing materials needed for all courses

offered in the university, as well as potential future courses. The university library supplies resources necessary for effective learning and research. A major problem facing university libraries is that they are either underused or used below their capacity, largely due to users' ignorance of the library's potential. This situation challenges librarians to educate users and equip them with the knowledge and skills required to use library resources effectively (Mishra & Phadke, 2014). Universities in Northwest Nigeria include those located in Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara States.

Statement of the problem

The library plays a crucial role in providing support services for teaching, learning, and research, thereby enhancing students' academic achievement. It is a readily available tool that all students can freely utilize to improve their academic performance. Therefore, it is of great importance that students make adequate use of library resources to achieve high academic standards. However, many students do not seem to be aware of the importance of library resources to improve their academic performance. Research evidence indicates that students often cannot handle assignments independently; instead, they rely on copying and reworking their friends completed work (Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021). A review of their script shows that there are underlying issues that need to be addressed. If this situation is not checked, it may negatively affect the entire educational system, leading to the underutilization of library resources and the production of inadequately prepared graduates. Hence, this study seeks to investigate the utilization of library information resources for improving students' academic achievements in universities in Northwest Nigeria.

Research questions

The study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the types of library resources for improving the academic achievement of students in universities in Northwest Nigeria?
2. To what extent are the library resources used for improving the academic achievement of students in universities in Northwest Nigeria?
3. What are the strategies for improving the usage of library resources among students in universities in Northwest Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be relevant to users such as students, librarians, academic institutions, administrators, library committees, institutional staff, and researchers. The findings will also educate users on the importance of acquiring adequate library resources for improving the academic achievement of students. In addition, the study will propose strategies to improve the use of library resources among students. The results of this study will further contribute to the existing body of knowledge and serve as reference material for other researchers who wish to conduct research in related fields.

Review of the Related Literature

Libraries are an integral part of the educational landscape of every institution (Ross, 2012, cited in Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021). The academic life of an entire institution revolves around the library. It is correct to assert that quality education may not be achieved without functional libraries. According to Serostanova (2014), cited in Mesagan and Ibrahim (2021), libraries have advanced significantly in their service delivery in a bid to make their resources available to all users. These resources are information materials that users rely on to satisfy their information needs. Such information resources include not only traditional print materials such as books, journals, newspapers, and maps, but also audiovisual materials such as records, MP3s and MP4s, audio and video cassettes, and

projectors (Oyewusi & Oyeboade, 2009, cited in Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021; Charles, 2019; Maya & Bala, 2020).

Libraries maintain collections that include not only printed materials but also reproductions, maps, photographs, microfiches, CD-ROMs, computer software, online databases, internet resources, electronic books, e-journals, and other media resources. A library will perform effectively when its collections include not only books and journals but also other materials such as general and specialized collections, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, museum objects, photographs, theses and dissertations, audiovisual materials, microforms, compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM), and the necessary equipment such as microfiche and microform readers, computers, and CD-ROM drives (Aina, 2004, cited in Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021; Adeyemi, 2010, cited in Aernyi & Odeh, 2017).

The study by Ogbemor (2011), cited in Awujoola and Fadeyi (2018), examined the use of library resources, with a focus on electronic resources, by members of the faculty of a higher educational institution. The study revealed that most students use printed sources more than electronic sources, although e-resources are also used quite frequently. However, it was discovered that books, websites, and printed journals were the most frequently used resources. The study also found a greater use of e-resources among undergraduates. Furthermore, the results indicated that the use of e-resources is positively influenced by respondents' perceived usefulness of the resources to their research productivity, as well as the convenience of access to the resources. Okiy (2000), cited in Awujoola and Fadeyi (2018), reported that students and academics at Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria, made use of book materials such as journals, newspapers, textbooks, magazines, dictionaries, projects, encyclopedias, and government publications.

Similarly, Mercy et al. (2022) revealed that undergraduate students used textbooks, journals, internet services, dissertations, and dictionaries more frequently than other library resources.

In the same vein, Burke (2011), cited in Awujoola and Fadeyi (2018), conducted a study on the utilization of archival information by students at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. The study reported that students used maps and atlases, gazettes, theses and dissertations, newspapers, statistical abstracts, video films, political records, journals, conference papers, and books in their academic activities. The use of library information resources plays a vital role in improving students' academic performance. It is generally accepted that the quality of library services depends largely on the quantity and quality of its collections, as well as the staff who provide the services (Ajibero, 2015, cited in Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021). Mercy et al. (2022) further opined that, to effectively utilize library resources for better learning outcomes, libraries should acquire more relevant information resources across all disciplines, be adequately funded, and increase the number of departmental libraries. Undergraduate students also expressed the view that lecturers should be involved in the library's acquisition (book selection) policy, and that the provision of resources should be matched with accessibility.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research approach and administered a survey questionnaire to one hundred (100) students in universities in Northwest Nigeria. A random sampling technique was used to select the study participants, ensuring that each respondent had an equal probability of being selected at any stage of the sampling process. Data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively using frequencies

and percentages, which were presented in tables for clearer representation. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26, was used for data analysis.

Data presentation and discussion

The findings of this study are presented in the tables below.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Gender			
Male	60	60.0	100
Female	40	40.0	
Status			
Students	71	71.0	100
Librarians	7	7.0	
Library assistants	13	13.0	
Researchers	4	4.0	
Academic/Non-academic staff	5	5.0	

Table 1 revealed the biodata of respondents consisting of 60% males and 40% females. Most (71%) of the participants are students, 7% are librarians, 13% are library assistants, 4% are researchers, and 5% are academic/non-academic staff.

Research question one: What are the library resources used for improving the academic achievement of students in universities in Northwest Nigeria.

Table 2: Library resources for improving the academic achievement of students in universities.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Total
Print library resources (books, journals, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, thesis and dissertations, etc.).	62	62.0	100
Non-print library resources (projectors, microfiches, CD-ROMs, online data bases, internet services, audiovisual materials, records, microfilms, computers, etc.).	38	38.0	100

Data in Table 2 revealed the library resources for improving the academic achievement of students in universities. A majority (62%) of the participants indicated that print library resources including books, journals, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, theses, and dissertations are available in their libraries, while 38% of the respondents indicated that non-print library resources, consisting of projectors, microfiches, CD-ROMs, online databases, internet services, audiovisual materials, records, microfilms, and computers, are available for improving students academic achievements in the study areas. This indicates that print library resources are the major resources available to users for improving academic achievement in university libraries in Northwest Nigeria. These resources include books, journals, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, theses, and dissertations.

The findings of this study align with those of Serostanova (2014), as cited in Mesagan and Ibrahim (2021), who revealed that libraries have experienced significant advancement in making resources available to all users to satisfy their information needs. When a collection of library resources consists not only of books and journals but also of other materials such as general and specialized materials, newspapers, magazines, manuscripts, museum objects, photographs, theses, and dissertations, the library can effectively meet users' information needs (Aina, 2004, cited in Mesagan & Ibrahim, 2021). Users of a library require the availability and accessibility of a wide variety of information resources in different formats, such as digital full-text, sound, graphics, images, multimedia, hypertext, as well as print documents (Mercy et al., 2022).

Research question two: To what extent are the library resources used for improving the academic achievement of students in universities in Northwest Nigeria?

Table 3: Use of library resources for improving the academic achievement of students in universities

Variables	Highly utilized	Utilized	Undecided	Not utilized	Total
Print library resources (books, journals, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, theses and dissertations, etc.).	79	14	7	0	100
Non-print library resources (projectors, microfiches, CD ROMs, online databases, internet services, audiovisual Materials, records, microfilms, computers, etc.).	28	45	27	0	100

The findings of the study presented in Table 3 revealed the extent to which library resources were utilized for improving the academic achievement of university students. The majority (79%) of the study participants indicated that they highly utilized print library resources, 14% reported that they utilized print library resources, while 7% were undecided. Similarly, 28% of the participants indicated that they highly utilized non-print library resources in the study areas. A larger proportion (45%) reported utilizing non-print library resources, whereas 27% were undecided.

The findings, therefore, indicated that print library resources were the major resources highly utilized for improving the academic achievement of students in universities within the study areas. This finding agrees with the study by Okiy (2000), as cited in Awujoola and Fadeyi (2018), which reported that users utilized print materials such as journals, newspapers, textbooks, magazines, dictionaries, projects, encyclopedias, and government publications to achieve their academic goals. Similarly, Mercy et al. (2022) revealed that undergraduate students frequently utilized textbooks, journals, internet services, dissertations, and dictionaries more than other library resources.

It is important for students to fully utilize university library resources to improve their academic achievement. Regular use of library resources provides students with opportunities to update their knowledge in various fields of specialization and to achieve their academic goals (Mercy et al., 2022).

Research question three: What are the strategies for improving the usage of library resources among students in universities in Northwest Nigeria?

Table 4: Strategies for improving the usage of library resources among students in universities

Variables	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
More relevant books are acquired in the libraries.	65	35	0	0	0	100
Adequate funds are provided to the libraries.	19	46	19	13	3	100
Increase in the number of departmental libraries.	34	44	8	14	0	100
Lecturers are involved in the book selection policy of the libraries.	40	50	4	6	0	100
Provisions are matched with accessibility to the resources.	29	51	11	2	7	100

Table 4 presents the findings of the study on strategies for improving the use of library resources among students in Northwest universities. Most (65%) of the participants strongly agreed that the acquisition of more relevant books in libraries improves the use of library resources among students in the study areas, while 35% also agreed with this assertion. Among the participants, 19% strongly agreed that the provision of adequate funds to libraries is a strategy for improving the use of library resources among students,

and most (46%) agreed with the assertion. On the other hand, 19% of the participants strongly disagreed and 13% disagreed that adequate funds are provided to libraries to improve the use of library resources among students.

It is noteworthy that 34% of the participants strongly agreed that an increase in the number of departmental libraries improves the use of library resources among students in Northwest universities. Most (44%) of the participants agreed with this assertion, whereas 8% strongly disagreed and 14% disagreed. As a strategy for promoting the use of library resources among students in the study areas, 40% of the participants strongly agreed that lecturers are involved in the book selection policy of libraries, and 50% also agreed. However, 4% of the participants strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed that lecturers are involved in the book selection policy of libraries. Furthermore, 29% of the participants strongly agreed that provisions matched with accessibility to resources improve the use of library resources among students in Northwest universities. Most (51%) of the participants agreed with this assertion, while 11% strongly disagreed and 2% disagreed.

The findings of the study indicate that most participants strongly agreed that the acquisition of more relevant books in libraries is a key strategy for improving the use of library resources among students in the study areas. Other strategies identified include the provision of adequate funds to libraries, an increase in the number of departmental libraries, the involvement of lecturers in the book selection policy of libraries and ensuring that provisions are matched with accessibility to resources. This study is in conformity with the findings of Mercy et al. (2022), who affirmed that library resources are more likely to be highly utilized to meet users' information needs when relevant books are acquired, adequate funds are provided, the number of departmental libraries is increased, lecturers

are involved in book selection policies, and provisions are matched with accessibility to resources.

Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1. Purchase of updated and relevant information resources in the library by the university.
2. Good study habits among the students by using the library resources should be encouraged.
3. The need for increased funding for university libraries to acquire non-print resources such as projectors, microfiches, CD-ROMs, online databases, internet services, audiovisual materials, microfilms, and computers to enhance students' academic achievement. While acknowledging university management's proactive efforts such as providing funds, acquiring relevant books, involving lecturers in book selection, and ensuring access to resources. The study stresses the importance of sustaining these efforts to maintain high-quality academic outcomes in the study areas.

Conclusion

The major objective of university libraries in Nigeria is to develop and maintain collections of information resources in both print and non-print formats and to make them available and accessible to all users. The availability of these information resources has a significant positive impact on students' study habits and their ability to achieve academic goals. Thus, key findings of this study revealed that the information resources for improving student academic achievement in university libraries across the study areas are

predominantly print resources such as books, journals, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, theses, and dissertations.

Students across these institutions made extensive use of these resources to support their academic achievement. Participants opined that the acquisition of more relevant books in libraries improved the use of library resources among students in the study areas. Other strategies that enhanced the utilization of library resources include the provision of adequate funds to libraries, an increase in the number of departmental libraries, the involvement of lecturers in the acquisition (book selection) policy of libraries and ensuring that resource provision is matched with accessibility.

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